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General removed amid racial slur probe

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Maj. Gen. Stephen Neary has been relieved of command of U.S. Marines in Europe and Africa while the service investigates allegations he used a racial slur that denigrates Black people, the Corps said Tuesday.

Marine Commandant Gen. David H. Berger relieved Neary on Monday “due to a loss of trust and confidence in his ability to serve in command,” the Corps said in a statement.

The Marine Corps previously said that the investigation was connected to the use of a racial slur but declined to go into detail.

Stars and Stripes reported earlier this month that the two-star general’s actions were being probed for using the word during a training event at his Stuttgart-area headquarters.

The incident occurred in August on the parade field outside Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa headquarters in Boeblingen, Germany. A lance corporal who was present told Stars and Stripes that Neary used the N-word while Marines were doing physical training outdoors with loud music playing. Some of the rap music incor-

porated the word, which prompted Neary to ask the junior Marines how they would feel if he said it, the lance corporal said.

The Marine, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution, said Black, white and Latino Marines were jolted when the general said the word. Even if Neary was attempting to be instructive about the taboo nature of the word, it came as a shock to hear it from a white general officer, the lance corporal said. “He lost respect right there,” the Marine said.

As the weeks passed and Neary remained in command, several Marines brought the matter to the attention of Stars and Stripes.

The incident came at a time of racial upheaval in the United States and inside the military as troops grappled with how to respond to police brutality cases that have sparked protests in U.S. cities in recent months.

In August, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May served as a “wake-up call” for the military.

“I don’t think what everybody [in the Defense Department’s leadership] appreciated, at least me personally, is the depth of sentiment out there among our service members of color, particularly Black Amer-

icans, about how much [impact] the killing of George Floyd ... had on them, and what they are experiencing in the ranks, as well. ... We must do better,” Esper said during a security forum.

The unrest triggered by Floyd’s and others’ deaths prompted the military to reexamine instances of racism in the ranks and sparked calls for a more inclusive military culture.

The Marine Corps, which has long faced questions about a lack of diversity within its senior ranks, has taken some steps to deal with racism. In June, it banned all Confederate battle flags from being displayed on its bases. Berger said that there would be no tolerance for prejudice or any expression of bias, “direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional.”

Neary, who assumed command of Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa in July, previously served as deputy commander of II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The Boston native was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1988 after graduating from Virginia Military Institute.

Col. James T. Iulo will serve as the acting commander until a replacement is determined, the Marines said Tuesday.

Army captain charged in death of Fort Bliss officer

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — An Army captain has been arrested and charged with murder in the death of another captain at Fort Bliss with whom she had a romantic relationship, police said.

Capt. Cleve Muchette Nelson-Royster, 27, is the second person charged with murder in the death of Capt. Malcom X. Perry, 27, according to the El Paso Police Department.

Perry died at about 5:50 a.m. Oct. 11 after the Audi A4 sedan that he was driving was rammed

by a Jeep Wrangler until it flipped and burst into flames on a road in east El Paso. Minutes before the crash, Perry called 911 and told the dispatcher, “I am going to die,” according to a report from the El Paso Times.

The driver of the Jeep, Richard Mustapha Sennessie, 23, was arrested Wednesday morning and also charged with murder. Nelson-Royster was a passenger in the Jeep, police said.

Nelson-Royster and Sennessie met at a local bar Oct. 11 before going to a strip club, where they saw Perry. Nelson-Royster told police she had been in an on-

and-off relationship with Perry for the past five years, the El Paso Times reported. Later, the two followed Perry to his apartment.

When Nelson-Royster and Sennessie arrived at the apartment complex, they saw a group of men beating up Perry, the newspaper reported. Nelson-Royster said she attempted to break up the fight and Perry escaped to his vehicle. Perry drove away and Nelson-Royster and Sennessie chased him in the Jeep, which belonged to her but was driven by Sennessie.

The Jeep began ramming the

Audi until it rolled over, crashed and caught fire, the newspaper reported. Sennessie fled the scene, but police found Nelson-Royster and the Jeep near the scene of the crash.

The investigation into the incident continues.

Base officials said Nelson-Royster is a logistics officer with the 1st Armored Division.

Perry, a logistics officer from Virginia, was commander of Bravo Company of the 123rd Brigade Support Battalion, part of the 1st Armored Division, according to Fort Bliss officials.

Russia, US appear ready to extend nuke pact

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia said Tuesday it's ready to accept a U.S. proposal to freeze the number of nuclear warheads and extend the two nations' last arms control pact for one year and Washington responded that it's prepared to make a quick deal.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus welcomed the Russian offer and said that the U.S. is ready to quickly clinch an agreement.

"We appreciate the Russian Federation's willingness to make progress on the issue of nuclear arms control," Ortagus

said in a statement. "The United States is prepared to meet immediately to finalize a verifiable agreement. We expect Russia to empower its diplomats to do the same."

The statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry marked a shift in Moscow's position after Russia and the U.S. rejected each other's offers regarding the New START treaty that expires in February.

The ministry noted that it's ready for a deal if the U.S. does the same and doesn't put forward any additional demands, the statement read.

