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# STARS AND STRIPES

stripes.com

Volume 79 Edition 228A ©SS 2021

CONTINGENCY EDITION

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2021

Free to Deployed Areas



## Miller's TIME

PHOTOS BY JEFFERY HARRIS/U.S. Army Reserve

**Gen. Scott Miller visits U.S. medical personnel in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, in October 2019. Miller became the longest-serving commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan on March 5.**

## General becomes longest-serving commander of Afghan war as US mulls its next move

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Gen. Austin “Scott” Miller on Friday marked 915 days as head of the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, making him the longest-serving commander of America’s longest war.

“The world recognizes we cannot fail,” Miller said when he was sworn in as the 17th commander overseeing the U.S. and NATO mission on Sept. 2, 2018, taking over from Gen. John Nicholson, who was at the helm for 914 days.

Since then, Miller, who turns 60 in May, played a key role in a historic deal with the Taliban and has overseen a U.S. drawdown amid rising violence among Afghans.

But under the Army general’s command, transparency about the U.S.’s actions in the war has shrunk while territory under Taliban control has grown to reach the highest level since the U.S.’s arrival in 2001.

The former leader of Joint Special Operations Command has mostly remained out of the public

SEE MILLER ON PAGE 4



Miller poses for a selfie with a resident in downtown Kabul last year.

## Biden shows support for change in war powers

BY AAMER MADHANI  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Friday signaled support to replace decades-old authorizations for the use of military force in the Middle East, a little more than a week after he relied on the authorizations to carry out a retaliatory airstrike against Iranian-backed militia in eastern Syria.

The Biden administration announced its position after a bipartisan bill was introduced earlier this week that would repeal the 1991 and 2002 authorizations for the wars in Iraq that presidents from both parties have relied on for legal justification to carry out strikes in the region.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden was committed to working with Congress to “ensure that the authorizations for the use of military force currently on the books are replaced with a narrow and specific framework that will ensure we can protect Americans from terrorist threats while ending the forever wars.”

Biden spurred bipartisan backlash last week after he ordered the strikes against facilities used by Kataeb Hezbollah. The strikes were in response to a rocket attack earlier in February targeting U.S. troops and civilian personnel in northern Iraq without first seeking congressional approval. The U.S. has blamed the militia for numerous attacks targeting U.S. personnel and interests in Iraq in the past.

Sen. Tim Kaine, a lead sponsor of the bill, said the reliance on the decades-old authorizations for use

SEE POWERS ON PAGE 4

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Powell: No interest rate hikes if inflation rises

Associated Press

WASHINGTON— Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell suggested Thursday that inflation will pick up in the coming months but that it would likely prove temporary and not enough for the Fed to alter its record-low interest rate policies.

His message of wait-and-see patience caused bond yields to jump and stocks to fall further, signaling that investors foresee stronger growth and higher inflation on the horizon. The yield on the 10-year

Treasury note had jumped from below 1% at the end of last year to roughly 1.4% Wednesday — and then surged above 1.5% during Powell's remarks.

Stock investors, too, dumped shares in the midst of Powell's remarks, in which he suggested that the Fed would need to see both a near-full recovery in the job market and a sustained rise in inflation above its target level before considering a rate hike.

The S&P 500 index ended Thursday with a loss of 1.3% and

was showing just a sliver of a gain for the year. The tech-heavy Nasdaq pulled back 2.1%. Higher yields on government bonds can entice some investors to sell stocks and buy Treasuries instead, thereby forcing stock prices down.

Powell also said the outlook for the economy has improved after three months of weak job growth. But he cautioned that the economy and the job market are still far from fully recovered and that full employment would not be achieved this year.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 8)	\$1.16
Dollar buys (March 8)	0.8166
British pound (March 8)	\$1.35
Japanese yen (March 8)	104.00
South Korean won (March 8)	1103.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain(Dinar)	0.3771
Britain (Pound)	0.7238
Canada (Dollar)	1.2673
China(Yuan)	6.4985
Denmark (Krone)	6.2405
Egypt (Pound)	15.6955
Euro	0.8392
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7648
Hungary (Forint)	308.50
Israel (Shekel)	3.3278
Japan (Yen)	108.32
Kuwait(Dinar)	0.3031
Norway (Krone)	8.5609
Philippines (Peso)	48.62
Poland (Zloty)	3.86
Saudi Arab (Riyal)	3.7518
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3421

So. Korea (Won)	1130.58
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9292
Thailand (Baht)	30.48
Turkey (NewLira)	7.5320

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

### INTEREST RATES

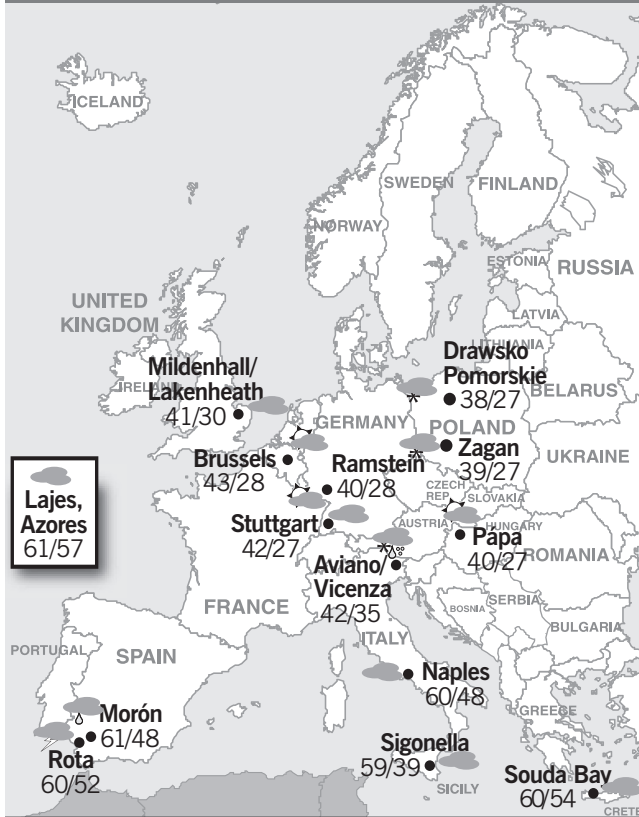
Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.04
30-year bond	2.31

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### SATURDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### SATURDAY IN EUROPE



### SUNDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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## MILITARY

# Rockets struck down in Iraqi base attack

By TARA COPP

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A U.S. defensive system protecting U.S. and coalition forces at an Iraqi air base that came under attack this week struck down three or four incoming rockets before they hit, a defense official told McClatchy on Thursday.

Al-Asad airbase in Iraq is a large training and logistics hub for U.S. and coalition forces. It was targeted by approximately

10 short-range rockets on Wednesday, resulting in the death of one U.S. contractor who had a heart attack while sheltering from the attack.

Al-Asad's Counter-Rocket, Artillery, Mortar (C-RAM) missile defensive system "engaged" with the incoming rounds and early assessments indicate it hit three or four of the 122 mm rockets, the official said on condition of anonymity.

There were ten known loca-

tions where the base was hit, the official said, and it was not clear if more than ten rockets were fired, or if the rockets that were struck down by C-RAM were responsible for some of the ground damage.

The Defense Department has not said who is responsible for the attack, and Iraqi officials are still investigating it.

President Joe Biden on Wednesday pledged to identify who is responsible for the attacks

and hold them responsible.

In the last several weeks attacks on Iraqi military bases housing U.S. and coalition troops, including a rocket attack in February at the U.S. military base in Erbil, that the Pentagon has attributed to Iranian-backed militias has spurred further U.S. military action.

Last week, two F-15E Air Force fighter jets dropped seven precision-guided munitions on known militia sites in Syria.

Defense Department press secretary John Kirby on Wednesday said Iraqi security forces were taking the lead in investigating this latest al-Asad attack.

A year ago al-Asad was hit by a dozen short-range Iranian ballistic missiles that were fired by Iran in response to the targeted U.S. strike against Iranian Gen. Qasem Soleimani, who was killed by a U.S. airstrike ordered by former President Donald Trump.

## Lawmakers call for briefings on extending Guard's deployment

By SARAH CAMMARATA

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Some lawmakers on Thursday called for congressional briefings on possible threats to the Capitol following reports that police have requested an extension of the National Guard deployment in Washington.

"Before any extension for National Guard presence is finalized, lawmakers should be briefed on the latest intelligence threat assessments to determine the necessity of keeping our service members away from their families and full-time jobs," Rep. Michael Waltz, R-Fla., a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a prepared statement. He said the Guard is needed for other missions such as coronavirus vaccine distribution and natural disaster deployments.

Waltz's comments followed a report by The Associated Press that the Capitol Police have requested a 60-day extension of the Guard deployment that is scheduled to end March 12. The report came as the Capitol was on high alert after Capitol Police said Wednesday that it "obtained intelligence that shows a possible plot to breach the Capitol by an identified militia group on Thursday."

Yet some lawmakers slammed the possibility of keeping troops deployed in Washington.

Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma,

the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, told Capitol Hill pool reporters that the request is "outrageous."

"That's not their function, that's not their mission," he said of the Guard troops. "They cannot do it. All of our employed people, all of the thousands of employers who would be forced to do something that they financially couldn't do. It's destroying careers of people. That's not what they're supposed to be."

A defense official on Thursday acknowledged the Pentagon received the request from the police force, but said it was a "draft" and the details of the proposal have not been finalized.

A spokesperson for the Capitol Police did not immediately return a request Thursday seeking comment.

There are still about 5,200 National Guard troops in the nation's capital who were called up to provide support to the Capitol Police in the response to the Jan. 6 riot. Following the riot, there were as many as 26,000 Guard troops in Washington.

Some lawmakers agreed with Waltz's call for congressional briefings.

Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., a member of the House Armed Services Committee, wrote on Twitter that Congress must be briefed about the extension request.



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

National Guardsmen stand guard at the Capitol in Washington on Thursday.

"It's critical that members of Congress get a briefing on what's behind these decisions," she wrote Thursday.

"We all have the same goal: to get back to the point where Capitol Police is capable of protecting us without the Guard's help, and all parties feel confident we can protect the people's business."

But others thought extending the deployment might be needed.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., told reporters that the troops should stay at the Capitol "as long as they are needed."

Pelosi directed retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré to lead a review of Capitol security in the

wake of the deadly Jan. 6 attack.

Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, the ranking Republican of the Senate Rules Committee, told Capitol Hill pool reporters that he had spoken to Honoré who suggested keeping troops in the area "quite a while longer" than two months, similar to what he claimed was the security plan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Post 9/11, 100 troops were deployed to the Capitol perimeter, according to the D.C. National Guard website.

"I do think that some active military police Guard in a more permanent basis near the Capitol could be a good idea for the foreseeable future, principally be-

cause they would actually be able to relieve the Capitol Police for some of their duties," Blunt said.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., also spoke favorably about maintaining "a couple hundred" National Guard troops deployed in Washington to assist the Capitol Police.

"Yes, eventually you want to do that," Klobuchar told a reporter in response to a question about drawing down troops in Washington. "But you want to listen to the law enforcement intelligence about what is safe."

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## Thunderbirds and Blue Angels debut 'Super Delta' formation

Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

Maybe you could call them the Thunder Angels.

The Navy and Air Force got together to team up the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds performance teams that tour the country at air shows to practice a new formation called the "Super Delta."

Images posted to the Thunder-

birds' social media accounts show six of their signature F-16 Fighting Falcons flanking six of the Navy's F/A-18 Super Hornets flying in formation over the Blue Angels' C-130J Super Hercules on the tarmac at Naval Air Facility El Centro in California on Tuesday.

"The formation grew out of a series of joint training opportunities

held in 2020 and 2021, and serves as a symbol of the teamwork, discipline, and skill of the men and women of our United States military forces deployed around the globe," reads a statement from the Air Force.

The new formation will be a highlight of a full flight to broadcast nationwide during the Na-

tional Memorial Day Parade: America Stands Tall, an event to honor "those who have served and sacrificed before us."

The two teams were able to fly together several times last year as part of flyovers around the country to thank those on the front lines battling the coronavirus epidemic.

The Blue Angels' home base is NAS Pensacola while the Thunderbirds' home base is at Nellis AFB in Nevada.

The Blue Angels' complete schedule can be found at blueangels.navy.mil/show.

The Thunderbirds schedule is listed at afthunderbirds.com/site/show-season.

## MILITARY

# GOP senators criticize DOD pick's tweets

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration's nominee for top Pentagon policy adviser was met with sharp criticism from Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, including accusations that he has been too partisan.

Colin Kahl, who served as national security adviser to then-Vice President Joe Biden during the Obama administration, faced repeated questions on his previous support for the Iran nuclear deal and how he would approach that issue now. And a number of GOP senators said they were troubled by partisan tweets Kohl put out during Donald Trump's presidency and they would oppose his nomination. It wasn't clear whether there was enough opposition to derail his nomination.

"We know that there is a new administration and that we will have policy disagreements that we will all try to work through," said the ranking Republican on the panel, Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma. "But how will you rectify the fact that many Americans, including those who work at the Department of Defense, know you only through your very partisan comments? How can we be

confident that you will be a model of nonpartisan policy analysis — which is what the job requires — if you are confirmed?"

Kahl said he worked on a bipartisan basis in his previous jobs in the Obama administration, which included a stint as deputy defense secretary for Middle East issues at the Pentagon from 2009 to 2011. And he told the panel, "This is not a political job, it's a policy job ... I have a long track record of putting politics aside and working on policy."

Republican Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas and others read a number of Kahl's tweets that condemned Republicans and the Trump administration. Cotton said the "volatile" tweets would hurt his ability to work with Congress, adding "your judgement around war and peace are almost always wrong."

In response, Kahl offered an apology, saying the last few years have been politically polarizing and there were times he got swept up in that on social media.

"There were a number of positions that President Trump took that I strongly opposed," he said. "I think the language that I used in opposing those was sometimes disrespectful, and for that, I apologize."

## Powers: Current rules draw criticism in Congress

FROM PAGE 1

of military force "serve no operational purpose, keep us on permanent war footing, and undermine the sovereignty of Iraq."

"Last week's airstrikes in Syria show that the Executive Branch, regardless of party, will continue to stretch its war powers," said Kaine, a Virginia Democrat.

Administration officials defended the airstrikes as legal and appropriate, saying they took out facilities that housed valuable "capabilities" used by Iranian-backed militia groups to attack American and allied forces in Iraq.

But several leading members of Congress, including members in Biden's own party, denounced the

strikes — the first military action he has authorized. Kaine and others argued offensive military action without congressional approval is not constitutional absent extraordinary circumstances.

The White House signaled support to replace the authorizations even as it warned the U.S. may consider military action following a rocket attack earlier this week that hit an air base in western Iraq where American and coalition troops are housed. A U.S. contractor died after at least 10 rockets slammed into the base early Wednesday.

"If we assess further response is warranted, we will take action again in a manner and time of our choosing," Psaki said.



JACKIE SANDERS/U.S. Air Force

Then-acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller, left, walks with Gen. Scott Miller in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Dec. 22.

## Miller: US general pushed against troop withdrawal from Afghanistan

FROM PAGE 1

eye during his time in Afghanistan. But within weeks of assuming command, he made headlines when he escaped an attack in Kandahar that killed provincial police chief Gen. Abdul Raziq and wounded several others, including Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Smiley. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

One of Miller's tasks during his tenure has been to maintain the Afghan government's trust in the United States. That was shaken early when the Trump administration excluded Kabul from talks with the Taliban, which began in late 2018 — around the same time then-President Donald Trump announced plans to slash the number of U.S. troops fighting overseas, including in Afghanistan.

The moves out of Washington put Miller "in react mode very early on in his time in command," said Jason Campbell, a policy researcher at Rand Corp., who has worked with Miller on several occasions.

"Everyone was operating under some level of uncertainty as to what the White House was going to decide or state publicly next," Campbell said in a phone interview.

Miller worked behind the scenes to convince Trump not to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, said Michael O'Hanlon, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution policy group.

"He persuaded Trump to be more patient and careful than the initial instinct of the commander in chief," O'Hanlon said.

Miller brought a no-nonsense military attitude to the table when he attended the talks with the Taliban in Qatar and showed himself to be "a skilled negotiator," a U.S. administration official who was at the talks said.

"He had a calm diplomatic demeanor, but he also called it like it

was when it came to levels of violence, going toe-to-toe with the Taliban in a way that we weren't seeing from other U.S. diplomatic officials," the official, who insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the matter, said in a telephone interview.

"He consistently pressed the Taliban to reduce violence and made clear to them that the U.S. would continue to defend Afghan security forces if necessary," the U.S. official said.

The talks culminated in the February 2020 deal, which said all foreign forces would leave Afghanistan by May if the Taliban met several conditions, including barring terrorist groups like al-Qaida from using Afghanistan to recruit new fighters or launch attacks on the U.S. and its allies.

U.S. troop numbers in Afghanistan fell from about 13,000 to 8,600 less than five months after the deal was signed, and by January, they were down to around 2,500. But critics have said the Taliban have consistently flouted the agreement by maintaining links with al Qaida. They've also ramped up attacks against Afghan security forces.

Miller has admonished the Taliban, including in October, when he called on them to "reduce their violence around the country" and immediately end an offensive in Helmand province.

The statement was made via the Twitter feed of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan spokesman Col. Sonny Leggett immediately after an announcement that the U.S. had launched airstrikes against Taliban positions in Helmand.

The public statement was rare. Under Miller, who declined to be interviewed through his staff, the military has become increasingly opaque about its actions.

In May, the military stopped publishing monthly tallies of airstrikes in the country, something

it did for most of the war, which began in 2001.

Journalists have seen access to NATO troops, officers and bases heavily restricted under Miller in comparison to previous years.

And although the official Twitter account for the NATO commander in Afghanistan has Miller's face on it, it doesn't include a single tweet from him — only statements by his predecessor.

While the full details of the fighting remain unclear, U.S. and Afghan forces have teamed up to capture or kill several al-Qaida leaders in recent months, military officials have said.

Afghan forces respect him because of the bonds he's built during multiple deployments, First Deputy Defense Minister Shah Mahmood Miakhel said.

But Miller's legacy in Afghanistan depends on what happens in the coming months and how, or if, the U.S. withdraws while he's in command.

Last month, he told Reuters news agency that Taliban violence was "much higher than historical norms," which was not conducive to moving "forward in what is hopefully a historic turning point for Afghanistan."

The Biden administration is reassessing the deal with the Taliban, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has said the U.S. will not "undertake a hasty or disorderly withdrawal from Afghanistan."

With the Taliban warning that they'll resume attacks on foreign troops if the alliance does not leave the country by May, Miller may again have to use the diplomacy and directness he called on at the talks in Doha to help end a war that has killed over 3,500 NATO troops, including some 2,300 Americans, and tens of thousands of Afghans.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.  
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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

## Senate nears relief bill votes after delay

By ALAN FRAM  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats agreed Friday to pare back emergency jobless benefits but extend them for an extra month, bidding to solidify support as the Senate approached a voting marathon on a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill.

The deal came as the chamber worked toward approving a final version of the massive package, probably over the weekend, of President Joe Biden's top legislative priority. That would give the House time to approve the legislation and whisk it to Biden for his signature.

First, the Senate was preparing to vote on a mountain of amendments, mostly by GOP opponents.

Virtually all are destined to fail but are designed to force Democrats to take politically awkward votes.

Among them, though, was a Democratic plan that was expected to pass that would trim the House bill's \$400 weekly emergency unemployment benefits.

Under the compromise, those payments — payable on top of regular state benefits — would be reduced to \$300, but run an extra month through September. Taxes also would be reduced on unemployment benefits. A Senate Democratic aide provided details of the deal on condition of anonymity to describe private talks.

Biden and Senate leaders had agreed Wednesday to retain the

House bill's higher \$400 version. The reduction to \$300 seemed to reflect a need to secure support for the overall bill, particularly from moderate Democrats.

Republicans are attacking the bill as a liberal spend-fest that ignores that growing numbers of vaccinations and signs of a stirring economy suggest that the twin crises are easing.

"Our country is already set for a roaring recovery," said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., in part citing an unexpectedly strong report on job creation. "Democrats inherited a tide that was already turning."

Democrats reject that, citing the 10 million jobs the economy has lost during the pandemic and

numerous people still struggling to buy food and pay rent.

"If you just look at a big number you say, 'Oh, everything's getting a little better,'" said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "It's not for the lower half of America. It's not."

In an encouraging sign for Biden, a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 70% of Americans support his handling of the pandemic, including a noteworthy 44% of Republicans.

Moments after the Senate took up the legislation Thursday, Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., forced the chamber's clerks to read aloud the entire 628-page measure. The exhausting task took the staffers 10

hours and 44 minutes and ended shortly after 2 a.m., with Johnson alternately sitting at his desk and pacing around the mostly empty chamber.

