

## Army puts retention bonus on hold

Program has produced positive results, but also exhausted its fiscal 2023 funding

BY BRIAN ERICKSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The Army is briefly suspending its bonus program enticing soldiers in certain fields to reenlist, as strong retention results have exhausted the funding for the current fiscal year.

The selective retention bonus program was shut down Tuesday afternoon through the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, according to an Army military personnel message.

Budgets are tight across the Army this

year, so leaders elected to suspend the bonuses rather than put other programs at risk, said Sgt. Maj. Tobey Whitney, senior career counselor for the active component.

About 3,700 more soldiers have been retained than at the same time in the previous fiscal year, Whitney said. The bonus program will be reinstated Oct. 1, he said.

“Any soldier who has already committed is still able to reenlist,” Whitney said. “However, if their (specialty) is typically offered a bonus, they can wait two weeks to

reenlist.”

For contracts that end before the bonus program resumes, existing policies provide for an extension of 90 days, which will keep those soldiers in the service and allow them to reenlist for a bonus, Whitney said.

The Army establishes a new retention bonus budget every fiscal year, and running out of money is not unprecedented.

In previous years, funds were shifted from other programs to allow the service to continue paying bonuses.

## US scouts more Philippine bases for shared access

BY SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. military is seeking access to more bases in the Philippines, the head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command told reporters during a press conference Thursday.

U.S. forces already have access to nine sites in the country, including four announced in February, under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

The U.S. is looking for more locations, Adm. John Aquilino said in the Philippines alongside that country's armed forces chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Romeo Brawner, according to a Friday report by NHK.

“General Brawner and I made recommendations to our senior leaders for the consideration of additional sites, but there's still work to do there,” the INDOPACOM commander said.

INDOPACOM posts Friday on X, formerly known as Twitter, show Aquilino and Brawner visiting three sites being developed to support U.S. forces in

the northern Philippines: Cagayan North International Airport, also known as Lal-lo; Camilo Osias Naval Base; and Cesar Basa Air Base.

The main purpose of the base-sharing agreement is training and disaster response, not for responses to regional security threats, Brawner said in the NHK report.

However, recent clashes between Chinese and Philippines coast guard vessels in disputed areas of the South China Sea and a recent exercise by the Chinese aircraft carrier Shandong carrier off the Philippines' northern coast are driving Washington and Manila closer, according to Leland Bettis, director of the Pacific Center for Island Security on Guam.

The threat posed by Chinese missiles to large operating bases has spurred efforts by U.S. forces to develop skills needed to fight from many smaller locations throughout the region.

“All the U.S. services are looking for more ‘places’ to operate from in the first (and sec-

ond) island chain to support their distributed and dispersed operating concepts,” Bettis said in an email Friday. “The Philippines is no doubt looking to bolster more U.S. operational support for enforcement of their national claims” in the South China Sea.

A candidate for another shared base is in the Batanes islands, where a U.S. team recently assessed a port less than 125 miles from Taiwan, Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines' Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said Friday in an X message to Stars and Stripes.

The U.S. is looking to enhance its ability to respond to contingencies in the South China Sea and involving Taiwan, according to Ralph Cossa, president emeritus of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii.

Rumors suggest the Navy seeks to regain access to Subic Bay and a return by the Air Force to nearby Clark Air Base can't be ruled out, he said by email Friday.

Subic and Clark formed America's largest overseas military presence before both were damaged in the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo and soon after returned to the Philippines.

“A U.S. return to either Clark or Subic would be a real attention-getter both positively (as a message to China) and negatively (as a rallying cry for anti-US elements),” Cossa wrote.

Seeking access to smaller facilities still sends a message to China but would likely draw less attention and complaints, he added.

Discussions over access to smaller Philippine bases is consistent with the direction the two allies have taken, Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore, said by email Friday.

“As for candidates for bases, I think the U.S. has for some time been working with the Philippines to develop a network of dispersed, smaller bases rather than massive ones like a Clark or a Subic,” he said.

# North Korea's Kim heads home after trip to Russia

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is on his way home Sunday from Russia, ending a six-day trip that triggered global concerns about weapons transfer deals between the two countries locked in separate standoffs with the West.

Kim's armored train departed to the sound of the Russian patriotic march song "Farewell of Slavianska" at the end of a farewell ceremony at a railway station in Artyom, a far eastern Russian city about 124 miles from the border with North Korea, Russia's state news agency RIA reported.

Senior officials including Russia's Minister of Natural Resources Alexander Kozlov and Primorye regional Gov. Oleg Kozhemyako were present at the ceremony, which featured a Russian military band playing both North Korean and Russian national anthems.

It was Kim's longest foreign

travel since he took power in late 2011. Observers said Kim was expected to return to Pyongyang around Monday afternoon.

Since entering Russia last Tuesday in his first overseas trip in more than four years, Kim had met President Vladimir Putin and visited key military and technology sites, underscoring the countries' deepening defense cooperation in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with the U.S. and its allies. Foreign officials and experts have said North Korea could provide badly needed munitions for Moscow's war on Ukraine in exchange for sophisticated Russian weapons technology that would advance Kim's nuclear ambitions.

