

USMC: 72 new virus cases on Okinawa

BY JOSEPH DITZLER

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. Marine Corps announced 72 new cases of the coronavirus Monday on Okinawa, more than the service has reported there in over a month.

All those cases, divided between two bases, were discovered among personnel recently arrived from the United States and still in the 14-day isolation period, Marine Corps Installations Pacific said in a Facebook post.

The new patients came up positive on a test required of all U.S. military personnel in Japan before they are permitted to leave quarantine. Fifty-two of the patients are at Camp Hansen and 20 are at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, according to the Facebook post.

“There is no risk to the off-base community or to the larger military and civilian populations aboard either” installation, the Marines said.

“These are all personnel who traveled from the U.S. and who have been in a [restriction of movement] status since their arrival.”

The Marines stopped publicly reporting

their Okinawa cases in early November, but during the summer accounted for over 300 during an outbreak that began in July.

Other U.S. military commands in Japan and South Korea since Friday confirmed 23 new coronavirus cases, some stretching back three weeks.

U.S. Forces Korea reported 14 new cases, all but one of them new arrivals to the peninsula since Nov. 9. The one exception, a soldier posted to Camp Casey, tested positive Saturday and was quarantined at the Camp Humphreys hospital in a room designated for coronavirus patients, the Army said in a news release.

USFK broke down the other cases this way: Four service members arrived at Osan Air Base via Patriot Express charter flights on Nov. 9, 11, 16 and 23. Seven other service members and two dependents arrived via commercial flights at Incheon International Airport on Nov. 10, 17, 20, 24, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

Seven tested positive upon arrival on their first test, while six tested positive on their second test, according to the Army. All are in quarantine at either Osan or Humphreys.

Back in Japan, Sasebo Naval Base on the island of Kyushu reported one new case Monday, Kadena Air Base on Okinawa reported six new cases Sunday and U.S. Army Japan reported one new case on Monday and two on Okinawa on Friday, according to Facebook posts and Army news releases.

All of those patients were already in isolation, according to their commands. The Army patients and those in Sasebo were new arrivals. The six with the Air Force recently returned from abroad and were tested Friday, according to an 18th Wing email on Monday.

The Army said its Okinawa patients are family members who arrived recently at Kadena and were tested Nov. 24. The Army patient announced Monday was tested Saturday by Japanese health authorities, according to an Army news release.

None of the three Army patients showed any symptoms of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus, the Army said.

U.S. commands in Japan do not always specify whether their new cases are service members, civilian employees or family members.

Complaint filed over day care’s dining policy

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The parents of a 7-month-old boy enrolled at a child care center at Marine Corps Base Hawaii have filed a complaint over the facility’s use of “family-style” dining, during which caretakers do not wear protective facemasks as they eat meals with children.

Melissa Martin, the boy’s mother and a Defense Department employee, filed a prohibited personnel practices complaint Nov. 22 with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel alleging the practice constitutes a “substantial and specific danger to public health.”

Martin lives on Marine Corps Base Hawaii with her son and husband, who is a non-commissioned officer with the Corps.

“I’m really just looking for my son — and

other children that also go to the [child care center] — to be in a safe, healthy place,” Martin said during a phone interview on Nov. 22.

A Marine Corps spokesman told Stars and Stripes the base’s Child Development Centers implement distancing between children and staff members during meal-times to mitigate risk, but the practice of using family-style dining to “role model” and “build healthy eating habits” is continuing.

Hawaii has had 17,840 confirmed coronavirus cases as of Sunday, with 224 deaths. The average daily number of newly reported cases over the past 14 days has been about 90.

Martin and the attorney she hired to file the complaint, Crista Kraics, point out that numerous child care centers of the various

services have suspended family-style dining during the pandemic.

In March, the Navy Installations Command announced that family-style dining was among the practices being discontinued at child-care programs due to risk of spreading the coronavirus. The Coast Guard announced a similar decision around the same time.

“I’m looking for, at the very least, my son to be able to go to a safe place when I need to send him to the child day care center,” Martin said during the interview. “I believe that that’s what the day care center is supposed to be. As military families, we put enough on the line. We sacrifice enough that I don’t want one more thing to be my son being sacrificed because of a silly rule that could be easily suspended for a period of time.”

Coast Guardsman buys Greenland PM meal

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Little did anyone expect that a junior Coast Guard member's simple act of kindness would become a highlight of summer exercises in the Arctic.

The captains of the cutters Tahoma and Campbell could have declined to take Seaman Kate Kilroy, who had not yet attended an occupational school or earned a job-specific rate, on an 85-day mission to the polar region to document their patrols and exercises with allies. But they "decided to take the chance" on the enthusiastic non-rate, Coast Guard District 1 said in a recent statement.

By the end of the summer, they were happy they did.

While the Campbell was at port in Greenland's capital city of Nuuk, Kilroy visited a diner, where she saw a stranger sitting alone and bought him a meal, just as

she would have done in the small North Carolina town of Apex where she was raised.

