

STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, October 22, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

CDC redefines meaning of close contact

Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. health officials Wednesday redefined what counts as close contact with someone with COVID-19 to include briefer but repeated encounters.

For months, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said close contact meant spending a solid 15 minutes within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for coronavirus. On Wednesday, the CDC changed it to a total of 15 minutes or more — so shorter but repeated contacts that add up to 15 minutes over a 24-hour period now count.

The CDC advises anyone who has been in close contact with a COVID-19 patient to quarantine for two weeks.

The change may prompt health departments to do contact tracing in cases where an exposure might previously have been considered too brief, said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University infectious diseases expert.

It also serves notice that the coronavirus can spread more easily than many people realize, he added.

The definition change was triggered by a report on the case of a 20-year-old Vermont correctional officer, who was diagnosed with a coronavirus infection in August. The guard, who wore a mask and goggles, had multiple brief encounters with six transferred prisoners before test results showed they were positive. At times, the prisoners wore masks, but there were encounters in cell doorways or in a recreational room where prisoners did not have them on, the report said.

An investigation that reviewed video footage concluded the guard's brief interactions totaled 17 minutes during an 8-hour shift.

The report didn't identify the prison, but Vermont officials said that in late July, six inmates tested positive when they arrived at the Marble Valley Correctional Facility

in Rutland.

In a statement, CDC officials said the case again highlights the importance of wearing masks to prevent transmission, and that the agency's guidance can change as new information comes in.

"As we get more data and understand this COVID, we're going to continue to incorporate that in our recommendations," CDC Director Robert Redfield said at a press conference in Atlanta.

The CDC also says close contact can include hugging and kissing, sharing eating or drinking utensils with someone infected and providing home care to someone who is sick. Someone sneezing or coughing on you also counts.

The risk of spread is considered to be lower outdoors, but the CDC guidance update "makes scientific sense," said Dr. Michael Saag, an infectious disease researcher at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

US links Iran to emails meant to intimidate voters

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials have accused Iran of being behind a flurry of threatening but fake emails sent to Democratic voters in multiple battleground states in a late-stage efforts to sway public opinion and interfere in the presidential election.

Purportedly from far-right, pro-Trump groups like the Proud Boys, the fake emails were apparently aimed at intimidating voters. John Ratcliffe, the government's national intelligence director, said the aim was to hurt President Donald Trump in the contest against Democrat Joe Biden, though he did not elaborate on how.

One possibility is the messages may have been intended to align Trump in the minds of voters with the Proud Boys after he was criticized for failing to unequivocally denounce

'These actions are desperate attempts by desperate adversaries.'

John Ratcliffe

National intelligence director

the group during the first presidential debate.

Officials did not lay out specific evidence for how they came to pinpoint Iran as the source of the threatening emails, but the activities attributed to Tehran would mark a significant escalation for a country some cybersecurity experts regard as a second-rate player in online espionage. The announcement was made late Wednesday at a hastily called news conference 13 days before the election.

The allegations underscored the U.S. government's concern about efforts by foreign coun-

tries to influence the election by spreading false information meant to suppress voter turnout and undermine American confidence in the vote. Such direct attempts to sway public opinion are more commonly associated with Moscow, which conducted a covert social media campaign in 2016 aimed at sowing discord and is again interfering this year, but the idea that Iran could be responsible suggested that those tactics have been adopted by other nations, too.

"These actions are desperate attempts by desperate adversaries," said Ratcliffe, who,

along with FBI Director Christopher Wray, insisted that the U.S. would impose costs on any foreign countries that interfere in the 2020 U.S. election and that the integrity of the vote remains sound.

"You should be confident that your vote counts," Wray said. "Early, unverified claims to the contrary should be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism."

The two officials called out Russia and Iran for having obtained voter registration information, though such data is sometimes easily accessible and there was no allegation either country had hacked a database for it or had altered any vote tallies. Iran sent spoofed emails designed to intimidate voters and sow unrest and also distributed a video that falsely suggested voters could cast fraudulent ballots from overseas, Ratcliffe said.

Missing Crozier nameplate causes uproar

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

Whoever removed Capt. Brett Crozier's nameplate aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt set off a social media storm this week.

Crozier steered the carrier through a coronavirus episode in March that ended with then-Navy Secretary Thomas Modly relieving him of command. Crozier's firing elicited an immediate backlash felt from the carrier deck to Capitol Hill.

Many commenters on Facebook assumed a vindictive move on someone's part when Crozier's nameplate went miss-

ing from a plaque listing all the carrier's commanders past and present since 1986, but the carrier's executive officer, Capt. Daniel Keeler, settled for a less sinister motive.

"(Sigh) It's getting fixed — not a directed removal," Keller wrote on the original Junior Officer Protection Association Facebook post drawing attention to the missing nameplate. "We think someone took it as a souvenir."

About eight hours later, Keeler posted an updated photo of the plaque, now featuring a new nameplate for Crozier; two new plates for his predecessor and successor, Capt. Carlos

Sardiello; and one for the current commander, Capt. Eric Anduze, along with corrected service dates.

"Done. (Until someone else decides they want a 'souvenir,')" Keeler captioned the photo.

