Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Friday called on U.S. allies in Europe and Asia to act alongside the United States in the face of a new era of great-power competition with Russia and China and help challenge their aggressive attempts to exert influence on other countries around the world.

"Russia and China want to disrupt the international order by gaining a veto over other nations' economic, diplomatic and security decisions. We cannot stand idly by while authoritarian nations attempt to reshape the global security environment to their favor at the expense of others," Esper said during a speech Friday at the Royal United Services Institute, a British defense think tank.

Esper, who is meeting with senior leaders in Europe this week, said he has been working to better prepare the U.S. military to face the threats posed by Russia and China.

"We cannot stand idly by" Esper calls on US allies to counter Russian, Chinese threats

By Caitlin M. Kenney
Stars and Stripes

LONDON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Friday called on U.S. allies in Europe and Asia to act alongside the United States in the face of a new era of great-power competition with Russia and China and help challenge their aggressive attempts to exert influence on other countries around the world.

"Russia and China want to disrupt the international order by gaining a veto over other nations' economic, diplomatic and security decisions. We cannot stand idly by while authoritarian nations attempt to reshape the global security environment to their favor at the expense of others," Esper said during a speech Friday at the Royal United Services Institute, a British defense think tank.

Esper, who is meeting this week with senior leaders in Germany, Great Britain and France, spoke of military and economic threats posed by Russia and China, which have been identified as "strategic competitors" to America's interests and security in the 2018 National Defense Strategy.

While America focused on "hard-fought battles" the last 18 years in Iraq and Afghanistan and less on preparing for the future, Esper said Russia and China have used that time to study the U.S. military, modernize their armies and expand into the cyber and space domains.

SEE ESPER ON PAGE 5

SEE TALIBAN ON PAGE 5
Mystery craft discovered to be Navy target boat

BY KATHERINE HAFNER
The (Norfolk) Virginian-Pilot

Crew members of western Ireland’s Doolin Ferry Co. were headed to Inis Oirr, a small island in Galway Bay, on Monday afternoon when they spotted something bright orange floating in the water.

“First I had a feeling of fear, (wondering) if there was people in difficulty ‘cause we could only see about a meter of the bow sticking out of the water,” Tom Noel, one of the crew members, said in an email to The Virginian-Pilot on Thursday. “Then once we got closer and could see the amount of growth on it, I knew it was a long time in the water and that it was only a danger to navigation.”

Upon investigating, Noel and the rest of the Doolin Express crew found the boat covered in goose barnacles — it had clearly been in the water for a while — and along with a local fishing boat, towed the boat to the beach at Inis Oirr, where many islanders helped pull it ashore.

A day later, Doolin Ferry Co., which is based near Ireland’s famed Cliffs of Moher, posted the account on Facebook. At that point, they guessed the boat was a U.S. Coast Guard rescue boat but were hoping for any details on what brought it so far. The post blew up online.

“We couldn’t have predicted the interest from the public that there has been in this boat,” Liam O’Brien, the ferry company’s owner, later said in a news release. “There was a lot of growth on it, it had clearly been there for a long time. We already have a shipwreck on the island, so everyone’s saying this is the new one. This is definitely the most unusual thing we have discovered and it’s drawing in lots of tourists to the area.”

News outlets across Ireland picked up the mystery. Thousands of people shared their theories on social media. Was it a drug-running boat masqueraded as law enforcement? Was it an American military vessel used to spy on the Irish?

Within a day the answer came. A representative for Silver Ships Inc., an Alabama-based shipbuilding company, confirmed it had manufactured the boat in 2015 for the U.S. Navy, the ferry company’s Siobhan Nolan said in an email.

“It’s a high-speed maneuverable surface target that can be guided remotely and is used as target practice by the Navy. "We believe the boat originated in Norfolk Virginia," Doolin Ferry Co. wrote on its website.

“…How cool is that?!”

That’s more than 3,400 miles of drifting.

Ferry Co. wrote on its website. “It’s likely that it was lost during a training exercise and it remained in the water drifting until it ended up in the water close to Inis Oirr. … How cool is that?!”

Turns out, it’s true. Timothy Boulay, a spokesman for the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, said Thursday that the vessel was lost during a missile test and evaluation event about 75 miles off the coast of Norfolk last September.

After realizing the target was lost, the Atlantic Target and Maritime Operations team searched for five hours but couldn’t find it and notified the Coast Guard of the potential navigation hazard.

Is it shocking the boat made it across the Atlantic? Not very, Boulay said, because the test vessels are foam-filled so that they don’t sink.
Officials at US bases say they were not trained in private housing oversight

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Top Army command- ers and civilian leaders were not familiar with basic service policies governing their relationships with private companies running on-post housing, which contributed to the housing crisis at installations across the United States, an inspector general’s report released Thursday determined.

Senior commanders, commanding gen- erals and high-ranking commanders at works departments at 48 Army installations in the United States reported they did not receive “adequate” training on their powers to oversee privatized military housing on their installations, according to the new Army IG report. Investigators said Army officials at only one of 48 installations that they surveyed demonstrated proper knowl- edge of their oversight authorities and re- sponsibilities. Officials at the rest reported “general confusion and frustration” about those powers.

Meanwhile, the local managers responsible for running privatized housing at Army bases also were unfamiliar with the Army policies and regulations, according to the report, which was the result of a seven-month in- vestigation thatspanned most Army bases across the continental United States, Hawaii and Alaska.

The IG probe was launched as news re- ports beginning late last year highlighted prevalent problems across private military housing, which are owned and run by private companies to the Army.

Residents also felt safety was not a prior- ity for the companies running their hous- ing. Residents at all 49 locations surveyed believed the property management com- pany placed the interests of Affiliate com- panies ahead of life, health and safety. At 48 of 49 locations, residents expressed concerns with environmental or safety problems — namely mold, lead paint, as-

Pentagon cautions Mattis’ book

WITHDRAWN

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has warned former De- fense Secretary Jim Mattis’ onetime speechwriter that he could face “a range of poten- tial consequences” for publishing a book that reveals classified information in a forthcoming book or unclas- sified details that defense of- ficials determine violate “the trust” of Mattis, according to a letter and memos obtained by The Washington Post.