"It's just something I do," she said. "I grew up in a family that routinely gives to others."

The stranger turned out to be Greenland's prime minister, Kim Kielsen.

"We had a nice conversation," Kilroy said. "I was in the right place at the right time, doing what I do. That's all."

After their conversation, Kielsen visited the Campbell and met the crew in September. He also gave the cutter's commanding officer, Capt. Thomas Crane, a driving tour of Nuuk.

Kilroy's chance encounter "directly strengthened our nation's position in an increasingly competitive Arctic domain through relationship building," Crane said.

"We couldn't have been happier with her performance," he said, calling Kilroy "a

true shipmate."

Formerly a hospitality and customer service worker, Kilroy joined the Coast Guard in late October 2018. Her "infectiously positive attitude" and natural photography skills helped earn her assignments with the public affairs team at the Base Portsmouth, Va., and eventually the opportunity in August to cover the Maine-based cutters' Arctic patrols.

Last week, she took over the Coast Guard's Instagram account to share photos she took during the Arctic deployment.

"Kilroy's imagery reminds us that people — not ships and aircraft — are behind all these partnerships," the Coast Guard said.

In a note of thanks, the U.S. Consulate called Kilroy's outreach the unplanned pinnacle of the Coast Guard's 2020 summer activities with Greenland and Denmark, the service said.

Phantom jet makes final appearance at Japan Air Self-Defense Force review

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

IRUMA AIR BASE, Japan — Japan's iconic F-4EJ "Samurai" Phantom II supersonic fighter jet was sent off in style Saturday during a Japan Air Self-Defense Force review near Tokyo.

One of Japan's last Phantoms, painted with sharp-toothed, snarling nose art, red sun symbols and the words "Phantom Forever" greeted Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga at Iruma Air Base in Saitama prefecture when he arrived to speak to about 800 troops.

Suga warned the air, ground and maritime defense personnel of an increasingly severe security environment and urged the service branches to cooperate before he clambered into the F-4's front seat and posed for photos.

A week earlier, on Nov. 20, the 301st Tactical Fighter Squadron at Hyakuri Air Base, Ibaraki prefecture, held a send-off ceremony for its Phantoms. The 301st is slated to move from Hyakuri to Misawa Air Base in northeast Japan in March and trade its F-4s for state-of-the-art F-35A Lightning II stealth fighters.

Japan is retiring the F-4s after 48 years of service, according to a JASDF tweet that day.

Japan chose the large, twin-engine, two-

seat multirole F-4 as its next-generation fighter on Nov. 1, 1968, and eventually acquired 140, according to the JASDF's official website.

The 301st was the first squadron to operate the F-4EJ at Hyakuri in October 1973. The Japanese Phantom fired its first warning shot near a Soviet Tu-16 strategic bomber intruding into Japanese airspace during a scramble on Dec. 9, 1987, according to the JASDF website.

The McDonnell Douglas-built F-4 was designed in the 1950s for air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. Eventually, 5,195 were built for the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, as well as 11 foreign militaries, including Japan.

The F-4 became the most famous American fighter-bomber of the 1960s and 1970s, epitomizing U.S. air power during the Cold War and used extensively in Vietnam.

With a top speed exceeding Mach 2.2, the supersonic fighter-bomber is remembered fondly by those who flew it.

The F-4 was, "in the hands of a talented pilot and weapons systems operator ... formidable and nearly indestructible," retired Air Force Gen. Ronald Keys, who flew Phantoms in the Vietnam War, told Stars and Stripes for a Nov. 10, 2019, story.

Moderna asking regulators to OK its vaccine shots

Associated Press

Moderna Inc. said it would ask U.S. and European regulators Monday to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine as new study results confirm the shots offer strong protection — ramping up the race to begin limited vaccinations as the coronavirus rampage worsens.

Multiple vaccine candidates must succeed for the world to stamp out the pandemic, which has been on the upswing in the United States and Europe. U.S. hospitals have been stretched to the limit as the nation has seen more than 160,000 new cases per day and more than 1,400 daily deaths. Since first emerging nearly a year ago in China, the virus has killed more than 1.4 million people worldwide.

Moderna is just behind Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech in seeking to begin vaccinations in the U.S. in December. British regulators also are assessing the Pfizer shot and another from AstraZeneca.

Moderna created its shots with the U.S. National Institutes of Health and already had a hint they were working, but said it got the final needed results over the weekend that suggest the vaccine is more than 94% effective.

Congress returns with aid, funding unresolved

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After months of shadowboxing amid a tense and toxic campaign, Capitol Hill's main players are returning for one final, perhaps futile, attempt at deal-making on a challenging menu of year-end business.

COVID-19 relief, a \$1.4 trillion catchall spending package, and defense policy — and a final burst of judicial nominees — dominate a truncated two- or three-week session occurring as the coronavirus pandemic rockets out of control in President Donald Trump's final weeks in office.

