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Trump-Biden not decided on election night

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The fate of the United States presidency hung in the balance Wednesday as Democratic challenger Joe Biden picked up a win in Wisconsin while fighting President Donald Trump in other battleground states that could prove crucial in determining who wins the White House.

Neither candidate cleared the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House, and the margins were tight in several other battleground states. Top advisers for both Biden and Trump on Wednesday morning expressed confidence that they respectively had the likelier path to victory in the outstanding states.

The AP called Wisconsin for Biden after election officials in the state said all outstanding ballots had been counted, save for a few hundred in one township and an expected small number of provisional ballots.

Trump's campaign has requested a recount. Statewide recounts in Wisconsin have historically changed the vote tally by only a few hundred votes; Biden leads by 0.624 percentage points out of nearly 3.3 million ballots counted.

It was unclear when or how quickly a winner could be determined. The latest vote counts in Michigan gave Biden a small lead there, but it was still too early to call the race.

Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien said the president would formally request a Wisconsin recount, citing "irregularities in several Wisconsin counties," and the campaign filed suit in Michigan to halt counting of ballots because it contended it wasn't given "meaningful access" to observe the opening of ballots and the counting process.

At the same time, hundreds

of thousands of votes were still to be counted in Pennsylvania.

The margins were exceedingly tight in states across the country, with the candidates trading wins in battlegrounds. Trump picked up Florida, the largest of the swing states, while Biden flipped Arizona, a state that has reliably voted Republican in recent elections.

The unsettled presidential race came as Democrats entered election night confident in both Biden's prospects and their chances of taking control of the Senate. But the GOP held several seats that were considered vulnerable, including in Iowa, Texas and Kansas. Disappointed Democrats lost House seats but were expected to retain control there.

The high-stakes election was held against the backdrop of a historic pandemic that has killed more than 232,000 Americans and wiped away millions of jobs. Both candidates spent months pressing dramatically different visions for the nation's future, including on racial justice, and voters responded in huge numbers, with more than 100 million people casting votes ahead of Election Day.

Trump, in an extraordinary move from the White House, issued premature claims of victory and said he would take the election to the Supreme Court to stop the counting. It was unclear exactly what legal action he could try to pursue.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell discounted the president's quick claim of victory, saying it would take a while for states to conduct their vote counts. The Kentucky Republican said Wednesday that "claiming you've won the election is different from finishing the counting."

The president stayed out of the public eye but took to Twitter

to suggest, without basis, that the election was being tainted by late-counted ballots. Twitter flagged a number of Trump's tweets, noting some of the information shared was "disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process."

Biden, briefly appearing in front of supporters in Delaware, urged patience, saying the election "ain't over until every vote is counted, every ballot is counted."

"It's not my place or Donald Trump's place to declare who's won this election," Biden said. "That's the decision of the American people."

Vote tabulations routinely continue beyond Election Day, and states largely set the rules for when the count has to end. In presidential elections, a key point is the date in December when presidential electors met. That's set by federal law.

Several states allow mailed-in votes to be accepted after Election Day, as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday. That includes Pennsylvania, where ballots postmarked by Nov. 3 can be accepted if they arrive up to three days after the election.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf said he had "promised Pennsylvanians that we would count every vote, and that's what we're going to do."

Trump appeared to suggest those ballots should not be counted, and that he would fight for that outcome at the high court. But legal experts were dubious of Trump's declaration. Trump has appointed three of the high court's nine justices including, most recently, Amy Coney Barrett.

The Trump campaign on Wednesday pushed Republican donors to dig deeper into their pockets to help finance legal

challenges. Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, during a donor call, spoke plainly: "The fight's not over. We're in it." Biden's running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, made a pitch on Twitter to supporters to pitch in \$5 to help pay for a fight that could "stretch on for weeks."

Democrats typically outperform Republicans in mail voting, while the GOP looks to make up ground in Election Day turnout. That means the early margins between the candidates could be influenced by which type of votes — early or Election Day — were being reported by the states.

Trump kept several states, including Texas, Iowa and Ohio, where Biden had made a strong play in the final stages of the campaign. But Biden picked off states where Trump sought to compete, including New Hampshire and Minnesota. But Florida was the biggest, fiercely contested battleground on the map, with both campaigns battling over the 29 Electoral College votes that went to Trump.

The momentum from early voting carried into Election Day, as an energized electorate produced long lines at polling sites throughout the country. Turnout was higher than in 2016 in numerous counties, including all of Florida, nearly every county in North Carolina and more than 100 counties in both Georgia and Texas. That tally seemed sure to increase as more counties reported their turnout figures.

Voters braved worries of the coronavirus, threats of polling place intimidation and expectations of long lines caused by changes to voting systems, but appeared undeterred as turnout appeared it would easily surpass the 139 million ballots cast four years ago.

Dems head toward House control, but lose incumbents

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Disappointed Democrats drove Wednesday toward extending their control of the House for two more years but with a potentially shrunken majority as they lost at least seven incumbents and failed to oust any Republican lawmakers in initial returns.

