

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Trump: Navy won't strip SEAL of trident

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday pushed back on the military's plans to strip a service member accused of misconduct of his status as a Navy SEAL, days after the president intervened to roll back other disciplinary actions against him and two other service members accused of war crimes.

"The Navy will NOT be taking away Warfighter and Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher's Trident Pin," the president said in a tweet. "This case was handled very badly from the be-

ginning. Get back to business!"

The message followed reports that senior Navy officials had set in motion steps to remove the chief petty officer's SEAL trident, which would effectively end his status as a member of the secretive, elite force. Earlier this year, a military court acquitted Gallagher of the majority of a series of war crimes charges relating to the battle against Islamic State in Iraq, including charges of murdering a militant captive, but he was convicted of a lesser charge of posing for a photo with the man's corpse.

The senior officer who draft-

ed the steps to remove Gallagher from the SEALs, Rear Adm. Collin Green, oversees Naval Special Warfare Command. Green also sought to review whether three officers who oversaw Gallagher in Iraq also should be ejected from the SEALs. They are Lt. Cmdr. Robert Breisch, Lt. Jacob Portier and Lt. Thomas MacNeil.

It was not immediately clear whether Trump's directive applies to them as well.

A spokesperson for Green could not immediately be reached for comment Thursday morning.

An attorney for Gallagher,

Tim Parlatore, said the last sentence of Trump's tweet indicates to him that the president wants Green to move on from intervening in the cases for each SEAL.

"This whole thing was a political show by a petulant child, and I think the president saw through that," Parlatore said of the admiral.

The Defense Department last week announced that Trump had authorized a reversal of a rank reduction for Gallagher and pardons for two soldiers also accused of war crimes, a move that defied advice from senior Pentagon leaders.

## Giuliani efforts focused on Bidens, key witnesses say

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Key impeachment witnesses said Thursday it was clear that Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani was pursuing political investigations of Democrats in Ukraine. Their testimony undercuts the president's argument he only wanted to root out Ukrainian corruption.

State Department official David Holmes said he understood that Giuliani's push to investigate "Burisma," the Ukraine gas company where Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board, was code for the former vice president and his family. Former White House adviser Fiona Hill warned that Giuliani had been making "explosive" and "incendiary" claims.

"He was clearly pushing forward issues and ideas that would, you know, probably come back to haunt us and in fact," Hill testified. "I think that's where we are today."

Testimony from Hill and Holmes capped an intense week in

the inquiry. The House probe focuses on allegations that Trump sought investigations of Joe Biden and his son — and the discredited idea that Ukraine rather than Russia interfered in the 2016 U.S. election — in return for U.S. military aid that Ukraine needed to fend off Russian aggression, and for a White House visit the new Ukrainian president wanted that would demonstrate his backing from the West.

Hill, a former White House Russia analyst, sternly warned Republican lawmakers — and implicitly Trump — to quit pushing the "fictional" Ukraine-interference narrative as they defend Trump in the impeachment inquiry.

Holmes testified that he came forward after overhearing Trump ask about "investigations" during a "colorful" phone call with Ambassador Gordon Sondland at a Kyiv restaurant this summer.

Holmes said he realized his firsthand account of what he heard would be relevant.

"Those events potentially bore on the question of whether the president did, in fact, have knowledge that those senior officials were using the levers of our diplomatic power" to push Ukraine to investigate his rivals, he testified.

As Holmes was delivering opening remarks, explaining how the ambassador "wincing," holding the cellphone away from his ear because the president was talking so loudly, Trump tried to undercut the career diplomat's account of overhearing the conversation.

The president tweeted that while his own hearing is "great" he's never been able to understand another person's conversation that wasn't on speaker. "Try it," he suggested.

Holmes also testified about his growing concern as Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer, orchestrated Ukraine policy outside official diplomatic channels. It was a concern shared by others, he testified.

"My recollection is that Ambassador Sondland stated,

'Every time Rudy gets involved he goes and f---s everything up.'"

The president instructed his top diplomats to work with Giuliani, who was publicly pursuing investigations into Democrats, according to Sondland and others testifying during the week of public hearings.

The landmark House impeachment inquiry was sparked after another call, on July 25, in which Trump asked Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy for "a favor," the investigations. A still-anonymous whistleblower's official government complaint about that call led the House to launch the current probe.

Hill stressed that she is "nonpartisan" and has worked under Republican and Democratic presidents. She contended that Russia wanted to delegitimize "our entire presidency," whether the winner be Trump or Hillary Clinton, in 2016. She warned that Russia is gearing up to intervene again in the 2020 election.

# 2 Army pilots killed in helicopter crash in Afghanistan ID'd

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

The Pentagon identified two Fort Hood-based soldiers, Chief Warrant Officer 2 David C. Knadle and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kirk T. Fuchigami Jr., as the service members killed in a Wednesday helicopter crash in Afghanistan.