Democratic leaders made more than a dozen late additions to their package on Thursday. That reflected their need to cement unanimous support from all their senators — plus Vice President Kamala Harris' tie-breaking vote — to succeed in the precariously divided 50-50 chamber.

The Senate's 51-50 vote to start debating the package, with Harris pushing Democrats over the top, underscored how they were navigating the package through Congress with virtually no margin for error.

## Most military families eligible for vaccine starting in April

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department rollout of its coronavirus vaccine effort will expand to most military families and service members starting in April, Army Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, the director of the Defense Health Agency, said Thursday.

The announcement was made during a virtual town hall hosted by Blue Star Families and the American Red Cross for military families about the coronavirus and the availability of vaccines. Military and civilian health care officials were invited to provide answers to questions on a range of issues including the safety of the vaccines.

About one-third of troops who have been offered the vaccine have declined to receive it, Robert Salesses, the Pentagon's homeland defense chief, told lawmakers last month. Since the vaccine is only authorized on an emergency basis, the Pentagon cannot mandate service members to take it. The military services and the Pentagon have been encouraging people to get vaccinated through social media and other messaging campaigns. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin even spoke about the importance of learning the facts about the safety of the vaccine in a video message that ran during the town hall.

"Speaking as a physician, the safety and

effectiveness of the approved vaccines is exceptional. And every passing week, the evidence only grows stronger," Place said regarding people's hesitancy to be vaccinated.

The Defense Department is following a tiered approach to vaccinating service members, civilian workers, and families. Most locations are now in Phases 1B and 1C, which includes deploying service members, front-line workers such as commissary staff, and people who are 65 and older, Place said.

Vaccines are now available at 335 sites around the world, including in deployed locations and on ships, he said.

Phase 2 is for the remaining military community who were not identified in earlier phases. While a few locations have already moved to Phase 2, a "significant number" of Defense Department locations will move to Phase 2 in April, Place said.

All beneficiaries can access the vaccine for free from either the Defense Department or any vaccination site such as a pharmacy, he said.

Ahead of the military moving season that usually starts in spring, Place said families who are moving will not be prioritized because they will be able to access the vaccine no matter where they are moving to or from. When they are vaccinated will depend on



ANNA NOLTE/18th Wing Public Affairs

**Air Force Master Sgt. Chona Crose, pharmacy flight chief, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Sydney Wray, a pharmacy technician, draw doses of the Moderna vaccine into syringes at Kadena Air Base, Japan, on Feb. 4.**

which tier and phase that they fall under for receiving it.

Elementary school-aged children can start receiving the vaccine in the first quarter of 2022 once the data from safety studies is available, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci also said pregnant women were not part of the vaccine clinical trials, yet several thousands of them have gotten the vaccine

— many of whom work in health care jobs — in order to protect themselves and their unborn child.

"The data looks pretty strong now that it is pretty dangerous to be infected when you are pregnant because you can have an increase in adverse outcomes of the pregnancy and the health of the mother," he said.

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## Navy leader in Japan notes 'positive outlook' as cases drop

By JOSEPH DITZLER  
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The largest U.S. naval base in Japan reported two new cases of the coronavirus Friday, a day after its commander lifted some restrictions for sailors at the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Yokosuka Naval Base, 35 miles south of Tokyo, had two individuals test positive during medical screenings, according to a Facebook post. The naval hospital there is monitoring five patients.

Yokosuka's case numbers have declined significantly since December, when the base reported 144 patients, and January, when it reported 293. Among U.S. bases in Japan, only the Marine Corps camps on Okinawa recorded higher coronavirus numbers over the past year than Yokosuka, the homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Base commander Capt. Rich Jarrett, in a video address posted Thursday on Facebook, challenged his command to make that

his last video update on COVID-19 by adhering in the home stretch to public health measures and getting vaccinated. COVID-19 is the coronavirus respiratory disease.

Jarrett broadened the off-duty travel area but left Tokyo and Kawasaki cities off-limits. He lifted the ban on off-duty use of mass transit, with the admonition to avoid riding trains and buses during rush hours.

Jarrett let stand an 8 p.m.-5

a.m. curfew, in keeping with the extension of emergency measures in Kanagawa prefecture until March 21. The state of emergency began Jan. 7 in Tokyo and neighboring Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama prefectures to stem a rise in infections.

In South Korea, the Army's Camp Casey returned to its pandemic routine after three days of restrictions, according to a Facebook post Friday. Casey, less than 20 miles from the Demilitarized

Zone, is home to the 210th Field Artillery Brigade.

Col. Ellis Baker, commander of Casey and Yongsan Garrison, on Wednesday ordered base activities curtailed and imposed a ban on travel to neighboring Dongducheon city after a spike in new cases there.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.  
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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# Traffic deaths spike despite less traveling

By TOM KRISHER  
Associated Press

DETROIT — Pandemic lockdowns and stay-at-home orders kept many drivers off U.S. roads and highways last year. But those who did venture out found open lanes that only invited reckless driving, leading to a sharp increase in traffic-crash deaths across the country.

The nonprofit National Safety Council estimates in a report issued Thursday that 42,060 people died in vehicle crashes in 2020, an 8% increase over 2019 and the first jump in four years.

Plus, the fatality rate per 100 million miles driven spiked 24%, the largest annual percentage increase since the council began collecting data in 1923.

And even though traffic is now getting close to pre-coronavirus levels, the bad behavior on the roads is continuing, authorities say.

"It's kind of terrifying what we're seeing on our roads," said Michael Hanson, director of the Minnesota Public Safety Department's Office of Traffic Safety. "We're seeing a huge increase in the amount of risk-taking behavior."

Last year's deaths were the most since 2007 when 43,945 people were killed in vehicle crashes. In addition, the safety council estimates that 4.8 million people were injured in crashes last year.

Federal data shows that Americans drove 13% fewer miles last year, or roughly 2.8 trillion miles, said Ken Kolosh, the safety council's manager of statistics. Yet the number of deaths rose at an alarming rate, he said.

"The pandemic appears to be taking our eyes off the ball when it

comes to traffic safety," Kolosh said.

Of the reckless behaviors, early data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show speed to be the top factor, Kolosh said. Also, tests of trauma center patients involved in traffic crashes show increased use of alcohol, marijuana and opioids, he said.

In Minnesota, traffic volumes fell 60% when stay-home orders were issued early in the pandemic last spring. Hanson said state officials expected a corresponding drop in crashes and deaths, but while crashes declined, deaths increased.

"Almost immediately the fatality rate started to go up, and go up significantly," Hanson said, adding that his counterparts in other states saw similar increases. "It created less congestion and a lot more lane space for drivers to use, and quite honestly, to abuse out there."

In late March and early April, the number of speed-related fatalities more than doubled over the same period in 2019 in the state, Hanson said. Last year, Minnesota recorded 395 traffic deaths, up nearly 9% from 364 in 2019.

Drivers also used the empty roads to drive extreme speeds. In 2019, the Minnesota State Patrol's 600 troopers handed out tickets to just over 500 drivers for going over 100 mph. That number rose to 1,068 in 2020, Hanson said.

Traveling over 100 mph makes crashes far more severe, the safety council said.

The high number of speeding drivers is continuing even as traffic is starting to return to pre-pandemic levels, according to Hanson.



CORVALLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT/AP

An Oregon man crashed this Tesla while going about 100 mph, destroying the vehicle, a power pole and starting a fire in Corvallis, Ore., on Nov. 17, 2020. A study found that traffic accidents increased during the pandemic.



GILLIAN FLACCUS/AP

Store to Door employee Nancy Murphy, left, prepares to embrace senior citizen Wendy Wersch in Portland, Ore., as she delivers an order of groceries for the nonprofit, Feb. 25.

## 1 in 3 nonprofit groups face financial peril amid crisis

By GLENN GAMBOA  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — More than one-third of U.S. nonprofits are in jeopardy of closing within two years because of the financial harm inflicted by the viral pandemic, according to a study being released Wednesday by the philanthropy research group Candid and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy.

The study's findings underscore the perils for nonprofits and charities whose financial needs have escalated over the past year, well in excess of the donations that most have received from individuals and foundations. The researchers analyzed how roughly 300,000 nonprofits would fare under 20 scenarios of varying severity. The worst-case scenario led to the closings of 38% of the nonprofits. Even the scenarios seen as more realistic resulted in closures well into double digit percentages.

Officials of Candid, which includes the philanthropic information resources GuideStar and Foundation Center, and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, which analyzes charitable giving during crises, said the most dire scenarios could be avoided if donations were to increase substantially — from the government as well as from private contributors.

"If you are a donor who cares about an organization that is rooted in place and relies on revenue from in-person services, now is the time probably to give more," said Jacob Harold, Candid's executive vice president.

Among the most vulnerable nonprofits, the study said, are those involved in arts and enter-

**'Now is the time probably to give more.'**

Jacob Harold  
Candid's executive vice president

tainment, which depend on ticket sales for most of their revenue, cannot significantly reduce their expenses and don't typically hold much cash.

Other studies have concluded that smaller arts and culture groups, in particular, are at serious risk. Californians for the Arts, for example, surveyed arts and culture nonprofits in the state and found that about 64% had shrunk their workforces. Roughly 25% of them had slashed 90% or more of their staffs. And a report last week from New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli found that employment in New York City's arts, entertainment and recreation sector tumbled 66% during 2020.

"It really has been devastating," said Kristina Newman-Scott, president of BRIC, a Brooklyn arts institution best-known for its community TV channel and Celebrate Brooklyn! concert series. "We have a lot of empathy for our colleagues and friends in the arts space who, based on their model, see things that are just not going to be the same for them. They will be navigating a very different financial pathway."

Newman-Scott said BRIC has been helping sustain smaller arts nonprofits and offering artists unrestricted \$10,000 grants through

its Colene Brown Art Prize.

Harold said that while arts and entertainment groups may be at particular risk, nonprofits from all sectors are in danger. According to the study, the District of Columbia was expected to lose the most nonprofits per capita, followed by Vermont and North Dakota.

The most vulnerable nonprofits may try to reduce costs this year by narrowing their focus or by furloughing workers. Some may seek a merger or an acquisition to bolster their financial viability, Harold noted, although doing so would still mean that fewer nonprofits would survive.

"A lot of nonprofit boards were able to say, 'Oh, this is going to end soon' and 'We're fine for a year,'" Harold said. "But they might not be fine for two years. So if they dragged their feet last year, they may find themselves really having to scramble this year to make the structural changes now."

President Joe Biden last week ordered the Small Business Administration to prioritize businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 20 employees in the awarding of loans through the Paycheck Protection Program.

"Since the beginning of this pandemic, 400,000 small businesses have closed — 400,000 — and millions more are hanging by a thread," Biden said. "It's hurting black, Latino and Asian American communities the hardest."

Harold said that while the federal government's focus on small businesses and small nonprofits will help some of them survive, "it's not going to have a huge impact."

# VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

## Reports: NY officials changed count of nursing home deaths

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Top aides to Gov. Andrew Cuomo altered a state Health Department report to obscure the true number of people killed by COVID-19 in the state's nursing homes, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times reported late Thursday.

The aides, including the secretary to the governor, Melissa DeRosa, pushed state health officials to edit the July report so only residents who died inside long-term care facilities, and not those who became ill there and later died at a hospital, were counted, the newspapers reported, citing documents and people with knowledge of the administration's internal discussions.

The report was designed and released to rebut criticism of Cuomo over a March 25 directive that barred nursing homes from rejecting recovering coronavirus patients being discharged from hospitals. Some nursing homes complained at the time that the policy could help spread the virus.

The report concluded the policy played no role in spreading infection.

The state's analysis was based partly on what officials acknowledged at the time was an imprecise statistic. The report said 6,432 people had died in the state's nursing homes.

State officials acknowledged that the true number of deaths was higher because of the exclusion of patients who died in hospitals, but they declined at the time to give any estimate of that larger number of deaths, saying the numbers still needed to be verified.

The Times and Journal reported that, in fact, the original drafts of the report had included that number, then more than 9,200 deaths, until Cuomo's aides said it should be taken out.

State officials insisted Thursday that the edits were made because of concerns about accuracy, not to protect Cuomo's reputation.

"While early versions of the report included out of facility deaths, the COVID task force was not satisfied that the data had been verified against hospital data and so the final report used only data for in facility deaths, which was disclosed in the report," said Department of Health Spokesperson Gary Holmes.

### California

SACRAMENTO — California will begin sending 40% of all vaccine doses to the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the state to try to inoculate people most at risk from

the coronavirus and get the state's economy open more quickly, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Thursday in the latest shake-up to the state's rules.

The doses will be spread among 400 ZIP codes where there are about 8 million people eligible for shots, said Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state's health and human services secretary. Many of the neighborhoods are in Los Angeles County and the central valley, which have had among the highest rates of infection.

The areas are considered most vulnerable based on metrics such as household income, education level and access to health care. Newsom said that not only is this the right thing to do, it's critical to opening up more of the state's economy.

### Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has faced political pressure and angry constituents over her state's mask order during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the 76-year-old governor of the deeply red state has resisted calls to drop the requirement as Republican governors across the South either shunned mask mandates altogether or lifted them in late winter.

"Maybe they don't have access to the same information I have. We want to be abundantly clear and abundantly safe before we drop the mask mandate," Ivey said when asked about fellow Republicans — including the Alabama Senate and the lieutenant governor — who urged her to end the order.

Ivey issued Alabama's mask order in July and announced on Thursday that she would extend it five more weeks until April 9.

### Oregon

SALEM — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said Thursday that starting next week counties that have moved out of the COVID-19 extreme risk level will not be moved back into it without giving them two weeks to improve their case numbers.

The temporary freeze also will allow businesses to avoid abrupt closures and major changes in how they do business. If case numbers don't improve in those two weeks, however, the county will move backward.

"Recognizing the challenges businesses encounter when facing a switch back and forth between Extreme Risk and other risk levels, this two-week extension will alleviate some of these challenges



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

St. John's Well Child and Family Center facilities coordinator Raul Chiriboga, middle, helps Joel Flores, 36, who has autism, and his mother, Emilia del Carmen Flores, 75, get through with the wheelchair at the COVID-19 vaccination site at the East Los Angeles Civic Center in Los Angeles, on Thursday.

and give counties a bit more time to bring case rates down," she said in an emailed statement. "As always, businesses and community members should continue to make smart choices and follow state-wide and county-specific health and safety guidance."

### Texas

AUSTIN — Texas reported 315 more deaths Thursday from the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 as the state's pandemic death toll neared 44,000.

The Texas Department of State Health Services said the state's COVID-19 death toll stood at 43,878 Thursday. The state's confirmed and probable coronavirus cases rose by 5,903 to 2,671,442. An estimated 152,267 of those cases were active Thursday, officials said.

Of those active cases, 5,263 required hospitalization as of Thursday, the state's most recent total made available. That was 245 fewer than Wednesday.

According to figures from Johns Hopkins University, over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases in Texas has fallen by 7,265.7 per day.

### Ohio

COLUMBUS — Gov. Mike DeWine on Thursday set a specific target of reduced coronavirus cases as the benchmark for ending public health orders in Ohio, including mask wearing.

Those orders will be lifted once the state hits the mark of 50 coronavirus cases per 100,000 people for two weeks, DeWine said. He called the goal "very doable," noting that that figure has already dropped from 731 cases on Dec. 3 to 445 cases on Feb. 3, and to 179 cases on Thursday.

But meeting that goal requires continued mask wearing for now and for as many people to receive

the coronavirus vaccine as possible, DeWine said. The state now has supplies of three vaccines from Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

### Florida

MIAMI — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and state health officials came under deeper scrutiny amid revelations that seniors in a wealthy enclave in Key Largo received hundreds of life-saving vaccinations as early as mid-January, giving ammunition to critics who say the Republican governor is favoring wealthy constituents over ordinary Floridians.

The revelations were the latest example of wealthy Floridians getting earlier access to coronavirus vaccines, even as the state has lagged in efforts to get poorer residents vaccinated.

DeSantis pushed back Thursday, saying a local hospital — not the state — was behind the vaccinations of more than 1,200 residents of the exclusive Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, Fla., and that the state "wasn't involved in it in any shape or form."

Despite the governor's denials of quid pro quos, the charges of favoritism were amplified by money pouring into the governor's campaign coffers from wealthy benefactors with ties to communities awarded vaccination sites — like the one in Key Largo. One resident of Ocean Reef, Republican former Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner, last week gave the Florida governor's campaign committee \$250,000.

### Connecticut

HARTFORD — Connecticut will be relaxing many coronavirus-related restrictions in two weeks on businesses, theaters, churches and travel but will be keeping the statewide mask mandate, Gov. Ned Lamont said Thursday while citing declining infections and hospitalization and

increasing vaccinations.

An array of changes will take effect March 19, such as making the state's restrictions for incoming travelers — including a 10-day quarantine — an advisory rather than mandatory.

Connecticut will be among many states that are easing their COVID-19 restrictions on people and businesses, despite repeated warnings from health officials.

On March 19, capacity limits will be eliminated on restaurants, libraries, museums, aquariums, gyms, retail stores, hair salons and churches. Restaurants will still have to close their dining rooms at 11 p.m. and seat no more than eight people per table.

### Kansas

TOPEKA — Kansas plans to give thousands of meatpacking plant workers their first COVID-19 vaccines by the end of next week, Gov. Laura Kelly announced Thursday.

The vaccinations for meatpacking workers began Thursday afternoon in southwestern Kansas, and Kelly said the state plans to administer the first of two doses to more than 12,000 of them across the state. Three counties in the area — Seward, Ford and Finney — have among the highest per capita number confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases in the state because of outbreaks last spring.

The governor said the state has considered meatpacking plant workers critical to the state's economy from the beginning but now is getting enough vaccine doses to push to get them inoculated.

"This is crucial and the right path to protect those workers and the communities where these plants are located," Martin Rosas, the president of the United Food and Commercial Workers local union for Kansas, said during a Zoom news conference.

## NATION

# Refugees' flights cancelled: Trump policy still in place

By JULIE WATSON  
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — More than 260 refugees who were vetted, approved and booked to come to the United States have had their flights canceled by the State Department over the past two weeks because they do not qualify under restrictions imposed by former President Donald Trump, refugee resettlement agencies say.

The restrictions came when Trump capped refugee admissions at a record low of 15,000. President Joe Biden proposed quadrupling refugee admissions and eliminating Trump's restrictions in a plan that was communicated to Congress three weeks ago.

Meantime, the State Department, which coordinates flights with resettlement agencies, booked the refugees with the anticipation that Biden would have replaced Trump's orders by now, according to the agencies. But Biden has not issued a presidential determination since his administration notified Congress, which is required by law, and Trump's orders have remained in place.

The action does not require congressional approval and past presidents have issued such presidential determinations that set the cap on refugee admissions shortly after the notification to Congress.

As a result, the State Department has canceled the flights of at least 264 refugees and more cancellations are expected, according to resettlement agencies.

Most of the refugees are from Africa and do not qualify for entry under the restrictions that Trump implemented that allocated most of the spots for people fleeing religious persecution, Iraqis who have assisted U.S. forces there, and people from Central America's Northern Triangle, the resettlement

agencies say.

Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS, a Maryland-based Jewish nonprofit that is one of nine agencies that resettles refugees in the U.S., said all flights for refugees who don't qualify under Trump's restrictions have been canceled through March 19.

"Real lives are being impacted," Hetfield said. "To say I am very disappointed that the Biden administration would treat refugees this way would be an understatement."

Many of the refugees had sold their belongings and left places they were renting and now are scrambling to find another place to stay until they get word they can come to the United States.

Melaku Gebretsadik, 54, an Eritrean refugee who lives in Greeley, Colo., was on his way to the Denver airport Tuesday with flowers and gifts to greet his wife and three children when he was told their flights were canceled. He has been waiting to be reunited with them for a decade.

"My heart was broken," Gebretsadik said through an interpreter.

His family was told they should be re-booked on a flight in a couple of weeks but Gebretsadik is not going to get his hopes up: "I don't know what to believe," he said.

The Biden administration gave no explanation about the delay or cancellation of flights when asked about the situation Thursday.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said Secretary of State Antony Blinken "believes that it is very much in our DNA to be a country that welcomes those fleeing persecution, welcomes those fleeing violence the world over. It is precisely why discriminatory travel bans were done away with."

But he said he had no updates on "our efforts to undo some of the damage to the program."



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

U.S. Capitol Police push back rioters trying to enter the U.S. Capitol in Washington Jan. 6.

## Trump State Department aide charged in assault on Capitol

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER  
Associated Press

A former State Department aide in President Donald Trump's administration has been charged with participating in the deadly siege at the Capitol and assaulting officers who were trying to guard the building, court papers show.

It's the first known case to be brought against a Trump appointee in the Jan. 6 insurrection, which led to Trump's historic second impeachment.