The New START treaty was signed in 2010 by then U.S.

President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The pact limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and envisages sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance.

After both Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty last year, the New START is the only remaining nuclear arms control deal between the two countries.

Russia has offered its extension without any conditions, while President Donald Trump's administration initial-

ly pushed for a new arms control agreement that would also include China.

It recently modified its stance and proposed a one-year extension of the 2010 treaty, but said this must be coupled with the imposition of a broader cap on U.S. and Russian nuclear warheads. The cap would cover warheads attached to battlefield weapons, which are limited by the New START treaty that only restricts strategic nuclear arsenals.

Russia has agreed to a one-year extension but resisted a broader cap on warheads until Tuesday.

Cost of new nuclear missile fleet estimated at \$95.8B

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has raised to \$95.8 billion the estimated cost of fielding a new fleet of land-based nuclear missiles to replace the Minuteman 3 arsenal that has operated continuously for 50 years, officials said Monday.

The estimate is up about \$10 billion from four years ago.

The weapons, known as intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, are intended as part of a near-total replacement of the American nuclear force over the next few decades at a total cost of more than \$1.2 trillion.

Some, including former Defense Secretary William J. Perry, argue that U.S. national security can be ensured without ICBMs, but the Pentagon says they are vital to deterring war. The Trump administration affirmed its commitment to fielding a new generation of ICBMs in a 2018 review of nuclear policy.

"The ICBM force is highly survivable against any but a large-scale nuclear attack," the review concluded. "To destroy U.S. ICBMs on the ground, an adversary would need to launch

a precisely coordinated attack with hundreds of high-yield and accurate warheads. This is an insurmountable challenge for any potential adversary today, with the exception of Russia."

The current fleet of 400 deployed Minuteman missiles, each armed with a single nuclear warhead, is based in underground silos in Montana, North Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska. Their numbers are governed in part by the 2010 New START treaty with Russia, which is due to expire in February. Russia wants to extend the treaty but the Trump administration has set conditions not accepted by Moscow.

The U.S. also is building a new fleet of ballistic missile submarines to replace the current Ohio-class strategic subs; a new long-range nuclear-capable bomber to replace the B-2 stealth aircraft; a next-generation air-launched nuclear cruise missile; and a new nuclear command and communications system. It also is working on updated warheads, including an ICBM warhead replacement for an estimated \$14.8 billion.

For 3rd time this year, Navy warship enters Barents Sea

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The United States has once again sent a warship into the Barents Sea in what is becoming the new normal this year, as Navy surface vessels navigate waters not visited since the height of the Cold War.

The USS Ross entered the Barents Sea on Monday, the Navy said. The Russian navy happens to be conducting military drills in the Barents this week.

"This Barents Sea mission marks a significant milestone, clearly demonstrating our dynamic ability to operate anywhere in the world," said Cmdr. John D. John, Ross' commanding officer, in a statement Tuesday. "These operations demonstrate the commitment of our crew to transatlantic stability and security."

The Ross' transit into the Barents — the third this year for Navy destroyers — comes as the Navy steps up activities in the Arctic, where Russia has invested heavily in recent years and China has declared itself a power with economic

interests.

The Navy now sees operating in the Barents Sea as "normal activity" akin to routine operations in the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Seas, said Cmdr. Kyle Raines, spokesman for 6th Fleet.

"We must operate and train in every environment in order to ensure a secure, stable and prosperous region," Raines said.

Before heading into the Barents Sea, the USS Ross took part in the U.K.-led Exercise Joint Warrior, the Navy's 6th Fleet said.

The Navy re-entered the Barents Sea in May for the first time since the mid-1980s, drawing complaints from Russia.

On Tuesday, as the USS Ross entered the area, the Russian navy announced that it was doing drills of its own in the Barents. Russia deployed a frigate from its Northern Fleet for anti-submarine warfare drills, Russia's Tass news agency reported Tuesday. The drills were expected to last several days.

DOJ to file antitrust case against Google

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department was expected to file a lawsuit Tuesday alleging that Google has been abusing its online dominance in online search to stifle competition and harm consumers, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

The lawsuit marks the government's most significant act to protect competition since its groundbreaking case against Microsoft more than 20 years

ago. It could be an opening salvo ahead of other major government antitrust actions, given ongoing investigations of major tech companies including Apple, Amazon and Facebook at both the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission.

Lawmakers and consumer advocates have long accused Google, whose corporate parent Alphabet Inc. has a market value just over \$1 trillion, of abusing its dominance in online search and advertis-

ing to stifle competition and boost its profits. Critics contend that multibillion-dollar fines and mandated changes in Google's practices imposed by European regulators in recent years weren't severe enough and that structural changes are needed for Google to change its conduct.

The case is expected to be filed in federal court in Washington, D.C., and will allege Google has been abusing its dominance in online search to stifle competition and harm

consumers, the person familiar with the matter told the AP. It will also allege that Google uses billions of dollars collected from advertisers to pay phone manufacturers to ensure Google is the default search engine on browsers, the person said. The person could not discuss the matter publicly before a formal announcement and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity.