By midmorning on Wednesday, Democrats' only gains were two North Carolina seats vacated by GOP incumbents after a court-ordered remapping made the districts more Democratic. Though they seemed likely to retain House control, their performance was an unexpected disappointment for the party, which hoped for modest gains of perhaps 15 seats.

After decades of trying, Republicans defeated 15-term Rep. Collin Peterson from a rural Minnesota district that backed President Donald Trump in 2016 by 31 percentage points, Trump's biggest margin in any Democratic-held district. Peterson, who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, opposed Trump's impeachment and is one of the House's most conservative Democrats. He was defeated by Republican Michelle Fischbach, the former lieutenant governor.

In Iowa, GOP state Rep. Ashley Hinson defeated freshman Democratic incumbent Abby Finkenauer to win a hard-fought race for the state's northeastern congressional seat. Hinson is a former television news anchor.

Also losing were freshmen Democrats Debbie Mucarsel-Powell and Donna Shalala, health secretary under President Bill Clinton, in adjacent South Florida districts where Trump seemed to consolidate support among Cuban voters. Others defeated were Democratic freshmen Joe Cunningham, of South Carolina; Xochitl Torres Small, of New Mexico; and Kendra Horn in Oklahoma, who had surprising victories in 2018 in districts Trump carried decisively in 2016.

Before votes were counted, both parties' operatives said the GOP would be fortunate to limit Democratic gains to a modest single digits. Democrats control the House 232-197, with five open seats and one independent. It takes 218 seats to control the chamber.

A smaller Democratic majority would make it tougher for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to unite her lawmakers as a handful of progressive freshmen arrive. By retaining House control, Democrats would mark only the second time in a quarter century that they've led the chamber for two consecutive two-year Congresses. The first period ran from 2007 through 2010, when Pelosi was serving her first four years in her post.

"Our purpose in this race was to win so that we could protect the Affordable Care Act and so that we could crush the virus," Pelosi told reporters, citing former President Barack Obama's health care act.

Democrats' hopes of protecting their majority and even expanding it were based on public anxiety over the pandemic, Trump's alienation of suburban voters and a vast fundraising edge. But those advantages didn't carry them as far as they'd hoped.

With GOP expectations for capturing the House all but nonexistent entering Election Day, Republicans were happy with the results.

"House Republicans have outperformed all expectations, said Dan Conston, who heads the Congressional Leadership Fund, a committee aligned with House GOP leaders that provides millions to Republican candidates.

Some endangered Democratic freshmen like Texas' Lizzie Fletcher, Georgia's Lucy McBath and New Jersey's Tom Malinowski and Andy Kim held on. But the party notched no victories in long-shot races they'd hoped would bolster their majority.

Dems' push halted, but GOP control of Senate not yet set

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats had a disappointing night in the battle for Senate control, but it was too soon for Republicans to take a victory lap Wednesday, although they brushed back multiple challengers to protect their now teetering majority.

Key races in North Carolina and Michigan remained undecided, and at least one in Georgia was headed to a January runoff.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said President Donald Trump's campaign helped his GOP allies, but it's still too soon to declare victory as state election officials count ballots.

"We're waiting — whether I'm going to be the majority leader or not," McConnell said at a press conference in his home state of Kentucky.

In a delicate pushback against Trump's own premature claims of victory over Joe Biden in the presidential race, the GOP leader said: "Claiming you've won the election is different from finishing the counting."

McConnell said he felt "pretty good" about the remaining contests. He secured a seventh term in a costly campaign, fending off Democrat Amy McGrath, a former fighter pilot.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine, won the hardest-fought race of her career, turning back a challenge by Democrat Sara Gideon and surviving to serve a fifth term.

Collins, one of four candidates on the ballot, won a majority of first-place votes. That meant no additional tabulation rounds were necessary under

Maine's ranked choice voting system.

Gideon conceded, telling supporters on Wednesday that she called Collins and congratulated her on the win.

Election night delivered a jarring outcome for Democrats who had devised an expanded political map, eager to counter Trump and his party's grip on the Senate.

While Democrats picked up must-win seats in Colorado and Arizona, they suffered a setback in Alabama, and Republicans held their own in one race after another — in South Carolina, Iowa, Texas, Kansas and Montana, dramatically limiting Democrats' hopes to make inroads.

The races attracted an unprecedented outpouring of small-dollar donations for Democrats, from Americans apparently voting with their pocketbooks to propel long-shot campaigns.

The voters' choices will force a rethinking of Democratic Party strategy, messaging and approach in the Trump era.

"You wasted a lot of money," said White House ally Sen. Lindsey Graham in Columbia, S.C., after defeating Jamie Harrison, despite the Democrat's stunning \$100 million haul for his upstart campaign.

The Democrats' gains were in Colorado and Arizona, where former astronaut Mark Kelly beat GOP incumbent Martha McSally. But they couldn't hold on in Alabama: Former college football coach Tommy Tuberville defeated Sen. Doug Jones.

The final breakdown awaited the outcome of races in Alaska, Michigan and North Carolina.

Push to relax drug laws gains state ballot wins

Associated Press

A nationwide push to relax drug laws took a significant step forward Tuesday as five more states legalized marijuana for adults and voters made Oregon the first state to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of street drugs such as cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine.

