

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Money running out in storm-hit Puerto Rico

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — First, Hurricane Maria knocked out power and water to Puerto Rico. Then diesel fuel, gas and water became scarce. Now, it's money.

The aftermath of the powerful storm has resulted in a near-total shutdown of the U.S. territory's economy that could last for weeks and has many people running seriously low on cash and worrying that it will become even harder to survive on this storm-ravaged island.

There are long lines at the banks that are open with reduced hours or the scattered ATMs that are operational amid an islandwide power outage and a nearly total loss of telecommunications. Many people are unable to work or to run their businesses because diesel to run generators is in short supply or they can't spend all day waiting for gas to fill their cars.

Engineer Octavio Cortes predicts it will only get worse because so many of the problems are interconnected and cannot be resolved easily.

"I don't know how much worse it's going to get," Cortes said as he joined other motorists stopping on a bridge over a river in northern Puerto Rico to catch a faint cellphone signal. "Right now, it's manageable, but I don't know about next week or after that."

The father of six typically works from home or travels around the world for his job, but neither approach is possible now because the power is still out for nearly all 3.4 million people in Puerto Rico and flights off the island are down to only a few each day.

While Cortes is OK for the moment, others don't have nearly the same resources.

Surgical technician Dilma Gonzalez said she had only \$40 left and her job hasn't called people back to work yet in the capital. "Until they let us know otherwise, I'm not supposed to go back," she said.

Official says 'strategic' US assets to head to S. Korea

The Washington Post

The U.S. will send "strategic" military assets to South Korea on a more regular basis to better deter North Korea, the South's national security adviser said Thursday.

The decision, which has not yet been confirmed by the Pentagon, comes at a time of escalating tensions between the U.S. and North Korea, with many analysts concerned that the incendiary rhetoric, combined with more frequent flyovers by American bombers, could lead to a catastrophic miscalculation.

Chung Eui-young, national security adviser to President Moon Jae-in, told lawmakers in Seoul that American "strategic assets" could be deployed to South Korea on a "rotational" basis before the end of the year.

"This will help us expand our defense capabilities," he told the lawmakers, according to Park Wan-joo, spokesman of the ruling Democratic Party.

He did not define "strategic assets," but South Korean officials usually define them as B-52 bombers, stealth warplanes, nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft carriers.

North Korea's foreign minister recently threatened that his country's military was ready to shoot down American military planes whether or not they were in North Korean airspace.

South Korean lawmakers were told that Washington had put its pledge on the deployment in writing, Park confirmed.

A spokesman for the United States Pacific Command, based in Hawaii, did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation or comment.

To celebrate its armed forces day, which falls on Sunday, South Korea's military showed off some of its new weapons during a parade Thursday. For the first time, the military displayed its Hyunmoo ballistic missiles, which have all of North Korea within range and are a key element of its "Kill Chain" preemptive strike system.

"Our government's determination to protect peace requires strong defense capabilities, and we will stand up against reckless provocations with strong punishment," Moon said after inspecting the weapons.

"Securing countercapabilities against

North Korean nuclear and missile threats is the most urgent task. We must further strengthen our Kill Chain and Korean missile defense system," the president said.

Last month, South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo asked his American counterpart, Jim Mattis, to send such military hardware to the southern half of the peninsula on a regular basis.

A poll that YTN, a cable news channel, commissioned in August found that 68 percent of respondents said they supported bringing tactical nuclear weapons back to South Korea.

This issue has become more and more important to South Korea as tensions with North Korea have risen. With top Trump administration officials repeatedly saying that military options for dealing with Kim Jong Un's regime are on the table, some in South Korea have become increasingly concerned about becoming collateral damage.

North Korea has enough conventional artillery trained on the greater Seoul area, home to 25 million people as well as several large American military bases, to cause widespread devastation before the American and South Korean militaries could respond.

If North Korea were to start unleashing its artillery on the South, it would be able to fire about 4,000 rounds per hour, Roger Cavazos, of the Nautilus Institute, estimated in a 2012 study. There would be 2,811 fatalities in the initial volley and 64,000 people could be killed in the first day, the majority of them in the first three hours, he wrote.

As North Korea has continued to show off its growing arsenal — detonating a hydrogen bomb and firing increasingly long-range missiles — the U.S. and South Korean militaries have been conducting drills as a "show of strength."

Air Force B-1B bombers from Andersen Air Force base in Guam and Marine Corps F-35B fighters from Iwakuni, Japan, have been dropping bombs on a training range in South Korea, just a few dozen miles from border with the North.

South Korean F-15K fighters have been doing the same, and South Korea has tested missiles designed to show that North Korea's nuclear and missile test sites are within range.

Coral could derail Futenma relocation project

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An endangered species of coral has been discovered where a U.S. military runway is being built for the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and is threatening to derail construction on the project.

The coral — called *Porites okinawensis* — was found during a July survey by the Okinawa Defense Bureau, an agency spokesman said.

A panel of Japanese government experts announced the discovery Wednesday.

Japan's Ministry of the Environment says the coral is fac-

ing extinction, and it has been included on the nation's Red List of Threatened Species.

Construction has continued on the project because bureau officials said the coral will not be affected by the work.

