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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy secretary forced out by Pentagon

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Monday that President Donald Trump gave him a direct order to allow a Navy SEAL accused of war crimes to retire without losing his SEAL status.

Esper told reporters at the Pentagon that Trump's order was the reason he announced Sunday that Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher would be allowed to retire with his Trident pin, retaining his status as a SEAL. Navy Secretary Richard Spencer was terminated Sunday over the case.

Last week Trump had tweeted that he wanted Gallagher to be allowed to retire as a SEAL, but Esper's comments Monday revealed that Trump had given the defense secretary a direct order to make that happen.

In his remarks, Esper also made the extraordinary accusation that Spencer last week had secretly offered to the White House to rig the Navy disciplinary process to ensure that Gallagher not lose his Trident. He didn't say how.

"No. I asked, and I never got an answer," Esper said.

Gallagher was acquitted of murder in the stabbing death of an Islamic State militant captive but convicted of posing with the corpse while in Iraq in 2017.

Esper fired Spencer on Sunday, saying he had lost trust in him. Spencer has not responded to requests for comment on Esper's accusation. However, in a letter Sunday to Trump acknowledging his firing, Spencer gave a different version of his thinking.

Spencer said he could not

in good conscience follow an order that he believed would undermine the principle of good order and discipline in the military — suggesting that he had been, or expected to be — ordered to stop the peer review process for Gallagher.

Esper said he remains concerned, based on the Gallagher case and other trouble with battlefield behavior by the military, that soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are not properly and fully trained in ethical standards. He said he had ordered the Pentagon's legal office to review how the military educates and trains service members on wartime ethics and the laws of armed conflict. The review also will look at how the services monitor, investigate and adjudicate adherence.

In announcing Sunday that

he had dismissed Spencer, Esper said he acted after learning of Spencer's secret plan to guarantee the outcome of the Navy SEAL peer review board that was scheduled to convene Dec. 2 with the goal of recommending whether Gallagher should be allowed to retain his Trident.

Spencer had "proposed a deal whereby if the president allowed the Navy to handle the case, he would guarantee that Eddie Gallagher would be restored to rank, allowed to retain his Trident and permitted to retire," Esper said.

This was "completely contrary" to what Esper and the rest of the Pentagon leadership had agreed to, he said, and contrary to Spencer's public position that the Navy disciplinary process should be allowed to play out with no interference.

Kim Jong Un orders artillery drill near S. Korea border

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered an artillery firing drill near the disputed border in the sea off the western coast, state-run media reported Monday, prompting a protest from South Korea's military.

Kim's visit to the Changrin islet was a blow to President Moon Jae-in, who had hoped the North Korean leader would attend a special summit of Southeast Asian nations this week in the southern city of Busan.

Kim formally declined the invitation to the ASEAN meeting last week, saying "now is not the time" due to strained bilateral ties that have been a casualty of stalled nuclear talks

with the United States.

The drill occurred on the Changrin islet as Kim made an unannounced inspection of a "defense detachment on the western front," according to the Korean Central News Agency.

"He indicated the target for Gun 2 of the coastal artillery company on combat duty and gave an order to fire," KCNA said, adding that the troops "fully showed their gun firing skills they cultivated in their day-to-day training to delight the Supreme Leader."

Kim stressed the need for units at all levels of the army to "set up a well-knit system" to ensure that they "are in full readiness for carrying out a combat mission any moment," the news agency said. It did not

give a date or provide more details about the drills.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the drills violated a bilateral military pact aimed at preventing hostilities, which was signed last year as diplomatic efforts to improve relations and persuade the North to abandon its nuclear weapons reached a high point.

"We call on North Korea to immediately stop all military actions in border areas that risk heightening military tensions, and to fully comply with the pact," Defense Ministry spokeswoman Choi Hyun-soo said during a press briefing.

North Korea has maintained a self-imposed moratorium on long-range missile and nuclear tests, but the commu-

nist state resumed artillery drills and short-range missile launches this year amid growing frustration over deadlocked diplomacy.

Most of the recent launches were aimed at the eastern sea. Changrin islet sits north of the Northern Limit Line. The de facto sea border has been a flashpoint for bloody naval skirmishes in the past, including a torpedo attack on the South Korean corvette Cheonan that killed 46 sailors in 2010.

North Korea has refused to acknowledge the maritime boundary on the grounds that it was drawn unilaterally by the U.S.-led United Nations Command after the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Libya: US military drone shot down by mistake

Associated Press

CAIRO — Libyan forces trying to seize Tripoli shot down a U.S. military drone over the capital by mistake last week, officials said Monday.

The U.S. military said it lost the drone Thursday while it was assessing the security situation and monitoring extremist activity. U.S. Africa Command declined to elaborate Monday, saying only that the incident was under investigation.

The self-styled Libyan National Army, led by Gen. Khalifa Hifter, launched an offensive to capture Tripoli in April after seizing much of eastern Libya from Islamic militants and other rivals in recent years. The country was plunged into chaos when a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

The country is now split between a government in the east allied with Hifter and

one in Tripoli, in the West, that is supported by the United Nations.

The LNA is backed by Egypt and UAE, while the Tripoli-allied militias receive aid from Turkey and Qatar. The fighting has stalled in recent weeks, with both sides dug in and shelling one another along Tripoli's southern reaches. They have also carried out airstrikes and drone attacks.

