

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## US exercise in Syria a warning to Russia

*Washington Post*

U.S. Marines conducted a live-fire, aerial assault exercise in southern Syria on Friday designed to warn Russian and other military forces to stay away from an American base there.

The exercise, involving a company-size unit, came amid rising U.S.-Russia tensions across the Syrian battlespace. The Trump administration has warned both Russia and the Syrian government against a planned offensive in Idlib province in northwestern Syria, the largest remaining pocket of rebel fighters who have tried, and failed, during the past seven years to oust President Bashar Assad.

In support of the Idlib operation, Russia has deployed a significant naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean, with weaponry capable of reaching across Syria.

The Marine exercise took place near the U.S. garrison at Tanf, along the Syrian-Iraqi border near Jordan, around which the Americans have long declared a 35-mile deconfliction zone off-limits to others. It followed a Russian notification, and U.S. rejection, of a plan to enter the zone to pursue “terrorists.”

“The United States does not seek to fight

the Russians, the government of Syria or any groups that may be providing support to Syria in the Syrian civil war,” Lt. Col. Earl Brown, a U.S. Central Command spokesman, said in a statement. “However, the United States will not hesitate to use necessary and proportionate force to defend U.S., coalition or partner forces.”

The garrison has served as a launchpad for U.S. counter-Islamic State operations and a U.S. special operations forces training facility for Syrian fighters aiding in that effort. The zone also lies astride a major transportation line between Tehran and Damascus, and control of the area has long been a goal of the Syrian government and its Russian and Iranian allies.

Increasingly frequent skirmishes have occurred near and inside the zone, including one Monday in which several Iranian and Iranian-backed fighters reportedly were killed in an airstrike. A U.S. military spokesman said the base had “received fire from unknown forces” but “did not fire back.” Israel, which has conducted strikes against Iranian forces in Syria, made no direct comment on the Monday incident.

Russia repeatedly has charged that the U.S. is harboring ISIS forces inside the zone, something the Americans have de-

nied vehemently while suggesting that Russia and its allies in Syria are looking for an excuse to attack the area.

“Coalition partners are in the At Tanf deconfliction zone for the fight to destroy ISIS,” Brown said. “Any claim that the U.S. is harboring or assisting ISIS is grossly inaccurate.”

Outlining an unusual series of events that led up to the exercise, Brown said Russia, using a communication line dedicated to avoiding accidental conflict between U.S. and Russian forces operating in Syria, had notified U.S. Lt. Gen. Paul Funk II, the commander of coalition forces in Iraq and Syria, that “they intended to enter the At Tanf deconfliction zone to pursue terrorists.”

That was followed Thursday, Brown said, by an unprecedented written note to Funk from his Russian counterpart “that they would make precision strikes.”

“The U.S. does not require any assistance in our efforts to destroy ISIS in the At Tanf deconfliction zone,” Brown said, “and we advised the Russians to remain clear.”

Russia and other pro-government forces, he said, were expected to abide by deconfliction agreements.

## SOCOM calls for variety of drones for battlefield use

*Tampa Bay (St. Petersburg, Fla.) Times*

On a far-flung battlefield, 100 miles from the nearest treatment center, a Navy corpsman signals for a small drone to bring life-saving blood to a wounded commando.

Meanwhile, a tiny drone shaped like a bug spies on enemy leaders. Another small drone swoops in to broadcast messages, in local languages and dialects, explaining why Navy SEALs are there. Elsewhere, swarms of drones, aided by artificial intelligence, challenge enemy forces’ jamming signals.

Welcome to the future of special operations warfare.

These technologies aren’t yet in the hands of the military’s commandos, but officials at U.S. Special Operations Command are eager to deliver them. That’s why

the command, headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., is seeking help from academics, industry and individuals who may have designed drones that can meet its needs.

In a request for information issued last month, SOCOM asked that they showcase their wares in November during a demonstration at the Avon Park Air Force Range straddling Polk and Highlands counties. Commandos will observe plans and, when possible, drone systems in action. Later, the command might collaborate on further development.

SOCOM officials could not be reached for comment, but Skip Parish, a Sarasota-based drone inventor, said the military is facing a drone arms race and Russia is a competitor.

Artificial intelligence with swarm net-

working on self-operated devices “are positioned to win wars,” Parish said. “The race is on to bring this technology to the battlefield and Mr. Putin is betting his army’s success in any potential engagement on it.”

Tampa drone expert Randy Goers called the SOCOM request a “step in the right direction” that will benefit troops in the field and, down the line, civilians in distress.

Goers, a Tampa city planner and host of the streaming Drone Radio Show, said that of all SOCOM’s drone requests, the blood delivery system and so-called nanodrones stand out.

He said “the ability to get fresh blood sources into the field, where people need them, is really critical and will increase the chances of survival.”

# DARPA pledges up to \$2B toward AI research

*The Washington Post*

The military's research arm said Friday it will invest up to \$2 billion during the next five years toward new programs advancing artificial intelligence, stepping up both a technological arms race with China and an ideological clash with Silicon Valley over the future of powerful machines.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, part of the Defense Department, said it will fund dozens of new research efforts as part of a "Third Wave" campaign aimed at developing machines that can learn and adapt to changing environments.

