

Afghan refugees get extra shots at US bases

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The Air Force has administered more than 7,000 vaccine doses for measles and chickenpox to Afghan evacuees at Ramstein Air Base and Rhine Ordnance Barracks, a spokesman said Sunday.

The vaccinations for the 9,000 Afghans waiting for flights to the United States were expected to be completed by the end of the day, Lt. Col. Will Powell, a spokesman for the 86th Airlift Wing, said in a statement.

About 20 had declined the vaccines, he said.

“We documented that information, let them rejoin their family and provided the information to the State Department,” Powell said. “They will handle it from that point on.”

Evacuees are receiving a shot for the chickenpox and another shot for measles, mumps and rubella at the request of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Air Force said.

The Afghans are required to

either receive both inoculations or show proof of prior vaccinations to enter the U.S., the wing said Thursday. Few Afghans are likely to have documented proof, since most fled Kabul with few or no possessions.

“These vaccines offer them the ability to have extra protection,” Lt. Col. Jaime Rojas, 86th Medical Group chief of aerospace medicine, said in a statement. “With the extra protection of the vaccines, wherever we end up sending them, there is protection for both the individual and for the people at the end destination as well.”

Evacuee flights were halted Sept. 10 after four cases of measles were discovered among U.S. arrivals from overseas bases. Most evacuees are transiting through U.S. military bases in Europe and the Middle East before heading to stateside bases.

One case of measles was confirmed Thursday in the evacuee population at Ramstein and ROB, wing officials said. The patient and family are being treated and were isolated for the past

three days, Ramstein officials said.

As soon as someone shows symptoms of illness, “they are immediately isolated, screened and tested ... to ensure the safety of the community and the rest of the evacuee population,” the wing said in response to an email query.

The Virginia Department of Health announced Tuesday that five people who had recently traveled from Afghanistan were diagnosed with measles. It was unclear Thursday if that number included the four cases the White House announced Sept. 10.

Ramstein public health officials took blood samples from 70 randomly selected evacuees last week and found that 94% had antibodies, indicating a past measles infection and recovery or a prior vaccination, wing officials said.

The Air Force did not say Sunday when flights to the U.S. would resume. Last week, the White House said the flights will remain suspended for at least

another week. The Air Force said it will take several days to complete the vaccinations.

“We understand the evacuees have been on a difficult journey, and we are committed to ensuring their health, safety and security during this short-term delay,” the wing said in its statement.

U.S. Navy officials said Friday that there had been no confirmed cases of measles at two bases in Europe temporarily housing Afghan evacuees. There are 100 Afghans at Naval Station Sigonella in Sicily and 500 at Naval Station Rota in Spain, said U.S. Navy Capt. Tamara Lawrence.

“All eligible evacuees at NAS Sigonella and NS Rota received measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations for their onward movement to the U.S.,” Lawrence said.

Earlier this month, officials reported that 1,900 evacuees from NAS Sigonella and another 750 from NS Rota had left for the U.S.

HMS Queen Elizabeth stops in Guam for a 2nd time

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The HMS Queen Elizabeth steamed into Naval Base Guam last week for the British aircraft carrier's second visit to the U.S. island territory in about a month.

The carrier, through its official Twitter account, announced the stop Sept. 13 and said it would undergo scheduled maintenance while in port. The carrier and its strike group also visited Guam on Aug. 6 as it makes its way through the Indo-Pacific region.

Naval Base Guam is offering a variety of support to the Queen

Elizabeth, base spokeswoman Theresa Cepeda told Stars and Stripes in an email Friday.

“These support services include but are not limited to Port Operations, Security, Morale, Welfare, Recreation, Base Communications, Fleet Logistics and Supply, and Navy Exchange Guam,” she wrote.

Cepeda said she could not confirm whether the carrier's sailors would be given liberty on base. She also said Royal Navy sailors were expected to follow coronavirus mitigation measures, however, which include

wearing a face mask and social distancing.

A spokesman for the Queen Elizabeth did not respond to requests for comment on Friday.

Royal Navy sailors were granted shore leave during the Queen Elizabeth's August visit. Two from the strike group were arrested during an incident at a Guam nightclub.

The ship's second stop in Guam comes less than a week after it departed Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan, where it stayed five days after arriving Sept. 4.

While in Japan, Queen Eliza-

beth sailors were not allowed to leave the ship in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

While Japan's coronavirus cases are now in decline after the peak of a fifth wave, the country reported nearly 16,000 new infections the day the Queen Elizabeth pulled into Yokosuka. Guam, which is also coming off another coronavirus wave, reported 174 cases on Monday.

The Queen Elizabeth is on its first operational deployment, which started in May and is expected to cover approximately 26,000 nautical miles.

Expert: US Marines may boost Darwin presence

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps could boost its presence in northern Australia following an agreement to strengthen defense ties between the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, according to a former Australian assistant defense secretary.

President Joe Biden, along with Australian and British prime ministers Scott Morrison and Boris Johnson, on Wednesday announced a trilateral defense alliance — AUKUS — that will provide Australia with at least eight nuclear-powered submarines.