The only absolute must-do business is preventing a government shutdown when a temporary spending bill expires on Dec. 11. The route preferred by top lawmakers like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is to agree upon and pass an omnibus spending bill for the government. But it may be difficult to overcome bitter divisions regarding a long-delayed COVID-19 relief package that's a top priority of business, state and local governments, educators and others.

Top items for December's lame-duck session include:

■ **Keeping the government open.** At a bare minimum, lawmakers need to keep the government running by passing a stopgap spending bill known as a continuing resolution, which would punt \$1.4 trillion worth of

unfinished agency spending into next year.

At issue are the 12 annual spending bills comprising the portion of the government's budget that passes through Congress each year on a bipartisan basis.

■ **COVID-19 relief.** Democrats have battled with Republicans and the White House for months over a fresh installment of COVID-19 relief that all sides say they want. But a lack of good faith and an unwillingness to embark on compromises that might lead either side out of their political comfort zones have helped keep another rescue package on ice for months.

■ **Defense policy.** A spat over military bases named for Confederate officers is threatening the annual passage of a defense policy measure that has passed for 59 years in a row on a bipartisan basis. The measure is critical in the defense policy world, guiding Pentagon policy and cementing decisions about troop levels, new weapons systems and military readiness, military personnel policy and other military goals.

Both the House and Senate measures would require the Pentagon to rename bases such as Fort Benning and Fort Hood, but Trump opposes the idea and has threatened a veto over it. The battle erupted this summer amid widespread racial protests, and Trump used the debate to appeal to white Southern voters nostalgic about the Confederacy.

Wis. recount confirms its Biden victory

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin finished a recount of its presidential results Sunday, confirming Democrat Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump in the key battleground state. Trump vowed to challenge the outcome in court even before the recount concluded.

Dane County was the second and last county to finish its recount, reporting a 45-vote gain for Trump. Milwaukee County, the state's other big and overwhelmingly liberal county targeted in a recount that Trump paid \$3 million for, reported its results Friday, a 132-vote gain for Biden.

Taken together, the two counties barely budged Biden's winning margin of about 20,600 votes, giving the winner a net gain of 87 votes.

"As we have said, the recount only served to reaffirm Joe Biden's victory in Wisconsin," Danielle Melfi, who led Biden's campaign in Wisconsin, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

Trump campaign spokeswoman Jenna Ellis said in a statement that the Wisconsin recounts have "revealed serious issues" about whether the ballots were legal, but she offered no specific details to validate her claim.

Trump was widely expected to head to court once the recount was finished. His campaign challenged thousands of absentee ballots during the recount, and even before it was complete, Trump tweeted he would sue.

Iran: Israel killed scientist remotely

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — A top Iranian security official on Monday accused Israel of using "electronic devices" to remotely kill a scientist who founded the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program in the 2000s.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the country's Supreme National Security Council, made the comment at the funeral for Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, where Iran's defense minister separately vowed to continue the man's work "with more speed and more power."

Israel, long suspected of killing Iranian

nuclear scientists over the last decade, has repeatedly declined to comment on the attack.

Fakhrazadeh headed Iran's AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003.

Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies.

Shamkhani's remarks drastically change the story of Fakhrazadeh's killing, which took place Friday. Authorities initially said a truck exploded and then gunmen opened fire on the scientist, killing him and a bodyguard.

State TV's English-language broadcaster Press TV reported earlier Monday that a weapon recovered from the scene of the attack bore "the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry." State TV's Arabic-language channel, Al-Alam, claimed the weapons used were "controlled by satellite."

Pa. senator tests positive, leaves meeting with Trump

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A Pennsylvania state senator abruptly left a West Wing meeting with President Donald Trump after being informed he had tested positive for the coronavirus, a person with direct knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press.

Republican state Sen. Doug Mastriano had gone to the White House last Wednesday with like-minded state lawmakers shortly after a four-hour-plus public meeting that Mastriano helped host in Gettysburg — maskless — to discuss efforts to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the state. Trump told Mastriano that White House medical personnel would take care of him, his son and his son's friend, who were also there for the Oval Office meeting and tested positive. The meeting continued after Mastriano and the others left, the person said.

The person spoke to the AP on Sunday on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private session.

Positive coronavirus cases are surging across the United States and the nation's top infectious disease expert said Sunday that the U.S. may see "surge upon surge" in the coming weeks. The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the United States topped 200,000 for the first time Friday.

Everyone who will be in close proximity to the president must take a rapid test. Trump was hospitalized in October after he contracted the virus. Dozens of White House staffers and others close to the president have also tested positive, including the first lady and two of the president's sons.

All participants in Wednesday's meeting took COVID-19 tests, but the positive results were not announced until they were in the West Wing of the White House, the person said.

"The president instantly called the White House doctor in and he took them back to, I guess, the medical place," the person said. The meeting with Trump was to strategize about efforts regarding the election, the person said.

After Mastriano and the others left, the discussion with Trump continued for about a half-hour. Mastriano did not return to the meeting.

