

China military to turn up Taiwan pressure

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered his military to pump up pressure on Taiwan, according to sources quoted by a Japanese news agency this week.

The order was issued at a recent meeting of China's top military body, the Central Military Commission, after three aircraft carriers from the United States and United Kingdom participated in weekend drills near Taiwan, Kyodo News reported Tuesday.

Nearly 150 Chinese warplanes buzzed through Taiwan's air defense zone between Friday and Monday, the island's Ministry of National Defense said in a series of press statements this week.

Taiwan said it is preparing to defend itself after the record-breaking number of incursions. The comments were made Monday by Foreign Minister Joseph Wu on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Television program "China Tonight."

China and Taiwan have been governed separately since splitting, in 1949 after a civil war. The U.S. military had troops on the island until 1979, when President Jimmy

Carter withdrew from the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty. Congress responded by passing the Taiwan Relations Act, which requires the U.S. to sell arms to the island.

Xi is thought to believe that the recent carrier drills, which also involved more than a dozen warships from Japan, New Zealand, Canada and the Netherlands, were aimed at stopping Beijing from unifying democratic Taiwan with the mainland and from capturing the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands, which are also claimed by China, Kyodo reported.

At the Central Military Commission, Xi said China should demonstrate that it is "always ready to fight," though he wants to avoid a head-on confrontation with the U.S., according to unnamed sources quoted by Kyodo.

Meanwhile, President Joe Biden has sent White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan to Switzerland for meetings with senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi, the White House said in a statement Tuesday.

The talks, slated for Wednesday in Zurich, are to be a follow-up to Biden's call with

Xi last month as the administration continues "to seek to responsibly manage the competition" between the two countries, National Security Council spokeswoman Emily Horne said in the statement.

Chinese aircraft have been flying into Taiwan's airspace since last year, but the large number of warplanes in the latest incursions have attracted attention, said Norah Huang, director for international relations at the Prospect Foundation, a security and foreign affairs think tank in Taiwan's capital, Taipei.

The incursions send a stronger message, which security experts have correctly characterized as psychological warfare and intimidation, she said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

"This kind of action won't win the hearts and minds of Taiwanese people," she said, noting that even the island's opposition politicians have blamed Beijing rather than trying to score points against the ruling party.

The Chinese military activity may also be an effort to pressure the Biden administration not to push forward with a plan to rename Taiwan's mission in Washington, D.C., Huang said.

Fired officer charged with 6 crimes, faces court-martial

By **COREY DICKSTEIN**
Stars and Stripes

Marine Lt. Col. Stuart Scheller Jr. will face a court-martial on six charges related to his public admonishing of U.S. officials' handling of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, service officials announced Wednesday.

Scheller — whose social media posts blasting top civilian and military officials garnered hundreds of thousands of views in the days after 13 U.S. troops were killed in a bombing at the Kabul airport — was formally charged Monday, one day before he was released from the brig at Camp Lejeune, N.C., a Marine spokesman said.

He is accused of displaying contempt toward officials, disrespecting superior commissioned officers, willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer, dereliction in the performance of his duties and failure to

obey an order or regulation, and by displaying conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Those charges were referred on Wednesday morning to a special court-martial by Maj. Gen. Julian D. Alford, who leads Marine Training Command, according to Capt. Sam Stephenson, a spokesman for the command. A special court-martial limits the maximum punishment for service members found guilty to one year in prison, a bad-conduct discharge, a reduction in rank to E-1, and a forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month, according to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Stephenson said Wednesday that no hearings had been scheduled in Scheller's case.

The lieutenant colonel was released from the brig Tuesday after about one week in pretrial confinement on suspicions of violating the UCMJ as the result of an agreement

between Scheller's defense attorneys and Alford, Stephenson said. He declined to provide any additional details.

Scheller was held in an individual cell in the Camp Lejeune brig, but he was not held in solitary confinement at any time, Stephenson said. He was in regular contact with other prisoners and staff during and allowed at least two hours of recreation time per day.

Scheller is a 17-year infantry officer who has served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was fired from his job commanding one of Camp Lejeune's infantry training battalions on Aug. 27, after he posted a video on Facebook and LinkedIn demanding accountability for top military and civilian officials in the hours after the deadly bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport, where U.S. troops worked to evacuate more than 100,000 people from Kabul after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

DOD clearance holders under constant vetting

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — All Defense Department clearance holders are now under “continuous vetting” as part of a reform to the personnel security process that determines who should have access to classified information and secure facilities, the director of the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency said Tuesday.

The automated system constantly checks criminal records, credit ratings and other pertinent information for those with security clearances to “ensure the trustworthiness of the national security workforce” and

“identify and address factors that may lead to insider threat incidents,” DCSA director William Lietzau told reporters at the Pentagon.

