

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Senate confirms Barrett to high court

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed to the Supreme Court late Monday by a deeply divided Senate, with Republicans overpowering Democrats to install President Donald Trump's nominee days before the election and secure a likely conservative court majority for years to come.

Trump's choice to fill the vacancy of the late liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg potentially opens a new era of rulings on abortion, the Affordable Care Act and even his own election. Democrats were unable to stop the outcome, Trump's third justice on the court, as Republicans race to reshape the judiciary.

Barrett, 48, will be able to start work Tuesday, her lifetime appointment as the 115th justice solidifying the court's rightward tilt.

"This is a momentous day for America," Trump said at a prime time swearing-in event on the South Lawn at the White House. Justice Clarence Thomas administered the constitutional oath to Barrett before a crowd of about 200.

Barrett told those gathered that she believes "it is the job of a judge to resist her policy preferences." She vowed, "I will do my job without any fear or favor."

Monday's 52-48 vote was the closest high court confirmation ever to a presidential election, and the first in modern times with no support from the minority party. The spiking COVID-19 crisis has hung over the proceedings.

## Marines preserve community spirit as tanker legacy ends

BY CHAD GARLAND  
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is ditching tanks, but its tankers are working to preserve their unique subculture, some with hopes that their special breed may one day be called on again.

"We are small and we are all really cut from the same cloth," said Maj. Ronald "JR" Valasek, an armor officer who launched a YouTube channel this summer where the tight-knit community can document its own legacy. "I will always be a tanker."

Dubbed "100 years of Marine Corps Tankers," the channel was born days after the 4th of July, as tank companies were closing and their M1A1 Abrams tanks were being hauled away. The Marines who crewed them were being asked to retrain, change services or retire.

"It's a way for us to keep our stories alive," Valasek said in a phone interview. "The series is going to go for as long as I have interviews."

He was inspired to launch the weekly video series after realizing many current or former tankers have memories and feelings to share. It's been "like therapy," he said, adding that it had spurred old friends to reconnect off-camera too.

In parts oral history, pep talk and eulogy, the episodes occasionally open a window into the final days of the service's remaining tank units, slated to be shuttered by 2023 — one century after the Corps received its first six M1917 tanks from the Army.

Master Gunnery Sgt. Daniel Formella, operations chief at the North Carolina-based 2nd Tank Battalion, spoke with Valasek

in late July, just hours after his battalion's M1A1s were loaded onto railcars at Camp Lejeune for the last time.

"It hurts seeing that [tank] ramp empty. Oh, it hurts," Formella said. "I've been trying to hold it together all week."

It's like losing a loved one, said Valasek, a 17-year veteran. Another heartbreak was knowing when he and others retire, it will be without the traditional ceremony on the tank ramp, standing under crossed 120 mm cannons, as their mentors and heroes had in years past.

The Marines got the news this spring, when Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger published a vision for the service's future without heavy armor and several other units. But it's a demise that's long been foretold.

"This day has been coming for ... 30 years," Chris Juhls, a retired gunnery sergeant, said in July. "It just so happens it's now, and there's nothing we can do about it."

Service-wide cuts to equipment, units and personnel are partly meant to free up money for modernization without asking Congress for a bigger budget. While Valasek didn't expect tank units to be unscathed, he was "personally shocked" that none survived.

A veteran of the Iraq War who spent over six months fighting in Fallujah, he said "tanks were an absolute necessity" there during Operation Phantom Fury and subsequent operations. Many Marine infantrymen would not have made it home without them, he and others say.

"When you need a tank, nothing else will suffice," Valasek said. "I don't know what direct

fire asset is going to replace [tanks]."

Still, as a former aide to Berger, he said he knows the general's decision wasn't made without considering its full ramifications. The commandant envisions a lighter, more agile Marine Corps, largely designed to counter China, and has said the Army would continue to provide tanks and other heavy ground systems.

But the concept raises questions for former Marine armor officer Dan Grazier, who anticipated several complications from relying on another service for heavy armor. This is partly because tanks are a maneuver element of their own in the Army, but the Marine Corps sees them strictly as support for infantry forces.

A military fellow at the non-profit watchdog Project on Government Oversight, Grazier was also skeptical that the U.S. would see the type of conflict the Marine Corps now envisions and suggested it could be more likely to see combat operations where armor units would be direly needed.

"I really fear the day that a future Marine finds himself in a bind and looks around because he needs a tank and there isn't one there to help him," he said.

But on the YouTube channel, several Marines have voiced what Valasek calls "tanker optimism" that the service may one day backtrack — and that it'll need Marines like them again when it does.

"Just because our equipment's going away, our brotherhood's not. It will never die," Formella said. "Our stories will continue through our kids ... until tanks come back."

# Pompeo, Esper push anti-China message

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper stepped up the Trump administration's anti-China message in India on Tuesday, exactly a week ahead of America's presidential election.

With President Donald Trump in a tight race for a second term against former Vice President Joe Biden, Pompeo and Esper sought to play on Indian suspicions about China to shore up a regional front against increasing Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. They also lauded joint cooperation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

In talks with their Indian counterparts, Pompeo and Esper signed an agreement expanding military satellite information sharing and highlighted strategic cooperation between Washington and New Delhi with an eye toward countering China. The two men paid tribute to Indian troops

killed in defense of their country, including 20 who died earlier this year in an incident with China.

