

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Winds fan flames of California wildfires

Associated Press

SHAVER LAKE, Calif. — Wildfires churned through bone-dry California on Tuesday after a scorching Labor Day weekend that saw a dramatic airlift of more than 200 people trapped by flames and ended with the state's largest utility turning off power to 172,000 customers to try to prevent power lines and other equipment from sparking more fires.

Three early morning helicopter flights rescued another 35 people from Sierra National Forest as a fire raged, the California National Guard said.

California is heading into what traditionally is the teeth of the wildfire season, and already it has set a record with 2 million acres burned this year.

The previous record was set just two years ago and included the deadliest wildfire in state history that swept through the community of Paradise and killed 85 people.

That fire was started by Pacific Gas & Electric power lines amid strong winds and tinder dry conditions. Liability from

billions of dollars in claims from that and other fires forced the utility to seek bankruptcy protection. To guard against new wildfires and new liability, the utility last year began preemptive power shut-offs when conditions are exceptionally dangerous.

That's the situation now in Northern California, where high and dry winds are expected until Wednesday. PG&E received criticism for its handling of planned outages last year. The utility said it has learned from past problems, "and this year will be making events smaller in size, shorter in length and smarter for customers."

Two of the three largest fires in state history are burning in the San Francisco Bay Area. More than 14,000 firefighters are battling those fires and about two dozen others around the state.

California was not alone: Hurricane-force winds and high temperatures kicked up wildfires across parts of the Pacific Northwest over the Labor Day weekend, burning hundreds of thousands of acres and mostly destroying the small town of Malden in eastern Washington.

The fire danger also is high in Southern California, where fires were burning in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and San Diego counties. The U.S. Forest Service on Monday decided to close all eight national forests in the region and to shutter campgrounds statewide.

"The wildfire situation throughout California is dangerous and must be taken seriously," said Randy Moore, regional forester for the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region that covers California. "Existing fires are displaying extreme fire behavior, new fire starts are likely, weather conditions are worsening, and we simply do not have enough resources to fully fight and contain every fire."

While the two mammoth San Francisco Bay Area fires were largely contained after burning for three weeks, firefighters struggled to corral several other major blazes ahead of the expected winds. Evacuation orders were expanded to more mountain communities Monday as the so-called Creek Fire churned through the Sierra National Forest in Central California.

## Trump says troops love him, attacks military leadership

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump touted his popularity with the troops and complained about his lack of support from military leaders at the Pentagon, days after a news report claimed he disparaged fallen service members as "losers" and "suckers."

Trump, speaking at a Labor Day press conference at the White House Monday, compared his treatment of soldiers to that of his challenger in the upcoming election, former Vice President Joe Biden, who, according to Trump, sent the nation's youth to fight in endless wars.

"It's one of the reasons the military — I'm not saying the military is in love with me; the soldiers are," he said. "The top people in the Pentagon probably aren't because they want to do nothing but fight wars so that all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs and make the planes and make everything else stay happy."

Trump noted his administration's suc-

cess in the conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and repeated his pledge to end U.S. involvement in overseas conflicts.

"Some people don't like to come home," he said. "Some people like to continue to spend money."

The comments follow an anonymously sourced report in the *The Atlantic* magazine that Trump had referred to fallen and captured U.S. service members as "losers" and "suckers" in 2018 when he canceled a visit to a French cemetery for Marines killed in the Battle of Belleau Wood.

Biden said Thursday that, if the revelations in the *Atlantic* article are true, "then they are yet another marker of how deeply President Trump and I disagree about the role of the President of the United States."

Trump, at Monday's press conference, repeated earlier assertions that the story is a hoax and added that "only an animal would say a thing like that."

He compared the story to claims that members of his campaign colluded with Russia ahead of the 2016 election.

"There is nobody that has more respect for not only our military, but for people that gave their lives in the military," he said.

Trump repeated his attack on NATO nations that, he said, are not living up to their obligations under the defense pact.

"If you look at NATO, with the exception of eight countries — we're one of them — every country is way behind. They're delinquent, especially Germany, in paying their NATO bills," he said.

The U.S. is paying for almost all of NATO, Trump added.

According to NATO's official website the U.S. accounts for 22.1% of its spending compared to Germany's 14.7%.

"So, they rip us off on the military and then they rip us off, with the European Union, on trade," the president said.

He also complained about the billions of dollars that, Trump said, the U.S. is losing when it trades with China. "They take our money, and they spend it on building airplanes and building ships and building rockets and missiles," he said.

# Military personnel can't opt out of payroll tax deferral

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Many service members, including all enlisted personnel, will see a temporary increase in their paychecks this month through the end of the year, followed by a fall in January, when they are likely to have to start repaying the money.

That's because active-duty military personnel and federal civilian employees cannot opt out of President Donald Trump's payroll tax deferral, defense and military officials confirmed over the weekend.

"Unfortunately, neither military members nor civilian employees are eligible to opt out of the deferral," Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne Bass tweeted Monday.

"The extra money we will get over the next few months, will be paid back next year," she said, advising leaders to "make sure your Airmen and families

are tracking to prevent financial strain in the future."

