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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Women on the watch

Daily Press (Newport News, Va.)

Women have been serving on Navy ships for a quarter-century, although the deck department — especially the bridge watch sections responsible for steering the ship and keeping a lookout for hazards — have remained a mainly male preserve.

That changed with USS Gerald R. Ford's underway last month — all the deck department sailors assigned to the boatswain's mates bridge watch teams were women. They call themselves the Iron 9.

"They did great. If there's a grade higher than 'A', that's what I'd give them," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Faeline Matthews, the boatswain's mate who leads the team and whose job is to make sure the relatively young sailors in a bridge watch section are qualified to do the work. "I think it shows what we can do."

While one of the Iron 9, Seaman Adrianna Jones, thinks the group's achievement will influence how female sailors are seen for years to come, she believes they also showed something about the deck

They call USS Ford's all-female bridge watch section the 'Iron 9'

department.

"Since we're on an aircraft carrier, a lot of people focus on flight deck operations and aircraft maneuvering," she said. "Sometimes deck department is overlooked as an essential asset, but recently there's been a lot more acknowledgement toward how necessary we are to the ship."

What a bridge watch section does requires concentration and focus.

At the helm, a post that on the Ford combines what helmsman, who steers the ship, and lee helmsman, who controls its speed, do on other carriers, a sailor has two screens, with dials displaying the Ford's current direction and trim.

Keeping a 100,000 ton carrier capable of 30 knots on course can be a strain, which

is why the drill is for the helm, the bridge messenger and the three lookouts in the section to spell each other. They rotate every hour through the watch.

Not that being a lookout is stress-free. The job involves being alert for hazards — like the small craft that can seem to pop up out of the blue, said Lt. Brandon Carney, the Ford's assistant first lieutenant, who regularly stands watch as officer of the deck.

Lookouts have phones hanging on cords around their neck so they can call in anything they spot. But except for their phones, orders and reports come in calm, conversational tones across the bridge.

"There's a lot of information flowing," Carney said.

Carney said Matthews and the Iron 9 are the future of the Navy.

"These boatswain's mates have the best work ethic I've ever seen in my career," he said. "I can easily see some of these sailors commissioning during their time in the Navy. The sky's the limit for this crew."

Esper eyes an 'enduring' presence for unit in Europe

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment might retain an "enduring" presence in Eastern Europe even after the unit's soldiers leave Germany, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Tuesday.

Esper said he is close to or has reached agreements with defense officials in several Eastern European nations to host rotations of American forces as the United States works to withdraw about 12,000 troops from Germany. In July, the defense secretary announced the plan to move troops out of Germany, saying the 2nd Cavalry Regiment — now the only brigade-sized U.S. ground combat unit stationed full time in Europe

— would be relocated to the continental United States.

"Since that announcement, as well as the signing of the defense cooperation agreement with Poland, my recent meetings with defense ministers from Romania and Bulgaria, and correspondence received from Baltic states, there is now the real opportunity of keeping the 2nd Cavalry Regiment forward in some of these countries on an enduring basis," Esper said in a speech at the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank.

Esper's initial force restructuring plan was announced July 29 as President Donald Trump ordered the Pentagon to remove troops from Germany, speeding up a long-planned review of the posture of Ameri-

can forces throughout Europe.

While that initial plan called for returning the regiment's 4,500 soldiers and 2,000 other troops to the United States, Esper said he would also work to position troops closer to Russian borders to better reassure allies closest to the rival nation.

"We need to move a little bit further east [because] it helps us with the time [and] distance challenges, if you will, in case there is some type of really aggressive action by the Russians," he said Tuesday.

Esper's initial plan envisioned the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and other U.S.-based Stryker brigade combat teams conducting heel-to-toe rotations to train with NATO partners primarily in the Black

Sea region. Now, Esper said he wants troops constantly training in those countries, as well as Poland and the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. He indicated Tuesday that the role could permanently belong to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, however Pentagon officials said later Tuesday that was not the current plan.

For now, the Pentagon is continuing with the plan to move the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to a new home station in the United States, said Army Lt. Col Thomas Campbell, a Pentagon spokesman. However, it remains unclear when the unit could leave its current home station in Vilseck, Germany, or where it will be stationed.

NATO allies' military spending up again

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Military spending among the U.S.'s allies in Europe and Canada increased for the sixth consecutive year in 2020 as one-third of member states reached a key alliance benchmark, a NATO report released Wednesday said.

But Germany, which has been accused by President Donald Trump of not spending enough on defense, spent only 1.57% of gross domestic product on its military, the report said.

Germany's defense spending was cited by Trump as a reason for issuing a directive to pull nearly 12,000 U.S. troops out of the country, although a plan to do so is still being developed by the Pentagon and it is unclear when a withdrawal would happen.

Ten of NATO's 30 members were estimated to be spending at least 2% of their GDP on their militaries, up from only three in 2014, the report said.

"We expect this trend to continue," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters.

NATO members have been under intense pressure to ramp up defense spending by the Trump administration. It increased by 4.3% among European allies and Canada for the year, Stoltenberg said.