Retired Navy Cmdr. Guy Snodgrass, who worked for Mattis for 17 months and re- tired in August 2018, has sued the Defense Department, al- leging that the Pentagon has imposed prior restraint on his book by dragging out a review of his manuscript for months. The department “deliber- ately failed to fulfill its lawful obligations and has imposed `inappropriate and illegally in- applicable requirements’ on Snodgrass, the lawsuit argues.

The book, “Holding the Line: Inside Trump’s Penta- gon with Secretary Mattis,” is billed by publisher Pen- guin Random House as an “insider’s sometimes shocking account of how Defense Sec- retary James Mattis led the U.S. military through global challenges while serving as a crucial check on the Trump administration.”

It originally was scheduled for publication Oct. 29, but that will be delayed because of the Trump administration’s continued hold on the work, according to the lawsuit.

The dispute has emerged as Mattis has overtaken his own book, “Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead,” in which he details his 41-year career as a Ma- rine officer and briefly touch- es on his time in the Trump administration.
Family questions deployment of GI who died

Army staff sergeant — a grandson of singer Ray Charles — suffered from heart condition

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Conrad Robinson followed one of his grandfathers into the Army, but what he shared with few colleagues before he died was that his other one was “the Genius” of soul music, Ray Charles.

Robinson, 36, died last year on a deployment to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, just days before Memorial Day.

His death left loved ones back home stunned, confused and, in his wife’s case, questioning whether his health conditions should have kept him from deploying in the first place.

An autopsy sent to Army investigators late last year revealed that he had died from a heart condition, a report Stars and Stripes recently obtained from the Army’s Criminal Investigative Command shows.

“Big Rob,” as his friends knew him, deployed to the ongoing Kosovo peacekeeping mission on a round-the-world tour with the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 28th Combat Support Hospital.

He was found dead, alone in his barracks room, after failing to show up for a mission on May 24, 2018.

Little else was disclosed about what happened to Robinson, a preventive medicine specialist, as the Army conducted its investigation.

Jo Oloteo, a friend who served with Robinson, knew him from when they served in Germany, deployed to Afghanistan in 2010 and traveled Europe in 2011. He called him “Bear” because he looked intimidating but had “the biggest heart.”

Of multiple friends interviewed, only Oloteo knew Robinson’s grandfather was the Grammy-winning Blind recording artist, born Ray Charles Robinson, who died in 2004.

Robinson’s father, David, who died in 2013, was the second son of the Georgia-born musician and Della “Bea” Howard Robinson, the couple portrayed by Jamie Foxx and Kerry Washington in the 2004 movie “Ray.”

“Conrad was low key about it,” Oloteo said via Facebook Messenger recently. “I remember asking him to sing ‘Georgia On My Mind,’ but he wouldn’t.”

His mother confirmed the relationship, but Synthia Robinson said she preferred to focus on her son’s life and service, which took him to Kuwait, twice to Afghanistan and to Korea before Kosovo.

A bright child who had played Little League and high school football, he enlisted after a year of college, hoping to gain discipline, direction and money for education, she said. Then he just kept reenlisting.

“Could I see a good change in him that he carried up until his death,” she said, adding that he had been planning for “the next chapter after retirement.”

He joined in part to follow the footsteps of his mother’s father, an Army veteran who died in 2008 and who he was very close with throughout his life, Conrad Robinson’s wife said.

Yolanda Robinson had met him after he’d already served four years and said she encouraged him to stay in to continue his education and better their lives. His family always came first, both his wife and mother said.

He often entertained his daughters — 10 and 5 — when he last saw them — with tea parties, game nights and bedtime stories, his wife said. He took off work for school events whenever he could.

“We would try to sneak some time for ourselves” about twice a month, she said.

When he was sent overseas, they spoke every week by phone.

Army colleagues and friends praised his work ethic and strong example. As a new father, he’d often pick up his infant daughter from day care at his friend Jaime Mendoza’s house hours after work, drenched in sweat from long workouts, Mendoza said.

“He motivated me to work harder,” said Mendoza, who knew him since arriving at Fort Irwin, Calif., as a private in 2007, calling him a “true great friend.”

Despite working out three times a day, Robinson “had always been on the Army’s weight control program,” his wife told investigators last year.

He was taking three medications for hypertension when he deployed and had sleep apnea, too.

She now questions whether he should have been sent to Kosovo in the first place, she told Stars and Stripes recently.

Pentagon policy doesn’t bar soldiers from deploying with high blood pressure if it’s controlled by medication or doesn’t require frequent monitoring.

But his condition had gotten uncontrollable in the weeks before his death, his wife said.

“My husband went to the doctor because his blood pressure was high” and because he needed a refill of his prescriptions, she said after reviewing his health records.

After monitoring his blood pressure for five days in early May, a doctor determined the condition wasn’t severe enough to warrant sending him to Kosovo.

He hadn’t complained of feeling unwell, his roommate and two soldiers who worked with him told investigators.

The medical examiner found that high blood pressure and the hardening of his arteries had caused his death. A toxicology test found two blood pressure medications in his system.

He’d apparently fallen asleep in his desk chair doing college homework late on May 23 and died the next morning, likely hours before his roommate found him unresponsive at about 9 a.m.

“I miss him terribly,” Oloteo said more than a year later, speaking of the man who he said used to be his “bodyguard” whenever they went out.

Mendoza hoped finding out why he died might bring him closure, but just talking about him “opened up the wound,” he said in a June email.

“I miss him every day and I’m just lucky I got to know him,” Mendoza said.

Kin receive Purple Hearts due Coast Guardsmen killed in WWI

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

The families of two Coast Guardsmen were presented Purple Heart medals this week, more than a century after their relatives were killed when the cutter they were aboard sank on a voyage to the Welsh port of Milford Haven to load up on coal.

“These men are truly the best of us,” Vice Adm. Linda Fagan said Tuesday in Alameda, Calif., as she presented medals to the families of Edward Kelleher and Arthur Deasy, who perished aboard the coast guard cutter Tampa in England’s Bristol Channel in September 1918.

Officials have been looking the past two decades for surviving relatives of the 111 Coast Guard and four Navy crew members who perished aboard the Tampa. They’ve found nearly 300 of them.

