

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Russia moves to fill void US left in northern Syria

Associated Press

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey — Russia moved to fill the void left by the United States in northern Syria on Tuesday, deploying troops to keep apart advancing Syrian government and Turkish forces. At the same time, tensions grew within NATO as Turkey defied growing condemnation of its invasion from its Western allies.

Now in its seventh day, Turkey's offensive against Kurdish fighters has upended alliances and is re-drawing the map of northern Syria for yet another time in the 8-year-old war.

Russia moved quickly to further entrench its role as a power broker after President Donald Trump ordered the pullout of American forces in northeastern Syria. The American move effectively abandoned the Kurdish fighters who were allied with the U.S. and cleared the way for Turkey's invasion aimed at crushing them.

Desperate for a new protector, the Kurdish administration struck a deal with the Russia-backed government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose forces on Sunday began moving into Kurdish-administered areas to shield them against Turkey. Syrian troops waved flags in the streets after they rolled into Manbij, a flashpoint town west of the Euphrates River that Turkey had been

aiming to capture and wrest from Kurdish control. Video by Russian journalists with the troops showed what appeared to be an abandoned outpost where U.S. forces had been stationed.

A U.S. military spokesman, Col. Myles B. Caggins, confirmed U.S. troops had completed their pullout from Manbij. During the withdrawal, contacts were kept open with the Turks and Russians to ensure the several hundred American forces there got out safely, U.S. officials said. U.S. troops have had outposts in Manbij since 2017, when they went in to avert a battle between Turkish and Kurdish fighters.

Now Russia was playing that role. Outside Manbij, Russian troops patrolled front lines between Turkish and Syrian army positions to keep them apart, Russia's Defense Ministry said.

"No one is interested" in fighting between Syrian government troops and Turkish forces, said Alexander Lavrentyev, Moscow's envoy for Syria. Russia "is not going to allow it," he told Russian state news agencies.

Kurdish leaders and representatives of the Syrian government held talks at a Russian military base last week, Lavrentyev said, adding he was unaware of any results.

Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters Washington is "deeply concerned" that Russian troops are patrolling between the two sides.

Russia has been a staunch ally of Assad for decades and entered the Syrian conflict in 2015, providing air cover that eventually turned the tide of the war in his favor. The Russian military has shipped weapons to Damascus, trained thousands of troops and put its advisers in key Syrian military units. Several hundred Russian contractors also have reportedly fought alongside Syrian troops, but their role in Assad's offensives does not appear to be significant.

In the first week of the Turkish assault, at least 154 fighters from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces have been killed, as well as 128 fighters from Turkish-backed Syrian factions, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitor of the war. It said at least 69 civilians have been killed in Syria.

Turkey says six of its soldiers have died, as well as at least 20 Turkish civilians killed by Kurdish mortar fire across the border.

Two Turkish soldiers and seven others were wounded in a mortar attack from Manbij, the Turkish Defense Ministry said, noting it retaliated and "neutralized" an estimated 15 Syrian Kurdish fighters.

A U.S. official said the approximately 1,000 U.S. troops being withdrawn from northern Syria will reposition in Iraq, Kuwait and possibly Jordan. The U.S. forces in Iraq could conduct cross-border operations against Islamic State in Syria as they did before creating the now-abandoned partnership with Syrian Kurdish-led forces, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

## Trump announces Turkey sanctions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Targeting Turkey's economy, President Donald Trump announced sanctions aimed at restraining the Turks' assault against Kurdish fighters and civilians in Syria — an assault Turkey began after Trump announced he was moving U.S. troops out of the way.

Some of those U.S. troops leaving northern Syria are being shifted to Iraq, where they could conduct cross-border operations against Islamic State militants, a U.S. official said.

The United States also called on Turkey to stop the invasion and declare a cease-fire, and Trump is sending Vice President Mike Pence and national security adviser Robert O'Brien to Ankara as soon as possible in an attempt to begin negotiations. Pence said on Monday that Trump spoke directly to Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who promised not to attack the border town of Kobani, which in 2015 witnessed ISIS' first defeat in a battle with U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters.

The Americans were scrambling for Syria's exits, a move criticized at home and abroad as opening the door to a resurgence of ISIS, whose violent takeover of Syrian and Iraqi lands five years ago was the reason American forces went in the first place.

The Turks began attacks in Syria last week against the Syrian Kurdish fighters, whom the Turks see as terrorists. On Monday, Syrian government troops moved north toward the border region, setting up a potential clash with Turkish-led forces.

In his sanctions announcement, Trump said he was halting negotiations on a \$100 billion trade deal with Turkey and raising steel tariffs back up to 50%. Trump also imposed sanctions on three senior Turkish officials and Turkey's Defense and Energy ministries.

# US considers removing nukes from Incirlik

By JOHN VANDIVER  
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. is reviewing plans to evacuate tactical nuclear weapons stored at Incirlik Air Base in light of ongoing tensions with Turkey, according to media reports.

The U.S. State and Energy departments were examining plans for potentially moving the weapons, which are roughly 250 miles from the Syrian border, The New York Times reported Monday, citing two unnamed officials.