U.N. Security Council resolutions — which Russia, a permanent member, previously endorsed — ban North Korea from exporting or importing any arms. Observers say Russia's alleged attempts to receive am-

munition and artillery shells from North Korea suggest Moscow's desperation to refill its arsenal exhausted in the war with Ukraine.

"Military cooperation between North Korea and Russia is illegal and unjust as it contravenes U.N. Security Council resolutions and various other international sanctions," South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said in written responses Sunday to questions from The Associated Press. "The international community will unite more tightly in response to such a move."

In return for supplying conventional arms to Russia, experts say North Korea would seek Russian economic and food aid but also transfers of technologies to build powerful missiles, a nuclear-propelled submarine and a spy satellite. North Korea has publicly sought to introduce such high-tech weapons systems citing what it called intensifying U.S.-led hostilities.

## US, S. Korea and Canada train in seas amid tension

**By DAVID CHOI**  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Warships from the United States, South Korea and Canada drilled Thursday in response to continuing tension with North Korea, and ahead of the reenactment of a pivotal Korean War landing.

The amphibious assault ship USS America, homeported at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, joined the South Korean guided-missile frigate ROKS Seoul and Canadian frigate HMCS Vancouver on Thursday in the Yellow Sea, according to a news release that day from South Korea's Ministry of National Defense.

The warships drilled on tactical maneuvers and helicopter operations, the release said.

"This exercise served as momentum to further improve our reaction posture and ability to deal with North Korea's threats through the combined multilateral naval exercises by [South Korea], the U.S. and Canadian naval forces," South Korean navy Cmdr. Kim Hyunseok said in the release.

The U.S. and South Korea have carried out several exercises around the Korean Peninsula with partner forces this summer.

On Aug. 29, the Japanese guided-missile destroyer JS Haguro joined the USS Benfold and South Korean destroyer Yulgok Yi I for a ballistic missile defense exercise in international waters south of South Korea's Jeju Island.

Canada is a member of the U.N. Command headquartered at Camp Humphreys in South Korea.

## Milley: N. Korean arms won't have impact

*Associated Press*

OSLO, Norway — North Korea may be able to boost Russia's supply of artillery munitions for the war in Ukraine, but that is not likely to make a big difference, the top American military officer said as he arrived in Norway for NATO meetings that began Saturday and will focus in part on the conflict.

U.S. Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the meeting in Rus-

sia between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin will probably lead North Korea to provide Soviet-era 152 mm artillery rounds to Moscow. But he said it was not yet clear how many or how soon.

"Would it have a huge difference? I'm skeptical of that," Milley told reporters traveling with him.

He said that while he does not want to play down the weapons assistance too much, "I doubt

that it would be decisive."

Foreign governments and experts have speculated that Kim will likely supply ammunition to Russia in exchange for receiving advanced weapons or technology from Russia.

Milley and the other defense chiefs from NATO countries are meeting at the Holmenkollen ski area on the edge of Oslo over the next several days to discuss support for Ukraine and other regional defense issues.

# Army plans to reinstate STEP for NCOs

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army next year will reinstate a policy suspended during the coronavirus pandemic that most soldiers complete required school training before they can be promoted, the service announced.

Beginning in January, Army noncommissioned officers must complete mandatory professional military education courses before they can move up in rank, under the service's Select, Train, Educate and Promote, or STEP policy, Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, the Army's personnel chief, ordered in a Sept. 12 memorandum.

The STEP policy was suspended in 2021 after the pandemic largely shuttered travel and created a backlog of otherwise-qualified soldiers unable to reach promotion because they could not attend their re-

quired education course.

Since that time, the Army has allowed almost all noncommissioned officers selected for promotion to advance in rank on a temporary basis before completing their required education course work, from the Basic Leader Course for those advancing to sergeant to the Sergeants Major Academy for those advancing to sergeant major. Those soldiers were allowed to pin on their new ranks and received pay and benefits at their promoted level, though the promotions remained temporary until they completed their required course, Army officials said.

The pandemic-induced conditions that led the Army to suspend the STEP program no longer exist, according to Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, the service's top enlisted soldier.

"Therefore, we move forward, ensuring our soldiers have the training and resources they need to succeed as leaders in our Army," Weimer said in a prepared statement. "STEP will help ensure our NCOs are ready to train soldiers to be brilliant at the basics and lead them through the reps and sets required to master the fundamentals needed to execute successfully as warfighters."

The Army will continue to allow some soldiers to be promoted on a temporary basis without attending their education courses under circumstances that could halt them from attending those schools, Stitt wrote in his memo.

Those circumstances include soldiers deployed on combat missions or overseas rotations for more than eight months, pregnant and postpartum soldiers, or those enrolled in spe-

cial training including the Army's Software Factory or its artificial intelligence school, according to the memo. Stitt also wrote the policy waiver could be implemented again if the Army faces a shortage of soldiers in a particular rank for a specific job.