Collectively, NATO members including the U.S. spent roughly \$1.03 trillion on defense for 2020, said the report, which was released a day ahead of a meeting of NATO defense ministers, including U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, where spending will be on the agenda, Stoltenberg said.

In 2014, when allies agreed that all members should meet NATO's 2% spending level by 2024, only the U.S., Greece and the United Kingdom were in compliance. Now, NATO data shows Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, France and Norway meeting the target.

Trump has taken credit for an overall boost in allied defense spending in recent years, and Stoltenberg has praised the U.S. president for making it a priority. But the increases date back to 2014 when Russia's military intervention in Ukraine led allies to reverse a downward trend in spending that began when the Cold War ended.

For many allies, especially those along NATO's eastern flank, Moscow's aggressive moves were a motivating factor in boosting expenditures.

Gender integration study set for USMC boot camps

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The University of Pittsburgh is conducting a study to determine the best way for the Marine Corps to approach gender integration at its two boot camps, the service announced Tuesday.

The study comes as the Marine Corps faces a looming deadline set in the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act that mandates the service end gender-segregated training within five years at

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., and integrate training within eight years at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

The Marine Corps wants "an independent, scientifically credible study of the models of entry-level military training to identify potential alternatives to increase gender integration of entry-level training," Bradley Nindl, a co-principal investigator and senior adviser for the study, said in a statement issued Tuesday.

The study is a \$2 million con-

tract between the Marine Corps and the university's Neuromuscular Research Laboratory and Warrior Human Performance Research Center, where Nindl is the director.

The Marine Corps remains the only service that does not fully integrate recruits in all levels of training and it only trains female recruits at Parris Island. While the service has recently begun integrating male and female recruits at the company level at Parris Island, it is only done when there are smaller numbers of female re-

cruits during the slower training months.

Last month, Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger said the Marine Corps faces two challenges with fully integrating the boot camps: finding enough female Marines to be drill instructors at each recruit depot and infrastructure.

Parris Island has limited barracks space for women, and San Diego has none, so even getting women and men to train on both coasts immediately cannot happen, Berger said.

Marines, sailors home after helping quell Calif. wildfires

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The roughly 250 Marines and sailors who spent the past month assisting wildfire firefighting operations in California returned to Camp Pendleton on Tuesday, the U.S. Army said in a news release.

The troops, from the 7th Engineer Support Battalion, helped suppress the Creek Fire in Central California and the August Complex in Northern California. Their mission began Sept. 21.

The battalion was one of two active-duty

units that trained to become wildland firefighters this fire season, the Army said.

The 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion from Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Wash., supported efforts to combat the August Complex from Sept. 3-27, the Army said.

The active-duty military firefighting operations were overseen by Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, which is the Defense Department's primary organization for coordinating with civil authorities in responding to natural disasters.

The National Interagency Fire Center

had requested military assistance in quelling California wildfires, which have blazed through almost 1.9 million acres.

"I am so very proud of the young men and women who supported our local, state, and federal partners during this record-breaking wildland fire season," Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, commander of U.S. Army North, said in the news release. "The Soldiers, Sailors and Marines learned and adapted quickly to wildland firefighting while maintaining a focus on their own safety and their crew's safety in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Tricare enrollment fees set to rise for many

BY STEVE BEYNON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Thousands of Tricare beneficiaries will be required to pay new enrollment fees in 2021.

Tricare Select Group A retirees will be required to pay new fees starting Jan. 1, 2021. An individual's monthly enrollment fee will be \$12.50 or \$150 annually.

Monthly family fees will be \$25 or \$300 annually.

There are 407,431 benefi-

ciaries of Tricare Select, according to 2019 data from the Defense Department.

The new fees were mandated by the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act's reorganization of Tricare, the health care program for service members, retirees and their families.

Any service member who joined the military before Jan. 1, 2018, is in Select Group A. Select Group B are those who enlisted or commissioned after Jan. 1, 2018, and have already been paying enrollment fees.

The Defense Health Agency said there are no changes to Group B.

Beneficiaries will need to contact their Tricare regional contractors and set up their enrollment payments.

The Tricare regions are: Humana Military in the eastern United States, HealthNet Federal Services in the west and International SOS Government Services overseas.

"In order to maintain health coverage unless waived by law, Tricare Select Group A retired

beneficiaries must take action and pay their Tricare Select enrollment fees," according to a statement from the Defense Health Agency, which oversees health care for the military.

Enrollment fees are waived, however, for Chapter 61 retirees, their family and survivors of deceased service members.

Chapter 61 refers to veterans who were medically retired from military service with a rated disability of 30% or greater, according to the Army's Human Resources Command.

Trump tends to electoral map, Biden eyes Obama boost

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is hopping from one must-win stop on the electoral map to the next in the lead-up to a final presidential debate that may be his last, best chance to alter the trajectory of the 2020 campaign.