The U.S. faces a dilemma over what to do with the weapons. Flying them out of Turkey risks further damaging the already troubled relationship with a longtime NATO ally,

while keeping the aging weapons in Incirlik would mean leaving them in a country that Defense Secretary Mark Esper warned on Sunday was “spinning out of the Western orbit.”

While not addressing the nuclear issue, Esper said on Fox News that “the arc of (Turkey’s) behavior over the past several years has been terrible.”

To keep the weapons in Incirlik would perpetuate a vulnerability that should have been eliminated years ago, a senior official told the Times.

Even before Turkey’s military intervention last week in Syria, nuclear watchdogs had raised alarms about holding the weapons at Incirlik amid a steadily deteriorating relationship between the West and

Turkey. Some former U.S. military officials also have urged the Pentagon to look for places other than Turkey to base U.S. troops.

Stored at Incirlik are B61 gravity bombs, which at their maximum yield are about 10 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The weapons can be dialed back to explode with a smaller yield.

Critics of the Incirlik arsenal argue the warheads are more of a legacy of the Cold War than a crucial part of the U.S.’ present day nuclear deterrent strategy.

U.S. European Command on Tuesday did not respond directly to a question about the status of nuclear weapons in Turkey.

“There have been no changes to the daily operations at Incirlik Air Base,” said Mark Mackowiak, a EUCOM spokesman.

While the U.S. military as a rule does not comment on where it stores nuclear weapons in Europe, a NATO-affiliated report released in April confirmed what was an open secret in security circles: U.S. nuclear weapons are stored at bases in Kleine Brogel in Belgium, Buechel in Germany, Aviano and Ghedi-Torre in Italy, Volkel in the Netherlands and Incirlik in Turkey.

The locations were mentioned in a report for the Defense and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and were published in July by a Belgian newspaper.

## ‘Safe outcome’ at military bases in Japan after storm

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
AND SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Naval Air Facility Atsugi appeared the worst hit by Typhoon Hagibis on Saturday of the U.S. military bases in and around Tokyo, according to official statements.

The base, 25 miles southwest of the city center, lay along the storm’s path after the eye came ashore over the Izu Peninsula Saturday evening.

Atsugi suffered “structural or water damage to more than 20 structures,” according to an of-

ficial base Facebook post Monday. Roofs were torn off some buildings, trees were damaged and debris was thrown around the base.

Still, the base’s emergency management office credited “a relatively safe outcome” to “command, tenant and resident preparation,” according to the post.

A request for comment on cleanup efforts went unanswered Tuesday, a holiday for the U.S. military.

Meanwhile, the civilian death toll from Hagibis climbed on Tuesday as cleanup work con-

tinued across Japan’s main island of Honshu, where a dozen rescues were underway, according to Japanese media.

By comparison, the U.S. military reported no deaths or injuries from the storm.

At Camp Zama, an Army base 40 miles southwest of Tokyo, damage was light.

“The U.S. Army Garrison Japan installations were very fortunate as they sustained only minimal typhoon damage,” according to an email Tuesday from base spokeswoman Gwendolyn Smalls. “Damage included minor tearing to the

protective netting that stretches along the Camp Zama Golf Course, a few downed trees and minor storm drain blockage due to shrubbery debris.”

Her email included a statement from U.S. Army Garrison Japan commander Col. Thomas R. Matelski.

“Our entire community did a wonderful job preparing for this typhoon, from securing outdoor belongings to having updated emergency kits,” he said. “I want to personally thank them for taking the steps to stay connected, stay informed and stay safe.”

## Soldier shot in head during search for Bergdahl dies

New York Daily News

A soldier who was shot in the head in Afghanistan while searching for another soldier who had deserted his post and was captured by the Taliban died Saturday.

Master Sgt. Mark Allen, 46, of Loganville, Ga., was one of several soldiers who was wounded during a 19-day search for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who had walked away from his post in 2009.

“I’m heartbroken to let you

all know that my husband passed away peacefully yesterday morning with his family by his side,” wife Shannon Allen wrote in a Facebook post.

“Over ten years ago, he sustained a severe head injury while serving in Afghanistan,

which caused him lifelong health problems. These past few months, he has faced some significant illnesses, and his body was finally ready to rest,” she wrote.

Allen’s funeral will be held Friday.



# New path to be Green Beret draws scrutiny

Associated Press

CAMP MACKALL, N.C. — Deep in the dark North Carolina woods, a small white light flickers in the heavy underbrush. It's after midnight and a soldier is taking a risk by turning on his headlamp to find his way.

The overnight land navigation test is just one hurdle in the grueling, monthslong course to join the Army's elite Special Forces, and using the light violates the rules. Just the night before, at least 20 commando hopefuls had either committed a disqualifying failure or given up in the drenching rain.

"We got a light!" barks an Army instructor from the front seat of his truck as he patrols the woods. Almost instantly the tiny white beacon goes out as the soldier spots the truck headlights and tries to escape detection.

For the nearly 200 candidates scrambling through Hoffman Forest at Camp Mackall, the struggle to become a Green Beret is real. But Army commanders are making sweeping changes to shorten and revamp the course. The aim is to meet evolving national security threats and to shift from a culture that weeds out struggling soldiers at every point to one that trains them to do better.

