

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, September 9, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Ghani: Cease-fire must precede talks

By J.P. LAWRENCE

*Stars and Stripes*

The Afghan government is ready to pick up peace negotiations with the Taliban after they were abruptly called off by President Donald Trump, but insisted that the insurgents first agree to a cease-fire, Afghanistan's president said Monday.

Afghans were bracing for more violence following Trump's surprise weekend announcement, in which he blamed the breakdown of the peace process on continued Taliban attacks, including a suicide car bombing that killed an American soldier Thursday near the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Afghanistan has "chosen sustainable and dignified peace and we will not go back," President Ashraf Ghani was quoted

by Afghanistan's ToloNews as saying.

"Negotiations are impossible without a cease-fire," he added. "We created the environment for peace, but the Taliban took it wrong."

It's unclear whether talks between the U.S. and the Taliban will resume, but Ghani, whose government was not included in the now-stalled negotiations, has invited Taliban chief Maulvi Hibatullah Akhonzada to a video conference and urged him to "at least talk with people" instead of hiding, The Associated Press reported. The insurgents dismiss Ghani's government as a U.S. puppet.

Even as Afghans prepared for the violence to drag on, many said the breakdown of the talks was inevitable, calling the insurgents untrustworthy liars who wanted only to return to power.

The Taliban have been lying throughout the peace talks, hoping to secure a deal that would see coalition troops pull out of the country, said Najibullah Fakhri, from northeastern Badakhshan province. Badakhshan never fell under Taliban control when the militants ruled the country in the 1990s, but several districts in the province have been overrun by the militants in recent years.

"The Taliban do not speak honestly," said Fakhri, who fled his home in the district of Jurm, southeast of the Badakhshan's provincial capital, Fayzabad, five years ago when the militant group began fighting there. "They are just trying to come into power again."

Afghanistan was "in chaos," said Malik Abdul Hadi, a tribal elder in Afghanistan's eastern Laghman province, after Trump announced Saturday

that he had called off peace negotiations and canceled secretly planned talks that would have been held separately with the Taliban and the Afghan government over the weekend in Camp David, Md.

"After nine months of talks, there is no result," Hadi lamented.

"The Taliban cannot be trusted," he added, echoing what Trump said on Twitter — that he'd called off the talks because "the Taliban's persistent, grisly violence made them untrustworthy partners."

What the Taliban said during the talks with the U.S. in Doha "is very different from what they are doing here," said Fakhri, who represents some 3,000 families who fled to the Badakhshan city of Baharak after militants took control of their towns.

## N. Korea offers to resume nuke negotiations with US

By KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea offered Monday to restart stalled nuclear negotiations with the U.S. later this month but warned "dealings may come to an end" if the Americans don't bring something new to the table.

Talks have been stalled since President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un failed to reach an agreement during their second summit in February in Vietnam.

The leaders agreed to resume working-level talks during their impromptu meeting on June 30 on the Korean border, but no date has been set. North Korea also raised tensions by test-fir-

ing several short-range ballistic missiles during the summer.

Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said Monday that North Korea was ready to come back to the table after repeated calls for talks by the U.S.

However, Choe said she hopes the U.S. will have new proposals that are acceptable to the North Koreans, noting that Kim previously had called for a "new way of calculation" and had given an end-of-year deadline for that to occur.

"I think the U.S. has since had enough time to find the calculation method that it can share with us," Choe was quoted as saying in an English-language report in the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

"We have willingness to sit with the U.S. side for comprehensive discussions of the issues we have so far taken up at the time and place to be agreed late in September," she added.

Choe warned that North Korean-U.S. "dealings may come to an end" if the Americans stick to their previous stance.

The comments came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed hope that talks with the North Koreans would resume "in the coming days or perhaps weeks."

"President Trump has made a commitment to their security and economic prosperity," Pompeo said Sunday in an interview on ABC's "This Week."

"I think President Trump would be very disappointed if

Chairman Kim doesn't return to the negotiating table," he said.

He also said the U.S. administration was disappointed about the short-range missile tests but didn't consider them a deal breaker. The launches stopped short of breaking Kim's promise to suspend long-range missile and nuclear tests, although experts say they violated U.N. Security Council sanctions resolutions that ban ballistic technology.

"Our mission set at the State Department is very clear: to get back to the table" and deliver a mechanism to achieve "a full, completely denuclearized and verified denuclearized North Korea," Pompeo said.

## Yokosuka Naval Base bears brunt of typhoon in Japan

*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — Yokosuka Naval Base suffered moderate damage, but fallen trees and minor flooding were the worst that most U.S. military bases around Tokyo experienced from a typhoon that brought record winds to central Japan early Monday.

Typhoon Faxai made landfall near the Japanese capital before 5 a.m., according to Japan's Meteorological Agency. Its strongest winds measured 129 mph at 4.30 a.m. near Chiba City. At Haneda Airport, where 138 flights were canceled, winds peaked at 97 mph at 3.30 a.m.

One person died in Tokyo from a fall related to the storm, and dozens of people in the Kanto area were injured, according to Japanese broadcaster NHK. No injuries were reported on U.S. bases.

About 932,000 households in the Kanto area were without power at 8 a.m. Monday, according to Tokyo Electric Power Co. That number fell to about 800,000 by the afternoon.