Roosevelt spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Jacqueline Pau told the Navy Times on Thursday that the nameplate was removed because the ship was in the process of updating the commanding officers' nameplates on the ceremonial quarterdeck.

Crozier commanded the aircraft carrier when it diverted to Guam on March 26 to deal with a coronavirus outbreak that ul-

timately resulted in more than 1,150 positive cases. Modly removed Crozier from command on April 2 after a letter Crozier emailed his Navy superiors pleading for help surfaced in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Crozier's firing was unpopular with much of the carrier's crew. Sailors shared to social media videos of Roosevelt crew members cheering and chanting Crozier's name the night he left the carrier for the final time. National news picked up the story, along with an audio recording of Modly denigrating Crozier during a later address aboard the carrier. Modly resigned shortly afterward.

2 more DODEA schools to soon begin reopening

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Two more schools overseen by the Department of Defense Education Activity-Europe will soon return to in-person instruction.

At the U.S. Navy base in Bahrain, classes will resume for grades nine to 12 at Bahrain School on Sunday, the start of the school week there, DODEA-Europe spokesman Stephen Smith said.

Elementary and middle school students at the base returned to school in late September.

Ankara Middle/High School in Turkey will begin in-person instruction for grades six to 12 on Monday, Smith said.

Both Ankara and Bahrain's high school have been conducting classes through remote learning since the start of the school year due to the local coronavirus risk level. At Bahrain, staffing levels have also been a problem.

Sevilla Elementary/Middle School at Moron Air Base, Spain, will continue remote instruction until further notice, Smith said. The installation is in the highest health protection condition level, HPCON Charlie, due to the high coronavirus risk in Spain.

Airman's sexual harassment post gets notice of high-ranking official

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The chief master sergeant of the Air Force has reached out to a female airman in Japan who said on Instagram that she experienced sexual harassment and retaliation.

Airman 1st Class Sarah Figueroa posted her claims Oct. 14 along with a photograph of herself in uniform that tagged President Donald Trump, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and numerous media outlets.

"My name is Sarah Figueroa and i am a victim of sexual harassment in the air force," she wrote. The post claims she was sexually harassed by a coworker at Misawa Air Base, an installation in northeast Japan that's home to the 35th Fighter Wing and about 5,700 U.S. personnel.

"Since i reported this, i've faced retaliation in ways you wouldn't believe. The retaliation has even reached a point of 'mistakes' being made for my career development," she wrote without providing details.

"Last week, i was followed (while driving) by the airman who sexually harassed and i feared for my life," she continued.

Figueroa said she reported the incident to military police and her chain of command but that her commander said it was coincidence that her alleged harasser drove behind her on a small installation.

The Instagram post attracted numerous comments, including one from Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne Bass, who asked Figueroa to contact her via email.

"The CMSAF deeply cares about the safety and well-being of all Airmen, and her interest in Airman 1st Class Figueroa's situation is no exception," a Pacific Air Forces spokesperson, Sgt. Renae Rittman, wrote Thursday in an email to Stars and Stripes.

Figueroa told Stars and Stripes that she wanted to talk Oct. 16 via an Instagram message but did not respond to subsequent emails and messages.

In follow-up Instagram posts, Figueroa said she wasn't trying to defame the Air Force or the military.

"For now I will be taking some personal time and will be staying off social media for a while," she wrote.

Pacific Air Forces has been looking into Figueroa's posts, the public affairs office wrote in an Oct. 16 email to Stars and Stripes.

"We take allegations like this seriously and are dedicated to the safety and well-being of all of our Airmen," the message said. "An investigation into those claims was done by the Airman's chain of command. Equal Opportunity office was made aware and provided subject matter expertise on the matter."

Remains found as part of search for '21 Tulsa victims

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — At least 10 bodies were found Wednesday in an unmarked mass grave at a Tulsa cemetery where investigators are searching for the remains of victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, Oklahoma's state archaeologist said.

"What we were finding was an indication that we were inside a large area ... a large hole that had been excavated and into which several individuals had been placed and buried in that location. This constitutes a mass grave," state archaeologist Kary Stackelbeck said.

Investigators found 10 wooden coffins containing what was initially presumed to be one person in each, Stackelbeck said. She said further examination of the coffins and remains, which have not been removed, was needed.

"Those skeletal remains are not in great condition," Stackelbeck said. "They're not the worst condition we have seen ... but they're not the best."

Combined with one set of re-

mains found nearby on Tuesday, there have now been at least 11 bodies discovered, according to Stackelbeck.

University of Florida forensic anthropologist Phoebe Stubblefield, a descendent of a massacre survivor who is assisting in the search, said patience is needed before anyone can expect to know the identities of the remains or the cause of deaths.

"We will need considerable time to investigate them because the preservation, teeth have been showing up OK, but non-dental structures" have deteriorated, Stubblefield said.

Stackelbeck said it was too early to say definitely that the remains are victims of the massacre, even though they were found near an area known as the "Original 18," where funeral home records indicate massacre victims were buried.

There are two headstones in the Original 18 marking the graves of two massacre victims, but the area where the remains were found Wednesday is unmarked.