"The United States will stand with the people of India as they confront threats to their freedom and sovereignty," Pompeo said, referring pointedly to ones posed by the Chinese Communist Party. "Our leaders and our citizens see with increasing clarity that the CCP is no friend to democracy, the rule of law, transparency, nor to freedom of navigation — the foundation of a free and open and prosperous Indo-Pacific," he said.

In a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pompeo and Esper discussed security and defense cooperation, the coronavirus pandemic and "shared interests in a free and open Indo-Pacific," said U.S. principal deputy spokesperson Cale Brown.

Esper earlier said the two countries' focus must now "be on institutionalizing and regularizing our cooperation to meet

the challenges of the day and uphold the principles of a free and open Indo-Pacific well into the future." That, he said, is particularly important "in light of increasing aggression and destabilizing actions by China."

Just hours before the meetings began, the Trump administration notified Congress of plans for a \$2.37 billion sale of Harpoon missile systems to Taiwan — the second major arms sale in two weeks to the island that Beijing regards as a renegade province. China reacted to the first sale by announcing sanctions on U.S. defense contractors.

Heightened border tensions between New Delhi and Beijing have added to Chinese-American animosity that has been fueled by disputes over the coronavirus, trade, technology, Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, human rights and disputes between China and its smaller neighbors in the South China Sea.

## Police: Fights over strip club visits led to fatal crash

BY ROSE L. THAYER  
Stars and Stripes

Anger over frequent strip club visits ignited a night of fights, violent threats and car chases for two romantically involved Army captains assigned to Fort Bliss that ended with one dead in a fiery crash and the other charged with murder, a court document revealed.

A night of jealousy and violence led Capt. Cleve Muchette Nelson-Royster, 27, and a civilian man on Oct. 11 to chase down her on-again, off-again boyfriend, Capt. Malcom X. Perry, and ram his car with her vehicle until his car flipped and burst into flames, according to an arrest affidavit filed with the El Paso County District Attorney's Office.

Perry, 27, was burned alive in his car, authorities said.

Richard Mustapha Sennessie, 23, was arrested two days later and charged with murder for his involvement in Perry's death, which occurred at about 5:50 a.m. at the intersection of

John Hayes Street and Zaragoza Road in east El Paso where Fort Bliss is located. Nelson-Royster was arrested Oct. 15 and also charged with murder.

Eyewitnesses and video surveillance footage shows that Nelson-Royster and Sennessie were at a bar called 915 Vibes, where she got into a fight with a group of women and was kicked out. From there, the two went to Jaguars, a strip club that Perry was known to frequent, "and this has caused a strain on their relationship," according to the court document.

Inside the strip club, Nelson-Royster confronted Perry and broke his eyeglasses, which triggered a fight with Perry that also involved a stripper. Surveillance footage shows Nelson-Royster fighting with other club employees before being physically removed from the club.

Nelson-Royster and Sennessie remain in the El Paso County Detention Facility with bonds set at \$500,000 and \$1 million, respectively.

## Navy in Japan has 2 new cases

BY JOSEPH DITZLER  
AND AYA ICHIHASHI  
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. Navy in Japan reported two new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday as the disease continues to recede within the U.S. military.

Both patients are recent arrivals to Japan who tested positive sometime since Friday while still in isolation, according to a Facebook post by Yokosuka Naval Base. The base has six active cases.

Most new infections among the U.S. military community occur within new arrivals to Japan or travelers returning from abroad. The military does not identify new cases in Japan as service members, Defense Department civilian employees, contractors or family members.

All new arrivals and returning travelers are required by U.S. Forces Japan and the Japanese government to isolate themselves for two weeks.

The naval base south of Tokyo, home of the U.S. 7th

Fleet, on Friday reported that two people, also new arrivals, had tested positive for the virus sometime in the previous week.

Tokyo reported 158 new patients on Tuesday, the highest number of new daily cases since 203 on Saturday, according to public broadcaster NHK and data from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The city center is considered a hot spot by U.S. military authorities and is generally off-limits to all U.S. personnel, civilian employees and families.

At Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, base public health officials conducted a second round of contact tracing Monday at the base high school after someone tested positive there, according to a letter from Principal Marian Leverette to staff, students and family.

On Okinawa, home to the largest concentration of U.S. service members, the prefecture issued a coronavirus warning on Monday evening as the number of new cases there continues to climb.



## As feared, virus deaths rising again in US

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Deaths per day from the coronavirus in the U.S. are on the rise again, just as health experts had feared, and cases are climbing in practically every state, despite assurances from President Donald Trump over the weekend that “we’re rounding the turn, we’re doing great.”

With Election Day just over a week away, average deaths per day across the country are up 10% over the past two weeks, from 721 to nearly 794 as of Sunday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Newly confirmed infections per day are rising in 47 states, and deaths are up in 34.

Health experts had warned that it was only a matter of time before deaths turned upward, given the record-breaking surge in cases engulfing the country. Deaths are a lagging indicator — that is, it generally takes a few weeks for people to sicken and die from the coronavirus.

Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota expert on infectious diseases who warned over the summer of a fall surge, said what’s happening now is a confluence of three factors: “pandemic fatigue” among people who are weary of hunkering down and are venturing out more; “pandemic anger” among those who don’t believe the scourge is a real threat; and cold weather, which is forcing more Americans indoors, where the virus can spread more easily.

“When you put those three together, we shouldn’t be surprised what we’re seeing,” Osterholm said.

The virus is blamed for more than 8.6 million confirmed infections and over 225,000 deaths in the U.S., the highest such totals in the world.

Deaths are still well below the U.S. peak of over 2,200 per day in late April. But experts are warning of a grim fall and winter, with a model from the University of Washington projecting about 386,000 dead by Feb. 1. A vaccine is unlikely to become widely available until mid-2021.

The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases hit a record high on Sunday of 68,767, according to Johns Hopkins, eclipsing the previous mark of 67,293, set in mid-July. The U.S. recorded more than 80,000 new cases on both Friday and Saturday — the highest marks ever — though testing has expanded dramatically over the course of the outbreak, making direct comparisons problematic. The true number of infections is thought to be far higher because many Americans have not been tested, and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

## Biden visits bluer Ga. as Trump targets Midwest

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With one week until Election Day, Joe Biden is going on offense, heading Tuesday to Georgia — which hasn’t backed a Democrat for president since 1992 — and pushing into other territory where President Donald Trump was once expected to easily repeat his wins from four years ago.

The Democratic presidential nominee planned to travel to Iowa, which Trump took by 10 points in 2016, later in the week. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, is heading to Arizona and Texas, where Republicans haven’t lost any state-wide office since 1994 — the nation’s longest political winning streak.

The aggressive schedule is a sign of confidence by the Biden team, which is trying to stretch the electoral map and open up more paths to 270 Electoral College votes. But after Democrats flirted with GOP territory in 2016, only to lose those states as well as their traditional Midwestern strongholds, Biden’s campaign is mindful of overreaching. The former vice president will also visit Wisconsin, Michigan and Florida in the coming days.

Georgia, where Biden planned to make two stops on Tuesday, has increasingly become a draw for Democrats in recent years, as turnout increases among Black voters and the Atlanta suburbs tilt away from the GOP.

“If this was the Georgia of 2008, 2012, I think there’s no way we would have seen a Biden come this late,” said Nse Ufot, chief executive officer of the New Georgia Proj-

ect, which aims to increase voter registration, especially among young people and minorities. “It’s a loud signal and acknowledgment of Georgia as a battleground state.”

Trump is staying focused on the so-called “blue wall” states that he flipped in 2016: Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, where he’ll return on Tuesday to hit West Salem just three days after holding a Janesville rally. The Republican president has maintained a whirlwind schedule, crisscrossing the country and making the argument that he built a booming economy before the coronavirus pandemic upended it. His latest swing could be a victory lap after the Senate on Monday approved the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett and gave conservatives a commanding 6-3 advantage on the Supreme Court.

Biden, meanwhile, is hoping to lift Democrats running for Senate in Georgia and Iowa. He planned to unveil his closing message during a Tuesday speech in Warm Springs, Ga., where natural hot springs offered President Franklin Delano Roosevelt comfort as he battled polio and governed a nation weathering the Great Depression and World War II.

The former vice president’s campaign said his appearance will bookend his visit earlier this month to Gettysburg, Pa., when Biden used the site of the bloody Civil War battle to issue a call for putting country ahead of party. On Tuesday, he will try to evoke Roosevelt’s New Deal sensitivities while promising to restore the nation’s character.

## La. again under hurricane warning

Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico — Storm-weary Louisiana is once again under a hurricane warning, with Zeta leaving Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula on a path that could hit New Orleans on Wednesday night.

Zeta, the 27th named storm in a very busy Atlantic season, made landfall as a hurricane just north of the ancient Mayan city of Tulum with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph. It weakened to a tropical storm as it crossed over land, but it was expected to regain strength over the Gulf of Mexico.

Zeta’s top winds were 70 mph early Tuesday, and it was centered about 540

miles south of the mouth of the Mississippi River. If Zeta makes landfall in Louisiana, it will be the fifth named storm to hit the state this year, joining Cristobal, Laura, Marco and Delta.

Zeta was still drenching the northern Yucatan as its center moved over the water. Quintana Roo state Gov. Carlos Joaquin said via Twitter early Tuesday that early reports indicated his state suffered no major damage, nor were there reports of deaths or injuries.

Zeta broke the record for the previous earliest 27th Atlantic named storm that formed Nov. 29, 2005. It’s also the 11th hurricane of the season. An average season sees six hurricanes and 12 named storms.

# Police shooting of Black man sparks Philadelphia protests

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — More than a dozen people were arrested and more than 30 officers injured in protests stemming from the police shooting death of a Black man they say refused their orders to drop a knife in a confrontation captured on video, Philadelphia police said Tuesday.