Court records indicate that 11 states will join the federal government in the lawsuit.

6 Russian intelligence officers charged in cyberattacks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department announced charges against Russian intelligence officers in cyberattacks that targeted a French presidential election, the Winter Olympics in South Korea and American businesses. The case implicates the Kremlin unit that interfered in the 2016 U.S. election but is not related to the November vote.

The indictment accuses the six defendants, all said to be current and former officers in the Russian military intelligence agency known as the GRU, of hacks prosecutors say were aimed at furthering the Kremlin's geopolitical interests and destabilizing or punishing perceived en-

emies. All told, the attacks caused billions of dollars in losses and disrupted a broad cross-section of life, including health care in Pennsylvania, a power grid serving hundreds of thousands of customers in Ukraine and a French election that saw the late-stage disclosure of hacked emails.

The indictment is the most recent in a series of Justice Department prosecutions of Russian hackers, often working on behalf of the government.

The attacks in this case are "some of the most destructive, most costly, most egregious cyberattacks ever known," said Scott Brady, U.S. attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, where the 50-page indictment was filed.

"Time and again, Russia has made it

clear: They will not abide by accepted norms, and instead, they intend to continue their destructive, destabilizing cyber behavior," said FBI Deputy Director David Bowdich.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday rejected the accusations and said Russia and Russian special services "have never undertaken any hacking attacks, especially against the Olympics."

"This resembles regularly occurring relapses of rampant Russophobia, which of course has nothing to do with the reality," Peskov said.

The indictment doesn't charge the defendants in connection with interference in American elections.

Protest arrests showing ordinary Americans, not antifa

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump portrays the hundreds of people arrested nationwide in protests against racial injustice as violent urban left-wing radicals. But an Associated Press review of thousands of pages of court documents tell a different story.

Very few of those charged appear to be affiliated with highly organized extremist groups, and many are young suburban adults from the very neighborhoods Trump has vowed to protect from the violence in his reelection push to win support from the suburbs.

Attorney General William Barr has urged his prosecutors to bring federal charges on protesters who cause violence and has suggested that rarely used sedition charges could apply. The Department of

Justice has also pushed for detention, even as prisons across the United States were releasing high-risk inmates because of COVID-19 and prosecutors had been told to consider the risks of incarceration during a pandemic when seeking detention.

Defense attorneys and civil rights activists are questioning why the Department of Justice has taken on cases to begin with. They have said that most belong in state court, where defendants typically get much lighter sentences. They have also argued that federal authorities appear to be cracking down on protesters in an effort to stymie demonstrations.

"It is highly unusual, and without precedent in recent American history," said Ron Kuby, a longtime attorney who has represented scores of clients over the years in protest-related incidents. "Almost all of

the conduct that's being charged is conduct that, when it occurs, is prosecuted at the state and local level," he said.

This is not to say there hasn't been violence. Police cars have been set on fire, officers have been injured and blinded, windows have been smashed, stores looted and businesses destroyed.

Some of those facing charges undoubtedly share far-left and anti-government views. Some have criminal records and were illegally carrying weapons. Others came to the protests from out of state. Some are accused of using the unrest as an opportunity to steal or create havoc.

But many have had no previous run-ins with the law and no apparent ties to antifa, the umbrella term for leftist militant groups that Trump has said he wants to declare part of a terrorist organization.

Feared virus surge in Calif. hasn't happened

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — Near the end of September, with coronavirus cases falling and more schools and businesses reopening, Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration urged restraint, citing a statistical model that predicted a startling 89% increase in virus hospitalizations in the next month.

That hasn't happened. Instead, state data shows hospitalizations have fallen by about 15% since that warning while the weekly average number of new cases continues to decline, even as other more populous states like Florida, Ohio and Illinois see increases.

California's good news isn't enough to change what Newsom calls his "slow" and "stubborn" approach to reopening the world's fifth-largest economy. He again cautioned people against "being overly exuberant" about those coronavirus numbers, pointing to a "decline in the rate of decline" of hospitalizations.

Connecticut

HARTFORD — Connecticut is planning to revamp its benchmarks for when people entering the state from locations with large COVID-19 rates will need to quarantine.

Currently, both state residents and out-of-state travelers coming from states and territories with 10 cases per 100,000 population or 10% positivity rates must fill out a state travel form and isolate for 14 days. Under the new rule, people must take such steps if they come from locations with 10 cases per 100,000 and 5% positivity rates.

Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont said the revised advisory, which New York and New Jersey may also adopt, will still impact those people coming from states with substantially higher infection rates than Connecticut's.

As of Monday, Connecticut itself surpassed the threshold of 10 cases per 100,000 with 11.2 new cases per 100,000. The state's seven-day rolling

average for positive cases as of Monday was 1.7%.

Georgia

ATLANTA — The number of COVID-19 cases is rising in Georgia, although infections in the state are not climbing as fast as those nationwide.

Even with relatively few infections reported Monday, the state's seven-day average is close to 1,300, more than 10% above the recent bottom on Oct. 8. The number of people hospitalized with confirmed cases of COVID-19 has also been rising for a week, crossing back above 1,300 on Monday.