The cutter’s sinking represented the single largest loss of life for the Coast Guard during WWI. Including British sailors and civilians, 131 people were aboard the cutter, which was one of six assigned to the ships between allied ports, the service said.

“Armed with four 3-inch guns, she escorted eighteen convoys, losing only two ships and earning a special commendation for exemplary service,” says the website of the Coast Guard historian.

Tampa was sailing alone to the Welsh port of Milford Haven to load up on coal when the German submarine UB-91 torpedoed it. The ship exploded and sank in under three minutes, the historian’s office said.

The Purple Heart, given to servicemembers killed or wounded by enemy actions, didn’t exist in its modern incarnation until 1932, and Coast Guard members weren’t eligible to receive it until 1942.

Ten years after that, the award was made retroactive to actions after April 1917, but the Tampa was overlooked until 1999, when retired Master Chief Petty Of- ficer James Bunch submitted a proposal to award it posthumously to the cutter’s crew, the Coast Guard said.

The award was authorized by then-Commandant Adm. James Loy for the crew of 115 Coast Guard and Navy personnel, who hailed from 22 states, the District of Co- lumbia and five foreign countries. Awards have been presented or are in the pipeline for at least 57 of them, the historian’s site says.

In Alameda this week, Bob Kelleher accepted the award for his uncle, an oiler on the ship who hailed from Perry, Okla., said Lt. Cdr. Stephen Brickley, a spokesman for the Coast Guard’s Pacific Area. Linda Rehman received it on behalf of her great-uncle, Deasy, the ship’s acting quartermaster, who was from Brooklyn, N.Y., he said.

“I ask you to focus not only on their sacrifice but also their service,” Fagan said in remarks at the ceremony. “Their legacy lives on in our memories.”

A list of the 115 crew members and information on how descendants can apply for the Purple Heart is at www.history.uscg.mil/tampa.
Esper seeks allies’ help with defunded projects

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he is urging European allies to pick up the tab for military construction projects in their countries defunded by the Pentagon to pay for President Donald Trump’s border wall.

The comments come after the Defense Department announced 127 construction projects that it plans to defund in the upcoming fiscal year, and a larger set of projects the department does not have enough funds to complete. There are about 3,000 active U.S. military bases around the world. The projects are valued at more than $3.6 billion and are part of an initiative to give troops in host countries a stronger negotiating position in talks with the U.S., a move in line with many of the president’s initiatives for a smaller military.

Earlier this week, the Pentagon announced that Esper would be using that law to take $3.6 billion that Congress appropriated for other military construction projects and divert the funds to the construction of new barriers on the southern border. Esper determined that the barriers in question would support troops that Trump has deployed as part of the National Emergency he declared in February.

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In Friday’s announcement, a handful of projects are based in the United Kingdom, with the largest amount of money bound for a project in Spain. The projects also include $252 million for four new training centers in the Philippines. The United States has 13,000 service members in the Philippines, mostly rotational.

The projects will be a major test of European allies’ ability to pay for military infrastructure themselves, with the United States seeking to rely instead on the U.S. military. A Pentagon official said the department had already spoken with several allies about sharing the burden of construction projects in their countries.

Esper also said that the United States was looking for an increase in funding for NATO. The United States isSPA the only country to spend more than 2% of its GDP on defense, according to the World Bank. Some NATO countries not meeting that threshold has been a major point of contention for President Donald Trump.

Esper called out Germany on Wednesday for not spending enough on defense, though it is a “wealthy country.” He said Germany lacked viable plans to meet the 2% goal by 2024 — an agreement reached in 2014 at the NATO summit in Wales. Germany is spending 1.2% of its GDP on defense as of 2018, according to the World Bank.

Esper also said U.S. allies, within NATO and in Asia, should exceed 2% spending for defense.

“Let’s take this opportunity to recommit to our collective defense commitments and our commitment to security and the rule of law around the world.”

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Taliban: Latest threat is third on Afghan provincial capitals in a week

FROM FRONT PAGE

The Taliban have explained their surge in deadly attacks — including on the capitals of northern Kunduz and Baghlan provinces last weekend — as necessary to give them a stronger negotiating position in talks with the U.S., a stance that has upended Afghan and others as scores of civilians are killed.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel said on June 11 that he was not in a position to determine or any kind of interim government.

Few details have emerged from the nine rounds of U.S.-Taliban talks over nearly a year. Khalilzad has said the first 5,000 U.S. troops would withdraw from five bases in Afghanistan within 135 days of a final deal. Between 14,000 and 13,000 troops are currently in the country.

However, the Taliban want all of the approximately 20,000 U.S. and NATO troops out of Afghanistan as soon as possible.

The U.S. for its part seeks Taliban guarantees that they will not allow Afghanistan to become a haven from which extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and the local affiliate of Islamic State can launch global attacks.

In Friday’s attack in Farah province, small clashes continued in the city, the provincial governor said.

One Farah resident, Shams Noozari, said the Taliban seized an army recruitment center and set it on fire. All shops had closed, he said, and some people were trying to flee.

The governor later said security forces had re-taken the recruitment center.

Also on Friday, fighting resumed in at least one part of Kunduz city and two outlying districts, with some residents trying to flee again, provincial council head Mohammad Yousuf Ayubi said.
Bahamians try to evacuate as relief effort stepped up

By Michael Weissstein
Associated Press

ABACO, Bahamas — Carrying their meager possessions in duffel bags and shopping carts, hundreds of desperate people gathered at the port in Grand Abaco on Friday in hopes of getting off the hurricane-devastated island, as an international disaster-relief effort took shape.

The search for victims and survivors continued, five days after Dorian blazed the Bahamas with 185 mph winds that obliterated countless homes. Officials said 30 people have been confirmed dead, but the toll is sure to rise.

At the port, some of those who lined up behind a yellow cloth tape arrived as early as 1 a.m., hoping for transportation to the capital, Nassau.

"It's going to get crazy soon," said Serge Simon, 39, who drives an ice truck and waited with his wife and two sons, 5 months old and 4. "There's no food, no water. There are bodies in the water. People are going to start getting sick.

There were no government-organized evacuations yet, but the Royal Bahamas Defense Force helped people board a 139-foot ferry that had come to pick up its employees and had room for an additional 160 people.