Alaska

JUNEAU — A group of four nonprofit organizations in Alaska's capital have been awarded a grant of more than \$860,000 to

counter homelessness amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The Juneau Empire reported Friday that the grant from the Alaska Housing Financial Corp. will be shared by the Juneau groups following their joint application to the corporation. The award is part of a federal coronavirus recovery fund emergency solutions grant to help prevent those affected by the pandemic from experiencing homelessness. The Glory Hall, Gastineau Human Services Corp., Family Promise of Juneau and the Alaska Housing Development will split the \$868,230 award.

Alaska Housing Financial Corp. spokesperson Stacy Barnes said some of the recipients may be experiencing hardship for the first time.

"They may have never received this kind of help before," Barnes said. "Trying to navigate can be difficult for sure."

Hawaii

HONOLULU — Hawaii Lt. Gov. Josh Green suggested that the way to "perfect" the state's coronavirus testing system for incoming travelers is to extend the mandatory pre-flight testing window from three days prior to arrival to four and requiring a second test when the person touches down.

The extra fourth day to get tested for the coronavirus prior to flying to Hawaii would allow tourists more time to find a test site and receive their results, Green told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser on Friday.

But Green also said that, as it stands right now, there is little reason to systematically change the current testing system.

"Right now the system is working," Green said. "I don't know why people would want to make wholesale changes to a system where we've got the lowest rate in the country of COVID. We've got the lowest mortality rate in the country of COVID. The active cases per capita, I believe, are the lowest in the country and we're the only country (state) that has significant travel because we have the Safe Travels program."

Michigan

DETROIT — Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan said on a talk show that he expected 5,000 residents a day would receive vaccines once they are made widely available.

He also spoke on CBS's "Face the Nation" about the logistics of vaccinating some 700,000 city residents, saying convention centers and parking areas near stadiums would play major roles.

Hospital workers, first-responders, those over 65 and other groups more at risk of coronavirus infection were expected to be first in line to receive vaccinations, Duggan said.

While there is currently no clear timetable for the distribution of several potential vaccines, Duggan said he expected some to be available to the wider public early in 2021.

Missouri

KANSAS CITY — After two staff members tested positive for COVID-19, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum will close for 10 days.

Negro Leagues Baseball Museum President Bob Kendrick said officials decided to close the museum starting Sunday to protect staff and visitors.

"This precautionary measure is based on our commitment to ensuring a safe environment for our team and valued patrons," he said in a statement.

Kendrick said the museum plans to reopen on Dec. 8. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Negro Leagues.

Montana

KALISPELL — Flathead County's interim public health officer is resigning at the end of the year, saying she's frustrated with the lack of support from county officials for any efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Tamalee St. James Robinson submitted her letter of resignation Friday to the county commission and the Flathead City-County Board of Health, saying it's clear the actions of the commissioners and the health board "have been at cross purposes with the goal of maintaining our county's public health."

New York

NEW YORK — New York City will reopen its school system to in-person learning, and increase the number of days a week many children attend class, even as the coronavirus pandemic intensifies in the city, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Sunday.

The announcement marks a major policy reversal for the nation's largest school system, less than two weeks after de Blasio announced that schools were shutting down because of a rising number of COVID-19 cases in the city.

Some elementary schools and pre-kindergarten programs will resume classes Dec. 7, the mayor said. Others will take longer to reopen their doors.

27 homeless after turkey frying sparks fire

MA NEW BEDFORD — An attempt to fry a turkey on Thanksgiving Day touched off a blaze that damaged three buildings and displaced 27 people in New Bedford.

WCVB-TV reported that the fire began as residents were trying to fry a turkey on their back deck. The fire quickly spread to structures on both sides, causing extensive internal damage.

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell said the incident was a reminder of the dangers involved in frying turkeys and that similar incidents had occurred in his city and throughout the country in the past.

One person was taken to the hospital with unknown injuries. The Red Cross was assisting 27 individuals who lived in the three buildings.

Firefighters replace bike stolen from grocery store employee

IL PEKIN — For nearly 30 years, Jerry Harrison, of Pekin, has commuted to work at a Kroger grocery store on a bicycle — every day, rain or shine, sleet or snow.

But one day, the Peoria Journal Star reported that he went outside to collect carts, and noticed his two-wheeler missing from the bike rack.

Harrison reported the apparent theft to his manager, who mentioned it to two firefighters from Pekin's Station 2.

Scott said all the firefighters favored replacing the bike and that Pekin Firefighters Local 524 members did not object to using money from the union's charity fund.

Police probe string of unprovoked assaults

MA BOSTON — Police in a Massachusetts city are looking for a suspect in a series of unprovoked attacks over the past three weeks.

Waltham Police said they believe the same male suspect is responsible for 10 separate incidents in which men were assaulted and sometimes struck in the face or head with an object. Police said they have no reports of a firearm being used during the assaults.

Five of the incidents occurred near the same apartment complex, and another five occurred in the city's downtown. All happened after sundown.