Senate panel advances high court nomination

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Judiciary Committee Republicans powered past a Democratic boycott Thursday to advance Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court nomination to the full Senate, keeping President Donald Trump's pick on track for confirmation before Election Day.

Democratic senators refused to show up in protest of the GOP's rush to install Trump's nominee to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Never has the Senate confirmed a Supreme Court nominee so close to a presidential election.

The Republicans, who hold the majority, voted unanimously in favor of Barrett, a conservative judge. Instead of attending, the Democrats displayed posters at their desks of Americans they say have benefited from the Affordable Care Act now being challenged in court. Senators plan to convene

a rare weekend session ahead of a final confirmation vote expected Monday.

"This is a groundbreaking, historic moment," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the committee chairman. "We did it."

The 48-year-old federal judge's ascent to the high court would lock a 6-3 conservative majority on the court for the foreseeable future.

Trump's Republican allies in the Senate are counting on Barrett's ascent to improve their standing with voters. The court could open a new era of rulings on the Affordable Care Act, abortion access and even the results of the presidential election.

"We should not be moving forward on this nomination," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Wednesday in announcing the boycott. He called Barrett's views "so far out of the mainstream."

Pandemic relief faces possible postelection resolution

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Negotiations on a COVID-19 relief bill are inching forward, but it's clear the window for action before the Nov. 3 election is closing and the issue will be tossed to a postelection lame-duck session of Congress.

The only thing that seems certain beyond that is uncertainty, with Capitol Hill veterans cautioning against expecting a quick and smooth resolution for an aid package that has tied Washington in knots for months.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi spoke again Wednesday, but her office signaled no real progress, and she acknowledged for the first time publicly that the measure won't pass before the election.

President Donald Trump's chief of staff, Mark Meadows,

accused Pelosi of slow-walking the talks. Trump's most powerful Senate GOP ally, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, is warning against a costly deal that could drive a wedge between the president and his fellow Republicans.

No one knows if Election Day will bring much more clarity.

"I'm never very optimistic about the lame duck and I've never been surprised," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. "You don't get near as much done as you think you're going to get done."

Those Republicans willing to speculate about a Trump loss in two weeks say not to expect much, either.

"I think Democrats would want to wait until the new president is sworn in and do it then, and I think Republicans probably would say ... the economy's taking care of it," said Sen.

Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa.

At issue is a huge virus relief bill that would send another \$1,200 direct payment to most Americans, restart bonus unemployment benefits, fund additional testing and vaccines, provide aid to schools and allocate money to states and local governments, a Democratic priority.

A \$1.8 trillion rescue plan in March passed virtually unanimously. The Pelosi-pushed package today is even larger, but has run into resolute opposition from Republicans. Taking care of the issue would clear the decks for a fresh start on the congressional agenda next year.

Pelosi remains optimistic, even after Washington was blanketed with media reports that McConnell, R-Ky., has warned the White House against sealing a \$2 trillion or

so relief deal with Pelosi before the election.

"Let's keep working so that we can do it after the election," Pelosi said Wednesday on MSNBC.

"We obviously want to have a deal by Nov. 3," Pelosi told SiriusXM radio. "That really is going to be up to whether the president can convince Mitch McConnell to do so."

McConnell says the GOP-controlled Senate is not buying the need for legislation as large as Trump wanted. And Meadows told reporters that Pelosi is still too uncompromising.

"We haven't seen a lot of action from Speaker Pelosi," Meadows said. "Most of the progress we've made have been concessions that the president has made."

Trump has said that if he wins reelection, aid will flow immediately.

US jobless claims drop, layoffs stay high

Associated Press

The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week to 787,000, a sign that job losses may have eased slightly but are still running at historically high levels.

With confirmed infections having neared 60,000 in the past week, the highest level since July, many consumers have been unable or reluctant to shop, travel, dine out or congregate in crowds — a trend that has led some employers to keep cutting jobs. Several states, such as Ohio and Idaho, are reporting a record number of virus hospitalizations.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department said that the number of people who are continuing to receive unemployment benefits tumbled by 1 million to 8.4 million. The decline shows that some of the unemployed are being recalled to their old jobs or are finding new ones. But it also indicates that many jobless Americans have used up their state unemployment aid — which typically expires after six months — and have transitioned to a federal extended benefits program that lasts three more months.

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — Two Arkansas lawmakers on Wednesday said they tested positive for the coronavirus, the latest in an outbreak among legislators that has prompted the suspension of state budget hearings this week.

State Sen. Missy Irvin and state Rep. Joe Cloud confirmed that they contracted the virus, the fourth and fifth lawmakers to do so this week.

Cloud, who said he developed symptoms on Saturday, noted that he had been at budget hearings at the Capitol last week.

Three senators and six House members have now tested positive for the virus since the pandemic began in March. Meanwhile, Gov. Asa Hutchinson's office said in a statement that the Republican tested negative twice Wednesday for

the coronavirus. He received one negative antigen test in the morning and later returned a negative PCR test, the most accurate one available. Those genetic tests, using long cotton swabs that collect samples from deep inside a person's nose and throat, can detect an active case of the coronavirus.