Federico Klein, who also worked for Trump's 2016 campaign, was seen wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat amid the throng of people in a tunnel trying to force their way into the Capitol on Jan. 6, the papers say. Klein pushed his way toward the doors, where, authorities say, "he physically and verbally engaged" with officers trying to keep the

mob back.

Klein was seen on camera violently shoving a riot shield into an officer and inciting the crowd as it tried to storm past the police line, shouting, "We need fresh people, we need fresh people," according to the charging documents.

As the mob struggled with police in the tunnel, Klein pushed the riot shield, which had been stolen from an officer, in between the Capitol doors, preventing police from closing them, authorities say. Eventually, an officer used chemical spray, forcing Klein to move somewhere else, officials say.

Klein was arrested Thursday in Virginia and faces charges including obstructing Congress and assaulting officers using a dangerous weapon.

He was in custody on Friday and couldn't be reached for com-

ment. A Trump spokesman said he had no comment.

Klein became a staff assistant in the State Department shortly after Trump's inauguration in 2017, according to a financial disclosure report. He held a top secret security clearance that was renewed in 2019, according to the court papers. He resigned from his position on Jan. 19, the day before Joe Biden was sworn in as president, authorities said.

One of Klein's State Department coworkers helped authorities identify him, officials said.

A Department of State diplomatic security special agent interviewed by an FBI agent said that Klein worked in the Office of Brazilian and Southern Cone Affairs, according to the court papers. The Department of State official identified Klein in photos and video shown by the FBI, officials said.

## California proposes ban on gendered toy, children's sections at stores

By ANDREW SHEELER  
The Sacramento Bee

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's large retailers would have to do away with boy and girl signage for toys and child care aisles, under a bill being considered by state lawmakers.

Assembly Bill 1084 would require retailers with 500 or more employees "to maintain undivided areas of its sales floor where the majority of those items being offered are displayed, regardless of whether an item has traditionally been marketed for either girls or

for boys," according to the Legislative Counsel's digest of the bill.

The bill would also prohibit the use of signage to indicate whether a particular child care item or toy is for boys or girls. Online retailers with a physical presence in California would be required to label their toy and child care sections in a unisex or gender-neutral way.

The bill, which if passed would go into effect Jan. 1, 2024, contains a provision to punish violating retailers with a \$1,000 civil penalty.

The bill is co-authored by Assemblyman Evan Low, D-Camp-

bell, who chairs the California Legislative LGBT Caucus, and Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia, D-Bell Gardens, who chairs the California Legislative Women's Caucus.

A previous version of the bill was introduced in 2020, but was pulled at Low's request because the Legislature was grappling with a then-ascendant COVID-19 pandemic.

Low said that he was inspired by Target's 2015 decision to abolish gendered kids sections.

"As much as I'd like to think of

this as watershed legislation, this is something the industry is already doing. We're just trying to play catch up," he said.

Low said he also took inspiration for the bill from a staffer's 9-year-old daughter, who wanted to know why she had to go into the "boys" aisle to find science-related toys.

"That was the impetus of this, which is how do we make a safe space today for children in society," he said.

Low said the bill is especially important as children begin to re-

turn to school as coronavirus-related closures come to an end. It's important to provide them with a positive experience that lets them shop without stigma, he said.

He likened the bill to several new California laws that prohibit retailers from marking up items marketed to women, mandating that corporations appoint women to their boards of directors, and establishing gender-neutral bathrooms.

"That's our agenda; those are our California values and that's our agenda," Low said.

## NATION



NASA/AP

**US astronaut Kate Rubins is shown outside the International Space Station during a space walk Friday. Rubins and Japan's Soichi Noguchi floated outside to complete unfinished work from Sunday's spacewalk. More mounting brackets and struts needed to be installed for improved solar panels due to arrive in June.**

## Spacewalking astronauts tackle more solar panel work

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL — For the second time this week, a pair of astronauts floated outside Friday to get the International Space Station ready for new solar panels.

NASA's Kate Rubins and Japan's Soichi Noguchi headed toward the unfinished work from Sunday's spacewalk, located on the far port end of the orbiting lab. They needed to finish installing mounting brackets and struts, and tighten some sticky bolts.

The equipment will support the first set of improved solar panels, due to arrive in June.

NASA is upgrading the space station's power grid to accom-

modate more astronauts and experiments, now that SpaceX is launching crews and Boeing should be too by year's end. The eight solar panels up there now have degraded over time; the oldest were launched 20 years ago.

The six new solar wings — smaller but more efficient — will fit over the older ones and boost the station's power capability by up to 30%. Boeing is supplying the panels, which will be launched in pairs by SpaceX over the next year.

During Sunday's spacewalk, Rubins and NASA astronaut Victor Glover encountered a number of stubborn bolts that prevented them from complet-

ing the support setup.

NASA decided the leftover work was more important than the other chores that had been scheduled for Friday's spacewalk, namely venting and rearranging hoses for ammonia coolant. Future spacewalkers will deal with that.

The latest spacewalk should be the last for the station's current residents, whose half-year missions are coming to a close.

Rubins will return to Earth in mid-April in a Russian capsule, along with two Russians. Noguchi, Glover and two other NASA astronauts will fly SpaceX back in late April or May.

## Dallas cop charged after hitman says he arranged killings

By JAKE BLEIBERG  
Associated Press

DALLAS — A Dallas police officer was arrested Thursday on two counts of capital murder, more than a year and a half after a man told investigators that he kidnapped and killed two people at the officer's instruction in 2017, authorities said.

Bryan Riser, a 13-year veteran of the force, was arrested Thursday morning and taken to the Dallas County jail for processing, according to a statement from the police department.

Riser was arrested in the unconnected killings of Liza Saenz, 31, and Albert Douglas, 61, after a man came



Riser

forward in August 2019 and told police he had kidnapped and killed them at Riser's direction, police Chief Eddie Garcia said during a news conference. He said investigators don't know the motives for the killings, but that they were not related to Riser's police work.

Garcia did not explain why Riser was arrested nearly 20 months after the witness came forward, and police declined to answer subsequent questions about the timing. Riser joined the department in 2008, and Garcia acknowledged that he had been patrolling Dallas while under investigation for the killings.

The chief stressed that his homicide division and the FBI were still investigating and said the department was reviewing Riser's arrests.

Saenz's body was pulled from the Trinity River in southwest Dallas

on March 10, 2017, with several bullet wounds, the chief said. Douglas was reported missing that year and his body hasn't been found.

Three men were charged with capital murder in the killing of Saenz: Kevin Kidd, Emmanuel Kilpatrick and Jermon Simmons. Kilpatrick is serving life in prison for the killings of a father and son. Kidd and Simmons remain in Dallas County jail on capital murder charges stemming from the killings of Saenz and the father and son. Simmons is also charged in another death.

One of the men charged with Saenz's killing told police that he and Riser were involved in burglaries when they were young, according to an affidavit for Riser's arrest. It does not identify the man by name.

More recently, Riser and the man allegedly hatched a plan to rob drug stash houses, but they didn't follow through with it. Instead, according to the affidavit, the man told investigators that Riser offered to pay him a total of \$9,500 to kidnap and kill Douglas and later Saenz.

Both were shot and their bodies were dumped in the river, the court states.

The affidavit states that Riser told the hired killer Saenz was an "informant." The document does not elaborate, and police declined to answer questions about whether Saenz had some connection to the department.

Riser has been put on administrative leave pending the outcome of an internal affairs investigation. Garcia said "we're going to expedite our process" toward his firing.

"We will not allow anyone to tarnish this badge," the chief said.

## IG: Audit finds major gaps in bio weapons detection system

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. program created after the 2003 anthrax attacks to help detect biological weapons provided protection in less than half the states and couldn't detect many of the known threats, according to a report released Thursday.

The program known as BioWatch, which described itself in a mission statement as a nationwide early warning system, was capable of detecting only six of 14 biological agents known to be potential threats. It also left detection equipment exposed and unguarded, the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security found.

"Without implementing changes to address BioWatch's challenges, the United States' ability to prepare for, detect, and respond to a potential bioterrorism attack is impeded, which could result in significant loss of human life," the inspector general concluded.

BioWatch, which is run by a component of Homeland Security, was created in 2003 in response to the deadly mailing of anthrax-laced envelopes to news media and government offices two years earlier. It has faced criticism for years.

Intended to supplement existing surveillance programs, BioWatch consists of air sampling equipment and lab facilities around the na-

tion. It was meant to reduce the time it takes to recognize an attack by monitoring for known biological agents. It costs about \$80 million per year to run, according to previous government reports.

The inspector general noted, however, that it has detection capability in just 22 of the 50 states.

Contrary to billing, "BioWatch does not operate a nationwide early warning system," the report said.

Previous reviews in recent years have faulted the program's computer network security and said it lacked reliable data about its capabilities for detecting an attack, among other problems. The Countering Weapons of Mass De-

struction Office, which runs BioWatch, in 2019 ranked lowest across 420 government agencies, for employee satisfaction and commitment, according to a report by the General Accountability Office.

Former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, co-chairs of the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense, have called for the replacement of BioWatch, which they say relies on winds blowing in the optimal direction and can take up to 36 hours to provide evidence of a biological agent.

The new report, based on an audit of the program conducted last year, found that BioWatch no long-

er carries out routine full-scale exercises, which in previous years had uncovered a range of problems with preparedness for a possible attack.

The Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office generally concurred with the findings in the report and said it is working to address problems raised in the audit. But its director also defended the overall value of the program.

BioWatch is integral to the office's mission "and serves as the department's best tool to effectively prepare for, detect and respond to bioterrorism threats," David Richardson, an assistant secretary at DHS who runs the office, wrote in a letter accompanying the report.

## WORLD

# China boosts defense spending by 6.8% in 2021

Associated Press

BEIJING — China is increasing its defense spending by 6.8% in 2021 as it works to maintain a robust upgrading of the armed forces despite high government debt and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

A national budget report issued Friday said China would spend \$210 billion on defense in the coming year.

That's up from \$180 billion last year representing a 6.6% boost, the lowest percentage increase in at least two decades.

The military budget has dipped during periods of slower economic growth, but has also been dropping steadily from the double-digit percentage increases over years as the increasingly powerful military matures and rapid expansion of what is already the world's second largest defense budget is no longer required.

The lavish spending increases of years past have given China the second-largest defense budget in the world behind the U.S. With 3 million troops, the world's largest standing military has been steadily adding aircraft carriers, nucle-

ar-powered submarines and stealth fighters to its arsenal.

The government says most of the spending increases go toward improving pay and other conditions for troops while observers say the budget omits much of China's spending on weaponry, most of it developed domestically. China's military is largely designed to maintain its threat to use force to bring Taiwan under its control, although it has also grown more assertive in the South China Sea, the Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and elsewhere.

The U.S., whose defense spending is estimated to run to about \$934 billion between Oct. 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, has complained of a lack of transparency in China's defense programs, fueling speculation that Beijing aims to supplant America as the primary military power in East Asia.

The People's Liberation Army exercises a strong political role as the military branch of the ruling Communist Party. President and party leader Xi Jinping heads the government and party commissions that oversee the armed forces.



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

**A type 094A Jin-class nuclear submarine Long March 10 of the Chinese navy participates in a naval parade in the sea near Qingdao in China's Shandong province in 2019.**



ANDREW MEDICHINI/AP

**Pope Francis is welcomed Friday by Iraqi President Barham Salih, at Baghdad's Presidential Palace, Iraq.**

## Pope urges Iraq to embrace its Christians during visit

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Pope Francis opened the first-ever papal visit to Iraq on Friday with a plea for the country to protect its centuries-old diversity, urging Muslims to embrace their Christian neighbors as a precious resource and asking the embattled Christian community — “though small like a mustard seed” — to persevere.

Francis brushed aside the coronavirus pandemic and security concerns to resume his globe-trotting papacy after a yearlong hiatus spent under COVID-19 lockdown in Vatican City. His primary aim over the weekend is to encourage Iraq's dwindling Christian population, which was violently persecuted by Islamic State and still faces discrimination by the Muslim majority, to stay and help rebuild the country devastated by wars and strife.

“Only if we learn to look beyond our differences and see each other as members of the same human family,” Francis told Iraqi authorities in his welcoming address, “will we be able to begin an effective process of rebuilding and leave to future generations a better, more just and more humane world.”

The 84-year-old pope donned a facemask during the flight from Rome and throughout all his protocol visits, as did his hosts. But the masks came off when the leaders sat down to talk, and social distancing and other health measures appeared lax at the airport and on the streets of Baghdad, despite the country's worsening COVID-19 outbreak.

The government is eager to show off the relative stability it has achieved after the defeat of the ISIS “caliphate.” Nonetheless, security measures were tight.

Iraqis, though, seemed keen to welcome Francis and the global attention his visit brought. Some lined the road to cheer his motorcade. Banners and posters in central Baghdad depicted Francis with the slogan “We are all Brothers.”

At a pomp-filled gathering with President Barham Salih at a palace inside Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, Francis said Christians and other minorities in Iraq deserve the same rights and protections as the Shiite Muslim majority.

“The religious, cultural and ethnic diversity that has been a hallmark of Iraqi society for millennia

is a precious resource on which to draw, not an obstacle to eliminate,” he said. “Iraq today is called to show everyone, especially in the Middle East, that diversity, instead of giving rise to conflict, should lead to harmonious cooperation in the life of society.”

Salih, a member of Iraq's ethnic Kurdish minority, echoed his call.

“The East cannot be imagined without Christians,” Salih said. “The continued migration of Christians from the countries of the east will have dire consequences for the ability of the people from the same region to live together.”

In Iraq, the pontiff bringing his call for tolerance to a country rich in ethnic and religious diversity but deeply traumatized by hardships. Since the 2003 U.S. invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, it has seen vicious sectarian violence between Shiites and Sunni Muslims, clashes and tensions between Arabs and Kurds, and militant atrocities against minorities like Christians and Yazidis.

The few Christians who remain harbor a lingering mistrust of their Muslim neighbors and face discrimination that long predated ISIS.

## Protesters defy Myanmar security forces as action by UN urged

Associated Press

YANGON, Myanmar — Demonstrators defied growing violence by Myanmar security forces and staged more anti-coup rallies Friday, while the U.N. special envoy for the country called for urgent Security Council action, saying about 50 peaceful protesters were killed and scores

were injured in the military's worst crackdowns this week.

In addition, YouTube removed five channels run by Myanmar's military for violating its guidelines.

The escalation of violence has put pressure on the world community to act to restrain the junta, which seized power on Feb. 1 by

ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Large protests against military rule have occurred daily in many cities and towns. Security forces escalated their crackdown with greater use of lethal force and mass arrests. At least 18 protesters were shot and killed Sunday and 38 on Wednesday, according

to the U.N. Human Rights Office. More than 1,000 have been arrested, the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said.

Protests continued in the biggest cities of Yangon and Mandalay, and elsewhere Friday. They were met again with force by police, and gunfire was heard.

U.N. special envoy Christine Schraner Burgener said in her briefing to a closed Security Council meeting obtained by The Associated Press that council unity and “robust” action is critical “in pushing for a stop to the violence and the restoration of Myanmar's democratic institutions.”

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Kangaroo captured after slipping its keepers

**AL** WINFIELD — A young kangaroo who slipped away from his keepers as he was being hauled to a new home has been captured.

The Winfield Police Department, in a post Wednesday on its Facebook page, said Jack, the 3 ½ year old kangaroo escaped Monday. He was seen in cellphone video heartily hopping down a country road in Winfield, al.com reported.

“For those interested in Jack the Kangaroo, he has been caught and is doing well,” Winfield Police’s social media post said.

The animal was being taken from south Mississippi to its new home in Tennessee, said Braxton Basinger of B & H Livestock.

Basinger stopped at his home in Winfield and planned to keep the kangaroo there until he made the final delivery Thursday. The kangaroo escaped when a worker let go of it while taking it out of the trailer, he said.

## Bill would designate gun stores as essential firms

**AZ** PHOENIX — The Arizona Senate has voted to designate gun stores as essential businesses allowed to remain open during an emergency.

Republicans sent the measure to the House in a 16-14 party-line vote on Wednesday.

Republican Sen. Wendy Rogers says the right to keep and bear arms must be protected, especially during emergencies.

Democratic Sen. Martin Quezada says the Legislature has much bigger priorities during the pandemic, such as ensuring people get access to unemployment insurance and don’t lose their homes.

## City believed to be first to ban new gas stations

**CA** PETALUMA — A Northern California city has become what’s believed to be the first in the country to ban all new gas stations in an effort to curb carbon emissions.

The Petaluma City Council voted unanimously to prohibit the creation, expansion, reconstruction and relocation of gas stations, encouraging owners to transition to stations that serve electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

The city of 58,000 people 40 miles north of San Francisco hopes to become carbon neutral by 2030.

## Driver swerves to miss falling couch, gets ticket

**FL** FORT LAUDERDALE — A couple driving home from Florida flipped and wrecked their car while swerving to avoid a couch that fell off a truck. And though both escaped serious injury, there was no avoid-



TODD BERKEY/AP

## So inclined

The sun rises over Johnstown, Pa., casting its golden rays over the valley and into one of the famous Johnstown Inclined Plane cars on Wednesday. The Johnstown Inclined Plane is the steepest vehicular incline plane in the world.

ing a \$166 traffic ticket dropped off at the hospital where they were treated.

Jake Singer told the South Florida SunSentinel that his girlfriend was driving Feb. 20 on Interstate 95 as they returned to Washington, D.C., after a monthlong visit with family in Boca Raton.

Singer said his girlfriend swerved to avoid the couch and that their 2006 Toyota Corolla struck the median and flipped over — and the truck kept going.

The car was totaled and both were taken to the hospital in ambulances, he said, lucky to have survived. But then a Florida Highway Patrol trooper showed up at the hospital to deliver the traffic ticket for “failing to drive in a single lane,” according to the agency’s crash report.

“He gave us a ticket for basically swerving lanes while trying to avoid a couch that was flying at us on the highway,” Singer told the newspaper.

## Man delivering new bus suffers injury in rollover

**ND** CHURCHS FERRY — Authorities said a man who was delivering a new bus to a school in Canada suffered a minor injury Wednesday morning after the bus rolled over several times on a highway in northeastern North Dakota.

The North Dakota Highway Patrol says Toronado Watson, 50, of

## THE CENSUS

**\$1K** The amount investigators with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife are offering as a reward for tips that lead to an arrest in the shooting of mule deer with blow gun darts in eastern Oregon. Oregon State Police troopers found the carcass of a fawn in the city of Burns in November, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported. The animal had a blow gun dart lodged in its neck. Three more mule deer were found in following months, but biologists were able to remove the darts and release the animals.

Winston-Salem, N.C., fell asleep shortly after 9 a.m. while driving a 2022 Thomas school bus west on U.S. Highway 2 near Churchs Ferry.

The patrol says Watson tried to gain control of the bus after running off the road but overcorrected and wound up rolling it in the north ditch. Watson, who was the sole occupant of the bus, was wearing his seatbelt. He was transported to a Devils Lake hospital for treatment.

## Man catches 9 ½ foot bluefin tuna off coast

**NC** NAGS HEAD — A Virginia man has reeled in a 9 ½ foot bluefin tuna off the coast of North Carolina.

The Virginian-Pilot reported Tuesday that Josiah VanFleet of Toano had caught the fish about 45 miles off the coast of Nags Head on Feb. 24.

VanFleet, who has a bathroom and kitchen remodeling business, said it’s the biggest fish he ever caught.

He told the newspaper that the

U.S. Coast Guard helped measure the fish and put it at an estimated 1,000 pounds. North Carolina’s current record is 877 pounds. But an estimated weight is not enough for the record books.

VanFleet caught the fish using a 22-foot Grady-White boat. He said it took seven adults and a second boat to complete the job.

## Sonoran desert tortoises are up for adoption

**AZ** PHOENIX — Wanted: Forever homes for more than 100 Sonoran desert tortoises that can grow to 14 inches and live as long as 100 years.

Due primarily to illegal breeding, Arizona Game and Fish Department officials said they have several tortoises of various ages and sizes available for adoption.

Tegan Wolf, desert tortoise adoption program coordinator for the department, said only one tortoise can be adopted per person and per household.

But an additional tortoise of the same sex can be adopted if it’s placed in a completely separate

enclosure as the reptiles can be territorial.

Adopters must have a securely enclosed yard and construct a burrow to protect the tortoise from potential hazards such as a fire pit, unfenced pool or dogs.

## Man accused of injuring woman with sword

**KS** WICHITA — A man who police allege attacked a Wichita woman with a sword and stabbed her dog has been arrested, police said Wednesday.

Police began searching for James Brown, 41, after officers went to a home early Tuesday and found his girlfriend suffering from severe cuts on her hand and back, Officer Charley Davidson said in a news release. She was hospitalized in serious condition.

Investigators determined that Brown and the woman were arguing at the home when he grabbed a 5- to 6-foot sword and struck her with it several times, Davidson said. He also stabbed the dog several times.

