

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## US strikes Taliban in Helmand province

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — American forces launched airstrikes in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province after Afghan forces there came under attack from the Taliban, a U.S. military official said Monday.

The two days of strikes were in line with the peace agreement signed by the Americans and Taliban in February, USFOR-A spokesman Col. Sonny Leggett said on Twitter. The U.S. said in the agreement that it would defend Afghan troops if they came under attack.

"USFOR-A has & will continue to provide support in defense of the ANDSF under attack by the Taliban," Leggett tweeted.

In a separate statement Leggett posted

on Twitter, USFOR-A commander Gen. Scott Miller called on the Taliban "to immediately stop their offensive action in Helmand Province and reduce their violence around the country."

The announcement of the targeted airstrikes followed heavy clashes over the weekend that brought the Taliban to the outskirts of Helmand's capital, Lashkar Gah. The Taliban have also been blamed for a rash of fighting around the country.

Despite the escalating violence, the U.S. is on course to fulfill a key commitment it made under the deal with the Taliban — to withdraw all foreign forces by May next year.

But President Donald Trump blindsided military leaders when he tweeted last week that U.S. troops "should" be home by Christmas.

Trump's comments "alarmed Pentagon and State Department officials who fear that putting a definitive date on troop withdrawal could undercut negotiations to finalize a peace deal between the Taliban and the Afghan government," USA Today reported last week.

Military officials have said the Taliban have not held to verbal agreements with the U.S. to reduce violence against Afghan forces. The Taliban also have fallen short of conditions in the February deal, including that they would sever ties with terrorist groups like al-Qaida — the masterminds of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. The intra-Afghan talks only got underway in September after extensive delays and are expected to take months, if not years.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

## Health care is focus as judge's hearing opens

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats branded Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett a threat to Americans' health care during the coronavirus pandemic Monday at the start of a fast-tracked hearing that Republicans are confident will end with Barrett's confirmation to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg before Election Day.

In a competing effort to approvingly define the 48-year-old Barrett, who sat silent and wearing a face mask, Republican senators called President Donald Trump's pick a thoughtful judge with impeccable credentials.

Barring a dramatic development, Republicans appear to have the votes to confirm Barrett to a lifetime seat on the Supreme Court. If she is confirmed quickly she could be on the Supreme Court when it

hears the latest challenge to the Affordable Care Act, a week after the election.

Democrats sought to tie her nomination to the upcoming court case.

"Health care coverage for millions of Americans is at stake with this nomination," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, of California, the Senate Judiciary Committee's senior Democrat.

The Trump administration wants the court to strike down the entire law popularly known as "Obamacare" on Nov. 10. Barrett has criticized the court's two earlier major rulings supporting the law.

Among Republicans, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, dismissed warnings Barrett will undo the Obama-era health care law as "outrageous."

Republicans also warned against making Barrett's Catholicism an issue in the confirmation debate, especially in regard to her stance on abor-

tion, with Sen. Josh Hawley, of Missouri, lambasting what he called a "pattern and practice of religious bigotry" by Democrats. However, Democratic senators made clear in advance of the hearing that they didn't plan to question the judge on the specifics of her religious faith.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, also a practicing Catholic, told reporters ahead of a campaign trip to Ohio that he doesn't think "there's any question about her faith."

The committee, meeting on a federal holiday, kicked off four days of statements and testimony in an environment that has been altered by the coronavirus pandemic. Some senators were taking part remotely, and the hearing room itself was arranged with health concerns in mind.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., opened the hearing acknowledging "the COVID problem in

America is real." But he said, "We do have a country that needs to move forward safely."

Graham acknowledged the obvious: "This is going to be a long, contentious week."

Protesters rallied outside the Senate buildings with the hearing room largely closed to the public. Capitol Police said 22 people were arrested and charged on suspicion of crowding, obstructing or other violations.

Republicans are moving at a breakneck pace to seat Barrett before the Nov. 3 election to secure Trump's pick, which would put her on the bench for any election-related challenges.

Trump chose Barrett after the death last month of Ginsburg, a liberal icon. It's the opportunity to entrench a conservative majority on the court for years to come with his third justice.

# Stuttgart raises limits after surge puts city on red alert

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTT GART, Germany — A sharp increase in coronavirus cases in Stuttgart over the weekend has forced officials to raise the health threat in the city to Germany's highest level and order new restrictions on social gatherings.

"We have to act decisively now to get the number of new infections down again immediately," Stuttgart Mayor Fritz Kuhn said in a statement Sunday.

About 28,000 Americans with ties to the military live in the Stuttgart area, which is home to the Army's Europe and Africa commands. Restrictions imposed by city authorities also apply to U.S. military personnel and their families, many of whom live off-base, and Defense Department civilians.

The health threat was elevated to "red" after 82 new cases were reported from Saturday to Sunday, pushing the district above the infection rate of 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants over a 7-day period. That's the level at which Germany's public health agency, the Robert Koch Institute, raises the alert status for a city or district to the highest level.

"The trend seems to be intensifying," the city said in a statement.