California

SACRAMENTO — A California appeals court has ordered state corrections officials to cut the population of one of the world's most famous prisons to less than half of its designed capacity, citing officials' "deliberate indifference" to the plight of inmates during the coronavirus pandemic.

State prison officials said Wednesday that they are deciding whether to appeal the order, which will otherwise force them to parole or transfer about 1,100 inmates serving time in San Quentin State Prison north of San Francisco.

California's oldest prison, home to its death row, was the site of one of the nation's worst coronavirus outbreaks, with 28 inmate deaths and 2,200 infections at its peak — about 75% of the inmate population. Nearly 300 employees were sickened and one died, though all but nine employees are now back to work.

The three-justice court said officials' decision not to cut the inmate population by half, as recommended by prison officials' outside advisers in June, was "morally indefensible and constitutionally untenable."

Idaho

COEUR D'ALENE — People with COVID-19 in Northern Idaho may soon have to be sent to Seattle or Portland, Ore., because the region's hospitals are nearing capacity.

Kootenai Health hospital said in a statement Wednesday that their hospital is at 99% capacity for patients. The facility is also short-staffed, as demand for nurses grows with the rise in COVID-19 cases through-

out the country, the statement said.

As of Wednesday morning, Kootenai Health had 31 COVID-19 inpatients and 11 required critical care. Chief Physician Executive Karen Cabell told KREM that the hospital nearing capacity at its current levels is "unprecedented."

Kootenai Health will not turn anybody away, but there may be long wait times and patients might receive treatment in different locations such as the waiting room, Cabell said.

Kansas

MISSION — Democratic Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly is again calling for a statewide mask mandate as the coronavirus case count continues to climb in rural parts of the state that don't require them.

Kelly said Wednesday that two-thirds of the state's COVID-19 cases are now coming from outside the Wichita and Kansas City region. Over the summer, she issued an order requiring Kansas residents to wear masks, but more than 90 counties chose to opt out. She said she now plans to speak with House and Senate leadership to work toward a bipartisan requirement with more teeth.

Her announcement came after the state health department reported that Kansas had 1,488 new confirmed and probable coronavirus cases since Monday, bringing the total number of infections reported in the state to 74,456. That pushed the rolling seven-day average for new cases to another record of 757. The department also reported 80 additional COVID-19-related deaths, most of them stemming from a review of death certificates, bringing the state's fatality toll to 952.

Michigan

LANSING — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer warned Wednesday that Michigan has more confirmed daily cases of the coronavirus than ever, noting a sharp increase since the state

Supreme Court invalidated her sweeping orders earlier this month.

The number of COVID-19 cases had been gradually rising for months prior to the Oct. 2 ruling, from a seven-day average of 119 in June to 984 — as the Democratic governor loosened economic restrictions and allowed schools to reopen. Since the court decision, the seven-day average is up to 1,818 — surpassing the April peak and nearly double what it was almost three weeks ago — though surrounding states without legal rulings have also seen similarly big spikes over the same time period.

Whitmer, whose administration has quickly reinstated virus measures under a different law but says the ruling caused confusion, pleaded with people to wear a mask and maintain distance from others.

Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN — Both of Puerto Rico's 911 call centers were shut down Wednesday night after several employees tested positive for the coronavirus, officials announced.

Public Safety Secretary Pedro Janer said people should call the island's emergency management agency at 787-724-0124 or police at 787-343-2020 in an emergency. He said both agencies are operating 24 hours a day.

People calling the first number that Janer provided, however, get a recording asking them to call 911 for an emergency. Then the recording provided callers with a directory.

"This is serious," Nazario Lugo, president of Puerto Rico's Association of Emergency Managers, told The Associated Press. He said he was shocked at the government's temporary plan in place to handle emergencies in the U.S. territory of 3.2 million people.

Lugo said officials should relay 911 calls through to another number, rather than forcing people to call a long number that they would have to read or hear about on the news.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

School bus driver accused of impairment

AZ WILLIAMS — A school bus driver has been arrested for allegedly driving impaired after a crash injured several children in northern Arizona.

Coconino County Sheriff's officials said Charles Hoag, 65, was taken into custody after Monday's crash in Williams. They said the school bus transporting 16 elementary-age students left the road and crashed into a ditch. Several students suffered minor injuries and two were transported to a Flagstaff hospital for evaluation.

Sheriff's officials said the incident was under investigation.

2 women accused of drugging, robbing men

IL CHICAGO — Two Wisconsin women are accused in Chicago of drugging 10 men and robbing them of about \$85,000 after they fell unconscious, Cook County prosecutors said Tuesday.

Tiana Trammell, 25, and Tjwana Rainey, 32, both of Milwaukee, allegedly ran the scheme from January until last Sunday. They are charged with operating a continuing financial criminal enterprise and possession of a controlled substance.

The women allegedly lured drunken men from bars and nightclubs in Chicago's River North district with invitations to their place. There, the men were given a drink that knocked them out. They awoke either in their own homes or by the side of the road, unharmed but without wallets and valuables. The women allegedly used stolen credit and debit cards at ATMs at Walmart and Target stores in the Milwaukee area.