The man, identified by city officials as Walter Wallace, 27, was shot before 4 p.m. Monday in an episode filmed by a bystander and posted on social media. Bystanders and neighbors complained that police fired excessive shots.

Wallace's father, Walter Wallace Sr., told The Philadelphia Inquirer that his son appeared to have been shot 10 times. He said his son was also a father, was on medication and struggled with his mental health.

"Why didn't they use a Taser?" he asked.

Officers had been called to the predominantly black Cobbs Creek neighborhood in west Philadelphia on reports of a man with a weapon, said Officer Tanya Little, a police spokesperson.

Officers said they found Wallace holding a knife and ordered him to drop the weapon several times. Wallace advanced toward the officers, who fired several times, Little said.

In the video, a woman and at least one man follow Wallace, trying to get him to listen to officers, as he briskly walks across the street and between cars. The woman, identified by family members as Wallace's mother, screams and throws something at an officer after her son is shot and falls to the ground. The video does not make it clear whether he was in fact holding a knife, but witnesses said he was.

Wallace was hit in the shoulder and chest, Little said, but she would not say how many times he was shot or the number of times officers fired. One of the officers drove him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead a short time later, she said.

No officers or bystanders were injured in the initial confrontation, Little said. The names of the officers who fired the shots, and their races, were not immediately disclosed. Both were wearing body cameras and were taken off street duty during the investigation.

Neighbors and witnesses soon gathered Monday night on the block of Locust Street where the shooting occurred, yelling that police didn't have to shoot Wallace and didn't have to fire so many shots.

Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw went to the scene Monday and spoke to neighbors, and both Mayor Jim Kenney, a Democrat, and Outlaw said they would hold a meeting soon to talk with the community about the shooting and other concerns.

"I heard and felt the anger of the community," Outlaw said in a statement, adding that the video "raises many questions" and that "those questions will be fully addressed by the investigation."

Hundreds of people later took to the streets in west Philadelphia into the wee hours of Tuesday, with interactions between protesters and police turning violent at times, the Inquirer reported. Video showed many yelling at officers and crying.

Dozens of protesters gathered at a nearby park and chanted "Black lives matter."

Police cars and dumpsters were set on fire as police struggled to contain the crowds. More than a dozen officers, many with batons in hand, formed a line as they ran down 52nd Street. The crowd largely dispersed then.

Thirty officers were injured, most of them from thrown objects, such as bricks and rocks, according to police. One officer had a broken leg and other injuries after she was struck by a pickup truck, police said. The other injured officers were treated and released.

## Wind could intensify Southern Calif. fires

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Crews tried to beat back two out-of-control wildfires in Southern California on Tuesday that have kept tens of thousands of people out of their homes even as another round of dangerous fire weather raises the risk for flames erupting across the state.

Fierce winds that drove twin fires through brushy hills near cities in Orange County a day earlier were expected to pick back up, although not to the earlier extremes, according to the National Weather Service.

Southern California Edison reported to regulators that it was investigating whether its equipment might have sparked the Silverado Fire near the city of Irvine. The utility said a wire that lashed a telecommunications line to a supporting cable may have struck a 12,000-volt conducting line above it.

Edison was among the utilities in California that deliberately cut power to customers to prevent equipment from being knocked down or hit with debris in the winds. Utility equipment has been blamed for several destructive fires in recent years.

Irvine residents had to evacuate after the fire broke out Monday, while later and a few miles away, another blaze, the Blue Ridge Fire, sent people fleeing from the Yorba Linda area.

## Long prison stint looms for self-help guru in sex slave case

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Keith Raniere, a self-improvement guru whose organization NXIVM attracted millionaires and actresses among its adherents, faces sentencing Tuesday on convictions that he turned some female followers into sex slaves branded with his initials.

U.S. District Judge Nicholas

Garaufis was expected to announce a lengthy prison term Tuesday for Raniere after hearing victims speak.

The court proceeding in Brooklyn culminates several years of revelations about NXIVM, which charged thousands of dollars for invitation-only self-improvement courses at its headquarters near Albany and had branches in Mexico

and Canada.

Guests included Hollywood actors and other affluent or prominent individuals, some of whom were willing to endure humiliation and pledge obedience for Raniere's vision of how to pursue perfection.

Prosecutors seek life in prison while defense lawyers say he should face 15 years behind bars for his conviction on

charges including racketeering, alien smuggling, sex trafficking, extortion and obstruction of justice.

Prosecutors said Raniere, 60, led what amounted to a criminal enterprise, inducing shame and guilt to influence and control co-conspirators who helped recruit and groom sexual partners for Raniere.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Ex-hospital worker charged in supply theft

**TN** NASHVILLE — The Tennessee comptroller's office said a former hospital worker stole at least \$798,200 in medical supplies from the facility.

According to the comptroller's investigation, former Maury Regional Medical Center supply chain department system coordinator Tommy John Riker was indicted this spring on theft and money laundering charges for incidents from April 2017 through September 2019.

The investigation found that Riker sold the goods online and kept the cash. The items ranged from needles to wound dressings.

The report says Riker's job duties didn't include filling supply orders, but he manipulated the hospital inventory control system to make it appear that orders were filled and dispensed to staff.