Case numbers are rising so rapidly that the city can no longer do effective contact tracing, "which is so important for controlling the pandemic," the head of Stuttgart's health department said in the statement.

"We are therefore mobilizing all forces within the city administration and are requesting help from the German army,"

Prof. Stefan Eehalt said.

Starting Wednesday, celebrations will be restricted to 10 participants in private venues and 25 people in rented or public spaces, the statement said.

Masks will be required in all public areas in the city center. Restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol downtown are expected to also be beefed up, but details were still being hashed out Monday. Bars in Stuttgart currently can't serve beverages after 11 p.m. and shop sales must stop by 9 p.m.

The neighboring county of Esslingen has been at the red alert level since last week.

The rise in coronavirus cases in the area mirrors what is happening in communities across Germany, including those that are home to Americans affiliated with the military.

## Trump: Not contagious; experts say not certain

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump tweeted on Sunday that he is "immune" to the coronavirus and "can't give it," even though the White House has not released negative test results and immunity to the virus remains poorly understood.

The tweet was quickly flagged by Twitter, which said it contained "misleading and potentially harmful misinformation" related to the coronavirus. It was the latest example of the social media giant pushing back against the president's posts on the deadly virus, and it appeared to refer to Trump's claim to immunity. Some recovered patients with COVID-19 have been reinfected, and experts say many questions remain about immunity, including how long it may last.

"A total and complete sign off from White House Doctors yesterday," Trump said. "That means I can't get it (immune), and can't give it. Very nice to know!!!"

Trump's claim came one day after his physician said he is "no longer considered a transmission risk to others," in a memo that seemed to clear Trump to return to his normal activities a little more than a week after he announced that he had tested positive for the coronavirus. Trump planned to hold a campaign rally Monday in Florida.

But experts say there would be no way to know for sure whether the president is contagious so soon after a COVID-19 diagnosis, and they noted that the White House has never made clear the severity of Trump's illness, which could influence how long he should isolate.

## Study: Virus can live on smooth surfaces

*Bloomberg*

The coronavirus may remain infectious for weeks on banknotes, glass and other common surfaces, according to research by Australia's top biosecurity laboratory that highlights risks from paper currency, touchscreen devices and grab handles and rails.

Scientists at the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness showed SARS-CoV-2 is "extremely robust," surviving for 28 days on smooth surfaces such as glass found on cellphone screens and plastic banknotes at room temperature, or 68 degrees Fahrenheit. That compares with 17 days survival for the flu virus.

Virus survival declined to less than a day at 104 degrees Fahrenheit on some surfaces, according to the study, published Monday in *Virology Journal*. The findings add to evidence that the COVID-19-causing coronavirus survives for longer in cooler weather, making it potentially harder to control in winter than summer. The research also helps to more accurately predict and mitigate the pandemic's spread, the researchers said.

"Our results show that SARS-CoV-2 can re-

main infectious on surfaces for long periods of time, reinforcing the need for good practices such as regular hand washing and cleaning surfaces," said Debbie Eagles, the center's deputy director, in an emailed statement.

The coronavirus tended to survive longer on nonporous or smooth surfaces, compared with porous complex surfaces, such as cotton.

The research received funding from Australia's defense department. It involved drying the coronavirus in an artificial mucus on different surfaces, at concentrations similar to those reported in samples from infected patients, and then re-isolating the virus over a month. The study was also carried out in the dark, to remove the effect of ultraviolet light, as research has demonstrated direct sunlight can rapidly inactivate the virus.

"While the precise role of surface transmission, the degree of surface contact and the amount of virus required for infection is yet to be determined, establishing how long this virus remains viable on surfaces is critical for developing risk mitigation strategies in high contact areas," Eagles said.



# Whitmer: Mich. working to protect voters

*Detroit Free Press*

LANSING, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, the target of an alleged kidnapping plot that included threats of violence, said Sunday she is not worried about violence on Nov. 3, but the state is prepared to keep voters safe that day.

Whitmer also said on CBS' "Face the Nation" she believes "there still are serious threats" from individuals aligned with groups similar to those involved in the alleged plot against her, which is a suspected act of domestic terrorism.

Asked by host Margaret Brennan if she is worried about violence on Election Day, in light of the alleged plot against her, Whitmer said: "I'm not

worried, but we are preparing to make sure that we do everything to keep people safe.

"We will not tolerate anyone ... interfering with someone's ability to safely vote."

On Thursday, the federal government charged six men with conspiracy to kidnap in connection with an alleged plot to kidnap Whitmer, which authorities said they wanted to carry out before Election Day. Also Thursday, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel brought charges against seven other men that included supporting terrorism, gang membership, and possession of a firearm in commission of a felony.

Whitmer repeated earlier comments she believes groups such as the Wolverine Watch-

men, whose founders are accused in her case, are taking comfort and motivation from statements by President Donald Trump and some Republican leaders in the Michigan Legislature, who have spoken at rallies against her emergency orders. Trump, who tweeted "Liberate Michigan" following an anti-Whitmer demonstration at the state Capitol in April, "has been increasingly divisive and downright dangerous," Whitmer said.