DARPA director Steven Walker announced the effort Friday

to an audience from American academia, private industry and the military at a symposium outside Washington, saying the agency wants to explore "how machines can acquire human-like communication and reasoning capabilities."

"This is a massive deal. It's the first indication that the United States is addressing advanced AI technology with the scale and funding and seriousness that the issue demands," said Gregory C. Allen, an adjunct fellow specializing in AI and robotics for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank.

"We've seen China willing to devote billions to this issue, and this is the first time the U.S. has

done the same," he said.

But DARPA's expansion comes at a time of tension between government agencies and the tech giants who employ some of the world's most in-demand AI talent. In June, Google announced it would not renew its Defense Department contract to help develop AI that could analyze drone footage, known as Project Maven, following a worker uprising against what some inside the company called the "business of war."

The new DARPA money, some AI researchers said, appeared to convey a message: If Google doesn't want to help the military develop AI, someone else will.

"There are hundreds if not

thousands of schools and companies that bid aggressively on the programs," Peter Highnam, DARPA's deputy director, said in a June interview. "They see incredibly interesting, challenging problems. They see data sets they would never have access to. And they see ways to ... build the labs to do what they're there for, which is hard science and engineering."

The agency said the new money would fund projects on top of the more than 20 active programs exploring cutting-edge applications of AI, including in cybersecurity; the detection of AI-created fake audio or video; and in "human-computer symbiosis" programs targeting the interaction between people and machines.

## France suspects Russian space attack targeted military satellite

*Bloomberg*

A Russian spy satellite might have targeted France's secret communications in space last year, French Defense Minister Florence Parly said.

The Russian aggression is a sign of a new, military space race that requires France and its European allies to beef up their own, independent infrastructure, Parly said Friday.

Russia's Louch-Olymp satellite approached a French-Italian orbiter about 22,000 miles above the Earth last year in what looked like an "act of espionage," Parly said, adding that Russia isn't the only nation developing a more aggressive presence in space, citing the U.S. and China.

"We know for a fact that other great space powers are putting some intriguing objects into orbit, testing potentially offensive capabilities, conducting maneuvers that leave little doubt about their aggressive motives," Parly said in a speech at the French National Space

Agency's headquarters in Toulouse. "We are in danger," she added. "The stakes are high. This is an absolute priority."

France is preparing a new strategy to develop its own space capabilities due to the new military threats brought by China and Russia and tensions with the U.S., the traditional guarantor of European security. Europe is watching with alarm as its main ally revives the Cold-War era space rhetoric, with an explicitly military goal.

In March, President Donald Trump said he wanted to created an American "Space Force." He wants Congress to allocate \$8 billion over the next five years for space security systems, Vice President Mike Pence said, calling for an "American dominance in space."

The country will order a series of new satellites to provide surveillance and communications for the army and the intelligence services. The decision will provide orders for key

French companies including Thales and Airbus.

The EU plans to earmark 16 billion euros (\$19 billion) in its 2021-2027 budget for space, with most going to the military and civilian satellite navigation system Galileo. The bloc also plans to allocate \$594 billion for security and independent access to space, according to the EU Commission's June statement. Part of the multibillion Horizon 2020 fund will also go to space innovations. France plans to spend \$2.4 billion next year, an official said.

France also is seeking to develop its own "new space" strategy with Germany to help startups and bigger companies invest in innovative and disruptive space projects in a bid to catch up both financially and technologically with leading space powers China and the U.S.

In February, a U.S. intelligence services warned that both Russia and China soon could possess destructive space weapons.

## Army: Pilots in helo crash disoriented

*Associated Press*

HONOLULU — An Army investigation into a fatal helicopter crash found the pilots became disoriented during nighttime training off Hawaii last year. All five soldiers aboard were killed in the crash on Aug. 15, 2017.

The pilots experienced "spatial disorientation," which is when a pilot can't determine a current position and altitude relative to the earth's surface, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Friday. The newspaper obtained the results of the investigation through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The crash occurred off Oahu's Kaena Point after the helicopter and an accompanying helicopter left Wheeler Army Airfield for night-vision-goggle training.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., conducted the investigation. The Army also is working on a second investigation that it will make public.

# Trump wants DOJ to help unmask 'resistance' writer

Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — President Donald Trump declared the U.S. Justice Department should investigate and unmask the author of a bitingly critical New York Times opinion piece purportedly written by a member of an administration “resistance” movement straining to thwart his most dangerous impulses.

Trump cited “national security” Friday as the reason for such an extraordinary probe, and he called on Attorney General Jeff Sessions to get it going. He also said he was exploring bringing legal action against the newspaper over publication of the essay two days earlier.

“Jeff should be investigating who the author of that piece was because I really believe it’s national security,” Trump said. If the person has a high-level security clearance, he said, “I don’t want him in those meetings.”

A White House official later said Trump’s call for a government investigation was an expression of his frustration with the essay, not an order for federal prosecutors to take action.

Though the article was strongly critical of Trump, no classified information appears to have been revealed by the author or leaked to the newspaper, which would be a crucial bar to clear before a leak investigation could be contemplated.

“The department does not confirm or deny investigations,” said Sarah Isgur Flores, a spokeswoman.