"[Construction] will not have an effect on the coral, and its living environment will be maintained," the spokesman said.

Bureau officials said they plan to seek permission to move the coral from the site but need the consent of the prefectural government, which has vowed to block the project altogether.

In the meantime, the officials said they plan to set up additional monitoring to make sure the coral lives.

It remains unclear what impact the discovery will have on a lawsuit filed in July by anti-base Gov. Takeshi Onaga that seeks to suspend construction. The lawsuit says the central government did not get a required permit to break coral.

Local officials indicated Thursday they would use the discovery to further contest construction. An official from the Henoko Base Construction Countermeasures Division said that while the Japanese courts struck down Onaga's 2016 revocation of permitting for the project that had been granted by his predecessor, this was a "different procedure under different law."

"We will discuss our policy in dealing with the issue

since we just received briefing today," the official said. "We will examine it strictly based on the law if a request of permission is made."

Some of the endangered coral found at the site was dead already, local media reports said. It is generally less than 3 inches across.

The relocation has been in the works since the mid-1990s as a way to ensure the safety of residents living around the land-locked Futenma air station, which would be shuttered once air assets move to Okinawa's remote north. A small but fervent local opposition — coupled with popular support — got Onaga elected in 2014 on a platform that vowed to block the project.

Senate OKs Dunford for second term leading JCS

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate has confirmed Gen. Joseph Dunford's nomination for a second term as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

By voice vote on Wednesday, the Senate backed the highly

respected, combat-hardened commander who's received high marks from Republicans and Democrats. The vote came shortly after the Armed Services Committee had approved the nomination.

Dunford completes his first

term Sept. 30. The committee held his confirmation hearing Tuesday, with just days to spare, to give him another tour of duty.

Trump in May nominated Dunford to serve a second two-year term as chairman,

as most military leaders serve two terms. President Barack Obama had tapped Dunford for the job.

Dunford took over as chairman on Oct. 1, 2015, after one year as commandant of the Marine Corps.

Army investigating West Point grad's pro-communist posts

Associated Press

FORT DRUM, N.Y. — U.S. military officials are investigating a West Point graduate who posted photos of himself at his graduation with pro-communist messages under his uniform, including a red Che Guevara T-shirt.

The 10th Mountain Division said Tuesday that Army officials at Fort Drum in northern New York are aware of 2nd Lt. Spenser Rapone's alleged actions and are "looking into the matter."

A photo posted on Twitter this week by Rapone shows him at his U.S. Military Academy graduation in May 2016 with a handwritten message under his uniform cap stating, "Communism will win." An-

other Twitter photo shows Rapone holding open the tunic of his graduation day uniform to reveal a Che Guevara T-shirt while standing on the football field where the graduation ceremony was held.

Fort Drum said "the Army has strict rules regarding the wear and appearance of Army uniforms."

Officials at West Point also issued a statement Tuesday, saying Rapone's actions "in no way reflect the values of the U.S. Military Academy or the U.S. Army."

Rapone was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division as an infantry officer after graduating from West Point in May 2016. Normally a soldier's hometown is releasable information, but Fort Drum's Lt. Col.

Tonya Stokes said Wednesday that it was being withheld for the safety of Rapone and his family. Officials didn't respond to a request to make Rapone available for comment.

While military officials support freedom of speech for soldiers, the Pentagon draws the line at political statements made while in uniform.

"The 10th Mountain Division not only supports free speech, it trains every day to ensure our nation has the ability to protect it at all cost," Stokes told the Army Times. "That being said, when our soldiers are in uniform, politics must be set aside. Our uniform represents every corner of our nation and it cannot be used to promote any single ideology."

'Big Unit' draws big crowds at base visits

BY DAN STOUTAMIRE
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Hall of Fame pitcher Randy Johnson proved his continuing drawing power Wednesday as he wrapped up a five-day USO tour of U.S. bases in Germany.

Hundreds of fans turned out at the Wiesbaden exchange store to get autographs from the pitcher, who has been retired more than seven years.

"I've been doing this since 2009, so I've been to an array of places, whether it's Kandahar (Afghanistan) or Iraq or Kuwait or Djibouti," Johnson said. "And I feel very fortunate that I've been able to go there and visit the military, because I get to see what they do."

Arriving in Germany on Sunday, Johnson also made visits to bases in Ansbach, Ramstein and Spangdahlem.

In Wiesbaden, the line for autographs and photos ran well outside the main exchange's front lobby, nearly reaching the parking lot. Johnson signed autographs and posed for pictures for more than an hour.

Left-hander Johnson, nicknamed the "Big Unit" and renowned for his intimidating height and his dominating fast-ball, played for more than 20 years in the major leagues, racking up 4,875 strikeouts, 303 wins and a 3.29 earned-run average.

He was a 10-time All-Star and a five-time winner of the Cy Young Award, which is given to the top pitcher in each league every season. He helped lead the Arizona Diamondbacks to their first-ever World Series win in 2001.

He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2015 by a nearly unanimous vote.

The pitcher comes from a family with a rich tradition of military service. Johnson said his father served during World War II, and two of his wife's brothers served in Vietnam. Between 1973 and 1977, his older brother served in Germany at the now-defunct Rhein-Main Air Base.