An arrest warrant for Brown listed charges of aggravated battery/domestic violence and animal cruelty, as well as a second aggravated battery/domestic violence charge related to the woman being strangled.

# HEALTH & FITNESS

BY ANGELA HAUPT

Special to *The Washington Post*

**B**y 8 a.m. on the first Friday in February, Chris Giza had biked 21 miles with a few colleagues he met on a nearby oceanfront trail — before each of them sat down at home, miles apart, for a virtual meeting. If he hadn't carved out time for this "fake commute," he says, he wouldn't have done anything but grab a cup of coffee before plopping down in front of his computer.

"It's almost a no-brainer," Giza, a pediatric neurologist in Los Angeles, says about his morning bike-riding routine. "There's all good and not really any downside. It helps you think better; it's good for your mental health, it's good for your physical health and it's good for your social health."

Of all the things work-from-home employees might miss about pre-pandemic life, commuting wouldn't seem to register high on the attention meter. But nearly a year after being sent home from the office, some employees, such as Giza, have realized that losing that time in the car — or on the bus, train or street — has had some drawbacks.

Jon Jachimowicz, an assistant professor of business administration in the organizational behavior unit at Harvard Business School, says commuting provides "a temporal and spatial separation between all the different roles we play." It's a buffer that eases the transition from one identity to the next, a consistent dose of in-between time to reflect and reset.

Before the pandemic, the average commute was 38 minutes each way, Jachimowicz's research indicates. Not only have employees lost that buffer, but they have also taken on more work: about 48 extra minutes per day. They are also dealing with more meetings and more communication that spills into off hours, according to findings published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in July.

When we don't psychologically detach from work, we risk becoming exhausted and burned out, says Samantha Pieknik, a licensed clinical psychologist in Phoenix.

"We've lost that time to sit with ourselves and shake everything off from the day," she says. "We're working at home and we're sleeping at work, and it's really confusing for our brains."

A fake commute, however, can help you reclaim that precious transition time and re-establish the boundaries that have been blurred from working from home, something that Giza has learned. He now "commutes" about 100 miles per week. Before adopting the practice, "I didn't have the usual time to clear my head," he says, which made it difficult to be focused while he was in work mode or fully present when he was in home mode.

Of course, a fake commute doesn't have to involve biking. You can walk, meditate, stretch or listen to an audiobook, though Jachimow-



## Focus shift: When home is an office

'Fake commutes' among ways teleworkers can make the boundaries between office, home clearer

icz notes the practice is a "luxury" and might not be possible for everyone, such as the parents of young children.

Pieknik, who now offers telehealth services from her home rather than commuting 10 minutes to her private practice, has added a fake commute to her mornings: She drives out to get coffee. She recommends the habit to others.

"It doesn't have to be super elaborate," she says. "It's just a matter of tricking your brain into starting a new routine."

Here are tips on how to incorporate a fake commute into your work-from-home day:

- Find the ritual that's right for you. There are many ways to reap the benefits of a fake commute. Like so much else, the important thing is choosing the method you'll stick to.

Robin Gibson, a social work administrator in Oklahoma City, started working from home on March 16 and soon realized that it wasn't a short-term situation. So she resumed her old commuting routine: listening to news podcasts, such as NPR's "Up First" and the *New York Times*' "The Daily."

"It's about an hour and a half of listening that I start when I get in the shower," she says. In the evening, she decompresses by tidying up, listening to more podcasts and writing down her plans for the next day.

"I missed that time of getting

myself right with the world," she says. "I sort of have my own little commute in my head in order to take care of myself."

- Be strategic about timing — and strive for consistency. It's best to engage in your chosen ritual when you're easing into and out of

**"Commuting provides 'a temporal and spatial separation between all the different roles we play.'"**

Jon Jachimowicz  
assistant professor  
Harvard Business School

the workday, Jachimowicz says. He suggests workers establish fake commutes that last at least five to 10 minutes each way and are repeated as many days of the workweek as possible.

Block out uninterrupted time on your calendar to help make it a priority. Some companies are embracing this idea: Microsoft, for example, recently announced that it

was launching a "virtual commute" feature that allows employees using its Teams software to schedule commute time at the beginning and end of the day. In a news release, the company said it hopes to help boost workers' well-being by encouraging them to take breaks to reflect and recharge.

- Leave home if you can. Debbie Plotnick, vice president for mental health and systems advocacy at Mental Health America, believes that those who get the most out of fake commuting are the ones who physically leave their home-turned-office. But that doesn't mean you have to go far: Doing yoga in the backyard or jogging around the block would suffice. Plotnick, who's based in Colorado, likes to spend time in the nature surrounding her home.

"I live in the mountains, and it's spectacular," she says. "I go outside and just revel in how fabulous it is." Your time commuting doesn't have to be solitary, she adds: Use part of it to call a friend or family member, which helps foster vital social connections.

- Consider including your family. Kids who are learning virtually are missing out on their own commute time, Plotnick says. That means they've lost opportunities to socialize while walking, riding the school bus or having one-on-one conversations with the parent dropping them off.

"It's really hard for the young

folks who are feeling so isolated now," she says, and a fake commute can help. "So maybe there's a restful time families spend together. Maybe it's a little bit of a family meditation or a family gentle yoga practice."

- Practice role-clarifying prospection. Commuting is an opportunity to think about and plan for the role we're transitioning into, such as shifting from supervisor to parent, Jachimowicz says. Let work go at the end of the day by spending part of your fake commute reflecting on your upcoming role: what you want to make for dinner, which chores need to be done, what you'll watch on TV. Similarly, on a Sunday night, coax yourself out of weekend mode by making a list of what you'd like to accomplish in the week ahead.

- Get serious about disconnecting. Fake commutes can help us transition between our roles — but the onus is on us to actually stay in them, rather than letting our minds drift back to other parts of the day.

"It's not just, 'Great, all I need to do is go for a walk after work,'" Jachimowicz says. "How many of us, after we transition, continue checking emails or texting? We're like, 'Oh, this isn't working.' Of course it's working! We're continuously activating our work roles." He suggests turning off your phone or silencing notifications in the name of better physical, mental and emotional health.

## VIDEO GAMES



505 GAMES/TNS

Playable character Jesse develops para-natural powers that let her launch objects and do other superhuman things in *Control*.

# More Control for all

Upgrade to popular Metroidvania-style game improves visuals, maintains quality of play

By GIESON CACHO  
*The Mercury News*

**G**ames that come with Xbox Live or PlayStation Plus can be hit or miss. The free offerings are often titles that players may already own or are projects that weren't that great to begin with. Once in a while, the services' offerings hit that sweet spot: A title comes along that has won acclaim and may have been missed.

For me, that game is *Control*. Now being offered on Xbox Game Pass and PlayStation Plus, Remedy Entertainment's 2019 action title was praised when it launched. Now, 505 Games has released an updated version for the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X.

The iterations take advantage of the hardware by supporting ray-tracing and 4K visuals at 60 frames per second. Keep in mind, though, that the next-gen upgrades are only available to the Ultimate Edition of the game, which was free via PlayStation Plus on the PS5. The Xbox Game Pass version is the Standard Edition and doesn't have the extra content or improved visuals.

*Control: Ultimate Edition* throws players into the shoes of Jesse Faden at the secretive Federal Bureau of Control. Think of it as a U.S. agency committed to "X-Files"-type cases and run by people who have a penchant for making videos in the style one would see in TV's "Lost."

The secret institution is tasked with handling and investigating Altered World Events. These para-natural occurrences are tied to Altered Items or Objects of Power. They can be as innocuous as a rubber duckie that quacks and follows a

person, or as dangerous as a merry-go-round horse that murders people.

When Jesse enters the *Control* headquarters, which is itself a para-natural Place of Power called the Oldest House, she finds it in disarray. She has personal motives for visiting the agency but ultimately finds herself involved in the bureau's struggle for survival. Transdimensional entities called the Hiss have invaded the base, and the employees are battling to retake the facility.

*Control* throws players immediately into the deep end. It doesn't offer any background and forces players to solve its inner mysteries. They have to adjust to the odd reality in the Oldest House, a facility that's always in flux with shifting walls and rooms that contain enormous quarries alongside offices and soaring atriums.

Players also learn that when Jesse picks up an Object of Power called the Service Weapon, she becomes director of the bureau and everyone magically acknowledges that. The firearm also has the special ability to transform into a shotgun-type weapon, a submachine gun, a rail gun-type contraption and other weapons. It also reloads automatically. In addition, Jesse has para-natural abilities that let her handle Altered Items and Objects of Power she finds in the Oldest House.

Structurally, *Control* resembles a Metroidvania-type game. Jesse has to stabilize the bureau by helping out the Power Plant and Maintenance Sector, and afterward she'll have the freedom to investigate how the Hiss infiltrated the headquarters. Jesse is weak and the explorable world is small in the beginning, but as she meets other employees, she gains clearance to

more of the Oldest House and the objects of power that give her new abilities.

At first, she can run and gun while taking cover behind desks. Soon after, she gains the ability to launch objects at foes, dodge incoming attacks, create shields out of debris, levitate over short distances and enact mind control over adversaries. She can also upgrade these abilities and make her weapons more powerful.

All this lets players design a version of Jesse that fits their playstyle and offers depth to combat. With different power-ups, players can emphasize the use of mind control or shields, or they can focus on maneuverability and gunplay. I relied on launching objects at foes and generating the energy to do that. I also had some mind control thrown in for good measure.

As Jesse ventures deeper into the Oldest House, players will find that the world is enormous, overwhelming and easy to get lost in. Thankfully, Remedy offers players fast travel through control points and it labels players' missions so they know where to go. Some side missions can be harder than others because they require puzzle solving or looking for the right object, but they're manageable if players are methodical explorers.

Remedy tells the story by relying on collectibles to fill in the gaps. Players discover the plot outlines, but to understand the details, they'll have to grab collectibles and read through them.

Doing that disrupts the flow of the combat and exploration. It would have been better to integrate them more into the gameplay or have them read aloud so players can continue playing without stopping to read through the menu.

**CONTROL**  
ULTIMATE EDITION



That's a shame, because story is a huge component to *Control*. Remedy crafts an intriguing world that interconnects with its other hit, *Alan Wake*. Together, they forge a compelling universe that's filled with odd phenomena and equally strange explanations. The atmosphere it creates is both creepy and whimsical, like "X-Files" at its peak.

On the PS5, *Control* benefits from the console's hardware. It produces ray-traced graphics that heighten the realism with lifelike reflections, while the performance mode runs the game at 4K at 60 frames per second, giving players silky-smooth visuals that flow from the screen. The additional *Alan Wake*-centric mission makes the campaign beefier but not overly long while the Foundation expansion gives players another set of quests that's serviceable, but not as good.

Two years after its release, *Control* still holds up on the latest generation of consoles, and it's a value that players shouldn't pass up if they own a PS5 and have a PlayStation Plus subscription. For Xbox Series X fans with Xbox Game Pass, the standard game is still great, especially with the speedier hard drive that cuts down on load times. The core experience is still worthwhile for those who haven't tried it yet.

Platforms: PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, PC

Online: [505games.com/games/control](https://www.505games.com/games/control)

## MOVIES

# Triumphant return to 'America'

Murphy back in sequel to 'the only movie I've ever done that had a cult following'

BY JAKE COYLE  
Associated Press

When Eddie Murphy made the original "Coming to America," he was, almost indisputably, the funniest man in America.

Murphy was at the very height of his fame, coming off "Beverly Hills Cop II" and the stand-up special "Raw." They were heady times. Arsenio Hall, Murphy's longtime friend and co-star in "Coming to America," remembers them sneaking out during the shoot to a Hollywood nightclub while dressed as Prince Akeem and his loyal aide Semmi. "We were insane," says Hall.

The '80s, Murphy says, are "all a blur."

"I was so young; all this stuff was happening. You take everything for granted when you're young, how successful I was," Murphy says, speaking by Zoom with a shelf of award statuettes behind him. "Now I take nothing for granted and appreciate everything."

Thirty-three years after "Coming to America," Murphy and Hall have returned to Zamunda. The sequel, originally planned to hit theaters last year, was sold because of the pandemic by Paramount Pictures to Amazon, where it is now streaming.

It's an unlikely coda to a blockbuster comedy, one that belongs so completely to the late '80s that even the sequel tries to keep some of that era's spirit. (A few notable R&B and hip-hop groups make cameos.) "Coming 2 America," directed by Craig Brewer, reverses the fish-out-of-water plot to bring Queens to Zamunda after Akeem learns he fathered a son (Jermaine Fowler) on his first visit to New York.

Some elements have been updated. There's a plot of female empowerment; KiKi Layne plays Akeem's daughter. At the barber shop, where Murphy and Hall also reprise their characters, the

conversation bounces from Teslas to transgender people.

"We had a draft where they had on MAGA hats and they were Republicans," says Murphy. "It was funny, but it was like, eh, let's not even go there."

Instead, Murphy and his collaborators — including writers Barry W. Blaustein, David Sheffield and Kenya Barris — felt the core appeal of "Coming to America" lies in its fairy-tale premise.

"This is the only movie I've ever done that had a cult following," says Murphy. "We had totally forgot about 'Coming to America.' Then this movie took on this life in the culture. It became like a cult movie. Lines from the movie became catchphrases. People do the mic drop now. The very first mic drop is Randy Watson from 'Coming to America.'"

"Coming to America" has indeed played a unique role in culture since 1988. Real-life McDowell's fast-food restaurants — the McDonald's knockoff from the movie — have briefly popped up in Los Angeles and Chicago. Beyoncé and Jay-Z once dressed up as characters from the film for Halloween.

But the John Landis-directed movie was also a massive success on release. It was the second-highest grossing film domestically in 1988 with \$128.2 million in tickets sold — nearly double what "Die Hard" made that year. Globally, it grossed \$288.8 million, or more than \$630 million adjusted for inflation.

To Murphy, that's the movie's legacy.

"Coming to America" is the first movie in the history of the movies that had an all-Black cast that traveled all around the world," says Murphy. "They don't give a s— about Selma and Martin Luther King and civil injustice, whatever our story is in America. They don't give a s—

SEE MURPHY ON PAGE 15



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

Eddie Murphy, left, and Arsenio Hall reprise their roles as Prince — now King — Akeem and his loyal aide Semmi in "Coming 2 America," a sequel to the much beloved movie from 1988.

## MOVIES

# Murphy: Family now a higher priority for actor

FROM PAGE 14

about that around the world.

"It's not about being Black. It's about love and family and tradition and doing the right thing," Murphy adds. "If 'Black Panther' was about the hood, people wouldn't have seen 'Black Panther' all around the world."

The connections between "Coming to America" and "Black Panther" — both rare depictions of Black royalty and a mythic Africa — are many. Before making "Black Panther," Murphy has said Ryan Coogler approached him about a "Coming to America" sequel. During production on "Black Panther," Lupita Nyong'o (once not a fan of "Coming to America" for its clichéd depiction of Africans) and other cast members threw a "Coming to America" birthday party. Ruth E. Carter designed the costumes of both "Black Panther" and "Coming 2 America." Both were shot in Atlanta.

"I've had people say, 'Zamunda isn't a real place, right?'" says Brewer. "And I say, 'No, it's definitely a real place. I believe it's just northeast of Wakanda.'"

The script for "Coming 2 America" was worked on for four years, but shooting started quickly. Murphy first suggested Brewer direct "Coming 2 America" during a dinner with John Singleton after a test screening of "My Name Is Dolemite," the Rudy Ray Moore biopic that helped spur a revival for Murphy, now 59.

"'Coming to America' was one of my favorite movies as a teenager," says Brewer. "I couldn't help but just say 'Yes!' immediately. Then it became clear to me that this is going to go, like, now."

"Coming 2 America" also rekindles the great comedic chemistry between Murphy and Hall. Murphy estimates that the close friends have seen each other two or three times a week for 40 years. But they went decades before talking about a sequel.

"All of a sudden I'm reading this script that I love and I realize this movie that we thought we never were going to do a sequel to, we're about to head to Atlanta — which is America's Africa," says Hall.

The shoot took place on the Tyler Perry Studio sound stages, with Rick Ross' nearby mansion serving as the Zamunda palace. The movie reunites most of the original cast — including James Earl Jones, John Amos and Shari Headley — and brings in many others, too, including Wesley Snipes, Leslie Jones and Tracy Morgan. Hall, who had been doing stand-up with Chris Rock and Dave Chappelle, sensed that



**"Coming 2 America" director Craig Brewer, left, and Eddie Murphy pose in Toronto in 2019. "I've had people say, 'Coming to America' setting Zamunda isn't a real place, right?'" says Brewer. "And I say, 'No, it's definitely a real place. I believe it's just northeast of Wakanda.'"**

everyone wanted in.

"One day in the dressing room, Dave is like, 'I heard ya'll are doing "Coming to America 2." I said, 'Yeah, man.' He said, 'I want to be in that,'" recalls Hall. (A scheduling conflict interfered and the versatile Hall, who has four roles in the movie, ended up playing the witch doctor part Chappelle might have had.)

Some things have changed with time. This "Coming to America" is rated PG-13 instead of R. Murphy was just 27 when he made "Coming to America." Now, he has 10 children and a grandchild. His daughter, Bella, has a small role in the film.

"He joked about it on 'Saturday Night Live,' about him versus Cosby and who's America's favorite dad now. But there's something to that," says Brewer. "If you're ever around Eddie and his kids — and now his grandchild — you see that he's truly a man who loves his family and does not need the public's constant validation and appreciation to know who he is."

Family life figures prominently in Murphy's newer stand-up material. A long-awaited return to performing in 2020 had been his intention before the pandemic hit. Those plans haven't been canceled; when live performance returns, Murphy says, "then we'll do stand-up." Until then, Murphy, a proud homebody, has found himself back where he started.

"I had gotten off the couch to go to work. I said, 'OK, let me get off this couch I've been on for eight years. Let me go do some work,'" Murphy says. "And we were rolling. We did everything we set out to do. The big thing was going back to 'Saturday Night Live.' We was on a high. 'Coming 2 America' was in the can. Then the whole world fell apart."

"I was all ready to go," Murphy says, grinning, "and then I had to go sit back on the couch."



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/TNS

Wesley Snipes, shown in "Coming 2 America" with Teyana Taylor, plays the ruler of a neighboring country.

# Wesley Snipes 'giddy' to be part of franchise

Actor says his upbeat character's energy in this film is closer to his own

BY PETER SBLENDORIO

New York Daily News

"Coming 2 America" was a long time coming for Wesley Snipes.

The actor, who stars as the eccentric and autocratic ruler of Nextdoria in the long-awaited sequel, is thrilled to now be part of the "Coming to America" franchise after initially auditioning to play Darryl Jenks in the 1988 original.

"I'm giddy as a pig at Fatburger," Snipes said. "I'm telling you, I'm happy. I wanted to be a part of that so bad, and James Earl Jones was in the original. For us theater thespians, he was an icon."

"The idea of being close to him, just enough to breathe, to listen, to have him breathe on me, was super exciting, and it was quite disappointing when I didn't get cast in the first film. But you sit by the river long enough, sometimes you'll see opportunity float by, and 30 years later here I am, and here it is."

In the new comedy, now streaming on Amazon Prime Video, Snipes stars as General Izzi, whose land neighbors Zamunda, the African kingdom where Eddie Murphy's Prince Akeem is next in line to the throne behind Jones' King Jaffe Joffer.

Snipes' character can be brutal and dangerous, but also loves to dance and make big entrances as he tries to persuade Prince Akeem to unite their territories.

"He is a diplomat. An ambassador," said Snipes, 58. "Also a tyrant, and an autocrat, but he's also a dancer and he's also a singer. ... He does a lot of different things, and he's there basically to make ends meet and right some wrongs that Mr. King of Zamunda did to his family in the past."

General Izzi presents problems for Akeem, who returns to Queens to track down his long-lost son after visiting New York in the first film to find a wife.

"Coming 2 America" was directed by Craig Brewer, who worked with Snipes and Murphy on the 2019 comedy "Dolemite Is My Name." It was during production for that movie that Brewer told Snipes he wanted him to do "Coming 2 America."

"I was overjoyed, not knowing exactly what the role would be," Snipes said. "I didn't care. I just wanted to be in the movie, be a part of that legacy and a part of that history."

Snipes, a martial artist beloved for action movies such as the "Blade" trilogy, is in the midst of a career resurgence following a two-year tax-related jail stint that ended in 2013.

He got a kick out of playing such an upbeat character in General Izzi.

"It's closer to the energy of my nature and my personality," Snipes said. "I'm much more of the whimsical, free-spirited type of a guy than what they see in the action films. I mean, we can go there. That is the Hyde to Mr. Jekyll, but I actually prefer and get so much thrill and jolly out of being in an ensemble of great, talented artists, and experiencing, creating, realizing and expressing all at the same time."