The crowd waited calmly as marines separated women and elderly people were supposed to go after the Category 5 hurricane splintered whole neighborhoods.

"They told us that the babies, the pregnant women and the elderly were supposed to be first preference," said Lukya Thompson, 23, a bartender. But many were still waiting, she said.

The Bahamian health ministry said helicopters and boats were on their way to help people, though officials warned of delays because of severe flooding.

An array of organizations and companies, including the United Nations, Royal Caribbean and American Airlines, mobilized to send in food, water, generators, diapers, flashlights and other relief supplies.

Some dazed survivors of the storm on Thursday made their way back to a shantytown where they used to live, hoping to gather up some of their soggy belongings.

"It's going to get crazy soon. There's no food, no water. There are bodies in the water. People are going to start getting sick."

Serge Simon
ice truck driver waiting to evacuate

Trump suggests media should apologize to him for his erroneous Ala. claim

By John Wagner
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump suggested Friday that the media should apologize to him for reporting on his erroneous contentsions that Alabama was in the crosshairs of Hurricane Dorian long after it was in the clear.

As the storm slammed into North Carolina’s Outer Banks on Friday morning, Trump returned to Twitter once again to insist that he was correct on Sunday when he tweeted that Alabama was among the states that would "most likely be hit (much) harder than anticipated" — a claim the National Weather Service in Birmingham, Ala., refuted 20 minutes after he made it.

In a series of tweets Friday, Trump revised his claim, saying that Alabama had "assessed that Alabama may also be grazed or hit." And he complained that the media has not apologized to him while he has insisted for days that he was correct.

"This nonsense has never happened to another President. Four days of corrupt reporting, still without an apology," Trump wrote. "But there are many things that the Fake News Media has not apologized to me for, like the Witch Hunt or SpyGate! The LaneStream Media and their Democrat partner should start playing it straight. It would be so much better for our Country!"

Since his initial claim about Alabama, Trump has posted more than a dozen tweets on the subject, including multiple maps. He defended a doctored and outdated hurricane map, displayed in the Oval Office, that had been altered with a black Sharpie to include Alabama in the storm’s track forecast cone.

And he had the White House release a 225-word statement defending his erroneous warnings that the state was “going to get a piece” of the storm.

Shortly after his tweets Friday targeting the media — his first of the day related to Dorian — Trump tweeted again, this time praising the response on the ground.

“Great job by FEMA, Law Enforcement, First Responders, U.S. Coast Guard and ALL!" he wrote. "Keep going, we all appreciate what you are doing!"

On Friday, Trump’s campaign was also hawking an “official Trump marker” available for purchase online amid the controversy over the doctored map.

It was not clear whether the marker, depicted on the campaign’s website, was a Sharpie, a brand preferred by the president. But a tweet by Brad Parscale, Trump’s campaign manager, appeared to allude to the controversy.

"Buy the official Trump marker, which is different than every other marker on the market, as an indication of the false news crazy!" he wrote, adding the hashtag: "#KeepMarkersGreat."
Diminished Dorian strands NC islanders

By Jeffrey Collins

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, N.C. — A weakened Hurricane Dorian flooded homes on North Carolina’s Outer Banks on Friday with a ferocity that seemed to take storm-hardened residents by surprise, and hundreds were feared trapped by high water.

Sheriff’s officials sent medics and other rescuers to Ocracoke Island — reachable only by boat or air — amid reports of people being forced to retreat to their attics after defying mandatory evacuation orders along the 200-mile ribbon of low-lying islands.

“There is significant concern about hundreds of people trapped on Ocracoke Island,” Gov. Roy Cooper said. “There are rescue teams ready as soon as they can get in.”

Its winds down to 90 mph, Dorian howled over the Outer Banks as a far weaker storm than the brute that wreaked havoc on the Bahamas at the start of the week. More than a quarter-million residents and visitors had been ordered to evacuate the North Carolina island chain ahead of the storm, officials said.

The Category 1 hurricane lashed communities on the Outer Banks with rain and surging seawater as it hugged the islands that stick out from the Eastern Seaboard like the side-view mirror on a car. Rising waters coursed into the main floors of elevated homes and smashed them with floating debris.

Around midmorning, the eye of the storm came ashore at Cape Hatteras, Dorian’s first landfall on the U.S. mainland.

“It’s bad,” Ann Warner, who owns Howard’s Pub on Ocracoke Island, said by telephone. “The water came up to the inside of our bottom floor, which has never had water.” She said a skylight blew out, and there were whitecaps in her front yard and underneath her house.

“We’re safe,” Warner added. “But it’s certainly a mess.”

Another Ocracoke Island resident, bookshop owner Leslie LaRue, said via text message that the storm had flooded and people had been forced to climb to their attics, but that the water had already begun to drop.

“We are flooding like crazy,” she said, adding: “I have been here 32 years and not seen this.”

The Hyde County Sheriff’s Office said deputies, medics and other rescuers were heading to the island amid reports of “catastrophic flooding.” The governor said that authorities were telling people to get to the highest point in their homes.

“To the North in Buxton on Hatteras Island, close to where Dorian blew ashore, Radio Hatteras volunteer Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy said that people were calling in to report that “houses are shaking like crazy” and that “it’s never been like this before.”

“The wind is blowing with fury,” she said.

Danny Couch, a resident of nearby Buxton and a Dare County commissioner, said that the storm sent crab traps flying, breaking windshields.

“I was out there, and stuff flying around, road signs and stuff,” he said. “It’s crazy. I don’t want to be a statistic.”

He added: “It’s godawful. It’s a storm of record, no doubt.”

As of 9 a.m., Dorian was moving northeast at 14 mph. It is expected to remain a hurricane as it sweeps up the Eastern Seaboard through Saturday, veering far enough offshore that its hurricane-force winds are unlikely to pose any threat to land in the U.S.

More than 370,000 people were without electricity in the Carolinas and Virginia as Dorian moved up the coast.

At least four people were killed in the Northeast. All were men in Florida or North Carolina who died in falls or by electrocution while trimming trees, putting up storm shutters or otherwise getting ready for the hurricane.