Trump last month directed the Treasury Department to allow employers to stop withholding the 6.2% tax on income that employees contribute to Social Security as a way to help workers during the coronavirus pandemic.

While employers in the private sector can decline to apply the tax deferral to their employees, participation is mandatory for active-duty members and civilian employees of the federal government whose Social Security wages fall within certain limits, said the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which handles pay for 6.5 million military personnel, civilians and retirees.

For them, "The deferral will happen automatically," DFAS said on its website.

The deferral will apply to civilians who make \$4,000 or less per pay period, and military members who clear \$8,666 or less of basic pay per month.

It will affect all enlisted personnel, officers in ranks from second lieutenant to major; lieutenant colonels and colonels with less than 16 and 14 years of service, respectively, and all warrant officers, except those at a grade of W5 with 24 or more years of service, according to DFAS guidance.

Military members can expect to see the first temporary pay boost in their Sept. 15 paycheck. Unless Congress passes legislation to make the deferral a tax cut that doesn't need to be repaid, they can also expect to see a 12.4% drop in pay for the first four months of 2021 as they repay the deferred taxes.

Postponed taxes will be withheld from wages in even amounts from Jan. 1 to April 30, 2021, DFAS said. They cannot be repaid in a lump sum.

One of the largest military commands in Europe is advising its soldiers and civilians to "formulate a plan" for saving the extra money.

## Guam: 4 more die from virus

*Stars and Stripes*

A 31-year-old woman who died Monday was the youngest victim of the coronavirus on Guam and one of four who succumbed there over Labor Day weekend, according to the governor's office.

The pandemic death toll on Guam is now 19.

All but one of the deaths took place at Guam Memorial Hospital, the governor's office said. The first, a 55-year-old man, happened late Friday, and the second, a 49-year-old woman, took place early Sunday. Both patients suffered conditions compounded by the virus, a statement said.

The youngest, a 31-year-old woman with underlying health issues, was pronounced dead on arrival Monday at Guam Regional Medical City, according to another statement. The fourth death occurred the same day, a 65-year-old man who had been admitted to Guam Memorial Hospital on Thursday after testing positive for the illness.

Yet another death — a 64-year-old woman who tested positive on Aug. 25 — was announced Tuesday afternoon.

"It is never easy losing a member of our community to this virus, and my heart breaks every time I receive these calls," Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero said in a Monday statement offering her condolences. "We cannot afford to lose any more people in this pandemic. Please do what you need to do to protect yourselves and your loved ones."

Guerrero, who recovered from the coronavirus after testing positive last month, recently extended a stay-at-home order until noon Friday.

The U.S. territory has been under a "Pandemic Condition of Readiness 1" since Aug. 15. The order is set to expire Sept. 30. As of Tuesday evening, Guam had recorded 1,713 coronavirus infections. Of those, 241 are U.S. service members.

## Navy ends search for missing sailor in North Arabian Sea

*From staff reports*

The Navy has ended search and rescue efforts for Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Ian McKnight, assigned to the USS Nimitz, who is believed to have gone overboard Sunday, the Navy said Tuesday.

The Nimitz, guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton and aircraft from the U.S. Navy and Air Force conducted search and rescue operations in the North Arabian Sea where it was reported that McKnight was missing.

The search and rescue operations ended Tuesday, after extensive attempts to locate McKnight.

"We are deeply saddened as we call off the search for IT2 Ian McKnight," said Capt. Max Clark, commanding officer of USS Nimitz. "We hold his family and friends in our hearts during this difficult time."

"The strike group team sends our thoughts and prayers to the family of Petty Officer McKnight," said Rear Adm. Jim Kirk, commander, Carrier Strike Group 11, in a statement.

"And I offer my thanks to all the Sailors and Airmen who were involved in the search for our shipmate."

The incident remains under investigation.

Nimitz is the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 11 and is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three critical chokepoints to the free flow of global commerce.



# Candidates trade barbs over economy

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and President Donald Trump spent Monday diminishing each other's credentials on the economy and understanding of the American worker as the presidential campaign entered its final, post-Labor Day stretch.

While workers live by an "American code," Biden said Trump "lives by a code of lies, greed and selfishness" as he met with labor leaders in Harrisburg, Pa., a key swing state. Trump, meanwhile, tried to put the halting economic recovery under the best light in a White House press conference where he said Biden and his running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, would

"destroy this country and would destroy this economy."

Labor Day typically marks the unofficial start to the fall campaign season as candidates accelerate their activity for the final sprint to Election Day. Both campaigns reflected that urgency Monday, as Harris and Vice President Mike Pence each campaigned in Wisconsin, a state Trump narrowly won in 2016. The events played out against the background of the pandemic, which has upended campaigning and pushed Biden and Harris in particular to conduct much of the traditional election activity online.

While the health of the American economy and status of workers were dominant Labor Day themes, both campaigns also

focused on recent protests that have roiled Wisconsin and the rest of the nation after police shot Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Kenosha last month.