Continuous vetting replaces the prior process of periodic re-investigations for clearance holders every five to 10 years. The idea is that the new program will identify potential security threats as they occur in real time, allowing risks to surface sooner to enable earlier intervention.

“If you get [charged with driving under the influence], that’ll come in the next day,” Lietzau said, explaining how fast the new system works.

Once the automated system alerts of a risk factor, staff at the agency then initiate an investigation to analyze whether the issue should be further analyzed or considered an active threat, he said.

In addition to criminal conduct, the system also analyzes suspicious financial transactions, domestic and foreign travel records, terrorism and counterterrorism databases and other public records for indicators of insider threats, Lietzau said.

The initiative is part of the director of National Intelligence’s Trusted Workforce 2.0, an inter-agency effort launched in 2018 to modernize the security clear-

ance system to “deliver stronger security, faster processing and better information sharing,” the agency said in a statement issued Tuesday.

“It replaces a suite of outdated legacy IT systems that no longer meet the needs of the U.S. government,” DCSA said in the statement.

While all troops, Defense Department civilians and defense contractors with clearances are now in the system, Lietzau said 29 other federal agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Health and Human Services, are also vetting their clearance holders this way.

All but one Marine hurt in Kabul attack out of hospital

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

All but one Marine injured in the attack by an Islamic State suicide bomber at Kabul’s airport in August that killed 13 U.S. service members have been released from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Md., a Marine Corps spokesman said Tuesday.

The remaining Marine is in “serious but stable condition,” Capt. Johnny Henderson said. The update shows steady improvement. On Sept. 22, the service reported four Marines were still at Walter Reed — one in “very serious condition” and three in “serious condition.” On Sept. 7, 15 wounded Marines were being treated at Walter Reed,

one of whom was in critical condition, three were in serious condition and 11 were in stable condition, Henderson said at the time. The service did not provide further details on their injuries or the names of those injured, which is Marine Corps policy to protect their privacy.

The injured Marines were among the survivors of an ISIS-K attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport during the final days of the U.S. military’s withdrawal from Afghanistan. Along with the 13 troops killed, more than 20 others were injured when an ISIS-K terrorist detonated an explosive vest and gunmen fired into the crowds near the airport’s Abbey gate.

ISIS-K, an abbreviation for ISIS-Khoro-

san, is the Afghanistan branch of the Islamic State terrorist group.

Seventeen Marines were wounded in the attack, and all the troops killed were awarded Purple Hearts and approved this month for combat action ribbons, according to the Marine Corps. Of the 13 troops killed in the attack, 11 were Marines, one was a soldier and another was a sailor.

While no longer receiving in-patient treatment, the other 16 Marines “are now on the West Coast in the vicinity of their parent units” receiving follow-on care, Henderson said.

“Their recoveries are being monitored and assisted by the Marine Corps’ wounded warrior regiment,” he said.

Navy pilot safely ejects, Super Hornet crashes in Death Valley

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

A Navy pilot suffered minor injuries when his F/A-18F Super Hornet crashed Monday in Death Valley National Park, according to Navy officials.

The jet went down in a remote area of the park, the service said in a news release that

evening. The unidentified pilot, who ejected from the aircraft, was treated at Las Vegas’ Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center and released that night.

No civilians were hurt, and Navy and local authorities are investigating the crash, according to the release. The

military is working with the National Park Service to clean up the area, it said.

The Super Hornet was assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 9 at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in Ridgecrest, Calif., the Navy said.

The jet is the latest to go

down in Death Valley in recent years. In 2019, a Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 151 at Naval Air Station Lemoore crashed into a ravine wall during routine training. The pilot was declared dead the day after the incident, after Navy officials called off recovery efforts.

Biden concedes lower price tag for bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats' push for a 10-year, \$3.5 trillion package of social and environmental initiatives has reached a turning point, with the president repeatedly conceding that the measure will be considerably smaller and pivotal lawmakers flashing potential signs of flexibility.

In virtual meetings Monday and Tuesday with small groups of House Democrats, Biden said he reluctantly expected the legislation's final version to weigh in between \$1.9 trillion and \$2.3 trillion, a Democrat familiar with the sessions said Tuesday. He told them he didn't think he could do better than that, the person said, reflecting demands from some of

the party's more conservative lawmakers.

Biden used those same figures during a Friday meeting with nearly all House Democrats, according to that person and a second Democrat familiar with the gathering. Both Democrats would describe the meetings only on condition of anonymity.

There has been no agreement on a final figure, and other unanswered questions — plus the possibility of failure — remain. Crucial unresolved matters include how to get virtually every Democrat in Congress to vote for a measure they've spent months fighting over and that Republicans will solidly oppose, and whether the shrunken price tag would be reached by dropping some proposals or by keeping most but at

lower cost or shorter duration.