US strike following Taliban attack harms Afghan civilians

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — In response to a Taliban rocket attack at Kabul's international airport Wednesday, the U.S. said it launched two missiles, one of which missed its intended target and killed at least one Afghan civilian.

Afghan officials said one Afghan woman was killed and 11 civilians were wounded in the Taliban attack. Afghan special forces managed to repel the attackers, killing four in an ensuing gunbattle, officials said.

Later, the U.S. military issued a statement saying that it had responded with an airstrike.

"Tragically, one of the missiles malfunctioned, causing

several casualties," the U.S. command said.

Navy Capt. William Salvin, a spokesman for the U.S.-led military coalition, said in a telephone interview that the U.S. fired two Hellfire missiles. One struck its intended target, a building from which the insurgents had launched their mortar attack. The other one was programmed to hit the same target but went astray for unknown reasons, Salvin said.

At least one Afghan civilian was killed by the malfunctioning Hellfire and an undetermined number of other civilians were wounded, Salvin said.

In its written statement, the U.S.-led coalition expressed regret for the civilian casualties.

The statement said the original Taliban attackers had fired several rounds of high-explosive ammunition, including mortars, in the vicinity of the Kabul airport. The U.S. statement said the insurgents also detonated suicide vests, "endangering a great number of civilians."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis was meeting with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the time of the attack, along with visiting NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. Mattis' plane was not hit.

Both the location of the attack — the Kabul airport — and the purported target — a visiting U.S. official's plane — underscored the ability of the insurgents to still stage high-profile attacks.

Army looking for ways it can address misbehaving generals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Struggling with an embarrassing series of misconduct and behavior problems among senior officers, the Army is putting together new mental health, counseling and career management programs to shape stronger, more ethical leaders.

The programs stem from a broader worry across the military about the need to bolster professionalism within the officer corps while holding accountable those who abuse their power. The Army plan appears to focus more on building character than berating bad conduct.

In recent years, general officers from the one-star to four-star level have violated the military code of conduct they've lived under and enforced. Some infractions involved extramarital affairs, inappropriate relationships with subordinates or improper use of government funds.

"The idea that we'll be perfect, I think, is unrealistic, but we can be better, and we strive to be better," said Lt. Gen. Ed Cardon, tasked by the Army's top officer to review the problem and devise ways to strengthen the senior officer corps. "Competence is no longer enough. Character is as or even more important."

Among the incidents leading up to the order was the suicide of Maj. Gen. John Rossi shortly before he was to become lieutenant general and assume control of Space and Missile Defense Command. Army leaders worry they missed opportunities to deal with the high levels of stress and self-doubt that reportedly led Rossi to hang himself.

In the past nine months, the Army found two senior officers guilty of misconduct, forcing them out of their jobs and demoting them as they retired. One lost two stars; the other lost three.

Gen. Mark Milley, the Army's chief of staff, said the military

has strived to combat stress disorders, suicide and other problems, but the focus often has been on enlisted troops or lower-ranking officers.

A new emphasis on senior leaders is needed, he said.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Cardon said several pilot programs have started and others are under discussion.

The Army, he said, needs to better help officers manage stress, organize calendars, make time for physical fitness, take time off and reach out for support.

In response to a data request, the Army said there have been nine general officers "relieved of duty" among active-duty, the National Guard and Army Reserves since 2012. Two high-profile cases in which senior officers were forced out and demoted weren't included in those statistics due to complicated legal or administrative reasons, making it clear the numbers underestimate the problem.

Price's charter flights interest lawmakers and anger Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says he's "not happy" with his top health official, putting Tom Price's job in jeopardy after his costly charter flights triggered a congressional investigation of administration travel.

Asked whether he's planning on firing Price, Trump responded Wednesday, "We'll see."

A former GOP congressman from Georgia, Price played a supporting role in the fruitless Republican effort to repeal "Obamacare," which has been another source of frustration for the president. Price is known as a conservative policy expert.

Late in the day, Price's office said he's heard the criticism and has taken it to heart. There was no indication he'd be stepping down.

Prompted partly by controversy over Price, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Wednesday requests for detailed travel records to the White House and 24 departments and agencies,

dating to Trump's first day in office. The letters were signed by the committee's chairman, Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., and its ranking Democrat, Elijah Cummings, of Maryland. Lawmakers are demanding information on political appointees' use of government planes for personal travel, as well as their use of private charters for official travel. The committee wants details by Oct. 10.

"I was looking into it, and I will look into it, and I will tell you personally I'm not happy about it," Trump responded when asked about Price's travel. "I am not happy about it. I'm going to look at it. I'm not happy about it and I let him know it."

Price's travels were first reported last week by Politico, which said it had identified 26 charter flights at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Cheaper commercial flights were a viable option in many cases.

Price is a past chairman of the House Budget Committee, where he was known as a frequent critic of wasteful spending.

McCain: VA must detail private-care program's finances

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain is demanding a full accounting from the Department of Veterans Affairs on the financial status of its private-sector health care program after the agency said it could face another budget shortfall as soon as December.

The Associated Press reported this week that the VA had acknowledged its Veterans Choice program could run out of money by year's end despite receiving \$2.1 billion in emergency funding just last month. Another shortfall could force the VA to limit referrals to outside doctors, causing delays in medical care for hundreds of thousands of veterans.