Harris, the first Black woman on a major party presidential ticket, met privately with Blake's family at the Milwaukee airport after arriving in the state, where she spoke with Blake by phone from his hospital bed. Harris told Blake she was proud of him and individually spoke to each of his family members, in person and on the phone, urging them to take care of their physical and mental health, Blake's lawyers said in a statement.

Biden met with Blake's family during a visit to Wisconsin last week. Trump did not during a trip of his own last week.

## Trump supporters hold vehicle rally near Portland

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — Hundreds of people gathered Monday afternoon in a small town south of Portland for a pro-President Donald Trump vehicle rally — just over a week after member of a far-right group was fatally shot after a Trump caravan went through Oregon's largest city.

Later, pro-Trump supporters and counter-protesters clashed at Oregon's Capitol.

Vehicles waving flags for Trump, the QAnon conspiracy theory and in support of police gathered about noon at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City.

The rally's organizers said they would drive to toward the state capital, Salem, and most left the caravan before that. A smaller

group of members of the right-wing group the Proud Boys went on to Salem, where a crowd of several dozen pro-Trump supporters had gathered.

At one point Monday afternoon, the right-wing crowd rushed a smaller group of Black Lives Matters counter-demonstrators, firing paint-gun pellets at them. There were skirmishes, and the Black Lives Matter group dispersed shortly after local police arrived on the scene.

Organizers of the earlier vehicle rally said they did not plan to enter Multnomah County, where Portland is located. Oregon City is about 20 miles south of Portland.

In Portland on Monday, Black Lives Matter supporters rallied in a city park

and demonstrated peacefully, KOIN TV reported.

"Teacher unions are part of the labor movement, and I feel like it's really important for people who are members of a union to step up and say, 'Our labor supports Black Lives Matter, and we are ready to organize in support of systemic change,'" educator Joanne Shepard told the TV station.

On Aug. 29, Aaron Danielson, a supporter of the right-wing group Patriot Prayer, was killed in Portland after a pro-Trump caravan went downtown. Trump supporters fired paint ball canisters at counter-demonstrators, who tried to block their way. Danielson's suspected killer, Michael Forest Reinoehl, was killed by police Thursday.

## Naked with 'spit hoods' on, protesters decry man's death

Associated Press

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Naked except for "spit hoods" in a reference to the killing of Daniel Prude, several protesters sat outside Rochester's police headquarters Monday morning to push for police accountability, local news outlets reported.

Photos and video showed roughly a half-dozen demonstrators, naked or in minimal clothes and some with "Black Lives Matter" written on their backs, sitting silently with their hands behind them, on a rain-slicked street outside the city

Public Safety Building. The Democrat & Chronicle reported that after a time, the demonstrators were given blankets and left in cars.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump tweeted that Rochester was among cities that had "bad nights," while Mayor Lovely Warren commended activist leaders, police and community elders on a night of calm protest Sunday.

Prude, a 41-year-old Black man, died after police found him running naked in a street March 23, put a hood over his

head to stop him from spitting, then held him down for about two minutes until he stopped breathing. He died a week later after he was taken off life support.

His brother, Joe Prude, had called 911 seeking help for Daniel Prude's unusual behavior. He had been taken to a hospital for a mental health evaluation earlier that night but was released after a few hours, his brother told officers.

His death sparked outrage after his relatives last Wednesday released police body cam-

era video and written reports they obtained through a public records request.

Seven police officers were suspended Thursday, and state Attorney General Letitia James said Saturday she would form a grand jury and conduct an "exhaustive investigation" into Prude's death. Warren and Police Chief La'Ron Singletary have faced calls for their resignations over the delay in releasing details of Prude's death.

Police union officials have said the officers were following their training.

# Fla. posts lowest virus numbers in months

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — Florida reported 1,838 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, the lowest single-day number of new infections reported by state health officials since June 15.

But health officials across the state were waiting to see if the Labor Day weekend might produce an uptick in the number of coronavirus cases, as might have been the case following the Fourth of July holiday — when the largest single-day surge in new cases was reported about a week later.

To date, the state has recorded more than 648,200 cases of COVID-19.

The latest state data released by the Florida Health Department reflected 22 new deaths. That pushed down the average number of deaths over the past week to 99 a day — the lowest average since July 16. In all, the state has tallied 12,023 deaths linked to the virus since the outbreak began.

## Iowa

DES MOINES — Hundreds of students from the Des Moines Public Schools and the Ames Community School District marched to the governor's mansion Monday to protest the decision to suspend sports and start the school year online.

The "Student March for Fairness" comes after the Iowa High School Athletic Association told the schools last week that all in-person activities and sports will be suspended starting Tuesday.

The students say they want fairness and equity to compete in fall and winter activities.

The march comes as students and their families await a court ruling on whether to allow the Des Moines school district to temporarily move completely to online classes rather than comply with a state order intended to ensure children return to at least partial in-person classes.

Polk County Judge Jeffrey Farrell said Friday that he hoped to reach a decision on the temporary injunction by Tuesday, when school is supposed to

resume for the 33,000 students in the Des Moines district. Most other Iowa school districts have already resumed classes.