Residents of the eastern 3rd Congressional District were likely thinking about potential threats to life and property — not stump speeches or political preferences — as Dorian moved northeast along the Atlantic coast.

“If there’s any kind of significant damage … the minds of people are going to be on something besides voting,” said Doug Raymond, the campaign manager for candidate Greg Murphy, as he yanked posts from the soggy earth in Carteret County.

Murphy, a Republican, and Democratic challenger Allen Thomas are the top candidates in Tuesday’s election. Each is vying to be chosen as the successor to the late Rep. Walter Jones Jr., who died in February on his 76th birthday after 24 years in Congress. Libertarian and Constitution Party candidates are also running.

Early in-person voting in the district was supposed to continue through Friday, but the district’s 17 counties had shuttered voting sites or planned to do so Friday. Murphy and Thomas decided to postpone campaigning until the storm is gone.

“There are more important things going on,” Thomas campaign manager Chris Hardee said.

With no promise that state election officials would extend early voting into the weekend, the campaigns were shifting their get-out-the-vote message to election day. The storm’s aftermath added a lot of uncertainty about who will show up on Tuesday, Raymond said.

Storm dampens enthusiasm for NC congressional race

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Hurricane Dorian has created new challenges in the final days of campaigning for a North Carolina congressional seat that was already getting scant attention.

As the hurricane scraped the coastline on its way toward the state, at least one campaign manager pulled signs for his candidate out of the ground on Thursday before they could blow away — or worse, become dangerous airborne missiles.

Beaufort Police Officer Curtis Resor, left, and Sgt. Micheal Stephens check a sailboat for occupants in Beaufort, N.C. after Hurricane Dorian passed the North Carolina coast on Friday. Dorian howled over North Carolina’s Outer Banks on Friday, a much weaker but still dangerous version of the storm that wreaked havoc in the Bahamas.

Hurricane Dorian passed the North Carolina coast on Friday after sweeping past the Bahamas as a Category 5 monster. The storm's fierce winds and heavy rain were still felt as far away as New England. But it also left a trail of destruction in its wake across the Carolinas.

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Hurricane Dorian is expected to remain a Category 1 hurricane as it moves through the Carolinas on Friday, but its winds are expected to decrease even more, leaving a trail of destruction across the state.

Dorian is the strongest hurricane to hit the East Coast in more than a decade and the most powerful to make landfall in the Atlantic Ocean since 1988, when Andrew hit Florida. But by Friday morning, the storm had weakened to a Category 1 hurricane, according to the National Hurricane Center.

The storm's winds are expected to fall below 150 mph (240 kilometers per hour) as it moves through North Carolina, the center said.

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Use of taxpayer money at Trump hotels probed

By Mary Clare Jalonick
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats are demanding information on the use of taxpayer money at President Donald Trump’s hotels and properties, including during Vice President Pence’s trip this week to Doonbeg, Ireland. The push is part of an expanded effort this fall to investigate the president’s financial entanglements and business practices.

The House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees announced Friday that they sent a series of letters regarding “multiple efforts” by the president, vice president and other Trump administration officials to spend taxpayer money at properties owned by Trump. They say the spending could violate the Constitution and bolster the case for Trump’s impeachment.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said in a statement that the spending is “of grave concern” to his committee, which is investigating whether to recommend articles of impeachment to the full House. House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Elijah Cummings, D-Md., said his panel “does not believe that U.S. taxpayer funds should be used to personally enrich President Trump, his family and his companies.”

The letters come after Pence stayed at Trump’s resort in Doonbeg, Ireland, this week. Doonbeg is on the other side of Ireland from Dublin, where he had meetings. The Democrats also sent letters to the White House and Secret Service about Trump’s suggestion earlier this month that his Miami-area golf course host next year’s Group of Seven summit with foreign leaders. The Democrats say those instances, among others, could violate the Constitution’s emoluments clause, which bans the president from taking gifts from foreign governments.

The push comes as Democrats are trying to keep public attention on their investigations of Trump. They have spent much of the year probing episodes detailed in special counsel Robert Mueller’s report, which did not exonerate the president on obstruction of justice. But lawmakers say they think the American public may have even more interest in Trump profiting off of his presidency as they weigh whether to move forward on impeachment.

“We have been focused on the Mueller report, and that is a very small part of the overall picture,” said Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, a member of the Judiciary panel. “We must get America focused on the ongoing violations against basic Constitutional principles.”

In addition to looking at Trump’s use of his properties, two House committees are continuing to investigate his relationship with banks with which he did business. And the Judiciary panel is also expected to investigate how money payments that Trump paid to kill potentially embarrassing stories.

Rhode Island Rep. David Cicilino, another Democrat on the Judiciary panel, said he believes the misuse of public funds or financial corruption makes Americans especially angry. And while people have heard a lot about the Mueller report, he said, they may know less about the emoluments clause.

“I think you’ll see a lot more of that in the coming months,” Cicilino said.

US adds a modest 130,000 jobs in August amid China trade war

By Christopher Ruggaber
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. employers added a modest 130,000 jobs in August, a sign that hiring in the United States has slowed but remains durable in the face of global economic weakness and President Donald Trump’s trade war with China.

The job gain was boosted by the temporary hiring of 25,000 government workers for the 2020 Census. Excluding all government hiring, the economy added just 96,000 jobs in August, the fewest since May.

Still, the Labor Department reported Friday in its monthly jobs report that the unemployment rate remained 3.7%, near the lowest level in five decades. And more Americans entered the workforce in August — a positive development that increased the proportion of adults who are either working or seeking work to its highest level since February.

In addition, average hourly pay rose 3.2% from a year earlier, outpacing inflation and increasing Americans’ spending power.

Even with the slower pace of hiring, more jobs and rising pay are expected to help sustain America’s economic recovery, which has entered its 11th year, the longest on record. An improving job market can help fuel consumer spending, the primary driver of growth.

And for now, Americans are still spending. Consumer spending rose in the April-June quarter by the most in five years. It also increased at a healthy clip in July.

That is especially significant now because many businesses have cut their spending and delayed expansion and investment given their uncertainty about the duration and impact of the trade war. In addition, retaliatory tariffs from China have cut into U.S. exports.