The changes that are beginning now have led to resentment

among some Special Forces that the brass wants to make it easier to pass the qualification course as a way to boost lagging recruiting numbers and ensure that women will eventually qualify. The fear, such critics say, is that Green Berets will become weaker and "dangerously less capable than ever before."

Army leaders insist the changes reflect the military's need to adapt to evolving security threats from Russia, China, Iran and other foes. They say the nearly two-year course had to be shortened, so some training will be done when soldiers get to their units, where it can be tailored to the specific needs of the region.

"Today's qualification course is for exactly the type of Green Beret we needed for 2008. It is not what we need for 2028," said Maj. Gen. Kurt Sonntag, who until recently was commander of the Army Special Operations Center of Excellence, which includes all the Special Forces training. "We need to reestablish our forte, which is our ability to work with partner forces, developing their capabilities to provide an advantage for them and the United States against our adversaries — North Korea, Iran and China and Russia."

Sonntag and other commanders, current and former instructors and students at the Special Forces training base at

Camp Mackall spoke with The Associated Press during a rare, two-day look at the course, including observation of the overnight land navigation test.

The more than 6,700 Army Green Berets are highly trained commandos who usually work in 12-person teams that are often used for specialized combat and counterterrorism operations and to train other nations' forces in battle skills. About a dozen died in combat this year, mainly working with Afghan forces fighting the Taliban; others are training troops in up to 60 countries.

The changes were driven by discussions with senior leaders, including Maj. Gen. John Deedrick, commander of 1st Special Forces Command, who told Sonntag he wanted soldiers to come out of the course with solid basic skills that can be sharpened when they get to their units.

"If you try to make them an expert in everything, you're gonna give me a Swiss Army knife that can do a little bit of everything but isn't real good," he said in an interview at Fort Bragg, N.C. "I'd prefer to have him very good at the basics, and then let me tailor what he's gonna do in the long run."

The new course drops some training, shifts some around and eliminates gaps in the schedule. For example, language training will now come

after soldiers graduate the course, becoming a skill to learn rather than one needed to pass to stay in the course.

Also, because the new Pentagon strategy is focused on threats from China and Russia, rather than wars against insurgents, some counterterrorism skills will be tailored to specific regions and taught after soldiers are in their units.

Senior Army leaders endorse the changes. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said Sonntag "really grinded through this to make adjustments to the course to make it more effective and streamline the amount of time they're in the schoolhouse" so they get to their assigned units more quickly. The new training, he said, will be more relevant to current threats.

The changes, however, caused an uproar among some instructors in the Special Forces community. In a lengthy and anonymous 2017 email, a Green Beret instructor argued that "career-focused leaders" have eroded standards in the qualification course in order to meet graduation quotas. The email charged that allowing women to compete for special operations jobs was also responsible because commanders want to "markedly lower the standards enough to ensure that any woman attempting this path will have absolutely no issue achieving it."

## Navy vet injured in '10 lauds successful penis transplant

By J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Navy veteran who had a penis transplant eight years after a bomb in Afghanistan blew off the lower half of his body said the pioneering surgery has helped him feel back to normal again.

"This surgery was a way for me to overcome that little subconscious voice or whatever it was that would always keep me feeling different from everyone else," the former Navy corpsman, who asked not to be named, told the MIT Technolo-

gy Review in a story published Monday. "It was one of the best decisions I ever made."

The veteran, referred to by the pseudonym Ray in the article, lost both legs, his penis, scrotum and a chunk of his abdominal wall when he stepped on a roadside bomb as he ran to help a soldier during a Taliban ambush in 2010. In March 2018, he became the fourth man ever and the first military veteran to have a penis transplant.

The injuries he sustained in Afghanistan were so severe, and the surgical procedure so

complex, that it took 14 hours for a team of surgeons at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, led by Dr. Richard Redett, to transplant a donor's penis, scrotum and tissue from the thigh and lower abdomen to Ray, the story said.

The Navy veteran began regaining sensation in his groin area within six months, he told the MIT Technology Review. He can urinate standing up and get erections but cannot become a biological father.

From October 2001, when the U.S.-led invasion of Afghani-

stan began, to August 2013, 1,367 male servicemembers sustained one or more injuries to their genitalia or urinary systems, it said, citing an article published in the Journal of Urology in 2017.

Ray told his story to let them know that servicemembers have options, he said. Since his transplant, he has become more confident and outgoing, friends and the surgeon who led his transplant said.

"He told me, which was the best news I could hear, that it feels normal," Redett said.

# Former adviser: Bolton called Trump lawyer a 'hand grenade'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former national security adviser John Bolton was so alarmed by Rudy Giuliani's back-channel activities in Ukraine that he described President Donald Trump's personal lawyer as a "hand grenade who is going to blow everybody up," according to a former White House aide.

The aide, Fiona Hill, testified for more than 10 hours Monday as part of the Democrats' impeachment probe into Trump's dealings with Ukraine. She detailed Bolton's concerns to lawmakers and told them that she had at least two meetings with National Security Council lawyer John Eisenberg about the matter at Bolton's request, according to a person familiar with the testimony who requested anonymity to discuss the confidential interview.

Those meetings took place in early July, weeks before a July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in which Trump urged that Zelenskiy investigate political rival Joe Biden's family and Ukraine's own involvement in the 2016 presidential election.