The move prompted an angry response from China.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Zhao Lijian said it was “highly irresponsible” for the U.S. and Britain to export nuclear technology, The Associated Press reported Friday.

Morrison, however, said that Australia wanted to boost peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

“Everything we’ve done with the United States is consistent with the partnerships

and relationships and alliances we’ve already had with the United States,” Morrison told Radio 3AW, according to the AP report.

It doesn’t take much for the Chinese to express strong views, and Australia has its own interests, said Ross Babbage, a former Australian assistant defense secretary.

“It’s quite normal for nation states to strengthen their defenses and make appropriate investments as their interests require,” he told Stars and Stripes in a phone interview Friday.

AUKUS, which officials had been talking about for the past 18 months, is about much more than submarines, Babbage said.

“We are going to see larger U.S. forces coming, including U.S. Army forces and air power coming here on rotation,” he said. “It’s quite likely the Marine Corps presence could be scaled up.”

About 2,200 Marines are heading home this month from Darwin, in Australia’s Northern Territory. The Marines arrived there in April for their 10th rotation since 2012 and spent the summer training with the Australian Army.

USAA can not open overseas bank accounts

BY JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

For the past year, USAA has been unable to open new accounts overseas or change existing ones because it holds no foreign banking license, according to the company.

The financial services firm can still service existing accounts for its members with overseas addresses, but has not offered new services since September 2020, USAA said.

“Due to foreign banking requirements, USAA is prohibited from offering new bank products to members with foreign addresses of record with USAA,” company spokesperson Brad Russell told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday. “However, this does not impact any accounts they opened with USAA prior to a move to a foreign country.”

USAA, founded by military officers a century ago, provides insurance and banking services to active-duty service members, veterans and their families. It claims 13 million members.

Mark Long, 38, a Defense Department civilian employee at Camp Zama near Tokyo, said he wanted to upgrade his existing USAA savings account to take advantage of a better interest rate.

But Long’s account is under an all-Pacific, Army/Air Force Post Office address, or AP APO.

“They said they couldn’t make the account upgrade because it’s considered as a new account. And I also asked if I have another child while I’m here and I need to start their savings account, can I do that,” Long said. “They answered no, they can’t open any new products for me.”

Russell said USAA account holders living overseas may continue using their existing accounts.

“We encourage members to open any needed accounts prior to establishing new foreign residence,” he wrote.

Russell said the company could resume international business, but he did not provide details.

“We continue to evaluate international applicable requirements and hope to serve such members with new bank products in the future,” he said.

Australia PM says France knew of its ‘grave’ concerns over sub fleet

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — France would have known Australia had “deep and grave concerns” that a submarine fleet the French were building would not meet Australian needs, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Sunday after the contract’s cancellation set off a diplomatic crisis.

France accused Australia of concealing its intentions to back out of the \$66 billion contract for French majority state-owned Naval Group to build 12 conventional diesel-electric submarines.

President Joe Biden revealed last week a new alliance including Australia and Britain that would deliver an Australian fleet of at least eight nuclear-powered sub-

marines.

Morrison blamed the switch on a deteriorating strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific.

“The capability that the Attack class submarines were going to provide was not what Australia needed to protect our sovereign interests,” Morrison said.

“They would have had every reason to know that we have deep and grave concerns that the capability being delivered by the Attack class submarine was not going to meet our strategic interests, and we have made very clear that we would be making a decision based on our strategic national interest,” he added, referring to the French government.

US, EU paths to max vaccination differ

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The Belgian town of Aarschot has a vaccination rate of 94% of all adults, but Mayor Gwendolyn Rutten worries her town is too close for comfort to the capital of Brussels, where the rate stands at 63%. But there's not much she can do about it.

Her hope is that the government mandates vaccination. "Otherwise, you drag all others back into danger," Rutten said in a recent interview.

But few European Union countries have issued outright mandates, instead requiring people to show proof of immunization, a negative test or recent recovery from COVID-19 to participate in ever more activities — even sometimes to go to work.

More sweeping requirements are the order of the day in the U.S., which has faced significant vaccine resistance. President Joe Biden announced mandates last week that cover large portions of the population, sometimes without any option to test instead.

Despite apparently divergent strategies, officials in both the U.S. and the EU are

struggling with the same question: how to boost vaccination rates to the max and end a pandemic that has repeatedly thwarted efforts to control it.

And the apparent split may in fact be narrowing. While not calling their restrictions mandates, some European countries are making life so difficult for those without the vaccine that it may amount to the same thing.

In a perhaps surprising move in a country known for touting individual freedoms, Biden has imposed sweeping vaccine requirements for as many as 100 million Americans, including many private-sector employees and health care workers. Employees at firms with more than 100 workers will need to get immunized or test weekly, while vaccination will be required for employees of the executive branch and contractors who do business with the federal government — with no option to test out. There are some exemptions.

The seemingly more aggressive U.S. policy may reflect greater pressures there. The EU, which initially lagged way

behind the United States in terms of vaccinations, surpassed it at the end of July. As of Thursday, the 27-nation bloc had 60% of its population vaccinated compared to 53% for the United States, according to Our World In Data. In both places, immunization rates vary widely from country to country or state to state.