On military bases in Tokyo and nearby Kanagawa prefecture, most residents were asked to stay home from work and school for two or three hours

while cleanup crews cleared fallen trees and branches from the streets.

At Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, personnel inbound from off-base homes were met with traffic jams and no morning trains.

"The (Yokohama-Yokosuka) Expressway is closed and Route 16 is in gridlock traffic. The Keikyū (rail line) has just now started running, and the status of the JR line is unknown," the base's official Facebook page announced at 10:10 a.m. The all-clear was given at 11:15 a.m.

Defense Department schools at Yokosuka and the Ikego housing area were closed Monday, according to the same page.

The naval base was in recovery mode for nearly 5½ hours, with only essential personnel expected at work and assessment teams from public works surveying damage.

Yokosuka-based ships, including the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and the 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge, did not relocate during the storm, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley said in an email.

"Our units and our personnel took every appropriate measure to weather the storm," he wrote.

## USAF reviewing layover policies amid scrutiny

The Air Force has launched a review of its selection of lodging accommodations amid heightened scrutiny of a decision to place a crew at the Trump Turnberry resort in Scotland, which it acknowledged Sunday "might be allowable but not advisable."

In a statement, the Air Force said its leadership has directed the Air Mobility Command to "review all guidance pertaining to selection of airports and lodging accommodations during international travel."

The statement cited the episode in March in which seven crew members flying on a transport plan from Kuwait

to Alaska stayed at the Trump family-owned resort during a layover at the Glasgow Prestwick Airport, which is about 30 miles from Trump's resort and has been used with greater frequency during Trump's presidency.

"While initial reviews indicate that aircrew transiting through Scotland adhered to all guidance and procedures, we understand that U.S. servicemembers lodging at higher-end accommodations, even if within government rates, might be allowable but not advisable," the statement said.

From The Washington Post

# Does Navy chiefs' coin trade devalue beloved tradition?

BY JOSHUA KARSTEN

*Stars and Stripes*

MANAMA, Bahrain — There's a burgeoning online market for the elaborate and colorful coins pressed into the palms of Navy petty officers when they pin on their anchors and take the chief petty officer's pledge, but some critics say the trade diminishes the value of the tradition.

The origins of the military coins, also called "challenge coins," is hazy, but military leaders have bestowed them to informally recognize a job well done or as a sign of appreciation for decades, if not a century or more.

In more recent years, chiefs' messes and chiefs themselves have produced coins in an expanding variety of shapes, sizes and complex features, leading collectors, even self-described "addicts," to hunt down the more elusive and rare ones in online forums and in-person meets.

It's "devolved into a sort of trading card culture," the Navy's top enlisted sailor said in an email, saying he hoped to get back to the kind of exchange "that coins are really about," such as giving sailors a sense of belonging with a unit, recognizing hard work or saying, "Thank you, shipmate."

"I don't fault them, but I do want to bring them around to the more traditional mindset of these exchanges being special," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith.

It's unclear when Navy leaders began bestowing coins, though the practice appears to have Army battlefield roots. The Naval History and Heritage Command could not "shed light on how this tradition started," an official said by email.

Historians and librarians with the National Defense University, Pentagon, Army and Navy could find no written records of the tradition, the Defense Department said in a blog post last month that found three popular theories tracing the origins to either World War I, Army infantry-run bars in Vietnam or the Green Berets of the 1960s.

Retired Adm. Scott Swift, former Pacific Fleet commander, believes they originated in the Civil War to promptly reward soldiers on the battlefield as awards processes lagged. He noticed it catching on in the Navy in the early 1990s around the time of Desert Storm.

For collectors, though, a commander's kudos isn't the currency, as posts online offer coins up for trade or for sale — "UFT" and "UFS," respectively, in the insiders' lingo. Coins celebrating chief ranks generally, not a specific unit's mess, are dubbed "pride coins" and the hard-to-find issues are dubbed "unicorns."

With a collection of about 400 coins, San Diego-based Chief Petty Officer Jorge Banuelos is "either an addict or a novice" depending on who's talking, he said. Some chiefs have well over 1,000 coins.

Still, the hobby is about more than expanding a collection of metal trinkets, Banuelos said. It's about being part of a community and meeting fellow chiefs, like two coin-trading buddies who helped him find a place to live when he moved from Europe to California.

"The whole point is to unite people, to talk, hear stories," said Chief Petty Officer Orlando Atencia. "Trading coins in itself creates a memory."

# Congress facing guns laws, budget fights

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — Congress returns to Washington this week amid mounting pressure from Democrats and the public to enact new gun restrictions, but lawmakers from both parties say meaningful action hangs solely on President Donald Trump.

Since lawmakers were last in session Aug. 2, three mass shootings have killed 38 people and injured many more.

The White House is expected to release gun policy proposals that Trump supports, possibly this week. But few gun safety advocates or Democrats are optimistic that the proposals will be as expansive as they want.

Returning lawmakers will also face a quick deadline to

fund the government again or risk another shutdown.

And the White House needs to pick up the pace on negotiations with Congress over a revised NAFTA trade agreement if Trump's top legislative priority, now called the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, is to become law this year.

All the while, some House Democrats will be clamoring to get impeachment proceedings against Trump underway.

The White House gun proposal comes at the urging of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who is trying to balance growing public support for increased background checks with a slate of Republican senators who are skeptical of angering the powerful gun

lobby.