Both soldiers died while on a mission in Logar province, where their helicopter crashed while providing security for troops on the ground, the Pentagon said in a statement Thursday. The incident is under investigation.

Fuchigami, 25, was from Keaau, Hawaii. Knadle, 33, was from Tarrant, Texas.

Both soldiers were Apache helicopter pilots assigned to 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Fuchigami's wife, McKenzie, called her spouse "a strong, courageous soldier and loyal husband."

"Eight months of marriage

with him was the best months of my life. He taught me so much about love and respect," she wrote in a Facebook post.

Linda Knadle Rodante, who identified herself as Knadle's aunt, said in a Facebook post Wednesday that the soldier was married with two children.

"Our heartfelt condolences go to both families and their friends during this difficult time," said Lt. Col. Adam Camarano, the soldiers' battalion commander, who added in a statement that Fuchigami and Knadle "will always be remembered as a part of the heroic legacy of the 1st Cavalry Division."

The Taliban claimed to have shot down the helicopter in a statement Wednesday. However, Fawad Aman, Afghan Defense Ministry deputy spokesman, denied the claim and said the crash occurred due to a technical problem.

The crash destroyed the helicopter, which was participating in a night raid, said Deedar Lawang, a Logar province spokesman.

# Report says US, allies' military success drove down terrorism deaths

By J.P. LAWRENCE

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Military successes by the U.S. and its allies against terrorist groups helped drive down global deaths from terrorism in 2018 for the fourth consecutive year, a report released this week said.

But even as terrorism deaths declined in most countries, they soared in Afghanistan, despite the U.S. launching peace talks with the Taliban that year to try to end decades of war in the country.

Terrorism deaths in Afghanistan soared by nearly 60% to more than 7,300 in 2018, with most of those casualties blamed on the Taliban, which overtook Islamic State to become the deadliest terrorist organization in the world, said the Global Terrorism Index 2019 report released Wednesday.

The Taliban killed 6,000 people last year in Afghanistan, said the report, issued by Australia's Institute for Economics and Peace think tank.

At the same time, military successes against ISIS caused it to sharply lose ground in Iraq and Syria, said the report, which has been compiled annually since 2013.

U.S. airstrikes in Somalia also led to a decline in terrorism deaths there and a 24% fall in attacks by the al-Shabab terrorist group, the report said.

As ISIS buckled under military pressure, terrorism deaths in Iraq fell by 75% in 2018, the report said.

For the first time since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, it was "no longer the country most impacted by terrorism," the report said. Afghanistan has taken over the top spot that no country wants.

Because of the increase in deaths from terrorism in Afghanistan in 2018, South Asia recorded more terrorism-related deaths than any other global region for the first time since 2012. Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the second-highest number of deaths from terrorism, overtaking the Middle East and North Africa for the first time since 2014.

Six of the 13 terrorist groups or movements that were responsible for more than 100 deaths in 2018 were in sub-Saharan Africa, the report said.

Terrorism's economic impact was also on the decline in 2018, falling 38% from its 2017 level to \$33 billion, according to the report.

# 2 die in T-38 crash at Vance Air Force base in Okla.

By COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Two airmen were killed Thursday morning in a crash of jet trainers at Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma, according to service officials.

The officials said the airmen died in a mishap that occurred during a routine training mission involving two T-38C Talon aircraft. They said two airmen were in each aircraft when the

incident occurred just after 9 a.m. local time. Officials did not provide the status of the two airmen who survived or indicate the nature of the crash.

"Vance emergency response personnel are on scene to treat casualties and assist in recovery efforts," according to a statement from the base. It added an Air Force team would launch an investigation into the incident.

Vance AFB is about 90 miles

north of Oklahoma City and is home to an undergraduate pilot training program.

Student pilots training to fly fighter jets or bombers typically fly the T-38Cs during the third and final stage of their undergraduate training program, according to the Air Force. The T-38C is a Northrup Grumman-built twin-engine, supersonic-jet trainer that has been used by the Air Force since 2001, and it is scheduled to be

replaced by a new jet trainer in the coming years. Versions of the T-38 have been used as the Air Force's primary jet training aircraft since the 1960s, and the service claims more than 70,000 pilots have trained using the plane.

In 2018, Boeing was awarded a \$9.2 billion contract to build T-X aircraft to replace the Air Force's T-38Cs. That contract calls for 350 of the new trainer jets to be ready for full operational deployment by 2034.



# Number of bases with water contamination likely to rise

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The number of known military installations with water sources contaminated by cancer-linked firefighting foam is likely to rise, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

In 2018, the Pentagon reported that 401 sites — including wells, on-base drinking sources and groundwater — at its military bases and communities worldwide had tested positive for higher than allowable levels of Per- and polyfluoroalkyl compounds, commonly known as PFAS.

The compounds are concentrated in the Aqueous Film-Forming Foam, or AFFF, that the military has sprayed on air-

craft fires since the 1970s.

The compounds in the military firefighting foam have been linked to cancers and birth defects. Over decades of use at military bases, the foam has seeped into groundwater and drinking water sources.