## Police fatally shoot dog that mauled its owner

**WA** SEATTLE — A Seattle police officer shot a dog to death while responding to a call for help from the pet owner, who was severely mauled by the animal.

The Seattle Police Department said in a release that it is investigating the incident as a police shooting, which happened at a northside Seattle apartment about 4:30 a.m. Saturday.

The dog attacked three people inside the home, including one man with severe injuries. Officers applied tourniquets to three of his limbs to try and stem the bleeding at the scene before he was taken to Harborview Medical Center.

## Police: Fleeing man beat up delivery driver

**WI** MADISON — Madison police said a man who attempted to flee from officers Saturday night after reports of a suspicious vehicle beat up a delivery driver before his arrest.

Police said several callers reported seeing a vehicle creating sparks from something that was apparently underneath it.

When officers found the vehicle, the suspect eventually ran away and got into the car of a delivery driver. When the driver refused to pull away, the man assaulted him and tried to steal money, police said.

The suspect tried to enter another car that was occupied before he was arrested.

The man is facing multiple charges.

## Tourist site with natural rock bridge up for sale

**AL** HAYLEYVILLE — A tourist site in northern Alabama that is billed as having the longest natural rock bridge east of the Rocky Mountains is up for sale, and at least one legislator is interested in turning it into a state park.

The family that has owned Natural Bridge Park for 40 years is asking \$3 million for the 149-acre site about 70 miles northwest of Birmingham, the Daily Mountain Eagle reported.

The park's bridge is a roughly 150-foot-long rock arch that rises more than 60 feet high. The park also offers nature walks, picnic spots and a gift shop. It opened in 1954.

David Denton, whose parents Jimmie and Barbara Denton bought the park in 1980, told the Daily Mountain Eagle his siblings are not in a position to run the park now. Jimmie Denton died in 2018.

## Boy, 3, fatally shoots self at birthday party

**TX** PORTER — A 3-year-old Houston-area boy was killed when he shot himself accidentally at his own birthday party, sheriff's officials said.

The incident was reported shortly after 4 p.m. Saturday at a home in Porter, 25 miles northeast of Houston, according to a statement from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. The child's family and friends told investigators that they were playing cards when they heard a gunshot and the boy was found with a chest wound, according to the statement. He was taken to a nearby fire station where he died.

Investigators said the child found a handgun that had fallen from a family member's pocket.

## Man steals police car in NJ, crashes it in NYC

**NJ** BAYONNE — A man who stole a police cruiser from an accident scene in northern New Jersey eventually led authorities on a pursuit into New York City that ended when the driver crashed into a parked car, officials said.

Frank Suarez, 31, of Bayonne, was charged Sunday with reckless endangerment, possession of stolen property and grand larceny.

The incident began shortly before midnight Saturday in Bayonne, when police responded to an accident. One officer parked his cruiser near an intersection to divert traffic from the crash scene, then later discovered it had been stolen.

Officers soon tried to stop the vehicle at the Goethals Bridge, but authorities said Suarez refused to stop. Port Authority police later reported they were pursuing the cruiser in Staten Island, and Suarez eventually

crashed in Brooklyn. Suarez was arrested without incident.

## Thief steals idling car with baby in back seat

**RI** PROVIDENCE — Rhode Island authorities are searching for a man that they said stole a car with a 2-month-old baby in the back seat before dropping the baby off at a storage facility.

Police said a couple pulled into a Cumberland Farms parking lot in Providence on Saturday and left the car running as they went into the store. While they were inside, a man jumped in the car and drove off, police said. Shortly after, the man left the baby at a storage facility and sped off again, police said. The stolen car was found later in a different location, officials said.

The baby was returned to the couple, unharmed, police said.

## Court overrules county airboat noise ordinance

**FL** GAINESVILLE — A court has invalidated a Florida county's ordinance that restricted noise from airboats to certain times each day.

A panel of judges in Alachua County recently ruled that the county's airboat noise ordinance conflicted with state law and is unconstitutional. County officials said they may appeal.

The Gainesville Sun reported the ordinance was originally approved by county voters in 2010. It prohibited the use of airboats between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. on area lakes as a solution to disturbance of local residents by the loud sound of the boats' large rear propellers.

Officials voted last year to have sheriff's deputies patrol the waters and issue citations to those violating the time restrictions.

From wire reports

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## Commentary

# Perfect for 2020: Game-losing TDs

Associated Press

In the disjointed football autumn that is 2020, it somehow makes perfect sense that defenders were left celebrating touchdowns by running backs who accidentally reached the end zone.

Twice in one weekend, once in the Big Ten on Saturday, which led to Indiana's stunning 36-35 win over Penn State in overtime, and the other in the NFL on Sunday, when the Atlanta Falcons — who else? — flopped their way through yet another fourth-quarter fiasco in losing to the appreciative Detroit Lions 23-22.

The Falcons should have learned their lesson from the Nittany Lions 24 hours earlier.

Penn State's Devyn Ford got the handoff with a one-point lead at the Hoosiers 14 and only 1:42 to play in Bloomington in the rivals' first game of the coronavirus-delayed season. The third-string tailback slowed as he approached the goal line.