## Kansas

LAWRENCE — A group of University of Kansas students went on a strike from classes Monday to protest the opening of the campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The University of Kansas held classes on Labor Day due to a modified academic calendar amid the pandemic, the Lawrence Journal-World reported.

The student organization Jayhawker Liberation Front publicized the strike in tandem with a petition calling for the closure of campus due to the virus spread. They also want free exit testing for all students, shelter for students in need and hazard pay for essential workers.

Kansas health officials reported on Monday four new coronavirus-related deaths and 1,694 new cases of COVID-19 in the state since Friday. That raises the death toll from the pandemic in Kansas to 485 deaths and 46,914 known cases.

## Missouri

COLUMBIA — Missouri health officials added another 906 COVID-19 cases to the state's count on Monday, as the number of people known to have contracted the virus reached at least 94,340.

The actual number is likely higher since some people who have the coronavirus do not have symptoms and testing has not been widespread, especially at the start of the pandemic.

Missouri's health department also reported another death in the last 24 hours, bringing the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,659.

## Montana

MISSOULA — Laboratory results and law enforcement reports indicate methamphetamine use increased in Montana during the first months of

the coronavirus pandemic.

Millennium Health reported a 34% increase in urine samples testing positive for methamphetamine after President Donald Trump declared a national emergency March 13, The Missoulian reported.

The lab company compared results from Jan. 1 through March 12 with results from March 13 through May 31.

The report authors analyzed more than 500,000 urine samples from various health care settings, although how many were from Montana was unclear.

The samples did not include drug testing done in the workplace or under court order, while many came from testing done by addiction treatment providers.

## New York

ALBANY — New York state marked a milestone of progress in fighting coronavirus infections on Monday, with a full month of fewer than 1% of virus tests coming back positive.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the 30-day stretch of good news while urging people to remain cautious during Labor Day weekend get-togethers. He attributed the state's progress to its statewide mask mandate and an approach to re-opening that's been slower than in many other states.

There is concern that case counts could rise as schools, college campuses and more businesses reopen. The State University of New York at Oneonta canceled in-person instruction less than two weeks into the fall semester because more than 500 students tested positive for the virus after some large parties were held.

Throughout New York's 64-campus state university system, more than 900 students and employees have tested positive on campuses over the last two weeks, and nearly 400 students are currently in precautionary or mandatory quarantine, according to a new online dashboard that the university system debuted Sunday.

## Texas

AUSTIN — Texas reported 2,057 new cases of the coronavirus on Monday, and 20 additional deaths.

The Texas Department of State Health Services said the total confirmed cases in the state is now at 640,370 and there have been 13,492 deaths due to COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

The true number of cases in Texas is likely higher because many people haven't been tested and studies have suggested that people can be infected and not feel sick.

The health department said about 3,500 people were hospitalized with COVID-19. The number of hospitalizations has been decreasing since peaking in July at 10,893, and the number of newly reported cases has also been decreasing since then.

## Wisconsin

MILWAUKEE — The chancellor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on Monday canceled all of its in-person social events and ordered undergraduate students to restrict their movements for the next two weeks in a continued effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The order from Chancellor Rebecca Blank comes as the number of virus cases among students has continued to rise. Among the restrictions, from now through Sept. 21, all student gyms and recreational facilities will be closed, dining halls will offer carry-out only and visitors will not be allowed in dorms.

Blank also warned that the campus might shut down if the situation gets worse.

In-person classes have not been canceled and study spaces remain open. The restrictions also don't apply to graduate students, faculty or staff members.

The number of cases among students at UW-Madison has grown daily for the last five days.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police: 5 shot during J'Ouvert celebration

**NY** NEW YORK — Five people, including a 6-year-old boy, were shot in an area where people had gathered for an overnight celebration known as J'Ouvert in New York early Monday, police said.

News outlets reported the shooting happened as people gathered in the streets for the festivities. It's unclear whether the shooting had any relationship to J'Ouvert, which is meant as a celebration of freedom from slavery. The celebration was scheduled to be virtual this year, but some people gathered in person.

The boy was shot in the leg, police said. A 47-year-old woman and three men, ranging in age from 34 to 45, also suffered gunshot wounds in their legs and feet.

Two men were arrested and two guns were recovered, New York City Police Chief Terence Monahan tweeted.

## Police: 2 people hit pushing out-of-gas car

**MO** KANSAS CITY — Kansas City police said two people were hospitalized after being hit by an SUV while pushing their car to a gas station.

Police spokeswoman Doaa El-Ashkar said the driver of a Tahoe and a passenger were pushing the SUV after it ran out of gas, the Kansas City Star reported.

While they were pushing, she said a silver Chevy Traverse SUV struck them. The driver of the Traverse then abandoned the vehicle in the road and fled.

The passenger of the out-of-gas Tahoe was hospitalized with serious injuries. The driver was hospitalized with injuries that are not life-threatening.

## State sues over cleanup of Mount Trashmore

**SC** OKATIE — South Carolina sued the owner of a site where a massive pile of trash burned and smoldered for months, demanding \$5 million to pay back what the state spent to put out the fire and clean up the site.