But by repeatedly conceding that the crown jewel of his own domestic agenda will have to shrink and providing a range for its cost, Biden is trying to push his party beyond months of stalemate and refocus bargainers on nailing down needed policy and fiscal decisions.

"I want to make sure that we have a package that everyone can agree on," Biden told reporters Tuesday in Howell, Mich., where he went to try building public support for his plan. "It's not going to be \$3.5 trillion. It's going to be less than that."

Asked how he would trim \$1 trillion from his initial plan, Biden said, "My objective is to get everything that I campaigned on passed." He added, "It won't all

happen at once." That seemed to suggest that some initiatives in the bill might not begin right away or might last only temporarily to save money.

The bill is the heart of Biden's push to beef up federal efforts to help families and slow global warming. It would require paid family and medical leave, extend tax breaks for families with children, low earners and people buying health insurance, expand Medicare coverage, prod energy companies to move toward cleaner fuels and provide free pre-kindergarten and community college.

Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have insisted on curbing the bill's cost and have been their party's highest-profile holdouts.

As GOP obstructs, Biden escalates default warnings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden is escalating his campaign to get Congress to lift the federal debt limit, hosting business leaders at the White House on Wednesday and warning in a new report that failure to extend the government's borrowing authority could set off a global financial crisis.

The moves come amid indications Democrats may change Senate filibuster rules to get around Republican opposition.

Biden will host a number of CEOs to underscore the severe ramifications if the government runs out of money to cover its bills.

Ahead of the meeting, the White House warned that if the borrowing limit isn't extended, it could set off a global financial crisis that the United States may not be able to manage.

"A default would send shock waves through global financial markets and would likely cause credit markets worldwide to freeze up and stock markets to

plunge," the White House Council of Economic Advisers said in a new report. "Employers around the world would likely have to begin laying off workers."

The recession that could be triggered could be worse than the 2008 financial crisis because it would come as so many nations are still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, the report said. It was first obtained by The New York Times.

Congress has just days to act before the Oct. 18 deadline when the Treasury Department has warned it will run short of funds to handle the nation's already accrued debt load. The Senate, meanwhile, is scheduled to vote Wednesday on whether to take up a bill to suspend the debt limit, but Republicans are again expected to block it.

To get around the GOP standoff, Biden indicated Tuesday that Democrats are weighing a procedural change.

"It's a real possibility," Biden told reporters.

Some politicians advocating for a \$1T coin to fix debt issue

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some politicians think they've found a silver bullet for the impasse over the debt limit, except the bullet is made of platinum: Mint a \$1 trillion coin, token of all tokens, and use it to flood the treasury with cash and drive Republicans crazy.

Even its serious proponents call it a gimmick. They have said it is an oddball way out of an oddball accounting problem that will have severe consequences to the economy if it is not worked out in coming days.

But despite all the jokes about who should go on the face of the coin, there's scholarship behind it, too. However improbable, it is conceivable the government could turn \$1 trillion into a coin of the realm without lawmakers having a say.

How is this possible when the treasury secretary can't simply print money to pay public debts? It's because a quirky law from more than 20 years ago seems to allow the administration to mint

coins of any denomination without congressional approval as long as they're platinum. The intent was to help with the production of commemorative coins for collectors, not to create a nuclear option in a crisis.

Specifically, the law says the treasury secretary "may mint and issue platinum bullion coins and proof platinum coins in accordance with such specifications, designs, varieties, quantities, denominations and inscriptions as the Secretary, in the Secretary's discretion, may prescribe from time to time."

This is that time, in the view of coin advocates. But Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the White House and some Democrats slapped down the idea.

"The only thing kookier would be a politically inflicted default," Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said of the coin.

Said Yellen, "What's necessary is for Congress to show that the world can count on America paying its debt." A coin, she told CNBC, "is really a gimmick."

Ship anchor may have caused Calif. spill

Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. — A ship's anchor may have hooked, dragged and torn an underwater pipeline that spilled tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil into the ocean off Southern California, according to federal investigators who also found the pipeline owner didn't quickly shut down operations after a safety system alerted to a possible spill.

Questions remained about the timeline of the weekend spill, which fouled beaches and a protected marshland, potentially closing them for weeks along with commercial and recreational fishing in a major hit to the local economy.

Some reports of a possible spill, a petroleum smell and an oily sheen on the waters off Huntington Beach came in Friday

night but weren't corroborated and the pipeline's operator, Amplify Energy Corp., didn't report a spill until the next morning, authorities said.

An alarm went off in a company control room at 2:30 a.m. Saturday that pressure had dropped in the pipeline, indicating a possible leak but Amplify waited until 6:01 a.m. to shut down the pipeline, according to preliminary findings of an investigation into the spill.

The Houston-based company took another three hours to notify the U.S. Coast Guard's National Response Center for oil spills, investigators said, further slowing the response to an accident for which Amplify workers spent years preparing.