The reinstated policy could mean a longer wait for some soldiers to reach their next rank. Stitt's memo noted the soldiers will be scheduled to attend their required pre-promotion school based on their qualifications as determined by a noncommissioned officer evaluation board or by their total promotion points, which include factors such as their physical fitness test scores, weapons qualifications scores, deployment times and technical certifications.

"Scheduling for [professional military education] attendance is merit-based," Stitt wrote.

## Atlantic storm delivers winds, rain in Northeast

*Associated Press*

BAR HARBOR, Maine — Atlantic storm Lee — which made landfall at near-hurricane strength, bringing destructive winds and torrential rains to New England and Maritime Canada — kept weakening Sunday after officials withdrew some warnings and predicted the storm would disappear early this week.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Sunday morning that the post-tropical cyclone was about 70 miles west-northwest of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and about 180 miles west of Channel-Port Aux Basques, Newfoundland. The top sustained wind speed had dropped to 45 mph.

"Gradual weakening is forecast during the next couple of days, and Lee could dissipate on Tuesday," the U.S. hurricane

center said.

The sky was sunny in Maine on Sunday morning, where 5% of electricity customers were still without power, down from 11% by midday Saturday during the height of the storm. In Canada, 18% of Nova Scotia had no electricity, down from 27% on Saturday. The figure was 3% in New Brunswick, down from 8%, and less than 1% on Prince Edward Island, down from 3%.

The center discontinued a tropical storm warning for the coast of Maine late Saturday and reported the Canadian Hurricane Centre had ended its tropical storm warning for New Brunswick and parts of Prince Edward Island.

Storm surges were expected to subside on Sunday after being forecast as up to 3 feet on Saturday along coastal areas, the hurricane center said.

## Texas AG Paxton back on job after acquittal

*Associated Press*

AUSTIN, Texas — Newly acquitted of impeachment charges, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is back on the job and getting back to the usual.

Promises to keep dragging the Biden administration into court. Support from former President Donald Trump. And coming soon, a sit-down with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

As Paxton on Sunday began his first full day back in office after winning acquittal in the Texas Senate over accusations of corruption and bribery, the Republican is quickly resuming what has long helped make him one of the most resilient political figures in the U.S. despite years of criminal charges and alleged scandal.

At the same time, the verdict is inflaming rifts within the

GOP surrounding his impeachment in the first place. The fallout in the Texas Capitol is likely only beginning and threatens to spill into the 2024 elections, when conservative allies of the Trump-backed attorney general say they will target Republican legislators who led the investigation against Paxton.

Even the very act of impeachment in Texas could get a second look after Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who presided over the trial, called for new guardrails in a fiery speech questioning how the case made it this far. On the other side are Republicans in the Texas House, where Paxton was overwhelmingly impeached and suspended from office in May. Its members bristled at Saturday's verdict and the criticism leveled by the lieutenant governor.



# Libya probes dams' collapse after floods

Associated Press

DERNA, Libya — Libyan authorities have opened an investigation into the collapse of two dams that caused a devastating flood in a coastal city as rescue teams searched for bodies on Saturday, nearly a week after the deluge killed more than 11,000 people.

It's unclear how such an investigation can be carried out in the North African country, which plunged into chaos after a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. For most of the past decade, Libya has been split between rival administrations—one in the east, the other in the west — each

backed by powerful militias and international patrons.

One result has been the neglect of crucial infrastructure, even as climate change makes extreme weather events more frequent and severe.

Heavy rains caused by Mediterranean storm Daniel caused deadly flooding across eastern Libya this month. The floods overwhelmed two dams, sending a wall of water several meters high through the center of Derna, destroying entire neighborhoods and sweeping people out to sea.

More than 10,000 people are missing, according to the Libyan Red Crescent. Six days on, searchers are still digging

through mud and hollowed-out buildings, looking for bodies and possible survivors. The Red Crescent has confirmed 11,300 deaths so far.

Claire Nicolet, who heads the emergencies department of the Doctors Without Borders aid group, said that rescuers found “a lot of bodies” on Friday and were still searching.

“It was a big number ... the sea is still ejecting lots of dead bodies unfortunately,” she told The Associated Press.

She said major aid efforts were still needed, including urgent psychological support for those who lost their families. She said the burial of bodies is still a signif-

icant challenge, but there has been progress in coordinating search and rescue efforts and the distribution of aid.

Libya's General Prosecutor, al-Sediq al-Sour, said that prosecutors would investigate the collapse of the two dams, which were built in the 1970s, as well as the allocation of maintenance funds. He said prosecutors would investigate local authorities in the city, as well as previous governments.

“Treasure citizens that whoever made mistakes or negligence, prosecutors will certainly take firm measures, file a criminal case against him and send him to trial,” he told a news conference in Derna late Friday.