As Democrat Joe Biden holes up for debate prep in advance of Thursday's faceoff in Nashville, Tenn., he's hoping for a boost from former President Barack Obama, who will be holding his first in-person campaign event for Biden on Wednesday in Philadelphia. Obama, who has become increasingly critical of Trump over the three-and-a-half years since he left office, will address a drive-in rally, where supporters will listen to him over the radio inside their cars.

It comes a day after Trump, trailing in polls in many battleground states, stopped in Pennsylvania on Tuesday. Trump was bound for North Carolina on Wednesday as he delivers what his campaign sees as his closing message.

"This is an election between a Trump

super recovery and a Biden depression," the president said in Erie, Pa. "You will have a depression the likes of which you have never seen." He added: "If you want depression, doom and despair, vote for Sleepy Joe. And boredom."

But the Republican president's pitch that he should lead the rebuilding of an economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic has been overshadowed by a series of fights. In the last two days, he has attacked the nation's leading infectious disease expert and a venerable TV newsmagazine while suggesting that the country was tired of talking about a virus that has killed more than 221,000 people in the United States.

Before leaving the White House for Pennsylvania on Tuesday, Trump taped part of an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that apparently ended acrimoniously. On Twitter, the president declared his interview with Lesley Stahl to be "FAKE and BIASED," and he threatened to release a White House edit of it before its Sunday airtime.

Also trailing in fundraising for campaign ads, Trump is increasingly relying on his

signature campaign rallies to maximize turnout among his GOP base. His trip to Pennsylvania on Tuesday was one of what is expected to be several visits to the state in the next two weeks.

"If we win Pennsylvania, we win the whole thing," Trump said in Erie.

Erie County, which includes the aging industrial city in the state's northwest corner, went for Obama by 5 percentage points in 2012, but broke for Trump by 2 in 2016. That swing, fueled by Trump's success with white, working-class, non-college-educated voters, was replicated in small cities, towns and rural areas, and helped him overcome Hillary Clinton's victories in the state's big cities.

But Trump will probably need to run up the score by more this time around, as his prospects have slipped since 2016 in vote-rich suburban Philadelphia, where he underperformed by past Republican measures. This raises the stakes for his campaign's more aggressive outreach to new rural and small-town voters across the industrial north.

10th hurricane of busy season moving toward Bermuda

Associated Press

MIAMI — Hurricane Epsilon, the 10th of this very busy Atlantic season, was moving toward Bermuda on Wednesday.

Epsilon is expected to make its closest approach to the island on Thursday night, and there is a risk of a direct impact, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

A tropical storm watch is in effect for Bermuda, and residents have been urged to closely monitor the storm.

Large swells generated by Epsilon are already affecting Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Greater Antilles, and the Leeward Islands, and are expected to cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions along the coast of New England and Atlantic Canada during the next couple of days.

The Miami-based hurricane center said Epsilon had maximum sustained winds of 85 mph Wednesday morning. The storm was located about 450 miles east-southeast

of Bermuda, and was moving northwest at 14 mph.

This year's hurricane season has had so many storms that the Hurricane Center has turned to the Greek alphabet for storm names after running out of official names.

Epsilon also represents a record for the earliest 26th named storm, arriving more than a month before a storm on Nov. 22 in 2005, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

Virus relief talks continue to inch ahead

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Negotiations on a huge COVID-19 relief bill have taken a modest step forward, though time is running out and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, President Donald Trump's most powerful Senate ally, is pressing the White House not to move ahead.

McConnell told fellow Republicans that he has warned the White House not to divide Republicans by sealing a lopsided \$2 trillion relief deal with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi before the election — even as he publicly said he'd slate any such agreement for a vote.

Pelosi's office said talks with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Tuesday were productive, but other veteran lawmakers said there is still too much work to do and not enough time to do it to enact a completed relief bill by Election Day.

McConnell appears worried that an agreement between Pelosi and Mnuchin would drive a wedge between Republicans, forcing them to choose whether to support a Pelosi-blessed deal with Trump that would violate conservative positions they've stuck with for months.

California

SACRAMENTO — California will let fans back in outdoor stadiums for pro sporting events in counties with low coronavirus infection rates, but isn't ready to allow Disneyland and other major theme parks to reopen, the state's top health official said Tuesday.

San Francisco and neighboring Alameda and Santa Clara are the only counties that meet the threshold for pro sports. Immediately after the announcement, however, officials in Santa Clara, home to the San Francisco 49ers, issued a statement saying they weren't prepared to allow even a limited number of fans into Levi's Stadium.

Major theme parks, on the other hand, strongly objected to the state's restrictions, saying that they could safely operate

even with thousands of people in attendance.

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE — Republican Louisiana lawmakers voted Tuesday to give themselves more authority to curb Gov. John Bel Edwards' coronavirus restrictions and emergency powers, under a deal brokered between House and Senate GOP leaders that ended a stalemate on the major issue of the special session.

After days of negotiations behind closed doors, the agreement was included in a bill by Covington Republican Rep. Mark Wright. The final language won Senate support Tuesday in a 23-13 vote, followed by House backing in a 54-30 vote.