The drug measures were among 120 proposed state laws and constitutional amendments that were on the ballot in 32 states. They touched on an array of issues that have roiled politics in recent years — voting rights, racial inequalities, abortion, taxes and education, to name a few.

But none directly dealt with the dominant theme of 2020 — the coronavirus pandemic. That's because the process to put measures on the ballot began, in most cases, before the virus surged to the forefront.

The Oregon drug initiative will allow people arrested with small amounts of hard drugs

to avoid going to trial, and possible jail time, by paying a \$100 fine and attending an addiction recovery program. The treatment centers will be funded by revenues from legalized marijuana, which was approved in Oregon several years ago.

"Today's victory is a landmark declaration that the time has come to stop criminalizing people for drug use," said Kasandra Frederique, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, which backed the measure.

The proposal was endorsed by the Oregon Democratic Party, as well as some nurses and physician associations. The Oregon Republican Party had denounced the drug decriminalization measure as radical, and some prosecutors called it reckless.

Oregon voters also approved a measure making the state the first to legalize the therapeutic use of psychedelic mushrooms.

Voters in New Jersey and Arizona approved measures legalizing marijuana for adults age

21 and older. In New Jersey, the Legislature now will have to pass another measure setting up the new marijuana marketplace. The Arizona measure also allows people convicted of certain marijuana crimes to seek expungement of their records. The passage of the measure signaled a change of attitudes after Arizona voters narrowly defeated a legal pot proposal in 2016.

South Dakota on Tuesday became the first state where voters authorized both recreational marijuana and medical marijuana via two separate initiatives in the same election. The legalization of recreational marijuana was approved by voters in Montana, and medical marijuana won approval in Mississippi.

A decade ago, recreational marijuana was illegal in all 50 states. Voters allowed it in Colorado and Washington in 2012, sparking a movement that already included 11 states and Washington, D.C., heading into Tuesday's elections. Sup-

porters hope additional victories, especially in conservative states, could build pressure for Congress to legalize marijuana nationwide.

Two states considered anti-abortion amendments with different results.

Louisiana voters passed a measure asserting there is no state constitutional right to abortion — something that could come into play if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns its *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion nationwide.

In Colorado, by contrast, voters defeated a measure to prohibit abortions after 22 weeks unless the pregnant woman's life is endangered. Previous Colorado ballot initiatives to limit abortion also failed in 2008, 2010 and 2014.

Meanwhile, in Mississippi, voters approved a proposal for a new state flag with a magnolia design. The vote came after legislators ended the use of a flag bearing a Confederate battle emblem in June.

Hospitalizations from coronavirus surge across US

Associated Press

Americans went to the polls Tuesday under the shadow of a resurging pandemic, with an alarming increase in cases nationwide and the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 reaching record highs in a growing number of states.

While daily infections were rising in all but three states, the surge was most pronounced in the Midwest and Southwest.

Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, North Dakota and New Mexico all reported record high hospitalizations this week. Nebraska's largest hospitals started limiting elective surgeries and looked to bring in nurses from other states to cope with the surge. Hospital officials in Iowa and Missouri warned bed capacity could soon be overwhelmed.

The resurgence loomed over candidates and voters, fearful of both the virus itself and the economic toll of any new shutdowns to control its spread. The debate over how far to take economically costly measures has divided a country already sharply polarized over President Donald Trump's turbulent four years in office.

The pandemic colored who voters chose at the ballot box and how they did it. While many Americans took advantage of expanded access to mail-in voting, lines were long in many polling places, with record turnout expected and reminders of the pandemic everywhere.

"It's very serious that we have 400 people gathered in one space at the height of the pandemic here in Wisconsin. So, we've tried to take every measure to limit the movement throughout the room," said Claire Woodall-Vogg, the election commission director of the city of Milwaukee, where poll workers were spread out into 12 different pods to limit contact.

Wisconsin health officials reported 5,771 new coronavirus cases Tuesday, a new record.

In Indiana, the Republican candidate for attorney general tested positive for COVID-19 after developing "some symptoms," his campaign announced Tuesday. Former U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita had been quarantining with his family after learning he was exposed to the virus, it said.

Hand sanitizer on voters' hands caused

a ballot scanner to jam at a polling place in Des Moines, Iowa, secretary of state spokesman Kevin Hall said.

Hall said some voters' hands were moist when they handled the ballots and the buildup of sanitizer eventually caused the scanner to stop working. The machine was fixed in about an hour.

Meanwhile, Iowa hospital officials warned that facilities and staff could be overwhelmed without serious efforts to curtail the virus spread. The seven-day rolling average of the state's positivity rate reached 36.4% over the weekend, the third-highest in the nation behind South Dakota and Wyoming, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Hospitalizations reached a record 730 on Monday.

Suresh Gunasekaran, CEO of University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, said the state is entering its third peak, one that is higher than previous ones in May and July. He said his biggest concern is that this peak comes at the beginning of the cold weather season, when the flu and other respiratory conditions typically increase hospitalizations.

Navy authorizes new, optional rank tab

BY THERON GODBOLD

Stars and Stripes

Sailors may now wear an easier-to-recognize rank insignia on their camouflage working uniforms, according to a recent Navy administrative change.