Snipes says his time working on "Coming 2 America" was filled with pinch-me moments.

"The day I walked into the set where they had the Grand Hall, and I saw Eddie sitting up on the dais, on the throne, man, that was a moment," Snipes recalled. "Amazing to see. Amazing to be in that, and then to have the vivid memory of the first film."

## TELEVISION



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/AP

Cynthia Erivo portrays Aretha Franklin (inset with her Grammy Award for Best Rhythm and Blues performance of the song “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” in New York on March 13, 1972) in a scene from the National Geographic miniseries “Genius: Aretha.”

# With justice, grace and truth

Cynthia Erivo wants her portrayal of the Queen of Soul to give Franklin respect she's owed

BY MESFIN FEKADU  
Associated Press

The Tony Awards could bring Cynthia Erivo another Emmy. Days after the British performer belted Aretha Franklin's “Ain't No Way” during a red carpet interview at the 2019 Tonys — explaining that it's her guilty pleasure song — she got a call from the producers of the National Geographic series “Genius: Aretha.”

“I was like, ‘I beg your pardon,’” she continued. “In my head I'm like, ‘There is another film happening and I'm excited to see that, so what is this?’”

NatGeo had already completed series on Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso, and wanted to focus on the life of Franklin, who died in 2018 and was arguably the greatest singer of all time.

When Erivo went to meet with the producers, she had a bit of an epiphany.

“Nothing else was playing in the hotel; it was just mood music,” she said. “All of a sudden ‘Day Dreaming’ comes on as I go to sit down. I'm like, ‘Am I the only one that noticed that?’”

Laughing with a huge smile on her face, she continued: “I was like, ‘Either you planned that, or someone's trying to tell me something.’”

Fast forward two years, and Erivo is playing the Queen of Soul in the eight-episode series debuting March 21. “Respect,” a film about Franklin starring Jennifer Hudson, will be released in August.

Erivo's exceptional performance in Broadway's revival of “The Color Purple” won her a Tony, Emmy and Grammy, and

she was a double Oscar nominee last year for “Harriet.” In an interview with The Associated Press, edited for clarity and brevity, the 34-year-old talked about meeting Franklin, playing icons on screen and more.

**AP: What does Aretha mean to you?**

**Erivo:** She means the world to me. As a singer, I truly believe that my job is to communicate and tell the stories that sometimes are difficult for people to tell for themselves ... Aretha did that with her eyes closed. She had a wonderful way of communicating the things that she had been through, through song.

**She has this thing by which she can take someone else's song and make it her own.**

Totally, and it's such a special thing. Not only does she take the song and make it her own, she takes the song and you forget it was someone else's. To me, it's a really special thing that she was able to do. I don't know that people realize that “Respect” wasn't her song first.

She finds messaging in songs, in music, that you didn't realize were there in the first place. I don't know how, but she always managed to find a way into a song that you didn't know existed. I know that this might not be a popular opinion, but when she did her version of (Adele's) “Rolling in the Deep,” I was like, “Huh, never heard this song like this before. Didn't think about this song like this before.” At that point, because she was an older woman singing this song, you're like, all the experience that this person must have gone through to get to this point, I didn't hear this before. Now I'm hearing it with her voice. She was one of a kind, truly.

**Did you get a chance to meet her?**

I met her the first time when she'd come to a performance of “The Color Purple.” I didn't know she was there. When I saw her, I felt like an idiot because I was just in shock. There is Miss Aretha Franklin standing in front of me and I've just finished singing a show in her presence, oh my goodness. How do I do this? She was funny and lovely. She sang the last line of “I'm Here” back to me. That was a moment I had to put my heart back together. I was like, “This is happening for real.” She was wonderful. When you meet someone like that, you don't think they'll remember your face. I met her again at the Kennedy Center Honors. I was singing the very first time I did it. She remembered me. She said, “You're the girl who was in that play. You can sing. You can sing.” I was like, “Yes that's me. Thank you very much.” I remember she was wearing red. My favorite thing about that day was when I saw the recording of it, when it finally aired, during my performance they pan to Aretha and she's singing along with her eyes closed.

**Were you hesitant to play her?**

It's about wanting to make sure you do her justice (and) put as much truth in it as you possibly can. There is only one Aretha Franklin, so no one can be Aretha Franklin, but you can put as much grace and truth into the re-enacting of her, the realization of her, so you can tell the story in the right way. I guess if I wasn't nervous, I wouldn't care.

**How do you feel about the people who say, “Cynthia doesn't really look like Aretha?”**

No, in the same way that Diana Ross didn't really look like Billie Holiday, but she did an

incredible, incredible job when she did “Lady Sings the Blues” ... I don't think anyone does look like Aretha. If you found someone who looks like Aretha who couldn't do the work, who can't sing the songs, then that's where you have a problem. I'd rather someone that doesn't look like her but can give me the essence.

**Are you excited to see the Jennifer Hudson version?**

I am. I know that they were close, and I know that they had a conversation. This is something she had been dreaming of doing. I am excited to see it.

**How's it been, playing real-life icons on screen?**

It's a huge honor and it's part of what I want for my lifetime — to be able to tell these stories of women whose stories wouldn't get the chance to be told, whose stories deserve to be told. The more I can do that whether it be Harriet, Aretha or a woman you don't know about who I've done the research to find out about, I want to keep bringing these stories to the forefront because they deserve to be told.

**The roles you've played reminds me of Chadwick Boseman, who portrayed James Brown, Jackie Robinson and Thurgood Marshall on screen.**

When (he died), I really did have that thought. I thought to myself, “What a wonderful legacy to leave behind. To be the person we could look to who was telling the stories of these incredible men who wouldn't have had their stories told if he didn't exist.” I guess it was like a wakeup call. This is the job at hand. Maybe this is part of your calling — to be able to tell these stories when others are finding it hard to let them come to the forefront. Maybe it's my job to be in it or me creating it, making sure someone is in it. That's also the task at hand for me.

**There's been so much conversation about Black British actors taking roles away from Black American actors. What are your thoughts on that?**

I hope we get to a place where we understand that my telling a story doesn't mean the story can't be told again. I think the way I tell a story is one version, and this just should serve as the introduction to someone else going, “Oh I'm going to tell the story again.” We have many stories, many versions of the Marilyn Monroe story ... we have many versions of Abe Lincoln. There are so many versions of these stories, but our stories aren't told over and over again. We don't have that. I hope that this only serves as fire. We've had it told once, let's tell that again. Let's tell this part of the story.

Harriet's story isn't done yet. She lived until she was 91. I think my story ended when she was 40-something, 45. We have another 45 years of life to tell because she did keep going. I haven't seen that story yet. I hope someone tells that story. I hope someone goes back and tells just the specific story about the war. I hope someone goes back and tells the specific story about her suffrage life. There's so much scope. She was a spy. We don't know that yet. I think our story on Aretha goes to the late 80's, early '90s. We have another 20 years of story left to tell.

As a British actress, before I am that I'm a Black woman. My job is just to tell the story just as truthfully as I possibly can. That doesn't have to be the only story that gets told. My version shouldn't be the only version to get told. I hope many versions get told. I think we always think this is the only and the last and it shouldn't be. Hopefully outside of being the actress I can create a space where the stories that we want to be told again get told again.

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Ernie Gates

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

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## Dems' bill is an assault on election integrity

BY HENRY OLSEN

Special to The Washington Post

House Democrats passed H.R.1, the ostentatiously and misleadingly named For the People Act, Wednesday on a near-party-line vote. The Senate should reject this dangerous assault on election integrity.

The bill's primary danger lies in its virtual abolition of any safeguards to ensure that a vote represents the true desire of a single, eligible voter. States would be effectively barred from mandating the use of a photo-ID to establish that a person is the registered voter they claim to be, instead permitting a prospective voter to merely sign a sworn affidavit. States would also be required to adopt same-day voter registration in federal elections, even during early voting, so that a person could show up at a poll, sign a registration form and cast a vote without any checks to ensure the person was actually eligible to vote. Together, these provisions would make it extremely easy for motivated people to move from poll to poll and cast a number of fraudulent ballots without any reasonable fear they would be caught.

The bill also cavalierly opens the door to voting fraud in its treatment of mail balloting. It would expressly permit a person to collect mail ballots and deliver them to the relevant election agency. It purports to limit this to already sealed ballots, but of course it would be almost impossible to prove a ballot was sealed when it was handed off. The most recent proved instance of mass voter fraud involved exactly this procedure, when a Republican operative cast fraudulent votes for candidates who paid him by collecting unsealed mail ballots from voters

and then filling them out for the preferred person. H.R.1 would make it much likelier that unscrupulous operatives to tip the scales in their favor.

H.R. 1 also makes it virtually impossible for a state to ensure that even a mail ballot sent directly was cast by the person it purports to be from. It bars any state from requiring identification for a mail ballot and also prohibits states from requiring that a ballot be notarized or witnessed. Without either requirement, matching a signature on a ballot with that on a voter-registration card is the only safeguard against a person casting a vote for someone else. That's a very thin reed to rely on, especially because the people who verify mail ballots will likely be lenient in their application of this standard in order not to deny a truly eligible person their right to vote.

The measure also disables other possible ways in which election integrity could be assured. It prevents states, for example, from requiring more than the last four digits of a person's Social Security number on a registration form. That theoretically opens the floodgates for undocumented immigrants who have illegally obtained SSNs, especially when combined with the requirement that certain state agencies automatically register people as voters when they come into any contact with the system. States are also prevented from removing registered voters from the rolls when a piece of mail is returned as non-deliverable and are required to provide at least 15 days of in-person early voting for federal elections. Entrepreneurial fraudsters could send mailings to all the names on a voter list, see which ones were returned and assemble a list of non-deliverables; they could then

recruit people to vote in person under those names without having to show identification (see above).

Democrats' claims that there have been no large-scale cases of voter fraud to date are beside the point. Incentives matter, and H.R. 1 creates massive incentives for people to cheat. We would never apply such a standard to community safety or the prevention of a terrorist attack. Our democracy can work only if all people, not just the partisans of one faction, trust that our system is fair. H.R. 1 makes it impossible to reach that standard because it creates so many clear and obvious ways to subvert elections.

It would be easy to create an election system that satisfies people concerned about voter fraud and voter suppression. Our smartphones now have fingerprint- and face-ID systems that protect our devices from unauthorized use. We could easily create a national voter database and attach pictures or fingerprints to every registration. This would even be compatible with same-day registration, provided each polling place had a computer with a camera that could snap a picture and immediately upload it to the database. Australia's vote-by-mail system requires each applicant to create and answer a personal security question, thereby ensuring that the person who casts the mail-in vote is the person they claim to be. Millions of Australians use this each election, and there is no history of voter fraud or suppression.

Democratic elections are America's birthright. H.R. 1 would sell that birthright for no reason and must be defeated.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

## Require 50% threshold for election to Congress

BY EDWARD B. FOLEY

The Washington Post

Political polarization is spurring partisans to extremes, but there's a simple change Congress could make to reverse this alarming trend: mandate that its members be elected by a majority of votes.

Americans probably think the law already requires this, given the Founders' reverence for majority rule as an element of self-government. Yet all but six states permit plurality winners, meaning that federal lawmakers can be elected even if they do not secure more than 50% of the vote.

States are generally authorized to set their own voting rules. But requiring that a candidate win a majority in the general election is fully within Congress's constitutional power. Article I, Section 4 empowers Congress to "at any time by Law make or alter" any "Regulations" concerning the "Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives."

Imposing this requirement would be healthy for democracy not only because, by definition, it would produce results that a majority of voters want — it would also help elect more moderates from both parties, officeholders predisposed to working across the aisle to legislate in the public interest.

Congress could make this change while being respectful of states' roles as "laboratories of democracy," because there are any number of ways to achieve majority rule. They could adopt a "top two" system like

that in place in California and Washington, in which a nonpartisan primary sends two finalists to the November election.

They could experiment with "approval voting," as St. Louis did for the first time in its mayoral election, which is similar to the "top two" system except that in the nonpartisan primary voters can support as many candidates as they want, rather than just one. Or they could adopt ranked-choice voting in the general election, preceded by either a nonpartisan or partisan primary, as in Alaska and Maine, respectively. Any of these options, and others also, permit a centrist candidate — like Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, or Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine — to prevail if, but only if, that's what the electorate as a whole prefers.

To understand how pernicious the current dynamic is, consider a race in which a moderate candidate attempts to challenge the polarizing effect of the existing system. For that, we reach back a decade, because usually centrists don't even try.

Florida's 2010 Senate race featured three general election candidates: Republican Marco Rubio, who won 49% of the vote; then-Gov. Charlie Crist, who was running as an independent after dropping out of the GOP primary and received 30%; and Democrat Kendrick Meek, who attracted just 20%. Had a majority been required, it's possible that Crist would have picked up enough Democratic support to beat Rubio.

What's worse: Electing plurality winners has the effect of deterring third-party can-

didacies like Crist's in the first place, leaving the general election a contest between the two major-party nominees. If the parties choose more extreme candidates in their primaries — as is happening increasingly, especially on the Republican side — then the November winner will be a more polarizing politician.

There ought to be 60 senators willing to require majority winners: 10 GOP traditionalists wanting to save their own party from extremism, plus all 50 Democrats eager to help prevent their Republican counterparts from becoming the anti-democracy caucus.

The question of how and whether to apply this rule to House elections is slightly more complicated. As long as the House remains full of single-member districts, all the same reasons apply — if not more so, given how partisan gerrymandering combined with primaries maximizes polarization. But if Congress moves to multimember districts for the House, as some have proposed, the same rationale would not apply.

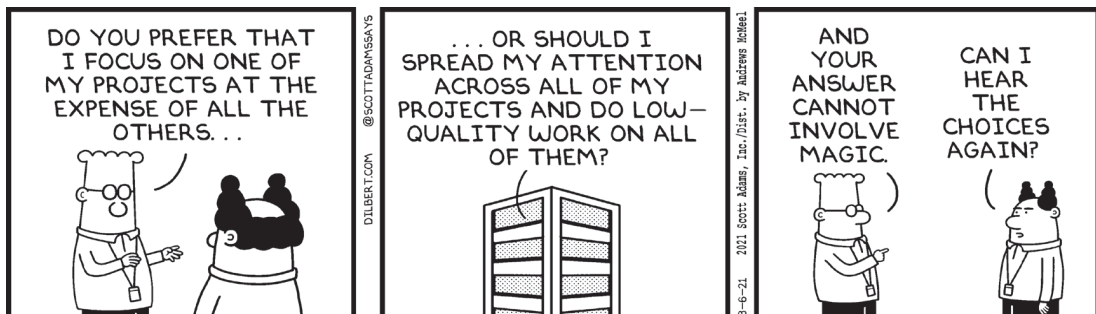
Congress already adopted a majority rule once, in 1866, for Senate elections, but that was before the 17th Amendment, when state legislatures still elected senators. It's time to reinstate this rule — paving the way for a more functional Congress to consider additional reforms now stymied by entrenched partisan division.

Edward B. Foley, a Washington Post contributing columnist, writes on matters relating to election law and administration.

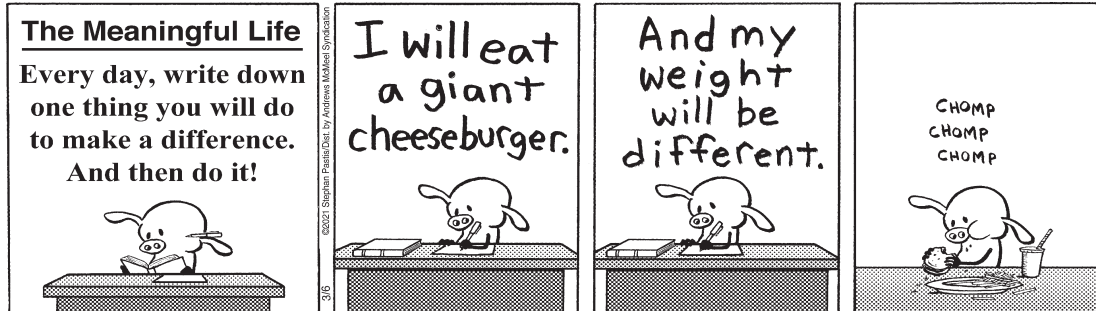
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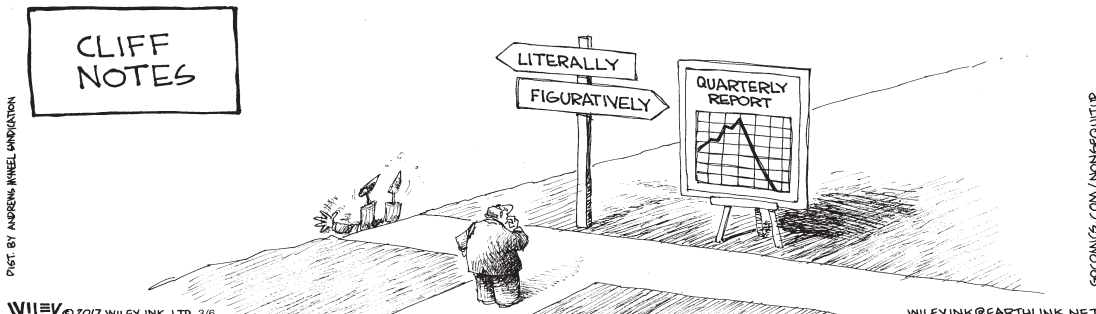
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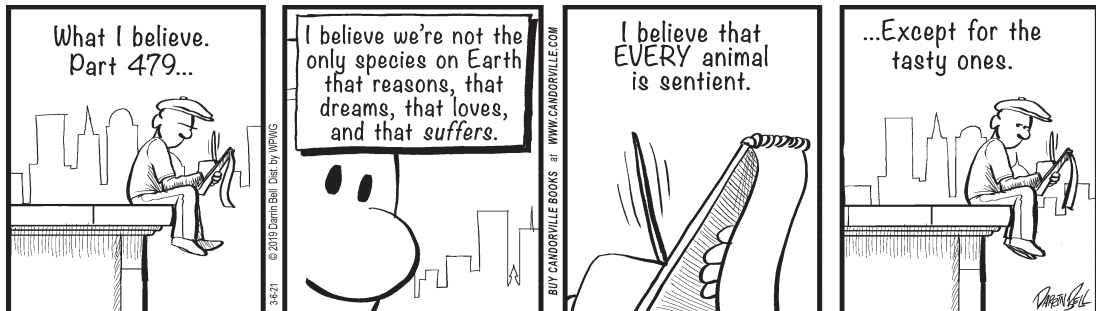
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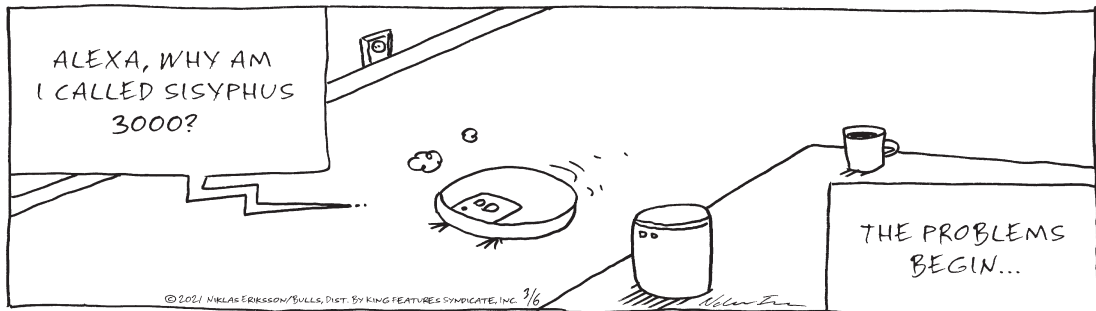
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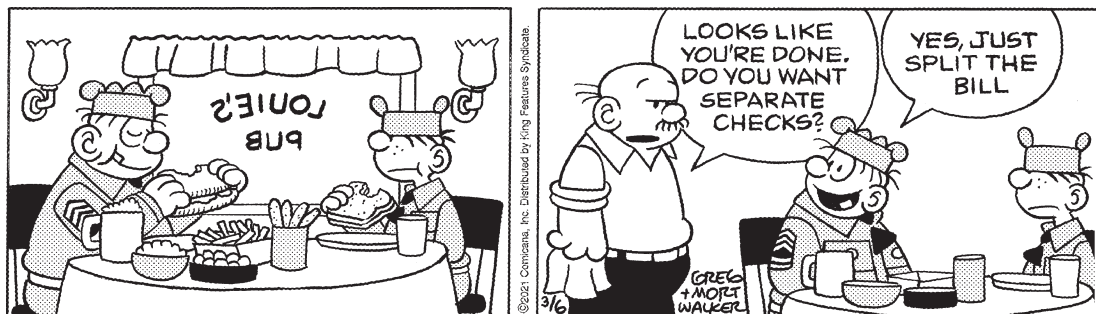
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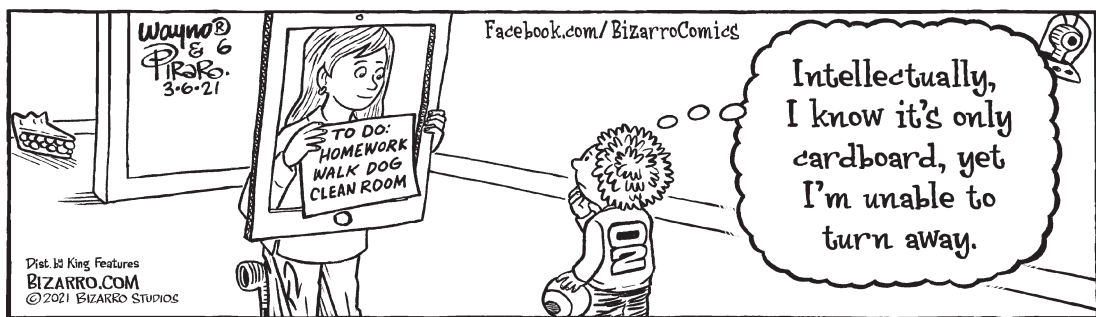
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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51					52					53		