American authorities from Biden on down have labeled the current phase a "pandemic of the unvaccinated," with data showing that nearly all COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. are now in people who weren't vaccinated. EU officials have used the same description for continuing outbreaks in their countries.

But while officials in Brussels can't impose a mandate on the EU's 450 million citizens, many national governments are ramping up restrictions for those who are not vaccinated. Some countries are, in fact, requiring vaccines for some groups: Slovenia is imposing them for government employees, with no option to test out.

More common in the EU, however, is essentially requiring regular testing for those who aren't vaccinated.

Army uses balloons in Norway rocket drills

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

It was only fitting that a history-making Army artillery exercise dubbed Thunder Cloud take place in the country that gave the world Thor, the Norse god of thunder.

American troops used the skies over Andoya in northern Norway for a novel test of a balloon system launched from the ground to between 60,000 and 72,000 feet above sea level, said Maj. Joe Bush, 41st Field Artillery Brigade spokesman.

The balloons delivered weather information and the coordinates of sea targets to soldiers on the ground so they could shoot M31 live guided rockets with a range of over 40 miles.

The exercise marked the first time the service sent the

target coordinates by balloon to set up attacks using the Multiple Rocket Launch System, an Army mainstay.

Soldiers from the brigade's 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment launched the guided rockets at the targets. The regiment is one of the oldest artillery battalions in the Army and has participated in nearly every Army campaign or operation since the country's inception, said battalion commander Lt. Col. David Henderson.

The unit supports the just-activated 2nd Multi-Domain Task Force, which is based in Wiesbaden, Germany. Lt. Col. Nicholas Stout, the chief of plans for the task force, said it is a centerpiece of the Army's modernization of its combat capabilities.

USAF, Army help pregnant Afghan evacuees at US bases

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The conditions in the tent near the flight line as overnight temperatures dipped into the 40s clearly weren't ideal for giving birth.

There wasn't time to get the Afghan woman in labor to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, about 15-30 minutes away by ambulance, depending on traffic.

"So we delivered in the tent," said Capt. Danielle Holland, an Air Force obstetrical and gynecological physician.

Tending to the scores of pregnant women who have poured into Ramstein since the first evacuation flight arrived Aug. 20 has been a challenge for U.S. military medical providers accustomed to Western standards of care.

It's hoped that the lessons learned will improve how the military provides health care in simi-

lar situations, said Maj. Suzanne Stammeler, an Air Force OB-GYN physician.

"Humanitarian-wise, in every conflict, there's always women and children," she said.

Stammeler and Holland are part of an OB-GYN team that arrived at Ramstein a few days after the first evacuees. They're with the larger 68-member Expeditionary Medical Support team deployed from RAF Lakenheath in England to support Ramstein and LRMC. Together with medical personnel at LRMC, they've delivered 21 babies as of Friday and provided care to women who miscarried or who need basic prenatal or postpartum care, officials said.

"The ability to provide care is a very big privilege because for these women, not having access to the basic things that we have access to every day is a hard thing to see," Stammeler said.

Setbacks in 1 hour imperil Biden's reset bid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It was an hour President Joe Biden would no doubt like to forget.

On Friday, the Pentagon acknowledged that a drone strike in Afghanistan killed 10 civilians, including seven children, not terrorists. A panel advising the Food and Drug Administration voted to not recommend COVID-19 booster shots for all Americans over age 16, dashing an administration hope. And France announced it was recalling its ambassador to the United States out of anger for being cut out of a secret nuclear submarine deal Biden had struck with the United Kingdom and Australia.

The headlines, all within an hour, underscored the perils for any president from situations that

can define a term in office.

Already, Biden has seen public approval numbers trend downward as the pandemic has deepened and Americans cast blame for the flawed U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The administration had hoped to roll out tougher vaccine guidelines, a new international alliance to thwart China and a recommitment to what Biden has done best: drawing on his years on Capitol Hill and knowledge of the legislative process to cajole fellow Democrats to pass the two far-reaching spending bills that make up the heart of his agenda. Those ambitions are now more difficult to achieve.

Biden has proclaimed defeating the pandemic to be the central mission of his presidency. But the

U.S. is now averaging more than 145,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases per day, compared with a low of about 8,500 per day three months ago.

The president has tried to shift the blame for the resurgence of cases to the more than 70 million Americans who have not gotten a vaccine and the GOP lawmakers who have opposed his increasingly forceful efforts to push people to get a shot. Aides had hoped for full FDA approval for the boosters, yet the advisory panel only recommended them for those over age 65 or with underlying health conditions or special circumstances.

Biden aides in recent days had quietly expressed relief that the Afghanistan withdrawal — like the war itself for much of its two

decades — had receded from headlines. That feeling was shattered Friday when the Pentagon revealed the errant target for what was believed to be the final American drone strike of the war.

The end in Afghanistan was part of an effort to refocus foreign policy on China, an aim that accelerated with the announcement of the agreement between the U.S., U.K. and Australia.