The most recent attack was reported by a man who said he was hit in the face by a blunt object.

City gets \$1.45 million for hurricane damage

SC GEORGETOWN — A coastal city in South Carolina is getting \$1.45 million from the federal government to repair damage caused by Hurricane Florence in 2018.

The U.S. Department of Commerce is awarding the grant to Georgetown to improve water infrastructure and support commercial and industrial growth, The Sun News of Myrtle Beach reported.

The department said the money will help the region become more resilient to future natural disasters.

Georgetown saw severe flooding from Florence in September 2018 as the Waccamaw River rose a record 21 feet. Officials said more than 8,000 households in the county had to evacuate at the time.

Driver going wrong way purposely hit pedestrian

NY SCOTTSVILLE — An upstate New York man drove the wrong way down Interstate 90 and hit a pedestrian at a rest stop, authorities said.

New York state police said Emmett Ellis, 37, was seen driving westbound on I-90 east, south of Rochester. Emergency callers reported that Ellis was trying to hit other vehicles.

Ellis exited the highway to a rest stop in Scottsville where he appeared to intentionally strike a pedestrian, authorities said.

According to state police, a trooper responding to the calls fired at Ellis when Ellis drove toward him. Ellis wasn't struck by the gunfire. Ellis re-entered the highway heading east and was apprehended after he exited the car, state police said.

Man accused of using employer credit card for guns

IN EVANSVILLE — A southwestern Indiana man has been charged with theft for allegedly using his company credit card to purchase about \$65,000 worth of firearms and outdoor recreational items.

Kyle D. Hollman, of Boonville, was arrested after an internal audit by ProLift Toyota Material Handling uncovered purchases Hollman, 29, allegedly made on his company credit card, and evidence that he altered the purchase orders to make his purchases appear authorized and legitimate.

The Evansville company alleged the thefts occurred over the course of three years and included nearly \$30,000 worth of

firearms and accessories and another \$35,000 of online purchases of outdoors items such as backpacks, coolers and boots, the Evansville Courier & Press reported.

Officials seek to clean up illegal dump site

GA ALBANY — Officials in southwest Georgia said they're cleaning up an unusually large illegal dump site.

"This is one of the largest ones that we've encountered," said Judy Bowles of Keep Albany-Dougherty Beautiful.

Bowles told WALB-TV that parts of the site have been there for six to eight months. Dumps are health hazards, she said, because they breed rats, mosquitoes and other pests.

Albany officials said it appears a homeless person has been living among the debris.

Puppy of man killed in hit-and-run found safe

CT VERNON — A missing puppy whose owner was killed by a hit-and-run driver while they were out walking last week has been returned.

Police in Vernon posted on their Facebook page that the dog, named Ollie, was found and returned.

Ollie and his owner, Andrew Aggarwala, were walking in their neighborhood when a car struck Aggarwala and fled. The 44-year-old, who was well-known in the local soccer community, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Ollie was found not far from the site of the accident.

Storms, broken plane force layover for turtles

MA BOSTON — They might have gotten there faster by walking, but at any rate, these endangered turtles had a lot to be thankful for on Thanksgiving.

Bad weather, a damaged propeller and an unscheduled stop in Tennessee complicated the rescue of 30 critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles that were found on the beaches of Cape Cod, stunned and almost killed by falling ocean temperatures.

"When we learned the plane could not reach its final destination, a flurry of calls went out, and within an hour, we had safe, warm overnight housing secured for these turtles," said Connie Merigo, manager of the New England Aquarium's marine animal rescue department.

From The Associated Press

NFL is struggling to a January finish

Associated Press

In every NFL season, there are losing teams who hit December and just want to get to January, get the schedule done and go home.

In 2020, it's all about the league itself getting to January during a pandemic that daily is becoming harder to deal with.

If Week 12 is a harbinger, NFL executives will be doing more scrambling than Lamar Jackson and Kyler Murray. They've already twice postponed the Thanksgiving night showcase game between Baltimore and Pittsburgh, and it's still in jeopardy for Tuesday night with more than 20 Ravens on the COVID-19 list. Denver, thanks to protocol violations by its quarterbacks, started an undrafted rookie wide receiver at the critical position and, unsurprisingly, barely moved the ball.

There also were hefty fines to the Saints and Patriots for not being as diligent about the coronavirus protocols as they need to be.

The NFL deserves praise for getting this far with minimal disruptions compared to what

we are seeing in the college game. Yet there is a foreboding environment right now.

Teams have been ordered to steer clear of their facilities on Monday and Tuesday as the pandemic rages across the country. Pro football tries to soldier on, but for how long?

"I think we have to really consider a bubble," says Bill Cowher, the Hall of Fame-bound coach and now a CBS Sports analyst. "When you think about the country right now, we're going through a second wave. You have to be flexible in your thinking.

"We're talking about shutting down facilities. We're talking about teams that may not be able to practice all week. I start to think about teams later on as we go through this, that they get out of the playoffs. They become more reckless and careless with their actions off the field.