However, Amplify CEO Martyn Willsher insisted that the company wasn't aware

of the spill until it saw a sheen on the water at 8:09 a.m.

The company's spill-response plan calls for the immediate notification of a spill. Criminal charges have been brought in the past when a company took too long to notify federal and state officials of a spill.

On Tuesday, federal transportation investigators said the pipe was split open at a depth of about 98 feet and a nearly mile-long section was pulled along the sea floor, possibly by an anchor that hooked it and caused a partial tear, federal transportation investigators said.

"The pipeline has essentially been pulled like a bow string," Willsher said. "At its widest point, it is 105 feet away from where it was."

Taliban resumes issuing travel documents to Afghans

The Washington Post

Hundreds of Afghans gathered outside a passport office in Kabul on Wednesday, a day after Taliban officials said that the country would resume issuing travel documents, ending a monthslong suspension that had further diminished the already limited ability of Afghans to leave their war-torn country.

Alam Gul Haqqani, acting head of the passport office, told reporters Tuesday that up to 6,000 passports would be issued daily. The Taliban government would also release 25,000-plus new passports that had previously been paid for, he said at a news conference.

In Wednesday's chaotic scenes, Taliban guards beat back people trying to apply for passports in an attempt to maintain order, Reuters reported. The Taliban plans to start issuing passports on Saturday and isn't yet taking new applications, according to the news agency.

The passports will continue to be issued under the name of the former government, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. No country has officially recognized the Taliban, which has renamed the country an Islamic Emirate, as Afghanistan's legitimate government.

The reopening comes as the Taliban struggles to govern a country that is facing a major brain drain. Many educated Afghans fled following the Taliban takeover of the country in August, fearing that the regime would implement its severe interpretation of Islamic law. While the Islamist militants have pledged to govern more moderately than during their brutal 1996 to 2001 reign, many remain deeply skeptical of such promises.

In the past two months, the passport office received at least 170,000 applications, local media reported.

A Taliban spokesman had previously said educated Afghans should stay be-

cause it was "time for people to work for their country," though the militants have agreed to let citizens with valid visas freely leave, according to Western officials.

There are no restrictions on who can apply for a passport, Interior Ministry spokesman Qari Saeed Khosti said at the news conference. But he urged former government officials and professionals "to come forward as the nation has invested in" them and "to play their part in rebuilding" Afghanistan.

Afghans with valid passports still face difficulties leaving the country. Afghanistan sits at the bottom of the 2021 Henley Passport Index, which ranks travel documents based on the number of places holders can visit without having to obtain a visa. Afghanistan has been in last place for most of the past 16 years, and many embassies that issued visas have relocated out of the country since the Taliban seized power.

Daily virus deaths in Russia surpass 900 for first time

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia's daily coronavirus death toll surpassed 900 on Wednesday for the first time in the pandemic, a record that comes amid the country's low vaccination rate and the government's reluctance to impose tough restrictions to control new cases.

Russia's state coronavirus task force reported 929 new deaths on Wednesday, the fourth time this month that daily COVID-19 deaths have reached record highs. The previous record, 895 deaths, was registered Tuesday.

Russia already has Europe's highest death toll in the pandemic at over 212,000

people, but some official data suggests that is an undercount.

The task force also reported 25,133 new confirmed cases Wednesday.

Despite the surge, government officials rejected the idea of imposing a lockdown and said regional authorities would take steps to stem the spread of the virus.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman killed trying to save dog on highway

AL ALBERTVILLE — A woman who was trying to save a stray dog on a highway in north Alabama died after she was struck by a vehicle during the rescue attempt, police said.

Christina Nicole Green, 31, of Decatur, was a passenger in a vehicle traveling on U.S. 431 Saturday night when she saw a dog trying to cross traffic and wanted to help it get out of the road, WAFF-TV reported.

The driver of the vehicle stopped at Green's request, and she walked across the northbound lane and median before being struck by a pickup truck in the southbound lane, Albertville police said.

Green died at the scene, and the driver of the pickup was not hurt. No charges were filed, and it wasn't immediately clear what happened to the dog.

Police: Woman stole SUV with 5 kids inside

NC CURRITUCK — A Virginia woman is accused of stealing an SUV with five children inside after the driver had stopped to help her following a multicar crash, a North Carolina sheriff's office said.

The Currituck County Sheriff's Office said in a news release that the SUV driver stopped and got out to assist after witnessing the crash on U.S. Highway 158 in Grandy. One of the drivers involved in the crash got out of their car, jumped into the SUV and drove off with the children, the news release said.

Deputies chased the SUV

down Caratoke Highway to a convenience store, where deputies apprehended the suspect after she got out of the vehicle and ran, the sheriff's office said. The children were described as "extremely shaken but not harmed," according to the news release.