The measure heads next to the governor's desk, where Edwards could choose to veto it. He's repeatedly said he doesn't support any attempts to lessen his emergency authority.

The House doesn't have enough Republican members to override a gubernatorial veto. That raises questions about whether lawmakers will return home without a permanent law change to the governor's emergency powers and legislative oversight — the major disagreement between GOP lawmakers and the Democratic governor that prompted the special session.

North Carolina

CHARLOTTE — Health officials in a North Carolina county said Tuesday evening they are investigating at least 50 confirmed cases of COVID-19 connected to an event at a church, according to TV station WBTV.

Mecklenburg County urged all people who attended convocation events at the United House of Prayer for All People on Oct. 10 and 11 to get tested, The Charlotte Observer reported Monday. At the time, the county linked at least nine cases of COVID-19 to the weekend event.

Mecklenburg County Deputy Health Director Raynard

Washington said the number has nearly tripled. Washington said the church made an effort to ensure masks were worn and that those attending practiced social distancing, but he said people didn't always comply.

Nevada

CARSON CITY — Nevada's rate of coronavirus infections is steadily rising again. But state officials are reluctant to blame relaxed guidelines and say there is no reason yet to consider stricter measures.

Gov. Steve Sisolak and state health officials pointed to national and worldwide trends rather than the easing of state guidelines as the cause of the spikes, and said adherence to prevention measures could curb the spread of the virus and prevent reimplementing restrictions.

Nevada's rate of infections has been increasing since Sisolak, a Democrat, relaxed restrictions on the size of public gatherings on Oct. 1. The White House Coronavirus Task Force has since redesignated the state as a "red zone," after the number of new cases per week per 100,000 residents surpassed 100.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — The attorney general's office has fined a New Hampshire restaurant where at least 18 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in an outbreak.

Fat Katz Food and Drink restaurant has been fined \$2,000 for violating emergency orders related to the coronavirus after it moved a karaoke event inside. The Hudson restaurant told authorities that it moved the event inside after receiving noise complaints and due to colder weather.

In issuing the fine, the state in a letter to the restaurant said the decision to move the event inside after being told it wasn't allowed indoors and allowing individuals to participate without bringing their own equipment not only violated the state's emergency order, but also was "reckless."

Tennessee

MEMPHIS — Three employees of a Tennessee tax service have been charged with filing over \$1 million in false claims for coronavirus-related federal loans, federal prosecutors said.

Brandy Scaife, Janisha Jones and Sharika Carpenter have been indicted on charges of wire fraud and conspiracy to defraud, the U.S. attorney's office in Memphis said in a news release.

All three were employees of Better Days Tax Service in Memphis, prosecutors said. From April through June, they used false information on more than 400 applications seeking U.S. Small Business Administration loans made available to businesses that suffered losses from the COVID-19 pandemic, prosecutors allege.

Each defendant faces up to 30 years in federal prison if convicted. Carpenter's lawyer, Arthur Horne, said Tuesday that he was gathering information about the case but his client plans to fight the charges.

Washington

SEATTLE — Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee will now require colleges and universities to provide quarantine facilities for all students if they are exposed to COVID-19.

The governor on Tuesday issued more restrictions for higher education campuses as the University of Washington struggles to contain an outbreak among its fraternities and sororities. There have been outbreaks in Whitman County, home of Washington State University, as well.

Also Tuesday, state health officials warned of an upcoming "fall surge" in coronavirus infections, noting that western Washington counties are hitting near or above previous peaks in the rate of infections.

The new guidelines now require the colleges to provide isolation and quarantine facilities for Greek system houses, communal off-campus homes, and students and workers who live on campus if they don't have a place to go.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Agency: Flying squirrels illegally shipped to Asia

FL TALLAHASSEE — Flying squirrels were being trapped in Florida, driven to Chicago and shipped to South Korea, Florida wildlife officials said while announcing charges against seven people they say ran an illegal wildlife trafficking operation.

Poachers captured as many as 3,600 flying squirrels over a three-year period. They sold the squirrels to a licensed wildlife dealer who claimed they were bred in captivity, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said. Flying squirrels are a protected species.

The seven people charged face a total of 25 felonies, including racketeering, money laundering and scheming to defraud.

Jail time, \$15K fine for man in deer killing

NV RENO — A 22-year-old Utah man was sentenced to 20 days in jail and fined \$15,000 nearly four years after he removed the antlers from a mule deer he illegally shot in southern Nevada and left behind the rest of the animal.

Brayden Norton, of Washington, Utah, was arrested in May 2019 after new information developed in the killing of the deer near Caliente in November 2016, Nevada Department of Wildlife officials said.

Chief Game Warden Mike Maynard said Norton never purchased a Nevada hunting license and didn't have a big-game tag.

Norton pleaded guilty in Lincoln County to unlawful possession of big game and wasting edible portions of a deer.

In addition to the fine, he must complete 200 hours of

community service and 12 months' probation.

Man accused of biting off nose of another man

IA DUBUQUE — A Dubuque man faces charges after police say he bit off the nose of another man during a fight.