A whistleblower complaint about that call, later made public, prompted House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to launch the impeachment inquiry. Giuliani is Trump's personal lawyer and was heavily involved in the effort to pressure Ukraine on the investigations.

Hill, a top adviser on Russia, also referred to U.S. Ambassador Gordon Sondland and acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, the person said, telling the three committees leading the investigation that Bolton also told her he was not part of "whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up," an apparent reference to talks over Ukraine.

She quoted Bolton as saying in one conversation that Giuliani was "a hand grenade who's going to blow everybody up."

Sondland is expected to appear for a deposition under subpoena Thursday and will certainly be asked about those talks.

The cache of text messages was provided by one of the inquiry's first witnesses, former Ukrainian envoy Kurt Volker, and detailed attempts by the diplomats to serve as interme-

diaries around the time Trump urged Zelenskiy to start the investigations into a company linked to Biden's son.

The interview is one of what could eventually become dozens of closed-door depositions in the impeachment probe. There are five more scheduled this week, mostly with State Department officials, though it is unclear if they will all appear after Trump declared he wouldn't cooperate with the probe. On Tuesday, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent was scheduled to testify.

One witness who may not be called before Congress is the still-anonymous government whistleblower who touched off the impeachment inquiry.

Top Democrats say testimony and evidence coming in from other witnesses, and even the Republican president himself, are backing up the whistleblower's account of what transpired during Trump's July 25 phone call with Zelenskiy. Lawmakers have grown deeply concerned about protecting the person from Trump's threats and may not wish to risk exposing the whistleblower's identity.

## Hunter Biden denies any wrongdoing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden's son Hunter is rejecting assertions by President Donald Trump and his Republican allies that he did anything wrong in engaging in foreign work in Ukraine and China.

Hunter Biden also says he failed to take into account potential implications for his father's political career. The former vice president is a front-runner in the 2020 Democratic presidential contest.

In an ABC News interview that aired Tuesday, Hunter Biden concedes he may have made a mistake "in the grand scheme of things" for failing to see the political repercussions for his father. But he adds, "Did I make a mistake based on some ethical lapse? Absolutely not."

Hunter Biden also acknowledged that he likely would not have been named to the board of a foreign company if his last name weren't Biden.

"I don't think there's a lot of things that would have happened in my life if my last name wasn't Biden," he said.

Trump and Republicans have targeted Hunter Biden for his work in Ukraine and China, making baseless claims of corruption.

In a July 25 phone call, Trump pressured Ukraine's leader to investigate the Bidens. Hunter Biden was on the board of an energy company in Ukraine. That phone call is the focus of a whistleblower complaint that triggered the formal House impeachment inquiry into Trump.

Hunter Biden said he never discussed his business dealings with his father.

Hunter Biden, who recently said he would step down from the board of directors of a Chinese-backed private equity firm, blamed his father's political opponents for creating a firestorm over his work.

## Texas officer resigns, charged in shooting

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A white former Fort Worth police officer was being held in jail on a murder charge after shooting a black woman through a window of her home, and the department told a grieving community that investigators would ensure "no stone is left unturned" in the search for answers.

Aaron Dean, 34, was jailed Monday night on \$200,000 bond after being charged with murder in a shooting that began with a call about an open front door. Earlier in the day he resigned from the force, and the police chief said he would have been fired if he hadn't.

Police bodycam video showed Dean approaching the door of the home where Atatiana Jefferson, 28, was caring for her 8-year-old nephew

early Saturday. He then walked around the side of the house, pushed through a gate into the fenced-off backyard and fired through the glass a split-second after shouting at Jefferson to show her hands.

Dean was not heard identifying himself as police on the video, and interim Police Chief Ed Kraus said there was no sign Dean or the other officer who responded even knocked on the front door.

Police went to Jefferson's home about 2:25 a.m. after a neighbor called a non-emergency line to report a door ajar. In a statement over the weekend, the department said officers saw someone near a window inside the home and that one of them drew his gun and fired after "perceiving a threat."



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Apologizes made after student denied meal

**SD** HURON — A South Dakota superintendent apologized after learning a student at a middle school was denied breakfast as a form of discipline.

Huron Superintendent Terry Nebelsick said a complaint was made to the South Dakota Department of Education after the incident was shared on social media.

Nebelsick, posting on Facebook, said a staff member at Huron Middle School violated district policy last week by denying the child breakfast because the student was misbehaving.

## Pickup crashes into roof; no one injured

**WI** BELOIT — Police said a Wisconsin man was arrested after crashing a pickup truck into the roof of a Beloit home.

Beloit police said the 37-year-old Beloit man was driving at a high rate of speed Saturday afternoon when his vehicle left the roadway, entered a water-retaining ditch and went airborne.

The homeowner was watching a football game when the truck came crashing through the roof about 12 feet from him. No injuries were reported.

The driver was arrested on suspicion of operating a vehicle while under the influence, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and reckless driving.

## Windsurfer stranded in water overnight

**DE** DEWEY BEACH — A windsurfer spent a night stranded and floating

in waters off Delaware after his sail broke and no one could hear his calls for help.