Multiple charges were filed against Markell Hancox of Chesapeake, Va., including five counts of second-degree kidnapping.

2 cops injured, 5 teens arrested in school brawl

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Two officers were injured and five teens were arrested after a large fight broke out at a South Florida high school just after the dismissal bell.

Fort Lauderdale Police said the school resource officer at Dillard High School was notified there was a big brawl on campus and was injured when he intervened. He was taken to the hospital with serious but not life-threatening injuries, Detective Ali Adamson said.

Police didn't say what prompted the fight or how many were involved, but said five were arrested and face charges including disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and battery on a law enforcement officer. A 17-year-old girl was charged with battery on a law enforcement officer and resisting with violence, police said.

2 polar bears leaving zoo based on advice

MD BALTIMORE — The two polar bears living at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore are moving to new locations after recommen-

dations from a nonprofit organization which focuses on animal care and welfare, officials said.

According to a news release, Neva and Amelia Gray came to the Maryland Zoo as 2-year-olds in 2018 from the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium and are half sisters.

Based on the recommendations from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, Amelia Gray will go to the Oregon Zoo in Portland to join her half sister Nora. Neva will move to an accredited zoo on a breeding recommendation and will eventually be paired with an older male polar bear, according to the news release.

With the move, both habitat sections at Polar Bear Watch at the zoo will now be solely for the use of the grizzly bears, Nova and Nita.

San Jose apologizes for 1887 Chinatown arson

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The city of San Jose was once home to one of the largest Chinatowns in California. In the heart of downtown, it was the center of life for Chinese immigrants who worked on nearby farms and orchards.

More than a century after arsonists burned it to the ground in 1887, the San Jose City Council last week unanimously approved a resolution to apologize to Chinese immigrants and their descendants for the role the city played in "systemic and institutional racism, xenophobia, and discrimination."

San Jose, with a population over 1 million, is the largest city in the country to formally apologize to the Chinese community for its treatment of their ancestors.

Male tiger kills female in breeding introduction

WA TACOMA — A female Sumatran tiger from Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in Tacoma has died after another tiger attacked her during a breeding introduction, officials said.

Six-year-old tiger Kirana, who was born at the zoo, died Monday, The News Tribune reported.

Zoo staff had slowly introduced Kirana and Raja, the zoo's 2-year-old male Sumatran tiger, as part of a plan to help save the endangered species. The two were closely monitored and separated by a mesh door, staff said.

When zookeepers removed the barrier to allow the tigers to meet physically Friday, Kirana was attacked and staff moved quickly to separate them, officials said.

Record number of guns found at airport in 2021

TN MEMPHIS — Transportation Security Administration officers at Memphis International Airport in Tennessee discovered a record number of guns at security checkpoints this year, officials said.

TSA security officers have found 48 firearms in carry-on baggage in 2021, surpassing the record of 47 guns set in 2018 and again last year, the agency said in a statement.

Guns are allowed to be transported on a commercial aircraft only if they are unloaded, packed in a locked, hard-sided case and placed in checked baggage.

— From wire reports



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Red Sox top Yanks in wild-card playoff

Associated Press

BOSTON — As the ball sailed over the center-field fence, landing 427 feet from the plate in a horde of happy Red Sox fans, Xander Bogaerts turned to the Boston dugout to flex his muscles before resuming his home run trot.

This is the matchup the Yankees wanted.

And the Red Sox were ready. Bogaerts and Kyle Schwarber homered off Yankees ace Gerrit Cole, and Nathan Eovaldi took a shutout into the sixth inning in the AL wild-card game to help the Red Sox beat New York 6-2 on Tuesday night.

Bogaerts also cut down Aaron Judge at the plate in the sixth as Boston advanced to the best-of-five AL Division Series against Tampa Bay.

Game 1 is Thursday night in St. Petersburg, Fla.

“Now we go to the next one, and we’ve just got to be ready to face a great baseball team,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “Coming into the season, everybody talked about them being the best team in the big leagues, and we have a huge challenge. But we’re ready for it.”

The Yankees, who lead the majors with 27 World Series championships, have not won it all since 2009. After angling for a matchup with the Red Sox in a potential tiebreaker, the Yankees wound up in Boston for the wild-card game instead.

And the Red Sox beat them in the postseason for the third straight try.

“Guys are crushed,” New York manager Aaron Boone said. “The ending is really cruel. But there’s nothing better than competing for something meaningful.”

A year after baseball took its postseason into neutral-site bubbles to protect against the coronavirus pandemic, a sellout crowd of 38,324 — the biggest at Fenway Park since the 2018 World Series — filled the old yard to rekindle one of the sport’s most passionate rivalries. Enough Yankees fans were among them to fuel a raucous back-and-forth of insulting chants.