McConnell said no legislation will get a vote on the Senate floor without approval from Trump, whose popularity in Republican-leaning states would give political cover to Republican senators to vote in favor.

Trump has spoken with several lawmakers sponsoring gun policy bills, including a 30-minute meeting with Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin III, of West Virginia, on Thursday evening at the White House.

A few Republicans and Democrats have held conversations over the August recess on a potential compromise. So far, those negotiations have not yielded any agreement.

While the gun debate could linger, Congress faces a more

pressing deadline to approve spending bills to avoid another government shutdown on Oct. 1.

Neither party wants another shutdown. House Democrats are eyeing a stopgap measure to fund the government through Nov. 22, just before lawmakers leave town for Thanksgiving.

House Democrats have enacted 10 of the 12 required spending bills, but the Senate has done none.

While Senate Republicans plan to work on those bills this week, there's little time to sort out the differences between the House and Senate bills. Senate Republicans are likely to rebuff the House stopgap plan, but it is unclear whether they would block its passage.

## 4 found in capsized cargo ship in Ga.

*Associated Press*

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, Ga. — Coast Guard rescuers found four South Korean crew members trapped inside a massive cargo ship by rappelling down the side and drilling a hole through the hull to contact them Monday.

"The early indication is they are on board and OK," Lt. Lloyd Heflin told The Associated Press.

Heflin said the rescue team is communicating with the trapped sailors through the hole they drilled, but getting them out remains quite challenging.

The capsizing of the Golden Ray in Georgia's St. Simons Sound early Sunday caused fires and smoke, and while the flames are now apparently out, the huge ship is listing at roughly 90 degrees with more than 4,000 vehicles inside it.

A South Korea Foreign Ministry statement said Monday that the crew members were alive and isolated inside an engine room. It said 10 South

Koreans and 13 Filipinos had been on board, along with a U.S. harbor pilot, when the ship began tilting over.

The 656-foot vehicle carrier is now stuck in the shipping channel, closing the busy Port of Brunswick.

Coast Guard crews lifted 20 people into helicopters hovering overhead on Sunday before rescuers determined the smoke and flames and unstable cargo made it too risky to venture further inside.

Rescuers were able to climb aboard on Monday after officials determined it was stable enough for a helicopter to land on the hull, Coast Guard Lt. Kit Pace said.

The Coast Guard said it was notified of the capsized vessel by a 911 call about 2 a.m. Sunday. The cause remains under investigation.

The ship channel is currently closed to vessel traffic, with a safety of a half-mile around the Golden Ray in St. Simons Sound.

## Alleged American ISIS sniper indicted

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

*Stars and Stripes*

An American citizen who allegedly became a sniper and weapons trainer for Islamic State in Syria has been indicted in federal court, the Justice Department said.

Ruslan Maratovich Asainov, 43, faces a possible life sentence after accusations of providing material support to ISIS and training terrorists in weaponry, said a statement released last week.

Asainov, a naturalized American citizen born in Kazakhstan, allegedly left his home in Brooklyn on a one-way flight to Istanbul around Christmas of 2013, according to the Justice Department.

Prosecutors allege that Asainov entered Syria and joined ISIS as a sniper, eventually becoming an "emir" known as "Suleiman Al-Amriki" and "Suleiman Al-Kazakhi."

Asainov taught other ISIS members how to use weapons

and also tried to recruit another person from the United States to travel to Syria to join ISIS, the court filings said.

Asainov was captured by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and handed over to the FBI in July 2019.

"The defendant, a naturalized U.S. citizen residing in Brooklyn, turned his back on the country that took him in and joined ISIS, serving its violent ends in Syria and attempting to recruit others to its cause," United States Attorney Richard Donoghue said at the time.

Prosecutors say they have a treasure trove of incriminating messages, including photos of three dead fighters, received from a confidential informant working with New York police, the New York Post reported.

As many as 80 U.S. citizens or residents have traveled to Syria or Iraq to join extremist groups since 2011.

Six have been repatriated to face charges for joining ISIS, Voice of America reported.

# Schools face backlash for not reporting threats to parents

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — When officials at a Catholic high school in South Carolina learned that a 16-year-old student made videos of himself firing a gun and using racial slurs, they alerted police, but not parents. After the videos made it into the news over the summer, the backlash came quickly.

Outraged parents complained they were left in the dark about the teen's threat to shoot people at Cardinal Newman School while their children were at risk. The principal took more than two weeks to send letters to parents about the videos and later apologized for not sharing information sooner.

While schools are more vigilant than ever about threats or signs of potential violence, some have faced intense criticism for favoring privacy over informing the community. When trying to strike a balance, security experts say there's one rule: Tell parents as much as you can as soon as you can.

"Every school district has to determine what kind of news conference they want to have," said Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center in California. "Do they want to have one where they say 'Oh, yeah, we knew we had Charlie Manson Jr. walking the halls and we did nothing about it.' Or do they

want to have the other one where they say, 'We informed the parents and students'" and diffused the situation.

Some school districts are now sending letters home even if a threat isn't specific or to warn what consequences children face if they make a threat.

Parents got more concerned about what schools tell them about security threats after details emerged about a shooter who killed nine people last month in an Ohio entertainment district.

The 24-year-old gunman had been suspended from his high school years before the shooting for compiling a "hit list" of fellow students, former classmates say. Police told at least some of his classmates that they were on the list, but it's not clear what information the school shared widely at the time.