#### ACROSS

- 1 Fuel stat
- 4 Mama — Elliot
- 8 Dross
- 12 Not 'neath
- 13 Jazzy James
- 14 Nozzle site
- 15 La-la lead-in
- 16 Country singer Jackson
- 17 Banister
- 18 Throws a hissy fit
- 21 Guitar master Paul
- 22 Huge
- 23 The staff of life
- 26 Cranberry territory
- 27 Young seal
- 30 Harvest
- 31 Remiss
- 32 London gallery
- 33 Play segment
- 34 Pooch
- 35 More broad
- 36 PC alternative
- 37 Comics cry
- 38 Entertains lavishly
- 45 MP's quarry
- 46 Lincoln in-law
- 47 — Dhabi
- 48 Misplace
- 49 Actress Falco
- 50 La —, Bolivia
- 51 Leg joint

- 52 Monopoly card
- 53 Sailor's assent

- 24 Fun and games
- 25 Consume
- 26 Satchel
- 27 Cushion
- 28 Salt Lake athlete
- 29 Part of MPH
- 31 Tracked down
- 32 "Kon- —"
- 34 "— Kapital"
- 35 Tied the knot
- 36 Donnybrook
- 37 "Frasier" pooch
- 38 Stroll
- 39 Victor's cry
- 40 Plane part
- 41 Central point
- 42 California valley
- 43 Online auction site
- 44 Money maven Orman

#### DOWN

- 1 Adult silkworm
- 2 Lima's land
- 3 Tennis great Steffi
- 4 Stopped
- 5 World record?
- 6 Ollie's pal
- 7 Backyard play area
- 8 Show indifference
- 9 Challah unit
- 10 "Dream on!"
- 11 Hair goops
- 19 Envelope part
- 20 Glutton
- 23 Bikini half

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle

D	N	A		M	A	E		W	R	I	S	T	
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3-6

#### CRYPTOQUIP

BE IIWKUI'G XMF LIUI M  
 RKUGI BOGCIMN KE M YIMU,  
 ZMWYI RI LKVFN YI OMZIN  
 LRBOOW CRI XKKR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT MIGHT SOMEBODY CALL A RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAS BECOME A CELEBRITY? A SHOOTING STAR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals Y

# SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

### Saturday's games

#### EAST

Maine at Delaware  
Villanova at Stony Brook

#### SOUTH

ETSU (1-0) at Wofford (1-1), ppd.  
VMI (1-0) at W. Carolina (0-5)  
Chattanooga (1-1) at The Citadel (0-5)  
Samford (1-1) at Furman (1-1)  
Presbyterian at Gardner-Webb (1-0)  
William & Mary at Richmond  
Jackson St. (1-0) at Grambling St.  
Alabama A&M at SC State  
James Madison (2-0) at Elon (1-1)  
Ark.-Pine Bluff at Southern U. (1-0)  
Nicholls (2-0) at Northwestern St.  
McNeese St. (1-1) at SE Louisiana (0-1)  
Alabama A&M at MVSU, ppd.

#### MIDWEST

S. Illinois (2-1) at Youngstown St. (0-2)  
W. Illinois (0-1) at S. Dakota St. (1-1)  
N. Dakota St. (2-1) at Missouri St. (1-3)  
Illinois St. (0-1) at N. Iowa (1-1)

#### SOUTHWEST

Mississippi College at Tarleton St. (1-2)  
Incarnate Word (1-0) at Lamar (0-1)  
Texas Southern at Prairie View

#### FAR WEST

Weber St. (1-0) at Cal Poly, ppd.  
Idaho St. (0-1) at S. Utah (0-1)  
UC Davis at Idaho (1-0)  
N. Arizona (1-0) at E. Washington (0-1)

### Sunday's games

#### EAST

Wagner at Merrimack College, ppd.  
Sacred Heart at Duquesne  
Bryant at LIU

#### SOUTH

E. Illinois (0-1) at UT Martin (0-1)  
Jacksonville St. (4-1) at Tennessee St. (0-1)

#### MIDWEST

Murray St. (1-0) at SE Missouri (1-1)

#### FAR WEST

Dixie State (1-0) vs. New Mexico St. (0-1) at El Paso, Texas

### Thursday's score

#### MIDWEST

North Dakota 21, South Dakota 10

## PRO BASEBALL

### Spring training

#### Wednesday's games

St. Louis 14, N.Y. Mets 9  
Tampa Bay 3, Pittsburgh 1  
Boston 14, Minnesota 6  
Philadelphia 4, Detroit 2  
Baltimore 8, Atlanta 1  
Miami 8, Washington 5  
Seattle 8, Chicago Cubs 8  
Kansas City 6, Chicago White Sox 5  
Arizona 9, Cleveland 4  
Milwaukee 8, San Diego 5  
Colorado 10, Oakland 7  
L.A. Angels 6, Texas 2  
N.Y. Yankees 4, Toronto 1  
Cincinnati 4, L.A. Dodgers 4

#### Thursday's games

Baltimore 6, Boston 3  
Detroit 8, Toronto 2  
Tampa Bay 5, Minnesota 2  
Pittsburgh 6, Atlanta 1  
Philadelphia 15, N.Y. Yankees 0  
N.Y. Mets 8, Washington 4  
Texas 5, San Diego 3  
San Francisco 3, Chicago White Sox 1  
Colorado 9, Seattle 9  
Cleveland 5, Milwaukee 1  
Arizona 9, L.A. Angels 2  
Houston 14, St. Louis 0  
Kansas City 5, Cincinnati 3  
Chicago Cubs 7, L.A. Dodgers 0

#### Friday's games

Tampa Bay vs. Boston at Fort Myers, Fla.  
Pittsburgh vs. Philadelphia at Clearwater, Fla.  
Minnesota vs. Atlanta at North Port, Fla.  
Detroit vs. N.Y. Yankees at Tampa, Fla.  
Houston vs. Miami at Jupiter, Fla.  
Baltimore vs. Toronto at Dunedin, Fla.  
L.A. Dodgers vs. Kansas City at Surprise, Ariz.  
Seattle vs. Chicago White Sox at Glendale, Ariz.  
L.A. Angels vs. Oakland at Mesa, Ariz.  
Cleveland vs. Chicago Cubs at Mesa, Ariz.  
Milwaukee vs. Colorado at Scottsdale, Ariz.  
St. Louis vs. Washington at West Palm Beach, Fla.  
Arizona vs. Cincinnati at Goodyear, Ariz.  
San Francisco vs. San Diego at Peoria, Ariz.

#### Saturday's games

Minnesota vs. Boston at Fort Myers, Fla.  
Atlanta vs. Tampa Bay at Port Charlotte, Fla.  
N.Y. Yankees vs. Pittsburgh at Bradenton, Fla.  
Washington vs. Miami at Jupiter, Fla.  
Philadelphia vs. Toronto at Dunedin, Fla.  
Chicago White Sox vs. Cleveland at Goodyear, Ariz.  
San Diego vs. L.A. Dodgers at Glendale, Ariz.  
Kansas City vs. San Francisco at Scottsdale, Ariz.  
Oakland vs. Seattle at Peoria, Ariz.  
Chicago Cubs vs. Milwaukee at Phoenix  
Colorado vs. L.A. Angels at Tempe, Ariz.  
Texas vs. Arizona at Scottsdale, Ariz.  
Detroit vs. Baltimore at Sarasota, Fla.  
N.Y. Mets vs. Houston at West Palm Beach, Fla.

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

### Thursday's men's scores

#### EAST

Manhattan 69, Fairfield 59  
Monmouth (NJ) 77, Rider 74, OT  
Quinnipiac 65, St. Peter's 60  
Siena 73, Canisius 66  
UMass 100, Saint Joseph's 66  
West Virginia 76, TCU 67

#### SOUTH

Campbell 78, Radford 60  
Duquesne 67, Richmond 62  
E. Kentucky 70, Austin Peay 67  
FAU 80, Middle Tennessee 50  
Florida Gulf Coast 72, Lipscomb 60  
George Mason 73, George Washington 59

Grambling St. 91, Alabama St. 68  
Jackson St. 50, Alabama A&M 35  
Jacksonville St. 68, Murray St. 65, OT  
Liberty 69, Kennesaw St. 59  
NC Central 74, Florida A&M 71  
Nicholls 80, McNeese St. 67  
North Alabama 68, North Florida 60  
UCF 64, East Carolina 60  
Winthrop 82, Longwood 61

#### MIDWEST

Dayton 84, Rhode Island 72  
Iowa 102, Nebraska 64  
Kansas 67, UTEP 62  
Michigan 69, Michigan St. 50  
N. Iowa 65, Illinois St. 60  
S. Illinois 73, Bradley 63  
Stetson 73, Bellarmine 70  
Vanderbilt 78, Cincinnati 64

#### SOUTHWEST

Baylor 81, Oklahoma St. 70  
Prairie View 68, Southern U. 61  
Texas 69, Oklahoma 65  
Texas Southern 80, Alcorn St. 78  
Texas Tech 81, Iowa St. 54  
Tulsa 107, Northeastern St. 74  
UTSA 123, SW Adventist 43

#### FAR WEST

Chaminade 80, Hawaii Pacific 69  
Colorado 75, Arizona St. 61  
S. Utah 68, Portland St. 58  
San Francisco 67, San Diego 51  
Utah St. 72, Wyoming 59

Weber St. 60, N. Colorado 59

### Thursday's women's scores

#### EAST

Fairleigh Dickinson 53, Bryant 47  
Fordham 48, George Washington 43  
Iona 55, Monmouth (NJ) 48  
Marist 71, St. Peter's 55  
Merrimack 70, Sacred Heart 61  
St. Francis (Pa.) 80, CCSU 67  
Temple 66, Memphis 52  
Wagner 73, Mount St. Mary's 62

#### SOUTH

Alabama 82, Missouri 74  
Alabama St. 71, Grambling St. 62  
Clemson 68, Notre Dame 63  
ETSU 68, Samford 61  
Furman 58, Chattanooga 40  
Jackson St. 65, Alabama A&M 51  
Kentucky 73, Florida 64  
LSU 71, Mississippi St. 62  
Marshall 72, Middle Tennessee 49  
Mercer 76, W. Carolina 67  
NC Central 65, Norfolk St. 61  
Old Dominion 55, W. Kentucky 53  
Syracuse 67, Boston College 61  
Tennessee Tech 79, Jacksonville St. 64  
Towson 77, UNC-Wilmington 66  
UCF 58, South Florida 45  
Virginia Tech 72, Miami 64  
Wake Forest 82, North Carolina 71  
Wofford 78, UNC-Greensboro 66

#### MIDWEST

Maryland 88, Michigan 63  
Murray St. 67, SE Missouri 64

#### SOUTHWEST

Mississippi 69, Arkansas 50  
Rice 64, North Texas 58  
Southern U. 70, Prairie View 39  
TCU 83, Oklahoma 79  
Texas Southern 60, Alcorn St. 50

#### FAR WEST

Arizona 60, Washington St. 44  
Loyola Marymount 85, Pepperdine 73  
Nevada 69, Air Force 58  
New Mexico 68, Colorado St. 55  
Oregon St. 71, Oregon 64  
Stanford 92, Southern Cal 53  
UCLA 58, Washington 46

## TENNIS

### Lyon Open

Thursday  
At Palais des Sports Gerland  
Lyon, France  
Purse: Euro 189,708  
Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Women's Singles  
Round of 16

Greet Minnen, Belgium, def. Arantxa Rus (8), Netherlands, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.  
Kristina Mladenovic (4), France, def. Margarita Gasparyan, Russia, 6-4, 6-2.  
Clara Burel, France, def. Aliaksandra Sasnovich, Belarus, 7-5, 2-6, 6-0.  
Viktoria Golubic, Switzerland, def. Caroline Garcia (3), France, 6-1, 6-2.  
Paula Badosa (7), Spain, def. Stefanie Voegele, Switzerland, 6-2, 6-4.

#### Women's Doubles

Eugenie Bouchard, Canada, and Olga Danilovic, Serbia, def. Alexandra Panova, Russia, and Rosalie van Der Hoek, Netherlands, 6-2, 4-6, 12-10.

Arantxa Rus, Netherlands, and Viktoria Kuzmova (1), Slovakia, def. Laura-Ioana Paar, Romania, and Julia Wachaczyk, Germany, 6-4, 6-4.

Renata Voracova, Czech Republic, and Makoto Ninomiya (2), Japan, def. Aliaksandra Sasnovich and Vera Lapko, Belarus, 6-3, 6-3.

### Argentina Open

Thursday  
At Buenos Aires Lawn Tennis Club  
Buenos Aires  
Purse: \$329,550  
Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles  
Round of 16

Pablo Andujar (6), Spain, def. Gianluca Mager, Italy, 6-4, 7-6 (5).  
Francisco Cerundolo, Argentina, def. Benoit Paire (3), France, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1.  
Jaume Munar, Spain, def. Frances Tiafoe (8), United States, 7-6 (4), 6-4.  
Diego Schwartzman (1), Argentina, def. Lukas Klein, Slovakia, 6-4, 6-2.

#### Men's Doubles

Nikola Cacic, Serbia, and Tomislav Brkic, Bosnia-Herzegovina, def. Thiago Monteiro, Brazil, and Andre Goransson, Sweden, walkover.  
Joao Sousa, Portugal, and Dominik Koepfer, Germany, def. Simone Bolelli, Ita-

ly, and Maximo Gonzalez (3), Argentina, 4-6, 7-6 (4), 10-5.  
Franko Skugor, Croatia, and Austin Krajicek (1), United States, def. Federico Coria and Francisco Cerundolo, Argentina, 6-4, 6-2.

### ABN Amro World Tournament

Thursday  
At Ahoy Rotterdam  
Rotterdam, Netherlands  
Purse: Euro 980,580  
Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Men's Singles  
Round of 16

Jeremy Chardy, France, def. David Goffin (6), Belgium, 7-6 (3), 7-6 (5).  
Tommy Paul, United States, def. Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-1.  
Stefanos Tsitsipas (2), Greece, def. Hubert Hurkacz, Poland, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5.  
Borna Coric, Croatia, def. Dusan Lajovic, Serbia, 6-3, 6-2.  
Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, def. Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, Spain, 6-3, 6-2.

#### Men's Doubles

Horia Tecau, Romania, and Kevin Krawietz, Germany, def. Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublev, Russia, 6-3, 6-4.

### Qatar Open

Thursday  
At Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex  
Doha, Qatar  
Purse: \$564,530  
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

Women's Singles  
Quarterfinals

Petra Kvitova (4), Czech Republic, def. Anett Kontaveit, Estonia, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.  
Jessica Pegula, United States, def. Karolina Pliskova (2), Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-1.  
Victoria Azarenka (8), Belarus, def. Elina Svitolina (1), Ukraine, 6-2, 6-4.  
Garbine Muguruza, Spain, def. Maria Sakkari, Greece, 6-3, 6-1.

#### Women's Doubles

Nicole Melichar, United States, and Demi Schuurs (2), Netherlands, def. Sania Mirza, India, and Andreja Klepac, Slovenia, 7-5, 2-6, 10-5.

Monica Niculescu, Romania, and Jelena Ostapenko, Latvia, def. Barbora Krejckova and Katerina Siniakova (1), Czech Republic, 2-6, 6-3, 10-8.

## GOLF

### Arnold Palmer Invitational

PGA Tour  
Thursday  
At Bay Hill Club and Lodge  
Orlando, Fla.  
Purse: \$9.3 million  
Yardage: 7,409; Par: 72  
First Round

Rory McIlroy	31-35-66	-6
Corey Connors	35-31-66	-6
Bryson DeChambeau	33-34-67	-5
Jason Kokrak	33-35-68	-4
Byeong Hun An	33-35-68	-4
Sebastián Muñoz	33-35-68	-4
Victor Perez	32-37-69	-3
Martin Laird	35-34-69	-3
Lanto Griffin	35-34-69	-3

### Drive On Championship

LPGA Tour  
Thursday  
At Golden Ocala Golf and Equestrian Club  
Orlando, Fla.  
Purse: \$1.5 million  
Yardage: 6,526; Par: 72  
First Round

Nelly Korda	34-33-67	-5
Jennifer Kupcho	32-35-67	-5
Austin Ernst	36-31-67	-5
Jing Yan	35-33-68	-4
Jaye Marie Green	33-35-68	-4
Mi Jung Hur	35-34-69	-3
Lydia Ko	33-36-69	-3
Megan Khang	34-35-69	-3
Gaby Lopez	35-34-69	-3

## DEALS

### Thursday's transactions

#### BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

**TEXAS RANGERS** — Agreed to terms with RHPs, A.J. Alexy, Kyle Cody, Brett de Geus, Dane Dunning, Demarcus Evans, Joe Gatto, Jonathan Hernandez, Tyler Phillips, and Josh Sborz, LHPs Kolby Allard, Wes Benjamin, Brock Burke, Taylor Hearn, John King, Brett Martin, and Joe Palumbo, Cs David Garcia, Jonah Heim, Sam Huff, and Jose Trevino, INFs Sherten Apostel, Ronald Guzman, Nate Lowe, Nick Solak, and Anderson Tejeda, and OFs Willie Calhoun, Leody Taveras, and Eli White on one-year contracts.

#### National League

**ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Anthony Swarzak on a minor league contract.

**COLORADO ROCKIES** — Placed OF Ian Desmond o the restricted list.

**MIAMI MARLINS** — Agreed to terms with LHP Gio Gonzalez on a minor league contract.

#### BASKETBALL

##### National Basketball Association

**MILWAUKEE BUCKS** — Waived G Jaylen Adams.

#### FOOTBALL

##### National Football League

**CAROLINA PANTHERS** — Signed LB Thomas Davis and TE Greg Olsen to a one-day contract for retirement with the club.

**DETROIT LIONS** — Announced that they have tendered the contracts for FB Jason Cabinda, P Jack Fox and T Matt Nelson.

**MINNESOTA VIKINGS** — Re-signed DE Stephen Weatherly.

**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** — Released P Thomas Morstead.

**NEW YORK GIANTS** — Released WR Golden Tate and LB David Mayo.

**PITTSBURGH STEELERS** — Signed QB Ben Roethlisberger to a one-year contract.

#### HOCKEY

##### National Hockey League

**NHL** — Fined Washington F Alex Ovechkin for spearing Boston's Trent Frederic during a March 3 game. Fined Carolina D Brett Pesce \$5,000 for a dangerous trip against Detroit's F Robby Fabbrri during the second period of Thursday's game.

**ANAHEIM DUCKS** — Recalled G Anthony Stolarz, RW Vinni Lettieri, D Jamie Drysdale and C Chase De Leo from San Diego (AHL). Assigned G Lukas Dostal, D Hunter Drew and LW Maxim Golod to San Diego (AHL). Waived D Brendan Guhle.

**BUFFALO SABRES** — Recalled D Jaco Bryson from the minor league taxi squad.

**CAROLINA HURRICANES** — Recalled D Jake Bean and G Alex Nedeljkovic from the minor league taxi squad.

**COLORADO AVALANCHE** — Assigned C Sheldon Dries to Colorado (AHL) and C Josh Dickinson to Utah (ECHL).

**DETROIT RED WINGS** — Recalled LW Mathias Brome from the minor league taxi squad.

**LOS ANGELES KINGS** — Recalled C Rasmus Kupari from Ontario (AHL).

**NASHVILLE PREDATORS** — Recalled Ds Jeremy Davis and Ben Harpur, G Kasimir Kaskisuo and Cs Rem Pitlick and Brett Sejny from the minor league taxi squad. Assigned LW Tanner Jeannot to Chicago (AHL). Activated F Brad Richardson from injured reserve. Placed G Juuse Saros on injured reserve. Assigned D Alexandre Carrier to the minor league taxi squad.