If only he went down, the Nittany Lions could have run out the clock because Indiana had just one timeout left. Instead, the sophomore tip-toed into

the end zone, giving Penn State an eight-point lead but leaving Indiana just enough time to tie it and force overtime, which it did with a touchdown and two-point conversion.

The Hoosiers then won it on another two-point conversion when quarterback Michael Penix Jr. rolled left and dived, barely touching the pylon with the football in his outstretched right hand and giving Indiana its first win over a top-10 team in 33 years.

Penn State coach James Franklin defended his running back and refused to blame the ill-advised touchdown for the excruciating loss. But he also indicated his players were instructed not to score in that situation.

"We went through that situation this week, we went through that situation on the sideline and, obviously, we could have handled it better, and I could have handled it better," Franklin said. "But I don't want to make it about that one play."

Teammate Pat Freiermuth consoled Ford afterward, imploring him to "stay off social media, head down and just flush it down, and I'll have your back regardless."

"I've been in his shoes in high school once," Freiermuth explained. "It's very hard to see that end zone open up like that and just think to yourself, 'Get down.'"

If it makes Ford feel any better, Todd Gurley II made the same mistake Sunday.

The Lions let Gurley score with just over a minute remaining to get the ball back, giving Matthew Stafford enough time to drive Detroit to the winning TD as time expired.

T.J. Hockenson's 11-yard TD grab tied it and Matt Prater nailed a 48-yard extra point to give the Lions a 23-22 win after an excessive celebration penalty moved the ball to the 30-yard line.

Trailing 16-14, the Falcons were trying to run down the clock and kick a chip-shot field goal for the win when they picked up a first down at the Detroit 10 with just over a minute remaining.

The Lions had used up all their timeouts on the drive, so their only hope was to allow a quick TD and they got out of the way as Gurley took the handoff from Matt Ryan. Only safety Will Harris got a hand on the runner but he released

Gurley about 3 yards shy of the goal line.

"It was great situational defense awareness right there," Detroit coach Matt Patricia beamed.

Gurley realized what the Lions were doing and tried to go down shy of the end zone, but his momentum carried him too far as he landed on the goal line with his ball-carrying left hand.

As Gurley fell across the goal line, Lions linebacker Jamie Collins signaled touchdown as his teammates celebrated around him.

"My job is just going down," Gurley lamented. "I'm taking all the responsibility."

Atlanta converted a two-point conversion to make it 22-16, but Stafford had just enough time to deliver another stunning fourth-quarter dagger to the Falcons, who fired their head coach earlier this month after becoming the first team to ever blow back-to-back 15-point, fourth-quarter leads.

"I was mad as hell," Gurley said of his game-losing touchdown. "I was trying not to (score), but my momentum took me in. It's kind of crazy."

And so perfect for 2020.

## Rams' dominant defense shuts down Foles, Bears

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The Rams could tell Leonard Floyd was playing with an uncommon fury against his old team, and the rest of the Los Angeles defense followed his lead.

By the time the Rams were done with the Chicago Bears on Monday night, Floyd had two sacks and the game ball — and Los Angeles had a decisive, energizing victory over a fellow NFC contender.

Josh Reynolds and Gerald Everett caught touchdown passes from Jared Goff, and the Rams won a matchup of

dominant defenses, beating the Bears 24-10.

"We proved that we were the better defense today," Floyd said after a six-tackle performance in his first game against Chicago since the Bears released him last offseason.

After his first sack, Floyd jumped up and went toward the Chicago sideline, shouting and gesticulating at the team that let him go. Floyd already knows he landed in a good spot with Los Angeles (5-2), which remained unbeaten at brand-new SoFi Stadium and reasserted itself in the conference hierarchy with a rebound performance

one week after a rough loss at San Francisco

"I thought our defense was outstanding from start to finish," Rams coach Sean McVay said. "They did such a great job. Some key stops, some key turnovers. Offensively, we did enough to get that lead and then really just run out the clock on that game."

Goff passed for 219 yards and Malcolm Brown rushed for a score for Los Angeles, but its defense did the hardest work.

Taylor Rapp made an end-zone interception on a pass deflection by Troy Hill while the Rams held the Bears (5-2)

to 182 yards in the first three quarters and built a 24-3 lead.

Eddie Jackson returned a fumble 8 yards for Chicago's only touchdown with 7:30 to play, but Los Angeles' defense stayed in control, yielding 279 total yards and three points. The Rams have won twice in three defense-dominated games between these long-time rivals over the past three seasons.

Nick Foles passed for 261 yards for Chicago, which dropped out of the NFC North lead and fell to 3-1 on the road with its latest discouraging offensive performance.



# Gators finally able to get back to work

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — No. 10 Florida resumed meetings and practices for the first time in two weeks Monday, getting back to work after a COVID-19 outbreak caused the Southeastern Conference to postpone two of the team's games.

The Gators (2-1) are scheduled to host Missouri (2-2) on Saturday, ending a 21-day layoff and beginning the first of seven consecutive games for coach Dan Mullen and his team.

Mullen was one of more than 30 players and coaches who tested positive for the coronavirus following a road trip to Texas A&M earlier this month. Everyone else on the plane — about 75 people in all — was quarantined because of potential exposure and contact tracing protocols.