Trump’s call is the latest test of the independence of his Justice Department, which is supposed to make investigative and charging decisions without political interference from the White House.

It also reflects an expansive view of White

House authority that cuts to the heart of special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation.

Trump’s lawyers and supporters have argued that as president, he is empowered not only to hire and fire whomever he chooses but that he can also inject himself into law enforcement matters.

Former FBI Director James Comey has said Trump asked him to go easy on former national security adviser Michael Flynn, an allegation that Mueller is scrutinizing. Trump’s lawyers have said that even if that happened as Comey described — they say it didn’t — it can’t be a crime because the president has the constitutional authority to involve himself in the activities of the Justice Department.

Trump’s call for an investigation came a day after his top lieutenants stepped forward to repudiate the op-ed in a show of support for their incensed boss, who ordered aides to unmask the writer.

Democrats were quick to condemn the president’s call for a federal investigation.

Sen. Chris Coons, of Delaware, said, “President Trump continues to show a troubling trend in which he views the Department of Justice as the private legal department of the Trump organization rather than an entity that is focused on respecting the Constitution and enforcing our laws.”

Rudy Giuliani, the president’s attorney, suggested that it “would be appropriate” for Trump to ask for a formal investigation into the identity of the op-ed author.

“Let’s assume it’s a person with a security clearance. If they feel writing this is appropriate, maybe they feel it would be appropriate to disclose national security secrets, too. That person should be found out and stopped,” Giuliani said.

# Company offers to drop actress’ hush money deal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The company set up by President Donald Trump’s former personal attorney offered Friday to rescind Stormy Daniels’ hush money agreement and dropped plans for its threatened \$20 million lawsuit against the porn actress for allegedly violating the deal.

An attorney for Essential Consultants said the company wants Daniels to repay the \$130,000 she was paid as part of the nondisclosure agreement, which was signed days before the 2016 presidential election, according to a letter included in a Friday night court filing.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, claims she had an affair with Trump in 2006; Trump denies it and was suing to invalidate the nondisclosure agreement.

The development could kill a plan by Daniels’ attorney, Michael Avenatti, to try to compel the president to provide testimony under oath if the agreement is rescinded and a judge agrees to dismiss the case.

Essential Consultants was set up by Trump’s former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, who pleaded guilty in federal court last month to campaign-finance violations and other charges. Cohen told the judge that he and Trump had arranged the payment of hush money to Daniels and a former Playboy model to influence the election.

In addition to the offer to quash the agreement, Essential Consultants also agreed to back off its plan to fight Daniels in private arbitration and will not pursue a lawsuit against her, Brent Blakely, an attorney for the company, said in a letter to Daniels’ lawyer. Cohen has said Daniels could owe \$20 million for violating the agreement.

# Senate concludes Kavanaugh hearing; confirmation likely

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After two marathon days questioning Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, senators concluded his confirmation hearing Friday by listening to others talk about him — friends stressing his fairness and warmth but opponents warning he’d roll back abortion rights and shield President Donald Trump.

One of the Democrats’ star witnesses was John Dean, Rich-

ard Nixon’s White House counsel who cooperated with prosecutors during the Watergate investigation. He told lawmakers that the high court with Kavanaugh on it would be “the most presidential powers-friendly court in the modern era.”

Senators on the Judiciary Committee are likely to vote on Kavanaugh’s confirmation Sept. 20, with a vote by the full Senate the following week. Republicans hope to confirm the judge, who would nudge the high court fur-

ther to the right, in time for the first day of the court’s new term, Oct. 1.

With special counsel Robert Mueller deep into his investigation of Russia’s meddling in the 2016 election, committee Democrats expressed concerns throughout the weeklong hearing that Kavanaugh would side with Trump on questions such as whether a president can be forced to testify. Kavanaugh, like previous nominees, declined to answer hypothetical questions

that might come before him as a justice.

Abortion was another main focus throughout the hearing, with Democrats portraying Kavanaugh as a judge who might vote to undercut or overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision establishing a constitutional right to abortion. Senate Democrats, in the minority 51-49, hope to appeal to two Republican senators who support abortion rights to break from their party and vote against Kavanaugh.

# Homeless veteran to get fundraiser money

Associated Press

FLORENCE, N.J. — A homeless good Samaritan who claims a New Jersey couple mismanaged the \$400,000 they raised for him online will receive all of the funds he's due while the couple is now under criminal investigation.

In a joint statement issued late Thursday, GoFundMe and the law firm representing Johnny Bobbitt said he will get an amount equal to the balance he didn't receive through the fundraiser.

The announcement came several hours after authorities had executed a search warrant at the New Jersey home of Mark D'Amico and Katelyn McClure. Citing "enormous public interest" in the case, county prosecutor Scott Coffina confirmed

in a Facebook post that D'Amico and McClure are under investigation, though no charges have been filed.

It was the latest twist in a onetime feel-good story about Bobbitt, who spent his last \$20 to buy gas for McClure when she became stranded on a highway in Philadelphia last year, and the couple who found 14,000 people online who were so touched by his kindness that they donated to a fund to help him start a new life.