Able Contracting Inc. and Earle LLC accumulated debris in a mound that reached over 50 feet tall and when the compacted trash started to burn, "hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants" were released into the environment, according to the lawsuit obtained by The Island Packet of Hilton Head.

The site in Jasper County, nicknamed Mount Trashmore for the way it loomed over the surrounding neighborhood, began burning in July 2019.

## Golf carts now allowed on coastal city's roads

**MS** GAUTIER — Residents in a coastal Mississippi city can now get around in more places in golf carts.

Gautier City Council passed an ordinance that went into effect Friday allowing golf carts on any city street where the speed limit is 25 mph, WLOX-TV reported.

Golf cart owners have to purchase a decal for \$25 to operate the vehicles on city streets.

Golf carts also have to follow all traffic and parking rules.

## Man charged in killing arrested as he fled US

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — Authorities arrested a Minneapolis man charged with vehicular homicide at Washington Dulles In-

ternational Airport in Virginia as he attempted to catch a flight to Turkey.

Said Sharif Maye, 34, was accused of intentionally killing Idris Ali Yussuf, 31, in Minneapolis on Aug. 24, the Star Tribune reported. The two men allegedly got into a dispute at a bar.

A witness told police that Maye ran his vehicle into Yussuf and pinned him against another vehicle, according to a criminal complaint. He died of head injuries in the hospital the next day.

## Town grants memorial for shark attack victim

**MA** WELLFLEET — Officials in a Cape Cod town have approved the installation of a memorial bench to honor a man killed in a shark attack two years ago.

The Wellfleet Select Board recently voted unanimously to install the bench in memory of Arthur Medici, 26, at Newcomb Hollow Beach, the Cape Cod Times reported.

Medici, who lived in Revere, was attacked by a shark while boogie-boarding off the beach in September 2018. It was the first fatal shark attack in state waters in more than 80 years.

## Man charged in using explosive device at gym

**NJ** GLOUCESTER CITY — Authorities said a New Jersey man is facing federal charges in connection with a homemade explosive device detonated at the entrance of a local gym last month.

Gloucester City police said officers were called shortly before 4 a.m. on Aug. 26 to Bellum Strength and Conditioning and found the entrance damaged by the blast.

Dwayne Vandergrift Jr., 35,

was arrested two days later.

The U.S. attorney's office said that Vandergrift was charged with malicious use of explosives, unlawful possession of two destructive devices and a firearms charge.

## Honors college drops SAT, ACT requirement

**AZ** TEMPE — Arizona State University's Barrett Honors College has announced that incoming freshmen for the 2021-22 school year will no longer be required to submit standardized testing scores from the SAT or ACT for admission into the school.

The college, designed for highly motivated students, made the announcement to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and avoid students being gathered in one room for hours to take a required test during the pandemic, KTVK-TV reported.

The university will continue to have other requirements to apply.

## Man in custody after shooting outside store

**AL** SPANISH FORT — Police say a man wearing body armor, and armed with multiple AR-15 style firearms, opened fire into an Alabama sporting goods store, shooting off dozens of rounds before being captured by police.

Police said no one was injured in the shooting at Bass Pro Shops in Spanish Fort. Authorities described the incident as an averted tragedy.

Spanish Fort Police Chief John Barber identified the suspected shooter as Robert Smith, 38, from the Grove Hill area, WKRG reported. Barber said charges are pending, and police don't yet know what motivated the shooting.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# NFL special teams may have sloppy start

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Penalties. Blocked punts or would-be field goals swatted out of the air. A kick returner weaving his way to a touchdown.

Players racing onto the field for a change of possession looking like a well-oiled machine, or a unit straggling out before the play clock expires. Worse, a key contributor stuck on the sideline leading to a touchdown.

Coaches around the NFL aren't quite sure what they'll get starting Thursday night when the 2020 season kicks off. The pandemic led to the league and players agreeing to limit potential exposure by wiping out all four preseason games, and that took away the ability to hone timing for special teams.

That could lead to lots of sloppiness until special teams players get live work blocking and tackling for punts, field goals and kickoffs.

"That's the biggest thing the preseason games' losses mean

is you don't ever get a chance to get that true game speed," Dallas special teams coordinator John Fassel. "You also don't get a chance to tackle and block at those high speed collisions."

Marwan Maalouf, coordinator of Minnesota's special teams, predicts teams that are fundamentally sound will be good from the start of the season. He also expects some sloppy play will get cleaned up as the season progresses. Maalouf says teams either are sloppy early or late due to a lack of good practices.

"I never took a lot of stock in the past if something didn't go right in preseason games because that's a learning tool, and now that's gone," Maalouf said. "It's just going to be one of those situations where we have to be on point so much more, especially in the return phases and coverage phases."

Mike Westhoff, the special teams pioneer who coached in the NFL for 32 years, said he had several current coaches

call him for tips on how to best replicate the speed of preseason games during training camp. The man who tied a tether ball to a crossbar to practice punt blocks said the key is thinking outside the box.

"You have to be creative with these things to still get what you're trying to get because you're not having the X number of times in the preseason games to get these guys to cover a kickoff, cover a punt, defend a punt, all the things that take place," Westhoff said.