It forced the team to shut down team activities and work remotely. It also left Mullen with concerns about missing so much time on the field and

away from a daily routine.

"We've got some veteran players," Mullen said. "For those guys, just picking it back up and getting going. Fortunately, when you have some older, veteran guys, it helps. But we'll see."

Adding to the team's issues: SEC rules mandate that players who tested positive must adhere to a four-day reacclimation period that includes cardiac monitoring. The protocols call for Day 1 practice to be 25% of a normal routine, with Day 2 increasing to 50%, Day 3 at 75% and then full participation on Day 4.

It essentially means Mullen won't be able to get his full team on the field for a full practice until Thursday.

Still, he was able to hold an in-person team meeting Monday for the first time in what seemed like forever.

"I think everybody's really excited, ready to get back after it, ready to get back to football," Mullen said. "I think after not

playing, I think that is something that is big within the team right now, is that ability to get back out on the field, get back to doing football, you know what I mean?"

"This year's been kind of a unique year like no other, with stops and starts, and different schedules, and kind of everything going on. Our guys, I thought, have handled everything extremely well throughout the year, so I think they're going to be really excited to get back out there on the practice field."

Mullen already tempered his expectations.

"I don't expect us to come out there and have certainly our sharpest, most crisp practice of the year," he said. "But I do expect us to have great energy, excitement and enthusiasm to be on the field to be back out there to get going as we kind of build up to Saturday."

Mullen said he felt "rested, for sure" following his 10-day quarantine, the worst of which

was "being isolated in your house and not being able to see your family."

Florida traced its outbreak to two players ignoring symptoms and getting on the team plane headed to Texas A&M. Both players had tested negative the day before the trip.

But they tested positive the day after the game and likely spread it to teammates and coaches on the plane, in the hotel, in the cramped confines of a visiting locker room, at team meals and on the flight home.

"We always knew the travel was going to be a concern and an issue for us," Mullen said. "When you add those all up, all of those different combinations, you add that up, and you throw the virus in the middle of it with obviously someone having it on the team, or at least maybe two people I'm guessing have it on the team, and then you put it in to that environment, you're going to get a spread."

## After big win, Hoosiers ready to take another step

Associated Press

Coach Tom Allen and the No. 17 Indiana Hoosiers celebrated wildly after Saturday's monumental upset of Penn State.

On Sunday, they were rewarded with their highest ranking since November 1993.

By Monday, everyone was back to business in Bloomington, looking to take the next step in the program's steady, yearslong progression: staying in the Top 25.

"We've got a lot of guys who went through the course of last season where we won enough games to become nationally recognized and we didn't stay there very long. That's a fact," Allen said. Monday. "So a big win, no question about it, a historic win. But it's in the past."

He said he's hoping the lessons of 2019 stick with an older team that's more mature.

Last year, Indiana produced its first eight-win season and

first winning record in league play since 1993. Then, after beating Northwestern for its fourth straight victory, the Hoosiers made their first Top 25 appearance since September 1994, ending the longest active drought by a power-five team.

Of course, the return ended when Indiana lost its next game, at Penn State.

Now, after beating their first top-10 opponent since October 1987 and taking down their highest-rated foe since the 1967 Rose Bowl season, the Hoosiers (1-0) are back in the rankings and on the cusp of potentially more breakthrough moments after Allen's crowd-surfing locker room moment.

The last time they entered back-to-back games as a ranked team came at the end of 1993. And with a win at Rutgers (1-0) this weekend, and a little help, Indiana could crack the top 15

for the first time since October 1988.

But last year's successes and tribulations including a stinging bowl-game loss when they failed to recover an onside kick taught everyone about the need to focus on small details.

"It's been just a lot of recovery and watching film, going over stuff we need to fix so we can execute at a higher level," quarterback Michael Penix Jr. said when asked what he's done since clinching the Penn State win with a diving 2-point conversion. "We won the game but we've got to execute at a higher level. We've got Rutgers this week, that's all I'm really focused on."

The Scarlet Knights (1-0) pose a real challenge.

They opened Greg Schiano's second stint as head coach with a 38-27 victory at Michigan State that was nearly as stunning as Indiana's overtime win.

The victory snapped a 13-game road losing streak and a 21-game losing streak in conference play.

And they did it with a new coach, a new coaching staff, a new quarterback and a defense that forced seven turnovers.

While the Hoosiers have won five straight in the series, Allen & Co. know their first road game will be different and not just because of the new mask guidelines and social distancing measures required by the Big Ten.

"Rutgers is a very different football team than it's been in the past and it's very obvious on film," Allen said. "Our guys have to be 100% focused on that and how we're going to get better. New quarterback, new system, I have a lot of respect for their coordinators and the staff they've put together. So we're 1-0 now and we want to go to 2-0 and that's how we have to approach it."

# Rays, Dodgers say it's great to have fans on site again

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Individual whistles echo during quieter moments, and a single fan with enough persistence can leave an impression with a chant during World Series games with the smallest crowds in more than 100 years.