The Daily Times of Salisbury, Md., reported Sunday the man was found uninjured around 7:45 a.m. Friday after floating for hours from Dewey Beach to Bay City, where he reached the shore. The U.S. Coast Guard, Delaware State Police and other agencies had searched for him.

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control said the man told police he could not reattach the sail to his board after it disconnected.

## Fire chief: 'Elusive' alligator caught

**MD** ADAMSTOWN — A fire chief in rural Maryland said an "elusive" 3-foot-long alligator has finally been caught.

WJLA-TV reported the alligator was caught Saturday in a retention pond on a private property in Adamstown after animal control officers and others spent hours Thursday and Friday trying to capture it. The station reported officers ended up placing a live animal cage trap with bait on the muddy shoreline after initial efforts using a fishing line failed.

Maryland residents are not allowed to own exotic animals, including alligators.

## River otters attack, injure pet dog in park

**AK** ANCHORAGE — An Alaska man said he rescued his family's dog from an attack by river otters in a small lake inside an Anchorage park.

Alaska Public Media reported Kenny Brewer, 27, waded waist-deep into Taku Lake and suffered a bite on his hand while

pulling the dog away from the river otters that converged on the pet.

The Anchorage dietitian said he and his wife were walking the husky mix, which was bitten by a group of otters that dragged the dog underwater temporarily.

A veterinarian cleaned the dog's cuts, sliced away damaged tissue and stitched a drain tube into its leg.

## Police: Suspect drove 130 mph, wrecked

**GA** ALPHARETTA — Police in Georgia said a DUI suspect who was clocked going 130 mph down a highway went airborne in his car, struck a median and flipped over a guardrail before walking away unharmed.

Alpharetta police said in a Facebook post they encountered the unidentified driver early Saturday morning. An officer began a pursuit after he found the man was traveling nearly 65 mph over the speed limit, but the suspect sped up.

Police said he lost control of the vehicle while exiting and rebounded off a concrete median, then climbed out of his Volvo without serious injuries.

## Grenade found in yard is safely disposed of

**OK** OKLAHOMA CITY — Police in Oklahoma City are investigating how a grenade wound up in a residential yard.

Authorities said a homeowner on the city's southeast side was doing yard work when he noticed what appeared to be a grenade in the yard of his neighbor Saturday. The Oklahoma City Police Department Bomb Squad responded to the homeowner's call but could not immediately determine if the

grenade was potentially explosive or inert.

Officials said bomb squad personnel decided to take custody of the grenade and dispose of it on the police firing range.

## Retiring pilot gives wings to toddler

**FL** MIAMI — An American Airlines pilot retiring after 35 years gave his wings to a Florida toddler with Down syndrome after his final flight.

Sarah and Ki Klitenick had been sitting next to the pilot's wife on a flight from Madrid to Miami earlier this month. The woman texted her husband in the cockpit, asking Capt. Joe Weis to come and meet Ki, 2.

Weis took the child on a tour of the cockpit and then pinned his personal wings from the airline on Ki's shirt.

The Orlando Sentinel reported Friday that the delighted toddler clapped and said "thank you" in sign language.

## Ski resort wins race to be first to open

**CO** FRISCO — A Colorado ski resort has opened its doors to become the first in the state to kick off ski season ahead of a scheduled opening by a nearby resort.

The Summit Daily reported Arapahoe Basin Ski Area beat Keystone Resort to become the first opened ski resort after announcing Friday that it would start operating lifts at 3:30 p.m. A-Basin said it would run until 5:30 p.m. to provide access to the intermediate trail for \$15.

Keystone Resort announced Friday its Saturday opening plans, marking the earliest opening day for the resort in more than 20 years.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Strasburg, Nats take control of NLCS

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 100 pitches in, Stephen Strasburg was adamant he wasn't quite ready to leave the latest superb start by a Nationals pitcher against the St. Louis Cardinals in the NL Championship Series — one that led to a victory that put Washington on the verge of the city's first World Series in 86 years.

It was the seventh inning, and manager Dave Martinez noticed Strasburg had flexed his right leg and reached for that hamstring. So the skipper and a trainer went to the mound to check on their guy.

"I was trying to explain to him, 'Hey, you just grabbed your hamstring, so there's a little concern,'" Martinez recalled. "He said, 'No, I cramped up. It's fine. I always cramp up.' He said, 'I'm staying in the game. I want to finish this inning.' I said, 'You sure you're all right?' He said, 'I'm in the game!'"

The right-hander did, indeed, stay in. He even struck out the next two batters to raise his total to 12 Ks, each finished with an off-speed pitch. Strasburg took his turn silencing the Cardinals' struggling bats, Nationals postseason star Howie Kendrick doubled three times and drove in three more runs, and Washington took a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven NLCS by beating St. Louis 8-1 Monday night.

"It's a little surreal," reliever Sean Doolittle said about being one win from the World Series, "and I think that's why it's important that we don't look too far ahead."

After Nationals starters Anibal Sanchez and Max Scherzer flirted with no-hitters in the first two games against the Cardinals, Strasburg wasn't quite that untouchable: He allowed a double in the second inning, six later singles and one unearned run.

Still, the Cardinals, quite simply, can't score in this NLCS: They have a grand total of two runs and 11 hits through three games. Washington's three starters have a combined ERA — no calculator necessary for this one — of 0.00.