## Dozens are injured at an Eritrean event in Germany

Associated Press

BERLIN — German police said dozens of people, including at least 26 officers, were injured during unrest surrounding an Eritrean cultural festival in the southwestern city of Stuttgart.

Shortly before the event was set to begin Saturday afternoon, around 200 protesters gathered in the area outside and began throwing stones, bottles and other items at police officers and participants of the event. Six of the 26 injured police officers were treated in a hospital for their injuries, police said. Four event participants and two protesters were also injured,

according to police, although information wasn't immediately available about the severity of their injuries.

Saturday's protests were the latest in a string of unrest surrounding Eritrean cultural events in Germany and elsewhere. In July, a clash at an Eritrean festival in the western German city of Giessen left 22 police officers injured. A fight between Eritrean government supporters and opponents in Tel Aviv in early September led to one of the most violent street confrontations among African asylum seekers and migrants in the city's recent

memory.

The event Saturday was organized by several groups considered close to the government of Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

Tens of thousands of people have fled Eritrea for Europe, many alleging they were mistreated by Isaias' repressive government. The conflicts surrounding gatherings like Saturday's highlight the deep divide among members of the Eritrean diaspora, those who remain close to the government and those who have fled to live in exile and strongly oppose Isaias.

On Saturday, Stuttgart police vice president Carsten Hoefer condemned the protesters' actions and said in a statement that “neither the extent nor the intensity of the violence was apparent in advance.”

City officials said there had been no reason to ban the gathering in advance, but that they will take steps to prevent similar unrest in the future.

“We must take decisive action against the emergence of conflicts from other states on German soil,” said Stuttgart Mayor Frank Nopper, according to German news agency dpa.

## Nuke watchdog criticizes Iran for limiting inspectors

Associated Press

BERLIN — The U.N. nuclear watchdog harshly criticized Iran on Saturday for effectively barring several of its most experienced inspectors from monitoring the country's disputed atomic program.

The strongly worded statement came amid long-standing tensions between Iran

and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is tasked with monitoring a nuclear program that Western nations have long suspected is aimed at eventually developing a nuclear weapon. Iran insists the program is peaceful.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, the head of the IAEA, said Iran had withdrawn the designa-

tion of “several experienced Agency inspectors,” barring them from taking part in the monitoring of its program.

“Iran has effectively removed about one-third of the core group of the agency's most experienced inspectors designated for Iran,” he said.

Grossi went on to “strongly condemn this disproportionate and unprecedented uni-

lateral measure,” saying it “constitutes an unnecessary blow to an already strained relationship between the IAEA and Iran.”

Iran's Foreign Ministry linked the move to what it said was an attempt by the United States and three European countries to misuse the IAEA “for their own political purposes.”

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Representative's husband dies in airplane crash

**AK** ANCHORAGE — U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola's husband has died in an airplane crash in western Alaska, the latest fatality involving politicians or their loved ones in the nation's largest state where flights are common because of a limited road system.

Peltola, a Yup'ik who became the first Alaska Native elected to Congress last year, was returning home to be with her family, her chief of staff, Anton McParland, said in the statement.

The Piper PA-18-150 Super Cub appears to have crashed under unknown circumstances upon takeoff after Eugene Peltola Jr. dropped off a hunter and equipment about 65 miles northeast of St. Mary's, National Transportation Safety Board chairperson Jennifer Homendy said during a news conference.

### Suspect in slayings wants no cameras in court

**ID** BOISE — Attorneys for a man accused of stabbing four University of Idaho students to death late last year want cameras banned from the courtroom, contending that news coverage of the criminal proceedings has violated a judge's orders and threatens his right to a fair trial.

Bryan Kohberger is charged with four counts of murder in connection with the deaths at a rental house near the university campus in Moscow, Idaho, last November. A judge entered a not-guilty plea on Kohberger's behalf earlier this year. Latah County Prosecutor Bill Thompson has said he intends to seek

the death penalty, and the case is scheduled for trial this fall, although it could be postponed.

Kohberger was a graduate student studying criminology at Washington State University, which is a short drive from the scene of the killings across the state border. He was arrested at his parents' home in Pennsylvania, and the unusual details of the case have drawn widespread interest.

### McDonald's planning to end self-serve soda

**NY** NEW YORK — Say goodbye to refilling that Coke. McDonald's is getting rid of self-served soda.

The Chicago-based fast food chain plans to eliminate self-service soda machines at its U.S. restaurants by 2032, McDonald's confirmed last week. It's unclear if locations outside the U.S. will follow suit.

McDonald's USA said the goal of the change is to create consistency for customers and crew members across the chain's offerings — from in-person dining to online delivery and drive-thru options.

The company did not specify if any additional factors — such as finances or sanitation — impacted the decision to part ways with its self-serve machines.

### Thousands sign up for magic mushrooms study

**OR** EUGENE — Psilocybin tea, wind chimes and a tie-dye mattress await those coming to an office suite in Eugene to trip on magic mushrooms. For roughly six hours, adults over 21 can experience what many users describe as vivid geometric shapes, a loss of identity and a oneness with

the universe.