The suburban Dayton school district has refused to release information about Connor Betts, who was shot and killed by police, citing legal protections for student records.

In Ohio's Highland Local Schools, where some staffers can carry concealed weapons, angry parents told the school board that they should have been told when a first grader picked up a loaded handgun left unattended by an employee in March. Instead, they learned about it in August in The Columbus Dispatch newspaper.

# Watchdog: Iran setting up newer centrifuges

Associated Press

BERLIN — The United Nations' atomic watchdog confirmed Monday that Iran is preparing to use more advanced centrifuges, another breach of limits set in the country's unraveling nuclear deal with major powers.

Iran had already announced the step, its latest violation of the 2015 agreement as it tries to pressure European signatories to find a way to maintain oil shipments and ease the toll of U.S. sanctions on the Iranian economy.

The International Atomic Energy Agency reported its inspectors verified the installation of new centrifuges. The agency said all had been "prepared for testing" but none yet tested at the time of the week-end inspection.

The nuclear deal was meant to keep Tehran from building atomic weapons — something Iran denies it wants to do — in exchange for economic incentives. Its collapse started with the United States unilaterally withdrawing from the deal last year and imposing increased sanctions.

The other signatories — Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia, as well as the European Union — have been struggling to salvage the agreement and find a way to meet Tehran's demands.

To put pressure on them, Iran has already pushed past limits in the deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, on nuclear enrichment purity and stockpiles of enriched uranium.

A centrifuge is a device that enriches uranium by rapidly spinning uranium hexafluoride gas. The IAEA said the ones its inspectors saw included 30 advanced IR-6 and three IR-6s models, as well as multiple IR-4 and IR-5 models.

# Parliament to be suspended amid Brexit stall

Associated Press

LONDON — Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted Monday a new Brexit deal can be reached to ensure Britain leaves the European Union by the Oct. 31 deadline as he acknowledged that withdrawing without one would be a "failure" for which he'd be partially to blame.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar warned Johnson that "there's no such thing as a clean break," and if Britain crashed out, it would "cause severe disruption for British and Irish people alike."

The two leaders met in Dublin as a showdown between the British government and lawmakers was reaching a climax in London.

An opposition-backed measure designed to rule out a no-

deal Brexit on Oct. 31 became law after receiving the formal assent of Queen Elizabeth II, hours before legislators were set to reject Johnson's demand for a snap election to break the political deadlock engulfing the government.

Later Monday, the government is due to suspend Parliament for five weeks to try to curb rebellious lawmakers who have played havoc with Johnson's Brexit plans.

Johnson, who insists Britain must leave the 28-nation EU in just over 50 days, come what may, said in Dublin that leaving without an agreement on divorce terms "would be a failure of statecraft for which we would all be responsible."

After their first meeting since Johnson became prime minister in July, the U.K. and Irish

leaders said they'd had "a positive and constructive meeting," but there was no breakthrough on the issue of the Irish border, the main stumbling block to a Brexit deal.

The EU says Britain has not produced any concrete proposals for replacing the contentious "backstop," a provision in the withdrawal agreement reached by Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, that is designed to ensure an open border between EU member Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland.

Varadkar said he was open to any alternatives that were "legally workable," but none has been received so far.

Johnson is adamant he won't ask for an extension to the deadline, saying he'd "rather be dead in a ditch" than delay Brexit.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Man driving dump truck drops gravel

**OR** PORTLAND — A man police say used a dump truck to drop loads of gravel on Interstate 5 in Portland and attempted to elude police in the vehicle has been taken into custody.

KOIN-TV reported that Craig Ferrero, 50, was arrested Friday on suspicion of criminal mischief, reckless driving, reckless endangering and unlawful use of a vehicle.

Dozens of police officers pursued the dump truck that left the freeway.

It finally stopped on Southwest Barbur Boulevard after spike strips shredded its tires.

## Man throws urine on prosecutor in court

**FL** FORT LAUDERDALE — Police said a man awaiting sentencing on an attempted murder charge tossed urine on the prosecutor inside a Florida courtroom.

The attack happened Wednesday in Broward Circuit Judge Susan Alspecter's courtroom. Albert Narvaez, 28, is now also charged with battery for his attack on Broward Assistant State Attorney Andrew Newman.

An arrest report says urine went inside Newman's mouth and all over his clothing.

The Miami Herald reported that Narvaez charged at Newman, flung the urine at him and yelled, "He told me to do it!"

He didn't say whom he was referring to. The sentencing hearing was postponed.

## Police: Man carjacked SUV, caused crashes

**MA** BOSTON — Police said a 72-year-old

man forced several people out of a sport utility vehicle and drove off before crashing into several vehicles in Boston.

Massachusetts State Police said multiple 911 callers reported the carjacking on an overpass shortly before 5 p.m. Friday.

Officials said the Hyannis man drove the wrong way and struck numerous other vehicles before the SUV crashed and rolled over.

No serious injuries were reported.

Officials said responding troopers restrained the man, who was taken to a hospital for a mental health evaluation.

His name has not been released.

## Man struck in head with a bowling ball

**IL** CICERO — Officials said a man was critically injured when he was struck in the head with a thrown bowling ball.

WBBM-TV reported that Damante Williams, 28, is in critical condition at Loyola University Medical Center, where he remained in a medically induced coma Friday.