Yes, that's zero-point-zero-zero.

"We expected better," said Kolten Wong, who went 0-for-4 on Monday and is 0-for-10 in the series for St. Louis.

Now it's Patrick Corbin's chance to see if he can match his rotation-mates. The \$140 million lefty was scheduled to start for the Nationals in Game 4 on Tuesday night, when they can close out a sweep at home. Rookie right-hander Dakota Hudson will be on the mound for the Cardinals.

"We've got to get a lead at some point in this series. Hard to win a game if you can't get a lead," St. Louis manager Mike Shildt said. "We've got to figure out a way to create some offense early in the game and be

able to hold it there."

Washington hasn't put a baseball team in the World Series since 1933, when the Senators lost to the New York Giants in five games. The nation's capital owns only one MLB championship; the Senators won all the way back in 1924. There wasn't even a baseball team in Washington for more than three decades until the Montreal Expos franchise moved to town before the 2005 season and was renamed the Nationals.

Until this season, the Nationals hadn't won a playoff series, going 0-4 since 2012, but they sure look as if they're making up for lost time.

"Shoot, maybe we're finally coming around," third baseman Anthony Rendon said.

How about this current run? The Nationals, who found themselves at 19-31 in late May, have won 15 of their past 17 games, stretching back to the last week of the regular season.

It all starts with the pitching.

"That's what our team is built around. You have those guys, those horses, that take the ball every fifth day," said Ryan Zimmerman, who drove in two runs. "They haven't disappointed, obviously, in the postseason, but they've kind of been the backbone of this team all year."

## Vols confident QB Maurer will play against Alabama

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee coach Jeremy Pruitt believes quarterback Brian Maurer will be available Saturday at No. 1 Alabama after a concussion prevented the freshman from finishing a 20-10 victory over Mississippi State last week.

"Brian took some reps last night at practice," Pruitt said Monday. "So he's going to be fine, I'm sure."

Maurer was making his second career start last week when he scrambled for a 13-yard gain late in the second quarter and landed headfirst. Maurer initially stayed in the game, handing the ball off twice before throwing an interception.

That interception ended Maurer's afternoon, as Jarrett Guarantano handled Tennessee's quarterback duties for the

rest of the game. Pruitt said afterward that his quarterback had sustained a concussion.

Pruitt was asked Monday why Maurer wasn't evaluated immediately after the 13-yard run.

"He hit his head on the ground, he jumps up and runs back in the huddle, gets a call, calls the next deal," Pruitt said. "Every play there's a lot of people running into each other and they're hitting their heads. I guess we could stop the game and evaluate everybody out there, but I don't think we have time for that."

Maurer's condition isn't the only issue facing Tennessee as it prepares for its toughest challenge of the season. Alabama (6-0, 3-0 SEC) has beaten Tennessee 12 straight times by an average margin of 25.6 points.

Alabama is favored by 35, but

Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban is taking nothing for granted in this matchup with his former assistant. Pruitt was Alabama's director of player development from 2007-09, defensive backs coach from 2010-12 and defensive coordinator from 2016-17.

"Jeremy has done a really, really good job there," Saban said. "His team to me is emerging. They lost two games that they very easily could have won, but they're playing with great discipline, toughness. The players are really playing hard. They're executing well in terms of what they did and probably played their best game this last game against Mississippi State."

Tennessee's defense won't be close to full strength as it faces an Alabama offense averaging 51 points to rank second among all Football Bowl Subdivision teams.

Linebacker Henry To'o To'o received a targeting penalty in the second half of the Mississippi State game, which means the Volunteers (2-4, 1-2) must play the first half at Alabama without their second-leading tackler.

Alabama receiver DeVonta Smith also is facing discipline after getting ejected from the Tide's 47-28 triumph over Texas A&M. Saban said Smith probably would sit out the first half of the Tennessee game.

The difference is that Alabama arguably has the nation's deepest receiving corps, while Tennessee has a severe talent shortage at inside linebacker. Tennessee's linebacker depth took a hit earlier this season when Jeremy Banks was dismissed from the team and Will Ignont and Shanon Reid left the program.



# Packers' Crosby hits FG to edge Lions

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — It took Mason Crosby 13 seasons to perform his first Lambeau Leap.

The 35-year-old kicker nailed a 23-yard field goal as time expired and jumped into the crowd with a boost from long snapper Hunter Bradley after he finished off a rally for the Green Bay Packers, who benefited from some questionable officiating to edge the Detroit Lions 23-22 on Monday night.

"That was fun, yeah," Crosby said of leaping into the crowd. "That feeling, once you get up in the stands, the energy in there and teammates and everyone's around, that's something I'll always remember. That was great."

Aaron Rodgers, in his second straight game without top target Davante Adams, completed 24 of 39 passes for 283 yards and two touchdowns, including a beautiful 35-yard throw to Allen Lazard for the second-year pro's first career score.

"I actually sit next to him in the team meetings," Rodgers said of Lazard, who was cut by the Packers in August and then signed to the practice squad to start the season. "We've struck up a pretty good friendship."

"The thing that got me was, which you love as a quarterback, and that's when your receiver's coming back and telling you he wants the ball and what route he wants to

run. ... That was him coming back in the huddle, telling me what play he wanted, and for a young guy to do that, how can you not have confidence in that?"