A senior official in the LNA's general command said they mistook the U.S. drone for a Turkish-made drone used by the Tripoli-allied militias. The LNA also downed an Italian drone southeast of Tripoli in recent days.

The official said the LNA apologized for shooting down the American drone and has "agreed with the Americans to coordinate their operations over Tripoli and its surrounding areas to avoid similar incidents in the future."

The LNA fighters did not share pho-

tographs of the U.S. drone online as they usually do when they shoot down drones, including the Italian one last week, another official said.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

On Saturday, the LNA imposed a "no-fly zone" over Tripoli, saying that all flights over the capital city and nearby towns are "prohibited without prior coordination."

The Tripoli fighting forced the U.S. military to pull out a small contingent of American troops who were in Libya in recent years helping local forces combat Islamic State and al-Qaida militants as well as protecting diplomatic facilities.

In September, the U.S. military said it carried out several airstrikes against ISIS, killing more than 40 militants in the first American strikes in the North African country in over a year.

Watchdog chief stands by report into Syria attack

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The director-general of the global chemical weapons watchdog expressed confidence Monday in a report into a deadly attack in Syria last year that has been called into question in a leaked letter.

Fernando Arias used his opening statement to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' annual meeting to publicly support the report issued in March by an OPCW fact-finding mission that found "reasonable grounds" that chlorine was used in a deadly attack on the Syrian town of Douma.

The mission wasn't mandated to attribute blame for the attack, but the U.S., Britain and France blamed Syria and launched punitive airstrikes. Syria denied responsibility.

A letter purportedly by a member of the OPCW team and released by secret-spilling website WikiLeaks called its conclusions biased.

Arias told the meeting that the report was written following careful consideration of all information.

"I stand by the impartial and professional conclusions reached by the fact-minding mission," he said.

Arias said the Douma attack, which killed dozens, is among nine incidents being investigated by a new attribution mechanism set up by the OPCW called the Investigation and Identification Team.

The annual meeting of the OPCW's 193 member states lasts all week. Among issues on the agenda is a proposal to include Novichok nerve agents on the list of outlawed chemical weapons.

Novichok, a form of nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, rose to infamy when it was used in the attempted assassination in March 2018 of Russian spy turned double agent Sergei Skripal.

3D-printed 'bombs' cut costs for USAF base

BY CHRISTOPHER DENNIS

Stars and Stripes

MILDENHALL, England — A 3D printer has slashed the time and cost required to get explosive training devices to the experts at RAF Lakenheath who need them as they prepare for deployments.

Staff Sgt. William Riddle has been using a 3D printer to produce dummy improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars that are used to train the explosive ordnance disposal airmen with the 48th Fighter Wing at Lakenheath, cutting the cost and time of having the training devices shipped from the United States.

"A decent year's worth of ordnance training for a flight of 25 airmen costs about \$60,000" when the dummy weapons are made in and shipped from the U.S., Riddle said.

Using a 3D printer, the cost of producing the "weapons" falls by 96%, the 48th Fighter Wing said in a statement.

Printing the training aids at Lakenheath also saves time, wing spokeswoman Capt. Miranda Simmons said.

"Using traditional purchasing methods, it takes approximately 30 days for procurement, but with this innovative process, it now takes between 24 and 48 hours," Simmons said in an email.

The printing system is easy to learn, said Riddle. "I can take anyone who hasn't done any 3D printing and give them a five-minute tutorial and have them printing with ease," he said.

Riddle is set to brief the Innovation and Transformation Board at U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa on his idea, for which he recently received an award from the 48th Continuous Process Improvement Office.

If the board approves the idea, it could be offered to EOD units across the theater, USAFE spokesman Capt. Christopher Bowyer-Meeder said.

Decision to block aid extensively reviewed

The Washington Post

A confidential White House review of President Donald Trump's decision to place a hold on military aid to Ukraine has turned up hundreds of documents that reveal extensive efforts to generate an after-the-fact justification for the decision and a debate over whether the delay was legal, according to three people familiar with the records.

The research by the White House Counsel's Office, which was triggered by a congressional impeachment inquiry announced in September, includes early August email exchanges between acting chief of

staff Mick Mulvaney and White House budget officials seeking to provide an explanation for withholding the funds after Trump had already ordered a hold in mid-July on the nearly \$400 million in security assistance, according to the three people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal White House deliberations.

One person briefed on the records examination said White House lawyers are expressing concern that the review has turned up some unflattering exchanges and facts that could at a minimum embarrass the president. It's unclear if the Mulvaney discussions or

other records pose any legal problems for Trump in the impeachment inquiry, but some fear they could pose political problems if revealed publicly.

People familiar with the Office of Management and Budget's handling of the holdup in aid acknowledged the internal discussions going on during August but characterized the conversations as calm, routine and focused on the legal question of how to comply with the congressional Budget and Impoundment Act, which requires the executive branch to spend congressionally appropriated funds unless Congress agrees they can be rescinded.

"There was a legal consen-

sus at every step of the way that the money could be withheld to conduct the policy review," said OMB spokeswoman Rachel Semmel. "OMB works closely with agencies on executing the budget. Routine practices and procedures were followed, not scrambling."