Epic Healing Eugene — Oregon's first licensed psilocybin service center — opened in June, marking the state's unprecedented step in offering the mind-bending drug to the public. The center now has a waitlist of more than 3,000 names, including people with depression, PTSD or end-of-life dread.

No prescription or referral is needed, but proponents hope Oregon's legalization will spark a revolution in mental health care.

Colorado voters last year passed a measure allowing regulated use of magic mushrooms starting in 2024, and California's Legislature this month approved a measure that would allow possession and use of certain plant- and mushroom-based psychedelics, including psilocybin and mescaline, with plans for health officials to develop guidelines for therapeutic use.

The Oregon Psilocybin Services Section, charged with regulating the state's industry, has received "hundreds of thousands of inquiries from all over the world," Angela Allbee, the agency's manager, said in an interview.

### Lahaina residents will make visits to properties

**HI** WAILUKU — Maui authorities said they are planning to start letting residents and business owners make escorted visits to their properties in the restricted Lahaina Wildfire Disaster area later this month.

It's been nearly five weeks since the deadliest U.S. wildfire in over a century devastated the historic town of Lahaina, killing

115 people with dozens still listed as missing.

Darryl Oliveira, Maui Emergency Management Agency interim administrator, said in a news conference that officials plan to allow people in certain zones to start entering the restricted area on Sept. 25. He said the goal and purpose of the supervised visits is for them to see their homes and properties safely and to get some closure.

The process will involve applying for a pass and meeting with officials before the escorted visits. Oliveira said they will be offered by zones depending on where the Environmental Protection Agency has finished hazardous materials removal work.

### Rep. Boebert kicked out of 'Beetlejuice' show

**CO** DENVER — Republican Rep. Lauren Boebert apologized Friday after getting kicked out of a musical play in Colorado for disruptive behavior and then falsely denying she had been vaping.

The apology came a day after surveillance video emerged that showed Boebert vaping at her seat in a Denver theater. Her campaign earlier denied the theater's contention that she had been vaping.

The normally combative Boebert said in a Friday statement that her actions were not meant to be malicious or cause harm "but the reality is they did." She was kicked out of the "Beetlejuice" musical on Sept. 10 following complaints from people in the audience that she and another guest were vaping, singing, using phones and causing a disturbance.

— From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# Will the Tide slide out of Top 25?

Associated Press

**W**eek 3 was about just getting through it for most of the highly ranked teams.

No. 1 Georgia, facing its first opponent with a prayer to challenge the two-time defending champs, needed a half to find a groove against South Carolina on Saturday.

No. 2 Michigan had to work around four turnovers to beat Bowling Green.

No. 3 Florida State fought through early lethargy and second-half sloppiness at Boston College to hang on for dear life.

No. 4 Texas used a 21-point fourth quarter to shake Wyoming.

No. 7 Penn State needed five takeaways to beat Illinois.

No. 18 Colorado made a miraculous comeback to beat Colorado State in overtime.

Then there was No. 10 Alabama, which went through two quarterbacks and needed almost three quarters just to get into the end zone at South Florida. The Tide were unrecognizable, even in victory.

As unsettling as last week's loss at home to Texas might have been Alabama fans, this had to feel just as ominous.

"I'm really proud of our players for the way they competed in the game. This was obviously a tough game," coach Nick Saban said.

Next week has the makings of being a huge one in college football, with as many as six matchups of ranked teams.

The immediate question is: Will Alabama be one of them?

The road trip to Tampa, Fla., seemed weird for the Crimson Tide, but Alabama recruits a lot in the Sunshine State and USF plays in an NFL stadium.

The Bulls (1-2) have been languishing for several years, with only one victory against an FBS team since 2020.

What could go wrong for Alabama?

Well, first off a midday thunderstorm caused more than a hour delay in a first half that ended 3-3.

Notre Dame transfer Tyler Buchner got the start at quarterback instead of Jalen Milroe, who made big plays but also threw two interceptions against Texas.

Buchner wasn't the solution, going 5-for-14 for 34 yards.

Ty Simpson (5-for-9 for 73 yards) relieved and was a little better, but the combination of a redshirt freshman processing slowly and an offensive line struggling to protect led to USF registering five sacks, the most for the Bulls in a game in four years.

Milroe did not play at all, and Alabama did not ice the game until powering for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

"We're going to evaluate the quarterbacks that played today and evaluate Jalen Milroe in terms of how he played and decide this week who gives us the best opportunity to be successful as an offensive team," Saban said.

This was a performance without precedent under Saban since his first season in Tuscaloosa was marred by a home loss against Louisiana-Monroe.

Other good teams have bad days and occasionally let overmatched opponents hang around. Not Alabama.

Since that loss to ULM and before Saturday's game, the Tide were 42-0 in the regular season against non-Power Five opponents (including FCS), with an average margin of victory of 40 points.

Only two of those games were decided by fewer than 24 points. The Tide scored at least 31 points in all but one of those games.