"I think right now from a competitive and balance standpoint that's out there, and from a safety standpoint that's out there, go to a bubble. Go to a city right now, identify a hotel, take all the staff members, put

them in there, and make sure from that point they bus to and from practice. They fly to and from games. It worked in hockey. It worked in basketball. I think the time is now. Protect the integrity of the game. It's the fairest thing to do. And it's the safest thing to do."

In some ways it also is the most difficult thing to do. Don't think that the NFL hasn't discussed the bubble idea, though it has concentrated on creating one or more for the playoffs. Doing so for the final six weeks of the schedule, it's a logistical challenge tantamount to scoring on the 1985 Bears or 2000 Ravens.

As the number of COVID-19 cases rises across the league, the potential for more postponements — even cancellations or forfeits, neither of which the NFL truly wants to ponder — also rises.

One option that seems more logical by the day is for the league to create a Week 18 for the second weekend in January. With outbreaks within teams a higher likelihood than ever — and having a week to play with because the bye be-

tween the conference championships and the Super Bowl could be eliminated — instituting a Week 18 has its merits.

Certainly it would lessen the chance of mismatches such as what happened Sunday in Denver, a 31-3 Saints romp that never was in doubt; is that the way NFL games should be? And it could help avoid what could be a similar lopsided contest in Pittsburgh on Tuesday night, should that game be played.

"I don't think weird is the right word," said Saints coach Sean Payton, whose team was fined \$500,000 and docked a seventh-round draft pick for repeatedly defying NFL protocols. "Look, everything about this season's unusual. So, we kind of tune out the things we can't control. ... And then what it is we can control? And let's find a way to get our next W."

Do coaches really want that next W, or next L, to come because they or their opponent is severely undermanned due to the invisible enemy that is the coronavirus? If so, that's as cold as Lambeau Field in the midst of winter.

County rules force 49ers to scramble

Associated Press

San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan said the team was blindsided by new coronavirus regulations put in place by Santa Clara County officials that will force the 49ers to find a temporary new home for practice and games.

The county announced the new rules Saturday that include a three-week ban on practices and games for contact sports starting Monday. The Niners were on a plane getting ready to travel to Los Angeles, where they beat the Rams 23-20 on Sunday, when the players and coaches heard about the new rules that will force the team out of its homes.

The team announced Monday that it will play its Week 13 and 14 contests at State

Farm Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., home of the Arizona Cardinals.

"The San Francisco 49ers have come to an agreement with the National Football League and Arizona Cardinals which allows the 49ers to host their Weeks 13 and 14 home games against the Buffalo Bills and Washington Football Team at State Farm Stadium in Arizona," the team said in a statement. "The Cardinals organization, State Farm Stadium and League officials have been supportive and accommodating as we work through the many logistical issues involved in relocating NFL games. Information regarding the 49ers future practice arrangements will be shared at the appropriate time."

Along with banning contact sports, the

new rules for Santa Clara County also require anyone who has traveled more than 150 miles from the county to quarantine for 14 days. The 49ers were set to return from the trip Sunday night just hours before the rules go into effect.

"They made that decision and we've got to deal with it," Shanahan said. "But to find that out through a tweet or a press conference where I have an entire plane coming up to me, I have all wives, everyone's girlfriends, everyone's family members, kids, saying that what they heard there."

With their next game not until a week from Monday, the Niners won't start practicing until Thursday. The 49ers did not address the plans for the Week 17 game, Jan. 3, against the Seattle Seahawks.

Henry helps Titans run past Colts

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Derrick Henry battered the NFL's second-stingiest defense for 140 yards and three touchdowns in the first half, finished with 178 yards and led the Tennessee Titans to a crucial 45-26 rout of the Indianapolis Colts on Sunday.

The win gives Tennessee (8-3) sole possession of the AFC South lead, a split in the two-game season series and a tiebreaking edge based on current division records of the teams. Henry also padded his lead as he chases a second straight rushing crown.

He has three straight 100-yard games and eight consecutive road games with 100 or more yards, tying former Titans running back Chris Johnson for the second-longest streak since the 1970 merger. Only Hall of Famer Barry Sanders (10 in 1996-97) had a longer streak.

Chiefs 27, Patriots 24: Patrick Mahomes threw for 462 yards and three touchdowns to outplay Tom Brady and lead Kansas City to a win at Tampa Bay.

Tyreek Hill scored on receptions of 75, 44 and 20 yards, backflipping into the end zone on his second TD, and finishing with 13 catches for 269 yards — the last an 8-yard catch on third-and-7 to give Mahomes an opportunity to run out the clock.

49ers 23, Rams 20: Robbie Gould made a 42-yard field goal as time expired and visiting San Francisco snapped its three-game losing streak, sweeping the season series against Los Angeles for the second straight year.

Nick Mullens passed for 253 yards and led two late scoring drives in his first victory as a starter since September for the defend-

ing NFC champion Niners (5-6), who stoked their flickering playoff hopes and became the first team to beat the Rams (7-4) at new SoFi Stadium.