In a letter to VA Secretary David Shulkin, McCain, who

chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he wants to know specifically when the VA expects Choice to run out of money. McCain cites the AP's report, which included a statement from the VA that Choice funds could be depleted as early as December or as late as March.

The Arizona Republican noted that Congress was led astray earlier this year after the VA provided false assurances that Choice funds would last until early 2018. After Shulkin admitted to a budget shortfall in June, McCain joined other senators to express concern to the VA about possible financial mismanagement.

Congress ultimately approved \$2.1 billion in emergency spending for Choice that was intended to last until February.

Hugh Hefner, founder of Playboy magazine, dies at 91

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Playboy founder Hugh Hefner, the pipe-smoking hedonist who revved up the sexual revolution in the 1950s and built a multimedia empire of clubs, mansions, movies and television symbolized by bow-tied women in bunny costumes, has died at age 91.

Hefner died of natural causes at his home surrounded by family on Wednesday night, Playboy said in a statement.

As much as anyone, Hefner helped slip sex out of the confines of plain brown wrappers and into mainstream conversation.

In 1953, a time when states could ban contraceptives, when the word "pregnant" was not allowed on "I Love Lucy," Hefner published the first issue of

Playboy, featuring naked photos of Marilyn Monroe (taken years earlier) and an editorial promise of "humor, sophistication and spice." Playboy soon became forbidden fruit for teenagers and a bible for men with time and money, primed for the magazine's prescribed evenings of dimmed lights, hard drinks, soft jazz, deep thoughts and deeper desires. Within a year, circulation neared 200,000. Within five years, it had topped 1 million.

By the 1970s, the magazine had more than 7 million readers and had inspired such raunchier imitations as Penthouse and Hustler. Competition and the internet reduced circulation to less than 3 million by the 21st century, but Hefner and Playboy remained brand names worldwide.

Asked by The New York

Times in 1992 of what he was proudest, Hefner responded: "That I changed attitudes toward sex. That nice people can live together now. That I decontaminated the notion of premarital sex. That gives me great satisfaction."

He was a widely admired, but far from universally beloved, figure. Many feminist and religious leaders regarded him as nothing but a glorified pornographer who degraded and objectified women with impunity. Women were warned from the first issue: "If you're somebody's sister, wife, or mother-in-law," the magazine declared, "and picked us up by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to Ladies Home Companion."

Hefner ran Playboy from his elaborate mansions, first in Chicago and then in Los Ange-

les, and became the flamboyant symbol of the lifestyle he espoused. For decades, he was the pipe-smoking, silk-pajama-wearing center of a constant party with celebrities and Playboy models. By his own account, Hefner had sex with more than 1,000 women.

Hefner was born in Chicago on April 9, 1926, to devout Methodist parents.

"Part of the reason that I am who I am is my Puritan roots run deep," he told The Associated Press in 2011. "My folks are Puritan. My folks are prohibitionists. There was no drinking in my home. No discussion of sex. And I think I saw the hurtful and hypocritical side of that from very early on."

Hefner is survived by his wife, Crystal, as well as his daughter, Christie, and his sons, David, Marston and Cooper.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fake pizza delivery driver shot man at home

PA PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia police have been searching for a fake pizza delivery driver who reportedly shot a man in the back at his home.

Police say the shooter knocked on a door and asked if anyone had ordered a pizza. When the victim said, “No” and tried to close the door, the fake delivery man tried to force his way into the home. When a dog started running toward the shooter from inside the home, the fake deliveryman ran away but fired two shots, one of which hit the 49-year-old victim in the lower back.

Police say they found a pizza box with a half-eaten pie at the scene.

The victim was stable at Einstein Medical Center.

Police: Man arrested twice in 1 day for DWI

NJ RAMSEY — A 71-year-old New Jersey man was arrested twice in one day on charges of driving while intoxicated.

NorthJersey.com reported Richard Haskell was first arrested Saturday morning when police in Ramsey found him sleeping in his parked car near a pond with a bottle of alcohol between his legs. He was given a field sobriety test and failed. He was later released.

That afternoon, police say Haskell drove to the police department to see if his car from the earlier arrest would be released. Officers performed another field sobriety test, and Haskell’s blood-alcohol level was still over the legal limit.

He was charged with a second DWI and given a court date.

Robbers break into home, steal a cat

CA SAN BRUNO — Two robbers in Northern California have given new meaning to the term cat burglars.

Police said Oleksandr Mirza and Ching Yen literally stole a cat after breaking into an apartment in San Bruno and pepper-spraying a resident.

The San Bruno Police Department said officers in San Francisco arrested Mirza and Yen.

Police Lt. Troy Fry said the suspects knew the victim and there was a dispute over who the cat actually belonged to.

Fry said the cat came away unharmed.

Tropical bird blown ashore in Cape Cod

MA EASTHAM — A tropical bird never before seen in Massachusetts was rescued from a Cape Cod beach.

Wild Care, a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Eastham, said the masked booby found Tuesday at a Wellfleet beach was likely blown off course by Hurricane Jose.