Experts fear another jump like the one seen in June, in part because cases and hospitalizations never fell as low as they did in the spring.

North Dakota

FARGO — The mayor of North Dakota's largest city said Monday that he'd like to see a statewide mask mandate as the coronavirus spins out of control, and in the meantime invoked emergency powers to require face coverings in most settings that don't involve family members.

Tim Mahoney, who, in addition to being Fargo's mayor, is also a general surgeon, has been largely supportive of Republican Gov. Doug Burgum's approach to managing the pandemic. But he said that in recent weeks, up to one in four people tested for the virus in his city has tested positive, and said it "would be great" if Burgum issued an order for the entire state.

Cass County, which includes Fargo, had over 200 new cases Monday and has had nearly 8,000 since the pandemic began. It's been one of the hardest-hit spots in a state that has ranked worst in the nation for daily new cases per capita the past two weeks.

New York

ALBANY — New York may have to consider changes to its quarantine rules for out-

of-state travelers now that two of its closest neighbors, Connecticut and New Jersey, are on the brink of getting added to the list of places subject to the restrictions.

About three dozen states are now on New York's must-quarantine list. Both Connecticut and New Jersey were poised to join them based on the current threshold of targeting states averaging 10 or more new cases per day, per 100,000 residents, over a seven-day period.

The latest data shows Connecticut and New Jersey hit that threshold Monday, with 11.2 new cases per 100,000 residents and 10.3 respectively. Massachusetts is at 9.9 cases per 100,000 residents, while New York is at seven per 100,000, twice what it was at the end of August.

Though he acknowledged that this is a problem, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo also said travel restrictions might be unenforceable among the three states given so much cross-border commuting to work or shop and worries about disrupting the economy.

Oregon

ALBANY — At least 19 students in Greater Albany Public Schools attended a gathering without masks, spurring new COVID-19 cases and setting back progress made toward holding in-person classes, officials said.

At least three positive cases have been traced to a large gathering in a local home with students from West Albany High School, South Albany High School and Lebanon High School, the Albany Democrat-Herald reported.

The families of the students have been contacted by local health authorities but according to Schools Superintendent Melissa Goff, some families may not be cooperating with efforts to trace the potential outbreak.

Prior to the latest positive cases, the school district was holding limited in-person instruction for students who receive special services while

monitoring the increasing case load around the county. A total of 142 students at 14 district sites were receiving in-person instruction.

Tennessee

NASHVILLE — Gov. Bill Lee intends to extend an executive order that allows the majority of Tennessee's counties the option to require face coverings in public, as the state has seen coronavirus case counts grow.

Gillum Ferguson, Lee's spokesman, confirmed Monday that the executive order will be extended until the end of the year. The order — which applies to 89 out of the state's 95 counties — was scheduled to expire at the end of the month.

In Tennessee, executive orders can be extended up to 60 days at a time.

West Virginia

CHARLESTON — The federal government has authorized the West Virginia National Guard to increase the number of personnel on active status to support the response to the coronavirus pandemic, Gov. Jim Justice said.

There are currently 379 members of the state National Guard on active status. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will allow that to increase to 400. The federal government will reimburse the state for 75% of the related costs for these personnel, the governor's office said in a news release Monday.

The National Guard's state response has included disinfecting vehicles and facilities, producing and distributing personal protective equipment, performing virus tests and virus prevention training for businesses, long-term care facilities, medical practices and residents, the statement said.

"If there is a state with a better National Guard, I'd love to see it, because our guardsmen and women in West Virginia are champions beyond belief and they've done an incredible job," Justice said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Hiker missing 12 days found safe in park

UT SALT LAKE CITY — The family of a woman who was missing in Utah's Zion National Park for 12 days said she has been found and is safe.

Holly Courtier was reported missing Oct. 8 and a search began the next day, The Desert News reported.

Search and rescue crews located Courtier on Sunday after receiving a tip from a park visitor who reported seeing her, National Park Service officials said.

Courtier's family said in a statement that they were "overjoyed" she was found safely, and thanked park rangers, volunteers and other members of the teams who searched for her.

Hunters kill 328 bears, more than all of 2019

NJ TRENTON — Hunters killed a total of 328 bears in the first segment of New Jersey's black bear hunt, more than were bagged during last year's entire hunt and in what could be the final year for the hunt.

The state's Division of Fish & Wildlife said 42 bruins were culled on Saturday, the sixth and final day of the hunt. Hunters had been restricted to using archery for the first three days, but on Thursday they were also allowed to use muzzleloading rifles.

The hunt is restricted to Sussex, Warren, Passaic, Morris, Bergen, Hunterdon, Somerset and Mercer counties. Sussex County accounted for 147 of the 328 bears killed. Hunting is prohibited in state parks, forests and wildlife management areas.

Gov. Phil Murphy has said this year could be the last for the bear hunt, which the Demo-

crat pledged to end when he ran for governor in 2017. Murphy cited a new bear management plan that the state Fish and Game Council was studying.