On Saturday, state House Speaker Lee Chatfield, in a series of tweets and in an "open letter" to Whitmer released by his office, criticized the governor for not tipping off legislative leaders and security officials about the alleged plot, which

she has said officials advised her about a few weeks ago.

Chatfield faced immediate blowback from numerous sources, including former U.S. Attorney Barbara McQuade, who said it is up to the FBI and others in law enforcement to determine who should be informed about any active investigation, such as this one involving ongoing surveillance of the alleged conspirators and use of confidential FBI informants. McQuade, who was U.S. attorney in Detroit from 2010 to 2017, took to Twitter in response. "Law and operational security prohibit her from alerting others," McQuade said of Whitmer. "That's DOJ's (the Department of Justice's) call, not the victim's."

## Fauci says his words taken out of context in Trump ad

*New York Daily News*

Dr. Anthony Fauci said Sunday he was taken completely out of context — and without his permission — in a campaign ad for President Donald Trump lauding the U.S. response to the pandemic.

"I can't imagine that ... anybody could be doing more," Fauci is shown saying in the 30-second ad, with the ellipses inserted in a caption to the video, just at the point where there appears to be a split-second break.

According to CNN, Fauci's quote came out of a Fox News interview conducted in March in which he praised the efforts of the White House coronavirus task force. At the time, he spoke about the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus threat and the "all hands on deck" nature of the response.

"Since the beginning, that we even recognized what this was, I have been devoting almost full time on this," Fauci said, according to CNN. "I'm down at the White House virtually every day with the task force. It's every single day. So, I can't imagine that under any circum-

stances that anybody could be doing more."

That was before more than 200,000 people had died, economies had opened up too much too quickly, and the barely dented infection rate had begun to rise once again.

It was also never meant to be an endorsement, Fauci told CNN.

"In my nearly five decades of public service, I have never publicly endorsed any political candidate," Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told CNN. "The comments attributed to me without my permission in the GOP campaign ad were taken out of context from a broad statement I made months ago about the efforts of federal public health officials."

Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh told CNN that regardless of how much time had passed since then and what had transpired, "The video is from a nationally broadcast television interview in which Dr. Fauci was praising the work of the Trump Administration. The words spoken are accurate, and directly from Dr. Fauci's mouth."

## American economists win Nobel for auction theory

*Associated Press*

STOCKHOLM — Americans Paul R. Milgrom and Robert B. Wilson won the Nobel Prize in economics Monday for "improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats."

"Their discoveries have benefited sellers, buyers and taxpayers around the world," the Nobel Committee said, noting that the auction formats developed by the winners have been used to sell radio frequencies, fishing quotas and airport landing slots.

The winners were announced in Stockholm by Goran Hansson, secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The award caps a week of Nobel Prizes at a time when much of the world is experiencing the worst recession since World War II because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The committee said Wilson's work showed "why rational bidders tend to place bids below their own best estimate of the common value," that is, "the value which is uncertain be-

forehand but, in the end, is the same for everyone."

"(Bidders) are worried about the winner's curse — that is, about paying too much and losing out," the committee said.

Milgrom developed a more general theory of auctions that takes into account what is known as the "private value" of what's being sold that can vary greatly from bidder to bidder.

Speaking to reporters in Stockholm by phone after learning of his win, Wilson struggled to think of an auction he himself had participated in. But then added: "My wife points out to me that we bought ski boots on eBay. I guess that was an auction."

Last year's award went to two researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a third from Harvard University, for their groundbreaking research into efforts to reduce global poverty. Few economists could have predicted last fall that the globe would come to a virtual standstill within months to stop the spread of COVID-19, triggering a sharp dip in business activity worldwide.



# Rapid virus test has risk of false positive

From wire reports

NEW YORK — A federal effort to arm nursing homes with rapid coronavirus tests is stumbling on concern the tests return false positives, putting at least one state at odds with federal officials over the value of the tests.

Nevada this month ordered nursing homes to stop using the point-of-care tests after they found more than 20 instances where positive findings were overturned by more precise assays. That was more than half of the positive samples retested. Other states are now questioning their accuracy as well.

Federal officials, meanwhile, said states don't have the authority to bar the tests, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said it would take "appropriate action" if Nevada didn't cease the ban. Brett Giroir, an assistant health secretary leading the administration's testing efforts, said Nevada was putting nursing home residents at risk.

## Arizona

PHOENIX — Cases of the coronavirus in Arizona dropped 75% following the implementation of mask mandates, a new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The drop occurred after a statewide stay-at-home order was lifted, which resulted in a 151% spike in cases.

The CDC report was authored with the Arizona Department of Health Services, including director Dr. Cara Christ, the Arizona Republic reported.

The stay-at-home order expired May 15. Two weeks later, the daily average number of coronavirus cases jumped by 151%.

## Georgia

SOUTH FULTON — A south Atlanta police department confirmed its chief has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

A spokesman for the City of South Fulton Police Department said Chief Keith Meadows and his wife, Tanya, tested

positive for the coronavirus and are currently quarantining at home, WXIA-TV reported.

In addition, the department said it has notified six other employees who have been in close contact with Meadows about the chief's condition.