The slip-on rank insignia is the same one that sailors wear on the cold weather parka and can be easily swapped between multiple uniforms.

“Your concerns have been heard,” states a post on the My Navy HR Facebook page.

“The Navy has now authorized a new and more recognizable rank tab for optional wear.”

The change is effective immediately and authorized for enlisted and officer ranks from petty officer to admiral, according to a naval administrative message Friday.

“I’m pro-new tab,” an Okinawa-based sailor, Petty Officer 1st Class David Krigbaum, 37, said via Facebook on Wednesday. “The black tab against the green camo background is a little jarring, but I like the practicality of it. Now we just need a bigger

senior chief star that can be seen from a distance.”

The new rank tab is an optional item, but sailors will be required to purchase the camouflage insignia and wear it in a tactical environment or training scenario.

Uniform policy updates help retain sailors and result from multiple sources of feedback, according to the Navy message, NAVADMIN 292/20.

To read the Navy message, visit www.public.navy.mil.

Yokosuka-based sailors banned from 2 local bars

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Two local bars are now off-limits to U.S. sailors — one for serving underage drinkers and another for undermining measures the Navy put in place to curb the coronavirus’ spread.

Capt. Rich Jarrett wrote in a pair of memos that Manila Vibe Resto Bar and Music Lounge and Sasha Latin Resto Bar, both in the city of Yokosuka’s Honcho bar district, are officially off-limits to those under his command.

U.S. personnel, including sailors, civilian employees, contractors and family members, are allowed to eat indoors at restaurants that serve alcohol. However, bars and izakayas — Japanese establishments that serve alcohol and appetizers — are banned under public health measures imposed by the U.S. military when the coronavirus pandemic started to unfold.

Jarrett on Friday barred sailors from Manila Vibe Resto Bar and Music Lounge, which “operates under the guise of a restaurant while continuing, in fact, to be a bar and lounge,” he said in an all-hands memo Friday.

Manila Vibe changed its branding in early October to “Manila Vibe Restaurant,” according to its Facebook page. Photos posted on the site appear to show handwritten sticky

notes with the word “restaurant” placed on the bar’s menus that previously read “Resto Bar and Music Lounge.”

“These actions violate the health protection measures I have put in place to guard against the continued outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Jarrett said in the memo, referring to the disease caused by the coronavirus.

The bar also declined shore patrol and Japanese police requests to enter to investigate a customer, base spokesman Randall Baucom said in an email to Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

Jarrett also banned sailors from Sasha Latin Resto Bar on Monday for “serving alcohol to underage service members and refusing entry to members of the shore patrol acting in their official capacity,” according to a memo issued Monday.

The incident happened early Saturday, Baucom said. He declined to release further information, citing an ongoing investigation regarding possible criminal charges.

Any change in name or management of the banned bars “will not necessarily revoke” the ban, and Japanese police have been notified that the bars are off limits to U.S. service members, according to Jarrett’s memos.

Fitness wear allowed when shopping on base

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

It’s now OK to wear spandex while running errands on base, apparently.

On Monday, Defense Secretary Mark Esper immediately authorized physical fitness attire for wear by patrons at commissaries and military exchanges at Defense Department installations. The policy change includes service members, spouses and children.

Athletic apparel must be “clean, serviceable and in good condition, and appropriately modest,” said the memo, which was signed by Esper and addressed to senior Pentagon leadership.

Service secretaries may make exceptions to the policy for service members “based on mission requirements and the need to maintain good order and discipline,” Esper said.

The memo, shared on social media sites Tuesday and first reported by Military.com, seemed to take many by surprise — mostly because they didn’t know that yoga pants with T-shirts weren’t allowed while shopping on base.

“Probably one of the least enforced rules ever. Been doing it for years and didn’t even know it was against the rules,” said a post on Air Force Reddit.

“I bet some (senior noncom-

missioned officers) are crying right now. I never even knew this was a thing,” said another post, referring to some NCOs’ penchant for enforcing appearance regulations.

Installation commanders have long had leeway to set the dress code for their base, which may include shopping facilities.

At Ramstein Air Base in Germany, there are no restrictions on wearing athletic clothing to the commissary and exchange, a base spokeswoman said Wednesday.

But some bases in warmer climates have been more strict.

At U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii, a dress code poster on the base’s official website says, “athletic clothing and swimwear are only allowed in recreation areas.”

Civilians at Marine Corps bases in Hawaii, meanwhile, may wear appropriate athletic gear inside base facilities, as long as it is nonmilitary-issued physical training gear and isn’t provocative in nature or marked with obscene or derogatory slogans, pictures or words, according to a 2018 command policy.

Civilians also are not allowed to go shopping on base immediately upon completion of a workout, the 2018 policy said.

Esper in the memo did not explain what prompted the policy change.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Driver stopped hauling snowmobile on car

WI CLAYTON — The Wisconsin State Patrol had a little advice for the guy who transported a snowmobile by strapping it to the roof of his Toyota Corolla. Bad idea.

A trooper pulled over the driver after seeing the snowmobile perched sideways on top of the sedan.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation tweeted a photo of the car with the Polaris topper with a message “Folks, don’t try this at home.”