The hold on the military aid is at the heart of House Democrats' investigation into whether the president should be removed from office for allegedly trying to pressure Ukraine into investigating his political rivals in exchange for the U.S. support that President Volodymyr Zelenskiy desperately wanted in the face of Russian military aggression.

Giuliani dug for dirt while pursuing a Ukraine bank

Bloomberg

Rudy Giuliani discussed representing a state-owned Ukrainian bank in a legal dispute over the summer even while publicly pressing Ukraine on behalf of the U.S. president.

Though he ultimately did not take on the client, the talks expose his enthusiasm for foreign business and his willingness to insert himself in matters rife with potential conflicts. In fact, the Ukrainian bank is entangled in a legal dispute with its former owner who has ties to Ukraine's president and is the subject of a federal investigation in the U.S.

The former New York mayor and personal lawyer for President Donald Trump, Giuliani said he was approached by lawyers for Privatbank seeking to recover assets linked to the previous owner. They wanted to know if Giuliani — who had written tweets critical of the man — could assist their civil suit, Giuliani confirmed by phone on Thursday.

He met with the lawyers at Quinn Emanuel about the case, though they parted ways with no agreement. Quinn Emanuel declined to comment. Privat-

bank said in an email that it "has not been approached by Mr. Giuliani and has not considered engaging him in any capacity."

The dispute between Privatbank and the previous owner, Igor Kolomoisky, is politically charged. Ukraine's last administration nationalized the bank in 2016 and accused Kolomoisky and his co-founder of making off with billions of dollars. Civil suits have followed as the bank seeks to recoup various assets in the U.S. and the U.K. as ill-gotten proceeds.

During impeachment hearings in Washington, Giuliani asserted on Twitter that he has no financial interests in Ukraine. He has done business in the country, however, including security consulting for the city of Kharkiv. He is also the honorary mayor of Anatevka, outside Kyiv.

Publicly and privately over the past year, Giuliani pushed Ukrainian officials to announce an investigation of Ukrainian influence in the 2016 U.S. election and of a matter that would embarrass a Trump political rival, former Vice President Joe Biden.

Dems OK early voting in Nev.'s presidential caucus

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The Democratic National Committee has approved a plan by Nevada Democrats to offer the first-ever early voting option for presidential caucuses, a change stemming from a push to make the in-person presidential nominating meetings more accessible.

The state party's chairman, William McCurdy II, and the DNC chairman, Tom Perez, intended to hold a conference call Monday to announce the approval of the plan, the party confirmed.

Besides offering four days of early voting, Nevada's plan calls for releasing raw vote totals from the caucus, offering caucus materials in Tagalog for the state's growing Filipino population and having caucus workers use an app instead of paper to record and transmit results to party officials.

"The primary goal in crafting this plan was to ensure as many Nevada Democrats as possible are given the opportunity to make their voice heard and I believe we will do that in 2020," McCurdy said in a state-

ment. "Nevada plays a critical role in the presidential primary, and we take our role as an early state incredibly serious."

The shift in Nevada, which votes third in the Democratic presidential primary season, comes as Democrats have been encouraging state parties to find ways to increase participation in caucuses or instead hold primaries.

Traditional caucuses require voters show up in person at neighborhood sites at a specific time and break into groups to demonstrate their support for their chosen candidate. Critics have said the format is difficult for people to participate in, especially if they're homebound, have to work or have young children.

To allow for an alternate way to participate, Nevada and fellow early voting state Iowa had sought earlier this year to allow people to vote in their 2020 caucuses over the telephone.

DNC officials rejected the plan in August, citing security concerns.

Nevada is instead relying on four days of early voting to boost turnout, running Feb. 15-18.

Documents on China's camps leaked

Associated Press

The Chinese government has detained more than 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities for what it calls voluntary job training. But a newly revealed classified blueprint shows that the camps Beijing runs in China's far west are instead secret centers for forced ideological and behavioral reeducation.

The confidential documents, leaked to a consortium of international journalists, lay out the Chinese government's deliberate strategy to lock up minorities, most of whom are Muslims,

to rewire their thoughts and even the language they speak.

The documents stipulate watch towers, double-locked doors and blanket video surveillance "to prevent escapes." They describe an elaborate scoring system that grades detainees on how well they speak the dominant Mandarin language, memorize ideology and adhere to strict rules on everything down to bathing and using the toilet.

They also show how Beijing is pioneering a new form of social control using data and artificial intelligence. With

the help of mass surveillance technology, computers issued the names of tens of thousands of people for interrogation or detention in just one week, including university students and party officials who wouldn't need vocational training.

Taken as a whole, the documents give the most significant description yet of how the mass detention camps work in the words of the Chinese government itself.

Experts say they spell out a vast system that targets, surveils and grades entire ethnicities to forcibly assimilate them — especially Uighurs, a Tur-

kic minority of about 10 million with its own language and culture.

"They confirm that this is a form of cultural genocide," said Adrian Zenz, a leading security expert in the far western region of Xinjiang, where many Uighurs live. "It really shows that from the onset, the Chinese government had a plan."

Zenz said the documents echo the aim of the camps as outlined in a 2017 report from a local branch of the Xinjiang Ministry of Justice: to "wash brains, cleanse hearts, support the right, remove the wrong."