Since the release of the original list of 401 sites in the 2018 report, communities near military bases across the U.S. have demanded that the Department of Defense fix the water contamination. Some states, such as New Mexico, have also filed lawsuits to force a faster cleanup or compensation.

Based on further testing, that 401 number is likely to go higher, Robert McMahon, assistant secretary of defense for sustainment said Wednesday. A

new, higher number is expected in an interim report on the issue that is expected to go to Defense Secretary Mark Esper next week.

"We think there's probably more installations than that," McMahon said. "We found that we undercounted within some of the (National) Guard sites."

"I think what you will see out of the report is a revised number above 401," McMahon said.

The upcoming report was directed by Esper in July. It is expected to address the status of cleanup, which the Pentagon has previously reported will top \$2 billion, and how best to move forward with getting health care for those affected by the contaminated water.

## US denies a report of troop cut in South Korea

Bloomberg

The U.S. dismissed a report that it is considering a withdrawal of thousands of its troops to gain leverage with South Korea as the Trump administration seeks to have it pay five times more to host American service members.

The South Korea daily Chosun Ilbo reported Thursday the U.S. was considering withdrawing one of its brigades if ongoing defense cost talks with Seoul don't go as it wants.

Jonathan Hoffman, chief Pentagon spokesman, later said in a statement that "there is absolutely no truth" to the report, which the paper attributed to a diplomatic source in Washington familiar with the talks.

Esper "reiterated our iron-clad commitment" to South Korea and its people during discussions in Seoul last week, Hoffman said.

Earlier Thursday, the defense chief had told reporters that the U.S. wasn't using troop levels as a bargaining chip in funding talks with host countries.

"We aren't threatening allies over this. This is a negotiation," he said.

Questions were raised about the stability of one of America's most important military alliances when U.S. negotiators walked out of a meeting in Seoul on cost-sharing. South Korea balked at a Trump administration demand for a five-fold increase in funding.

The current cost-sharing agreement reached earlier this year expires at the end of 2019. South Korea's Defense Ministry said that despite the latest acrimony, the U.S. has vowed in its latest meeting that its forces would stay.

President Donald Trump has demanded South Korea contribute about \$5 billion for hosting U.S. troops, well above the current one-year deal where Seoul pays about \$1 billion.

## New bill seeks better mammograms for active-duty, other women with Tricare

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Active-duty service members and other women who use Tricare for their medical treatment would benefit from the latest technology for breast cancer screening under new legislation expected to be introduced Thursday in the House and Senate.

The Better and Robust Screening Today Act, or BRST Act, would require Tricare to offer digital breast tomosynthesis as a primary and preventative health care service to military members, retirees and their families.

Digital breast tomosynthesis, referred to as DBT, builds a three-dimensional image of a breast to better detect and diagnose breast cancer, especially for women with dense breast tissue.

The technology is already

available to women who use Medicare or the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care. Tricare, though, covers only mammograms with two-dimensional images, which some lawmakers say is a suboptimal standard of care.

"What we're hoping is that in dropping this particular legislation, that we're able to fix this gap," said Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa.

Houlahan is leading the bill in the House, and Sen. Martha MacSally, R-Ariz., is sponsoring the Senate's version. Both women are veterans. McSally, a former combat pilot, retired from the Air Force after 22 years. Houlahan's father was a career naval aviator, and she worked for several years as an Air Force engineer.

As a retiree, McSally is eligible for Tricare but primarily receives medical treatment from the VA, she said.

"I'm going to get a mammogram next week, but I'm going to the VA, so I'll have better technology than those on Tricare," McSally said. "And that's ridiculous."

McSally and Houlahan sent letters in September to Thomas McCaffery, the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, urging him to expand Tricare coverage to include DBT screenings. Ten female senators signed onto the letter with McSally, and 50 House members signed Houlahan's version.

McSally said Wednesday she was still waiting for McCaffery's response.

The House and Senate versions of the BRST Act will be introduced Thursday. Houlahan and McSally said they're optimistic about the bills making it through their respective chambers.

# Dems spar over health care, Trump at debate

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Democratic presidential candidates clashed in a debate over the future of health care in America, racial inequality and their ability to build a winning coalition to take on President Donald Trump next year.

The Wednesday night faceoff came after hours of testimony in the impeachment inquiry of Trump and at a critical juncture in the Democratic race to run against him in 2020. With less than three months before the first voting contests, big questions hang over the front-runners, time is running out for lower tier candidates to make their move and new Democrats are launching improbable last-minute bids for the nomination.

But amid the turbulence, the White House hopefuls often found themselves fighting on well-trodden terrain, particularly over whether the party should embrace a sweeping “Medicare for All” program or make more modest changes to the current health care system.

Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, the

field’s most progressive voices, staunchly defended Medicare for All, which would eliminate private insurance coverage in favor of a government-run system.