The driver, Matthew Schmit, 23, of Clayton, was issued a warning about the hauling technique and cited for failing to buckle up, according to DOT spokeswoman Christena O’Brien.

He told the trooper he had just bought the snowmobile and was driving it over to a friend’s house to show him, the Star Tribune reported.

Parade canceled, virtual event set for Vets Day

AL BIRMINGHAM — An Alabama tradition that bills itself as the nation’s longest-running Veterans Day parade was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The National Veterans Day Parade in Birmingham won’t happen this year because of the threat of spreading COVID-19. A statement from organizers said it will be replaced by an online-only event.

The parade through downtown Birmingham has been held annually since 1947. The “virtual parade” is set for Nov. 11 and will include recorded and live content featuring various groups shown online at nationalveteransday.org.

Grizzly attacks, injures father, son hunters

MT KALISPELL — A grizzly bear attacked and injured a father and son hunting in northern Montana.

The bear charged out of a thickly wooded area and attacked the two near Smith Lake north of Whitefish Lake in the Flathead Valley, according to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks state agency.

The hunters shot and killed the bear and were later flown to a hospital. Authorities didn’t identify the two or say how seriously they were hurt.

Investigators found a deer carcass and concluded the nearly 20-year-old female was defending the food and offspring, the Helena Independent Record reported.

City to receive report on unmarked graves

VA CHARLOTTESVILLE — Charlottesville officials are getting an update on the discovery of unmarked graves in a city park where enslaved people could have been buried.

The Daily Progress reported the city council received a report indicating that there are 43 likely unmarked and unrecorded graves near a cemetery in Pen Park. The report comes after the city commissioned an archaeological firm to survey the site.

The property was once owned by slaveholders, including Dr. George Gilmer, who was Thomas Jefferson’s physician.

City staff have plans to ensure the graves are not disturbed by any future projects. And the city is planning to work with historical groups to identify who may be buried in the unmarked graves.

Unlicensed dog breeder charged with abuse

MO JEFFERSON CITY — An unlicensed dog breeder in southern Missouri was charged with 24 criminal counts after she allegedly euthanized 21 dogs she had agreed to turn over to the state, Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt said.

Marlisa McAlmond, who runs Cedar Ridge Australians in Oregon County, was charged with 21 counts of animal abuse, two counts of felony damage and one count of animal cruelty.

Schmitt’s office had formerly sued McAlmond over breeding conditions at the business and because she had an expired license. Despite a temporary restraining order against her, McAlmond continued to breed dogs.

Woman accused of scamming Amazon

FL TAMPA — A 32-year-old Florida woman was accused of receiving \$165,000 in reimbursements from Amazon for shipping costs that she never paid, sheriff’s officials said.

Investigators from the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office said Hoai Tibma took advantage of a loophole in Amazon’s policies by making it appear she had paid to return packages. Instead she was using old prepaid labels from the company.

She’s accused of second-degree grand theft and was arrested Oct. 23, an arrest affidavit said.

Between March 2015 and August, she was reimbursed \$3.99 each for about 42,000 returns, the Tampa Bay Times reported.

Sheriff’s officials said she used 31 Amazon accounts, all

linked to an address in a Tampa suburb.

Tibma faces up to 15 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

Driver fleeing police gets stuck in cemetery

ND FARGO — Authorities said a drunken driver who was fleeing police after driving the wrong way on a Fargo street was arrested after her vehicle became stuck in a cemetery.

Police said officers tried to stop the 33-year-old driver but she refused to pull over. Her vehicle eventually got hung up in the Holy Cross Cemetery near the airport, KFGO radio reported.

The woman faces charges for driving under the influence, refusing to take a DUI test and fleeing an officer in a vehicle. She is also wanted on a Grand Forks County warrant, police said.

City adopts drone response program

GA BROOKHAVEN — Drones will be used to respond to 911 calls in one Georgia city, with Brookhaven becoming the first in the Southeast to adopt a first responder program using the devices.

City officials approved funding for the Brookhaven Police Department’s Unmanned Aerial System unit, which will consist of four drones. Brookhaven plans to train and obtain FAA licenses for 12 operators.

Each drone is equipped with a camera that records and streams HD video to the department’s crime center, where an officer can relay information to police on the ground. The drones are also capable of thermal imaging, which can spot suspects at night.

From wire reports

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NASCAR crew chiefs look for perfection

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The NASCAR championship was in clear reach when Denny Hamlin made his final pit stop in last year's title-deciding finale. With everything on the line, his crew chief went with an aggressive adjustment aimed at gaining one last burst of speed.

Chris Gabehart called for a large, thick patch of tape across the front right side of the No. 11 Toyota. It was a gamble Gabehart was willing to take, believing "you've got to dance with the fire to beat these guys."

He got burned.

The aerodynamic adjustment backfired, Hamlin had to pit again to avoid overheating his engine, and his title chances were over. As Gabehart leads Hamlin back into the championship race Sunday, the crew chief has no fear of overthinking his team out of title contention.

"You've certainly got to learn from your mistakes and your successes, right? That's part of getting better," he said. "I'm not concerned of making those same issues again. For better or worse, we're going to put our best foot forward, give Denny the best platform we

can as a race team to go out and perform, then we're going to let him perform."