China toughens rules to protect intellectual property

Associated Press

BEIJING — China issued new, tougher guidelines for protection of patents, copyrights and other intellectual property in a move that may be timed to help along halting progress in trade talks with the United States.

The guidelines issued Sunday by the State Council, or Cabinet, and the powerful Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party order beefed up laws for protecting intellectual property rights, increased compensation for infringements and set stricter enforcement of existing laws. They also lower the threshold for criminal prosecution of IPR offenses.

The new blueprint makes protection of intellectual property one of the criteria for evaluating local government officials' performance, creating a greater incentive for compliance.

In past decades, officials were judged mainly by political loyalties and economic growth in their localities. More recently, China's leaders added environmental protection to such evaluations. Putting future promotions and income on the line could create much stronger motivation to more effectively enforce such laws.

Theft and forced transfers of technology and inadequate protection of copyrights, patents and trademarks are perennial com-

plaints of foreign companies operating in China and are among the key issues in the latest flareup in trade tensions.

Despite much progress, "China continues to be a haven for counterfeiting, digital piracy and IP theft," the U.S. government's International Trade Administration said in a recent report.

It said piracy of U.S. intellectual property by China costs American companies up to \$600 billion a year.

Piracy is also a domestic concern. The government has long said that companies are less likely to innovate if they cannot profit off the results of their investments due to piracy of their products and technology.

Pro-democracy camp wins by landslide in Hong Kong

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's pro-democracy opposition won a stunning landslide victory in weekend local elections in a clear rebuke to city leader Carrie Lam over her handling of violent protests that have divided the semiautonomous Chinese territory.

Wu Chi-wai, leader of the city's biggest pro-democracy party, said Monday that the bloc swept nearly 90% of 452 district council seats, which will help it take unprecedented control of 17 out of 18 district councils.

The results were based on official tallies announced by election officials.

The result of Sunday's elections could force the central government in Beijing to rethink how to handle the unrest, which is now in its sixth month. The district councils have little power, but the vote became a referendum on public support for the protests.

"It's nothing short of a revolution," said Willy Lam, a political expert at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "It's a sound repudiation of the Carrie Lam administration and shows

the silent majority are behind the demands of the protesters."

The pro-democracy camp hailed its astounding gains as a victory for the people and said Carrie Lam and Beijing must now seriously heed protesters' demands, which include free elections for the city's leader and legislature as well as an investigation into alleged police brutality.

"We are only vehicles used to reflect the people's concerns," said Wu.

Beijing, which blames foreign powers for fomenting the unrest in Hong Kong, has showed

no signs that it may soften its stance on the former British colony, which was returned to China in 1997.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters during a visit to Tokyo on Monday that Hong Kong will always be part of China, no matter the poll outcome.

A record 71% of Hong Kong's 4.1 million registered voters cast ballots in the city's only fully democratic elections, well exceeding the 47% turnout in the same poll four years ago.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Pilot rescued after plane hits power lines

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Authorities said a 65-year-old pilot escaped injury after his plane hit and became entangled in power lines southwest of the Twin Cities.

Minnesota Public Radio News reported it happened just before 4 p.m. Saturday in Louisville Township, south of Shakopee.

The Scott County Sheriff's Office said the single-engine Piper Cub was suspended upside down after striking the power lines.

Authorities said crews deenergized the lines, allowing pilot Thomas Koskovich, of Shakopee, to be rescued from the plane.

Man arrested after \$2M in meth found

NV LAS VEGAS — Nevada authorities arrested a Las Vegas man after police suspect he was in possession of about \$2 million worth of methamphetamine.

Mohave County Sheriff's Office officials said Israel Tellez-Nava, 35, was arrested Thursday on Interstate 40 in Kingman by detectives during a traffic stop. Authorities said detectives noticed bundles of the drug in plain view when they looked in the car's window.

Detectives said a search of the vehicle turned up boxes containing 43 pounds of meth estimated to be worth more than \$1.9 million.

Tellez-Nava is being held on felony charges of transportation of dangerous drugs for sale, possession of dangerous drugs and possession of dangerous drugs for sale.

Algae bloom spreads despite cold weather

MA MASHPEE — A 5-month-old algae bloom on Cape Cod is continuing to spread from a pond to an adjoining river despite colder temperatures.

The Cape Cod Times reported that the bright-green bloom started in Mashpee's Santuit Pond in June and has now moved into the Santuit River.

Mashpee Selectman Andrew Gottlieb said this year's bloom is more extreme than one last year that hung on until December.

Blooms can pose health threats to animals, pets and humans. Algae thrive on warm weather, stagnant water and chemicals found in septic systems and fertilizer.

Ex-player sues school over football hazing

IL BYRON — A former player is suing his northern Illinois high school, its football coaches, administrators and a former teammate over alleged hazing, including an incident in which he and other players were forced to run naked across a field.

The Rockford Register Star reported that the former Byron High School player contends in his lawsuit there is a culture of "long-standing, systemic, ritualized" hazing and bullying in the football program.

The players were suspended after taking part in an October 2018 "Oreo Run," in which students ran across a football field with cookies wedged in their rear ends.

The plaintiff, who is identified in the lawsuit as "John Doe," was also assaulted by a teammate who later pleaded guilty to misdemeanor battery.