“The American people understand that the current health care system is not only cruel — it is dysfunctional,” Sanders said.

Former Vice President Joe Biden countered that many people are happy with private insurance through their jobs, while Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., complained about other candidates seeking to take “the divisive step” of ordering people onto universal health care, “whether they like it or not.”

Democrats successfully campaigned on health care last year, winning control of the House on a message that Republicans were slashing existing benefits. But moderates worry that Medicare for All is more complicated and may not pay the same political dividend. That’s especially true after Democrats won elections earlier this month in Kentucky and Virginia without embracing the program.

“We must get our fired-up Democratic base with us,” said Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. “But let’s also get those inde-

pendents and moderate Republicans who cannot stomach (Trump) anymore.”

The fifth Democratic debate unfolded in Atlanta, a city that played a central role in the civil rights movement, and the party’s diversity, including two African American candidates, was on display. But there was disagreement on how best to appeal to minority voters, who are vital to winning the Democratic nomination and will be crucial in the general election.

Sens. Kamala Harris of California and Cory Booker of New Jersey said the party has sometimes come up short in its outreach to black Americans.

“For too long, I think, candidates have taken for granted constituencies that have been a backbone of the Democratic Party,” Harris said. “You show up in a black church and want to get the vote but just haven’t been there before.”

Booker declared, “Black voters are pissed off, and they’re worried.”

In the moderators’ chairs were four women, including Rachel Maddow, MSNBC’s liberal darling, and Ashley Parker, a White House reporter for The Washington Post.

## Fewer customers hit by the latest Calif. blackout

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Pacific Gas & Electric turned off electricity Wednesday for about 120,000 people in Northern California to prevent power lines from sparking wildfires during a new bout of windy, warm weather.

However, favorable weather allowed the nation’s largest utility to drastically reduce the number of customers it originally had planned to black out — about 375,000 — and even to begin restoring electricity

in some areas.

Higher-than-expected humidity, cloud cover and even some rain showers in the Sierra Nevada helped reduce the risk, said Scott Strenfel, PG&E’s principal meteorologist.

“All of these factors kind of broke in all of our favor,” he said.

Virtually all those who lost power were expected to get it back Thursday once a weather all-clear is declared and ground crews and helicopters check power lines to make sure any damage is repaired, of-

ficials said.

Forecasts had called for it to be dry and windy Wednesday, with gusts up to 55 mph, which could fling tree branches or other debris into lines and cause sparks that have the potential to set catastrophic fires, PG&E officials said. A virtually rainless fall has left brush bone dry.

The blackout is the latest in a series of massive outages by PG&E, including one last month that plunged nearly 2.5 million people into darkness and outraged officials and customers as overkill.

## Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu accused of corruption

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel’s attorney general on Thursday formally charged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a series of corruption cases, throwing the country’s paralyzed political system into further disarray and threatening the long-time leader’s grip on power.

Capping a three-year investigation, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit charged Netanyahu with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three differ-

ent scandals.

According to the indictment, Netanyahu accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of champagne and cigars from billionaire friends, offered to trade favors with a newspaper publisher and used his influence to help a wealthy telecom magnate in exchange for favorable coverage on a popular news site.

The indictment does not require Netanyahu to resign but is expected to raise pressure on him to step down.

Mandelblit was set to issue a statement

later Thursday, as was Netanyahu, who has called the allegations part of a witch hunt, lashing out against the media, police, prosecutors and the justice system.

The most serious charges were connected to so-called “Case 4000,” in which Netanyahu is accused of passing regulations that gave his friend, telecom magnate Shaul Elovitch, benefits worth more than \$250 million to his company, Bezeq. In return, Bezeq’s news site, Walla, published favorable articles about Netanyahu and his family.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Officer to plead guilty in urinal licking case

**HI** HONOLULU — A Honolulu police officer is expected to plead guilty to depriving a homeless man of his civil rights by forcing him to lick a public urinal.

John Rabago's attorney, Megan Kau, said Tuesday he plans to plead guilty to an indictment because he wants to accept responsibility.

A former officer charged with Rabago pleaded guilty in September to failing to report that Rabago forced the homeless man to lick the urinal. Reginald Ramones, who left the department in August, pleaded guilty to a lesser charge that he knew a fellow officer committed a civil rights violation and didn't inform authorities.

## Coast Guard responds to spill after crash

**NC** NAGS HEAD — The Coast Guard said it responded to a diesel spill after a tugboat collided with an old bridge on the Outer Banks.

The Coast Guard said in a news release Monday that the fuel was coming from the semi-submerged tug. It had struck the Old Bonner Bridge in Oregon Inlet. The replacement for the aging Bonner Bridge opened earlier this year.

The Coast Guard said about 3,000 gallons of fuel were onboard.

## 30 bison escape onto highway; 2 are killed

**MT** STEVENSVILLE — About 30 bison escaped a western Montana ranch and ended up on the highway near Stevensville, where two suffered fatal injuries after being struck by a pickup.