Police arrest man on animal cruelty charges

OK PORTER — A northeastern Oklahoma man has been charged with 42 counts of animal cruelty after authorities found 36 malnourished dogs inside maggot-infested cages and farm animals that had been restrained.

The Wagoner County Sheriff's Office said when deputies were dispatched to a home in Porter on Wednesday, they found three horses, one cow, one bull and a heifer bound to different fixed objects throughout the property, as well as 36 dogs packed into a small building in the back.

All of the animals had no access to food or water and appeared malnourished, according to the sheriff's office.

The home's owner, Kerry E. Yochum, was arrested by deputies. Jail records did not list an attorney for Yochum.

Prisoner attacks guard and fellow inmate

AL OZARK — A jailed Alabama man awaiting trial in the killing and dismembering of his 58-year-old mother was accused of attacking a corrections officer and a fellow inmate with a homemade weapon, according to authorities.

The Dale County Jail correctional officer was leaving a cell block Saturday afternoon when the inmate, Chad Brogdon, 37, used an improvised sharp object to injure the officer, Dale County Chief Deputy Mason Bynum said.

Brogdon was accused of repeatedly striking the officer,

who was able to free himself and isolate the inmate back inside the cell block, Bynum said.

The inmate then also assaulted a fellow prisoner, officials said. That inmate was taken to a hospital with injuries that were not described. The correctional officer was treated at a hospital and released.

Officials certify record 19-pound lake trout

VT MONTPELIER — A South Burlington fisherman caught a record 19.36-pound lake trout in Lake Champlain this summer, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

The department said this week that it had recently certified the record fish entry. Jeffery Sanford caught the 36.5-inch fish in over 100 feet of water in August, the department said.

The size and health of the fish is a result of good lake trout habitat and ongoing efforts to control sea lamprey, which prey on lake trout, landlocked Atlantic salmon, brown trout, steelhead, walleye, lake sturgeon and other fish species, said Shawn Good, the department's fisheries biologist who oversees the Vermont State Record Fish Program.

Sanford said he wanted to release the fish but was unable to revive it, so he brought it to be weighed as part of the Lake Champlain International's Basin Derby, where it is now in first place for the derby's lake trout category, the department said.

Long lines as medical pot dispensaries open

MO ST. LOUIS — Missouri's first licensed marijuana dispensaries opened this weekend in the St. Louis

area with long lines.

The two dispensaries run by N'Bliss opened Saturday in Ellisville and Manchester. Another dispensary is expected to open Monday in the Kansas City area nearly two years after Missouri voters approved a constitutional amendment to allow the sale of medical marijuana.

To buy the drug, people need approval from a doctor and a state medical marijuana card. Prices are expected to be high initially because the supply is limited in the state at this stage. N'Bliss was charging \$125 for an eighth of an ounce of marijuana when it opened Saturday.

The Missouri Department of Health and Human Services expects most of the state's 192 approved dispensaries to be open by the end of the year.

Cruise ship rescues 24 people on sinking boat

FL MIAMI — A Carnival Cruise Line ship rescued two dozen people, including two children, from a sinking boat 37 miles off the Florida coast, the cruise line reported Saturday.

It was not immediately clear why the smaller boat came under distress, but its passengers were taken on board the Carnival Sensation when the boat started taking on water. They were given life jackets, food, water and blankets,

The Miami Herald said the passengers were later transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The cruise ship was in international waters 37 miles off the coast of Palm Beach when it came upon the struggling boat, whose passengers were of various nationalities, cruise line officials said. They were evaluated and quarantined from the crew.

From wire reports

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Edwards-Helaire, Chiefs run past Bills

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Patrick Mahomes didn't mind taking a back seat to rookie Clyde Edwards-Helaire and the Kansas City Chiefs' running attack.

With the Buffalo Bills working hard to limit deep throws by the strong-armed Mahomes, he gladly kept handing off the ball, and Kansas City beat Buffalo 26-17 on Monday night in a game that was originally scheduled for last Thursday.

"You know my nature, I want to throw it deep every time. We want to go down and throw these long touchdowns," said Mahomes, the 2018 MVP. "But if teams are going to play us like this, we've got to show we can run the football."

Mission accomplished.

Led by Edwards-Helaire's 161 yards rushing, the Chiefs finished with 245 — the most since Mahomes took over as

starter in 2017. Kansas City's 46 rushing attempts were also the most in eight years under coach Andy Reid, and that was with Le'Veon Bell waiting to make his debut after signing with the Chiefs last Thursday.

"I can't wait," Bell tweeted during the game.

Edwards-Helaire has already chatted with the veteran Bell and is excited to team up.

"Another guy coming in, another piece to the puzzle. For me, we can only go up," Edwards-Helaire said. "Anything I can do to pick his brain and gain knowledge from, I'm there for it."

Mahomes finished 21-for-26 for 225 yards with two touchdowns, both to tight end Travis Kelce. His first touchdown was the 90th of his career in his 37th game, breaking the NFL record for fewest games to 90 TD passes. Hall of Famer Dan Marino had the previous mark at 40 games.