The Crimson Tide return home next week for what should

be a key Southeastern Conference West game against No. 17 Mississippi, which beat Georgia Tech.

It's part of a what looks like a monster slate: Ohio State at Notre Dame; Florida State at Clemson; UCLA at Utah; Colorado at Oregon; Oregon State at Washington State and Iowa at Penn State.

All could be games matching ranked teams when the new AP Top 25 comes out Sunday.

Alabama has not been unranked since 2007, a streak of 248 appearances that is second only to Nebraska's 348 straight weeks ranked from 1981-2002. The Tide's run might be in danger.

What is more likely come to an end this week is Alabama's run of 128 polls in the top 10. That, too, is second-longest all-time. Miami went 137 straight polls as a top-10 team from 1985-93.

## Messy SEC

Three weeks into the season, the entire SEC has an unfamiliar look.

The conference has only five undefeated teams. Three of them came into Saturday unranked.

The Pac-12 leads the way with eight unbeaten. The Atlantic Coast Conference has seven, Big Ten six and the Big 12 also has five with perfect records.

Within the SEC, No. 11 Tennessee got outmuscled by the same Florida team that looked totally out of sorts in an opening loss at Utah. The Vols have not won in The Swamp since 2003, and so far Joe Milton is no Hendon Hooker at quarterback.

Outside the conference, the SEC went 1-1 against Power Five opponents Saturday to move to 4-7 on the season.

Missouri scored the SEC's best nonconference victory so far, beating No. 15 Kansas State of the Big 12 on a 61-yard walk-

off field goal from burly kicker Harrison Mevis. It was breakout game for former five-star receiver Luther Burden III, who had seven catches for 114 yards and two touchdowns.

The Big 12 got even later, with BYU winning at Arkansas.

The SEC often heads into November with multiple teams in the College Football Playoff race. This season, it looks a lot more like a conference full of teams that will pick each other off.

With two Saturdays left in September, the SEC's national title hopes might be Georgia or bust.

## Around the country

As for those Bulldogs, the post-Stetson Bennett/Todd Monken offense needs to smooth some things out. ... No coach entered the season on a hotter seat than West Virginia's Neal Brown. The Mountaineers got their coach a huge victory in the Backyard Brawl against Pitt ... No. 6 Ohio State tuned up for its trip to No. 9 Notre Dame by dropping 63 on Western Kentucky, easing some concerns in Columbus about QB Kyle McCord. ... The LSU team some expected to contend for a national title showed up at Mississippi State and routed the Bulldogs, who look lost offensively as they transition away from the late Mike Leach's Air Raid. LSU's Malik Nabers had 191 yards receiving — in the first half alone. ... No. 21 Duke has won each of its first three games by at least 20 points for the first time since 1994. ... South Alabama produced the day's most notable Group of Five over Power Five upset, thumping Oklahoma State in Stillwater. It was one of three games the Big 12 lost to G5 schools. Ohio beat Iowa State and Miami, Ohio, broke a 16-game losing streak against Cincinnati to give the Mid-American Conference two upsets.



# QB Sanders sparks Buffs to 20T win

*Associated Press*

BOULDER, Colo. — His mom gave the pregame speech. His defensive-back son started the scoring with an 80-yard pick-six. His quarterback son won it with a 98-yard drive for the ages and an overtime not soon forgotten.

It was quite a day for Deion Sanders. With a bunch of celebrity friends in town, too, to take it all in.

Shedeur Sanders threw a TD pass to Michael Harrison in the second overtime after leading the drive to tie the game with 36 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter and No. 18 Colorado rallied to beat Colorado State 43-35 early Sunday in front of a full house packed with famous names.

Sanders connected with Harrison for an 18-yard score and then found an open Xavier Weaver on the two-point conversion. The Colorado defense took it from there, with Trevor Woods intercepting Brayden Fowler-Nicolosi's pass on fourth-and-23 to end the game at nearly 12:30 a.m. local time.

It set off a celebration as fans

rushed the field for a second straight week. This was the biggest fourth-quarter comeback for Colorado since 2005.

"We showed that we have no surrender or give-up in us," Buffaloes coach Deion Sanders said. "They never doubted themselves."

In the first OT, Shedeur Sanders patiently waited in the pocket until Harrison flashed open for a 3-yard score. Fowler-Nicolosi followed by connecting with Tory Horton on an 8-yard score.

With 2:06 remaining in the fourth quarter, Sanders and the Buffaloes (3-0) got the ball back on the 2-yard line and trailing 28-20. He led a seven-play drive that culminated with a 45-yard TD pass to Jimmy Horn Jr. with 36 seconds left. Sanders hit Harrison for the two-point conversion.

"Well, we do it in practice all the time, so it's not really a surprise to us," Sanders said of the 98-yard drive. "We like these high-pressure moments"

His dad never doubted.

"This is who he is," Deion Sanders said.

A 23½-point underdog, the Rams led for a large chunk of the game. Their unraveling was 17 penalties for 182 yards, including a flag for a block below the waist that nullified a touchdown in the second overtime.