County spends \$182K on beer koozies

FL FORTLAUDERDALE — A Florida county spent about \$182,000 on beer koozies meant to promote the area that an audit found were produced by a government official's company.

The South Florida Sun Sentinel reported that auditors said Carol Hudson used her position as county vice president of sports marketing to buy almost \$420,000 in swag for the county. She used her own Saints Enterprises without telling officials of her connection to it.

An audit released Friday found that is not allowed under county rules.

County Auditor Bob Melton said he will send a report to the state attorney's office to decide if charges should be filed.

Wildlife biologists fly mule deer for project

UT ANTELOPE ISLAND — Utah state wildlife officials gathered mule deer on Antelope Island and flew them by helicopter to assess the health of the herd.

The Standard-Examiner reported that about 50 blindfolded and restrained deer were flown last week, typically two or three at a time dangling below the aircraft in orange bags.

They were taken to the island's Fielding Garr Ranch, where biologists and other Utah Division of Wildlife Resources staffers checked various aspects of each animal's health, including hind feet, body length and body fat.

Authorities said the goal is to make sure the herd is at a healthy size, given the resources available. There are 400 to 500 deer living in the state park, located on the Great Salt Lake.

Guard charged with punching man

FL ORLANDO — A security guard at an Orlando rail station has been charged after authorities say he punched a man in the face.

The Orlando Sentinel reported that an arrest affidavit says Steven Spaugh, 42, of Kissimmee, is facing a charge of aggravated battery with a dangerous weapon.

Orlando police said Spaugh approached a man who appeared to be drinking a beer at a train station. Spaugh said he told the man to pour it out, but the man insisted it was only ice tea.

The man told officers Spaugh hit him in the head with handcuffs. The man also said Spaugh slammed him to the ground and continued to punch him in the face, according to the affidavit.

Man, 18, arrested for bathroom videos

IA DES MOINES — An 18-year-old Ankeny man was arrested after being accused of recording men in bathrooms at Des Moines Area Community College and Principal Park, a minor league baseball stadium in Des Moines.

The Des Moines Register reported the man was arrested Friday morning and faces a charge of invasion of privacy after a man reported to police that he saw someone stick a device under a divider of a bathroom stall he was in while urinating on Sept. 9.

Police said the victim confronted the suspect, and a police search of the suspect's cellphone revealed numerous videos of men being recorded in restrooms.

From wire reports

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Roundup

Seahawks remain undefeated on road

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Rashaad Penny ran for a career-best 129 yards, including a 58-yard touchdown, Russell Wilson threw one TD pass and the Seattle Seahawks beat the Philadelphia Eagles 17-9 Sunday.

Missing their top three wide receivers, leading rusher and two Pro Bowl offensive linemen, the Eagles (5-6) couldn't do much on offense and hurt themselves with three turnovers inside Seattle territory and another near midfield.

The Seahawks (9-2) remain undefeated on the road in six games.

The Eagles didn't have wideouts DeSean Jackson, Alshon Jeffery and Nelson Agholor, running back Jordan Howard and right tackle Lane Johnson from the start. Right guard Brandon Brooks left in the first quarter. First-round pick Andre Dillard made his first career start at right tackle after playing the left side all season and was benched at halftime.

The Seahawks were without star defensive end Jadeveon Clowney.

Philadelphia's defense did its best to keep it close, sacking Wilson six times.

But Carson Wentz struggled again and the offense was awful. Wentz was 33 of 45 for 256 yards, one TD, two interceptions and lost two fumbles, including one on a handoff exchange.

Wilson was 13 of 25 for 200 yards, one TD and one pick.

Saints 34, Panthers 31: Wil Lutz kicked a 33-yard field goal as time expired, and host New Orleans took a four-game lead in the NFC South with five games left.

Drew Brees completed 30 of 39 passes for 311 yards and three touchdowns, and led New Orleans from its 14-yard line with 1:51 left to the Carolina 15 with 3 seconds remaining to set up the winning kick. That capped a contest filled with late momentum shifts and critical errors — none bigger than Carolina kicker Joey Slye's missed field goal from 28 yards with 2 minutes left.

Allen passed for 256 yards and three TDs for Carolina (5-6), which saw its playoff hopes pushed to the brink. McCaffrey had 133 yards and two touchdowns from scrimmage on a balance of runs and receptions.

Patriots 13, Cowboys 9: New England held Dallas' top-ranked offense without a TD for the first time this season and earned its 18th straight regular-season victory at home.

Dallas (6-5) had a chance to take the lead late. But facing fourth-and-11 on its 25 with 1:50 left, Dak Prescott's 20-yard apparent completion to Amari Cooper was nullified

after an official review.

The Patriots (10-1), who struggled to move the ball in their win over Philadelphia last week, played without two key receivers after Mohamed Sanu and Phillip Dorsett were ruled out with injuries.

49ers 37, Packers 8: Jimmy Garoppolo threw two long touchdown passes and the San Francisco harassed Aaron Rodgers all night, helping the host 49ers rout Green Bay.

Garoppolo connected on a 42-yard touchdown strike to Deebo Samuel in the second quarter and a 61-yarder to George Kittle in the third to get San Francisco (10-1) off to a resounding start to a grueling three-game stretch.