Police armed with a search warrant left the couple's home in Florence, about 30 miles northeast of Philadelphia, with bags and boxes of material and a BMW. Bobbitt has questioned where they got the money for the new car. They have said they used their own money for it.

The couple's attorney, Ernest Badway,

has not returned calls seeking comment on the police investigation. They have previously denied any wrongdoing.

The couple is being sued by Bobbitt, who says they used the account as a "personal piggy bank" to "fund a lifestyle they could not otherwise afford."

In court Wednesday, the couple's lawyer said Bobbitt has gotten about \$200,000. But Bobbitt's lawyer said he had received only about \$75,000, which includes the value of a camper and a 1999 Ford Ranger.

A judge presiding over Bobbitt's lawsuit ordered the couple to give sworn statements last Monday on the status of all the money raised, as well as to turn over documents. Bobbitt, whose attorney says he is entering a drug addiction program, will also be deposed.

# Dallas officer in wrong home kills neighbor

Associated Press

DALLAS — Authorities are seeking a manslaughter warrant for a Dallas police officer who shot and killed a neighbor after she said she mistook his apartment for her own, police said Friday.

It was not clear what the officer may have said to Botham Jean, 26, after entering his home late Thursday. But given what investigators currently know about the case, they decided to pursue a manslaughter case, police said.

"Right now, there are more questions than we have answers," police Chief U. Renee Hall said at a news conference Friday afternoon. She said she spoke to Jean's

sister to express condolences to the family.

It was also unclear if the officer was in custody. Hall said she did not know the whereabouts of the officer, whose name was not released.

According to police, the officer returned home in her uniform after her shift. She called dispatch to report that she had shot a man, and she later told the officers who responded that she believed the victim's apartment was her own when she entered it.

The responding officers administered first aid to Jean, a native of the Caribbean country of St. Lucia who attended college in Arkansas and worked for accounting and consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoo-

pers. Jean was taken to a hospital, where he died.

Hall said the officer's blood was drawn to be tested for drugs and alcohol. She declined to speculate as to whether fatigue or other issues may have factored into the shooting. She also said the Texas Rangers will conduct an independent investigation.

Family and friends described Jean as a devout Christian and a talented singer. His uncle, Ignatius Jean, said the slaying left relatives devastated and looking for answers.

Authorities have not said how the officer got into Jean's home or whether his door was open or unlocked.

# Death toll climbs after northern Japan earthquake

Associated Press

ATSUMA, Japan — The toll from an earthquake that rocked Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido rose to 20 on Friday, and 19 others remained unaccounted for in one small town after an entire mountainside collapsed on their homes.

The region was slowly restoring transportation links and power, with lights back in about half of the homes on the island of 5.4 million people after a day of region-wide blackouts.

Officials said they hoped to have the generating capacity close to normal by the weekend, though full repairs to Hokkaido's

main power plant could take up to a week.

Rescuers were using search dogs, backhoes and shovels as they dug through tons of mud and debris from the landslides triggered by the magnitude 6.7 quake that struck before dawn Thursday.

After more than a day of digging, there were no reports of survivors being pulled from their crushed homes in the outskirts of the town of Atsuma, not far from the quake's epicenter.

There were scant signs of damage inside Atsuma itself, a seaside community of about 4,600 that advertises itself as a destination for surfing and a great lifestyle. But by late Friday, the power still had not been

restored and stores were closed.

"There are no supplies, so the shop simply cannot function. It's tough," said Yasuhiro Kurosaki, a young father whose wife was cradling their infant son outside the small supermarket owned by his father. Shelves inside the darkened shop were bare aside from a few boxes of potato chips.

Most residents sought meals, water and shelter at the local social services office.

Farther inland, unharvested rice fields stretched before a long expanse of hillside that had collapsed all at once, bringing earth and timber down onto homes that had been tucked along the edge of the mountain.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Bloody footprints lead to suspect's arrest

**TN** COOLTEWAH — Investigators said bloody footprints at the scene of a killing in Tennessee led them to arrest a man whose shoes match the stained steps.

News outlets cited court documents as saying the prints discovered near Gary McPherson's body match Rodney Gearing's shoes. Gearing was questioned by authorities hours after they found McPherson, and Gearing's shoes, clothes and phone were sent to a Tennessee Bureau of Investigation lab for testing.

He is charged with homicide.

McPherson was found dead inside his home in July.

### 19 rescued after ride at fair malfunctions

**WA** PUYALLUP — Firefighters rescued 19 people from a ride that malfunctioned at the Washington State Fair.

KING5 reported the ride called "El Nino" was full of fairgoers when it became stuck in the air Monday. Pierce County firefighters said all 19 on board were brought to safety.

The ride will remain out of service until repairs can be made.

Washington State Fair officials have not said what caused the ride to malfunction.

### Pet store owner facing animal neglect charges

**SD** RAPID CITY — The owner of a Rapid City pet store that was raided by authorities last month is facing more than 200 charges of animal cruelty and neglect.

Animal control officers act-

ing on an anonymous complaint found 36 dead animals and squalid conditions at Pitter Patter Pet Store that hadn't yet opened for business. They seized 90 living animals, including dogs, cats, hamsters and guinea pigs Aug. 16.