Bitterroot Bison owner Troy Westre told the Hamilton, Mont., Ravalli Republic someone apparently opened a gate on the north end of the ranch property Monday evening.

The Montana Highway Patrol received a report of bison on the Eastside Highway at 8:50 p.m.

Patrol Sgt. Scott Bennett said one bison was killed by the collision with the pickup and another had a broken leg and was euthanized. The pickup was totaled.

Family, friends and neighbors helped Westre round up the rest of the herd and they were back at the ranch by midnight.

## Man uninjured after firing gun in pocket

**SD** SIOUX FALLS — Police said an intoxicated man escaped injury when he accidentally fired his gun inside his pants pocket.

The 24-year-old Sioux Falls man was arrested Monday for reckless discharge of a weapon and possession of a gun while intoxicated.

Police said officers heard a gunshot and responded to a parking ramp about 2:30 a.m.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported officers found the man had a blood alcohol content of 0.25, which is more than three times the legal limit to drive.

## Police kill fox after it attacks 5 people

**NJ** EAST ORANGE — Police killed a fox that they said attacked five people in a northern New Jersey community and also tried to attack an officer.

Glen Ridge police said the first attack was reported around 9:15 a.m. Nov. 15. As

officers from that department and the Bloomfield Animal Control agency searched for the fox, authorities learned two other people had been bitten. The three people were treated at hospitals for bite wounds.

Officers found the fox about two hours later near the New Jersey Transit railroad tracks. Authorities said the fox was killed after it attempted to attack one of the officers.

The two other people attacked by the fox apparently were not bitten by it.

State wildlife officials will test the animal to see if it had rabies.

## Runaway police dog bites 14-year-old boy

**KS** WICHITA — Authorities said a runaway police dog bit a teenager on the face and chest.

The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office said in a Facebook post that the German Shepherd, named Bocephus, went missing Monday night.

Someone found the dog, put him on a leash and walked around the neighborhood in an unsuccessful search for his owner. The person then returned home, and Bocephus was placed in the bedroom of a 14-year-old boy. The teen took the dog for a walk the next morning and was bitten while removing the leash.

The post said the boy was treated at a clinic for minor injuries.

## Naked woman crashes car, killing girl, 6

**CA** SANTA CLARITA — Authorities said a naked woman was behind the wheel of a car that crashed north of Los Angeles, killing a 6-year-old girl and injuring a 2-year-old.

The California Highway Patrol said the woman got into two crashes Monday morning in Stevenson Ranch, an unincorporated area near Santa Clarita.

KABC-TV said the two girls were in the back seat. Officials said Good Samaritans freed them from the wreckage as the car caught fire.

KABC-TV said the woman and the 2-year-old girl were hospitalized in stable condition.

Authorities said they believe the woman is the mother of the two girls but that hadn't been confirmed.

## Woman accused in scam to obtain visas

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — A woman swindled money from four people in a scam aimed at getting visas for crime victims, according to criminal charges filed against her.

Yuridia Hernandez Linares, 36, of Eden Prairie, used a sharp object to cut the four, who then filed false police reports claiming they were injured during armed robberies, according to prosecutors.

The four told police they paid Hernandez Linares a total of \$5,000 and worked with her to file the false report in order to get a so-called U visa, which are given to victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and have been helpful to law enforcement, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported.

Hernandez Linares was charged in Hennepin County District Court with one count of felony theft by swindle. She was jailed in Hennepin County.

From wire reports

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# Penn State may give Buckeyes first test

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State coach Ryan Day has been saying all season how he wants to see how his team plays when a game is tight, nasty and intense in the fourth quarter.

That hasn't happened yet. Through 10 games, Day has had the luxury of the Buckeyes running away from other teams by halftime or shortly thereafter and watching the backups mop up. Consider that his second-string running back, Master Teague III, has piled up 744 rushing yards on 114 carries, all in relief of J.K. Dobbins.

Day may get his wish soon.

The second-ranked Buckeyes begin the most rigorous two-game stretch of the season that will see them host No. 9 Penn State on Saturday and finish the regular season the

following week in Ann Arbor against No. 12 Michigan, their archrival. If Ohio State wins out, the Buckeyes will be in the Big Ten championship on Dec. 7, likely against Minnesota or Wisconsin, and of course they have national title hopes, too.

"I think our team knows what's at stake," Day said Tuesday. "We've talked about that, but now it's just time to focus on Penn State."

The closest thing to on-field adversity the Buckeyes have experienced this season was leading by just three points early in the third quarter against then-No. 13 Wisconsin before reeling off 28 points on the way to a 38-7 win.

"We just have to be mature enough to understand how important every series, every play is, and it might just be one play that changes the game," Day

said. "I can't really say that we've been in a game where that's the case this year. Understanding that as coaches, understanding that as players, is going to be huge."

Adding to the drama this week is how this game finished the past two seasons, with the Buckeyes coming from behind late to win each time on drives engineered by quarterbacks. The last three games between the two teams have been decided by a total of five points.