In its employment report Friday, the government revised down its estimate of job growth for June and July by a combined 20,000. That revision reduced average job growth for the past six months to 150,000, down from 223,000 for all of last year.

Facebook, Google face antitrust scrutiny

NEW YORK — Two bipartisan groups of state attorneys general are launching separate antitrust investigations into Facebook and Google, adding to regulatory scrutiny of two of the world’s largest and most ubiquitous tech companies.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat, confirmed the Facebook investigation in a news release Friday, saying the probe would focus on Facebook’s “dominance in the industry and the potential anti-competitive conduct stemming from that dominance.”

“Even the largest social media platform in the world must follow the law and respect consumers,” she said. “I am proud to be leading a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general in investigating whether Facebook has stifled competition and put users at risk.”

She said the probe would seek to determine if Facebook endangered consumer data, reduced the quality of consumer choices or increased the price of advertising.

Facebook had no immediate comment.

The Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal, citing sources they did not identify, have reported that a coalition of attorneys general will announce a separate investigation of Google in Washington on Monday.

Google issued a statement that didn’t comment directly on the antitrust concerns but said its services “help people every day, create more choice for consumers and support thousands of jobs and small businesses across the country.”

“We continue to work constructively with regulators, including attorneys general, in answering questions about our business and the dynamic technology sector,” it said.

James said the coalition she is leading on the Facebook investigation includes the attorneys general of Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee and the District of Columbia.

The U.S. Justice Department announced in July that it was opening a sweeping antitrust investigation of Big Tech, though it did not name any specific companies.

It said it was investigating whether online platforms have hurt competition, suppressed innovation or otherwise harmed consumers.

The House Judiciary Committee is also conducting an antitrust probe into major tech companies.
Analysis: Black votes will define Dem electability

BY ERRIN HAINES
Associated Press

For all the strategic calculations, sophisticated voter targeting and relentless talk about electability in Iowa and New Hampshire, the Democratic presidential nomination will be determined by a decidedly different group: black voters.

African Americans will watch as mostly white voters in the first two contests express preferences and winnow the field — then they will certainly almost anoint the winner.

So far, that helps explain the front-running status of former Vice President Joe Biden. He has name recognition, a relationship with African America's best-known presidential candidate and a decadeslong Democratic resume. Black voters have long been at the foundation of the political base for candidates ranging from Delaware, where he served as a U.S. senator for nearly four decades, is 38% black — and until another presidential candidate proves that he or she can beat him, he is likely to maintain that support.

In the 2008 campaign, Hillary Clinton held a strong lead among black voters over Barack Obama until he stunned her by winning the Iowa caucuses and proved to black voters that he was acceptable to a broad spectrum of Democrats. Those same voters returned to Clinton in 2016.

This cycle, many black voters are also making a pragmatic choice — driven as much or more by who can defeat President Donald Trump as the issues they care about — and sitting back to see which candidate white voters are comfortable with before deciding whom they will back.

At the same time, the early courtship of black voters, overt and subtle, is part of a primary within the primary that includes detailed plans on issues like criminal justice reform, reparations, mass incarceration among black women, voter suppression and systemic racism.

As black voters and movers and drivers of national politics, our self-image and awareness of our power and influence is evolving," said Aimee Allison, founder of the She the People network, which hosted the first presidential debate specifically at female voters of color.

Trump appealed to black voters during the 2016 campaign by saying: "What the hell do you have to lose?" and ended up with only 8% of the black vote. But the Republican president again is saying he will try to win over black voters, frequently citing low unemployment and his own success in signing criminal justice legislation. So far, there is no evidence to suggest that he will succeed.

The other decisive factor is the decisiveness of black voters will come in the primaries. African Americans make up roughly 13% of the population but 24% of the Democratic primary electorate. That number is more formidable in states like Georgia, Alabama and Virginia.

Biden reminded black reporters during a recent roundtable that his strength is not just with working-class whites, but with the black voters he’s known for more than half a century in politics.

“After all this time, they think they have a sense of what my character is and who I am, wants and all,” Biden said. “I’ll be surprised if you find any African Americans that think I’m not in on the deal, that I’m not who I say I am … I’ve never, ever, ever in my entire life been in circumstances where I’ve ever felt uncomfortable being in the black community.”

He acknowledged that his family “isn’t a no assurance of success. And he noted that black voters may ultimately prefer black candidates like Sens. Kamala Harris of California or Cory Booker of New Jersey. First, though, one of them would have to prove to black voters that they were viable alternatives.

Black voters can be decisive not only in determining the Democratic nominee but also the ultimate winner. While Democrats have peaked in recent cycles with white voters at around 60%, black voters have been their most loyal constituency.

But in 2016, a drop-off among black voters had consequences. Black voter turnout dropped from about 67% in 2012 to about 60%, according to government data.

“It comes down to a strategy decision that campaigns have to make: Do they believe that the way to win the White House is to win white voters, or do they believe that the way to White House is to mobilize voters of color?” said Leah Daughtry, who recently hosted a 2020 Democratic forum for black faith voters in Atlanta.

O’Rourke touts gun buyback program

BY STEVE LEBLANC
Associated Press

MEDFORD, Mass. — Democratic presidential hopeful Beto O’Rourke says a mandatory government buyback program for AK-47 and AR-15 rifles is needed because other gun control measures don’t do enough to remove weapons already on the streets.

O’Rourke spoke Thursday at Tufts University in his first campaign stop in Massachusetts. He said that while universal background checks and red flag laws that allow gun to be taken from those deemed a danger to themselves or others will sit well with many Americans, they will not address the millions of assault-style weapons already in private hands.

He said the country needs to buy back those weapons.

The auto industry as a whole needs nearly 10 million AR-15 and AK-47s on the streets of our communities today and it is absolutely necessary though politically difficult step of saying that we have to buy those AR-15 and AK-47s,” O’Rourke said. “This is a mandate that every single American who owns one of these will have to turn over.”

Last month, a gunman killed nearly two dozen people in O’Rourke’s El Paso, Texas, homecoming-style AK-style rifle.

Other Democratic candidates for the White House have also staked their wake on gun control.


O’Rourke touched on a number of other topics including climate change, cybersecurity, Russian interference in U.S. elections and immigration.