Packers 41, Bears 25: Aaron Rodgers threw four touchdown passes and host Green Bay padded its NFC North lead.

The Packers (8-3) scored touchdowns on each of their first three possessions and grabbed a three-game division edge over Chicago (5-6) and Minnesota. Since winning five of their first six games, the Bears have dropped five straight.

Vikings 28, Panthers 27: Chad Beebe caught a 10-yard touchdown pass with 46 seconds left for host Minnesota shortly after he muffed a punt that let Carolina pad its lead. Then Joey Slye missed a 54-yard field goal try with 1 second remaining that preserved the Vikings' victory.

Kirk Cousins went 34 for 45 for 307 yards and three scores for the Vikings (5-6), hitting Justin Jefferson for his second touchdown grab with 5:38 to go and finding Beebe for the winner to punctuate a seven-play, 75-yard drive that took 65 seconds.

Patriots 20, Cardinals 17: Nick Folk kicked a 50-yard field goal as time expired and host New England rallied in the second half to beat Arizona.

James White rushed for two touchdowns for the Patriots (5-6). It was the second time this month that Folk hit a last-second game-winning field goal. His 51-yarder beat the New York Jets 30-27 on Nov. 9.

Falcons 43, Raiders 6: Deion Jones returned an interception 67 yards for a touchdown, Matt Ryan threw a pair of short scoring passes, and host Atlanta thoroughly

dominated Derek Carr and bumbling Las Vegas. The Raiders (6-5) lost their second in a row and looked very much like a pretender in the AFC playoff race, producing a listless, mistake-filled performance against an Atlanta team that's playing out the season under an interim coach.

Dolphins 20, Jets 3: Ryan Fitzpatrick threw two touchdown passes while starting in place of the injured Tua Tagovailoa and visiting Miami kept New York winless. Tagovailoa was inactive with a left thumb injury, so Fitzpatrick stepped in against one of his many former teams.

Bills 27, Chargers 17: Tre'Davious White's fourth-quarter interception set up Tyler Bass' 43-yard field goal, helping host Buffalo hold off Los Angeles.

Josh Allen threw for a touchdown and ran for another score for the AFC East-leading Bills (8-3), who hung on after nearly blowing an 18-point third-quarter lead.

Browns 27, Jaguars 25: Baker Mayfield took advantage of his best game-day weather in a month, throwing two touchdown passes as Cleveland won at Jacksonville to remain squarely in the AFC playoff picture. The Jaguars (1-10) fired general manager Dave Caldwell after the game, which was its 10th straight loss.

Giants 19, Bengals 17: New York lost starting quarterback Daniel Jones to a hamstring injury in the second half but generated enough offense to win at Cincinnati. Jones went down after completing a short pass in the third quarter with the game tied at 10. He returned for two plays on the next series but then was relieved by backup Colt McCoy.

Steelers both optimistic, wary with game change

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Steelers didn't add any players to the team's expanding reserve/COVID-19 list on Sunday, but coach Mike Tomlin isn't exactly ready to say Tuesday night's rescheduled visit by Baltimore is a go.

"I don't know that I can say I'm confident of anything in this environment," Tomlin said. "I got great news today that we had no new positives ... (but) it's a sensitive situation ... you talk about degrees of confidence and things of that nature, it's a slippery slope."

The Steelers (10-0) were supposed to host the Ravens (6-4) on Thanksgiving. A COVID-19 outbreak in Baltimore initially led the NFL to push the game to Sunday. When positive tests among the Ravens continued to pile up, the league postponed it until Tuesday. It's still on ... for now.

While Tomlin has constantly praised his team's diligence to the league's COVID-19 protocols, Pittsburgh has not been immune. The team has placed four players on the reserve/COVID-19 list since Thursday, a group that includes leading rusher James Conner and defensive end Stephon Tuitt.

Two coaches — special teams coordinator Danny Smith and quarterbacks coach Matt Canada — will also be unavailable should the Steelers end up playing on Tuesday due to what the team called an "illness."

Tomlin shrugged off the suggestion that what is happening to the Steelers and Ravens should serve as a message to the rest of the league as winter looms and cases across the world — let alone the NFL — skyrocket.

"We don't need cautionary tales," Tomlin said. "We've been living this every day. We've been tested daily since July 20th. ... We have taken this very seriously."

Vanderbilt fires Mason after 0-8 start

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Vanderbilt fired coach Derek Mason on Sunday after losing the first eight games of his seventh season, and offensive coordinator Todd Fitch will serve as the interim coach.

“While this was a difficult decision, but I know this change is necessary,” athletic director Candice Lee said in a statement. “We wish Derek and his entire family the best.”

Mason posted a statement on Twitter thanking Nashville and Vanderbilt for embracing his family. He said he was grateful to be Vanderbilt’s coach the past seven years.