The pressure will be intense Sunday at Phoenix Raceway for both the drivers and their team leaders. There is no practice or qualifying under COVID-19 protocols, so the cars must be dialed-in when they are unloaded on race day.

The four-driver field this year includes two former champions: Joey Logano, who won in 2016 under this current format, and his Team Penske teammate Brad Keselowski, who won in 2012 under different rules. Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing is back in the final four for the third time and Chase Elliott is making his championship debut for Hendrick Motorsports.

Only Hamlin and Gabehart, in their second season as driver and crew chief, have previously raced for a championship together.

Paul Wolfe won the 2012 title with Keselowski but now crew chiefs Logano. Keselowski is in his first season with newcomer Jeremy Bullins, and Elliott is teamed with Alan Gustafson, who led Jeff Gordon in Gordon's 2015 final four appearance.

Gustafson believes he can help Elliott manage the stakes of the winner-take-all final race as NASCAR's most popular driver competes in his first championship.

"I don't think you can really be prepared for it until you go through it," said the veteran Hendrick Motorsports crew chief. "Going through this weekend, we can help prepare him for it. It's a unique experience. I think you have to go through it to really understand it and learn how to manage it."

The dynamic at Team Penske is interesting in that Logano and Keselowski both worked through the coronavirus-impacted season with new crew chiefs, having to learn their team leaders with little track time. The Penske organization made a three-team swap at the start of the year and Wolfe, the only crew chief in the finale with a title, is teamed with the only driver to win a championship in this format.

Wolfe doesn't think prior title runs give them an edge, but points to Logano's win three weeks ago at Kansas that locked the No. 22 team into the finale. Wolfe has had extended time to work on their Ford for

Phoenix, where Logano won in March before the pandemic shutdown.

"I feel like we have an advantage because we won at Kansas, (I've) have had maybe a little more time to put thoughts into how do we want to approach the race?" Wolfe said.

Bullins has yet to compete in a race with such high stakes but takes pride in the work he's done with Keselowski. The Penske organizational swap on paper put Keselowski with the least-accomplished crew chief on the roster, a move at the time Keselowski said he hoped gave him the kick he needed to elevate his performance.

Keselowski will go to Phoenix with four wins and drive the Ford that won at both New Hampshire and Richmond.

"When we made the swap, we immediately added a ton of experience to our team. We've just tried to take advantage of Brad's experience, use that to better what we were doing as a race team, put ourselves in a good spot," Bullins said. "I think we're just trying to make it no more than what it is, not make it bigger than what it is. Obviously, there's a lot on the line."

Sports take a break for voting, social activism

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just past noon on Election Day, after casting her vote where the NBA's Wizards and NHL's Capitals play, Mary Pittman exited through one of the arena's glass doors. Perched on the 77-year-old retiree's walker: a stars-and-stripes hat touting the basketball team, autographed on the brim in fresh black ink.

"No line," Pittman said about Tuesday's balloting. "No waiting. No confusion. No fuss."

At a time when athletes are embracing activism like never before, refusing to heed the unfounded admonition framed two years ago by one TV talk-

ing head as "shut up and dribble," there was vivid symbolism in the wide use of team arenas and stadiums as voter registration and polling sites.

If the United States' fields of play once were walled off from politics — Colin Kaepernick, whose 33rd birthday happened to be Tuesday, saw his sideline kneeling to call attention to police brutality and systemic racism contribute to his status as a "former NFL quarterback" — they have become fertile ground for those sorts of statements in 2020.

"Athletes, like anyone, are entitled to their opinion," Pittman said. "But I don't have to agree with it."

And that's absolutely fine, said Ish Smith, the Wizards guard who signed Pittman's cap.

"I've loved and respected how we have ... been able to speak out on certain things that was, in the past, uncomfortable. It says a lot. Says how far we came as athletes. And we're going to keep growing, keep evolving," Smith said.

"Sports and politics — usually people keep to one side," he said. "Now they're intertwining."

Indeed, that intersection never has been as pronounced as now, whether manifested in the messages on courts and jerseys during the NBA sea-

son. Or walkouts staged by that league's players and followed by others from tennis to hockey. Or the unfurling of a black ribbon held by the Washington Nationals and New York Yankees before they knelt in unison at the first game of the Major League Baseball season.

"When I played, players and coaches were never — maybe not never; rarely — asked about politics and voting," Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "But the times are different. Our country is in turmoil, and everybody plays a role."

Tuesday, meanwhile, was that rare day in the U.S. without scoreboards.

Packers RBs are in short supply

Associated Press

The Green Bay Packers could be missing their top three running backs when they visit the San Francisco 49ers on Thursday night.

Green Bay has placed running backs A.J. Dillon and Jamaal Williams plus linebacker Kamal Martin on the COVID-19 reserve list over the past two days. That makes all three players unavailable for Thursday's game, according to NFL protocols.

The Packers' leading rusher is Aaron Jones, whose status remains uncertain for this week after he missed Green Bay's past two games with a calf injury.