But not only did Beijing balk, so did Paris, as France angrily accused the U.S. of cutting it out of the alliance and scuttling its own submarine deal with Australia.

And then France recalled its ambassador after its officials expressed dismay that, in their estimation, Biden had proven to be as unreliable a partner as his predecessor Donald Trump.

4 finish first tourist trip to orbit the Earth

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Four space tourists safely ended their trailblazing trip to orbit Saturday with a splashdown in the Atlantic off the Florida coast.

Their SpaceX capsule parachuted into the ocean just before sunset, not far from where their chartered flight began three days earlier.

The all-amateur crew was the first to circle the world without a professional astronaut.

The billionaire who paid undisclosed millions for the trip and his three guests wanted to show that ordinary people could blast into orbit by themselves, and SpaceX founder Elon Musk took them on as the company's first rocket-riding tourists.

"Your mission has shown the world that space is for all of us," SpaceX Mission Control radioed.

"It was a heck of a ride for us ... just getting started," replied trip sponsor Jared Isaacman, referring to the growing number of pri-

vate flights on the horizon.

SpaceX's fully automated Dragon capsule reached an unusually high altitude of 363 miles after Wednesday night's liftoff. Surpassing the International Space Station by 100 miles, the passengers savored views of Earth through a big bubble-shaped window added to the top of the capsule.

The four streaked back through the atmosphere early Saturday evening, the first space travelers to end their flight in the Atlantic since Apollo 9 in 1969. SpaceX's two previous crew splashdowns — carrying astronauts for NASA — were in the Gulf of Mexico.

Within a few minutes, a pair of SpaceX boats pulled up alongside the bobbing capsule. When the capsule's hatch was opened on the recovery ship, health care worker Hayley Arceneaux was the first one out, flashing a big smile and thumbs up. All appeared well and happy.

Volcano erupts on Spain's La Palma island in Atlantic

Associated Press

MADRID — A volcano on Spain's Atlantic Ocean island of La Palma erupted Sunday after a weeklong buildup of seismic activity, prompting authorities to speed up evacuations for 1,000 people as lava flows crept toward isolated homes on the mountain.

The Canary Islands Volcanology Institute reported the eruption on Cumbre Vieja, which last erupted in 1971.

Huge red plumes topped with black-and-white smoke shot out along a volcanic ridge that scientists had been closely watching following the accumulation of molten lava below the surface and days of small earthquakes.

Mariano Hernández, the president of La Palma island, told Canary Islands Television there were no immediate reports of injuries or deaths from the eruption. He said there were five eruption points, of which two were spewing magma.

The explosion took place in an

area known as Cabeza de Vaca on the western slope of the volcanic ridge as it descends to the coast. Tinges of red could be seen at the bottom of the black jets that shot rocks into the air.

One black lava flow with a burning tip was sliding toward some houses in the village of El Paso. Mayor Sergio Rodríguez said 300 people in immediate danger had been evacuated from their homes and sent to the El Paso soccer field.

Roads were closed due to the explosion and authorities urged the curious not to approach the area. La Palma, with a population of 85,000, is one of eight islands in Spain's Canary Islands archipelago off Africa's western coast.

Itahiza Dominguez, head of seismology of Spain's National Geology Institute, told local TV station RTVC that although it was too early to tell how long this eruption would last, prior "eruptions on the Canary Islands lasted weeks or even months."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Girl slaps boy for rumors that class lizard died

NE OMAHA — Rumors that a middle school class gecko had died prompted one Nebraska girl to slap another student.

Police said the girl admitted slapping a 13-year-old boy during a football game at Millard Central Middle School because the lizard was missing and some classmates had said the boy had killed it.

But the Omaha World-Herald reported that the gecko was actually fine and was found in his cage safe and sound, according to the police report.

However, the 13-year-old girl was cited on suspicion of third-degree assault and released to her mother's custody.

Man who fled during trial gets 28 years for attack

AZ PRESCOTT — A 44-year-old Prescott man who fled in 2019 while on trial for a brutal attack on a camper the previous year has been sentenced to 28 years in prison after being apprehended in Payson, authorities said.

Robert David Pearsall III was out on bond when he absconded two days before jurors in his Yavapai County Superior Court trial on attempted first-degree murder and aggravated assault charges returned guilty verdicts.

The events leading to his conviction occurred in September 2018 when Pearsall struck the victim, whom he did not know, on the head multiple times with a large board in a remote camping area near Perkinsville, authorities said.

The severely injured victim

likely would have died but for emergency aid provided by other campers who included trained firefighter paramedics, the county attorney's office said in a statement.

Pearsall fled the scene but surrendered days later. After absconding the next year while on trial, he was on the run for over two years before he was arrested July 22 in Payson where he was living under an alias, officials said.

Man accused of stalking, harassing mayor arrested

MS CLARKSDALE — A man who investigators believe left a threatening voicemail to a mayor in Mississippi has been arrested.

Joseph Pittman is charged with felony eluding a law enforcement officer after being arrested, WMC-TV reported. He was also arrested on a warrant for stalking Clarksdale Mayor Chuck Espy.