Because of the coronavirus, this year's Fall Classic is being held at a neutral site. A team from each coast is playing in Texas, drawing fans from Los Angeles and Tampa, Fla. — along with curious Texas Rangers supporters seeing the home squad's new retractable-roof stadium for the first time.

The roughly 11,000 mask-wearing fans each night — well, they're supposed to be wearing face coverings — are roughly 11,000 more than players saw in the stands during the regular season and all of the American League playoffs. So 40,518-seat Globe Life Field might as well be full as far as the Tampa Bay Rays are concerned.

"It certainly sounds like there's 40,000 people in there," manager Kevin Cash said. "Now, they might be 35,000 Dodger fans, which is OK. Any type of loudness and energy, that creates a lot in the dugout. That creates intensity. It's loud and it's been really refreshing to get to play with fans."

To Cash's point, there has been plenty of Dodger blue visible for each of the 12 games with limited crowds since the start of the National League Championship Series two weeks ago. The 13th was Game 6 of the World Series on Tuesday night, with Los Angeles in position to win its first title in 32 years.

That also means plenty of masks with the iconic interlocking LA logo since face

coverings are required except when fans are "actively eating or drinking" — an activity apparently more loosely defined by some.

There's plenty of elbow room on the concourses, and fans in clusters of four are separated by at least one row above and below them. Mask compliance on the concourses is close to 100%, while in the seats about one in four can be seen either without a mask on, or with the covering pulled down around the neck.

Many of these fans, though, are used to being crammed into the corridors of, say, Dodger Stadium, in the postseason.

"It's great that it's empty and it's clean and it was easy to get in," said Ana Chacon, born, raised and still living in Los Angeles County. "But it sucks that not everyone got to come. And it sucks that it's not in Los Angeles."

Game 1's restricted total of 11,388 was the smallest Series crowd since 10,535 attended Game 6 in 1909 between the Tigers and Pittsburgh at Detroit's Bennett Park, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

It's the first World Series played entirely at one ballpark since 1944 between the Cardinals and Browns at Sportsman's Park in St. Louis — and the fourth overall. The Yankees and Giants share.

Jacob Ornelas grew up in the Dallas area before returning to his native El Paso. He still makes it back for Texas Rangers games, and would have been at Glo.

"It takes away from the experience overall, but not my experience as far as being here the first time, being in a World Series," Ornelas said.

# More than 30 teams to play in 'bubble' for college basketball

Associated Press

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — A resort casino on tribal land in Connecticut is completing plans to host more than 30 college basketball teams as it becomes a modified bubble for several early season tournaments, including two moved from New York.

The Mohegan Sun has teamed with the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, which holds its men's Tip-Off Tournament and Women's Challenge there every year, and the Gazelle Group, which runs the Empire Classic and the Legends Classic in New York.

The organizers plan to hold those tournaments and several other "pods" of games, which will get names in the next few weeks, at the Mohegan Sun, which is owned by the Mohegan Tribe and includes a 10,000-seat arena that is home to the WNBA's Connecticut Sun.

"It's a single site, secluded location, with enormous square footage for social distancing," said Greg Procino, vice president of basketball operations for the Hall of Fame. "There are a lot of things that will work in our favor."

Rick Giles, the president of the Gazelle Group, expects about 35 teams from more than a dozen conferences will participate at what they are dubbing "Bubbleville" between Nov. 25 and Dec. 5, with up to seven games a day.

There will be at least nine "pods" of games, beginning with the Empire Classic on Nov. 25-26, which will include Villanova, Baylor, Arizona State and Boston College.

UConn, USC, Virginia, Florida, St. John's, UMass, Vanderbilt, BYU, Louisville, North Carolina State and other men's and women's programs also have agreed to play, organizers said.

Southern California coach Andy Enfield said the Trojans

are expected to be in a pod with BYU, UConn and Vanderbilt.

"It'll be a great event once we get there," Enfield said. "We're not concerned as long as we know we'll get tested and the opposing teams are, too."

The Hall of Fame on Friday announced a revised field of teams and schedule for the Tip-Off Tournament. The event will be split into two brackets called Naismith and Springfield.

The Naismith bracket comprised of Rhode Island, South Florida, Temple and Virginia Tech will play Nov. 28-29. The Springfield bracket of Albany, Drexel, Long Island and Quinnipiac will play Dec. 3-4.

"We've been able to combine and leverage both our organizations and strengths to create something bigger than what we originally had," Giles said. "I don't know if either organization individually could have pulled off what we're about to do next month."

The Mohegan Sun has already developed protocols for coronavirus testing, cleaning and managing sports during the pandemic. It also has its own medical staff and facilities to treat and isolate anyone who may be infected.

The resort teamed with Viacom over the summer to produce televised events for boxing and mixed martial arts.

Tom Cantone, the senior vice president for sports and entertainment at Mohegan Sun, said this is not a full bubble, like the NBA and WNBA in Florida, but a highly controlled environment.

"We're just following the playbook we've already established and has been working brilliantly," Cantone said. "We will just continue to do what we've been doing with our doctors and protocols. So far, it's worked flawlessly."

Each team will be tested upon arrival. Each school will have its own secured floor in the resort's 34-story hotels.