Wild Care Executive Director Stephanie Ellis told the Cape Cod Times the bird was thin, weak and experiencing respiratory discomfort.

The seabirds are more common in the Gulf of Mexico.

Velcro to consumers: Say ‘hook and loop’

NH CONCORD — The company that makes Velcro brand fasteners hopes the message in its new marketing video will stick as well as its products: “Don’t Say Velcro.”

The video features actors

portraying trademark lawyers pleading with the public to respect Velcro Cos.’ brand and refer to other “scratchy, hairy” products as “hook and loop” fasteners instead of Velcro.

CEO Fraser Cameron in New Hampshire said he wants people to know there’s a real company behind the products, and there’s a difference between Velcro brand products and others in the marketplace.

Velcro was invented by a Swiss engineer in the 1940s after he studied burrs that stuck to his dog’s fur and his wool pants.

Caving club suspended after student left behind

IN BLOOMINGTON — Indiana University has suspended its spelunking club pending an investigation into how a freshman was locked inside a cave for 60 hours.

The Herald Times reported that university officials announced this week that the Office of Student Conduct is conducting an investigation into how Lukas Cavar, 19, became trapped inside Sullivan Cave.

Cavar was on a beginner’s spelunking trip with the Caving Club on Sept. 17 when he was separated from the group. He then discovered the gate at the cave’s entrance was padlocked. Two club leaders rescued Cavar on Sept. 19 after learning that his parents had filed a missing person report with university police.

Man claims he found maggots in sandwich

NJ EWING — A man claims he found maggots in a sandwich he ordered from a convenience store in New Jersey.

Chris Garcia told The Tren-

tonian he bought a buffalo chicken cheesesteak hoagie Saturday from a Wawa store in Ewing, where he lives. He claims after a taking few bites, he noticed sauce from the sandwich was moving.

The 22-year-old says he found two maggots moving around his sandwich. Garcia’s mother recorded video of maggots crawling on the sandwich wrapper.

A Wawa spokeswoman says its investigation shows the claim is “highly unlikely and probably impossible.” She says the 750-store chain inspects its stores daily and holds itself to the “highest standard of quality” in the food it serves.

Garcia says he was given a refund after returning to the store with the sandwich.

2 Red Lobster workers fight; 3 people charged

GA MACON — A fight between two Red Lobster employees culminated in charges for three people after a BB gun was produced.

The Telegraph of Macon reported the Bibb County Sheriff’s Office said Amber Browner and Terral Gray argued at the restaurant about work schedules Sunday night. Sgt. Linda Howard said the argument spilled into the parking lot after Browner followed Gray out and then grabbed a BB gun from her car. Howard said Gray tackled Browner, who dropped the BB gun.

Browner was charged with disorderly conduct with a weapon and freed on \$390 bond.

Howard says Sabrina Jones and Ayesha Stokeling are each charged with hindering and interfering for attempting to hide evidence. Their bonds were set at \$1,300.

From wire reports

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and Military News

No. 2 Clemson still team to beat in ACC

Associated Press

Clemson's status as the team to beat in the Atlantic Coast Conference is motivating other schools to prove the league goes beyond the second-ranked Tigers.

Schools are making early cases that they are up to challenging the defending national champions. There have been upsets to start the year and several teams besides the Tigers are off to unbeaten starts. Three ACC teams are ranked in the Top 25 behind Clemson — No. 12 Virginia Tech, No. 14 Miami and No. 17 Louisville and Heisman Trophy winner Lamar Jackson.

Five schools — Clemson, Wake Forest, North Carolina State, Duke and Georgia Tech — are unbeaten in ACC play. The Tigers, Demon Deacons, Blue Devils and Virginia Tech are 4-0 overall, while Miami is 2-0 entering its league opener at Duke on Friday night.

October should provide some clarity, but right now it's anybody's game in the ACC, even with Clemson again sitting atop the Atlantic Division.

It could start Saturday night in Blacksburg, Va., when Clemson visits Virginia Tech for a rematch of last season's conference championship game.

Clemson got all it could handle from Boston College, which battled it to a 7-all tie entering the fourth quarter last week. Clemson eventually pulled away by rushing for four touchdowns in a 34-7 win that again showed its ability to answer challenges.

"It used to be a really big deal, a once-or-twice-a-season kind of thing," Tigers co-offensive coordinator Jeff Scott said of Clemson preparing for a big game. "Now, it's just kind of becoming the expectation. Coach (Dabo) Swinney does a great job of

reminding our guys, 'Hey, this is the biggest game of the year only because it's our next game.' It has nothing to do with any of that other stuff."

Still, nothing is a given.

Just ask North Carolina State, which went wire to wire in a 27-21 victory over then-No. 12 and preseason conference favorite Florida State. Though the Seminoles returned from a 21-day layoff because of Hurricane Irma — and adjusted to the season-ending knee injury to quarterback Deondre Francois — visiting teams face a tall order winning in Tallahassee.

The Wolfpack weren't fazed at FSU, and aim to maintain that momentum against Syracuse and Louisville the next couple of weeks in hopes of challenging Clemson in the Atlantic.

"You're talking about trying to get a win that you know you can get, but doing it at a place that not many people get out of there that way," N.C. State coach Dave Doeren said.