Cicero town spokesman Ray Hanania said the injury occurred during a fight Wednesday evening at Town Hall Bowl in the Chicago suburb.

Cicero police posted a photo of the suspect on its Facebook page

## State mulls bus driver fitness standards

**ME** AUGUSTA — The state of Maine is considering new physical fitness requirements for school bus drivers.

Officials are considering the new standards along with other new safety requirements,

including seat belts on all large school buses and clearer standards for annual driver physicals.

The push for new standards is inspired by a December 2017 crash in Oakland, Iowa, that killed a driver, 74, and a student, 16.

An investigation found a lack of physical fitness testing contributed to the crash.

The Portland Press Herald reported that Maine is among 44 states that don't require physical performance tests for drivers.

## Obnoxious parents drive away referees

**RI** CRANSTON — The organization that oversees high school sports in Rhode Island is asking overzealous parents to settle down, because they are driving away qualified game officials.

Tom Mezzanotte, executive director of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League, told WJAR-TV that the primary reason the state has a shortage of referees and umpires is because officials don't want to put up with obnoxious parents.

In a letter to parents of high school athletes, Mezzanotte wrote, "Yelling, screaming and berating the officials humiliates your child, annoys those sitting around you" and "embarrasses your child's school."

## Man demands return of pot seized by police

**OH** SHARONVILLE — A man confused about Ohio drug laws called a police department demanding that officers return the small amount of marijuana they "stole" from him.

WXIX-TV reported the man told a Sharonville police dispatcher in an expletive-laced

call Sept. 3 that it's legal to possess 3.5 ounces of marijuana, and the amount officers seized was just 0.14 ounces.

While some Ohio cities have decriminalized pot possession, it remains illegal in the state.

## Woman shot during nearby home invasion

**FL** ORLANDO — Sheriff's officials said a sleeping woman was caught in the crossfire of a shooting in a neighboring apartment that killed one person.

Orange County Sheriff's Lt. Tony Boles said the woman was taken to the hospital early Friday for treatment of wounds that were not thought to be life-threatening.

Boles said the shooting started after someone broke into an apartment in the complex near Orlando shortly after 2 a.m. Multiple shots rang out, and one bullet struck the woman as she slept in the nearby apartment.

Boles said a possible suspect was killed in the shooting. The suspect's name hasn't been released.

## Bronze bull statue damaged by vandal

**NY** NEW YORK — Police said a Texas man bashed New York's Charging Bull statue with a metal object and damaged one of its horns.

Tevon Varlack, of Dallas, was arrested Saturday on charges of criminal mischief, disorderly conduct and criminal possession of a weapon for allegedly attacking the bronze beast.

Police said Varlack, 42, hit the bull with a metal object that looked like a banjo, leaving the statue with a hole in its right horn.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news  
updated 24/7 from bases  
around the world.  
Now online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

## NFL roundup

# Browns commit 18 penalties, get blasted

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Undisciplined. Mistake-prone. Just downright awful.

These Cleveland Browns looked a lot like THOSE Cleveland Browns — the ones the fast-growing bandwagon of Browns fans thought, or at least hoped, had been left far back in the rearview mirror.

The most hyped team over the NFL offseason racked up 18 penalties for 182 yards in Sunday's season opener, while star-in-the-making quarterback Baker Mayfield threw three interceptions in the fourth quarter.

The Browns lost 43-13 to Tennessee to drop to 1-19-1 in openers since 1999.

"You all can crown them if you want to crown them," Titans tight end Delanie Walker said. "We still have to play football."

With Mayfield entering his second season, and with newly acquired receiver Odell Beckham Jr., and with a new coach (Freddie Kitchens) and the momentum from a strong finish to 2018, Cleveland became the trendy pick to buck decades of awfulness and win its division, and maybe even more.

Instead, the first game ended in front of a mostly empty home stadium, with the deficit swelling to more than four touchdowns; it was the first Cleveland loss of 30-plus points since 2015.

Nothing went right.

"That is not the way we want to be represented," said Kitchens, who put on a brave face following his team's demoralizing 2019 debut. "We lost our discipline and we lost our composure. ... I did not see it coming."

No one did. Except maybe the Titans.

The Browns were favored to win their first season opener in 15 years, and after taking the opening kickoff, Mayfield drove the offense 73 yards for a TD in the opening five minutes. Things looked promising, and Cleveland's crowd was roaring

at unsafe decibels.

But rookie Austin Seibert missed the extra point, and the penalties began piling up like laundry in front of a washing machine.

Cleveland was called for 10 infractions in the first half, with starting left tackle Greg Robinson's ejection for kicking Titans safety Kenny Vaccaro in the head the most egregious act.

"We do not tolerate that," Kitchens said. "That is unacceptable."

Vaccaro isn't sure what prompted Robinson's reaction.

"I knocked him over and he kicked me in my head," Vaccaro said. "I thought it was funny. It's going to be a hefty fine, I feel bad for him. I didn't want him to get ejected. We were taught on this team, no dumb penalties."

**Patriots 33, Steelers 3:** A day after the acquiring former Pittsburghs malcontent Antonio Brown, defending Super Bowl champions New England showed it might not even need him, getting 341 yards and three touchdown passes from 42-year-old Tom Brady.

Phillip Dorsett caught two touchdown passes, including a 58-yard score, and Josh Gordon — another disgruntled receiver who wore out his welcome elsewhere — caught one TD pass.