The Chiefs are off to a their third 5-1 start in four seasons, and they bounced back from a sloppy 40-32 loss to the Las Vegas Raiders on Oct. 11.

Buffalo (4-2) lost its second straight. The Bills fell 42-16 at Tennessee last Tuesday, a game that was moved because of a COVID-19 outbreak on the Titans. That led to the Kansas City-Buffalo game being pushed back as well. The Chiefs, who were originally scheduled to play three games in 11 days, wound up having two more days of rest than the Bills.

Buffalo's defense sold out to prevent Mahomes from going deep but proved vulnerable against the run.

"We felt we did well limiting them from taking it off the top, but the run game's just another part of their game, and they executed it well," safety Micah Hyde said.

The Bills were undone by

allowing the Chiefs to convert nine of 14 third-down chances, two of them on a 12-play, 75-yard drive that ended on Harrison Butker's 30-yard field goal with 1:56 remaining.

During that drive, Buffalo's Justin Zimmer stripped the ball from Edwards-Helaire at the Kansas City 30. The play was ruled a fumble on the field, but that call was overturned after replays showed Edwards-Helaire's knee was down.

Two plays later, on third-and-11, Mahomes scrambled out of trouble and hit Byron Pringle for 37 yards. Mahomes then ate up more clock with a 9-yard scamper on third-and-7.

"Frustrating, just because we feel like as a defense we've got to find a way to get our offense back on the field," Hyde said. "We had to get a stop and we didn't."

Murray returns to hometown, leads Cards past Dallas

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Maybe Kyler Murray will lose a game on the home field of the Dallas Cowboys one of these days.

It wasn't going to be on a night when the Arizona quarterback watched the star running back of his hometown team have another night of fumble-itis.

Murray accounted for three touchdowns in his first game back home as a pro, Ezekiel Elliott set up the visiting team's first two TDs with fumbles and the Cardinals beat the Cowboys 38-10 on Monday night.

The speedy quarterback who won three high school championships and a Big 12 title at the home of the Cowboys improved to 7-0 as a starter at AT&T Stadium, throwing for two scores despite a rough start through the air and rushing for 74 yards and a TD.

"That's not easy when that's what everyone has been talk-

ing about all week," coach Kliff Kingsbury said. "He's probably had this one circled on his calendar since it came out. But I thought he handled himself well."

It was the "Monday Night Football" debut for Murray, a star in high school football-obsessed Texas while playing in the Dallas suburbs, and Kingsbury, who also had a happy first trip to his native Texas as an NFL coach.

"It was fun, brought back a lot of memories," Murray said. "Felt like I've been playing there every Sunday honestly. It's comfortable, felt good."

Fired after six seasons at Texas Tech in 2018 without any winning records in Big 12 games, Kingsbury was hired by Arizona soon after and has the Cardinals (4-2) tied for second place in the tough NFC West. Arizona is above .500 this late in the season for the first time since 2015, its most recent playoff year.

Andy Dalton had the rest of Dallas' four turnovers with two interceptions in his first start for the Cowboys in place of injured star Dak Prescott, just down the road from where he had a standout career at TCU.

The nine-year starter in Cincinnati led a come-from-behind victory over the New York Giants in Week 5 after the gruesome-looking compound fracture of Prescott's right ankle. There wasn't anything resembling a rally this time.

While the Dallas offense didn't look anything close to the NFL-leading unit it was with Prescott — and lost the fourth of its five projected starting offensive linemen in four-time All-Pro Zack Martin (first-quarter concussion) — Elliott's miscues led to the fifth straight game in which the Cowboys have trailed by at least two touchdowns.

Dallas (2-4) overcame two of those deficits, which is why they were guaranteed to stay in first

place in the woeful NFC East no matter what happened in the last of three straight home games — and a third straight road game for Arizona.

"The record, it is what it is right now, the division is what it is right now, but it's still early," Dalton said. "There's a lot of football left to be played, and for us, we've got to improve as a football team."

Elliott was benched briefly after the two-time rushing champion lost a second fumble in the same game for the first time in his career. He has five fumbles (four lost) already this season — one shy of his career high for an entire season as the NFL's worst turnover margin dropped to minus-12 with four giveaways and no takeaways.

Murray was playing in the \$1.2 billion stadium with the retractable roof and giant video board for the first time since leading Oklahoma over rival Texas there in the Big 12 championship game.

Teams scrambling to find games

Associated Press

College coaches endured a tense time waiting for the NCAA to green-light the 2020-21 basketball season.

They knew there was a window the NCAA was looking at to start, likely sometime in late November or early December. They just didn't have a date. So they did the best they could to prepare for the big moment, yet still found themselves in a scramble once it actually happened.

Even now, five weeks before tipoff, teams are struggling to fill out schedules as the clock keeps ticking.

"We were trading a lot of phone calls, trying to come up with the best solutions," said Anthony Ruta, director of basketball operations under Arkansas coach Eric Musselman. "You need time because you're trying to juggle a bunch of different things. You're trying to check a lot of boxes along the way without compromising yourself in other areas."