"It's a hard place to win, so I think it's a huge win for our players, not just to feel the benefits of their work but to have the confidence that they are a team that can finish anybody."

The opportunity exists for teams to break through with quarterback Deshaun Watson gone from Clemson and FSU winless and without Francois.

While schools have circled those dates in hopes of making a statement, beating both the Tigers and Seminoles respectively remains difficult with each winning three conference crowns and a national title over the past six seasons.

"We're better," Wake Forest coach Dave Clawson said, "but if you're going to play in the ACC Atlantic, right now those teams are ahead of us and to get where we want to

get, you have to beat them and we haven't done it yet. ... These wins are never going to come easy."

But then, good starts by Wake and N.C. State warn Atlantic Division teams not to look past anybody.

"It's competitive," said Louisville coach Bobby Petrino, looking ahead to next week's meeting against the Wolfpack. The Cardinals (1-1) look to get back in the ACC chase after getting thumped 47-21 on Sept. 16 by a Clemson squad looking formidable on both sides of the ball.

But the ACC is still eager to show it's not just Clemson and everybody else.

Though early, seeing Duke and Georgia Tech atop the Coastal isn't shocking considering they're among four division winners in as many years. The Blue Devils have posted several impressive wins the past few weeks, rolling past Big Ten member Northwestern (41-17) and Big 12 Baylor (34-20) before beating rival North Carolina 27-17 last week for the second straight year to drop the Tar Heels to 0-2 in the ACC.

Miami has rolled in nonconference play, averaging 46.5 points and 568.5 yards per game despite being interrupted by Irma. The Hurricanes look to prove themselves in the ACC starting with Duke, which is allowing just 15.2 points per contest.

But this weekend, it's Virginia Tech's turn to try and knock off Clemson.

There's no fear in the Hokies after falling 42-35 to Clemson in last year's title game. The Hokies were driving toward a possible tie before a fourth-down interception at the Tigers' 23 left them with a TD short and motivated to contend again.

Virginia Tech coach Justin Fuente isn't getting caught up in the hype, saying, "It's a great opportunity for us to play a fantastic football team."

Washington State preps for No. 5 USC, QB Darnold

Associated Press

The Air Raid offense gets all the attention at No. 16 Washington State but the Cougars' defense is also pretty good.

They'll find out how good when Sam Darnold and No. 5 Southern California come to Pullman on Friday night.

Darnold is easily the best quarterback the Cougars (4-0, 1-0 Pac-12) have faced this year. The Heisman Trophy candidate is averaging 306 passing yards per game and has led the Trojans to 13 consecutive

victories.

Yet Washington State linebacker Isaac Dotson said the Cougars will do nothing special to prepare for him.

"Nothing changes for us," Dotson said. "We just play our defense. He's a solid quarterback. A good player. He's our next opponent. He's one guy on that team. We are not preparing for one guy."

The Trojans (4-0, 2-0) are playing Washington State for the first time since 2014, when they beat the Cougars 44-17 in Pullman. The game is sold out

and excitement is high in the Palouse.

"It's an exciting chance for us," Dotson said.

Despite the recent loss of star linebacker Peyton Pelluer to a broken foot, Washington State ranks first in the Pac-12 in pass defense, allowing 142 yards per game. They also have 15 sacks on the year. Defensive lineman Hercules Mata'afa had 2½ sacks within the first six plays in last Saturday's crushing of Nevada. He has 18 quarterback pressures so far this year.

The Cougars have been

tough on opposing quarterbacks. They knocked Oregon State's Jake Luton out of the game with an injury, and prompted Boise State and Nevada to change quarterbacks during those games. They are allowing only 18.5 points per game.

The Cougars are also meeting their goal of generating better than two turnovers per game.

"Each snap for us is an opportunity to get the ball out," Dotson said. "Takeaways equal victories."

Con man key informant in FBI's probe

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A once-obscure admitted con man named Louis Martin “Marty” Blazer III may have failed in his scheme to make low-budget movies with money swiped from pro athletes, but he’s now succeeded in stealing part of the spotlight in a scandal that’s shaken college basketball to its core.

Federal authorities revealed this week that Blazer was the wily informant — referred to in criminal complaints only as CW-1 “cooperating witness-1” — who played a central role in a federal bribery investigation of assistant coaches at four top-tier basketball schools.

“I’m aware of people who are willing to do this,” federal prosecutors say Blazer told authorities in 2014 when he agreed to wear a wire and buddy up to coaches who took covert payments in exchange for encouraging top-flight NBA prospects to choose a particular school, agent or financial adviser.

Blazer, 46, posed as an experienced — and corrupt — financial adviser and business manager while helping the FBI make hundreds of recordings — a ruse resulting in a case charging 10 people, including coaches from Auburn, Southern California, Arizona and Oklahoma State.

The expanding ramifications of the probe were felt Wednesday when Louisville announced it was putting basketball coach Rick Pitino on unpaid leave in response to a related scheme alleging agents promised the family of a Louisville prospect it would get \$100,000 from Adidas if he signed with the Adidas-sponsored school.