**Lions 27, Cardinals 27 (OT):** Kyler Murray and the host Cardinals nearly finished an improbable comeback in the rookie's debut, rallying from an 18-point deficit in the fourth quarter to tie the game.

The Cardinals had two chances to win in extra time and so did the Lions, but all they could do was trade field goals and settle for a tie.

**Ravens 59, Dolphins 10:** Lamar Jackson looked unstoppable from the start and tied a franchise record with five touchdown passes to help the Ravens humiliate the Dolphins and rookie coach Brian Flores.

The Ravens set a franchise record for points in the first half, and an NFL record for points in the first half of an opener, tak-

ing a 42-10 lead at the break. They broke franchise marks for points and total yards with 643.

**Rams 30, Panthers 27:** Malcolm Brown ran for a pair of scores and Jared Goff threw for 186 yards and a touchdown.

Todd Gurley started and ran for 97 yards on 14 carries after being limited to 8 yards rushing on five carries in the first half.

Christian McCaffrey led the Panthers with 209 yards from scrimmage and two touchdowns.

**Eagles 32, Redskins 27:** Carson Wentz threw a pair of deep touchdown passes to DeSean Jackson, and the Eagles overcame a 17-point deficit. Wentz was 28-for-39 for 313 yards and three TDs in his first game since Week 14 after not taking a snap in the preseason. Jackson had eight catches for 154 yards. The Eagles racked up 436 total yards.

Case Keenum threw for 380 yards and three TDs, helping the Redskins build a 17-0 lead in his first start with his fourth team in four seasons. But Philadelphia's high-powered offense took over and the defense settled down after a sloppy start.

**Vikings 28, Falcons 12:** Anthony Harris highlighted a thorough thrashing by Minnesota's defense with two interceptions of Matt Ryan and a fumble recovery.

Dalvin Cook carried a revived running attack, with 21 rushes for 111 yards and two touchdowns.

**Bills 17, Jets 16:** Josh Allen threw a 38-yard touchdown pass to John Brown with 3 minutes left, and the Bills rallied from a 16-point second-half deficit.

Le'Veon Bell caught a touchdown pass and had a 2-point conversion in his Jets debut.

**Chargers 30, Colts 24 (OT):** Austin Ekeler scored three touchdowns, including the winner on a 7-yard run with 5:01 remaining in overtime.

The Chargers got the ball to start overtime and went 75

yards on eight plays. Ekeler, the Chargers' lead back with Melvin Gordon holding out for a new contract, had 154 all-purpose yards on the day. He ran for 58 yards on 10 carries and caught six passes for 96 yards and two scores.

**Seahawks 21, Bengals 20:** Russell Wilson hit Tyler Lockett for a 44-yard touchdown on the first play of the fourth quarter, and the host Seahawks withstood a career day from Andy Dalton.

Dalton threw for a career-high 418 yards and two first-half touchdowns to John Ross. But the Bengals failed to score on three possessions inside Seattle's 36-yard line in the third quarter.

**Cowboys 35, Giants 17:** Dak Prescott tied his career high with four touchdown passes while throwing for 405 yards, and the host Cowboys rolled up 494 yards.

Saquon Barkley ran 59 yards on his first carry of the season, setting up Eli Manning's touchdown pass for a 7-0 lead. But the Giants simply couldn't keep up with a Dallas offense eager to see what could happen at full strength.

**49ers 31, Buccaneers 17:** Richard Sherman and Ahkello Witherspoon returned two of a retooled San Francisco defense's three interceptions off Jameis Winston for touchdowns and Robbie Gould kicked three field goals. Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 166 yards and one touchdown in his first game in nearly a year.

Winston threw for 194 yards to become Tampa Bay's career passing leader, including a 10-yard scoring pass to Chris Godwin that trimmed a double-digit deficit to 20-14 late in the third quarter. Ultimately, though, the Bucs could not overcome the fifth-year quarterback's mistakes and dropped their debut under coach Bruce Arians, who was lured out of retirement after Tampa Bay finished 5-11 last season.

# Harvick wins at Brickyard; Johnson's playoff run ends

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Jimmie Johnson drove through pit road with his rear bumper dangling off the back, already aware of the consequences when he parked the car.

His chance at ending a 27-month victory drought with a record-tying fifth Brickyard 400 win gone. His quest for a record-breaking eighth series title put on hold. And his distinction as the only driver to make every NASCAR playoff since it was adopted in 2004 was history, too.

An almost flawless run Sunday by Kevin Harvick ruined any chance Johnson had of executing his win-to-get-in strategy, and when he hit the wall in the second turn with 55 laps to go at Indianapolis Motor Speedway made it official: Johnson would miss the playoff for the first time.

"Damn, oh, what a bummer and a let-down," he said on a Twitter post. "I promise you (my fans) we will finish this season strong and be a threat next year in 2020. I just want to thank you for all being there, for your support. Chasing eight will have to wait till next year."

Harvick beat Joey Logano by 6.118 seconds to claim his second Brickyard win.

But for Johnson, it has been a second straight tough season.

His only victory was in an exhibition race in February. He endured two major

changes in his pit box, the first coming at the end of last season when Hendrick Motorsports announced Johnson's longtime crew chief Chad Knaus would be paired with William Byron. In July, Johnson's team made another change.