Think shrinking the field to avoid wearing players out. Forget using the full 100 yards to practice kickoffs or even punt returns. Think 20 or 30 yards instead of punting 50 yards or a regular kickoff.

"You'll never get enough reps to do it," Westhoff said of using a full field. "You're going to kill them."

Coaches have tried to adapt. Fassel had Dallas do a nearly live punt drill Thursday in which the Cowboys ran down-

field as close to full speed as possible, only to pull up instead of tackle. The Jets have emphasized wrapping up, tackling, stripping the ball in more physical drills.

"It does make it tough for us, but we are doing the best we can to try to get these guys going," Jets special teams coordinator Brant Boyer said.

Tennessee has tried to pressure punt returners as much as possible in practice, surrounding each returner with three or four players so he focuses on the ball while making the catch.

"Not like they're getting the total live look as a punt returner, but if we can get guys that are in front of him all the time, he's got to come up and make contested catches, whether it's with the gunners, or just the coach, or the other returners that are back there helping him out," Titans special teams coordinator Craig Aukerman said.

## Allgeier, BYU hammer Midshipmen in season opener

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — BYU coach Kalani Sitake did a fine job of keeping his players safe from COVID-19 while getting them ready to open a new football season.

Ken Niumatalolo wished he could have done the same thing at Navy.

Tyler Allgeier ran for 132 yards and two touchdowns, and the Cougars put the clamps on Navy's usually potent triple option in a season-opening 55-3 rout Monday night inside an eerily empty stadium at the Naval Academy.

BYU scored touchdowns on each of its first two possessions, led 31-0 at halftime and coasted to its most lopsided victory since a 70-6 blowout of Wagner in October 2015.

"We knew we had to be physical up front, tackle well and block well on offense," Sitake

said. "All of camp, our offense was doing this — and it made our defense better."

Niumatalolo, on the other hand, put most of his emphasis in camp at doing whatever it took to keep his players safe from the coronavirus. That approach proved costly in the opener.

"Boy, that game was 1000 percent my fault," Niumatalolo said. "Obviously, we weren't prepared. One team was playing football. There's nobody to blame but myself. I erred on the side of trying to keep our guys safe. I'd say it's the worst Navy football game we ever played."

Also, the weirdest.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event had none of the pageantry and atmosphere usually associated with a football game at Navy. There were no lavish tailgates in the parking lot, no flyover before the opening kickoff, the Bri-

gade of Midshipmen was not allowed in the stadium and the 34,000 seats remained vacant due to restrictions ordered by the state of Maryland.

It took some doing to make this game happen. The Midshipmen were originally scheduled to open against Notre Dame and the Cougars were supposed to play Utah, but both those games got scrapped. So the athletic directors of Navy and BYU arranged this match-up, which marked the first time since 1989 these schools played each other.

With no one in the stands and no cheerleaders on the sideline, all the noise was made by the players — especially those in front of the Cougars bench. The offense yelled when the defense repeatedly stuffed Navy's bid to move the ball, and the defense roared as Allgeier, Lopini Katoa and quarterback Zach Wilson moved downfield

at will.

Allgeier averaged 9.4 yards per carry, Katoa ran for 80 yards and scored twice, and Wilson went 13-for-18 for 232 yards with two touchdowns before leaving in the third quarter.

Navy went 11-2 last year and led the nation in rushing, averaging 360.5 yards per game with Malcolm Perry running the offense. Perry is now with the Dolphins, and his successor at quarterback, senior Dalen Morris, rushed for 2 yards on seven carries before being pulled with the score 38-0.

"We challenged our team to be physical and I'm glad that showed up," Sitake said. "It was just a great thing to see as a head coach."

BYU finished with 580 yards and Navy could muster only 149 — the second-lowest total in Niumatalolo's 13 years at the school.



# Lightning rip Islanders in series opener

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Braydon Point and the well-rested Tampa Bay Lightning resembled a refreshed team eager to come off an extended break after switching cities in the NHL playoff bubble.

The New York Islanders, on the other hand, looked predictably travel- and game-weary.

Point scored twice and added three assists in an 8-2 romp over the Islanders to open the Eastern Conference finals on Monday night. Nikita Kucherov had four assists, and scored his 34th career playoff goal to move one ahead of Martin St. Louis for first on the franchise list.

The Lightning showed no signs of rust following a near week-long break after eliminating the Boston Bruins in their second-round series with

a 3-2 double-overtime win on Aug. 31. They instead resembled a refreshed team by scoring three times on nine shots to build a 3-1 lead by the 10:46 mark of the first period, and matched a franchise record for most goals scored in a playoff game.

The Islanders, by comparison, came out flat, looking like a team that spent Sunday flying to Edmonton, Alberta, from Toronto, a day after a 4-0 win over Philadelphia in Game 7 of their second-round series.

“Let’s be honest, this is a one-off. They had to grind through a seven-game series and then travel and play and change time zones,” Lightning coach Jon Cooper said.

“Now we’re on even terms. There’s no travel. Everyone gets the same rest,” he added. “It’s easy to say now that the game turned out the way it did.

Bottom line is, you’ve got to take advantage of a tired team.”