College football ended up with a scattershot plan for starting its season, leaving it up to the various conferences. As a result, some conferences are already playing while others, like the Pac-12 and Big Ten, are still waiting for their seasons to kick off.

The NCAA took a more unified approach to the basketball season, saying it would set a start date for all teams in all conferences.

Word came down in mid-September, when the NCAA said the season will begin on Nov. 25.

Then the scramble began.

Coaches kept in touch with opponents on

their original schedules to make sure they were both on the same page. A multitude of factors had to be sifted through.

Because the season was originally slated to begin in early November, the later start date meant several games on the schedule would have to be pushed to another day or eliminated. Many teams don't want to travel long distances during a pandemic, so finding regional opponents became a priority.

Teams also had to sort through contracts with previously scheduled opponents and work around uncertainties as leagues across the country try to work out conference schedules.

"The problem is we already had the schedule," West Virginia coach Bob Huggins said. "(Director of basketball operations Josh Eilert) had done a great job, had us a great nonconference schedule, and then we had to just about totally blow it up and start all over again. It's been as tough as I can remember in 43 years."

The NCAA reduced the maximum number of regular-season games from 31 to 27 if a team plays in a multiteam event. The max is 25 without a multiteam event.

One of those, the Maui Invitational, was moved to Asheville, N.C. The Battle 4 Atlantis in the Bahamas was canceled and several teams slated to play there are headed to South Dakota instead. The Cancun Challenge was moved from Mexico to Florida and the Empire Classic from Madison Square Garden to the Mohegan Sun in Connecticut.

Many teams are opting to play in smaller events, like the four-team Little Apple

Classic at Kansas State and the Champions Classic in Orlando.

The rest of the schedules will be a mix of home and away games. The safety of players and coaches is the top priority, so many programs are looking at nearby opponents so they can travel by bus instead of going through an airport and getting on a plane.

There's also the issue of testing.

Every state and conference seems to have different standards and individual schools have a variety of testing capabilities, some based on financial restraints. Finding opponents with similar testing standards, or who are at least willing to adhere to possibly more stringent practices, became another piece of the scheduling puzzle.

"It has been frustrating because we don't know the rules of the game," Michigan State coach Tom Izzo said. "If we bring in a nonconference team, are they testing the same way, are they following the protocol that the Big Ten would accept? We're starting to put together a schedule, maybe here and maybe there."

It's been nearly a month since the NCAA's start date announcement. The scramble is still ongoing.

At least coaches know there will be a season and when it will start after months of waiting.

"It really has given us some clarity going forward," Villanova coach Jay Wright said. "It's taken a little bit of a workload off us because we were all prepared for anything. Now we've got some parameters to work with."

Briscoe thrilled to drive Stewart's No. 14 car

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Chase Briscoe earned job security for the first time in his career with a well-deserved promotion to the Cup Series to cap a season that has so far been storybook.

Briscoe on Tuesday was named the replacement for Clint Bowyer in the No. 14 Ford at Stewart-Haas Racing, the team co-owned by Briscoe's childhood hero. Briscoe idolized fellow Indiana native Tony Stewart and dreamed of one day driving Stewart's car.

"People would ask me 'What's the goal?' and I'd say 'Man, the

dream is to drive the 14,'" Briscoe said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Never in a million years did I think that was possible. Getting to drive Tony's car, and how much of a diehard Tony fan I was, it's just crazy that I'm getting to drive that car."

The 25-year-old native of Mitchell, Ind., is a third-generation racer who watched his father compete against Stewart on Midwest dirt tracks. Now he's a nine race winner in the Xfinity Series, the championship points leader, and just the third driver of the No. 14 at

SHR since it was created for Stewart in 2009. Stewart hand-picked Bowyer to replace him in 2017, and when Bowyer accepted a television deal for next season, it freed the seat SHR desperately needed to avoid losing Briscoe.

"Chase has worked incredibly hard to make his mark in NASCAR and has earned this promotion," Stewart said.

Briscoe said he froze with stage fright during his childhood encounters with Stewart, and was such a passionate fan that he argued every Sunday with his Jeff Gordon-loving

grandmother during NASCAR races. He emulated his favorite driver while playing video games.

Much like Stewart, Briscoe is considered a blue-collar racer who lacks the family wealth needed to clear the path for an aspiring young driver. He had to earn everything on the track and nearly every year, his season plans were 11th-hour deals.

Even after he'd locked in on a driver development deal with Ford, his job security depended almost exclusively on funding.

Badgers relying on experienced defense

Associated Press

Wisconsin traditionally wins games because of its running game and defense.

Now that Jonathan Taylor has moved on to the NFL, that would seem to put more pressure on the defense to carry the load as the Badgers' offense adjusts to life without the two-time Doak Walker Award winner.

The defense looks forward to that challenge.

"I'm feeling great about our defense," end Isaiahh Loudermilk said. "Every year we feel great about our defense, but I really feel like this group has great potential."

The defense will need to live up to that potential for Wisconsin to reach the Big Ten championship game for the fourth time in five years. The 14th-ranked Badgers open their pandemic-delayed season Friday night by hosting Illinois.