The women were arrested early Sunday after carrying a man from a club to Trammell's car, Assistant State's Attorney Paul Kiefer told Judge Charles Beach II. A tracker had been placed on Trammell's vehicle, Kiefer said.

African stone carvings recovered at airport

FL MIAMI — Customs officers have recovered ancient stone carvings from Cameroon at a South Florida airport, authorities said.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced Tuesday that officers at Miami International Airport intercepted an air cargo shipment containing "Ikom Monoliths." The stone sculptures had been exported to the U.S. using fraudulent documents, investigators said.

Experts believe the artifacts date back between A.D. 200 and A.D. 1000. The items will be returned to the central African nation, officials said. No arrests or criminal charges were reported.

2nd wind turbine blade breaks off in 2 months

IA PATON — For the second time in as many months, a huge blade has broken off from its wind turbine in central Iowa.

The latest incident happened last week near Paton in Green County, television station KCCI reported Tuesday. No one was hurt. That follows a similar incident in mid-September, when another blade dropped from a turbine near Adel and crashed into a corn field.

The blades are 177 feet long and weigh 18,000 pounds, officials said. Mid-American Energy told the station that in both cases, the blades were equipped with a specific type

of lightning protection system. MidAmerican said such incidents are "extremely rare," but acknowledged that even one incident is unacceptable.

Reward offered in bow killing of alligator

LA BATON ROUGE — Louisiana authorities are offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the conviction of whoever killed an alligator with a crossbow and then abandoned the body.

Alligator hunting is tightly regulated. Hunters in Louisiana need a special license, and must lock a harvest tag to the tail of each animal killed.

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries agents were told on Monday that a 12.5-foot alligator that had been killed by an arrow was in Bayou Manchac near Alligator Bayou in Ascension Parish, the agency said in a news release Tuesday. Agents found the animal with a 20-inch carbon crossbow arrow sticking out from the hinge of its jaws, agency enforcement division spokesman Adam Einck said in an email.

Iconic subway map now appearing on phones

NY NEW YORK — One of New York's landmarks is getting an upgrade.

It's not a building, statue or museum — it's the city's iconic subway map, reproduced on millions of coffee mugs, keychains and T-shirts and known for confusing out-of-towners (and even diehard New Yorkers on occasion) with its multicolored tangle of lines.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority on Tuesday debuted a live, web-based subway map that shows trains moving in real time and lets riders check for planned ser-

vice changes, the frequent bane of weekend riders.

"We've all had the experience when we get on the train on a Saturday morning, sit down, read a book take a look at your iPhone and then look up and see we're at a different station than we might have expected to be at," said Sarah Meyer, chief customer officer for New York City Transit, which operates the subways. "This will save people time and make their lives easier."

The map also includes information on which stations have elevator access and whether elevators are operating. Clicking on a station shows how soon each train will arrive.

Cult-classic ginger ale is being discontinued

VA RICHMOND — A nearly century-old cult-classic ginger ale that's made in Virginia is being discontinued.

Facing an aluminum can shortage during the pandemic this year, Coca-Cola had already ceased production of Northern Neck Ginger Ale in July, The Virginian-Pilot reported Monday. Now, the company announced in a news release, the discontinuation will be permanent.

The soda known for its distinctive bite was developed in Montross in 1926 and produced in recent years in Sandston, outside of Richmond.

Online petitions have sprung up in the past few days urging Coca-Cola to reconsider or sell the formula to another bottling company, the newspaper reported.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news
updated 24/7 from bases
around the world.
Now online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Lowe, Rays hold off Dodgers in Game 2

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Brandon Lowe kept finding his name near the top of Tampa Bay's lineup even as his offensive struggles continued to mount this postseason.

After Lowe finally busted out in Game 2 of the World Series, the Rays and Dodgers are tied deep in the heart of Texas.

"Sometimes guys, you've got to allow them to go through some tough patches," manager Kevin Cash said. "He will go quiet for a little while, but he can get as hot as anybody in baseball."

Lowe hit two home runs to the opposite field, Tampa Bay's bullpen held on late and the Rays beat Los Angeles 6-4 on Wednesday night.

"Yeah, those felt really good," said Lowe, a 2019 All-Star who led the Rays with 14 homers and 37 RBIs this season. "It felt great to kind of get back and contribute to the team. They've been doing so well for the past month — it felt really good to get back and actually start doing stuff again."

Blake Snell struck out nine in 4²/₃ innings for the Rays and didn't allow a hit until Chris Taylor's two-run homer trimmed it to 5-2 in the fifth. The Dodgers threatened to complete a big comeback in the eighth, but Tampa Bay's relievers held firm.

Lowe and Joey Wendle each had three RBIs for the Rays, whose six runs and 10 hits were their most over the past 11 postseason games.

"I think today was a little bit better indi-

cator of the kind of team that we are," said Wendle, who had a two-run double and a sacrifice fly. "Just a complete win, complete team win."

Nick Anderson got four outs for the victory. Diego Castillo earned the save when he struck out Taylor, the only batter he faced.