He also defended his decision not to back a “Medicaid for All” approach to health care — a position favored among some of the Democratic candidates, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Washington Sen. Cory Booker.

O’Rourke said he wants to expand health care to cover all Americans but doesn’t want to pay private, employer-sponsored health plans — including those negotiated by unions.

He also said he would look at breaking up big tech firms if needed.

Official: Trump to challenge Calif. mileage standard

BY TOM KRISHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is moving forward with a proposal to revoke part of California’s authority to set its own automobile mileage standards, a government official said Thursday, in another confrontation with the states that follow its rules.

The Environmental Protection Agency is preparing to act for the White House that would set a single national standard for fuel economy, according to the official, who is familiar with the regulatory process and spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan has not been made public.

President Donald Trump has pushed for months to weaken Obama-era mileage standards nationwide and has targeted California’s decades-old power to set its own mileage standards as part of that effort.

Administration moves to rescind authority that Congress granted probably would end up in court. When President George W. Bush challenged California’s mileage-setting ability, California fought it. The Bush administration subsequently dropped the Bush effort.

An EPA administrator would have to be posted in the Federal Register and would be subject to public comment.

His administration has tried to ease or remove scores of environmental regulations that it regards as unnecessary and burdensome. The tougher mileage standards were a key part of the Obama administration’s efforts to reduce climate-changing fossil fuel emissions.

California has sued the Trump administration 27 times on environmental matters alone, often as part of a group of states. Counting preliminary injunctions, California has won in court 19 times, said Sarah Lovenheim, a spokeswoman for California Attorney General Xavier Becerra.

California’s mileage move would target California’s half-century-old authority under the Clean Air Act to set its own, tough tailpipe emission standards.

California’s long struggles with smog mean the state has been setting its own mileage standards since before the 1970 law was written. Congress allowed California to seek waivers from the national mileage standards for that reason.

About a dozen states have opted to follow California’s mileage standards.

The waiver has allowed California, the state with the most people and by far the biggest economy, to steer the rest of nation toward cutting down on car and truck emissions that pollute the air and alter the climate.

The auto industry as a whole doesn’t like the far tougher Obama-era mileage standards and fears it won’t be able to meet them, as U.S. consumers keep shifting away from sedans to less-efficient trucks and SUVs. Most automakers favor increasing mileage requirements at a lower rate than set under Obama. They also want one U.S. standard to avoid having to engineer separate vehicles for California and the states that follow its rules.

The tougher mileage standards are set to expire in 2025, after which California can adopt tougher rules on its own. The standards since 2012 require automakers to produce cars that average 54.5 miles per gallon by then. That’s up from 33.8 miles per gallon in 2008.
Fatal fire foiled rescue attempts by boat's crew

By Stefanie Dazio
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Crew members who survived the fiery sinking of a scuba diving boat off Southern California tried to rescue the 34 people who died but were driven back by flames, smoke and heat, federal authorities said.

The crew told investigators a “harrowing story” about the moments after a blaze erupted aboard the Conception, a scuba diving boat, and tried to get through the double doors of the galley but were aflame.

Crew members jumped from the bridge area to the main deck — one breaking a leg in the effort — and tried to get through the double doors of the galley but were aflame.

That cut off both escape routes for the 33 passengers and a crew member in the bunkroom — a migrant who had hitched a ride on the Conception.

The crew then tried but failed to get into windows at the front of the vessel.

“’At that point, due to heat, flames and smoke, the crew had to jump from the boat,’ Homendy said.

Captain Jerry Boylan stayed aboard trying to send radio distress calls and was last in the water, said Glen Fritzler, co-owner of Truth Aquatics Inc., of Santa Barbara, which operated Conception.

“’The other crew at a certain point when the flames had engulfed the boat and they were in the water, they could see Jerry jump from the upper deck, a long jump. And there was a trail of smoke following him. They thought he was on fire,’ Fritzler told KEYT-TV in Santa Barbara.

”Within minutes, they would’ve been consumed,” he said. “So they did their best. They did reenter the boat, although they had to swim ashore, but when they got in,烟 was everywhere because the boat was on fire”.

The survivors used a skiff at Conception’s stern to reach a nearby boat, and two then returned to see if they could rescue any other survivors, but none were found, Homendy said.

Fritzler said the experience has traumatized the survivors.

“They’re breaking down,” he said. “They’re seeking counseling. It’s a very tough time for them.”

The building was packed with so much clutter that it was nearly three fire inside a San Francisco Bay Area warehouse nearly three years ago, and it continues to be taxing criminal case over the deaths of 36 people trapped in the warehouse nearly three years ago.

Sobes and deadlocked on the other.

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“Their intention was not to cause harm to the aircraft or its passengers,” according to the affidavit by Jose A. Ruiz, a federal air marshal who serves on an FBI counterterrorism task force.

Alani explained that stalled contract negotiations between American Airlines and the mechanics’ unions were hurting him financially, and he tampered with the plane “to cause a delay or have the flight canceled in anticipation of obtaining overtime work,” Ruiz wrote.

American has accused mechanics of an illegal work slowdown that has led to hundreds of canceled flights in recent months. The airline successfully used two unions that represent the workers.

This week, both sides announced that they will resume negotiations Sept. 16 in Washington, with help from a federal mediator. The mechanics said they are trying to secure a new contract for more than three years.

In a statement, American Airlines said it cooperated fully with the investigation “and we are taking this matter very seriously.”

The Federal Aviation Administration said the plane was taken out of service after the July incident and repaired and inspected before it was allowed to fly again.

Alani was charged with willfully damaging or disabling an aircraft and was expected to appear in federal court in Miami on Friday.

An American Airlines mechanic is accused of sabotaging a flight over stalled union contract negotiations. According to a criminal complaint affidavit filed in federal court, Abdul-Majeed Marouf Ahmed Alani admitted during an interview Thursday that he tampered with a navigation system on the plane so that he could collect overtime work.

The plane, with 150 people on board, was scheduled to fly from Miami to Nassau in the Bahamas on July 17. As the pilots powered up the plane at Miami International Airport, they saw an error message for a system that tracks speed, nose direction and other critical flight information and aborted the takeoff.

When mechanics examined the plane, they found a piece of foam glued inside a navigation system part called an air data module.