“The Bogaerts homer in the first inning — I mean, talk about a pop. And, you know, the crowd went nuts, and you feed off that energy,” Schwarber said. “You thrive for that, and Red Sox na-

tion brought it tonight. We needed it, and you can’t say enough about the crowd.”

It was the fifth playoff matchup between the longtime foes, with Boston taking a 3-2 edge. That doesn’t count the 1978 AL East tiebreaker — technically regular season Game No. 163 — that the Yankees won thanks to Bucky Dent’s homer into the net above the Green Monster.

Boone was a New York third baseman when he added to the heartbreak with his 11th-inning walk-off homer in Game 7 of the 2003 AL Championship Series.

The Red Sox haven’t lost to them since.

They got their revenge the next year when they rallied after losing the first three games of the ALCS to eliminate the Yankees, then went on to win their first World Series title in 86 years. They won three more championships, in ’07, ’13 and in ’18 when they knocked out New York in the divisional round.

Any lingering pain disappeared into the center-field bleachers in the first inning on Tuesday night.

Unlike Dent, who barely cleared the left-field wall that sits just 310 feet from home

plate, Bogaerts drilled a line drive 427 feet to straightaway center. And unlike Carlton Fisk, who contorted his body to will the ball fair in Game 6 of the 1975 World Series, Bogaerts interrupted his home run trot only to flex for the Boston dugout.

With Dent in the crowd and Boone in the Yankees dugout, the Red Sox chased Cole in the third after he allowed Schwarber’s solo shot and put two more men on with nobody out. In all, he was charged with three runs on four hits and two walks, striking out three in two-plus innings.

Cole said he felt “sick to my stomach.”

“This is the worst feeling in the world,” said the star who signed a \$324 million, nine-year deal to join New York for the 2019 season.

With Boston leading 3-1, Judge followed with an infield single that finished Eovaldi, and reliever Ryan Brasier gave up a wall single to Giancarlo Stanton. Mistakenly waved home by third base coach Phil Nevin, Judge was easily thrown out at the plate — 8-6-2 — by the team that led the majors with 43 outfield assists.

San Francisco finally has time to take a breath

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Fresh off an NL West crown that took 107 wins for the Giants to 106 by the Dodgers, Brandon Crawford and Buster Posey couldn’t help but envision a potentially epic playoff matchup against rival Los Angeles.

Now, the team gets to wait until after Wednesday’s NL wild-card game between the Cardinals and Dodgers to see if that matchup will materialize.

“It’ll be fun no matter what,” said Posey, who caught five of the final six games and 10 of 13 down the stretch. “When it comes down to the postseason, the intensity’s there no matter what, but there’s no doubt that it would be heightened if we play them.”

San Francisco is holding optional workouts Tuesday through Thursday in prepara-

tion for hosting Game 1 of the NL Division Series on Friday night at Oracle Park, though manager Gabe Kapler expects the sessions to be well attended.

The Giants finally got to catch their breath after the division went down to the final day and they edged out the reigning World Series winner and eight-time defending West champion.

“Well, that’s what it’s like to be in the division against the Dodgers,” Crawford said. “They always have a great team. To be able to hold them off for most of the second half is pretty great for us.”

Kapler hadn’t decided on a Game 1 starter, equally confident in his two options: right-handers Kevin Gausman and Logan Webb.

Crawford, Posey and the club’s injured

home run leader Brandon Belt are a major reason San Francisco is back on the October postseason stage.

It delivered time and again when many counted it out months ago. For Posey to return after sitting out the coronavirus-shortened 60-game season last year meant so much to the Giants both on the field and in the clubhouse. Belt and Crawford produced career numbers.

Belt’s recovery timeline remained unclear, though Kapler noted Tuesday, he “talked about the NLCS as kind of the dream scenario.” And Belt was on the field to take grounders at first, certainly a positive sign.

The break this week especially mattered for Posey and the taxed bullpen, which took on a greater load last month as starters Johnny Cueto and Alex Wood were out.

Ex-OU QB's son leads Texas in rivalry

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Former Oklahoma quarterback Charles Thompson never imagined he'd even consider putting up the "Hook 'em Horns" hand gesture.

He's done it now, and for good reason. His son, Casey, will start at quarterback for No. 21 Texas (4-1, 2-0 Big 12) against No. 6 Oklahoma (5-0, 2-0) in the annual rivalry game.

It's a strange situation for the elder Thompson, who lives in Moore, Okla. — a short drive from Oklahoma's campus. Charles ran the wishbone offense for coach Barry Switzer, playing a significant role in Sooners victories over Texas in 1987 and 1988.

"I've been an OU fan since I was 6," Charles, a native of Lawton, Okla., said. "Every year, this time of year, I've always rooted against Texas. Even the last few years with Casey on the team, I still kind of quietly wanted Oklahoma to win — kind of a win/win situation for me. This will be the first year that honestly, I'm really rooting for Texas."