Yet, somehow he still entered Sunday two spots and 18 points below the postseason cutline and started the third stage 12 points out.

But with Byron and Johnson running side-by-side off a restart, Johnson's back end spun, sucking him up the track and into the path of Kurt Busch. Both Chevrolets slammed hard into the wall, starting an eight-car melee that ended the streak just that fast.

"I've had 25 races coming into this where I've been worried about it," Johnson said. "I'm not stoked by the situation at all. I am impressed that we have been in 15 consecutive playoffs. I'm not sure anybody else has done that. So, our record doesn't stink. We wish we could have kept it going, but life goes on."

With Johnson out, Clint Bowyer, Harvick's teammate with Stewart-Haas Racing, held onto the 15th spot in the 16-car field. And Ryan Newman, of Roush Fenway Racing, broke a tie for the final spot with Daniel Suarez and put the No. 6 Ford in the playoffs.

# Nadal wins 19th Slam

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rafael Nadal's 19th Grand Slam trophy went from inevitable to suddenly in doubt in a thrill-a-minute U.S. Open final.

What had all the makings of a casual crowning morphed into a grueling contest thanks to Nadal's opponent, Daniil Medvedev, a man a decade younger and appearing in his first major title match. Down by two sets and a break, Medvedev shifted styles, upped his level against a rattled Nadal — and even received an unexpected boost from the Arthur Ashe Stadium spectators.

Truly tested for the only time in the tournament, the No. 2-seeded Nadal managed to stop Medvedev's surge Sunday and hold off his historic comeback bid, pulling out a 7-5, 6-3, 5-7, 4-6, 6-4 victory in 4 hours, 50 minutes of highlight-worthy action and Broadway-worthy drama to collect his fourth championship at Flushing Meadows.

"One of the most emotional nights of my tennis career," said Nadal, who covered his face with his hands while crying when arena video boards showed clips from each of his Slam triumphs.

Now at 19 majors — a total Medvedev called "outrageous" — Nadal is merely one away from rival Roger Federer's record for men.

But this one did not come easily. Not at all.

Not since 1949 has anyone won a U.S. Open final after trailing by two sets to none. Never before had Medvedev won a five-set match. Only once before had Nadal lost a Grand Slam match after taking the opening two sets.

And yet the tension was real.

"What he went through during the match and still being able to survive and finish the match that way, it's out of this world," said one of Nadal's coaches, Carlos Moya. "You have to be, mentally, a genius. He's still there, still fighting and turning things around when things look really bad. He was able to do that today."

Add the Spaniard's haul in New York to his 12 titles at the French Open, two at Wimbledon and one at the Australian Open, and the 20-19 gap between Federer and Nadal is the closest it's been in 15 years. Nadal says he wants to finish his career at No. 1 in the Grand Slam standings — ahead of Federer and Novak Djokovic, looming in third place currently with 16 — but also insists he won't base his happiness on how it all shakes out in the end.

# US tops Brazil for spot in quarters

Associated Press

SHENZHEN, China — The first mission for the U.S. is complete: The Americans are going to the Tokyo Olympics.

And now the World Cup quarterfinals await.

Kemba Walker and Myles Turner each scored 16 points, and the Americans earned a top seed for the quarterfinals by beating Brazil 89-73 on Monday in the final second-round game of the tournament.

The U.S., bidding to become the first nation to win three straight World Cups, will face France on Wednesday — and won't have to go through any extra qualifying tournament next summer for the Olympics.

"We're thrilled that we've qualified for the Olympics," said U.S. coach Gregg Popovich, who will lead the Americans in Tokyo next summer as well. "With this new situation in qualifying, you don't want to do that every year. That's a pretty big grind."

It was a win three nations could celebrate: The U.S. victory also clinched an Olympic spot for Argentina and a quar-

terfinal spot for the Czech Republic. The Czechs moved on despite losing earlier Monday to Greece.

The Czech Republic grabbed the last place in the round of eight via a three-team, points-differential tiebreaker over Greece and Brazil after they all went 3-2 in group play.

"It's already been a dream," Czech guard Tomas Satoransky said.

Greece defeated the Czech Republic 84-77, an outcome that meant the U.S. went into the Brazil game assured a spot in the quarters. All that was at stake was seeding and where it was going, either to nearby Dongguan by bus or back on a plane to Shanghai.

Get the bus ready. France, a 100-98 loser to Australia on Monday, awaits the U.S. on Wednesday in the quarterfinals. Other quarterfinal matchups: Spain vs. Poland and Serbia vs. Argentina on Tuesday, and Australia vs. the Czech Republic on Wednesday.

# Cards' Flaherty dazzling against Pirates

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Jack Flaherty always had the tools. Figuring out how to put them together has been the challenge for the 23-year-old pitcher since the former first-round pick arrived in St. Louis two years ago.

While Flaherty is sketchy on specifics about what exactly he changed heading into the All-Star break, one thing is for certain: the roadblocks — mental, physical and otherwise — are all gone. Flaherty is rolling, and so are the Cardinals.

Flaherty overwhelmed the Pittsburgh Pirates in a 2-0 victory on Sunday, striking out 10 against five hits and a walk over eight electric innings to keep up a dazzling run that has turned him into the de facto ace for the NL Central leaders. Flaherty (10-7) won for the sixth time in eight starts while drop-

ping his post All-Star break ERA to 0.76 as St. Louis pushed its lead in the division to 4½ games over second-place Chicago with three weeks to go in the regular season.