After switching sides, Blazer’s work as a cooperator in the basketball case included recording and videotaping a meeting with former NBA star and Auburn assistant Chuck Person and others in late 2016 at a restaurant near the university in which Person agreed to accept \$50,000 in bribes to steer college athletes to his firm, court papers said. The documents describe how a few weeks later, the pair exchanged chummy text messages about whether Person was being wired \$5,000 or \$10,000 as an installment.

“I thought it was 10. I guess 5 will do,” Person said.

“Nah 5 + the 5 from yesterday right!” the cooperator reassured him. “No prob!”

Which schools are involved?

Louisville

Who’s accused: Forward Brian Bowen and the basketball program for lack of oversight.

Why: James Gatto, director of global sports marketing for basketball at Adidas, is among those accused of funneling \$100,000 to the family of a high school athlete to gain his commitment to play at Louisville and to sign with Adidas once he became a professional. The player’s name was not released, but details in the criminal complaint make it clear investigators were referring to Bowen.

Fallout: Louisville has placed coach Rick Pitino and athletic director Tom Jurich on administrative leave. Jurich is on paid leave, while Pitino is on unpaid leave. The coach’s attorney, Steve Spence, told the Courier-Journal Wednesday that Louisville has “effectively fired” Pitino.

Next steps: Louisville waits. The scandal could cost the school its 2013 national championship. The program already is on probation because of a scandal involving escorts hired for players and recruits.

Auburn

Who’s accused: Assistant coach Chuck Person.

Why: Federal prosecutors say the former NBA player accepted about \$91,500 in bribes to steer clients to Pittsburgh-based financial adviser Martin Blazer when they reached the NBA.

Fallout: Person has been suspended without pay. Auburn is refunding season tickets to about 30 fans. Head coach Bruce Pearl, who has had issues before, is now under scrutiny again.

Next steps: Auburn has hired a Birmingham law firm to conduct a review of the basketball program. Person is slated to appear in court in New York’s Southern District on Oct. 10.

Arizona

Who’s accused: Assistant coach Emanuel Richardson.

Why: Court documents say Richardson allegedly accepted \$20,000 in bribes and used money to influence at least one unidentified basketball player to commit to play for Arizona.

Fallout: Richardson has been suspended and relieved of all duties.

Next steps: The Department of Justice is investigating.

Miami

Who’s accused: An unidentified player or players and an unidentified assistant coach.

Why: Federal prosecutors say among several allegations that at least three top high school recruits were promised payments of as much as \$150,000, using money supplied by Adidas, to attend two universities sponsored by the athletic shoe company. Court papers didn’t name those schools but contained enough details to identify them as Miami and Louisville. Miami coach Jim Larranaga’s attorney, Stuart Grossman, says his

client “is unfamiliar with this matter and had zero involvement in any allegations of any impropriety.” School president Julio Frenk says the U.S. Attorney’s Office has confirmed it is investigating a potential tie to a Miami coach and recruit. Frenk says school officials are “alarmed and disappointed” by the development.

Fallout: None yet.

Next steps: Athletic director Blake James also issued a statement saying the school was aware of the indictments in the case and would cooperate with any review of the matter.

Oklahoma State

Who’s accused: Assistant coach Lamont Evans.

Why: He allegedly took bribes to influence star athletes to go to certain agents. According to FBI papers, he expected \$2,000 a month for his services. He said it was necessary to use his influence over the youngsters early in their college careers because many of them are “one and done,” meaning they play one year of college ball before joining the NBA, according to court papers.

Fallout: Evans has been suspended. New coach Mike Boynton goes into his first season without his top assistant.

Next steps: Evans is to appear in court in New York’s Southern District on Oct. 10.

Southern California

Who’s accused: Assistant coach Tony Bland.

Why: According to the Orange County Register, Bland allegedly received bribes to steer players to agents and facilitated payments of \$9,000 to the families of two unidentified Trojans players. Bland also is accused of accepting \$13,000 during a meeting July 29 in Las Vegas with Christian Dawkins, a former agent with ASM Sports.

Fallout: Bland has been placed on administrative leave. He appeared in federal court in Tampa, Fla., on Tuesday.

Next steps: USC said it appointed former FBI Director Louis J. Freeh to conduct an internal investigation.

Alabama

Who’s accused: Basketball administrator Kobie Baker.

Why: Athletic director Greg Byrne said in a statement that there was an internal review of the basketball program resulting from a wave of arrests in the federal bribery probe, and Baker has resigned. An athletic department spokeswoman declined to elaborate on the reason for Baker’s resignation.

Fallout: It may be limited. Byrne said the review has not identified any NCAA or SEC rules violations, nor the involvement of any other coach or staff member.

Next steps: Byrne said the school will continue to be proactive in its compliance efforts.

— The Associated Press

Cubs top Cardinals, clinch NL Central

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The last time the Cubs went to the postseason three straight years was in 1906-08. The World Series champions won the National Central for the second straight year with a 5-1 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals on Wednesday night.

Under .500 and trailing Milwaukee in the division race at the All-Star break, the Cubs turned things around with a stellar second half.

“It was tough,” starter John Lackey said. “It’s always a challenge and we got a lot of people’s best shots. We played well and we’re back in the playoffs and we’ll see what happens.”

Addison Russell hit a three-run homer and Lackey pitched six strong innings for Chicago.