Point and Kucherov’s five-point nights set a franchise playoff record. Yanni Gourde scored twice, Victor Hedman had a goal and two assists and Ryan McDonagh and Ondrej Palat also scored for the second-seeded Lightning.

Andrei Vasilevskiy made 23 saves, and the Lightning have won five straight, matching their longest playoff run since 2016.

Game 2 is Wednesday.

Thomas Greiss, who stopped 16 shots in earning his first postseason shutout on Saturday, was yanked after giving up three goals on nine shots. He was replaced by Semyon Varlamov, who gave up five goals on 25 shots.

The eight goals allowed matched a franchise low, following an 8-3 loss to the New

York Rangers in the Islanders’ second playoff game on April 10, 1975.

“Every time we made a mistake, they scored,” Islanders coach Barry Trotz said.

The opening goal reflected the disparity in rest between the two teams.

Point opened the scoring 74 seconds in by bursting up the left wing, getting a step around Ryan Pulock, before driving to the net and wrapping the puck around Greiss.

Hedman said the goal provided the Lightning an immediate lift.

“Obviously, we haven’t played for a week, and we were thinking how the start was going to be, and then Pointer does that,” Hedman said. “I think he set the tone from the start.”

After Eberle scored, the Lightning struck for two goals on consecutive shots.

## NBA playoffs roundup

# Celtics push defending champs to brink of elimination

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The game plan from Boston coach Brad Stevens was simple: Start things off with an increased effort on defense to set an immediate tone.

The Celtics did exactly as he asked — and put the reigning NBA champions on the ropes.

Jaylen Brown scored 27 points and the Celtics never trailed, rolling past the Toronto Raptors 111-89 in Game 5 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series on Monday night.

Boston now leads the series 3-2 and can earn a trip to the East finals on Wednesday.

“We were playing with great purpose,” Stevens said. “You could feel that from the get-go.”

Kemba Walker scored 21 for the Celtics, whose starters outscored Toronto’s starters by a whopping 93-45. Jayson Tatum scored 18, Daniel Theis and Brad Wanamaker each had 15 and Marcus Smart added 12 for

Boston.

“The job’s not finished yet,” Brown said. “We’ve still got a lot of work that needs to be done.”

Fred VanVleet scored 18 for Toronto, which trailed by as many as 30. Norman Powell scored 16 for the Raptors, while Pascal Siakam and Kyle Lowry managed 10 points apiece. Matt Thomas also had 10 for Toronto.

Here’s what Toronto got out of its first 18 possessions: five points on 2-for-15 shooting, a stretch that included everything from missed open layups to airballed contested jumpers, along with five turnovers in the game’s first 8:53.

“I know it sounds crazy ... but I thought our offense was awesome for like the first eight minutes,” Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. “I thought it was awesome. I don’t think those shots could have been more open.”

They were down 18-5 after all that, and it got worse in a hurry.

Another big scoring run — this time, 23-7 — in the second quarter pushed Boston’s lead from 37-25 to 60-32 late in the half. The Raptors had gone 5-for-6 from the field just before that spurt began and seemed to be getting in a rhythm; they missed 11 of their next 13 shots and things got out of hand.

“Tonight our defense really set up our offense,” Walker said. “It worked out for us.”

Toronto outscored Boston 28-25 in the third and it already didn’t matter; the Celtics’ lead was 87-63 going into the fourth.

“We just didn’t play crisp enough,” Lowry said. “We didn’t look at the rim early enough in the shot clock to attack. But it happens. Now we got to watch the film and make adjustments and play for our lives.”

**Clippers 113, Nuggets 107:** Paul George scored 32 points,

Kawhi Leonard added 23 along with a big late block and the dynamic duo helped Los Angeles rally in the fourth quarter to win Game 3 of their Western Conference semifinal series.

Leonard did a little bit of everything as he grabbed 14 rebounds and dished out six assists. He also had two blocks, including one late on a shot by Jamal Murray at the rim.

Los Angeles takes a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series. Game 4 is Wednesday.

Clippers coach Doc Rivers called a timeout to calm down the Clippers with 8:29 left and trailing 97-90. Fueled by defense, Los Angeles went on a 14-4 run to take a 104-101 lead. The Clippers didn’t trail again.

Lou Williams sealed the win with a driving layup that extended the lead to six with 2:04 left. George turned in a torrid shooting night. He finished 12-for-18 from the floor, including five three-pointers.

# Johnson captures Tour Championship

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dustin Johnson only looks like he plays without a pulse. Beneath his stoic stare and that swagger as he walked the fairways of East Lake were jangled nerves Monday because it meant so much to him.

The \$15 million prize for winning the FedEx Cup? That would get anyone's attention, especially someone who thought he was rich when Johnson cashed his first tournament check as a PGA Tour rookie for \$113,571.

But there was more.

"The prestige, for sure," Johnson said after delivering a key par putt and steady play down the stretch for a 2-under 68 and a three-shot victory in the Tour Championship.

"Being a FedEx Cup champion is something that I really wanted to do. I wanted to hold that trophy at the end of the day," Johnson said. "It was something that I wanted to accomplish during my career."