The department said it is also continuing to sanitize the precincts and "take all of the necessary precautions to reduce transmissions (of the coronavirus) per CDC guidelines."

## Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb said he's still comfortable lifting COVID-19 restrictions in Indiana after health officials on Friday reported a record-high day of new infections in the state.

The Indiana State Department of Health announced that 1,832 more Hoosiers have tested positive for the coronavirus. That brings the total number of Indiana residents known to have had the coronavirus to 131,493 as the state's seven-day rolling average of new cases of the respiratory disease continues growing at record levels.

Western Indiana's Vigo County Health Department issued a warning Friday discouraging large gatherings, noting that the county's current COVID-19 cases are mostly linked to a recent apple festival and other outdoor events with a large attendance. In Elkhart County, where both of the area's local hospitals are full, the local health department said on its Facebook page that "a major disturbing increase" in the number of coronavirus cases calls for renewed vigilance around mask-wearing and physical distancing.

## Maine

ALFRED — An email points to an outright ban on masks in housing units in a Maine jail dealing with a coronavirus outbreak that's linked to a wedding and reception that made national news.

The York County Jail became a coronavirus hotspot after an

employee who attended an August wedding more than 200 miles away in the Katahdin region spread the virus. The number of cases associated with the jail was approaching 90 as of Friday, and the number of cases linked to the wedding and reception has topped 170 with eight deaths.

The email obtained by news outlets said inmates were not permitted to bring masks into any housing unit, a policy that likely exacerbated the outbreak.

Corrections officers reported that there was an "an informal directive not to wear masks in the housing units for fear of creating hysteria amongst the inmates," said William Doyle, an official with the union that represents corrections officers.

## New York

NEW YORK — City officials gave out 62 fines totaling \$150,000 for violating COVID-19 rules in hot spots in Brooklyn and Queens over the weekend, the city government said.

Five unnamed religious institutions were among those hit with fines.

With many of the affected areas home to large Orthodox Jewish populations, leaders have pleaded with the communities to shy away from large gatherings. Last week, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced fines of up to \$15,000 for holding big get-togethers and penalties of up to \$1,000 for those who refuse to wear face coverings.

## Texas

AUSTIN — Activists and leaders from the right wing of the Texas Republican Party on Saturday continued their backlash against Gov. Greg Abbott's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, staging a protest outside his home as they criticized his orders as overbearing and unlawful.

State party chairman Allen West, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller and some GOP lawmakers were among an estimated 200 people gathered outside the governor's

mansion to blast Abbott's executive orders — including a continued statewide mask mandate and lockdowns.

West, who has criticized some of Abbott's efforts to stem the spread of the virus, read a resolution that the State Republican Executive Committee passed last month calling for Texas to reopen.

## Vermont

MONTPELIER — Criminal jury trials are set to restart in Vermont after being suspended in March to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The first trials will be in Windham County in December, according to a statement from the Vermont Judiciary. Jury drawings are scheduled for Dec. 7 in Windham County, the Rutland Herald reported.

Social distancing and masking will be required of everyone in courthouses, courtrooms will be sanitized daily and hand sanitizer will be available for jurors and others.

One concern was that each courthouse had to have an air-handling system that was sufficient, especially with winter coming, said Karen Carroll, associate justice of the Vermont Supreme Court and co-chairwoman of a committee formed to restart jury trials safely.

## West Virginia

HUNTINGTON — All city employees in Huntington will receive a \$1,000 supplemental uniform and cleaning allowance, officials said.

Huntington Mayor Steve Williams and City Council Chairman Mark Bates announced Thursday that the payment is a reimbursement for added expenses employees have incurred during the coronavirus pandemic.

About 325 employees in the state's second-largest city will receive the payment, according to a statement released by the city. The payments will come from the city's general fund.

Williams and City Council members will not receive the payments.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Noose in park leads to hate crime charge

**CA** BERKELEY — A man suspected of tying a noose to a tree branch in Berkeley's marina was charged with a misdemeanor hate crime, police said.

A person who works at the marina saw the man, later identified as Jaime Robledo-Espino, 32, tying a noose with some rope, the East Bay Times reported.

When the employee confronted Robledo-Espino about the noose, he fastened it to a tree branch and fled the area, police said.

The employee took a picture of the suspect and provided it to officers. He was arrested a short time later.

## Missing inmate found two months later

**NE** OMAHA — An inmate was arrested more than two months after he went missing from the Community Corrections Center in Omaha.

Authorities had been looking for Matthew Saxton since Aug. 1 when he didn't show up to his work-release job, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services said in a news release.

Saxton is serving a four- to seven-year sentence, which he began Aug. 19, 2019. His convictions include fourth-offense DUI and leaving the scene of a property-damage accident.

## Mother drowns in lake; 6 kids on boat rescued

**NV** ZEPHYR COVE — A woman drowned after falling off a boat carrying six children on Lake Tahoe and a man who jumped off the boat to

try to rescue her had to be hospitalized for severe hypothermia, authorities in northern Nevada said.

The Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District said the incident occurred near Zephyr Cove, which is on the east side of the lake that straddles the California-Nevada border.

After the woman and the man went into the water, the boat with the children still aboard drifted into the middle of the lake where a fire district boat crew rescued the children, who were unhurt, the district said in a statement.

Rescue personnel were unable to revive the woman.

## Residents use portable toilet as sewer backs up

**NC** MOYOCK — Residents of nearly 200 homes in an affluent eastern North Carolina neighborhood were forced to use portable bathrooms after the sewer system backed up.

Eagle Creek resident James Hutson told The Virginia-Pilot that it's an "insult" to live in a \$300,000 home and have to use an outdoor portable bathroom.

Currituck County said in a news release that repairs are underway, but the sewer system is privately owned. The system's vacuum pumps are malfunctioning and wastewater has backed up in at least 183 homes.

## Ex-frat member given 18 months in hazing event

**NM** ALBUQUERQUE — A former New Mexico State University fraternity member who shot another student during a hazing ritual last year was given an 18-month suspended sentence.

Miguel Altamirano, 22,

pleaded no contest to charges of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and negligent use of a deadly weapon while intoxicated.

Altamirano shot Jonathan Sillas in the leg at a campground in November 2019 during hazing for the Kappa Sigma fraternity at the university.

"I expected a little bit of hazing. I didn't think they were going to hurt us," Sillas said two months after he was hospitalized.

The university revoked Kappa Sigma's charter and Altamirano was expelled.

## Ex-eBay workers plead guilty in harassment plan

**MA** BOSTON — Two former eBay Inc. employees pleaded guilty to their roles in a campaign to terrorize a publisher and editor of an online newsletter critical of the company with a scheme that included live spiders and other disturbing deliveries sent to their home.

Stephanie Popp, former senior manager of global intelligence; and Veronica Zea, a former eBay contractor who worked as an intelligence analyst in eBay's Global Intelligence Center, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit cyberstalking and conspiracy to tamper with witnesses.

They are among seven former eBay employees charged in the scheme that involved other anonymous deliveries sent to the couple's home, including a funeral wreath and a bloody pig Halloween mask.

The couple was targeted after their newsletter published an article about a lawsuit filed by eBay accusing Amazon of poaching its sellers, investigators said.

## School ditches Indian mascot, gets new one

**ME** SKOWHEGAN — A Maine high school that eliminated its Indian mascot will now be known as the River Hawks.

The school board in Skowhegan voted 15-5 for the new mascot.

It hasn't been an easy change at Skowhegan High School. Many people in the Skowhegan area feel that the Indian mascot is a part of their history.

School board member Jennifer Poirier said it will take time but "the new generation" will embrace the new mascot.

## Agency removes wildlife from unlicensed rehab

**MI** MUSKEGON — Officials removed a half-dozen red foxes, three coyotes and other animals from an unlicensed rehabilitation center in western Michigan where the owner's 2-year-old granddaughter lost an arm after reaching into a pen that housed two wolf-dog hybrids.

State conservation officers searching the Howling Timbers facility in Muskegon also found 47 dogs that are believed to have been crossbred with wolves or other wolf-dog hybrids, according to Michigan's Department of Natural Resources.

The Natural Resources Department, Muskegon County sheriff's office, and the state Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are investigating owner Brenda Pearson for operating the facility without required permits.

The DNR revoked Pearson's wildlife rehabilitation permit in 2010.

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# 17th title for Lakers as James gets 4th

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The ultimate anguish. The ultimate joy.

This season, for LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers, had it all. And it ended in the only fashion that they deemed would be acceptable, with them back atop the basketball world.

For the first time since Kobe Bryant's fifth and final title a decade ago, the Lakers are NBA champions. James had 28 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists, and the Lakers beat the Miami Heat 106-93 on Sunday night to win the NBA Finals in six games.

Anthony Davis had 19 points and 15 rebounds for the Lakers, who dealt with the enormous anguish that followed the death of the iconic Bryant in January and all the challenges that came with leaving home for three months to play at Walt Disney World in a bubble designed to keep inhabitants safe from the coronavirus.

It would be, James predicted, the toughest title to ever win.

They made the clincher look easy. James won his fourth title, doing it with a third different franchise — and against the Heat franchise that showed him how to become a champion.

Bam Adebayo had 25 points and 10 rebounds for Miami, which got 12 points from Jimmy Butler — the player who, in his first Heat season, got the team back to title contention. Rajon Rondo scored 19

points for the Lakers.

With that, the league's bubble chapter, put together after a 4½-month suspension of play that started March 11 because of the coronavirus pandemic, is over. So, too, is a season that saw the league and China get into political sparring, the death on Jan. 1 of commissioner emeritus David Stern — the man who did so much to make the league what it is — and then the shock on Jan. 26 that came with the news that Bryant, his daughter Gianna and seven other people died in a helicopter crash.

The Lakers played the rest of the season in his memory.

They delivered what Bryant did five times for LA — a ring, and the clincher was emphatic.