The Rapid City Journal said Marinda Parks, 38, now faces 203 municipal charges. Animal Services and Enforcement officer Kelsey Harty said investigators had to wear masks during the raid because of the stench.

### Famous tall ships to make coastal visits

**OR** ASTORIA — The famous tall ships Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain will be dropping anchor in two Oregon coastal communities next month for naval buffs to visit.

The Statesman Journal reported that the Lady Washington has been in "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," "Star Trek: Generations" and ABC's "Once Upon A Time."

The ship is a replica of the first American vessel to make landfall on the West Coast.

It will be docked in Coos Bay from Oct. 2-7, while the Hawaiian Chieftain will be in Astoria on those same dates.

### Woman takes off with baby after crashing car

**TX** SAN ANTONIO — Video shot from a helicopter shows a woman leading Texas troopers on a high-speed chase and crashing into a pickup, then taking off on foot holding a baby in a carrier.

The Texas Department of Public Safety released the video Friday. The incident happened June 15 in San Antonio.

Authorities said the woman

was traveling at about 100 mph before she rear-ended the pickup that had stopped at a light. She jumped out of her SUV, grabbed the child carrier and ran.

She then climbed into another vehicle containing a woman and child. Troopers blocked the vehicle and got everyone out.

DPS said the woman was charged with child endangerment, evading arrest and possession of a controlled substance. The baby was released to Child Protective Services.

### Police probe vandalism at historic cemetery

**CT** MERIDEN — Authorities in Connecticut said gravestones at a historic cemetery were vandalized.

WVIT-TV reported St. Patrick's Cemetery in Meriden was recently vandalized with graffiti images and profanity. Most of the graves date back to the late 1800s. The cemetery is maintained by the Catholic Cemeteries Association.

Neighbors said many people play the game Pokemon Go at the cemetery.

No arrests have been made. An investigation is ongoing.

### Home designed by Frank Lloyd Wright up for sale

**AZ** PHOENIX — A Phoenix home that architect Frank Lloyd Wright designed for his son and was spared from demolition is up for sale.

The Arizona Republic reported that the asking price for the spiral-shaped house in Phoenix's Arcadia neighborhood is \$12.95 million.

Owner Zach Rawling announced last June that he would donate the David and Gladys Wright House to the local architecture school established by Wright.

But the School of Architecture at Taliesin disclosed two weeks later that the donation had been called off.

### Air show delayed until 2020 for Blue Angels

**ME** BRUNSWICK — Aviation buffs are going to have to wait a bit longer for the Great State of Maine Air Show.

The Midcoast Regional Re-development Authority intends to wait until 2020 for its next air show. That'll be three years after the most recent show featuring the Navy Blue Angels and other big-name acts.

Executive Director Steve Levesque told the Times Record that he could've requested the Air Force Thunderbirds for a show in 2019 but wanted to wait for the Blue Angels.

The tradition of air shows in Bangor dates back 50 years.

### 5 flamingo chicks born in recent weeks at zoo

**MI** ROYAL OAK — Flamingo families are growing at the Detroit Zoo.

Zoo officials said five flamingo chicks hatched in recent weeks. They're being guarded by their parents in the African bird habitat, not far from great apes.

The zoo's chief life sciences officer, Scott Carter, said it's a wonderful opportunity for visitors to see chicks getting plenty of attention from their parents. He said they'll grow into tall, pink flamingos.

The zoo in Royal Oak now has 59 greater flamingos and 21 Chilean flamingos.

The Chilean flamingo is listed by the International Union for Conservation as "near threatened." The greater flamingo is listed as "least concern."

From wire reports

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# Turpin ignites No. 16 Frogs

Associated Press

DALLAS — If No. 16 TCU was looking ahead to a showdown with Ohio State, KaVontae Turpin snapped his fellow Horned Frogs back into the present with another speedy dash to the end zone.

Turpin ignited a sluggish team by returning a punt 78 yards for a touchdown before adding a 42-yard scoring catch, and the Horned Frogs pulled away for a delayed and rain-soaked 42-12 victory over Dallas-Fort Worth rival SMU that ended early Saturday morning.

The start of the game Friday night between former Southwest Conference foes was held up nearly two hours by lightning, and a steady rain fell until halftime.

The Horned Frogs (2-0) finally secured their first seven-game winning streak in the 98-game Iron Skillet series after midnight, winning comfortably after struggling early for the third straight year. TCU has outscored SMU 83-14 in the second half the past three meetings.

Perhaps looking ahead to the fourth-ranked Buckeyes next week, TCU squandered its first two chances to take control by committing turnovers before Alec Dunham picked up a fumble by SMU quarterback Ben Hicks in stride and returned it 25 yards for a touchdown.

"We understand the next ballgame here Ohio State is not SMU," coach Gary Patterson said. "Not in any aspect whatsoever. But I think our kids will know that too."

The Mustangs (0-2) led 9-0 early in the first home game for coach Sonny Dykes, but had just 167 yards total offense after Braeden West's 51-yard scoring run on the fifth play of the game.

# Knee halts top seed Nadal; del Potro to face Djokovic in US Open final

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rafael Nadal felt the pain sear into his right knee early in his U.S. Open semifinal, on what he called "a bad movement." It was a familiar pain, one that he's dealt with off and on for years.