Officials said the voicemail on Espy's cellphone also threatened three other people, but their names are not being released. Police had been investigating that incident, which occurred about a month ago, and obtained an arrest warrant for Pittman as a result, Police Chief Robbie Linley said.

Student arrested as part of TikTok crime challenge

AL ROBERTSDALE — A south Alabama high school student is facing criminal charges after being accused of stealing a fire extinguisher from the school as part of a TikTok challenge that's been widely spread on the social media platform.

TikTok videos encourage students to commit theft and vandalism at school, but the social media company said it's taking steps to remove them.

The "devious licks" challenge went viral earlier this month, Al.com reported. It involves students stealing everything from bathroom stall bars to COVID-19 masks in an attempt to garner likes and shares on TikTok. "Devious licks" is slang for theft.

Schools across the South have been warning parents about the trend.

Famous Skinny House sells for a nice fat price

MA BOSTON — Boston's famous Skinny House has sold for a nice fat price.

The home in the city's North End hit the market in August for \$1.2 million, and the deal was closed for \$1.25 million, according to Zillow.

The four-story home built in 1862, according to a plaque on the facade, is about 1,165 square feet — even though it is about 10 feet wide at its widest point and narrows in the back to about 9.25 feet.

It has two bedrooms and one bathroom and includes a private deck with a view of Boston Harbor. The home does not have a front door. Instead, residents enter through a side door.

It is also known as the Spite House, according to the plaque. According to local lore, two brothers inherited some land. When one of them joined the Army, the other built a large house that took up most of the land. When the soldier brother returned, he built the Skinny

House to block his brother's view and sunlight.

2 charged with using drone to fly drugs into jail

CA ORANGE — A man living under a stolen identity and a female inmate have been charged with using a drone to smuggle drugs into a Southern California jail, prosecutors said.

The drone is suspected of carrying heroin, methamphetamine, Xanax and muscle relaxers into the Theo Lacy Facility in the city of Orange, the Orange County District Attorney's Office said in a statement.

The inmate is accused of using a jailhouse phone to direct the man where to fly the drone.

The man was arrested at a Costa Mesa apartment.

The 30-year-old woman and 41-year-old man each face multiple charges including smuggling controlled substances into a correctional facility and conspiracy, the statement said.

District judge charged with drunken driving

ND FARGO — A North Dakota district judge is facing a drunken driving charge after allegedly crashing into two parked cars in downtown Fargo.

South Central Judicial District Judge Cherie Clark, who is based in Jamestown, was arrested after officers responded to a report of the crash, authorities said.

Officers conducted standard field sobriety tests and a breath test before Clark was arrested, KFGO radio reported.

— From wire reports



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Perennial CFP powers look vulnerable

Associated Press

Alabama looked beatable for the first time.

Ohio State's defense still looks discomfited, Clemson's offense still looks limp and Oklahoma still looks far from elite.

Maybe college football's season of the super teams won't be such a foregone conclusion after all?

The top-ranked Crimson Tide faced its first serious challenge, but managed to get out of The Swamp undefeated against No. 11 Florida. The No. 9 Buckeyes, No. 6 Tigers and No. 3 Sooners also were winners — with blemishes.

Those four teams have combined for 20 College Football Playoff appearances. Fans, at least those of other teams, have been lamenting the same old, same old and bracing for another round of it in 2021.

Three weeks in, dare to dream of something different.

After rolling out to a 21-3 lead, things didn't come easy for the Alabama's offense, and maybe Nick Saban was right to be concerned about that run defense after the Mercer game. The Gators ran for 245 yards — though they went nowhere on the potential tying two-point conversion late in the fourth quarter.

Credit Florida coach Dan Mullen with back-to-back games against the Tide where — with very different personnel — the Gators were able to make Alabama's offense operate under pressure by carving up its defense.

Last year, Florida was all about Kyle Trask connecting with Kyle Pitts and Kadarius Toney. The Gators are a quarterback-run team now with Emory Jones, who went the whole way with Anthony Richardson sidelined.

"To be honest with you, I hope we see them really soon, like later this season," Mullen said.

Alabama will still be No. 1 in the country, the favorite to repeat as national champion, but the Tide gave just the slightest indication the machine might have a couple of gears that need grease. Especially with consecutive games against No. 20 Mississippi (Oct. 2) and at No. 7 Texas A&M (Oct. 9) coming up soon.

No. 9 Ohio State (2-1) is past the point of needing just a tune up. The Buckeyes pulled away from Tulsa in the fourth quarter thanks to freshman phenom TreVeyon Henderson (270 yards rushing and three TDs).

Those defensive issues that had coach Ryan Day being asked about the status of defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs after the Oregon loss? Still there. Tulsa passed for 428 yards.

Related: No. 10 Penn State, No. 25 Michigan and Michigan State are a combined 9-0.

Clemson's opening, touchdown-less loss to Georgia seemed no reason to panic and maybe Saturday's long weather delay against Georgia Tech got the Tigers (2-1) out of sorts. Still, 284 total yards against a team that lost to Northern Illinois is disconcerting. Clemson has scored 17 points in two games against FBS opponents.