Day said the latest quarterback, Georgia transfer Justin Fields, is up for the same challenge if it presents itself.

"I'm a pretty even-keeled guy," Fields said. "My emotions don't really change, so I'm just going into this game like every other week, same preparation, same focus at practice."

Ohio State gets an all-around boost with the return of All-American defensive end Chase Young from a two-game suspension for violating NCAA rules by accepting a personal loan from a friend.

Young is second in the nation with 13½ sacks and is the best player on the nation's top defense.

"For us to sit here and expect that Ohio State isn't going to make plays on Saturday, they're going to," Penn State coach James Franklin said. "Don't be shocked by that. That's going to be my message to the team. They're going to make plays, we got to match them. It needs to be one of those types of games, like a heavyweight fight. That guy delivers a blow, you counter. That's what it's going to need to be."

## No. 24 Texas A&M can play spoiler for Georgia, LSU

Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Texas A&M has yet to become a power in the Southeastern Conference in its eighth season in the league. With trips to No. 4 Georgia and top-ranked LSU to end the regular season, the Aggies could thrust their way into the spotlight by playing spoiler.

The 24th-ranked Aggies aren't yet among the SEC's elite in coach Jimbo Fisher's second year, but they're still a formidable foe. They've won four in a row and their three losses have come against No. 3 Clemson, No. 16 Auburn and No. 5 Alabama. The Tigers were ranked No. 1 at the time of their game.

"This team will probably be one of the most talented teams we've played against," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "We all know who their three losses are against. I feel like the three losses are against Top 10 teams that are really, really good football teams. And they have an immense amount of talent."

Fisher, who won a national

title in 2013 at Florida State, said he is much more worried about improving his team than spoiling anyone's season.

"We want to affect the outcome of our own program and how we play and what we do and what we get out of that ... we've played well this last month, and we can keep November rolling and play well, play good football," he said. "It's important for our program. The playoffs are wonderful, but I'm worried about what's going on at A&M."

Auburn was in a similar situation in 2017 when the team beat No. 2 Georgia and No. 1 Alabama late in the season to rise from No. 16 in the polls to fourth and reach the SEC title game for the first time since 2013. Auburn's late push ended a streak of three straight SEC titles for the Crimson Tide. The Tigers ended up losing to Georgia in the rematch for the conference championship.

The Bulldogs know people would love to ruin their title hopes. But they're confident that they can finish the season

strongly after bouncing back from a double-overtime loss to South Carolina with four straight victories to win the East and land in the top four of the College Football Playoff rankings.

"We always knew we controlled our own destiny. We always knew we could be back in this position and just continue to work and do what we have to do to get back," linebacker Azeez Ojulari said.

Smart is aware that he can't shield his players from talk of the playoff, so he doesn't try to tell them to ignore it. Instead, he just implores them to focus on paying attention to details on the field.

"What you try to emphasize is the facts," he said. "Here are the facts ... if we block and tackle people, if we do simple better, we're pretty good. If we don't and we turn the ball over and we don't play well on special teams and we give up big, explosive plays, we're not very good."

LSU, meanwhile, is looking to reach the SEC title game

for the first time since 2011, though the Tigers also have national championship hopes.

In last year's meeting in College Station, Texas A&M snapped a seven-game skid in the LSU series with an epic 72-70 win in seven overtimes.

LSU coach Ed Orgeron is pleased with how his team has grown in his third full season in charge in Baton Rouge after taking over for Les Miles after four games in 2016.

"It seems like this year it's come all together," he said. "It has taken us three years. Yes, it is a process. Maybe that's too long. Maybe that's a short time. I don't know ... but I always knew at LSU you have to win. I know the expectations at LSU (are) you have to win. My goal has always been to win at LSU."

And that's what he and the Tigers have done this year. And at 10-0, they're the SEC's only undefeated team and are ranked No. 1 in the AP poll and the CFB rankings with two games to go before conference title games.



# Astros owner mum on sign stealing probe

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Houston Astros owner Jim Crane declined comment Wednesday on Major League Baseball's investigation into allegations of sign stealing against his team.

While walking through the lobby of the luxury hotel where MLB owners were meeting, Crane stopped briefly when approached by reporters.

"If you want to talk about baseball, I'll talk about baseball," Crane said. "What else do you want to talk about?"

When someone started to ask whether he had any comment about the allegations, Crane didn't even let that question get finished before responding, "Any other issues?"

Two sheriff's deputies working security in the lobby then stepped in and escorted the Astros owner toward a flight of stairs that led upstairs to where the meetings were taking place.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday he hopes the investigation will be

completed before the start of next season and that he has authority to impose discipline beyond the loss of amateur draft picks.

Manfred was scheduled to hold a news conference Thursday after owners wrap up their meetings at the hotel adjacent to the new Texas Rangers ballpark that will open next season.