Rodgers linked up with Jamaal Williams for the other TD. Williams finished with 104 yards on 14 carries and four catches for 32 yards for Green Bay (5-1), which captured its first win in five tries against its NFC North rival.

The Packers, who are off to their first 3-0 start in the NFC North since 2012, might not have pulled it off if not for two fourth-quarter penalties for illegal hands to the face against Detroit's Trey Flowers, both of them on third down. The first set up Lazard's touchdown, and the second allowed Green Bay to run the clock down to 2 seconds before Crosby's game-winner. In both cases, replays showed Flowers' hands on the neck or shoulder — not the face — of a Packers lineman.

"I actually changed the position of my hand, because it was to the chest initially," Flowers said. "I was doing it all game. I didn't know that was a flag to the chest, so I changed it. And he called it again."

"I didn't think hands to the chest was a penalty. I thought hands to the face, but I had him right here in the chest. The second time I changed it. ... That's part of a move that I do. So, nah, I don't think that was a penalty."

Referee Clete Blakeman said each of the

calls was made by umpire Jeff Rice, and he discussed the last one with him.

"Basically, it's for illegal use of the hands, hands-to-the-face foul," Blakeman told a pool reporter. "To be a foul, we basically need some forceful contact that's prolonged to the head and neck area of the defender."

"So, in his mind he had pinned him back, it was prolonged, and that's what created the foul."

Matt Prater was good from 26, 22, 41, 51 and 54 yards for the Lions (2-2-1), who fell to 0-2 under Matt Patricia on Monday night. Detroit lost its last Monday night game to the Jets 48-17 last year.

"We got to find a way to finish," said Kenny Golladay, who had 121 yards on five catches for Detroit. "That's a big part of it right now. Find a way to finish. We left a lot of points out there. We were in the red zone quite a bit and just coming out with field goals. That's tough, especially when you've got a guy, a quarterback on the other side that you, you've got to finish."

Matthew Stafford finished 18-for-32 for 265 yards and was sacked three times.

Kerryon Johnson scored the lone touchdown for the Lions from 1 yard out in the first quarter. Preston Smith and Za'Darius Smith each had a sack for Green Bay. Preston Smith and Kyler Fackrell combined for the other.

## Engram's return could help battered Giants

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The anemic and injury-plagued New York Giants' offense expects to get a little help when it plays the Arizona Cardinals this weekend in a game matching the first two quarterbacks taken in this year's NFL Draft.

Giants tight end Evan Engram was optimistic Monday about playing Sunday at MetLife Stadium, and there is a chance 2018 NFL Offensive Rookie of Year Saquon Barkley also will be back.

Engram, who is having a breakout season, missed Thursday night's 35-14 loss to the New England Patriots with a knee injury. Barkley has missed the last three games with a high ankle sprain suffered against

the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sept. 15.

The status of top receiver Sterling Shepard is uncertain. He missed the Patriots' game with his second concussion this season. He took part in individual drills Monday, but coach Pat Shurmur refused to talk about his status.

"It's unfortunate," Engram said of the team not having three major cogs in the offense. "We've talked about it. We can't dwell on it. We have to keep moving."

One sign that Shepard may be out a little longer was New York signing veteran receiver Bennie Fowler, who was cut before the game against the Minnesota Vikings. Shepard was hurt in that contest.

The Giants (2-4) have done

very little offensively in the last two games, being limited to 211 total yards in a 28-10 loss to the Vikings and 213 against the Patriots.

Engram, who had a team-high 33 catches for 373 yards and two TDs, and Barkley watched Thursday night's game at Shepard's home.

"It's tough, definitely opportunities in that game," Engram said. "It (hurt) not being out there, but like I said, there are things out of our control. When they do happen we can't really dwell and pout and not gain anything from it. We just have to do what we can and be ready."

In the last two games, Daniel Jones and the offense accounted for one touchdown in each game. A big kickoff return

by rookie Corey Ballentine set up the TD against the Vikings and the one against the Patriots was on a 64-yard pass to Golden Tate III. The good news for the Giants is that while they have lost their last two games, Dallas and Philadelphia (both 3-3) lost over the weekend. New York is a game out of first place in the NFC East heading into the matchup with Kyler Murray and the Cardinals (2-3-1).

Murray was the No. 1 overall pick in the draft. Jones was taken No. 6.

"I have seen some crazy things happen in this league," veteran safety Antoine Bethea said. "Two-and-four is not where we wanted to be. We just have to focus on Arizona."

## NHL roundup

## Toews' OT goal caps Islanders' comeback

Associated Press

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Devon Toews scored at 1:13 of overtime to complete a stunning late-game comeback by the New York Islanders as they downed the St. Louis Blues 3-2 on Monday.

The Blues seemed to have the game well in hand in the closing minutes before Brock Nelson put the home team on the board with his third goal of the season at 14:29 of the third. Mathew Barzal then tied the game at 19:33 off a scramble in front with Islanders goalie Thomas Greiss pulled for an extra attacker.

That set the stage for Toews' goal. Barzal and Nelson had the assists. That sent what had been a mostly silent crowd at Nassau Coliseum into a frenzy as the defending champion Blues skated off toward their locker room. Griess made 21 saves for the win.