He did it by hitting his stride at just the right time.

He won two of the three FedEx Cup postseason events

and lost in a playoff by a 65-foot putt in the other. It all came down to the final day of the final event, and even with a five-shot lead, it was never easy.

Xander Schauffele and Justin Thomas each got within three shots on the front nine. They each got within two shots of Johnson with two holes to play. He never let them catch him, and his only birdie of the back nine on the final hole gave him his third victory since June and the 23rd of his PGA Tour career.

"It's a very tough trophy to

win," Johnson said. "I controlled my own destiny, but I still had to go out and play well. I had a lot of great players right behind me. It got close at the end. I knew it was going to come down the stretch and I'd have to hit some golf shots."

None were bigger than the 20-foot par putt on the 13th hole to keep his lead at three shots, the 5-iron safely on the green on the toughest hole at East Lake, another 5-iron over the water on the par-3 15th and a wedge out of a deep bunker and onto the green at the 16th.

## MLB roundup

### Blue Jays use 10-run sixth inning to overtake Yankees

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Chad Green and Adam Ottavino were routed during a 10-run sixth inning that included Danny Jansen's grand slam, and the Toronto Blue Jays rallied to beat the Yankees 12-7 Monday night and send skidding New York to its sixth loss in seven games.

New York has lost four straight and 14 of 19, dropping into third place in the AL East, two games behind second-place Toronto and 6½ back of Tampa Bay. At 21-20 overall following a 16-6 start, the Yankees have dropped into the AL's eighth and final playoff position.

With general manager Brian Cashman making a rare road trip, New York led 6-2 when Green replaced Jonathan Holder going to the bottom of the sixth. Green, Ottavino and Luis Cessa needed 67 pitches and 43 minutes to get three outs.

"It's the worst feeling in the world," Ottavino said. "You let your team down. It's always tough when you feel like you're the reason why you lost the game."

**Phillies 9, Mets 8 (10):** Jean Segura hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning and drove in a career-best five runs, bailing

out Philadelphia's abominable bullpen and helping the visiting Phillies earn a split of the four-game series.

New York erased a 6-0 deficit against former teammate Zack Wheeler and baseball's worst bullpen, taking a 7-6 lead on Jeff McNeil's three-run homer in the seventh inning.

**Cubs 5, Cardinals 1:** Kyle Hendricks went eight innings, helping NL Central-leading Chicago to the victory.

The host Cubs got just the sort of start they needed from Hendricks and closed out the five-game series on a winning note after losing three straight, and earning a split of the 10-game season series against St. Louis.

**Mariners 8, Rangers 4:** Kyle Seager and Dylan Moore homered, and host Seattle beat Texas for its first six-game winning streak since July 2019.

Moore also had a three-run double. Marco Gonzales (5-2) struck out seven while pitching seven innings of two-run ball.

**Nationals 6, Rays 1:** Washington ace Max Scherzer cooled off visiting Tampa Bay with seven scoreless innings.

Kurt Suzuki had an RBI double among his three hits and Michael A. Taylor drove in two runs for the last-place Nation-

als, who were missing several regulars.

Scherzer (4-2) allowed six hits, struck out eight and walked one in his second-longest outing of the season.

**Indians 5, Royals 2:** Zach Plesac won his second straight start since returning to his team's rotation after a demotion for breaking team COVID-19 protocols, and host Cleveland handed Kansas City its season-high seventh straight loss.

Plesac (3-1) permitted one run — Adalberto Mondesi's 458-foot homer in the seventh — and seven hits in seven innings.

**Marlins 5, Braves 4 (10):** Miguel Rojas had four hits for visiting Miami, including a go-ahead double in the 10th inning.

Atlanta's Adam Duvall led off the ninth with a tying pinch-hit homer off Brandon Kintzler (2-3), the closer's second blown save in 11 chances.

**Twins 6, Tigers 2:** Ryan Jeffers hit his first major league homer to spark host Minnesota's four-run third inning, and Michael Pineda stayed sharp in his return from suspension.

Pineda (1-0) pitched seven innings of two-run ball in his first victory since Sept. 1, 2019. After serving a 60-game penal-

ty for taking a banned weight-loss drug, Pineda debuted last week with six innings and a no-decision as the Twins beat Chicago.

**Giants 4, Diamondbacks 2:** Kevin Gausman and three relievers combined on a three-hitter, and host San Francisco ended pitcher Zac Gallen's record-setting streak to begin his career in a win over Arizona.

Darin Ruf hit a two-run single in the sixth and Brandon Belt had a bases-loaded walk as the Giants won for the sixth time in eight games.

Gallen had not allowed more than three earned runs in his first 23 career starts, a major league record to begin a career.

**Athletics 6, Astros 0:** Sean Murphy homered and hit a two-run single to help Chris Bassitt snap a three-start winless stretch, and host Oakland beat Houston with both teams missing star players.

**Padres 1, Rockies 0:** Jurickson Profar hit an RBI double with no outs in the ninth inning for host San Diego, which got a brilliant performance from right-hander Dinelson Lamet to beat Colorado for its sixth victory in eight games.