Charles said he catches some grief from his old teammates with his son playing for Oklahoma's biggest rival.

"I mean, there's surely some joking, kind of messing around a little bit, but I think all of them are kind of in support of him," he said. "They certainly want Casey to have a great game, but want Oklahoma to win."

"I get a mulligan. I want Casey to win."

Charles won't go so far as to wear Texas' burnt orange, and he said if you gut him open, he'll bleed Oklahoma crimson. He'll wear a custom-made black Texas shirt when he sits with the other parents.

"Well, I've never put on burnt orange," he said defiantly.

The situation has provided an opportunity for Charles to learn a few things about the rivalry from the Texas side.

"All my life, I've always called it the OU-Texas game," he said. "Ask anybody from Oklahoma, they'll say OU-Texas. I got sort of harassed a little bit in Austin because they say Texas-OU. They want Texas first."

Casey is in an odd situation, too. He wore Oklahoma's crimson and cream until his high school days. Another of Charles' sons, Kendal, played for the Sooners, further strengthening the bond between the family and the school.

Casey played high school football at Southmoore High School in Moore before playing his senior season at Newcastle High School in Newcastle, Okla.

As he became a major prospect, his loyalty to Oklahoma waned. Former Texas coach Tom Herman recruited Thompson back when Herman was the head coach at Houston, and Tim Beck had recruited him when he was an assistant at Ohio State. When Herman took over at Texas and Beck became the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Texas, it made sense for Casey to take a look. He attended the 2017 rivalry game as a Longhorns prospect.

Naturally, the locals objected when Texas entered the picture.

"I remember even in high school when I was getting recruited, some of my teachers and best friends were like, 'If you go to that school, I'll never root for you, never cheer for you,'" Casey said. "But I'm really not worried about people who are hating. I'm trying to focus on this team and the people who care about me and love and support me."

Though he was highly

recruited, his journey hasn't been easy. Even after he stepped in for the injured Sam Ehlinger and threw four touchdown passes in the 55-23 Alamo Bowl win over Colorado, he didn't secure the starting job. Freshman Hudson Card won the spot in the summer and started the first two games.

Casey has taken over and completed 71% of his passes. He has thrown nine touchdown passes and just three interceptions. Now, he has the Cotton Bowl stage.

"It's a dream come true for me to start in this game," he said. "But I don't really think that I'll be nervous or anxious or uptight. I'm excited to play."

Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley has followed Casey throughout the years and has a good relationship with the family. He's glad to see Casey succeed.

"Here from game three on he has played at a high level, has done some really good things — moving around, throwing the ball well like he does," Riley said. "I don't wish him success on Saturday. We're going to get out there and compete against each other. But I'm happy for him. I'm glad he's having success. And I'm not surprised."

Seahawks' OC Waldron scheming to attack Rams

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — When Pete Carroll and the Seattle Seahawks went shopping for an offensive coordinator in the offseason, they landed on Shane Waldron, hoping he could recreate the success he had with the division rival Rams.

So, four weeks into the regular season, how does Waldron's former boss in Los Angeles think it's going?

"They've got a lot of play-makers, but I think Shane's putting his own spin on it,"

Rams coach Sean McVay said. "There are some elements of some things that would look familiar to you guys. But it's certainly it's the Seahawks offense for sure. And he's done a nice job for the first four weeks without a doubt."

Seattle was hoping when it hired Waldron that he could merge what worked so well for Los Angeles with the talents of Russell Wilson. The biggest test of that partnership so far will be Thursday night, when the Seahawks host the Rams in an early NFC West showdown.

Seattle watched for the previous four seasons as Los Angeles' offense became one of the best in the game. Waldron wasn't the architect, but he was heavily involved in the development of McVay's schemes.

Seattle coach Pete Carroll saw that development firsthand, twice a year and three times last year. And when the Seahawks fired Brian Schottenheimer after last season, Waldron immediately became a top candidate to replace him.

"I thought Shane and a couple other guys from that same

background were guys that I was really excited about as well," Carroll said. "Shane was the best, right guy for our situation for everything that we were trying to get done."

So far, it's been a mixed bag for Seattle. Wilson leads the league in passer rating and hasn't thrown an interception. But the Seahawks were putrid offensively in the second half of losses to Tennessee and Minnesota, and last week went five straight drives to start the game against San Francisco without a first down.

Irving misses first practice back in N.Y.

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kyrie Irving didn't practice with the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday, again remaining away from the team amid questions about his availability to play in New York because of the city's vaccine mandate.

Coach Steve Nash said he had no further update about the status of his All-Star guard.

"We support him, we're here for him. When things change and there's a resolution, we're here for him," Nash said.