Blayre Ward, 24, of Dubuque, was arrested on suspicion of willful injury, assault causing injury, harassment and other counts, the Telegraph Herald reported.

Police documents said Ward and another man fought with Scott Plumley, 44, of Dubuque, and that Ward bit Plumley's nose, "biting the majority of it off." Plumley was taken by ambulance to a local hospital and later transported to an Iowa City hospital for specialized surgery to reconstruct his nose.

Police: Man assaulted K-9, struck patrol car

DE GEORGETOWN — A Delaware man was accused of assaulting a police K-9 and striking a patrol car with his vehicle after troopers attempted to get him to stop his car.

Troopers attempted the traffic stop on suspicion that Dwayne Wiltbank Jr., 37, was driving under the influence, Delaware State Police said in a news release.

Officials said he failed to stop and a chase ensued. During that pursuit, authorities said Wiltbank intentionally struck a marked car head on and then reversed his car into another patrol car.

Troopers then deployed the K-9 in an attempt to arrest Wiltbank. "It was unsuccessful after he began assaulting the dog," the release said.

Wiltbank was arrested after troopers got into the passenger side of his vehicle and used a stun gun on him.

Rare white sea turtle found on beach

SC KIAWAH ISLAND — Volunteers checking sea turtle nests on a South Carolina beach came upon a rare sight: a white sea turtle hatchling crawling across the sand.

The town of Kiawah Island posted on its Facebook page that the Kiawah Island Turtle Patrol found a lone white baby sea turtle. Photos show a tiny turtle that's a creamy white color rather than the more typical gray or green of a sea turtle.

The Olive Ridley Project, a sea turtle conservation group, said sea turtles with the genetic condition called leucism typically have a hard time surviving because of a lack of camouflage.

Plastic bag ban starts after months of delay

NY ALBANY — New York's long-delayed ban on single-use plastic bags went into effect this week.

The state law bans supermarkets, department stores and other types of businesses from distributing the thin plastic bags that have been clogging up landfills, getting tangled in trees and accumulating in lakes and seas. Single-use paper bags are still allowed, but counties have the option of imposing a 5 cent fee.

The law was supposed to go into effect March 1, but state environmental officials delayed enforcement after a lawsuit was brought by a plastic bag manufacturer and convenience store owners. A judge upheld key parts of the law this summer.

Backyard camera shows illegal entry into US

VT DERBY — The Border Patrol was investigating after a home security camera on a man's property on the U.S.-Canadian border recorded a minivan illegally entering Vermont from Quebec.

The video showed three men trying unsuccessfully to move a granite block that marks the border in the backyard of camera owner Alain De La Bruere, of Derby.

De La Bruere told MyNBC5.com that most of the blocks are fixed in place, but the men managed to move one of the blocks at the edge of his yard and drive into the United States. The car was later found abandoned in a Walmart parking lot in Derby.

Teacher reports break-in at students' home

CA SACRAMENTO — A California teacher alerted police to a break-in at a home where her students were participating in an online class.

A man entered the home in Galt through a window and ran through the house and then out a back door before going over a fence, KOVR-TV reported.

Teacher Jennifer Petersen realized something was wrong when the teenagers did not log off at the end of the lesson.

"I was just watching their faces and I can see their faces go from concern to panic," Petersen said.

An audio recording captured the students screaming for help after seeing the man in the house.

Petersen called police and stayed online until authorities arrived at the home.

No arrests were reported by police.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Dodgers take Game 1 of World Series

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Clayton Kershaw, Cody Bellinger, Mookie Betts — the Los Angeles Dodgers stars all shined.

Nothing out of the ordinary there, even if the setting was surreal.

Baseball's best team during the pandemic-shortened season showed off its many talents in the first World Series game played at a neutral site, beating the Tampa Bay Rays 8-3 Tuesday night.

With the seats mostly empty, Kershaw dominated for six innings, Bellinger and Betts homered and the Dodgers chased a wild Tyler Glasnow in the fifth inning and coasted home in the opener.

A crowd limited by the coronavirus to 11,388 at Globe Life Field, the new \$1.2 billion home of the Texas Rangers, marked the smallest for baseball's top event in 111 years.

Los Angeles hopes to go home with a title that has eluded the Dodgers since 1988 but tried to

guard against focusing ahead.

"It's hard not to think about winning. It's hard not to think about what that might be like," Kershaw said. "Constantly keep putting that in your brain: tomorrow, win tomorrow, win tomorrow, win tomorrow. And then you do that three more times, and you can think about it all you want."

A regular-season star with an erratic postseason history, Kershaw looked like the ace who so often stars on midsummer evenings with the San Gabriel Mountains behind him at Dodger Stadium. With these games shifted, the 32-year-old left-hander wound up pitching not far from his offseason home in Dallas.

The three-time Cy Young Award winner allowed one run and two hits, struck out eight and walked one. He induced 19 swings and misses among his 78 pitches — more than his three previous Series starts combined.

"You can appreciate and totally see why he's heading to

the Hall of Fame one day whenever he's done," Rays manager Kevin Cash said.