Pete Fairbanks went 1²/₃ innings and left-hander Aaron Loup threw a called third strike past slugger Cody Bellinger with a runner on second to end the eighth. Loup also retired the first two hitters in the ninth.

"They've got some really good pitchers. They got out to that early lead and we just weren't able to overcome it," Taylor said. "We did a pretty good job of fighting to the end and we just weren't able to come up with the big hit we needed."

After an off day, Game 3 in the best-of-seven series matches two big-game pitchers starting on extra rest Friday night. Charlie Morton goes for the Rays against Walker Buehler.

Los Angeles was the "home team" for the first two games but will bat first in the next three.

Lowe hit a solo shot to left-center in the first off rookie Tony Gonsolin, putting the American League champion Rays ahead for the first time at this neutral-site World Series with their 27th homer of the postseason — matching a major league record. The second baseman was hitting .107 this postseason, and in an even worse 4-for-48 slide (.083) the past 13 games since the start of the AL Division Series.

"You've got to be able to be tough-minded

and Brandon is. A lot of our guys are," Cash said. "We owe it to our guys to stick with them."

"Brandon, go ahead and get hot now, feel good about yourself."

By the time Lowe went deep again in the fifth, his second opposite-field homer of the game — and the entire season — it was 5-0. That one bounced off the top of the left-field wall with a runner on against Dustin May, already the fourth Los Angeles pitcher.

Will Smith and NLCS MVP Corey Seager also homered for the Dodgers. Seager's solo shot in the eighth was his seventh homer and 16th RBI, extending the franchise records he had already set this postseason. It's the most homers by a shortstop in any MLB postseason.

Snell, the 2018 AL Cy Young Award winner, retired 10 straight before walking Kiké Hernández with two outs in the fifth and Taylor, the No. 9 batter, homered on his 80th pitch. Tampa Bay's ace was out of the game two batters later, after Mookie Betts walked and Seager singled.

"He was outstanding," Cash said. "He was awesome. Gave us everything that we needed."

Snell attacked with breaking pitches in the strike zone, not his usual pattern, against a Dodgers team that doesn't often chase. But less than a week after an aggressive hook by Cash to take Snell out of Game 6 of the ALCS after four innings, the left-hander still hasn't completed six innings since July 2019.

More not merrier as LA sends 7 to mound in loss

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — More was not merrier for Los Angeles Dodgers pitchers.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts went with an opener against the team that invented the concept, sending Tony Gonsolin to start Game 2 of the World Series against the Tampa Bay Rays as the first of seven pitchers — one shy of the record for a nine-inning Series game.

By the end of the Dodgers' 6-4 defeat Wednesday night, which evened the Series at one game apiece, it appeared the Dodgers are down to essentially a two-man rotation of Walker Buehler and Clayton Kershaw.

Coming off games on seven straight days against Atlanta in the NL Championship Series under this year's unique postseason

schedule, with just Monday's off-day, Roberts felt he had no rested alternative.

"We didn't have anybody that was on regular," he explained.

Seems like a throwback to the Boston Braves of Spahn and Sain and pray for rain, as Gerald V. Hern of the Boston Post poetically memorialized the pitching tandem of Warren Spahn and Johnny Sain in 1948.

Of the 125 innings pitched by the Dodgers in the postseason, Buehler is 1-0 with a 1.89 ERA in 19 innings and Kershaw is 3-1 with a 2.88 ERA in 25 innings, a combined 2.45 ERA. The rest of the staff is 6-3 with a 4.11 ERA.

Gonsolin lasted just four outs, struggling with his slider and leaving with a 1-0 deficit after allowing a home run to his second batter, Brandon Lowe.

Dylan Floro (four outs) and Victor Gon-

zalez (three outs) followed with scoreless ball, but the Rays built a 5-0 lead off Dustin May, who gave up Joey Wendle's two-run double in the fourth and Lowe's two-run homer on an 0-2 curveball in the fifth. Joe Kelly allowed Wendle's sacrifice fly in the sixth.

Alex Wood (six outs) and Jake McGee (three) finished with shutout relief, but the damage yielded by the earlier parade of pitchers was too much to overcome.

Gonsolin has a 9.82 postseason ERA, allowing eight runs in 7¹/₃ innings, and May a 5.00 ERA, giving up five runs in nine innings.

"I still trust them. I still believe them, and they've just got to make pitches," Roberts said. "They're still going to need to get big outs for us."

Raiders send O-linemen home after positive test

Associated Press

The Las Vegas Raiders sent all five starting offensive linemen home as part of coronavirus contact tracing after right tackle Trent Brown was placed on the reserve/COVID-19 list with a positive test.

The Raiders held practice on Wednesday without their starting five as they prepare for Sunday's home game against Tampa Bay. Safety Johnathan Abram also was held out because of contact tracing.

"I guess they were around Trent," coach Jon Gruden said. "I can't get into things any more than that. Hopefully we'll get some players back tomorrow or for Sunday."

Gruden says the team is listening to the league about how to handle the situation.

Las Vegas had the week off last week and returned to practice on Monday. Brown took part in that practice but has since tested positive.

"I'm concerned," Gruden said about being without his linemen. "I'm really more concerned about Trent's health than anything. This is COVID. I'm concerned about anybody who has it or is near it."