Game 6 was over by halftime, the Lakers taking a 64-36 lead into the break. The Heat never led and couldn't shoot from anywhere: 35% from two-point range in the half, 33% from three-point range and even an uncharacteristic 42% from the line, not like any of it really mattered. The Lakers were getting everything they wanted and then some, outscoring Miami 36-16 in the second quarter all with James making just one shot in the period.

Rondo, now a two-time champion and the first to win rings as a player in both Boston and Los Angeles — the franchises now tied with 17 titles apiece — was 6-for-6 in the half, the first time he'd done that since No-

vember 2007. The Lakers' lead was 46-32 with 5:00 left in the half, and they outscored Miami 18-4 from there until intermission.

Ball game. The 28-point halftime lead was the second-biggest in NBA Finals history, topped only by the Celtics leading the Lakers 79-49 on May 27, 1985.

True to form, the Heat — a No. 5 seed in the Eastern Conference that finished with a losing record last season, a team that embraced the challenge of the bubble like none other — didn't stop playing, not even when the deficit got to 36 in the third quarter.

A 23-8 run by Miami got the Heat to 90-69 with 8:37 left. But the outcome was never in doubt, and before long confetti was blasted into the air as the Lakers' celebration officially began.

## TIP-INS

**Lakers:** Davis did not wear the gold-painted sneakers that he had for Game 5; instead, he went with red-and-black ones Sunday. ... John Salley and Robert Horry were, until Sunday, the only players to win championships with three different franchises. James (Miami, Cleveland) and Danny Green (San Antonio, Toronto) added their names to that list with this title.

**Heat:** Goran Dragic (torn left plantar fascia) checked in late in the first quarter, his first appearance since Game 1 of the series.

# Reds Hall of Famer Morgan dies at 77

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Joe Morgan, the Hall of Fame second baseman who became the sparkplug of the Big Red Machine and the prototype for baseball's artificial turf era, has died. He was 77.

He died at his home Sunday in Danville, Calif., family spokesman James Davis said in statement Monday. Morgan was suffering from a nerve condition, a form of polyneuropathy.

Morgan's death marked the latest among major league greats this year: Whitey Ford, Bob Gibson, Lou Brock, Tom Seaver and Al Kaline.

Morgan was a two-time NL Most Valuable Player, a 10-time All-Star and won five

Gold Gloves. A 5-foot-7 dynamo known for flapping his left elbow at the plate, Little Joe could hit a home run, steal a base and disrupt any game with his daring.

Most of all, he completed Cincinnati's two-time World Series championship team, driving a club featuring the likes of Pete Rose, Johnny Bench and Tony Perez to back-to-back titles.

Morgan's tiebreaking single with two outs in the ninth inning of Game 7 in 1975 gave the Reds the crown in a classic matchup with Boston, and he spurred a four-game sweep of the Yankees the next season.

Morgan was the league's MVP both years. And his Hall of Fame teammates and manager readily acknowledged he was the one that got it all

started..

"He was just a good major league player when it didn't mean anything," former Reds and Tigers skipper Sparky Anderson once said. "But when it meant something, he was a Hall of Famer."

In a 22-year career through 1984, Morgan scored 1,650 runs, stole 689 bases, hit 268 homers and batted .271.

"Joe wasn't just the best second baseman in baseball history," Bench said. "He was the best player I ever saw and one of the best people I've ever known."

In his prime, Morgan helped to revolutionize the game with his quickness and many talents, especially once he hit the turf at Riverfront Stadium.

"Packed unusual power into

his extraordinarily quick 150-lb. fireplug frame," he was praised on his Hall of Fame plaque.

In other MLB news:

■ The Chicago White Sox parted ways with manager Rick Renteria, General Manager Rick Hahn announced Monday. Renteria managed the White Sox for four seasons and had a 236-309 record with the team. Last season, the White Sox made their first playoff appearance since 2008 after finishing with a 35-25 record.

However, the White Sox stumbled at the end of the season, losing seven of their last eight games. In the playoffs, they lost in the wild card round to the Oakland Athletics.

# Raiders snap Chiefs' 13-game win streak

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Derek Carr could be forgiven for thinking he was due for another miserable day at Arrowhead Stadium.

The Raiders quarterback had never won in six tries in Kansas City, his quarterback rating so low in his personal house of horrors that he probably deserved to be benched. And when Carr threw an early interception Sunday that helped the Chiefs take a commanding lead, well, it seemed as if history was repeating itself.

"I've had a lot of sad walks up that ramp," Carr said later, "but you know what? Not today."

Instead, the oft-criticized

quarterback steadied his shaky team, outplayed Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes and led the Raiders to a 40-32 victory. Carr finished with 347 yards and three touchdowns passing. Perhaps fittingly, he executed the quarterback sneak on fourth-and-1 that clinched the win.

"I think we're back a little bit," Carr said with a smile, "but we have to win football games against these guys to make it a rivalry. We haven't done that in a long time. To make it a rivalry, we have to win games like this one."

The game, tied 24-24 after three quarters, could have gone either way. But with the high-powered Kansas City offense

sputtering, the Raiders got the go-ahead touchdown from Josh Jacobs, a field goal from Daniel Carlson and an interception of Mahomes on fourth down to set up Jacobs's second TD and establish breathing room.