"We'll give him up to game time, and then we'll figure it out," Packers coach Matt LaFleur said of Jones' status. "We'll see."

The Packers (5-2) knew they'd be facing this obstacle once they learned Monday of Dillon's positive test. Williams and Martin were added to the COVID-19 reserve list Tuesday because the league determined they had high-risk close contacts with someone who was infected.

Williams had rushed for 152 yards and caught 10 passes over the past two games while Jones was sidelined. Dillon, a rookie second-round pick from Boston College, had five carries for 21 yards and a 16-yard reception Sunday in a 28-22 loss to the

Minnesota Vikings.

The Packers would be in a major bind if they're also without Jones, who has rushed for 389 yards and has seven total touchdowns (five rushing, two receiving) in five games.

Green Bay's only other running backs are Tyler Ervin and Dexter Williams, who isn't related to Jamaal Williams.

"Those guys work hard, and they've been a part of our system now for over a year and they know what the expectations and standards are," LaFleur said. "It was good work for them to get reps today. We'll see come game time if Aaron Jones can go or not."

Ervin, who also returns kicks and lines up at receiver, has rushed four times for 43 yards and caught six passes for 33 yards this season. He missed two games because of an injury.

The 2016 fourth-round pick from San Jose State has 10 career carries. The Packers claimed him off waivers last December and re-signed him in March.

"He can do a lot," quarterback Aaron Rodgers said. "I think it's important we don't put too much on his plate. He's been in the receiver room for a majority of the year. He's been a great returner for us. He's obviously coming back from his hand injury, which has kept him out of a lot of

return stuff. But he's versatile guy."

Dexter Williams, currently on Green Bay's practice squad, has played one game this season without any carries. The 2019 sixth-round pick from Notre Dame had five carries for 11 yards last year. Rodgers said Williams has a "really good attitude" and has "done a nice job of growing up in the offense and feeling more comfortable with the checks and his responsibilities in pass-blocking and route-running."

Even with all their issues at running back, the Packers are much closer to full strength than the 49ers (4-4) heading into Thursday's game.

49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo (ankle) and All-Pro tight end George Kittle (foot) are out indefinitely after getting hurt Sunday in a 37-27 loss to the Seattle Seahawks. Other injured 49ers include receiver Deebo Samuel, cornerback Richard Sherman, pass rushers Nick Bosa and Dee Ford and running backs Raheem Mostert, Tevin Coleman and Jeff Wilson Jr.

"By no means do you ever want this," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. "You want all your guys and you want to be going as good as you can. But you have to embrace everything. You've got to embrace the quick turnaround with Thursday night football. You've got to embrace injuries. You've got to embrace everything."

NFL expands sidelines to give more distancing

Associated Press

The NFL is expanding the sideline area to give teams more space to distance, and mask usage is now mandatory before and after games and at halftime.

The updates to the COVID-19 protocols were sent to clubs in a memo Tuesday, a day after the league learned two players who played in games Sunday tested positive.

The league also is strongly encouraging players to wear masks whenever they come off the field and teams in intensive protocol are prohibited from holding in-person coaching and personnel meetings.

"What we are trying to convey is masks can prevent you from becoming a high-risk contact, which is our goal, so

it's in everybody's best interest to wear a mask for their protection and again to reduce exposure," NFL chief medical officer Dr. Allen Sills said on a conference call. "We believe that the mask use, whether it's in the locker room, on the sideline, it just reduces your chance of becoming a high-risk contact should someone turn positive."

Ravens All-Pro cornerback Marlon Humphrey has confirmed he was one of the positive cases who played Sunday. Results from pre-game tests aren't immediately available. Sills said if the league learns someone is positive during a game that person would be removed from the game or sideline.

Baltimore added seven players to the Reserve/COVID-19 list Tuesday, including starting

linebackers Matthew Judon, Patrick Queen and L.J. Fort. Linebackers Malik Harrison and Tyus Bowser were also put on the COVID along with starting safety DeShon Elliott and defensive back Terrell Bonds.

The Green Bay Packers placed running back AJ Dillon on the Reserve/COVID-19 list Monday after he tested positive and added running back Jamaal Williams and linebacker Kamal Martin to the list as high-risk, close contacts on Tuesday.

The Chicago Bears placed right guard Germain Ifedi and backup tackle Jason Spriggs on the Reserve/COVID-19 list on Tuesday. And the Lions added linebacker Jarrad Davis to the reserve/COVID-19 list.

The Denver Broncos said Tuesday general manager John

Elway and team president Joe Ellis tested positive.

"We're trying to double down on high-risk, close contacts during game day so we're asking our clubs to have their players wear masks on the sideline, in the locker room and we're mandating it for the post-game interactions that might occur between teams because we think these are all vulnerable areas where we see contact occurring that could be high-risk contact," Sills said.

The sideline area will stretch from one 20-yard line to the other.

"Our focus and efforts really continue to be limiting those exposures, particularly for the high-risk, close contacts," said Dawn Aponte, the NFL's chief football administrative officer.

Schedule madness: Teams scramble for games

Associated Press

The NCAA's announcement of a college basketball start date led to a huge scramble as schools tried to fill out schedules altered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Instead of getting easier with time, the task of building schedules has become more difficult as the season's start date nears.