Wisconsin's offense lost more than just Taylor. The Badgers also must replace All-America center Tyler Biadasz and leading receiver Quintez Cephus from last year's team. Redshirt freshman quarterback Graham Mertz will start against Illinois because senior Jack Coan is out indefinitely after undergoing foot surgery.

The defense has fewer questions. Wisconsin returns eight players who made at least six starts last year for a defense that ranked fourth among Bowl Subdivision teams in yards allowed per game (287.1) and 13th in yards allowed per play (4.79).

"The chemistry is there," cornerback

Caesar Williams said. "The playmaking is there. It's just (time to) put it on film."

Williams is one of three returning starters in a secondary that also features cornerback Faion Hicks and safety Eric Burrell. Wisconsin also has three defensive linemen who made at least six starts in Loudermilk, Garrett Rand and Keanu Benton.

Linebacker Jack Sanborn had a team-high 80 tackles plus 5½ sacks and three interceptions last season. Sanborn sees ways in which Wisconsin's defense can be even better this season.

"Last year, you'd look at games and we've got some guys doing one thing, some guys doing another," Sanborn said. "That's just one area we've talked about a lot that we believe we can clean up, and something that we need to clean up."

Wisconsin's biggest task on defense is replacing the playmaking ability of departed outside linebackers Zack Baun and Chris Orr, who combined for 24 of the Badgers' 51 sacks last season. Baun was an Associated Press All-America second-team selection.

"We feel like we have guys who can step in those roles and create plays and be dynamic for us," defensive coordinator Jim Leonhard said. "But at the same time, we're not going to ask them, 'Hey, do what Chris did,' or, 'Do what Zack did.' That's not fair to them."

Leonhard's presence is part of the reason the Badgers are so optimistic they'll be

even better on defense this year. Burrell refers to his coordinator as a "genius."

The former Wisconsin player began his college career as a walk-on in 2001 and went on to play 10 years in the NFL. Leonhard returned to his alma mater as an assistant coach in 2016 and was promoted to defensive coordinator a year later.

Wisconsin produced 104 takeaways during Leonhard's first four seasons on staff to rank second among all FBS teams. Wisconsin ranked third nationally in scoring defense (17.2) and fourth in total defense (297.9) from 2016-19 while building a reputation across the Big Ten.

"They've got a good scheme," Illinois offensive coordinator Rod Smith said. "They play physical. They play hard. They do everything that you'd expect a good defense to do. That's exactly how they're coached. That's the culture."

Illinois still beat Wisconsin 24-23 last year in one of the season's biggest upsets, though the Badgers went on to win the Big Ten West Division and finish 10-4.

Wisconsin's defense now wants to build on that success even without the pass-rushing prowess of Baun and Orr. Coach Paul Chryst can't wait to see how this experienced group develops.

"I like the group a ton," Chryst said. "We do have a lot of guys who've played. But I think it's also exciting because it's a new year. This group can kind of write their own story. That's the opportunity that's in front of everyone as the season begins."

Brohm to miss Purdue's opener after 2nd positive test

Associated Press

Purdue coach Jeff Brohm started feeling abnormally fatigued late last week. By Saturday, the symptoms worsened.

Two positive COVID-19 tests Sunday confirmed what Brohm suspected.

On Monday, Brohm announced he had contracted the virus and would not be on the sideline for Saturday's season-opener at home against Iowa. Instead, offensive coordinator Brian Brohm will replace his older brother and will continue calling plays.

"It's not going to be very fun and it's bad timing," Jeff Brohm said on his weekly Zoom call. "You work all year long for a season, it's an abbreviated

season, I'd like to be there, be with the team. But I don't think one person makes the team whether it's a coach or a player. I think our team will respond and play well."

Brohm isn't the first coach facing this predicament.

Alabama coach Nick Saban and Florida coach Dan Mullen both tested positive last week and are among a handful of other college coaches who have been diagnosed with the illness.

The SEC canceled Florida's next two games after Mullen and at least 21 players and coaches had positive tests. Three negative tests allowed Saban to return to the sideline for Saturday night's win by the No. 2 Crimson Tide over No. 3

Georgia.

Big Ten protocols are more stringent.

Boilermakers athletic director Mike Bobinski said players with confirmed COVID cases must sit out 21 days while staff members are required to follow CDC guidelines — isolate for 10 days and remain symptom-free.

Those requirements rule out Brohm's in-person availability Saturday though Purdue is looking for ways to keep him in touch with his team.

"If there is any way we can let Jeff be involved remotely, if that is permissible, we would explore it," Bobinski said. "We don't have an answer to that yet."

The initial indication some-

thing was wrong came late last week. So when Brohm started feeling worse Saturday — chills and chest tightness among the symptoms — he presumed he had it. Sunday morning's daily rapid test came back positive and a subsequent test came back positive that night.

Bobinski said no Purdue football players have returned a positive result since daily tests began Sept. 30 and there has been no discussion with conference officials about postponing or canceling this weekend's game.

"We've had good results, our players have a great success rate," Brohm said. "Unfortunately, it got me. There are some things that are going to flare up here and there."