Rams coach Jay Norvell added spice to the Rocky Mountain Showdown earlier in the week by taking a jab at Deion Sanders for not taking off his sunglasses and hat in interviews. After the game, Sanders and Norvell shook hands amid a sea of fans.

"This rivalry has been going on way longer and before I got here," said Norvell, who's in his second season at Colorado State. "It's going to be going on way after I leave."

As for their squabble, it's water under the bridge to Sanders.

"I wish the best for him," he said.

Sanders and the Buffaloes fed off the perceived slight all the way into the game. Shilo Sanders donned sunglasses after his 80-yard interception return for a touchdown in the first quarter as his proud father raced down the sideline in happiness.

Shedeur Sanders finished

with 348 yards, four TDs and one interception for the Buffaloes, who won their sixth straight over the Rams (0-2). Sanders was missing receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter, who was ruled out in the third quarter with an undisclosed injury and taken to the hospital for further evaluation. He could be out a few weeks.

Fowler-Nicolosi had 367 yards and three TDs. Receiver Tory Horton caught a TD pass and threw another on a trick play to tight end Dallin Holker.

"Every loss hurts but this one does hurt a little more just the way we lost it," Fowler-Nicolosi said. "It's brutal."

It was chippy at times, with Rams defensive lineman Mohamed Kamara getting a finger in the face mask from Shedeur Sanders after a play. Kamara was disqualified in overtime for a targeting call on Sanders.

The emotions heated up early, too, with both teams gathering at midfield about an hour before kickoff and exchanging some words. Hunter left the gathering to run over to the student section and fire up the fans.

## Boos rain on winner Hamlin; Logano among eliminated

*Associated Press*

The best driver to never win a NASCAR championship believes he can lose that tag this year.

At least that's what Denny Hamlin told the crowd at Bristol Motor Speedway as they booed his third victory of the year, 51st of his career, and third in the prestigious short-track Saturday night race.

"It's our year. I just feel we've got it all put together," Hamlin said. "Nothing to stop us at this point."

Hamlin has won three Daytona 500s and most of NASCAR's crown-jewel races, but he has never won a Cup title in 18 years

with Joe Gibbs Racing. He was among the strongest cars in the first round of the playoffs.

He is third behind William Byron of Hendrick Motorsports and Gibbs teammate Martin Truex Jr. with the points reset for NASCAR's second round.

Joey Logano and Kevin Harvick were eliminated from title contention as both NASCAR champions failed to advance out of the first round. Logano became the first reigning champion eliminated in the first round when he crashed early in the third stage and finished 34th. He was watching as a spectator as former Gibbs teammate Hamlin celebrated.

Harvick, who is retiring at the end of the season, also was eliminated after finishing five laps down in 29th. Harvick was the first driver to win the championship in this elimination format in 2014.

Also eliminated were Daytona 500 winner Ricky Stenhouse Jr. and Michael McDowell, despite finishing sixth. Three Ford teams were eliminated, and Stenhouse drives a Chevrolet.

"It wasn't enough. We were in a must-win situation," McDowell said. "This is a learning experience. We'll learn from this, get ready for next year."

For Hamlin, the booing was loud when he stopped his No. 11

Toyota at the finish line. He collected the checkered flag then verbally sparred with the angry spectators.

"Everyone like a winner, right?" he at first said of the jeers.

He boasted "this is our year" for a championship, then addressed the crowd directly.

"I beat your favorite driver," he taunted.

"Who would that be?" asked the announcer.

"All of them," Hamlin said as he headed off to celebrate, likely with the 23XI Racing team he founded, after Bubba Wallace drove his way into the second round with a 14th-place finish.

# Dodgers win 10th NL West title in 11 years

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Clayton Kershaw doesn't know how many more of these celebrations he'll get the chance to enjoy inside the Los Angeles Dodgers' clubhouse.

Wrapping up an NL West title still feels special.

"You have to embrace it. You have to enjoy it. Like I've been saying, this could be the last one for a long time. Every year I say that, but you just can't take it for granted," Kershaw said.

The Dodgers secured yet another NL West crown Saturday night with a 6-2 victory in 11 innings over the Seattle Mariners. It's the 10th division title in 11 seasons for Los Angeles, and the celebration featured hugs and championship T-shirts on the field before bubbly was popped in the clubhouse.

Max Muncy's single off Gabe Speier (2-2) scored Mookie Betts from second base with one out in the top of the 11th to give the Dodgers a 2-1 lead. Chris Taylor and Kiké Hernández followed with two-run singles off Isaiah Campbell, and the numerous fans in Dodger blue roared their approval as Seattle fans headed for the exits.

Evan Phillips (2-4) pitched the 10th inning and Joe Kelly got the final three outs.

**Orioles 8, Rays 0:** Gunnar Henderson homered and drove in three runs, Grayson Rodriguez pitched eight outstanding innings and Baltimore secured a potentially crucial tiebreaker in the AL East with a victory over visiting Tampa Bay.