Travel is an issue. So is finding common testing protocols. Restrictions in every state are all different and constantly changing with virus cases on the rise. The cancellation of several multiteam events left huge holes. Even sorting out officiating has presented challenges.

It's been like trying to simultaneously build 353 separate puzzles with overlapping and sometimes-missing pieces — and time is running out.

"We don't know a lot of things," said Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski. "But we know we're going to have March Madness. We know we're going to have a regular season. We just don't know much about both — and

it's a hell of a way to run a railroad."

The coronavirus ran college basketball, like every other sport and aspect of life, off the rails in March. The NCAA Tournament was wiped out and so was part of the payout to member schools, a whopping \$375 million shortfall.

Following the lead of sports such as the NFL and Major League Baseball, the NCAA opted to start college basketball's regular season on Nov. 25. The NCAA reduced the maximum number of games from 31 to 27 for teams playing in multiteam events, 25 for those that don't.

The plan is to play the NCAA Tournament in March, possibly in a "bubble" environment like the NBA and NHL did.

The key is finding a way to get there. Even with meticulous planning before the NCAA's announcement, teams had a tough time finding opponents.

The season was pushed back, so games set for early November had to be postponed or dropped. Lost games had to be replaced with new opponents, with a premium placed

on regional schools since most teams don't want to fly during a pandemic.

Virus testing protocols had to be worked out and finding officials, many of whom work multiple games a week in different states and conferences, was a complex, unexpected issue.

In addition to all that, scheduling turned into a shifting platform filled with unexpected trap doors at nearly every turn.

Several multiteam events moved locations — the Maui Invitational from Hawaii to North Carolina, the Cancun Challenge from Mexico to Florida — leading to teams dropping out. Other multiteam events were canceled, leaving scheduling holes.

"There's been nothing like it," Illinois coach Brad Underwood said. "It's truly COVID 2020, unprecedented as so many things are."

Underwood described Illinois' schedule as a blank sheet of paper last month, and the Illini have since added a Dec. 8 game against Duke in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

Much is expected of USC's bulked-up QB Slovis

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kedon Slovis won't catch anybody by surprise the second time around at Southern California.

And it's not just because the unassuming quarterback who took the Pac-12 by storm last year is a whole lot harder to miss now with his extra 15 pounds of muscle.

"He went from a young man to a grown man in a year," USC coach Clay Helton said with a smile.

Slovis is becoming more than the unheralded teenager who produced the best season by a freshman quarterback in USC's voluminous history last fall. When the No. 20 Trojans finally begin their regular season Saturday morning at the Coliseum against Arizona State, Slovis carries both the weight of his responsibilities and the heavy expectations that gather on this program's best players.

His enlarged frame makes the burden look lighter — and you'd never know it anyway from Slovis' perpetually cool

demeanor.

"We just want to give our guys the opportunity to make plays, and it starts with me," Slovis said. "That's really the most I can do at this point, and what I'm focused on."

Slovis projects a calm belying his 18 years, but he spent the extra-long offseason lifting weights, eating well, poring over video and assuming a greater leadership role. All kinds of tangible growth has happened since his impressive debut season ended with an injury in the Trojans' loss to Iowa in the Holiday Bowl, according to the coaches most responsible for guiding his journey.

"The biggest advantage is he has a year under his belt now," USC offensive coordinator Graham Harrell said. "I think that he feels more comfortable checking routes and protecting plays than he probably did last year. You know, if he sees something, he feels more comfortable attacking it. ... I (also) think now, after a year of being the guy, I think the team sees him in a different light, and I

think that'll help."

The difference in Slovis' arm skills is already coming out in practice, where the sophomore is regularly frustrating the elite talent on the Trojans' defense.

"He's really an NFL quarterback playing college football right now," USC starting cornerback Olajiah Griffin said. "There will be plays where I'll make a good play, break on the ball, and he just fits it in the spot where I just can't reach, even though I'm doing everything correct."

For a freshman who got on the field only because JT Daniels injured his knee in the season opener, Slovis put up stunning numbers last season: 3,505 yards passing with 30 touchdowns and nine interceptions in 11 games at the helm of Harrell's version of the Air Raid offense.

Slovis was the Pac-12's offensive freshman of the year after posting the highest completion percentage (71.9) by a freshman in NCAA history. It was also the highest ever by a USC quarterback or a Pac-12 passer,

topping the marks set by Cody Kessler and Stanford's Andrew Luck, respectively.

What's more, the Air Raid offense often becomes more productive when the quarterback in charge hits his second year of experience. North Texas, Harrell's previous collegiate stop, took a big leap forward under quarterback Mason Fine in Harrell's second season in charge.

That difference sometimes shows up in the offense's tempo, which is supposed to be as fast as possible in most situations. Harrell saw Slovis picking up that crucial confidence late last season in the Trojans' 52-35 win over archrival UCLA.

"The first drive or two, Kedon is moving at the pace of a snail, it seems like, and his body language (stinks)," Harrell said. "And then we see him kind of get a little bounce to him. The offense starts to get lined up a little faster. We start playing at a little faster rate, and I don't know if we got stopped the rest of the night."