Of course, the ACC isn't brimming with potential challengers to break the Tigers' six-year lock on the conference title.

As for Oklahoma, the hype coming into this year was based on the premise that the Sooners now had a good defense to go with what is almost always a super-charged offense. The assumption being that with Lincoln Riley calling plays, Spencer Rattler would go from good to great at quarterback and the rest of the offense would follow.

Rattler would turn into a Heisman contender like the three quarterbacks (Baker Mayfield, Kyler Murray and Jalen Hurts) who came before him.

What's the old saying about assuming? Oklahoma's offense is a long way from

from the Baker/Kyler days. In a workmanlike victory against Nebraska, Rattler was 23-for-34 for 213 yards and no interceptions.

The Sooners have won six consecutive Big 12 titles, but have only gone unbeaten in conference play once during that time. After watching the Sooners play it close with Tulane and Nebraska, the rest of the Big 12 should be buoyed.

Now, a reality check: Wins are wins, and by the time November rolls around, all these powerhouses could be rolling toward the CFP again.

But for now, the rest of the country has some reason to hope a real playoff race is possible.

Bearcat comeback

No. 8 Cincinnati came from 14-0 down late in the first half to put away Indiana late, checking the first box on an important stretch of games for the Bearcats if they hope to make a playoff case. Cincinnati has a week off before heading to No. 12 Notre Dame on Oct. 2.

The Bearcats got some help in the form of four turnovers by the Hoosiers and a targeting call against Indiana that swung momentum late in the first half. Still, it's a solid road win.

The problem is that solid was not what the Bearcats signed up for. Cincinnati's perfect-world CFP scenario had Indiana and Notre Dame as ranked teams. The Hoosiers could still cobble together a good season, but Michael Penix has been a turnover machine and Indiana is probably not going to be the second-best team in the Big Ten East this season.

As for the Irish, they are 3-0 but none of it has been easy. At least this time they didn't need late-game heroics against Purdue.

Notre Dame has No. 18 Wisconsin next week in Chicago. The Bearcats will be rooting for the Irish on their off week.

No. 10 Penn State holds on, slips past No. 22 Auburn

Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Jaquan Brisker skipped across a field littered with white pom-poms and toward a row of Penn State students painted white from head to toe.

The Nittany Lions' star safety had a big smile on his face, and it

didn't fade one bit even as he tripped over a photographer while celebrating a dramatic victory on a raucous night in Happy Valley.

Brisker broke up a desperation pass toward the end zone by Auburn's Bo Nix as time expired and No. 10 Penn State held on to

beat the No. 22 Tigers 28-20 on Saturday night.

Sean Clifford completed 28 of 32 passes for 280 yards and two touchdowns as the Nittany Lions (3-0) welcomed back their white out crowd for a rare visit from a Southeastern Conference team.

"I was ready," Brisker said.

"When you come to Penn State, you expect to play in front of big crowds like this. You've got to take it in for 10 seconds, then it's back to reality."

The Nittany Lions beat an SEC opponent at home for the first time since 1985 against Alabama.

Army scores TDs on first 6 drives in rout

Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Christian Anderson ran for two touchdowns and passed for one, and Army reached the end zone on all six of its first-half possessions in rolling to a 52-21 win over UConn on Saturday.

Anderson's two short scoring runs and his 39-yard TD pass to Isaiah Alston gave the Black Knights (3-0) a 21-0 lead on the way to their 12th straight home victory.

The win was the 52nd for coach Jeff Monken, breaking a tie with Jim Young for third all-time at West Point.

Tyrell Robinson ran for a career-long 70-yard score and Jakobi Buchanan and Anthony Adkins added short TD runs for a 42-0 halftime lead. The 42 points were the most in a first half since scoring 42 against Houston in the 2018 Armed Forces Bowl, a 70-14 victory. For the second straight game, Army did not punt.

The Huskies (0-4) stopped the Black Knights' offense for the first time in the third quarter and they scored on freshman Tyler Phommachanh's 38-yard keeper and a 96-yard kickoff return by another freshman, Brian Brewton. It was UConn's first kickoff

return for a TD since 2011. The points were the first for the Huskies against an FBS opponent this season.

Fourteen Arm players had positive rushing yards for a team total of 397, led by Robinson's 84.

Phommachanh ran for two touchdowns and had 60 yards rushing and 109 passing.

Utah State 49, Air Force 45: Calvin Tyler Jr. raced 61 yards for the go-ahead touchdown with just under four minutes to play to lift the visiting Aggies over the Falcons in the Mountain West Conference opener Saturday night.

Utah State, which had just one win a year ago, won its third straight game to open the season for the first time since 1978.

Tyler carried 19 times for 132 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Aggies while Logan Bonner completed 21 of 34 passes for 253 yards and two touchdowns. Andrew Peasley threw three second-half touchdown passes, including a 72-yard bomb to Deven Thompkins with 9:51 to go to pull Utah State within a touchdown of Air Force, 45-40.