“I am confident that our current student-athletes and their families are in good hands with Chancellor (Daniel) Diermeier and Director of Athletics Candice Lee and will continue to rise to today’s challenges with integrity and character,” Mason wrote.

Hired in 2014 as Vanderbilt’s 28th coach, Mason replaced James Franklin when he left for Penn State. Mason came to Vander-

bilt after being associate head coach and defensive coordinator at Stanford. He became the first Vanderbilt coach since the 1920s to beat in-state rival Tennessee three straight seasons.

He guided the Commodores to a bowl twice in three seasons, the last clinched with a 38-13 rout of Tennessee in November 2018. Athletic director Malcolm Turner, who was on the job for barely a year, gave Mason a contract extension within his first month on the job in February 2019.

Turner gave Mason his support again late during the 2019 season, but Turner resigned in February. Lee was named the interim athletic director before Vanderbilt took off the interim title in May.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Southeastern Conference is playing only league games this season. Vanderbilt came into the season having lost four consecutive SEC games, a skid now at 12 with the Commodores at 0-8 and on the verge of the first winless season in school history af-

ter a 41-0 loss to Missouri.

“I take full responsibility,” Mason said following the loss to Missouri, Vanderbilt’s fifth by double digits this season.

Mason hired Fitch and a new defensive coordinator after last season. Then he had at least seven players opt out, with eight others transferring this year. Linebacker Dmitri Moore opted out, then changed his mind before deciding to transfer after playing in a loss to then-No. 6 Florida.

Vanderbilt became the first SEC school to have a game postponed due to not having at least 53 scholarship players available; that happened before a road trip to Missouri initially scheduled for October.

The Commodores also played two other games with the number of scholarship players in the 50s.

The most notable thing to happen this season for Vanderbilt came Saturday, when soccer goalkeeper Sarah Fuller became the first woman to play in a Power Five conference football game.

College basketball roundup

Richmond shocks No. 10 Kentucky in Lexington

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Blake Francis and Nathan Cayo powered Richmond to the program’s first road victory over an Associated Press top 10 team, rallying in the second half to beat No. 10 Kentucky 76-64 Sunday.

The Spiders (2-0) had been 0-25 against top 10 teams and trailed 36-30 just after half-time. Francis and Cayo each finished with 18 points, many coming during a series of small scoring runs that pushed Richmond ahead.

A 9-0 burst gave the Spiders the lead, and a 7-0 stretch made it 58-46 with 7:43 remaining. In between, Francis and Tyler Burton hit three-pointers and Cayo converted a three-point play.

The Wildcats (1-1) got within eight before Richmond answered with Jacob Gilyard’s fast-break layup and Matt Grace’s 3-pointer for a 13-point edge with 4:40 left.

No. 2 Baylor 86, Washington 52: Jared Butler scored 20 points and the Bears won again in Las Vegas without coach Scott Drew.

Assistant coach Jerome Tang is directing Baylor with Drew in a 10-day isolation peri-

od after testing positive for COVID-19.

No. 11 Creighton 69, North Dakota State 58: Christian Bishop scored 13 of his 16 points in the second half, Antwann Jones fueled the decisive run in the first half, and the host Bluejays opened the season with a victory.

Jones scored nine of his 11 points in succession as Creighton turned an early deficit into a lead, and Bishop had nine points in the first five minutes of the second half.

No. 17 Houston 64, No. 14 Texas Tech 53: Marcus Sasser scored 17 points playing close to home, Quentin Grimes added 15 and the Cougars never trailed in a victory at Fort Worth, a neutral-site meeting. Sasser, whose career high of 26 points came at SMU in Dallas as a freshman last season, was 5-for-15 from the field as Houston (3-0) overcame 35% shooting at Dickies Arena.

No. 18 Arizona State 100, Houston Baptist 77: Marcus Bagley scored 21 points, fellow freshman Josh Christopher added 17 and the host Sun Devils used a huge first-half run to rout the Huskies.

Arizona State (2-1) played without starting guard Alonzo Verge for unspecified rea-

sons in their home opener, but it did little to slow it down against overmatched Houston Baptist (0-2).

No. 23 Ohio State 74, UMass-Lowell 64: Duane Washington Jr. scored 21 points and the host Buckeyes had to rally from a second-half deficit to win. Washington took a pass from teammate C.J. Walker and hit a three from the left wing for a 70-63 lead with 1:07 left to all but clinch it for Ohio State (2-0).

No. 24 Rutgers 70, Hofstra 56: Ron Harper Jr. had 15 points and nine rebounds, Jacob Young had 17 points and the host Scarlet Knights never trailed.

Montez Mathis scored 14 points, and point guard Paul Mulcahy added nine rebounds and seven assists.

No. 25 Michigan 81, Oakland 71 (OT): Isaiah Livers scored 22 points and Hunter Dickinson had all 19 of his points after half-time, helping the host Wolverines roll to a win.

Dickinson, a 7-foot-1 center, scored six points early in overtime to finally give Michigan (2-0) control of a game it was expected to win easily.