Kershaw threw nine balls in the first, when he stranded a pair of runners, then threw just nine more over the next three innings.

"He had a game plan to try to really quiet down things from there and he executed," said Kevin Kiermaier, who ended Kershaw's streak of 13 retired in a row with a fifth-inning homer on a hanging slider that cut the Rays' deficit to 2-1.

Kershaw, a five-time ERA champ, improved to 2-2 in the World Series and 12-12 in postseason play, a shadow of his 175-76 regular-season record. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts did not pitch him after Game 4 of the NL Championship Series last Thursday.

"I think we were going to stay away from him in Game 7 just for this particular reason," Roberts said.

Game 2 is Wednesday night. The Dodgers, who posted the best record in the majors dur-

ing the shortened season and showed off all their stars in Game 1, plan to throw a collection of pitchers started by Tony Gonsolin against Rays ace Blake Snell.

Bellinger, the 2019 NL MVP who began the opener with a career .114 batting average in 12 World Series games, had put the Dodgers ahead in the fourth with a two-run homer off Glasnow, having no trouble driving a 98 mph pitch into the Dodgers bullpen in right-center.

Bellinger, whose seventh-inning homer put the Dodgers ahead in Game 7 of the NL Championship on Sunday, shuffled his feet, tapping gently as he crossed the plate and celebrated by toe tapping teammates while dancing back to the dugout, a sign he remembered popping his right shoulder during raucous revelry two nights earlier.

Bellinger capped his evening by leaping at the 6-foot center field wall in the ninth, robbing Austin Meadows of a possible home run.

Tampa Bay's Glasnow wilts after promising start

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Tyler Glasnow had already given up a two-run homer and four of his six walks when he went back out for the fifth inning.

Tampa Bay manager Kevin Cash might have waited a smidge too long to go to his bullpen in Game 1 of the World Series.

Glasnow was charged with all four runs in the small-ball fifth by the Los Angeles Dodgers — three singles, four walks and three stolen bases that tied a Fall Classic record — as the Rays lost 8-3 on Tuesday night in the franchise's first Series game since 2008.

"I think ultimately it was kind of a lack of strikes thrown right here," Cash said. "That's not ideal, especially against an offense like this that can really capitalize on the free passes."

The 6-foot-8 Glasnow started fast enough in his first World Series start, pumping the occasional 100 mph fastball while matching postseason veteran Clayton Kershaw out for out through three innings.

But after striking out three around the second of his three walks to Corey Seager in the third, Glasnow walked Max Muncy to start the fourth. Two batters later, Cody Bellinger hit the fastest pitch he ever has for a homer (98.2 mph).

"I felt a little weird in the beginning, made the adjustment I think in that third inning and started to feel pretty good," Glasnow said. "As the game went on, I think I was just getting on the side of it, getting a little rushed, going forward just a bit too quick. Too many walks, not executing well enough."

Glasnow, who struck out eight, started the fifth with con-

secutive walks to Mookie Betts and Seager, but Cash stayed with him long enough to give up Muncy's run-scoring fielder's choice after a double steal by Betts and Seager, and Will Smith's soft single to center.

"He had plenty of stuff to keep us right there," Cash said. "The walks are definitely not ideal. Glas would be the first to recognize that. We didn't do a good job holding the runners on. We can't let them get the double steal right there."

Cash said he stuck with Glasnow against Muncy because he thought that was the best chance for a strikeout with runners at second and third. Muncy hit a sharp grounder to first baseman Yandy Diaz, who lunged toward second to make the stop but had to throw across his body. Betts beat the throw with a headfirst slide.

The six runs were the most

Glasnow has allowed in seven postseason starts. The six walks and 112 pitches were career highs for the 27-year-old right-hander.

When he finally pulled Glasnow, Cash was boxed in because he needed lefty reliever Ryan Yarbrough to face the left-handed Bellinger, who popped out.

Yarbrough had to stay because of the three-batter minimum, and right-hitting Chris Taylor had an RBI single before Kiké Hernandez pinch-hit for the lefty Joc Pederson and singled in another run.

Glasnow, one of the shrewd moves that helped the Rays get this far when he was acquired for ace Chris Archer at the trading deadline two years ago, had to pitch the opener because Tampa Bay struggled to close out Houston after winning the first three games in the ALCS.

Pacers hire Raptors' Bjorkgren as coach

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana wanted its next coach to take the franchise in a new direction.

The Pacers were seeking someone who could communicate with today's players, who was open to a new offensive philosophy and who could win some postseason games.

On Tuesday, president of basketball operations Kevin Pritchard found his man in Toronto assistant Nate Bjorkgren.

"Nate is the right coach for us at the right time," Pritchard said in a statement released by the team. "He comes from a winning background, has experienced championship success, is innovative and his communication skills along with his positivity are tremendous."

Terms were not immediately available though several reports said the 45-year-old Bjorkgren agreed to a multi-year deal.