The Falcons took a 10-0 lead in the first quarter, but Bonner engineered a 13-play,

71-yard drive capped by Tyler's first touchdown, then drove the Aggies 92 yards in 11 plays on their next series, giving them a 13-10 lead after hitting Brandon Bowling from six-yards out.

Haaziq Daniels connected with Micah Davis on a 56-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter to put Air Force back in front and Dane Kinamon scored just before intermission to put the Falcons in front, 24-13.

Bonner led Utah State on another long drive to start the second half, hitting Justin McGriff with a 24-yard scoring pass to make it 24-20.

Emmanuel Michel had touchdown runs of 51- and 55-yards in the third quarter to put Air Force up 38-34 going into the final period, and Daniels pushed the lead to 45-34 with a 39-yard touchdown dash.

Peasley answered with a three-play drive capped by his bomb to Thompkins.

Daniels led the Falcons (2-1) with 182 yards on 6-for-12 passing and added 95 yards on 13 carries. Michel carried 11 times for 133 yards and Brad Roberts carried 21 times for 113.

BYU improves to 3-0 vs. Pac-12

Associated Press

PROVO, Utah — Forcing turnovers and getting big plays at critical junctures from Jaren Hall is turning into a proven winning formula for BYU.

Hall threw for 214 yards and two touchdowns and added 38 yards on seven carries, leading No. 23 BYU to a 27-17 victory over No. 19 Arizona State on Saturday night.

Tyler Allgeier added 69 yards and a touchdown on the ground, and the Cougars (3-0) forced four turnovers to earn their third straight victory over a Pac-12 opponent.

"We're 3-0 against good opponents," Hall said. "What more can you ask for?"

Jaylen Daniels threw for 265 yards to lead the Sun Devils (2-1), but also tossed a pair of interceptions.

In addition to committing multiple turnovers, Arizona State racked up 16 total penalties and 121 penalty yards.

"We have the makings of a good football team," Sun Devils coach Herm Edwards said. "But when you do this, it's not good football at all. It's hard to watch when you're going backward, and you just defeat yourself."

No. 3 Sooners survive Huskers

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Oklahoma and Nebraska played as if they were trying to uphold the history of the rivalry.

Spencer Rattler passed for a touchdown and ran for another, and the No. 3 Sooners held on to beat the Cornhuskers 23-16 on Saturday.

Celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the "Game of the Century" — No. 1 Nebraska's 35-31 win over No. 2 Oklahoma in 1971 — the teams rewarded their nostalgic fans with a competitive contest. The programs had a fierce, yet respectful rivalry in the Big Eight and Big 12, with the Cornhuskers winning five national titles and the Sooners claiming four between 1970 and 2000.

"It was just a hard-fought game," Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley said. "You knew it would be. There's a lot of pride in these two programs. Both these programs have won a lot of games, a lot of championships. To bring this game back — I think everybody sensed how special it would be. Both teams rose to the occasion and gave us a great college football game."

It was their first meeting since 2010 — right before Nebraska left the Big 12 for the

Big Ten — and it was memorable and much closer than expected. The Sooners were a three-touchdown favorite and there were even reports during the offseason that the Huskers looked at possibly trying to reschedule the game for its rebuilding program to another year.

Turns out Nebraska was more than game.

The Huskers got the ball trailing by a touchdown with 57 seconds remaining and no timeouts. Oklahoma sacked Adrian Martinez twice on the final drive, and the Nebraska could not manage a first down.

Eric Gray ran for 84 yards on 15 carries and Kennedy Brooks added 75 yards on 14 attempts for the Sooners (3-0), who gained 408 yards.

Martinez passed for 289 yards and a touchdown for the Huskers (2-2), who sought their first win over a ranked team since 2015.

"Our guys aren't into moral victories," Martinez said. "We want to win games. Simple as that. There are definitely a lot of positives to take away from today, and we will do that once we watch the film."

Oklahoma opened with an old-school 14-play, 75-yard drive. Rattler sneaked in from the 1 to give the Sooners a 7-0 lead.

Larson wins; Harvick and Elliott feud

Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Kyle Larson won at Bristol Motor Speedway — not really a big surprise or even the most interesting part of NASCAR's first playoff elimination race.

The postrace feud between reigning Cup Series champion Chase Elliott and Kevin Harvick stole the show Saturday night, especially when Harvick angrily told the energized crowd: "I'm ready to freakin' rip somebody's head off."

The fickle crowd struggled to pick a side before settling firmly behind Elliott, NASCAR's most popular driver.

Harvick took the lead from Elliott with 33 laps remaining but the hard racing caused contact that cut one of Elliott's tires. After a quick tire change, Elliott exacted his revenge by deliberately slowing in front of Harvick to give Hendrick Motorsports

teammate Larson a chance to catch Harvick.

Larson made the race-winning pass with four laps to go to earn his sixth win of the year. Then Harvick and Elliott parked alongside each other on pit road, bounded out their windows, and immediately began jawing at each other.