The defending champion looked up at his guest box and indicated something was wrong. He tried to continue. Eventually, he could not.

Nadal stopped playing after dropping the opening two sets Friday night, putting Juan Martin del Potro back into a Grand Slam final for the first time since winning the 2009 title at Flushing Meadows.

"That was not a tennis match at the end. Just one player playing, the other staying on one side of the court," Nadal said. "I hate to retire, but staying one more set out there, playing like this, would be too much for me."

On Sunday, No. 3 del Potro will face No. 6 Novak Djokovic, who advanced with an emphatic 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over No. 21 Kei Nishikori in the second semifinal.

"I don't know how it looked, but it felt really good," said Djokovic, who reached his record-

tying eighth final in New York as he aims for a third U.S. Open championship and 14th major title. "Great intensity, great focus, good game plan. Obviously easier said than done. You have to execute the shots."

He missed last year's U.S. Open because of an injured right elbow, which eventually required surgery this February. But he is now back to his best, as evidenced by a Wimbledon title in July and his run in New York, where Djokovic has won his past 13 sets.

"Very solid everything," was 2014 Open runner-up Nishikori's assessment after failing to break Djokovic while losing a 14th consecutive match to him. "Serve. Return. Groundstrokes. He was playing aggressive."

Del Potro was leading 7-6 (3), 6-2 after two hours of play when Nadal shook his head and said he had to retire, becoming the first man in the half-century professional era to do so during a semifinal or final at the U.S. Open.

"Of course, it's not the best way to win a match," said del Potro, who hugged Nadal when it was over. "I don't like to see him suffering on court today. So I'm sad for him."

# Loyd scores 23 as Storm beat Mystics

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Jewell Loyd was unselfish in the deciding game of the WNBA semifinals, giving up her spot on the floor and choosing not to mess with what was going right for the Seattle Storm at the time.

Her decision appeared to be rewarded in Game 1 of the Finals.

"It's amazing how many times when you're thinking right like she (is), and you're unselfish like she was in Game 5, how you are rewarded the next time," Seattle coach Dan Hughes said.

Loyd made 9 of 12 shots and scored 23 points, league MVP Breanna Stewart added 20 points, and the Storm opened the Finals with an 89-76 victory over the Washington Mystics on Friday night.

The first WNBA Finals game in Seattle in eight years was a dominant performance by the home team, led by the guard who watched most of the fourth quarter of Seattle's Game 5 win

over Phoenix in the semifinals. Loyd made the suggestion to Hughes not to change Seattle's lineup during that fourth quarter against Phoenix which meant she stayed on the bench.

And instead of sulking about her struggles for most of the semifinal series, Loyd became the leader of an efficient offensive performance from the top team in the league during the regular season.

"It helps when you're playing with people who are unselfish and set you up and keep giving you the ball. That's what makes this team special. Everyone is willing to make that extra pass regardless if you miss 100 shots and make the next 70, this team is going to give you the ball."

Loyd scored 10 straight points during the second quarter when Seattle took control thanks to a 16-4 run, and combined with Stewart to score 20 of Seattle's first 22 points of the third quarter. Seattle led by 27 in the third quarter and 26 early in the fourth quarter.

Seattle shot 53 percent, outscored Washington 46-28 in the paint and had 21 assists on 33 field goals. Sue Bird, the hero of Game 5, scored just four points, but her points weren't needed on this night. Natasha Howard added 17 points making 7 of 8 shots.

"We were a step behind — they looked quicker than us," Washington coach Mike Thibault said.

Washington's first Finals game in franchise history was mostly forgettable. Elena Delle Donne and Kristi Toliver both struggled shooting. Ariel Atkins led the Mystics with 23 points, but no other Washington player scored more than Natasha Cloud's 11 points.

Still dealing with a bone bruise in her left knee that forced her to miss one game of the semifinals, Delle Donne was 4-for-11, finishing with 10 points and didn't play the fourth quarter. Toliver scored just five points on 2-for-11 shooting.

# Surging Astros rally past Price, Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Astros manager AJ Hinch says his team is at its best when his players are putting together good at-bats one after another.

Against the Boston Red Sox, the Houston hitters did that — eventually.

Carlos Correa lofted a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the eighth inning and the Astros won their sixth consecutive game, rallying past Boston 6-3 Friday night in a matchup of AL division leaders.

The Red Sox, with the best record in the majors, had won three in row.

Boston starter David Price had allowed just one hit and retired 14 in a row when he went into the seventh with a 2-0 lead. He left after Alex Bregman's double and a walk and, after Ryan Brasier took over, the Astros scored three times. J.D. Martinez tied it with a single for his second RBI of the game.

Houston then scored three times in the eighth. Correa put the AL West leaders ahead, a wild pitch by Joe Kelly (4-2) scored another run and Tyler White added an RBI single.

"Price was unbelievable tonight. He was throwing fastballs, cutters, both sides of the plate, changeup," Bregman said. "It was good stuff by him, but it was a good team win by us. Happy to knock him out."

Ryan Pressly (2-1) got two outs and Roberto Osuna posted his 14th save. Astros starter Gerrit Cole went six innings, giving up five hits and two runs and striking out eight.