He comes to Indiana after spending two seasons as an assistant on Nick Nurse's staff in Toronto. There, Bjorkgren helped the Raptors capture their first NBA championship in 2018-19 and was part of a

team that earned the Eastern Conference's No. 2 seed each of the past two seasons.

He also won a G-League title while working for Nurse in 2010-11 with the Iowa Energy.

And though this will be Bjorkgren's first head coaching job in the NBA, he went 126-74 in four seasons as a G-League head coach with the Dakota Wizards, Santa Cruz Warriors, Energy and Bakersfield Jam.

Bjorkgren was expected to be introduced Wednesday on a Zoom call.

"This is something I have prepared for during my career," Bjorkgren said in a statement, thanking those involved in the selection process. "I also want to thank Nick Nurse for giving me my first professional coaching job 14 years ago. I'm looking forward to working with this great team to achieve our goal as NBA champions."

Just winning some postseason games would be a start.

Despite making five straight playoff appearances, the Pacers haven't won a series since defeating Washington 4-2 in the 2014 Eastern Conference semifinals.

Clippers confirm Lue hire

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday confirmed their hiring of Tyrone Lue to replace Doc Rivers as coach.

Lue spent last season as an assistant on Rivers' staff. Rivers coached the Clippers for the last seven seasons and is now guiding the Philadelphia 76ers.

The team planned to introduce Lue virtually on Wednesday.

Lawrence Frank, the team's president of basketball operations, said the Clippers con-

ducted a "thorough" search.

"We found that the best choice for our team was already in our building," Frank said. "He's one of the great minds in our league, and he's able to impart his vision to others."

Lue was on the Cleveland Cavaliers' staff when he replaced the fired David Blatt during the 2015-16 season. Under Lue's guidance, the Cavs and LeBron James went on to win their first NBA championship that season, making Lue one of the few rookie coaches in the league to lead his team to a title.

Talented receivers have Crimson Tide in very good hands

Associated Press

If it wasn't Jaylen Waddle outrunning the Georgia defense, it was DeVonta Smith winning a fight for the ball in the back of the end zone or slipping free on a wheel route.

Not even No. 4 Georgia's vaunted defense could contain No. 2 Alabama's speedy, crafty, sure-handed receivers Saturday night. The question now: Who can?

"Trying to cover outstanding receivers is really a difficult task," Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban said. "You have to have a really, really good secondary, you have to have really good guys to match up. That's been an advantage for us. It was a huge advantage for us last year, and it's an advantage for us this year."

Smith and Waddle each delivered another huge game in a 41-24 victory over the Bulldogs, who easily have the best defense Alabama has faced this season.

It's one thing to do it against Mississippi, and another altogether to victimize Georgia.

"They made a couple big throws," Bulldogs coach Kirby Smart said. "They beat us on some bubble plays and a double move with Waddle. They made a lot of big plays on 50-50 balls. Smith and Waddle had some big catches."

What else is new?

Smith and Waddle rank among the nation's top seven receivers in yards per game. And John Metchie III had 181 yards and two touchdowns against Texas A&M.

Waddle had a 90-yard touchdown against Georgia and has at least 120 receiving yards in all four games.

Smith has 24 catches for 231 yards and three touchdowns in the past two games, displaying his strong connection with quarterback Mac Jones.

"That's just us in practice

just getting chemistry down and really Mac just believing in me," Smith said. "I always tell Mac: 'You believe in me, I believe in you. I will never let you down.'"

Jones, whose three consecutive 400-yard passing games matches Tua Tagovailoa's career total, said the trust is mutual and that Smith has the confidence to say, "Throw it to me."

"He says, 'I don't care if I'm triple covered, throw it to me,'" Jones said. "It's hard to turn that down. He's a (Michael) Jordan-level competitor."

"If you can get him the ball, then he'll make the play."

Same goes for Waddle, a dangerous open-field runner who is also a threat as a punt returner. And Metchie, when he gets the chance.

The Tide also displayed their power running game with Najee Harris, who ran 31 times for 152 yards and a touchdown.

"They're big, they're physical, they lean on and wear on you and they've got a great back," Bulldogs safety Richard LeCounte said.

"The passing game they use is really creative. They run a lot of the same plays from different formations and they did a good job disguising them with motions."

The Tide's passing game has gotten more explosive even after losing Tagovailoa and fellow first-rounders Jerry Jeudy and Henry Ruggs III, both receivers.

"These receivers are special," Saban said.

Alabama is second in the country to Texas in scoring with 48.5 points a game. The Tide is also second in passing yards to Central Florida with 393.3 yards a game. Alabama's receivers are second in the country to Kansas State while averaging 16.55 yards per catch this season.

Dolphins turning to Tua as starter

Associated Press

MIAMI — Tua Tagovailoa now has a role to match his jersey number. He's the Miami Dolphins' No. 1 quarterback.

The former Alabama star will make his first NFL start next week for the Miami Dolphins, who are turning to him to replace Ryan Fitzpatrick.

The change by coach Brian Flores will come after the Dolphins' bye this week and has been long anticipated, but the timing is surprising because the team won its past two games to improve to 3-3. Tagovailoa will start at home against the Los Angeles Rams on Nov. 1.