Mahomes quickly answered, hitting Travis Kelce for a TD and Darrel Williams for the 2-point try. But the Raiders (3-2) recovered a squib quick, Jacobs rumbled for a first down as the Chiefs (4-1) burned timeouts, and Carr sneaked for the crucial first down.

"It clicked to me in the locker room. I'm like, 'Man, this is your first win,'" Jacobs said. "It feels good to see him, and see how good he played in this game, being a captain. He just

controlled the game, made sure everybody stayed positive."

Mahomes spent the entire game trying to escape the Las Vegas pass rush, which manhandled the Chiefs offensive line. He finished with 340 yards passing and two touchdowns along with an interception. Kelce had 108 yards receiving.

"You know, we just didn't execute at a high enough level," Mahomes said..

**Virus concerns:** The Raiders placed DT Maurice Hurst on the COVID-19 list earlier this week, and the Chiefs reportedly had an assistant strength and conditioning coach test positive. But both organizations said there were no additional positive tests.

## NFL roundup

# Wilson rallies Seahawks past Vikings

Associated Press

SEATTLE — By this point, Russell Wilson piecing together more late dramatics that ends with the Seattle Seahawks erupting in celebration seems almost expected.

Another late drive. Another touchdown throw by Wilson. Another Seahawks victory.

"I don't know how anybody could ever be better than what he continues to show us in those situations," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "He's as good as you can get."

Wilson capped a 94-yard drive with a 6-yard touchdown pass to DK Metcalf on fourth-and-goal with 15 seconds left, and the Seahawks beat the Minnesota Vikings 27-26 on Sunday night.

Seattle improved to 5-0 for the first time in franchise history with Wilson providing more prime-time magic and yet another late comeback on a soggy October night in an empty stadium.

In his career, Wilson has 34 career game-winning drives when tied or trailing in the fourth quarter and overtime — regular season and playoffs combined.

**Cowboys 37, Giants 34:** Dak Prescott sustained a gruesome ankle injury not long after his first career touchdown catch before backup Andy Dalton led a drive to a field goal on the final play, and host Dallas beat winless New York.

Michael Gallup made two spectacular sideline catches on throws from Dalton, the second a 38-yarder to the New York 16. The Cowboys ran the clock down to 3 seconds, and Greg Zuerlein had his second game-ending kick of the season, from 34 yards.

**Rams 30, Washington 10:** Jared Goff threw for 309 yards and two touchdowns and ran for another, and visiting Los Angeles improved to 4-1 by beating Washington in Alex Smith's return almost two years since a gruesome injury put his career in jeopardy.

Smith played his first NFL game 693 days since breaking his right tibia and fibula, entering when new Washington starting quarterback Kyle Allen injured his left arm. Smith was 9-for-17 for 37 yards on the same field he was carted off of on Nov. 18, 2018, before undergoing 17 surgeries to repair the injury.

**Browns 32, Colts 23:** Baker Mayfield passed for a season-high 247 yards and two touchdowns against the NFL's No. 1 defense, Myles Garrett forced a crucial safety in the fourth quarter and host Cleveland held on for a win over Indianapolis.

The Browns improved to 4-1 for the first time since 1994.

**Steelers 38, Eagles 29:** Rookie wide receiver Chase Claypool scored four touchdowns, including the clincher with 2:59 remaining, and Pittsburgh re-

mained unbeaten with a win over visiting Philadelphia.

**Dolphins 43, 49ers 17:** Ryan Fitzpatrick threw for 350 yards and three touchdowns and visiting Miami sent defending NFC champion San Francisco to its third straight home loss to open the season.

**Texans 30, Jaguars 14:** Deshaun Watson threw for a season-high 359 yards and three touchdowns and Houston got its first win of the season, beating visiting Jacksonville in the wake of coach Bill O'Brien's firing.

**Panthers 23, Falcons 16:** Teddy Bridgewater threw for 313 yards and two touchdowns, Juston Burris made a huge interception in the end zone and Carolina held on for a victory over winless host Atlanta.

**Ravens 27, Bengals 3:** Host Baltimore sacked Joe Burrow seven times, forced the Cincinnati rookie into a pair of turnovers and effectively stuffed the Bengals' running game in a box.

**Cardinals 30, Jets 10:** Kyler Murray ran for a touchdown and threw another to DeAndre Hopkins as Arizona snapped a two-game losing streak with a victory over host New York, further putting coach Adam Gase's future in jeopardy after an 0-5 start.



# Arozarena, Zunino drive Rays past Astros

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Randy Arozarena homered again at Petco Park and Mike Zunino drove in the go-ahead run for the Tampa Bay Rays, who beat the Houston Astros 2-1 Sunday night in the opener of the AL Championship Series.

Blake Snell allowed Jose Altuve's homer as he labored through the first inning on 29 pitches before the 2018 AL Cy Young Award winner settled down to pitch five innings for the win.

Diego Castillo got five outs for the save. He came on with the bases loaded with one out in the eighth and got out of it with one pitch when Yuli Gurriel grounded into a double play. Aaron Loup had loaded the bases on a hit batter, walk and single.