"We're in the ballgame. Guys don't give up at bats, whether the score is 9-0 or 0-0. It's just not the way they go about their business," Cole said. "I'm really thankful that they do that and it makes it easier to sit there to having blown the lead but try to continue to throw quality innings. ... This is a team game and it was a great team

win."

Price tied a season-high with 10 strikeouts over 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings, allowing two hits and two runs. Boston had won the previous nine games he had started.

"It's been a couple days since the last time I was out there. I thought I threw the ball pretty good," said Price, who returned from a bruised wrist. "I lost it there in the seventh inning when I really needed to make pitches. And I wasn't able to do that."

Yuli Gurriel's RBI double and Tony Kemp's two-run double off Brasier made it 3-2 the seventh.

Martinez put AL East-leading Boston in front 1-0 with a sacrifice fly that scored Mookie Betts.

Xander Bogaerts hit his 20th home run to open the Boston fourth. He had an opportunity to put up more runs in the fifth but struck out with the bases loaded to end the inning.

## MLB roundup

# Dodgers pull closer to first-place Rockies

Associated Press

DENVER — Kenta Maeda felt something the veteran pitcher doesn't always experience — a touch of nerves.

Stepping into the shoes of All-Star closer Kenley Jansen happens to be stressful work. Even more so in the heat of a division chase.

Clayton Kershaw threw six effective innings, Maeda finished the ninth in place of Jansen and the Los Angeles Dodgers crept closer to the NL West-leading Colorado Rockies with a 4-2 victory on Friday night.

Yasiel Puig homered and had an RBI single for the Dodgers, who climbed within a half-game of the Rockies as they began a pivotal three-game series. This is the latest into the season the Rockies have been alone in first place since 1995.

"We need to play like we're in the playoffs right now and close to the World Series," Puig said.

Kershaw (7-5) baffled the Rockies even if he didn't have his best stuff. The left-hander allowed two runs and six hits

as he improved to 22-7 in 39 career starts against Colorado, with a 3.21 ERA.

**Angels 5, White Sox 2:** Two-way star Shohei Ohtani homered for the third consecutive game after learning he will probably need Tommy John surgery, launching a three-run shot to cap Los Angeles' four-run third inning against host Chicago.

Shut down as a pitcher because of the right elbow problem, Ohtani hit his 19th homer of the season to break a tie with Kenji Johjima for the most by a Japanese rookie in the majors.

Ohtani, in the lineup as the designated hitter, has four homers in his past three games. Before the game against the White Sox, Ohtani said he plans to finish the season as the DH and hasn't decided yet if he'll have Tommy John surgery.

**Phillies 4, Mets 3:** Rhys Hoskins hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning to make a winner of Aaron Nola, and visiting Philadelphia beat New York.

Carlos Santana lined an early

two-run shot for the Phillies, who trail Atlanta by 2½ games in the NL East. The first-place Braves lost 5-3 at Arizona.

**Rays 14, Orioles 2:** Blake Snell tied the major league victory lead with his 18th, Nick Ciuffo and Kevin Kiermaier hit early three-run homers and host Tampa Bay beat Baltimore.

**Blue Jays 3, Indians 2 (11):** Kevin Pillar hit a solo homer in the bottom of the 11th after AL MVP contender Jose Ramirez grounded out with the bases loaded in the top of the inning, allowing Toronto to beat visiting Cleveland.

**Twins 10, Royals 6:** Eddie Rosario homered, Ehire Adrianza had three hits and three RBIs and Minnesota beat visiting Kansas City to snap a five-game skid.

**Tigers 5, Cardinals 3:** Jeimer Candelario hit a two-run homer with one out in the ninth inning, lifting Detroit over visiting St. Louis.

**Pirates 5, Marlins 3:** Jordan Luplow hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the seventh

inning, Josh Bell also had a two-run shot and host Pittsburgh rallied past Miami.

**Brewers 4, Giants 2:** Jesus Aguilar hit a two-run double in the seventh inning to lead host Milwaukee past San Francisco.

**Reds 12, Padres 6:** Scott Schebler's grand slam set a Reds season record (10), and Phillip Ervin homered twice as host Cincinnati pulled away to a rain-delayed victory over San Diego.

**Yankees 4, Mariners 0:** Masahiro Tanaka struck out 10 in eight innings, and Gleyber Torres and Andrew McCutchen each hit a two-run homer as visiting New York handed Seattle its fifth shutout of the season.

**Athletics 8, Rangers 4:** Rookie Ramon Laureano hit two home runs and Marcus Semien also went deep as host Oakland beat Texas.

**Diamondbacks 5, Braves 3:** Paul Goldschmidt hit his 33rd home run and Arizona held off visiting Atlanta in a matchup of slumping playoff contenders.

# Seahawks LB Griffin continues to inspire

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Twelve-year-old Logan Powell was already a die-hard Seattle Seahawks fan, even though he's growing up in a household with a Steelers-loving dad.

If possible, Powell's fandom of the Seahawks was amplified when Seattle selected Shaquem Griffin in the fifth round of the NFL Draft last spring. Powell didn't know who exactly Griffin was before the Seahawks selected him. He just knew there was a college player with one hand who wanted to play in the NFL.