"He's in control of the conviction of what he's doing," Cardinals manager Mike Shildt said. "Just a lot of big league pitches consistently. Fastball where he wants it to with good life on it, and a really good slider as well. That's what pitching looks like. Phenomenal job."

Flaherty's surge began with seven innings of two-hit ball against San Francisco on July 7. The Cardinals lost 1-0 that day, but the switch flipped. Flaherty has been lights out while fueling St. Louis' sprint to first and has allowed just three earned runs 56 innings across eight starts since Aug. 1.

"(I've made) small adjustments, not really to my me-

chanics, but mentally to how I was going about things," Flaherty said. "So little things here and there. Just tried to kind of carry it from one start to the next."

Carlos Martinez worked a perfect ninth for his 19th save to finish off a season series dominated by the Cardinals. St. Louis won 14 of its 19 meetings with Pittsburgh, including 10 of 12 in the second half, one of the main reasons the Cardinals are heading to October while the Pirates are planning for next season.

"Guys are healthy," Flaherty said. "We're playing together. Playing as a team. Not letting any moment get too big."

Paul Goldschmidt had an RBI double, and Harrison Bader added a run-scoring single off Pittsburgh rookie James Marvel (0-1). Matt Carpenter went 2-for-3 while starting at

third base and is hitting .400 (6-for-15) in September as the veteran tries to shake out of a season-long slump.

"Like everybody else, he understands it's about the team," Shildt said of Carpenter. "He's got his head in the right spot to help us win baseball games."

Flaherty's effectiveness ended Pittsburgh manager Clint Hurdle and second baseman Adam Frazier's respective days a little bit early. Both were ejected by home-plate umpire Roberto Ortiz in the seventh for arguing balls and strikes after Ortiz ruled a pair of borderline pitches in favor of Flaherty.

"He's taken it to another level," Hurdle said of Flaherty. "He was as advertised from what we watched coming in here. It's been going on for two months."

## MLB roundup

# Indians' Clevinger wins 10th straight decision

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Mike Clevinger and the Cleveland Indians gave the Minnesota Twins another reminder that winning their first division title in nine years won't be easy.

Clevinger won his 10th straight decision, and Carlos Santana and Francisco Lindor homered as the Indians beat the Twins 5-2 on Sunday.

Cleveland, 1½ games behind Oakland for the second wild card in the American League, moved back to 5½ games behind Minnesota in the AL Central. The Indians and Twins close the season series with a three-game set in Cleveland that begins on Friday.

Clevinger (11-2) put Cleveland in a good spot on Sunday, allowing two runs and four hits with two walks and seven strikeouts in 6⅓ innings. He hasn't lost since June 28. In his last 13 starts, Clevinger is 10-0

with a 2.00 ERA and 108 strikeouts in 81 innings.

**Reds 4, Diamondbacks 3:** Relief pitcher Michael Lorenzen lined a game-ending, pinch-hit double in the ninth inning to lift host Cincinnati over Arizona, stopping the Diamondbacks' five-game winning streak.

**Rays 8, Blue Jays 3:** At St. Petersburg, Fla., Tyler Glasnow struck out five over two innings in his return from a four-month layoff.

**Yankees 10, Red Sox 5:** Gleyber Torres, Mike Tauchman and Aaron Judge hit home runs as visiting New York broke the franchise record for homers in a season in a win over Boston.

**Athletics 3, Tigers 1:** Sean Manaea (1-0) matched his career high by striking out 10 in his second start following shoulder surgery, and host Oakland gave Detroit its first 100-loss season since 2003.

**Nationals 9, Braves 4:** Max Scherzer (10-5) won for the first time in two months, Juan Soto homered and visiting Washington stopped Atlanta's nine-game winning streak.

**Phillies 10, Mets 7:** At New York, Maikel Franco, Scott Kingery and Adam Haseley homered as Philadelphia overcame a 3-0 deficit and closed within two games of Chicago for the second NL wild-card spot.

**Brewers 8, Cubs 5:** Tyler Austin drove a pinch-hit, three-run homer during the five-run fourth against Jon Lester (12-10), and Milwaukee pulled within two games of visiting Chicago.

**Dodgers 5, Giants 0:** Corey Seager and Matt Beaty homered off Dereck Rodriguez (5-9) as host Los Angeles (93-52) cut its magic number to clinch the NL West to two.

**Astros 21, Mariners 1:** Gerrit Cole (16-5) celebrated his

29th birthday by allowing one hit with 15 strikeouts in a season-high eight innings and winning his 12th straight decision.

**Marlins 9, Royals 0:** Sandy Alcantara (5-12) threw a four-hitter and became the first Marlins pitcher with two shutouts in his rookie season since Dontrelle Willis in 2003.

**Rangers 10, Orioles 4:** Rookie Nick Solak had three hits and four RBIs, Ronald Guzman and Rougned Odor homered and Texas completed its first four-game sweep at Baltimore since July 1972 at Memorial Stadium.

**White Sox 5, Angels 1:** At Chicago, Danny Mendick hit his first career home run and Jose Abreu got his 31st this season.

**Padres 2, Rockies 1:** At San Diego, Wil Myers singled off Yency Almonte with one out in the 10th to drive in Manny Machado, who walked against Jesus Tinoco (0-2).