Castillo threw 29 pitches in two innings Friday night in the 2-1 win against the New York Yankees that clinched the AL Division Series.

"I was going to be ready," he said through a translator. "I knew with the day off yesterday, I came to the stadium prepared. I just came ready to pitch."

Tampa Bay has leaned on its bullpen all season.

"I think the job he did sums up his whole year," said Zunino, the catcher. "He stepped

up big for us. He's been throwing a lot in big situations for us. We had an idea who we might be able to go to, but him coming in there showing what he's made out of says a lot about what those guys in the bullpen have done for us all year."

Game 2 is Monday afternoon when the Rays turn to 36-year-old Charlie Morton, who got the win for Houston in Game 7 when it won the 2017 World Series. The Astros counter with Lance McCullers Jr., who started that Game 7 for Houston.

The Astros, who got into the playoffs with a losing record, are in the ALCS for the fourth straight season and are trying to advance to the World Series for the third time in that span.

They are villains in many people's eyes for their sign-stealing scandal three years ago, when they beat the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series. They also remain unapologetic.

Tampa Bay is trying to reach its second World Series after losing to the Philadelphia Phillies in 2008.

"They've got a lot of weapons over there where they can mix and match, and we tried to keep the right-handed side of their lineup in there tonight, which we did," Houston manager Dusty Baker said. "Everything went according to plan tonight,

other than winning the game."

Zunino singled past diving shortstop Carlos Correa to bring in Willy Adames with the go-ahead run with two outs in the fifth off lefty Framber Valdez. Adames reached on a leadoff walk and advanced on consecutive ground outs to Valdez.

Arozarena continued his breakout postseason with his fourth homer in six games, sending a 1-2 pitch from Valdez to center field with one out in the fourth to tie it at 1. He homered in each of the first three games of the AL Division Series against the New York Yankees, also in San Diego.

Nicknamed "The Cuban Rocket," Arozarena defected to Mexico in 2015 and signed as a free agent with the St. Louis Cardinals in 2016. He made his big league debut last year and was traded to the Rays in the offseason.

He tested positive for COVID-19 during intake testing prior to summer camp and didn't make his 2020 season debut until Aug. 30. The only Tampa Bay players with more homers in a postseason are Melvin Upton Jr. with seven and Evan Longoria six, both in 2008. Altuve homered in his third straight game, driving a 2-1 pitch from Snell to left with one out in the first. Snell allowed one run and six hits, struck out two and walked two.

# Elliott wins at Roval, champ Busch bounced

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.C. — Kyle Busch, leading a race he had to win, not once believed he was driving toward a season-saving victory. He doesn't even think he can get to victory lane this year.

"Do we even have a shot to win? I don't think we have a shot," Busch said after he was eliminated from the playoffs Sunday.

NASCAR will crown a new champion this year and the worst season of Busch's career extended to mark the earliest the reigning Cup champion has been eliminated since the format debuted in 2014.

Chase Elliott won on the hybrid road course-oval at Charlotte Motor Speedway, where Busch and three others were trimmed from title contention. It was Elliott's fourth straight road course victory dating to

last season.

Elliott is in the round of eight for the fourth consecutive year and still seeking his first appearance in the championship final four.

"We've been fortunate to get to the round of eight the last couple years, that's kind of been the stopping point," Elliott said. "We're just eyes ahead trying to assert ourselves amongst the next group."

Busch, meanwhile, won't be in the title-deciding finale for the first time in six years. He needed his first win of the season to advance, a tall ask in this bumpy year. He seemed good as done when a flat tire at the end of the second stage should have ended his chances.

He seemed resigned when he keyed his mic and said, "Good job this year, guys," to his No. 18 Joe Gibbs Racing crew. He still somehow recovered and was third when he gambled

on not pitting to take over the lead.

His fate was in his hands but Busch knew he didn't have a chance.

"We were trying something, anything," Busch said. "I didn't have anything for nobody."

Busch led just one lap after the restart before both teammate Erik Jones and Elliott passed him and then his Toyota began to fade. Busch finished 30th. There are only four races remaining for him to extend his streak to 16 consecutive seasons with at least one victory.

Austin Dillon in a Chevrolet for Richard Childress Racing, and Stewart-Haas Racing teammates Clint Bowyer and Aric Almirola in Fords also were eliminated. Bowyer, who this week said he's retiring at the end of the season and will move to the television booth, was treated for exhaustion after driving the second half of the

race without power steering.

Elliott, meanwhile, won for the second consecutive year at "The Roval" and third time this season. It's his second win this season at Charlotte — he won on the oval in May when NASCAR resumed racing during the pandemic.

Elliott will try to take that momentum into the round of eight, which he advanced to for the fourth-straight year. Elliott has never made it to the championship finale.

"Best way to get into the next round is to win," Elliott said. "Looking forward to the opportunity and looking to make some noise."

Elliott advanced along with Denny Hamlin and Kurt Busch, who won the first two races of the second round, along with Kevin Harvick, Martin Truex Jr., Joey Logano and Alex Bowman.