"I was like 'Ah, that would be cool if he was on the Seahawks,'" said Powell, who wears a prosthetic left leg. "And then he was drafted by the Seahawks."

Powell and seemingly everyone else now knows Griffin's story. The amputation of his left hand as a child. The chance he was given to play college football at UCF. The remarkable college career where he was the best defensive player in his conference and one of the best in the country. And ultimately being provided a chance to play in the NFL for the team his twin brother already played for.

Griffin's story will likely add another unplanned chapter on Sunday in Denver, one nobody could have expected on the day he was drafted by Seattle. He'll do more than just play in his first NFL regular-season game. Griffin will be one of the starting linebackers for the Seahawks with K.J. Wright out due to minor knee surgery.

The player who has been told countless times he can't will make his professional debut as a starter.

For kids like Powell, it's even more inspiration. If someone missing a hand can start in the NFL, then what is possible?

"He's just proved he can do whatever he wants because he worked hard for it," Powell said.

Griffin's work ethic has been cited by coaches and scouts

as the driving reason the 23-year-old is even in the NFL. But being an NFL player has brought another responsibility, one greater than what he experienced in college. Griffin understands he will always have a role more than just being a football player.

It's why after Seattle's final preseason game a week ago, he spent time back on the turf of CenturyLink Field meeting with kids from NubAbility, a nonprofit whose mission is to "encourage, inspire and instruct limb-different youth in mainstream sports." He signed autographs. He posed for pictures. Powell was there among those listening intently to what Griffin had to say well after 11 p.m. on the field of a mostly empty stadium.

Griffin said he didn't have a specific message to share; it was simply a chance to relish in the camaraderie of being together and seeing what was possible.

"There's no exact message. It's just us doing what we love doing," Griffin said. "That's living out our dreams. That's us choosing what we want to do. There's not really a message because we're all on the same page. We all support each other. Having them come support me is another step along the way. It's just living out our dreams the best that we can."

Right in the middle of talking to the kids and signing autographs was Shaquem's twin brother Shaquill, the Seahawks' second-year starting cornerback. He's helped his brother manage the transition from college to the NFL. He's also been just as important in supporting and promoting what his brother has already accomplished.

"It means the world to me. Just seeing the people that look up to us, kids that are still pushing for what they believe in," Shaquill said. "You understand what kind of role you've really got playing this sport, using this platform."

# Chargers aiming to hit stride early

Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — An 0-4 start put the Los Angeles Chargers in a hole too deep to escape last season.

Coach Anthony Lynn wants his new team to spend September building instead of digging.

The first few weeks of this season are particularly important to Lynn and the Chargers, a popular pick to win the AFC West and to earn their franchise's second postseason appearance since 2009.

The Bolts went 9-3 after their dismal start to their relocation season, but it wasn't enough to make the playoffs. Lynn seems confident his veteran players learned the importance of early season urgency from last year's setbacks.

"We'll see how we start, but hopefully we start faster than we did last year," Lynn said Monday after the Chargers began preparations for Sunday's home opener against the Kansas City Chiefs.

The Chargers weren't exactly terrible to begin last season: Three of those four losses were by seven total points, and the Chargers were undone twice by missed field goals in the final seconds. But they didn't match the level of play they hit frequently later in the year, when the NFL's top passing offense and an aggressive defense combined to turn the Bolts into one of the NFL's best teams.

"You can't take wins and losses from last season," Lynn said. "I wish you could, but you can't. But you can certainly bring the culture over, and I like the attitude of the players."

The Chargers also feel they've got a reliable kicker after last season's missteps. The team that cycled through four kickers last season is going with Caleb Sturgis, who was the champion Philadelphia Eagles' kicker at the start of last season before getting hurt and missing the bulk of the year.

The Chargers also appear to be getting healthy after several

regulars were slowed by injuries during the preseason.

Defensive end Joey Bosa, receiver Tyrell Williams, rookie defensive tackle Justin Jones and cornerbacks Casey Hayward and Trevor Williams all participated in the Bolts' first practice of the week Monday. Bosa won't play Sunday after reinjuring his foot this week, but Hayward, like Bosa one of the team's most important defensive players, is expected to be ready Sunday.

"My only concern is a boxer needs so many sparring rounds before you go fight, and these guys have been out," Lynn said. "So getting them caught up and back in the fold is my only concern."

Tight end Antonio Gates, who signed a one-year deal to return for his 16th season with the Chargers, returned to practice Wednesday and will be active Sunday. Lynn was waiting to evaluate the 38-year-old star's readiness before determining Gates' role this weekend.

"I just want to see his conditioning," Lynn said early in the week. "I don't want to put him in a position where he goes out there and hurts himself, and that sets us back four or five weeks."

Kansas City will be a particular challenge right away for the Chargers, who were beaten soundly twice by the AFC West champions last year. Kansas City essentially sewed up the division with a 30-13 home victory over Los Angeles on Dec. 16 — the Chargers' only loss in seven games to close the season.

Nearly every playmaker from last season's team is back, and they all remember how it felt to be playing catch-up all season long.

"We definitely want to get it going from the start this year, and not wait to get to where we need to go," running back Melvin Gordon said recently. "We've got to be ready."