Irving hasn't said if he has been vaccinated against COVID-19, asking for privacy when pressed about his status during the team's media day on Sept. 27. He wasn't with his teammates that day at Barclays Center, instead appearing via Zoom.

New York has a mandate requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for athletes who play in

or practice in the city.

The Nets held training camp last week in San Diego, with Irving present and practicing, and they ran their first practice at their training facility in Brooklyn on Tuesday with everyone except Irving.

Nash said he wasn't concerned about not being able to have his full team together, two weeks before the Nets play the NBA's season-opening game at the reigning champion Milwaukee Bucks.

"We're just trying to work every day," Nash said. "So we came in today and had a great practice and we'll do the same tomorrow and that's kind of where I'll leave it."

The NBA doesn't require players to be vaccinated, but those who aren't face frequent coronavirus testing and severe restrictions on their activities. Players in New York and San Francisco, which has a similar mandate soon going into effect, won't be

paid for the games they miss.

The New York Knicks have said their entire team is vaccinated and Andrewiggins recently became the last of the Golden State Warriors to get a shot, leaving Irving as the lone player potentially facing a pay cut for virus reasons.

Nash frequently pointed to a lack of practice time last season as a problem for the Nets, with the condensed schedule and coronavirus testing forcing them instead to often opt for rest when they could get it.

He said the team won't consider holding practice outside the city, even if it would ensure the entire roster would be available.

"No, this is our home and this is where we're going to practice and we have almost the whole group," Nash said. "So that's a positive and we're just working at getting better every day and focusing on the things we can control."

Top NHL picks stay in school, including No. 1

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Owen Power stood in a sea of maize-clad fans pumping pom-poms and cheering on Michigan's football team in a win over Washington this fall.

Power is 6-foot-5 and has some notoriety as the No. 1 overall pick in the NHL Draft, but he blended right in with his fellow students among the 108,345 fans under the lights on an electric night at the Big House.

That's just the way the 18-year-old Canadian wanted it.

Power passed on a chance to make millions this season with the Buffalo Sabres, who selected the defenseman No. 1 overall in July. He decided to stay in school and return for his sophomore season with the Wolverines, ranked No. 3 in the pre-season.

"I just thought there's no need to rush into it," he said.

The Mississauga, Ontario, native is the first player drafted No. 1 overall not to go straight to the NHL since St. Louis selected Erik Johnson in 2006 and he went to play at Minneso-

ta for a season. He is only the fourth NCAA player to be drafted No. 1 overall, joining Michigan State's Joe Murphy (1986), Boston University's Rick DiPietro (2000) and Johnson.

Power spent last year walking around a largely empty and eerie campus in Ann Arbor and played his freshman season without fans in the stands because of COVID-19 restrictions. Without a doubt, the pandemic played a part in Power's decision to stay.

"He wants a normal year," Michigan coach Mel Pearson said. "He came to college for a reason, came to the University of Michigan for a reason: To go to class, to be a college student, to hang out with kids, to go to a football game on a Saturday and enjoy that experience."

A majority of the 2021 NHL Draft class elected to spend one more season developing before making the jump to the world's top hockey league, and many of them are Power's teammates. Including Tyler Boucher (Ottawa, No. 10 pick), who's committed to play at Boston Universi-

ty, five of the top 10 draft choices playing college hockey the season after they were chosen matches the total for the previous four drafts combined.

Dallas Stars general manager Jim Nill, who came up as a scout and director of player development, believes the pandemic-shortened season last year played a role in this anomaly of so many top picks going back to school.

"I think the disruption of the season last year probably comes into play," Nill said. "If they played a full season, would've got 50 games in and gone to a national championship, played more hockey, developed more, maybe a different story."

Michigan had to withdraw from the NCAA Tournament because of a virus outbreak, but the Wolverines are loaded this season: Four of the top five NHL Draft picks and five of the top 24 are wearing maize and blue this season to take a shot at winning it all.

The expansion Seattle Kraken took Matt Beniers No. 2 overall; New Jersey drafted

Luke Hughes two picks later to eventually pair him with his brother, Jack, drafted first overall in 2019; Columbus took Kent Johnson No. 5 overall; and Florida selected Mackie Samoskevich No. 24.

"It's safe to say that they've turned down a considerable amount of money and investment," said Michigan associate head coach Bill Muckalt, who played in the NHL for five seasons after winning two national titles with the Wolverines. "They still feel that they can get better and improve here, and we feel the same way."

Michigan has seven first-round picks — the most in NCAA history — and 13 players on the roster have had their names called in the NHL Draft.

"Everyone expects Michigan to probably win the national championship," said Jack Hughes, entering his third season with the Devils. "It's like almost like a Duke basketball or Kansas basketball-type thing, having four of the top five kids drafted. That's unheard of, and I don't know if that will ever happen again."