Gruden had the coronavirus in July before the start of training camp.

The Raiders' current starting offensive line is left tackle Kolton Miller, left guard Denzelle Good, center Rodney Hudson, right guard Gabe Jackson and Brown. The other linemen on the active roster are Patrick O'mameh, John Simpson, Andre James, Brandon Parker and Sam Young.

Guard Richie Incognito is on injured reserve with an Achilles injury and Las Vegas also has Jaryd Jones-Smith, Erik Magnuson and Kamaal Seymour on the practice squad.

"What's crazy is, whoever's out there, that's who's out there. Nobody cares about this or that. They just see the win-loss and that's all that matters in this business," quarterback

Derek Carr said. "So with that said, we came in with the mindset today like, oh dang, you feel bad for those guys. You feel for them, you pray for them, make sure they're OK, make sure their families are OK, all those kinds of things.

"But at the same time, we have a job to do while we're here, so you have to compartmentalize a little bit. You have to separate the two once you step on the field. We have to act like this is game day. We have to act like this is the group we're rolling out with, so get ready to play."

Brown is the second Raiders player put on the COVID list this week after cornerback Damon Arnette went on it on Monday. Arnette was already on injured reserve with a broken thumb.

The list is used for players who either test positive for the coronavirus or have been in close contact with an infected person.

Defensive tackle Maurice Hurst was put on the COVID list two weeks ago before being activated on Monday.

Brown is supposed to be a key part of Las Vegas line after signing a \$66 million, four-year contract before the 2019 season. He has played only sparingly this season after injuring his calf on the opening series in Week 1 at Carolina.

He missed the next three games before returning on Oct. 11 for a 40-32 win over Kansas City.

Notes: DT Maliek Collins (shoulder) and DE Carl Nassib (toe) returned to practice on a limited basis. ... WR Bryan Edwards (foot, ankle) and CB Keisean Nixon (groin) didn't practice. ... WR Marcell Ateman was added back to the practice squad from IR and WR De'Mornay Pierson-El was released from the practice squad.

Dietzen's comeback thrills his teammates

Associated Press

Wisconsin offensive lineman Jon Dietzen spent much of his time away from football watching games and wondering how well he could still play if injuries hadn't caused him to give it up.

The response he got from family members sparked his decision to attempt a comeback.

"My family helped convince me I really should come back and do it," Dietzen said. "I remember watching games and saying, 'Oh, I bet I could still do that.' They said, 'Well, if you think you can, why don't you?'"

Dietzen, who has made 32 career starts, is back with the Badgers after taking off the 2019 season. He says he's feeling better and ready to contribute whatever he can when the 16th-ranked Badgers open their season Oct. 23 by hosting Illinois.

Teammates and coaches say Dietzen already is making a major difference.

"He's been an absolute blast to be around," Wisconsin coach Paul Chryst said. "There's obviously a maturity that he brings but also that appreciation. Something was taken away and now (he's) getting to play."

Dietzen made a combined 20 starts at left guard in 2016-17 and was the Badgers' first-team left tackle in 2018, but he struggled with ankle and hip injuries for much of his career. He underwent hip surgery before the 2018 season.

"He just is an incredible warrior," offensive tackle Cole Van Lanen said. "He's battled through so much."

All those injuries finally caused Dietzen to announce via social media in February 2019 that he was giving up football.

But later that summer, Dietzen noticed he was starting to feel better. He began training again that July.

"It was more a way to start gauging how my body did feel," Dietzen said. "I noticed day-to-day things felt better, just waking up and moving around, but

obviously you can account that to having not played football that day."

When Dietzen trained for months and still felt fine, he realized that perhaps a comeback was possible.

He spent that year away from the game hanging out with his girlfriend, fishing, hunting and editing a podcast. But he also watched plenty of football, which made him realize just how much he wanted to get back on the field.

"Definitely the more football I watched, the more I missed it," Dietzen said. "In the beginning, I kind of tried to stay away from it, but obviously you grow up playing football and playing high-level football, you're going to end up sitting around watching football all the time."

At that point, family members told him he ought to play again.

"There was nobody that was questioning whether it was a good decision for me," Dietzen said. "They knew I knew how to listen to my body at this point."

Dietzen approached Wisconsin coaches in October 2019 to say he was interested in coming back to the program at some point. His return became official just before the start of the Badgers' pandemic-delayed preseason camp.

He brings more versatility and experience to the offensive line. When Wisconsin released its depth chart for Friday's Illinois game, Dietzen was the starting right guard.

His return has delighted a team that got enough bad news this preseason with quarterback Jack Coan undergoing foot surgery and safety Reggie Pearson not getting medically cleared. Tight end Jake Ferguson said "as soon as you see him in pads, it's awesome, and he's got the flow going," a reference to Dietzen's long red hair.

"It's almost like nothing's changed," Ferguson said. "He's still a leader. He's still out there kicking butt."

Stan Van Gundy agrees to coach Pelicans

Associated Press

Stan Van Gundy is headed to the New Orleans Pelicans, where he'll take over a promising team that includes 2019 No. 1 overall draft pick Zion Williamson and reigning Most Improved Player Brandon Ingram.