Oakland pitcher Mike Fiers told The Athletic in a story last week that while he was playing with the Astros during their 2017 World Series championship season the team stole signs during home games by using a camera positioned in center field.

Yankees president Randy Levine, whose team lost to the Astros in the AL Championship Series in 2017 and again this year, said he would leave it to the commissioner "to get to the bottom of it" and said he hadn't heard anything recently.

Asked if it was frustrating considering a seven-game ALCS loss to the Astros two years ago, Levine responded, "We have to see what the results

of the investigation are before we make any comment."

During this year's ALCS, Houston players were suspected of whistling in the dugout to communicate pitch selection to batters.

Crane's appearance at the owners' meetings was his first near media since last week's report, which led to MLB expanding its investigation of the team.

Baseball was already looking into the Astros for an incident during the playoffs. The team fired assistant general manager Brandon Taubman for directing inappropriate comments at female reporters during a clubhouse celebration after the Astros beat the New York Yankees to win the AL pennant on Oct. 19. The team issued and then retracted a statement accusing a Sports Illustrated reporter of trying to "fabricate a story." Taubman was fired on Oct. 24.

Not long after his lobby encounter with reporters that lasted less than 30 seconds, Crane joined some other owners for a tour of the Rangers'

new \$1.2 billion stadium being built across the street from the ballpark the team called home the past 26 seasons.

Manfred toured the construction site Tuesday, when he addressed MLB's investigation into the Astros, who lost to Washington in Game 7 of the World Series.

"Any allegation that relates to a rule violation that could affect the outcome of a game or games is the most serious matter—it relates to the integrity of the sport," Manfred said then. "People want the game played consistent with our rules, and feel it's important that we figure out exactly what happened here and take steps to make sure that it doesn't happen in the future by imposing appropriate discipline."

Manfred didn't speculate on what that discipline would be and said it would be based on what is determined by "the facts established at the end of the investigation."

For now, Manfred said the Astros were the only team being investigated for cheating allegations.

## NHL roundup

### Tkachuk's overtime goal lifts Senators over Canadiens

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Brady Tkachuk finished what Jean-Gabriel Pageau started, and the Ottawa Senators feel like they have the struggling franchise moving in the right direction.

Tkachuk went five-hole on Carey Price 38 seconds into overtime, Pageau scored for the second straight game and the Senators beat the Montreal Canadiens 2-1 Wednesday night. Craig Anderson stopped 35 shots, and Ottawa won for the fourth time in five games.

"We're still learning and getting better," Tkachuk said. "And we've improved so much since the start of the year. I definitely think we're trending

in the right direction.

Montreal rookie Nick Suzuki scored in the second period, and Price stopped 22 shots for the Canadiens a day after allowing five goals in Columbus.

Pageau beat Price at 9:55 of the second by tipping a shot from Tyler Ennis. Pageau leads the NHL with 10 goals this month, and the 27-year-old also has nine goals in 20 career games versus the Canadiens — his most against any opponent.

"It's obviously a great feeling," said Pageau, who has 13 goals this season.

"I'm feeling confident in my abilities right now and I'm lucky to have the teammates I have right now. We're playing some really good hockey.

"When I shoot, I always try to score now. That's something that changes when you play with confidence."

Suzuki scored on a power play with Nikita Zaitsev in the box for cross-checking. Phillip Danault found the puck during a net-front scramble and passed to Suzuki for an easy score. It was his sixth goal of the season and came 44 seconds into the period.

Ennis nearly gave Ottawa a 2-1 lead in the final minute of the second on a breakaway, but Price made a blocker save.

The visitors kept coming in the third. Price denied Ennis on a power play early on, moments after Anthony Duclair missed the net from the slot.

**Rangers 4, Capitals 1:** Artemi Panarin scored twice, Henrik Lundqvist stopped 30 shots, and host New York beat short-handed Washington.

Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and an assist, Brett Howden also scored, and Kaapo Kakko added two assists for the Rangers, who ended a two-game skid and improved to 6-3-1 in their last 10 games. Lundqvist earned his 454th win, tying Curtis Joseph for fifth on the NHL's career list.

Evgeny Kuznetsov scored and Braden Holtby made 27 saves for first-place Washington, which lost in regulation for the second time in four games after an 11-0-2 stretch.

## NBA roundup

# Clippers slip past Celtics in overtime

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Lou Williams scored 27 points, Kawhi Leonard and Paul George combined for 42 points in their first game together for the Clippers, and Los Angeles rallied to edge the Boston Celtics 107-104 in overtime Wednesday night.

George scored 25 points. Leonard added 17 and blocked Kemba Walker's potential tying three-point attempt after injury and rehab had prevented them from playing in the same game over the season's first 14 games.

The Clippers improved to 9-1 at home after rallying from a 10-point deficit in the fourth.

Jayson Tatum led the Celtics with 30 points and Marcus Smart and Brad Wanamaker added 14 apiece. Williams hit a go-ahead three-pointer with

31 seconds remaining in regulation. After a timeout, Tatum hit a three-pointer with George falling down defending him to tie it 97-all with 13 seconds left.