**NEW JERSEY DEVILS** — Recalled RW Janne Kuokkanen from the minor league taxi squad.

**NEW YORK RANGERS** — Agreed to terms with Ds Braden Schneider on a one-year contract and Mason Geertsen on one-year contract then loaned him to Hartford (AHL). Recalled RW Patrick Newell from Hartford (AHL). Assigned D Mason Geertsen to Hartford (AHL).

**OTTAWA SENATORS** — Recalled D Braydon Coburn from the minor league taxi squad.

**PHILADELPHIA FLYERS** — Recalled C Connor Bunnaman from the minor league taxi squad.

#### SOCCER

##### Major League Soccer

**ATLANTA UNITED** — Signed G Ben Lundgaard to a two-year contract.

**COLORADO RAPIDS** — Acquired D Michael Edwards from DC United for General Allocation Money (GAM) and performance compensation and signed him to a two-year contract. Acquired W Dantouma Toure from New York Red Bulls for General Allocation Money (GAM) and performance compensation and signed him to a four-year contract.

**LA GALAXY** — Acquired D Derrick Williams from DC United in exchange for General Allocation Money (GAM) and signed him to a two-year contract.

**MINNESOTA UNITED** — Signed F Patrick Weah to a four-year contract.

**NEW YORK CITY FC** — Signed MF James Sands to a five-year contract extension. Signed G Cody Mizell for 2021 season.

**PHILADELPHIA UNION** — Announced the retirement of D Ray Gaaddis.

**SEATTLE SOUNDERS** — Signed F Fredy Montero to a one-year contract.

#### COLLEGE

**NCAA** — Named Charlie Cobb to football's CFP Selection Committee.

**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY** — Named Latrell Scott football's passing game coordinator, tight ends/inside receiver coach.

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE** — Named Mike Ekeler football's outside linebacker coach and special team coordinator.

## BRIEFLY

### Flames fire Ward, replace him with Sutter

CALGARY, Alberta — The Calgary Flames fired coach Geoff Ward on Thursday night and replaced him with Darryl Sutter, who will lead the team for the second time.

The Flames announced the moves shortly after Ward coached the Flames to a 7-3 win over the Ottawa Senators. Calgary went 11-11-2 under Ward this season.

Ward went 35-26-5 in 66 games with the Flames, who beat Winnipeg in a in a best-of-five qualifying series last summer but lost to Dallas in the first round of the playoffs.

### Source: Bradley agrees to deal with Brewers

MILWAUKEE — Free-agent outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr. is joining the Milwaukee Brewers, agreeing to the parameters of a \$24 million, two-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday because the details of the agreement were still being negotiated and the deal is subject to a successful physical.

Bradley would have the right to opt out after one year and \$13 million, allowing him to become a free agent after this season.

### Washington releases Comeback Player Smith

Washington released AP Comeback Player of the Year Alex Smith on Friday, a move that was expected but still provides a cold ending to the veteran quarterback's storybook tenure with the organization.

Coach Ron Rivera said he met with Smith this week, each side figured it was best to move on, and the organization granted Smith's request to be released.

Smith made a triumphant return to NFL action last season, two years after breaking two bones in his right leg and requiring 17 surgeries to repair it.

### Source: Griffin, Pistons agree to buyout

DETROIT — Blake Griffin's time in Detroit is over, another significant step in a rebuilding process that has the Pistons at the bottom of the Eastern Conference.

The veteran forward and the Pistons have agreed to a contract buyout, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Friday because the move was not yet official.

The Pistons announced last month that they would keep Griffin out of the lineup while resolving his future, a clear sign that the star forward could be on the way out. The Pistons also traded Derrick Rose to the New York Knicks last month.

## NHL/AUTO RACING

## NHL scoreboard

## NHL ROUNDUP

## Kreider hat trick powers Rangers

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Chris Kreider had his second hat trick in five games and the Rangers beat the slumping New Jersey Devils 6-1 on Thursday night in a game marred by a late injury to New York goalie Igor Shesterkin.

Kreider, who scored three times in a loss to Philadelphia on Feb. 24, has nine goals in his last six games, and 13 overall. He completed his natural hat trick 23 seconds into the final period after scoring twice in the second. His fourth career hat trick came on five shots.

Shesterkin seemed to hurt his right leg with just under six minutes to play when he stretched to stop a 2-on-1 break and shot by Damon Severson. He went down without contact and had to be helped off the ice, dragging the leg.

Shesterkin kept the Rangers in the game in the first period by stopping 13 of 14 shots. He finished with 32 saves in helping the Rangers win their second straight and their fifth in seven. Pavel Buchnevich, Brendan Smith and Alexis Lafreniere also scored for New York.

Jack Hughes scored for the Devils.

**Lightning 3, Blackhawks 2 (OT):** Alex Killorn scored 4:59 into overtime, with the puck barely over the line at the horn, and visiting Tampa Bay beat Chicago for its sixth straight victory.

Steven Stamkos and Anthony Cirelli also scored for Tampa Bay, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 35 saves in another stellar performance.

**Islanders 5, Sabres 2:** Matt Martin scored twice and host New York beat Buffalo in the opener of a three-game series.

Noah Dobson, Anthony Beauvillier and Jordan Eberle also scored for New York, and rookie Ilya Sorokin stopped 16 shots.

**Flyers 4, Penguins 3:** Claude Giroux scored his second goal of the night on a tap-in with 2:08 remaining and visiting Philadelphia overcame an early Pittsburgh deluge.

Scott Laughton and Sean Couturier also scored for the Flyers.

**Canucks 3, Maple Leafs 1:** Jake Virtanen



KATHY WILLENS/AP

New York Rangers left wing Chris Kreider, right, scores against New Jersey Devils goaltender Mackenzie Blackwood during the second period Thursday in Newark, N.J.

scored twice, leading host Vancouver past NHL-leading Toronto in the opener of a two-game set.

Bo Horvat also scored for Vancouver, and Thatcher Demko stopped 32 shots.

**Jets 4, Canadiens 3 (OT):** Pierre-Luc Dubois scored at 4:29 of overtime to lift visiting Winnipeg past Montreal in the opener of two-game series.

Dubois fired a rolling puck past goalie Jake Allen for his fifth of the season.

**Blue Jackets 3, Stars 2:** Boone Jenner had a goal and an assist, Oliver Bjorkstrand and Eric Robinson added third-period goals, and visiting Columbus beat struggling Dallas.

Korpisalo stopped 22 shots for the Blue Jack-ets.

**Panthers 5, Predators 4:** Aaron Ekblad had

two goals and two assists to lead visiting Florida past Nashville.

Carter Verhaeghe, Mason Marchment and Jonathan Huberdeau also scored, Aleksander Barkov had three assists and Sergei Bobrovsky made 31 saves.

**Flames 7, Senators 3:** Dillon Dube had his first career hat trick to help host Calgary beat Ottawa.

Sean Monahan, Derek Ryan and Brett Ritchie each had a goal and an assist for Calgary.

**Hurricanes 5, Red Wings 2:** Jordan Staal and Jesper Fast scored early in the third period to help host Carolina beat Detroit.

Andrei Svechnikov, Svechnikov, Martin Necas and Nino Niederreiter also scored for the Hurricanes.

East Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	22	13	5	4	30	75	70
N.Y. Islanders	23	13	6	4	30	63	52
Philadelphia	20	12	5	3	27	67	62
Boston	20	12	5	3	27	60	52
Pittsburgh	22	12	9	1	25	68	71
N.Y. Rangers	21	9	9	3	21	59	55
New Jersey	19	7	10	2	16	47	60
Buffalo	21	6	12	3	15	48	65

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	21	16	4	1	33	74	41
Carolina	23	16	6	1	33	81	62
Florida	22	14	4	4	32	72	64
Chicago	24	12	7	5	29	75	71
Columbus	25	10	10	5	25	69	80
Nashville	23	10	13	0	20	55	73
Detroit	26	7	16	3	17	54	87
Dallas	18	6	8	4	16	48	50

West Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	19	14	4	1	29	61	41
St. Louis	23	13	8	2	28	75	73
Colorado	20	12	7	1	25	61	48
Minnesota	20	12	7	1	25	62	54
Arizona	22	10	9	3	23	59	66
Los Angeles	21	9	8	4	22	62	59
San Jose	20	8	10	2	18	59	77
Anaheim	23	6	12	5	17	48	69

North Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	25	18	5	2	38	88	59
Winnipeg	23	15	7	1	31	78	62
Edmonton	25	14	11	0	28	80	78
Montreal	22	10	6	6	26	71	65
Calgary	24	11	11	2	24	66	73
Vancouver	27	10	15	2	22	77	91
Ottawa	26	8	17	1	17	70	102

## Wednesday's games

Toronto 6, Edmonton 1  
Arizona 3, Los Angeles 2  
Colorado 4, San Jose 0  
Washington 2, Boston 1, SO  
St. Louis 3, Anaheim 2  
Vegas 5, Minnesota 1

## Thursday's games

N.Y. Islanders 5, Buffalo 2  
Winnipeg 4, Montreal 3, OT  
Philadelphia 4, Pittsburgh 3  
N.Y. Rangers 6, New Jersey 1  
Carolina 5, Detroit 2  
Tampa Bay 3, Chicago 2, OT  
Florida 5, Nashville 4  
Columbus 3, Dallas 2  
Calgary 7, Ottawa 3  
Vancouver 3, Toronto 1

## Friday's games

Washington at Boston  
Tampa Bay at Chicago  
Anaheim at Colorado  
Minnesota at Arizona  
St. Louis at Los Angeles  
Vegas at San Jose

## Saturday's games

Buffalo at N.Y. Islanders  
N.Y. Rangers at New Jersey  
Philadelphia at Pittsburgh  
Florida at Nashville  
Minnesota at Arizona  
Toronto at Vancouver  
Winnipeg at Montreal  
Anaheim at Colorado  
Columbus at Dallas  
St. Louis at Los Angeles  
Calgary at Edmonton  
Vegas at San Jose

## Sunday's games

Buffalo at N.Y. Islanders  
Tampa Bay at Chicago  
Florida at Carolina  
New Jersey at Boston  
Washington at Philadelphia  
N.Y. Rangers at Pittsburgh  
Nashville at Dallas  
Ottawa at Calgary

## Scoring leaders

## Through Thursday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	25	14	26	40
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	25	10	25	35
Mitchell Marner, TOR	24	10	24	34
Patrick Kane, CHI	23	11	23	34
Mark Scheifele, WPG	22	11	20	31
Auston Matthews, TOR	21	18	13	31
James van Riemsdyk, PHI	19	10	16	26
Nicklas Backstrom, WSH	22	10	15	25
Alex DeBrincat, CHI	19	11	14	25
Brock Boeser, VAN	26	12	13	25
Anze Kopitar, LA	21	4	20	24
Mark Stone, LV	19	5	19	24
Jonathan Huberdeau, FLA	21	8	16	24
Brad Marchand, BOS	20	10	14	24

## McDowell takes hot streak to Las Vegas

BY JENNA FRYER

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Michael McDowell was rolling along at Homestead-Miami Speedway when he saw another driver signal for a car to pass.

When McDowell came upon the same driver, he wasn't given the same courtesy.

"I literally saw a driver wave another driver by, and then race me for the next seven laps like it was the last lap," McDowell recalled Tuesday.

He declined to identify the rival who refused to give McDowell an easy pass over the weekend, but it was an eye-opener for the Daytona 500 winner. A journeyman driver for small-budget teams, McDowell isn't usually racing at the front of the pack or passing cars for top-10 finishes.

But since his Daytona 500 victory — his first win in 358 previous Cup Series starts — McDo-



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Michael McDowell followed his Daytona 500 victory with a pair of top-10 finishes. That's three in three races, one shy of his total from all of 2020.

well has found himself running with a different crowd. He has opened the season with three top-10 finishes through three

races, just one shy of his total last year.

The strong start with Front Row Motorsports has put McDowell in uncharted territory. In the final laps Sunday at Homestead he found himself trying to pass Kevin Harvick for fifth, a previously unthinkable scenario.

It has all validated the effort McDowell put in over 14 years, but it hasn't translated into on-track respect for the No. 34 Ford from his peers.

"There are top guys that don't want to be passed by the 34 and I get it, I understand that because they think that they're having a really bad day if the 34 is going around them," said McDowell, who also acknowledged putting up too strong of a fight when his car was a perpetual backmarker.

"On the flipside, I somewhat deserve it because I race the guts out of everybody and always have," he said. "Even when I was

in bad cars I never made it easy on anybody, so I don't expect them to make it easy on me."

McDowell next goes to Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday ranked a career-high fourth in the Cup standings. His best finish in the final standings was 23rd last season, and when he opened this year, McDowell openly doubted his team could crack the top 16 required to qualify for the playoffs.

He still wasn't sure how Front Row stacked against the competition after winning the Daytona 500, which wasn't exactly a fluke because McDowell is a respected superspeedway racer. But he has yet to fall back into the field to where he's accustomed to racing.

"To make a big jump like we did, I wouldn't say that it's a complete, like, unbelievable shock, but it's pretty close to it," McDowell said. "We have definitely outperformed where we thought we'd be."

# COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## Scoreboard

### Conference tournaments

**America East Conference Semifinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 UMass Lowell at UMBC  
 Hartford at Vermont  
**Championship**  
**Saturday, March 14**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Atlantic Sun Conference**  
**At Jacksonville, Fla.**  
**Thursday, March 4**  
**Quarterfinals**  
 Liberty 69, Kennesaw St. 59  
 North Alabama 68, North Florida 60  
 Florida Gulf Coast 72, Lipscomb 60  
 Stetson 73, Bellarmine 70  
**Semifinals**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 Liberty vs. Stetson  
 North Alabama vs. Florida Gulf Coast  
**Championship**  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Atlantic 10 Conference**  
**First Round**  
**Wednesday, March 3**  
 Saint Joseph's 72, La Salle 66  
 George Washington 53, Fordham 49  
**Second Round**  
**Thursday, March 4**  
 Duquesne 67, Richmond 62  
 UMass 100, Saint Joseph's 66  
 Dayton 84, Rhode Island 72  
 George Mason 73, George Washington 59  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 St. Bonaventure vs. Duquesne  
 Saint Louis vs. UMass  
 VCU vs. Dayton  
 Davidson vs. George Mason  
**Semifinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 St. Bonaventure-Duquesne winner vs. Saint Louis-UMass  
 VCU-Dayton winner vs. Davidson-George Mason-George Washington  
**Championship**  
**Sunday, March 14**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Big South Conference**  
**First Round**  
**Saturday, Feb. 27**  
 Hampton 67, Presbyterian 65  
 High Point 65, SC-Upstate 60  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Monday, March 1**  
 Winthrop 83, High Point 54  
 Radford 67, Hampton 52  
 Longwood 77, UNC Asheville 61  
 Campbell 63, Gardner-Webb 57  
**Semifinals**  
**Thursday, March 4**  
 Winthrop 82, Longwood 61  
 Campbell 78, Radford 60  
**Championship**  
**At Higher-Seeded Team**  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 Winthrop vs. Campbell  
**Colonial Athletic Association**  
**At Harrisonburg, Va.**  
**First Round**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Towson vs. Elon  
 UNC-Wilmington vs. William & Mary  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 Delaware vs. Hofstra  
 Towson-Elon winner at James Madison  
 UNC-Wilmington-William & Mary winner vs. Northeastern  
 Drexel vs. Coll. of Charleston  
**Semifinals**  
**Monday, March 8**  
 Delaware-Hofstra winner vs. James Madison-Towson-Elon winner  
 Northeastern-UNCW-William & Mary winner vs. Drexel-Coll. of Charleston winner  
**Championship**  
**Tuesday, March 9**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Horizon League**  
**At Higher-Seeded Schools**  
**First Round**  
**Thursday, Feb. 25**  
 Detroit Mercy 83, Robert Morris 73  
 Youngstown St. 74, UIC 58  
 Fort Wayne 89, Green Bay 84, 2OT  
 Milwaukee 84, IUPUI 72  
**Quarterfinals**  
**At Higher-Seeded Schools**  
**Tuesday, March 2**  
 Cleveland St. 108, Fort Wayne 104, 3OT  
 N. Kentucky 70, Detroit Mercy 69  
 Milwaukee 94, Wright St. 92, OT  
 Oakland 87, Youngstown St. 83, OT  
**At Indianapolis**  
**Semifinals**  
**Monday, March 8**  
 Cleveland St. vs. Milwaukee  
 Oakland vs. N. Kentucky  
**Championship**  
**Tuesday, March 9**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Missouri Valley Conference**  
**At St. Louis**  
**First Round**  
**Thursday, March 4**  
 S. Illinois 73, Bradley 63  
 Northern Iowa 65, Illinois St. 60  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 S. Illinois vs. Loyola Chicago  
 Evansville vs. Indiana St.  
 Northern Iowa vs. Drake  
 Valparaiso vs. Missouri St.  
**Semifinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Loyola Chicago-S. Illinois-Bradley winner vs. Evansville-Indiana St. winner

Drake-Illinois St.-Northern Iowa winner vs. Valparaiso-Missouri St. winner  
**Championship**  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Ohio Valley Conference**  
**At Evansville, Ind.**  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Wednesday, March 3**  
 Belmont 78, SIU-Edwardsville 61  
 Morehead St. 61, SE Missouri 54  
**Thursday, March 4**  
 Jacksonville St. 68, Murray St. 65, OT  
 Eastern Kentucky 70, Austin Peay 67  
**Semifinals**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 Jacksonville St. vs. Belmont  
 Morehead St. vs. Eastern Kentucky  
**Championship**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Patriot League**  
**At Higher-Seeded Schools**  
**First Round**  
**Wednesday, March 3**  
 Loyola at Holy Cross, cancelled  
 Boston University 69, Lehigh 58  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Loyola at Navy, Noon  
 American at Army  
 Bucknell at Lafayette  
 Boston University at Colgate  
**Semifinals**  
**Wednesday, March 10**  
 Navy-Loyola-Holy Cross winner vs. American-Army winner  
 Bucknell-Lafayette winner vs. Colgate-Lehigh-Boston University winner  
**Championship**  
**Sunday, March 14**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Southern Conference**  
**At Asheville, N.C.**  
**First Round**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 W. Carolina vs. The Citadel  
 Samford vs. Mercer  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 W. Carolina-The Citadel winner vs. UNC-Greensboro, Noon  
 ETSU vs. Chattanooga  
 Samford-Mercer winner vs. Wofford  
 VMI vs. Furman  
**Semifinals**  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 UNC-Greensboro-W. Carolina-The Citadel winner vs. ETSU-Chattanooga winner  
 Wofford-Samford-Mercer winner vs. VMI-Furman winner  
**Championship**  
**Monday, March 8**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Summit League**  
**At Sioux Falls, S.D.**  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Omaha vs. South Dakota St.  
 W. Illinois vs. South Dakota  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 North Dakota vs. Oral Roberts  
 Kansas City vs. North Dakota St.  
**Semifinals**  
**Monday, March 8**  
 Omaha-South Dakota St. winner vs. North Dakota-Oral Roberts winner  
 W. Illinois-South Dakota winner vs. Kansas City-North Dakota St. winner  
**Championship**  
**Tuesday, March 10**  
 Semifinal winners  
**Sun Belt Conference**  
**At Pensacola, Fla.**  
**First Round**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 Arkansas St. vs. Georgia Southern  
 Appalachian St. vs. Little Rock  
 South Alabama vs. Louisiana-Monroe  
 Texas-Arlington vs. Troy  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Louisiana vs. South Alabama-Louisiana-Monroe winner  
 Georgia St. vs. Arkansas St.-Georgia Southern winner  
**Semifinals**  
**Sunday, March 7**  
 Georgia St.-Arkansas St.-Georgia Southern winner vs. Louisiana-South Alabama-Louisiana-Monroe winner  
 Coastal Carolina-Texas-Arlington-Troy winner vs. Texas St.-Appalachian St.-Little Rock winner  
**Championship**  
**Monday, March 8**  
 Semifinal winners  
**West Coast Conference**  
**At Las Vegas**  
**First Round**  
**Thursday, March 4**  
 San Francisco 67, San Diego 51  
 Santa Clara 95, Portland 86  
**Second Round**  
**Friday, March 5**  
 San Francisco vs. Loyola Marymount  
 Santa Clara vs. Pacific  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
 Loyola Marymount-San Diego-San Francisco winner vs. Saint Mary's  
 Pacific-Portland-Santa Clara winner vs. Pepperdine, Noon  
**Semifinals**  
**Monday, March 8**  
 Gonzaga vs. Loyola Marymount-Saint Mary's-San Diego-San Francisco winner  
 BYU vs. Pepperdine-Pacific-Portland-Santa Clara winner, Noon  
**Championship**  
**Tuesday, March 9**  
 Semifinal winner

## TOP 25 ROUNDUP

# Michigan clinches Big Ten

Associated Press

Franz Wagner scored 19 points, Hunter Dickinson added 14 and No. 2 Michigan wrapped up the Big Ten title with a 69-50 victory over rival Michigan State on Thursday night.