Goals from Brayden Schenn and Vladimir Tarasenko had given St. Louis a 2-0 lead.

**Bruins 4, Ducks 2:** David Pastrnak scored a career-high four goals for his fifth career hat trick, leading host Boston over Anaheim.

Jaroslav Halak stopped 30 shots and Brad Marchand added two assists for the Bruins, the Stanley Cup runner-up off to a 5-1 start.

Rickard Rakell and Adam Henrique scored for the Ducks, and John Gibson made 19 saves. Anaheim has lost two of three after winning its first three games

this season.

Pastrnak completed his hat trick with an unassisted goal off a faceoff. He stole the puck from defenseman Josh Mason and slipped a wrist shot between John Gibson's pads 2:20 into the third period to make it 3-1, prompting fans to throw hats on the ice.

The 23-year-old forward scored 2:14 later off a nice feed from Marchand.

**Panthers 6, Devils 4:** Mackenzie Weegar scored the tying goal and set up Noel Acciari for the go-ahead tally and Florida rallied from a three-goal deficit for a win at winless New Jersey.

Brett Connolly scored twice, Jonathan Huberdeau and Evgenii Dandonov also had goals as the Panthers snapped a three-game losing streak. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 17 shots as he improved his career mark against the Devils to 17-5-1.

Pavel Zacha, Taylor Hall, Jesper Bratt and Will Butcher scored for New Jersey, which fell to 0-4-2. Cory Schneider made 28 saves.

**Wild 2, Senators 0:** Alex Stalock stopped all 26 shots he faced and Minnesota won at Ottawa for its first win of the season.

Victor Rask and Zach Parise scored third-period goals for the Wild (1-4-0).

Stalock, in his first start of the season, earned his sixth career shutout.

Craig Anderson stopped 33 shots for the Senators (1-4-0), who wrapped up a four-game homestand with a 1-3-0 record.

After two scoreless periods, Minnesota opened the scoring midway through the third. Rask had a great takeaway on Jean-

Gabriel Pageau and then beat Anderson short-side.

**Sabres 4, Stars 0:** Rookie forward Victor Olofsson set an NHL record by becoming the first player to score his first seven career goals on the power play, Carter Hutton made 25 saves to earn his first shutout of the season, and host Buffalo kept up its strong start.

Sam Reinhart, Jeff Skinner and Marcus Johansson had the other goals and Jack Eichel recorded two assists for the Sabres. Olofsson also had an assist.

**Avalanche 6, Capitals 3:** Nazem Kadri and Mikko Rantanen each had a goal and two assists to help visiting Colorado improve to 5-0-0.

Erik Johnson, Nikita Zadorov and Matt Nieto also scored for the Avalanche. Nathan MacKinnon added an empty-net goal and had an assist for Colorado, which scored on its first three shots of the game.

**Blackhawks 3, Oilers 1:** Patrick Kane and Alexander Nylander scored, Corey Crawford stopped 27 shots, and host Chicago got its first win of the season.

Brandon Saad added an empty-netter with 32.7 seconds left to seal the win for the Blackhawks, who went 0-2-1 in its first three games. Crawford lost a bid for his 26th career shutout when James Neal scored his NHL-leading eighth goal on a power-play with 2:11 remaining.

Mike Smith finished with 32 saves for Edmonton, which had opened the season with five wins.

## Blaney edges Newman to advance in playoffs

Associated Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Ryan Blaney emerged safely from the wreckage at Talladega Superspeedway that claimed other playoff contenders, winning by a tiny margin that was huge for his championship hopes.

Blaney beat Ryan Newman in a door-to-door race to the finish line to win Monday and advance to the third round of NASCAR's playoffs.

Blaney's first win of the season came as he was in danger of getting eliminated from title contention. The playoff field will be trimmed from 12 drivers to

eight next weekend at Kansas. Blaney had little margin for error after he had mechanical issues at Dover last weekend and finished 35th.

"Our mindset really was we had to win one of these two races," Blaney said. "We were so far back in points. I know Talladega's a wild card. There was a lot of wrecks today and a lot of guys got tore up. But we didn't really get any stage points and we were already pretty far behind the eight-ball.

"We knew we had to probably win one of these two weeks. It's just a huge relief."

Blaney joins Kyle Larson

in the round of eight, with six spots still available.

The race began Sunday but was postponed by rain after the first stage. The delay gave Blaney time to recover from a Sunday spin as he tried to enter pit road, and ended with Ford and Team Penske as winners. Ford had won seven consecutive Talladega races until Chevrolet snapped that streak in April.

Blaney was the leader on a restart with two laps remaining and had a huge push from fellow Ford driver Aric Almirola to gain space on the field. Then Newman came charging along on the outside line with help

from Denny Hamlin and Newman easily zipped past Blaney.

But the Ford train remained committed and Blaney got another push from Almirola to pull alongside Newman. The two raced door-to-door to the finish line, with Blaney winning by a nose. The 0.007-second margin of victory was the sixth-closest in the history of Talladega, which celebrated its 50th anniversary.

It was Ford's sixth straight Talladega playoff victory and Team Penske's seventh win in the last seven Cup races at the Alabama superspeedway.