News of the change leaked Tuesday. Flores says he regrets that his players found out about the switch through social media rather than from him.

"The one thing in this situation that's unfortunate is that I didn't get a chance to address the team before this was out in the media," Flores said. "It's

not the way I or we want to do business. Unfortunately, it's kind of the way of the world right now.

"I'm not happy about that at all. I'll address that to the team, and really apologize to them that they had to find out through social media. I don't think that's fair to them."

And Flores says the decision to bench popular veteran Fitzpatrick was difficult.

"Fitz has done a great job," Flores said Wednesday. "He has been productive. His leadership has been great. But we felt like for the team now, moving forward, this is a move we need to make."

Tagovailoa made his pro debut in mop-up duty at the end of Miami's 24-0 victory Sunday over the New York Jets. He will become the 22nd quarterback to start for the Dolphins since Dan Marino retired following the 1999 season.

At Alabama, Tagovailoa wore

Marino's No. 13. That Dolphins jersey is retired, and so Tagovailoa now wears No. 1.

Touted as a potential franchise quarterback, the dynamic Tagovailoa raises the profile of a team that has been off the NFL radar for much of the past two decades. He was drafted in April with the fifth overall pick — the highest choice Miami has devoted to a QB since Bob Griese in 1967.

Tagovailoa is coming back from a serious hip injury that cut short his Alabama career last November. The recovery slowed his preparation to assume a starting NFL job, as did the coronavirus pandemic that forced the cancellation of offseason drills and exhibition games.

"He has been thrown into a very difficult situation in that he didn't have any preseason, he didn't have really an off-season," Dolphins offensive coordinator Chan Gailey said

Tuesday, shortly before the news of Tagovailoa's promotion broke.

Fitzpatrick, 37, described himself during training camp as a placeholder. He is being benched even though he ranks fifth in the NFL in completion percentage, and Miami is on pace for its highest-scoring season since 1986 at 26.7 points per game.

Tagovailoa went 2-for-2 for 9 yards against the Jets.

"Under duress he made an accurate throw," Gailey said. "Then he sat in the pocket on third down and made a throw for a first down. For a guy that hadn't played a snap, those are real positives."

"He has gotten more comfortable," Flores said. "Accuracy, decision-making, all those things have been good in practice. Practice is very different from games, but we're comfortable and confident he'll be able to be competitive."

'McMoney' McManus gives Broncos a leg up

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Brandon McManus and his powerful right leg were benched for the New England game — in quite a few fantasy football leagues, anyway.

The Denver Broncos kicker took notice, too.

McManus couldn't resist a playful jab on Twitter after his franchise-best, six field-goal performance against the Patriots: "95.5% of fantasy didn't play me. Shout out to the 4.5% who ride or die with me."

From about midfield in, the Broncos (2-3) certainly have total confidence in "McMoney" McManus, which he was jokingly called after recently inking a new deal. The reliable McManus has become a safety net for an injury-riddled offense that's trying to get on track with QB Drew Lock back at the helm.

"He definitely allows us to take a deep breath," said Lock, who returned from a sprained right shoulder in the 18-12 win over the Patriots on Sunday. "(We) can call what we feel like and call what we want. That was kind of the game plan."

For McManus, his big day at New Eng-

land was a years-in-the-making chance at redemption. He missed a 41-yarder off the right upright inside Gillette Stadium on Nov. 2, 2014.

Three weeks later, he was cut by Denver before being brought back to handle the kickoff duties.

"This place is special for me to kind of come back and perform like that," said McManus, who signed a four-year, \$17.2 million extension in September. "It's always difficult to kick here in a stadium like this."

McManus made it look like a breeze. He connected from 45, 44, 27, 52, 20 and 54 yards. It's the sixth time he's made multiple field goals of 50 or more yards in a game, which ties Baltimore's Justin Tucker for most in NFL history.

McManus had a crack at a 57-yarder early in the fourth quarter, but the team elected to pass leading 18-3.

A calculated decision in the estimation of McManus.

"If I miss that, they get the ball at midfield and definitely the momentum," said McManus, whose team has won two in a row heading into a home game against Pat-

rick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs (5-1) on Sunday. "I really wasn't itching at all to go out there."

That's in contrast to last season, when McManus had a sideline outburst after coach Vic Fangio called him back as he was preparing to attempt an NFL record 65-yarder at altitude.

But that decision by Fangio has only served to fuel him. McManus is 12 of 13 on field goals this season, including a 53-yarder to put the Broncos up for good late in the fourth at the New York Jets on Oct. 1. That helped net him AFC special teams player of the week honors, which he figures to be up for again.

"When we come out to practice, he wants to finish at 65 and 66 (yards), and I think it's the right message to send because you really actually just send it to yourself," special teams coordinator Tom McMahon said. "He wants to go big and he wants to kick from deep. His Achilles has been 50-plus yard kicks in his career and he's attacking it and we really like it."

McManus isn't your ordinary kicker. He doesn't even think of himself as a kicker, but simply as an athlete.