The Wolverines (19-2, 14-2) had a chance to clinch the championship based on winning percentage with a victory in any of their final three games. They were blown out by No. 4 Illinois — the team chasing them — on Tuesday night, but they rebounded with a gritty effort two nights later.

Michigan went on a 9-2 run to take a 39-28 lead into halftime. The Wolverines later went on a 25-4 tear that spanned much of the second half.

Aaron Henry scored 14 points for Michigan State (14-11, 8-11), which will finish with a losing conference record for the first time since 1993. It had never happened before under coach Tom Izzo, and the Spartans are struggling to extend Izzo's streak of 22 straight NCAA Tournament appearances.

**No. 3 Baylor 81. NO. 17 Oklahoma State 70:** Jared Butler scored 22 points and the host Bears, fresh off clinching their first Big 12 title on the road two days earlier, ended the Cowboys' five-game winning streak.

Baylor (20-1, 12-1 Big 12) seems to have its legs back under it after a three-week stretch without any games because of COVID-19 issues in the program.

**No. 5 Iowa 102, Nebraska 64:** Jordan Bohannon tied a career high with eight three-pointers and scored 26 points, and the host Hawkeyes beat the Cornhuskers.

Freshman Patrick McCaffery had a career-high 19 points for Iowa (19-7, 13-6 Big Ten). Luka Garza had 14 points for the Hawkeyes, who topped 100 points for the fourth time this season.

**No. 6 West Virginia 76, TCU 67:** Redshirt freshman Jalen Bridges set season highs with 22 points and 12 rebounds to lead the host Mountaineers past the Horned Frogs.

Derek Culver scored 17 points for West Virginia (18-7, 11-5 Big 12), which bounced back from an overtime loss to No. 3 Baylor on Tuesday.

**No. 13 Kansas 67, UTEP 62:** Marcus Garrett scored on a driving layup with 22.4 seconds to go and Dajuan Harris added a pair of clinching free throws as the host Jayhawks overcame a 15-point second-half deficit and beat the Miners.

David McCormack scored 16 of his 18 points in the second half, and Ochai Agbaji had 19 points as Kansas (19-8) avoided a rare second loss in Allen Fieldhouse this season.



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

**Michigan center Hunter Dickinson, right, is defended by Michigan State forward Thomas Kithier during Thursday's game in Ann Arbor, Mich.**

**No. 15 Texas 69, No. 16 Oklahoma 65:** Jericho Sims matched season highs with 16 points and 12 rebounds to help the visiting Longhorns beat the Sooners.

Andrew Jones added 16 points for Texas (16-7, 10-6 Big 12), which has won three of four.

**No. 18 Texas Tech 81, Iowa State 54:** Mac McClung scored 20 points and the host Red Raiders beat the Cyclones for their third consecutive victory following a three-game losing streak.

Marcus Santos-Silva had 14 points and seven rebounds to help Texas Tech (17-8, 9-7 Big 12) wrap up its home schedule with a fifth consecutive victory over Iowa State, the longest winning streak for either team in the series.

**No. 24 Colorado 75, Arizona State 61:** McKinley Wright IV scored 17 of his 24 points in the second half and the host Buffaloes shook off a sluggish start to beat the Sun Devils.

Wright turned in his seventh 20-point game of the season in what was his final game at CU Events Center.

# Creighton suspends McDermott

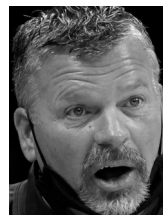
BY ERIC OLSON

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Creighton University suspended basketball coach Greg McDermott indefinitely Thursday night for using racially insensitive language while addressing the team after a game last weekend.

McDermott publicly apologized Tuesday and again Wednesday for urging his players to “stay on the plantation” after the 14th-ranked Bluejays' 77-69 loss at Xavier.

McDermott coached in the Bluejays' 72-60 loss at No. 10 Villanova on Wednesday night. Assistant coach Alan Huss will serve as interim head coach for the home game against Butler on Sat-



McDermott

urday.

“I made a mistake and I own it,” McDermott said in a Twitter post after the suspension was announced.

“Mistakes come with consequences, and I accept and agree with the suspension.”

Athletic director Bruce Rasmussen said he and university president the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson met with senior administrators Thursday to determine disciplinary action against McDermott.

“Coach McDermott and the team have accepted that, effective immediately, he is suspended for

all team activities, including Saturday's home season finale against Butler.”

The university statement announcing the suspension did not specify how long McDermott would be suspended. Creighton athletic spokesman Rob Anderson told The Associated Press no end date has been set.

Rasmussen said additional sanctions are under consideration, none of which will be made public.

McDermott, in an apology he posted on Twitter on Tuesday, acknowledged saying: “Guys, we got to stick together. We need both feet in. I need everybody to stay on the plantation. I can't have anybody leave the plantation.”

## NFL/NBA



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, left, will be back on the sidelines with Steelers coach Mike Tomlin again next season in Pittsburgh.

## Steelers, QB Roethlisberger agree to deal for 2021 return

BY WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger is returning for an 18th season with the Pittsburgh Steelers and is taking a pay cut to do it.

The team and the two-time Super Bowl winner announced on Thursday they have agreed on a new contract that assures the 39-year-old will be back in 2021.

Financial details were not immediately available, though the Steelers made no secret of the need for Roethlisberger to take a pay cut to ease some of the burden of his NFL-high \$41.25-million salary-cap hit scheduled for 2021.

NFL Network, citing anonymous sources, said Roethlisberger's new deal will essentially pay him \$14 million this season and adds four voidable years to spread out the dead money.

"I am grateful to be at this stage of my career and more than happy to adjust my contract in a way that best helps the team to address other players who are so vital to our success," Roethlisberger said in a statement. "I love this game and love to compete, and I believe in this team and my ability to deliver when called upon. It all starts with great preparation and I am ready to go."

Roethlisberger passed for 3,803 yards with 33 touchdowns and 10 interceptions in 15 games in 2020 after missing almost all of 2019 with a right elbow injury. The Steelers won their first 11 games on their way to a 12-4 record and captured the AFC North title but were stunned at home by Cleveland in the first-round of the playoff game thanks in part to four Roethlisberger interceptions.

Steelers President Art Rooney II, head coach Mike Tomlin and general manager Kevin Colbert all expressed the desire to bring back Roethlisberger, stressing the need to do it in a way that gives the Steelers some financial flexibility. The new contract does offer a bit more freedom, but Pittsburgh is facing several high-profile departures in free agency.

Wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster, outside linebacker Bud Dupree, running back James Conner and left tackle Alejandro Villanueva are among more than a dozen Steelers who will hit the open market this month. Conner and Villanueva are unlikely to be brought back after underwhelming play in 2020. Smith-Schuster and Dupree have likely priced themselves out of a return.

Throw in the retirements of center Maurkice Pouncey and tight end Vance McDonald and the decision to part with offensive coordinator Randy Fichtner — all three of whom have a close relationship with Roethlisberger — and the veteran quarterback will find himself in the midst of an overhaul.

The franchise's leader in just about every major statistical passing category remains, he was at the controls of an offense that finished last in the NFL in yards rushing and yards per rushing attempt. Those are numbers the front office said it will spend the offseason trying to improve.

Pittsburgh has the 24th pick in the draft and several glaring needs, particularly along the offensive line. If left guard Matt Feiler — also a free agent — doesn't come back, Roethlisberger could find himself playing behind a line with three new starters and a running back that isn't Conner for the first time since 2017. Include the imminent departure of the reliable Smith-Schuster and the absence of McDonald — in essence a third tackle in 2020 when he was on the field — and the Steelers will have a very different look in 2021.

Yet rather than nudge Roethlisberger toward retirement and see what the club has in backup Mason Rudolph — who is entering the final year of his rookie deal — the Steelers will run it back hoping their late-season fade was a one-off.

"We know that Ben can still play at a high level and do special things for this team," Colbert said.

# James, Durant choose teams for Sunday's All-Star Game

BY TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

LeBron James has faced Giannis Antetokounmpo as an opponent in the last three All-Star Games.

The Los Angeles Lakers' star got him as a teammate this year.

James used the No. 1 overall pick on Antetokounmpo — the NBA's two-time reigning MVP from Milwaukee — in the draft for Sunday's All-Star Game in Atlanta. Kevin Durant, who will not play in the All-Star Game because of injury but still is the captain for Team Durant, took Brooklyn teammate Kyrie Irving with his first pick.

The other starters for Team LeBron will be Stephen Curry of Golden State, Luka Doncic of Dallas and Nikola Jokic of Denver. The other starters for Team Durant will be Joel Embiid of Philadelphia, 2020 All-Star MVP Kawhi Leonard of the Clippers, Bradley Beal of Washington and Jayson Tatum of Boston.

This is the fourth year of the NBA's playing captain format for the All-Star Game. James is 3-0, beating teams captained by Curry in 2018 and Antetokounmpo in the last two seasons.

"I just try to pick players that can complement one another," James said during the draft that was taped Wednesday and aired Thursday night on TNT. "When we're on the floor, we'll try to play the game the right way. It's the All-Star Game, so there's going to be some shenanigans out there. But for the majority of the game, we're going to try to play the right way and come out with a win."

Durant had the first pick of the reserve round and took another Brooklyn teammate, James Harden with the opening selection there. James' first pick among the reserves was Damian Lillard of Portland, Durant followed by taking Devin Booker of Phoenix, and James countered by selecting Ben Simmons of Philadelphia.

"I wanted Ben Simmons. I wanted Ben," Durant said.

The remaining Team Durant subs: Zion Williamson of New Orleans, Zach LaVine of Chicago, Julius Randle of New York, Nikola Vucevic of Orlando and Donovan Mitchell of Utah. James' final selections were Chris Paul of Phoenix, Jaylen Brown of Boston, Paul George of the Los Angeles Clippers, Domantas Sabonis of Indiana and Rudy Gobert of Utah.

Mitchell and Gobert, respectively, were the last two players taken despite being the only All-Stars from the Jazz — who hit the break an NBA-best 27-9.

"This is slander, America,"



MORRY GASH/AP

Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo was the No. 1 overall pick by the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James in the draft for Sunday's All-Star Game in Atlanta.

TNT analyst Charles Barkley said during the taping.

Durant took Mitchell, which left Gobert to James as the final selection. And James did his best to diffuse what he knows will inevitably be a topic of conversation — how the Jazz got snubbed during the draft.

"Listen, I just want to say something," James said. "There's no slander. There's no slander to the Utah Jazz. But you guys got to understand, just like in video games growing up, we never played with Utah. Even as great as Karl Malone and John Stockton was, we never picked those guys in video games. Never."

The NBA and the National Basketball Players Association have committed more than \$3 million to aid historically Black institutions as part of All-Star Sunday, with at least \$1.75 million coming from the game itself.

Team LeBron will play on behalf of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. Team Durant will play for the United Negro College Fund. Both organizations will receive \$500,000 to start, and the winners of the first, second and third quarters will collect another \$150,000. The team that reaches the target score first and wins the game will get \$300,000 more.

"It's an honor that we get to represent so many people and use this platform to help advance education, our youth, just the world in general," Durant said.

A few notes from the draft:

**LeBron vs. Philly:** For the fourth straight year of this format,

Embiid was not drafted by James. But it's not an anti-Philly bias: James drafted Embiid's teammate Ben Simmons for the second consecutive year and will have him as an All-Star teammate for the third time; he swung a trade to get Simmons after Antetokounmpo originally drafted him in 2019.

**Gobert history:** Team LeBron might have defaulted into a pretty good last pick. All Gobert did last year in his All-Star debut was shoot 10-for-11, score 21 points and grab 11 rebounds in 19 minutes.

**Jazz reaction:** The Jazz, on Twitter anyway, took the high road after Mitchell and Gobert were the last two players selected. "The All-Star nod is a credit to the Jazz's success this season, but also to the work it has taken to get here," the team wrote. Mitchell will play for Philadelphia coach Doc Rivers on Sunday; Gobert will play for Jazz coach Quin Snyder.

**Opposing teammates:** Mitchell and Gobert won't be the only All-Stars from the same franchise playing for different teams Sunday. Phoenix (Paul and Booker), the Los Angeles Clippers (George and Leonard) and Philadelphia (Embiid and Simmons) will be in the same boat. Technically, James and Lakers teammate Anthony Davis are on different squads as well; Davis, who is injured and will not play, was placed on Team Durant.

**The coaches:** Rivers, who played in one All-Star Game, is coaching the game for the third time. It's Snyder's All-Star debut as a head coach.

# NBA

## ROUNDUP

# Knicks head into break above .500

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Julius Randle capped his All-Star first half with 27 points, 16 rebounds and seven assists, sending the New York Knicks into the break with a winning record after a 114-104 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Thursday night.

RJ Barrett added 21 points to help the Knicks improve to 19-18 in their first season under Tom Thibodeau. They have missed the playoffs for seven straight years but finished the first half in fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

Wayne Ellington scored 17 points for the Pistons.

**Trail Blazers 123, Kings 119:** Damian Lillard had 44 points, including 10 straight at a key moment down the stretch, to help Portland beat visiting Sacramento.

Lillard made eight three-pointers. The Trail Blazers have won three straight heading into the All-Star break.

De'Aaron Fox had 32 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds for Sacramento.

**Suns 120, Warriors 98:** Cameron Payne scored 17 points, Devin Booker added 16 and host Phoenix easily handled short-handed Golden State.

The Suns enter the All-Star break second in the NBA at 24-11, winning 16 of 19 dating to Jan. 28.

**Wizards 119, Clippers 117:** Bradley Beal



WENDELL CRUZ/AP

Knicks guard RJ Barrett, center, scores during the third quarter against the Detroit Pistons on Thursday in New York. Barrett finished with 21 points in the Knicks' 114-104 win.

scored 33 points and Washington won while Los Angeles All-Star Paul George was a late scratch on the road.

Russell Westbrook had 27 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds for the Wizards. They have won eight of 11 heading into the All-Star break.

**Celtics 132, Raptors 125:** Jayson Tatum had 27 points and 12 rebounds and host Boston won its fourth straight game, outlasting short-handed Toronto.

Jaylen Brown added 21 points and seven rebounds, and Kemba Walker finished with 15 points.

**Bucks 112, Grizzlies 111:** Jrue Holiday hit a baseline jumper with two seconds remaining and visiting Milwaukee escaped with the victory over Memphis.

Rookie Desmond Bane had a final chance for

the Grizzlies, but his three-pointer hit the front of the rim, giving the Bucks their sixth victory in seven games.

**Heat 103, Pelicans 93:** Jimmy Butler had 29 points and nine assists and Miami took advantage of Zion Williamson's absence to beat host New Orleans.

Brandon Ingram scored 17 points for New Orleans. Williamson was scratched because of a toe injury.

**Nuggets 113, Pacers 103:** Nikola Jokic had 20 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, Michael Porter Jr. also scored 24 points and visiting Denver beat Indiana.

**Thunder 107, Spurs 102:** Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 33 points and Oklahoma City rallied in the second half to beat host San Antonio.

# Play: Ball leads rookie class in every significant statistical category

## FROM PAGE 24

Ball leads all rookies in most statistical categories, including points (15.8), assists (6.3), rebounds (6) and steals (1.6) per game.

More importantly, Ball's game — which includes an array of slick, needle-threading passes — has brought some needed pizzazz and star potential to a franchise mired in obscurity for years. The Hornets are 17-18 entering the All-Star break, just a game behind the fourth-place Boston Celtics in the ultra-tight Eastern Conference.

"He's the real deal," Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell said.

Warriors forward Draymond Green recently tweeted "LaMelo is a problem!"

"Right now, with the way things look, he looks like NBA rookie of the year to me," Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said. "He's getting it done statistically, their team is winning. He's got energy, he's got a vibe, he's got swagger. If you like watching players that play with flair, he's right up there."

Ball, who grew up watching



RANDALL BENTON/AP

Hornets guard LaMelo Ball, right, passes the ball around Sacramento Kings center Richaun Holmes to teammate Bismack Biyombo. Ball has brought star potential to the Hornets, who head into the All-Star break at 17-18, fourth in the Eastern Conference.

Penny Hardaway and Jamal Crawford highlights, sees things on the court most players don't.

He regularly delivers on-time behind-the-back passes leading to

transition layups, kick-outs for open three-pointers and alley-oop lobbs for dunks off the pick-and-roll, many of those going to high-flying Miles Bridges, earning the

duo the nickname "AirBnB."

Ball's impact with the Hornets was almost immediate, becoming the youngest player in NBA history to record a triple-double in just his 10th NBA game. Still, it took 20 games before Hornets coach James Borrego inserted him into the starting lineup following an injury to Devonte Graham.

It's unlikely Ball is giving up the position anytime soon.

The 19-year-old has only elevated his game in 15 starts, averaging 20.6 points, 6.6 assists and 6.2 rebounds and has already won NBA rookie of the month twice.

"Man, he's good," Mitchell said. "I'm not going to lie, I'm very impressed with his playmaking ability, his competitiveness, but his joy. ... He's very talented; he can do many different things."

Ball said he wants to add some muscle to his frame and Jordan added "we believe that he will continue to work and get better as a player."

Ball's long-term NBA goal is simple, if not lofty: he wants to be a Hall of Famer like Jordan.

Nothing would please Jordan more.

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	24	12	.667	—
Brooklyn	24	13	.649	½
Boston	19	17	.528	5
New York	19	18	.514	5½
Toronto	17	19	.472	7

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	18	18	.500	—
Charlotte	17	18	.486	½
Atlanta	16	20	.444	2
Washington	14	20	.412	3
Orlando	13	23	.361	5

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	22	14	.611	—
Chicago	16	18	.471	5
Indiana	16	19	.457	5½
Cleveland	14	22	.389	8
Detroit	10	26	.278	12

### Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	18	14	.563	—
Dallas	18	16	.529	1
Memphis	16	16	.500	2
New Orleans	15	21	.417	5
Houston	11	23	.324	8

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	27	9	.750	—
Portland	21	14	.600	5½
Denver	21	15	.583	6
Oklahoma City	15	21	.417	12
Minnesota	7	29	.194	20

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	24	11	.686	—
L.A. Lakers	24	13	.649	1
L.A. Clippers	24	14	.632	1½
Golden State	19	18	.514	6
Sacramento	14	22	.389	10½

### Wednesday's games

Indiana 114, Cleveland 111  
 Detroit 129, Toronto 105  
 Philadelphia 131, Utah 123, OT  
 Brooklyn 132, Houston 114  
 Charlotte 135, Minnesota 102  
 Atlanta 115, Orlando 112  
 Chicago 128, New Orleans 124  
 Dallas 87, Oklahoma City 78  
 Portland 108, Golden State 106  
 Sacramento 123, L.A. Lakers 120

### Thursday's games

Boston 132, Toronto 125  
 Washington 119, L.A. Clippers 117  
 New York 114, Detroit 104  
 Denver 113, Indiana 103  
 Milwaukee 112, Memphis 111  
 Miami 103, New Orleans 93  
 Oklahoma City 107, San Antonio 102  
 Phoenix 120, Golden State 98  
 Portland 123, Sacramento 119

### Friday's games

No games scheduled

### Saturday's games

No games scheduled

### Sunday's games

### 2021 All-Star Game

Team Durant vs Team LeBron



STEVE DYKES/AP

The Trail Blazers' Damian Lillard, right, passes the ball past Kings guard De'Aaron Fox, left, on Thursday in Portland, Ore.

# SPORTS



## Ben's back

Steelers, Roethlisberger agree to new deal » **NFL, Page 22**

NBA

# Exceeding expectations

## Hornets owner Jordan thrilled with play of rookie guard LaMelo Ball

BY STEVE REED  
*Associated Press*

### DID YOU KNOW?

LaMelo Ball leads all rookies in most statistical categories, including points (15.8), assists (6.3), rebounds (6) and steals (1.6) per game.

SOURCE: Associated Press

guard would eventually rise to the level of becoming an All-Star.

Jordan likes the way Ball is trending.

"I think Melo has adjusted to the NBA game better than any of us ever thought this early in his career," The 2009 Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame inductee told The Associated Press in an email. "He has exceeded our expectations so far this season."

**R**ookie LaMelo Ball has seized the attention of the NBA this season with his highlight reel passes and a surprising ability to score, including Charlotte Hornets owner Michael Jordan.

The six-time NBA champion said when the Hornets selected Ball with the No. 3 overall pick they hoped the crafty 6-foot-6 point

**Charlotte Hornets rookie guard LaMelo Ball**  
RICK BOWMER/AP

SEE PLAY ON PAGE 23



## Creighton suspends coach for 'plantation' remarks » College hoops, Page 21