After losing the first two of this four-game set, the Orioles (92-56) moved a game ahead of second-place Tampa Bay (92-58) and won the season series. That means if the teams tied for first in the division, Baltimore would win.

**Diamondbacks 7, Cubs 6 (13):** Gabriel Moreno singled to right to score Evan Longoria in the 13th inning as host Arizona rallied to beat Chicago.

The Diamondbacks closed to within a half-game of the Cubs for the second NL wild-card berth and are tied with Cincinnati for the third and final spot.

**Marlins 11, Braves 5:** Jake Burger hit a go-ahead two-run homer and Jazz Chisholm Jr. added a grand slam in the eighth inning to lift host Miami.

Luis Arraez and Yuli Gurriel also went deep for the Marlins, who became the first NL East team to win a series against the division champions. Atlanta was 11-0-1 in its previous series against division opponents.

Matt Olson hit his major league-leading 52nd homer and overtook Andruw Jones as Atlanta's season home run leader. Jones hit 51 in 2005.

**Reds 3, Mets 2:** Christian Encarnacion-Strand hit a two-run homer as visiting Cincinnati held off New York for another important victory in the race for the last NL wild card.

**Rockies 9-5, Giants 5-2:** San Francisco's playoff chances were damaged when host Colorado swept a day-night doubleheader, taking advantage of seven walks in the opener and two errors and two wild pitches in the nightcap.

**White Sox 7, Twins 6:** Eloy Jiménez and Gavin Sheets homered during host Chicago's five-run first inning in a victory over Pablo López and Minnesota.

**Phillies 6, Cardinals 1:** Kyle Schwarber hit his 44th homer, sparking NL wild-card leading Philadelphia past host St. Louis.

The three-run homer snapped a 0-for-16 slump for Schwarber, who sports a .197 sea-

son average. He hiked his RBI total to 97.

**Guardians 2, Rangers 1:** Steven Kwan drove in Bo Naylor following Tyler Freeman's tying single in the eighth inning, rallying Cleveland past visiting Texas.

The Rangers, who remain in the second AL wild-card position, dropped their second straight in the series.

**Royals 10, Astros 8:** Kyle Isbel's bunt single highlighted a three-run seventh in host Kansas City's victory over Houston.

With Texas losing 2-1 at Cleveland, Houston maintained a half-game lead in the AL West despite the loss.

**Blue Jays 4, Red Sox 3 (13):** Whit Merrifield singled in the 13th inning to lift Toronto over visiting Boston. The Blue Jays ensured they would not lose ground in the playoff race. Toronto began the day a half-game behind Seattle for the third AL wild-card spot.

**Brewers 9, Nationals 5:** Mark Canha hit a tiebreaking grand slam off Kyle Finnegan with two outs in the eighth inning as NL Central-leading Milwaukee beat visiting Washington.

**Padres 5, Athletics 2:** Juan Soto hit a sacrifice fly and drew a bases-loaded walk, Matt Waldron struck out five while pitching into the sixth for his first major league victory and visiting San Diego secured a series win for manager Bob Melvin against his former Oakland club.

**Tigers 5, Angels 4 (10):** Miguel Cabrera hit a tiebreaking single in the 10th inning as visiting Detroit beat Los Angeles after blowing a three-run lead in the ninth.

**Yankees 6, Pirates 3:** Giancarlo Stanton hit a solo home run in the third inning for just his second hit in eight games, and New York relievers retired 15 consecutive batters in a victory over host Pittsburgh.

## Oblique injury accelerates elbow surgery for Ohtani

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani will have surgery soon on the ligament tear in his pitching elbow after the Los Angeles Angels' two-way star was ruled out for the rest of the season Saturday due to an oblique injury.

Ohtani and the Angels, out of playoff contention, decided to wrap up his season after an MRI exam showed persistent irritation in his oblique muscles, general manager Perry Minasian

said. The injury was likely to prevent Ohtani, who had already missed 11 consecutive games, from hitting effectively in the season's final two weeks.

Ohtani, 29, now intends to have surgery on the torn elbow ligament to prepare for next season, although Minasian didn't know whether it would be Tommy John surgery or another procedure. Ohtani is unlikely to pitch next season, but his agent has said his client wants to

be ready to play as a designated hitter for whatever team he chooses in free agency.

Ohtani was placed on the 10-day injured list Saturday. He has not played since Sept. 3 because of the oblique injury, and his season as a pitcher ended on Aug. 23 after he tore his elbow ligament during a game against Cincinnati.

Even with its early end, Ohtani's season was spectacular.

He led Japan to victory in the

World Baseball Classic in March, winning the tournament's MVP award. Ohtani then set career bests for the Angels with a .304 batting average and 1.066 OPS in his best season at the plate.

He leads the AL with 44 homers and had 96 RBIs, eight triples and 20 stolen bases.

Ohtani was 10-5 with a 3.14 ERA in 23 starts, striking out 167 and walking 55 in 132 innings.