Following the game against the first-place Packers (8-3), the Niners will travel to Baltimore (8-2) and New Orleans (9-2) the next two weeks in a stretch that will go a long way to determining whether San Francisco will be able to hold off Seattle (9-2) in a tight NFC West race.

Titans 42, Jaguars 20: At Nashville, Tenn., the Titans scored four touchdowns over six offensive plays in the third quarter for their second straight victory to keep themselves firmly in the AFC playoff hunt.

The Titans (6-5) are tied with Indianapolis and Oakland just outside the AFC's final wild-card spot; those are their next two opponents, both on the road.

Jacksonville (4-7) lost its third straight, the past two since Nick Foles returned to the lineup.

Jets 34, Raiders 3: Sam Darnold threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score for host New York's first three-game winning streak in over two years.

The Raiders (6-5) came into a rain-soaked MetLife Stadium on a three-game winning streak with an eye on a possible AFC West first-place showdown at Kansas City next week. Instead, they got outplayed by a suddenly resurgent Jets (4-7) team that pulled away in the second half.

Bills 20, Broncos 3: Josh Allen threw two touchdowns passing and Shaq Lawson had two of Buffalo's four sacks. The Bills have their best record through 11 games in 23 years.

Buffalo improved to 8-3, to match its best start since Hall of Fame quarterback Jim Kelly's final season in 1996, while keeping the Bills firmly in position to secure their second playoff berth in three years.

Frank Gore had 65 yards rushing to up his total to 15,289 and move ahead of boyhood idol Barry Sanders into third on the NFL career list. The 15-year veteran also

increased his total to 19,154 yards from scrimmage to pass Marshall Faulk for fourth on the list.

Browns 42, Dolphins 24: Jarvis Landry caught two touchdown passes against his former team and host Cleveland won its third straight in its first game since losing star defensive end Myles Garrett to a season-ending suspension.

Baker Mayfield had 327 yards passing and hit a TD pass to Odell Beckham Jr., and Joe Schobert had two interceptions as the Browns (5-6) continued their climb back into the AFC playoff hunt.

Steelers 16, Bengals 10: At Cincinnati, Devlin "Duck" Hodges took over for struggling Mason Rudolph and threw a 79-yard touchdown pass, sparking the depleted Steelers and keeping the Bengals the only winless team in the NFL.

Hodges connected with James Washington on the game-turning play in the third quarter, leaving Pittsburgh (6-5) with a quarterback decision as it moves forward without Ben Roethlisberger.

Buccaneers 35, Falcons 22: Massive defensive lineman Vita Vea turned receiver to haul in his first career touchdown, one of three scoring throws by Jameis Winston as visiting Tampa Bay escaped last place in the NFC South.

Winston shook off two more interceptions to post his sixth straight 300-yard passing game, leading the Buccaneers (4-7) to just their second victory in the last seven games.

Bears 19, Giants 14: Khalil Mack set up a touchdown with a strip-sack and Allen Robinson had a season-high 131 yards receiving for host Chicago.

Trying to salvage something from a disappointing season, the Bears (5-6) bounced back from a loss to the Los Angeles Rams. The Giants (2-9) dropped their seventh straight and clinched their third losing season in a row.

Redskins 19, Lions 16: Quinton Dunbar intercepted Jeff Driskel in the final minute, Dustin Hopkins hit the go-ahead field goal from 39 yards with 16 seconds left as host Washington snapped a four-game losing streak.

Rookie quarterback Dwayne Haskins picked up his first NFL win after leading Washington (2-9) into field goal range following Dunbar's interception. Haskins finished 13 of 29 for 156 yards and an interception but made a couple fewer mistakes than Driskel, who was picked off three times as the Lions (3-7-1) lost their fourth in a row and third since starter Matthew Stafford went out with injury.

Top 25 roundup

No. 2 Louisville gets scare from Akron

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Chris Mack hopes No. 2 Louisville learns from a huge scare against Akron.

Ryan McMahon made two free throws with 16.8 seconds left, helping the Cardinals escape Akron 82-76 on Sunday night.

The Zips trailed 55-33 early in the second half before getting within 78-74 on the second of Loren Cristian Jackson's three consecutive layups. Darius Perry's two free throws with 23 seconds left provided a six-point lead before Jackson drove again to make it 80-76.

McMahon was fouled on the inbounds and promptly made the free throws. Akron took several three-point shots in the final seconds before Jordan Nwora's defensive rebound as time expired sealed a victory more tense than expected.

"We talked about finishing, we talked about not letting up and winning the last war and we really didn't do any of those things," McMahon said.

Louisville's near-upset followed a torrid five-game start in which it shot above 50% each time and earned four consecutive routs. This time, the Cardinals (6-0) shot just 42% and only 33% after halftime.

To Mack, that demonstrates how misleading a lofty ranking can be.

"We have not earned that yet, just as every team in the country in my opinion has not earned that yet," said the second-year Louisville coach, stressing that teams are still coming together.

"I hope that we're mature enough to not accept in victory what we certainly wouldn't accept in defeat. We have a long way to go."

Jackson and Tyler Cheese each had 20 for the Zips (4-2), who had won three in a row coming in. Channel Banks added 18 points.