Van Gundy agreed to a four-year contract, said a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the terms had not been revealed publicly.

The coach said on his Twitter account Wednesday that he was "excited to join a talented New Orleans Pelicans team" and thanked team owner Gayle Benson and others for the opportunity.

"It will be an honor to work with our players and to work for Mrs. Benson and David Griffin, Trajan Langdon, their staff and the great people of New Orleans," Van Gundy wrote. "I can't wait to talk to our players and get the process started."

Among the players he'll talk to is veteran locker-room leader JJ Redick, who spent his second through sixth NBA seasons playing for Van Gundy in Orlando. Redick has readily credited Van Gundy for helping him develop into a reliable double-digit scorer.

"In terms of intangibles and characteristics I think any NBA player should have, I think he taught me those things and he reinforced those things in me — profes-

sionalism, accountability ... not taking any nights off, all that stuff, because he lives that," Redick said of Van Gundy in 2016, when he played for the Los Angeles Clippers and Van Gundy was coaching Detroit. "I see how hard he works, how much he invests in his craft, and so as a player, playing for him, you really have no choice but to do the same."

In New Orleans, Van Gundy will replace Alvin Gentry, who was let go after the Pelicans missed this season's playoffs. Part of the problem for the Pelicans this season was that Williamson missed most of the season; he averaged 22.5 points and 6.3 rebounds per game on 58% shooting, albeit in only 24 games.

The Pelicans were 30-42 this past season, getting to the NBA's restart bubble at Walt Disney World but falling well short of the playoffs. They have a promising young core with Williamson, Ingram, Lonzo Ball, Jaxson Hayes and Nickeil Alexander-Walker, plus currently hold four picks in this year's draft.

Van Gundy, 61, is a seasoned coach with a more traditional and direct style of communicating with players. His task now is to get Williamson and a largely young supporting cast to buy into a vision that is bound to emphasize defense as much, if not more, than pace of play.

Van Gundy spent parts of 12 seasons coaching Miami, Orlando and Detroit, win-

ning 58% of his games and going to the playoffs eight times. He was Dwyane Wade's first coach in Miami after Pat Riley's surprise resignation in the fall of 2003, then stepped down from the Heat job 21 games into the 2005-06 season — the year Miami went on to win its first championship.

He won 66% of his games in five seasons in Orlando, taking the Magic to the 2009 NBA Finals against the Los Angeles Lakers and going to the playoffs in each of those seasons. His firing from the Magic in 2012 came after a season in which he said he'd been told by management that center Dwight Howard wanted him fired.

And then his four seasons in Detroit were largely a struggle — three losing seasons, the best year in that run being a 44-38 season where the Pistons got swept from the playoffs.

But a common theme in Van Gundy's coaching career is solid defense. In eight of his seasons, his teams ranked in the top 10 defensively.

While Pelicans veteran guard Jrue Holiday is highly regarded for his defensive play, stopping opponents from scoring was a considerable problem for New Orleans this past season. The Pelicans gave up 117.1 points per game, better than just three of the NBA's 30 teams.

Van Gundy had been working most recently as an NBA analyst for Turner Sports.

Injuries, virus having an effect at Villanova

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — An avid sports fan, Villanova coach Jay Wright watched with interest how Major League Baseball muddled through its season to get to the World Series and college football and the NFL have been challenged to piece-meal schedules to complete a season.

That made the two-time national champion weary that college basketball teams can play a complete 25-game season without cancellations or severe disruptions.

Wright says it's "50-50" the sport — which took one of the first major hits in the coronavirus pandemic era with the

cancellation of the 2020 NCAA Tournament — can make it through the season in tact.

"You have to try to anticipate what it's going to be," Wright said Wednesday. "But you have to realize, you could be wrong."

The Wildcats already felt the impact of COVID-19 when they had to put workouts on hold for 14 days last month when members of the program tested positive for the virus. Citing confidentiality, Wright has not disclosed the names of the people who had it, but the winningest coach in Villanova history said he was not among them. Wright said he's tested once a week — including Wednesday.

Penn State's Chambers resigns after an inquiry

Associated Press

Pat Chambers resigned as Penn State's men's basketball coach Wednesday following an internal investigation by the school into allegations of inappropriate conduct.

Chambers, 49, had been at Penn State for nine years and was coming off the team's best season under his directions.

Penn State athletic director Sandy Barbour said during a press news conference that she would not disclose details of the school's investigation, but did say NCAA matters were not part of the investigation.

The investigation followed a July story by ESPN's "The Undeclared" that quoted a former Penn State player saying

Chambers made an insensitive remark to him, referencing a noose, during the 2018-19 season.

"As difficult as this news may be, both President (Eric) Barron and I believe this is the right outcome," Barbour said.

Assistant coach Jim Ferry was elevated to interim coach for the coming season. The start of the NCAA basketball season is slated for Nov. 25. Ferry has previously been head coach at Long Island University-Brooklyn and Duquesne.

Chambers was in the middle of a four-year contract with Penn State that runs through 2021-22 season. He was 148-150 with Penn State, including an NIT championship in 2018.