"Obviously, Harvick and Chase got together. Chase was upset. Kind of held him up," Larson said. "It got Harvick having to move around and use his tires up off the bottom. I started to get some dive-ins working off of (turn) two, got a big run, decided to pull the trigger, slide him, squeeze him a little bit, then he had me jacked up down the frontstretch. It was wild."

Then came the pit-road confrontation.

Harvick had his helmet on at first and Elliott wagged his finger in Harvick's face.

There was brief shoving, Harvick slammed his helmet in anger, and both drivers blamed the other even after the verbal sparring moved inside Elliott's hauler for a private conversation.

"We were racing for the frickin' win at Bristol, we're three-wide in the middle, and he throws a temper tantrum like I was just trying to get the lead and race him hard," Harvick fumed. "Then he pulled up in front of me and just sits there until I lose the whole lead."

Elliott, meanwhile, indicated Harvick pushes people around on the track and the pattern must stop.

"It's something he does all the time. He runs into your left side constantly at other tracks and sometimes it does cut down your left side and other times it doesn't," Elliott said.

Brewers clinch 4th straight playoff berth

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Manny Pina homered twice, Eduardo Escobar and Jace Peterson also connected, and the Milwaukee Brewers clinched their fourth straight postseason berth with a 6-4 win Saturday over the Chicago Cubs.

The Brewers won for the seventh time in nine games to ensure themselves at least a wild card after San Diego and Cincinnati lost earlier in the day. Milwaukee's magic number to lock up the NL Central title is three over St. Louis.

NL Cy Young Award contender Corbin Burnes allowed three runs and six hits in six innings, striking out 11. The right-hander gave up Ian Happ's 23rd homer with a man on in the fifth.

Blue Jays 6, Twins 2: Marcus Semien became the fifth second baseman to hit 40 home runs in a season, and host Toronto moved back into a playoff position by beating Minnesota.

Teoscar Hernández hit a three-run homer, Bo Bichette had three hits and two RBIs and the Blue Jays improved to a big league-best 14-3 in September.

Indians 11, Yankees 3:

Catcher Gary Sánchez failed to catch Oscar Mercado's foul popup, leading to a seven-run fifth inning capped by Andrés Giménez's three-run homer as Cleveland won at New York.

Franmil Reyes hit an RBI double off Albert Abreu in the fifth and a two-run homer in the sixth against Andrew Heaney.

Giants 2, Braves 0: Curt Casali hit a two-run single in the fourth that held up, Alex Wood made an impressive three-inning return from COVID-19, and host San Francisco blanked Atlanta.

Wood struck out four and didn't walk a batter or allow a hit in three scoreless innings, throwing 37 pitches in his first start for San Francisco since Aug. 26. Zack Littell (4-0) relieved and struck out the side in the fourth.

Red Sox 9, Orioles 3: Xander Bogaerts hit a three-run homer off Mike Baumann (1-1) and drove in four runs, carrying host Boston to its fourth straight win.

Tigers 4, Rays 3: Jeimer Candelario hit a three-run homer in the first off Ryan Yarbrough (8-6), and Dustin Garneau went deep in the second as

Detroit won at AL East-leading Tampa Bay.

Dodgers 5, Reds 1: Max Scherzer (15-4) allowed two hits in seven shutout innings, struck out seven and lowered his MLB-best ERA to 2.08 as Los Angeles won at Cincinnati.

Scherzer improved to 7-0 with a 0.78 ERA in nine starts since the Dodgers acquired him from Washington on July 30.

Athletics 3, Angels 1: James Kaprielian pitched two-hit ball over six innings, Matt Olson hit his 36th home run and Oakland won at Los Angeles.

Rockies 6, Nationals 0: Kyle Freeland (6-8) allowed seven hits and struck out seven over six innings, and Trevor Story hit a three-run homer as Colorado won at Washington.

Pirates 6, Marlins 3: Catcher Nick Fortes homered and singled in his major league debut, Cole Tucker had three hits and Bryse Wilson (3-7) allowed two runs and four hits in five innings as Pittsburgh won at Miami.

Rangers 2, White Sox 1: DJ Peters' pinch-hit single drove in the go-ahead run in the sixth and host Texas beat former teammate Lance Lynn (10-5)

and AL Central-leading Chicago.

Royals 8, Mariners 1: Kris Bubic allowed two hits over 6²/₃ innings in his best start this season, and host Kansas City stopped a three-game skid and put a dent in Seattle's playoff chances.

Phillies 5, Mets 3: Jean Segura had his first multihomer game in almost five years and Aaron Nola snapped a nine-start winless streak, leading Philadelphia to a win at New York.

Diamondbacks 6, Astros 4 (10): Kole Calhoun knocked in the go-ahead run with an RBI single and Daulton Varsho homered as Arizona scored three runs in the 10th inning in a win at Houston. Calhoun hit a run-scoring single off Yimi García (3-9) and Varsho followed with a two-run homer to center.

Cardinals 3, Padres 2: Tyler O'Neill hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the eighth inning and host St. Louis rallied to beat San Diego, which saw stars Manny Machado and Fernando Tatis Jr. have a dugout dustup.