No. 7 Virginia 48 Arizona State 45: At Uncasville, Conn., freshman Casey Morsell scored

19 points, including the go-ahead three-pointer with 1:02 remaining, and the Cavaliers rallied past the Sun Devils to win the Hall of Fame Tip-Off Tournament.

Mamadi Diakite added 15 points for the defending national champion Cavaliers (6-0).

Remy Martin had 21 points to lead Arizona State (3-2). He hit eight of his 16 shots, while the rest of the team went 9-for-26.

Florida 70, No. 18 Xavier 65: At Charleston, S.C. Keyontae Johnson and Andrew Nembhard had 15 points each and Florida held off Xavier in the Charleston Classic championship.

The Gators (5-2) had made plenty of headlines for their losses to Florida State and UConn that saw them go from No. 6 at the start of the season to out of the Top 25. But Florida showed the offensive punch and defensive disruption that had the team so highly regarded.

It built a 10-point lead by halftime — the first time Xavier trailed after 20 minutes all season — and kept pouring it on in the second half as a pair of three-pointers by Nembhard and one by Noah Locke extended it to 50-35 just three minutes into the second half. When Johnson flipped in a layup moments later, the Gators led by 17.

Xavier nearly came all the way back. It closed to 68-65 on Quentin Goodin's three-pointer with 1:08 left and had a strong shot to tie on Paul Scruggs' clean look with 13 seconds left. But Scruggs' attempt bounced twice off the rim and Kerry Blackshear Jr. grabbed it for the Gators, got fouled and made both free throws for the final margin. Scruggs had 24 points.

No. 24 Baylor 87, No. 17 Villanova 78: At Conway, S.C., Jared Butler scored 10 of his 22 points during the final 6 minutes, helping the Bears pull away for a victory over the Wildcats.

MaCio Teague scored 18 points while Davion Mitchell added 13 to help the Bears (5-

1) pass their first Top 25 test, a matchup that for much of the way felt like a potential Sweet 16 preview.

Baylor (5-1) broke open a tight, tense game with nine ties and 18 lead changes by scoring on their final 12 possessions and holding the Wildcats without a field goal during the final 2½ minutes while winning their fourth straight.

Butler, the tournament MVP who has led the Bears in scoring in five of six games, hit threes on back-to-back possessions early in that stretch, the first of which put them up 67-66 with just under 6 minutes left and the second breaking a 67-all tie.

No. 9 Kentucky 81, Lamar 56: Tyrese Maxey scored 21 points and the host Wildcats made a season-high 10 three-pointers.

Maxey made a career-high four three-pointers against, surpassing three he made in Kentucky's opening victory over Michigan State.

Ashton Hagans added 15 points for the Wildcats (5-1).

No. 12 Texas Tech 96, Long Island-brooklyn 66: Freshman Jahmi'us Ramsey scored a career-high 27 points, and the host Red Raiders pulled away after trailing by a point at halftime in a victory over the Sharks.

Ramsey was 5-for-6 from three-point range and grabbed six rebounds in the third-highest scoring game for a freshman at Texas Tech (5-0).

The Red Raiders trailed 42-41 at halftime. The Sharks (1-5) turned it over on their first four possessions of the second half and Davide Moretti put Texas Tech in front for good with a bucket on his way to 12 points.

Raiquan Clark scored 18 points for Long Island but was limited after committing his fourth foul early in the second half.

No. 14 Arizona 104, Long Beach State 67: Nico Mannion scored 22 points, Zeke Nnaji added 21 and the Wildcats pulled away in the second

half to beat the visiting 49ers.

Arizona (6-0) struggled in the first half for a second straight game, trailing 31-30 with less than three minutes remaining before rallying for a 38-33 half-time lead. Nnaji and Mannion both had 11 points before the break.

The Wildcats hit 13 of their first 16 shots in the second half, including six of eight from three-point range, to push the lead to 72-44 with ten minutes left and cruise to the win.

Michael Carter III led Long Beach State (2-4) with 11 points.

No. 15 Utah State 68, North Texas 59: At Montego Bay, Jamaica, Alphonso Anderson scored 10 of his 19 points down the stretch, Justin Bean had a double-double, and the Aggies scored the final 11 points to beat the Mean Green to win the Montego Bay division of the Jamaica Classic.

Bean finished 14 points and 13 rebounds and Diogo Brito scored 15 points for Utah State (7-0).

The game featured 12 ties, with the score knotted for more than 10 minutes, and 17 lead changes. Neither team lead by for than five points until the closing seconds.

No. 23 Colorado 56, Wyoming 41: Tyler Bey had 11 points and 19 rebounds to lead the Buffaloes past the Cowboys in Las Vegas.

Bey, who has 22 career double-doubles and 12 in his past 19 games, accomplished the feat for the third time in four games this season. D'Shawn Schwartz scored 12 points, while Evan Battey added nine points and 13 rebounds for Colorado.

No. 25 Washington 88, San Diego 69: Isaiah Stewart had 25 points and seven rebounds, Jaden McDaniels scored 20 points and the host Huskies beat the Toreros.

The highly touted freshmen combined to score 10 points to start a game-clinching run early in the second half as Washington (5-1) won its third straight.

NBA roundup

Doncic's 41 leads Mavs past Rockets

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Luka Doncic scored 41 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. added a season-high 31 and the Dallas Mavericks never trailed in a 137-123 victory over the Houston Rockets on Sunday.