The Cubs are the first defending World Series champion to win their division the next season since the 2009 Philadelphia Phillies and the first defending champions to reach the playoffs the next season since

the Cardinals won the wild card in 2012.

“It’s fun to be a team that people want to beat,” Cubs infielder Kris Bryant said. “We embrace that and we’re going to go with that for as long as we can. It feels good right now knowing they (the Cardinals) always beat up on us before and now we’re able to kind of get of a taste of that, too.”

The Cubs became the second visiting team to celebrate a title at Busch Stadium III. The 2009 Los Angeles Dodgers won the NLDS at St. Louis.

“It’s a blessing to be in a situation to win a World Series on a team and win a division in a tough division the very next year,” Cubs outfielder Jason Heyward said. “That’s not my plan. That’s someone else’s plan there. It just happened to be here. Fans, rivalry, whatever, it is what it is, but I know we had a lot of fun competing.”

Lackey (12-11) retired the final 10 batters he faced. The former Cardinal and three-time World Series winner struck out three and gave up two hits and two walks.

“I’ve got to keep telling these kids (young

Cubs players) ‘Don’t take any one of these for granted. You never know if it’s your last one,’” Lackey said. “If you start thinking this is something easy, it’s time for you to go home.”

Six Cubs relievers combined for three scoreless innings.

Cardinals starter Michael Wacha needed just 60 pitches to cruise through the first six innings, striking out eight, before running into trouble in the seventh. Anthony Rizzo and Bryant started the inning with singles and Russell drove a 2-1 pitch over the left field wall to give the Cubs a 3-1 lead.

Wacha (12-9) was chased after allowing the first six Cubs to reach base in the seventh. Former Cub Dexter Fowler came to the plate with the bases loaded as the tying run in the eighth, but Carl Edwards Jr. got him to fly weakly to right field, ending the Cardinals’ threat.

The loss drops the Cardinals elimination number to one.

The Cubs will draw Washington in the NLDS.

MLB roundup

Angels’ loss gives Twins wild-card berth

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — From worst to wild card, the Minnesota Twins have completed a most remarkable reversal.

A couple of hours after losing 4-2 to Cleveland, the Twins earned an AL wild-card berth when the Angels lost 6-4 in 10 innings to the White Sox.

A season after winning just 59 games, the Twins became the first team to lose at least 100 and then make the postseason the following year.

Manager Paul Molitor’s team will play Tuesday night at either Yankee Stadium or Fenway Park in the wild-card game. Boston holds a three-game lead over New York in the AL East race.

Cleveland scored two runs off Adalberto Mejia (4-7). Mike Clevinger (12-5) won in relief for the Indians.

White Sox 6, Angels 4 (10): Nicky Delmonico hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the 10th inning to lift host Chicago and

eliminate Los Angeles from playoff contention.

Rockies 15, Marlins 9: Ian Desmond homered during a six-run second inning and play-off-chasing Colorado won hours after the league approved the sale of visiting Miami to an investment group featuring Derek Jeter.

Charlie Blackmon reached 100 RBIs for the Rockies, who with three games left are in prime position to contend for their first playoff berth since 2009. They are 2½ games ahead of Milwaukee for the second NL wild-card spot.

Reds 6, Brewers 0: Rookie Brandon Woodruff was chased in a five-run third inning and visiting Milwaukee’s postseason hopes took another hit.

The Brewers have lost five of seven. They’ve dropped 2½ games behind Colorado for the second NL wild-card spot with only four games left.

Red Sox 10, Blue Jays 7: Reigning AL Cy Young winner Rick Porcello struggled in his

final playoff tuneup, and David Price relieved him to solidify his role on the postseason roster as host Boston lowered its magic number to two in the AL East.

Yankees 6, Rays 1: Luis Severino cruised through his final postseason tuneup and Starlin Castro, Greg Bird and Aaron Hicks all homered in the sixth inning for host New York.

The Yankees remained three behind AL East-leading Boston with four to play.

Dodgers 10, Padres 0: Rich Hill allowed two hits over seven innings and Yasiel Puig, Curtis Granderson and Corey Seager homered for host Los Angeles.

The Dodgers own the best record in baseball and tied the Los Angeles franchise record for wins in a season at 102, which was last done in 1974. **Astros 12, Rangers 2:** Justin Verlander struck out 11 to win his fifth straight start since getting traded, major league batting leader Jose Altuve reached 200 hits for the fourth season in

a row, and AL West champion Houston completed a dominating three-game road sweep.

Diamondbacks 4, Giants 3: J.D. Martinez hit his 16th homer in September during a three-run rally in the ninth inning that lifted host Arizona over San Francisco.

Phillies 7, Nationals 5: Aaron Altherr had two hits and drove in two runs to lead Philadelphia over visiting Washington.

Mets 7, Braves 1: Terry Collins was a winner in perhaps his final home game as manager for host New York.

Royals 7, Tigers 4: Paulo Orlando hit a two-run homer and Kansas City sent visiting Detroit to its ninth straight loss.

Athletics 6, Mariners 5: Mark Canha hit a solo home run with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning that lifted host Oakland over Seattle.

Pirates 5, Orioles 3: Josh Bell hit a two-run homer and Pittsburgh beat visiting Baltimore.