**Mavericks 142, Warriors 94:** Luka Doncic scored 33 of his 35 points in the first half and had yet another triple-double to help host Dallas rout short-handed Golden State.

Doncic fell a point short of matching Dirk Nowitzki's team record set Nov. 3, 2009, against Utah. In just 17 minutes, Doncic was 10-for-11 from the floor, making 6 of 7 three-pointers, and hit 7 of 8 free throws.

The second-year star from Slovenia had 22 points, five assists and five rebounds in the first quarter alone. He played only 25 minutes total, but still managed 10 rebounds and 11 assists.

**Nuggets 105, Rockets 95:** Nikola Jokic had 27 points and 12 rebounds, host Denver held James Harden to 27 points and snapped Houston's eight-game winning streak.

**76ers 109, Knicks 104:** Ben Simmons hit the first three-pointer of his career and had 18 points and 13 assists to lead host Philadelphia past New York.

**Raptors 113, Magic 97:** Fred VanVleet scored 24 points, Pascal Siakam had 18 points and 11 rebounds and host Toronto snapped Orlando's win streak at three.

**Heat 124, Cavaliers 100:** Duncan Robinson set Miami records for three-pointers in a quarter and a half on his way to 29 points and the Heat beat Cleveland to remain unbeaten at home.

**Bucks 135, Hawks 127:**

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points and 11 rebounds, Eric Bledsoe scored 28 points and Milwaukee won at Atlanta.

**Jazz 103, Timberwolves 95:** Bojan Bogdanovic scored 30 points, Donovan Mitchell added 26 and Utah won at Minnesota to split a home-and-home series.

**Wizards 138, Spurs 132:** Bradley Beal shot 9-for-9 in a 21-point third quarter and finished with 33 to help host Washington hand San Antonio its seventh consecutive loss.

**Nets 101, Hornets 91:** Jarrett Allen had 22 points and 17 rebounds in host Brooklyn's victory over Charlotte.

**Bulls 109, Pistons 89:** Lauri Markkanen scored 24 points to bust out of a slump, Wendell Carter Jr. had 12 points and 15 rebounds and host Chicago beat Detroit.

## College basketball roundup

## Tigers win, find out Wiseman can return on Jan. 12

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Precious Achiuwa had 16 points and 12 rebounds, and Memphis beat Arkansas-Little Rock 68-58 Wednesday after star freshman James Wiseman was cleared by the NCAA to return to the court Jan. 12.

The game was played only hours after the NCAA ruled Wiseman, the Tigers' 7-foot-1 center and last season's top recruit, ineligible for the next 11 games for receiving impermissible benefits from Memphis coach Penny Hardaway. Wiseman's family received \$11,500 from Hardaway to help with moving expenses from Nashville to Memphis two years ago, before Hardaway became the Tigers' coach. Wiseman played for East High, where Hardaway coached.

The NCAA considered Hard-

away a university booster because he donated \$1 million to the university in 2008. Wiseman watched the game from the bench.

Markquis Nowell led the Trojans (3-2) with 16 points, while Ben Coupet Jr. added 12 points. Ruot Monyyong had 12 points and nine rebounds and Kamani Johnson finished with 10 points and 11 rebounds.

The University of Memphis issued a statement that the NCAA informed school officials that Wiseman must sit out nine games for the infraction and three more for the games the freshman already has played this season.

"Based on case precedent, the circumstances of this case and other mitigating factors, the University will immediately appeal this decision," Memphis said. "We expect a more

fair and equitable resolution, and we will exhaust all avenues on James' behalf."

Hardaway made clear he wasn't happy with the punishment even as Memphis now knows how many games Wiseman will miss.

"I've stated from the beginning I didn't think it was fair," Hardaway said. "There's nothing I can do about it. Obviously, James should be on the floor. That's just how I feel."

Wiseman had filed a lawsuit to continue playing after the NCAA ruled him "likely ineligible" for receiving the impermissible benefits from Hardaway — who was not the Memphis coach at the time.

Wiseman withdrew the lawsuit against the NCAA on Nov. 14 after Memphis played him in the Tigers' first three games of the season. The 16th-ranked

Tigers were 2-1 with the 7-foot-1 center on the court.

**No. 2 Louisville 76, USC Upstate 50:** Ryan McMahon made consecutive three-pointers and Dwayne Sutton and Darius Perry had one each during a second-half surge that rallied the Cardinals past the visiting Spartans.

**No. 5 North Carolina 75, Elon 61:** Armando Bacot had season highs of 22 points and 14 rebounds and fellow freshman Cole Anthony flirted with the Tar Heels' first triple-double in 19 years in a defeat of the visiting Phoenix.

**No. 20 Tennessee 76, Alabama State 41:** Jordan Bowden scored 16 points to lead four players in double figures as the Volunteers trounced the Hornets for their 29th straight home victory.