The Mavericks scored 45 points in the first quarter and were up 78-60 at half-time. Hardaway had 19 in the half, Doncic 17 and Kristaps Porzingis 15.

The Mavericks have won five straight, scoring at least 137 in the past three. Houston has lost three straight after winning eight in a row.

James Harden had 32 points for Houston but was just 2-for-15 on three-pointers in a game where the Rockets made 10 of 44 three-point attempts.

Clippers 134, Pelicans 109: Montrezl Harrell tied a career-high with 34 points and had 12 rebounds, Kawhi Leonard added 26 points and Los Angeles beat visiting New Orleans for its fifth straight victory.

Lou Williams added 19 points and Paul

George had 18. The Clippers had 16 three-pointers with George making six.

Brandon Ingram, one of three Lakers players involved in the Anthony Davis trade, led New Orleans with 24 points and eight rebounds in his first game back at Staples Center. Jrue Holiday scored 18 points, and E'Twaun Moore had 17.

Nets 103, Knicks 101: Spencer Dinwiddie scored 30 points in another strong start in place of the injured Kyrie Irving and visiting Brooklyn beat New York for its season-high third straight victory.

Irving continues to rest an injured right shoulder, and Dinwiddie is making sure they get by without him, scoring 20 or more points in a career-best five straight games after stepping into the starting lineup. He was 13-for-14 from the foul line, where the Nets had a whopping 27-9 advantage in makes.

Nuggets 116, Suns 104: Paul Millsap scored 23 points and Jamal Murray and Will Barton had 22 apiece in host Denver's victory over Phoenix.

Nikola Jokic had just eight points, but grabbed 13 rebounds to help Denver win its fifth in a row.

The Nuggets held Phoenix guard Devin Booker to a season-low 12 points on 5-for-13 shooting. Booker came in averaging 26.2 points in November.

Cheick Diallo led Phoenix with a career-high 22 points. Dario Saric had a career-high 17 rebounds to go with 18 points.

Kings 113, Wizards 106: Harrison Barnes matched his season high with 26 points on 7-for-8 shooting, Bojan Bogdanovic had 21 points and visiting Sacramento beat Washington.

Buddy Hield added 18 points, including a late three-pointer that put Sacramento's lead at multiple possessions for good, and Richaun Holmes had 16 points and 10 rebounds. The Kings won for the seventh time in 10 games to improve to 7-8.

Bradley Beal led Washington with 20 points, ending his string of 30 or more at a career-best five games.

NHL roundup

Sabres top Panthers to snap a 3-game skid

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Zemgus Girgensons and Linus Ullmark ended the Buffalo Sabres' three-game losing streak.

Girgensons scored twice, Ullmark made 43 saves and the Sabres beat the Florida Panthers 5-2 on Sunday night to snap a three-game losing streak.

"We did a lot of good things tonight and were rewarded with a 'W,'" said Jack Eichel, who had a goal and two assists. "We did a good job of finding a way to get that next goal."

Victor Olofsson and Jeff Skinner also scored.

"I thought [Ullmark] played an outstanding game today staying on the initial shots," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "He was the king of the first shots tonight. We're really, really happy with his performance."

Brett Connolly and Noel Acciari scored for the Panthers, and Samuel Montembeault stopped 20 shots. The Panthers have lost two straight after winning their previous three, losing 4-2 to the Carolina Hurricanes on Saturday night. They have lost consecutive games in regulation for the first time this season.

"All of a sudden you've got a tough weekend," coach Joel Quenneville said. "Let's get back to the drawing board and tighten things up and do things the right way."

Connolly's power-play goal — on a shot from above the left circle — cut it to 4-2 at 3:08 of the third, but Girgensons countered with his second goal with 6:35 to go. Girgensons was able to push the puck into the corner of the net.

"I just took it to the net, shot it once and it went in," Girgen-

sons said.

Connolly has five goals in his past five games, but the Panthers came away without a point in back-to-back games.

"I think we're going to have to go through something like that," Connolly said. "Every team is going to go through it. It's just a matter of how we respond."

Oilers 4, Coyotes 3 (SO): Connor McDavid scored the only goal of the shootout and Pacific Division-leading Edmonton beat second-place Arizona.

Mikko Koskinen stopped Vinnie Hinostroza on host Arizona's last shootout attempt and finished with 26 saves.

James Neal, Alex Chiasson and Markus Granlund scored in regulation time for the Oilers. McDavid extended his points streak to 11 games with his 29th assist of the season,

while Leon Draisatl got his NHL-leading 32nd assist. Hinostroza, Carl Soderberg and Christian Fischer scored for Arizona. Alex Goligoski had three assists and Darcy Kuemper stopped 34 shots.

Granlund tied the score at 3 when he collected a dropped catch from Kuemper of his own shot, and put in the rebound with 6:48 to play in regulation.

Hurricanes 2, Red Wings 0: James Reimer made 19 saves for his 22nd career shutout in victory Carolina's victory over Detroit.

Sebastian Aho had a goal and an assist, and Teuvo Teravainen also scored to help Carolina win for the sixth time in seven games.

Jimmy Howard stopped 34 shots for Detroit. The Red Wings have lost six in a row.