Video from a surveillance camera captured a person who drove up to the plane, got out and spent several minutes working around the compartment containing the navigation system, according to the affidavit.

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Iran defends its moves away from nuclear accord

BY Niniek Karmini
and Nasser Karimi
Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Iran's foreign minister defended his country’s plan to take further steps away from the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers if Europe fails to provide a solution on reviving it by a deadline that expired Friday.

The crisis stems from President Donald Trump’s pullout from the accord over a year ago and the imposition of escalated U.S. sanctions on Tehran that have choked off Iran’s ability to sell its crude oil abroad, a crucial source of government revenue, and sent its economy into freefall.

Meanwhile, a last-minute French proposal offering a $15-billion line of credit to compensate Iran over the choked off crude sales looked increasingly unlikely.

Zarif did not say what exact steps his country would take as he met with his Indonesian counterpart, Retno Marsudi, in Indonesia’s capital, Jakarta.

Zarif described the U.S. sanctions as “illegal restrictions on Iran, which we call economic terrorism … because they target ordinary Iranian citizens, the civilians.”

Marsudi said Indonesia would like to see the nuclear deal “implemented fully and effectively.”

As the nuclear deal unraveled, the Iranian government scaled back its commitments under the accord earlier this year. It began breaking limits of the deal, such as just creeping beyond its 3.67%-enrichment limit and its stockpile rules. Using advanced centrifuges speeds up enrichment and Iranian officials already have raised the idea of enriching to 20% — a small technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

But in Jakarta, Zarif insisted Iran’s nuclear program remained peaceful and lashed out at the U.S.

“Unfortunately, the U.S. not only doesn’t normalize economic relations with Iran, but punishes others for normalizing economic relations with Iran, which is totally unacceptable,” Zarif said.

Iran’s atomic energy agency was to make an announcement on Saturday detailing its next nuclear step, which President Hassan Rouhani has described as highly significant. Details would be unveiled at a press conference in Tehran, Iranian media said.

Also Friday, Germany renewed its appeal for Tehran to return to full compliance with the agreement.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Rainer Breul said Germany views with concern the Iranian statement.

“We call on Iran not to exacerbate the situation,” he said. “In light of the ongoing efforts toward de-escalation this announcement isn’t the right signal.

“The German government will carefully examine which individual steps Iran takes,” Breul added. “It’s not too late for Iran to leave the slope it has put itself on.”

Brexit crisis grows as opposition rejects early election, Lords vote

Associated Press

LONDON — Britain’s bedeviling Brexit dilemma intensified Friday, as opposition parties refused to support Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s call for an election until he secures a delay to Britain’s exit from the European Union — something he vows he’ll never do.

Johnson insists Britain must leave the EU in 55 days, and says an election is the only way to break the deadlock that has seen lawmakers repeatedly reject the divorce deal on offer, but also block attempts to leave the EU without one.

He wants to go to the public on Oct. 15, two weeks before the scheduled Brexit day of Oct. 31, but needs the support of two-thirds of lawmakers to trigger a snap election.

Johnson lost a vote on the same question this week, but he plans to try again Monday.

After discussions Friday, lawmakers from several opposition parties said they would not back an election unless the government asked the EU to postpone Brexit, removing the risk the U.K. could crash out without a deal. Johnson says he would “rather be dead in a ditch” than delay Brexit.

Parliament is trying to force his hand, passing an opposition-backed law that would compel Johnson’s Conservative government to seek a three-month Brexit postponement if no divorce deal is agreed by Oct. 19.

The legislation was approved Friday by the unelected House of Lords, after gaining backing from the elected House of Commons earlier this week. It will come into law within days once it gets the formality of royal assent.

But pro-EU lawmakers want to hold on to triggering an election until the Brexit delay has actually been secured, fearing Johnson will try to wriggle out of the commitment.

“I do not trust the prime minister to do his duty,” said Liz Saville Roberts, leader in Parliament of the Welsh party Plaid Cymru.

Students form a human chain outside the Maryknoll Convent School in Hong Kong on Friday. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Thursday that the decision to withdraw an extradition bill that sparked months of demonstrations was her government’s initiative to break the impasse and not Beijing’s directive.

Hong Kong students form human chains in protests

BY KIN CHEUNG
Associated Press

HONG KONG — Students and alumni from at least five Hong Kong schools formed human chains Friday to raise awareness for the remaining four of their five demands, which include an extradition bill that sparked the demonstrations.

The continuing act of defiance came two days after Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam announced that her government will be formally withdrawing an extradition bill that sparked the demonstrations.

The proposed legislation would have allowed Hong Kong residents to be sent to mainland China to stand trial.

Despite the hard-fought concession, some protesters have said they will continue their resistance because the government has committed to fulfilling only one of their five demands, which include abolition of police brutality.

Students in blue school dresses held hands Friday outside the Maryknoll Convent School, a Catholic girls’ school. They paired their uniforms with surgical masks, in the style of protesters who wear masks to conceal their identities and mitigate the effects of tear gas. Alumni from various schools and clad in protesters’ trademark black also joined similar chains in the district.

One young man dressed in a shirt bearing his school’s emblem held up a placard that said “Freedom.”

While the extradition bill was the trigger for the movement, it has since shifted its target toward the police, who have been accused of using excessive force.

The authorities say they have only used the minimum amount of force necessary to quell riotous demonstrators.

Lam on Wednesday said her government would implement fully and effectively “I do not trust the prime minister to do his duty,” said Liz Saville Roberts, leader in Parliament of the Welsh party Plaid Cymru.

Associated Press

Britain Prime Minister Boris Johnson visits Darnford Farm near Aberdeen, Scotland, on Friday. Opposition parties said they won’t support Johnson’s call for an election.
Kosher Sex store sells intimacy to Tel Aviv couples

**By Ruth Eglash**
The Washington Post

TEL AVIV — At first glance, the Kosher Sex store on a shabby stretch of Montefiore Street looks like any other fancy store in this swanky part of the city. Hip denim hangs from a single circular rail above polished hardwood floors. Healing crystals are laid out neatly on a shiny mirrored table. But closer inspection of the shelves and the window display suggests something else is on sale here, and it’s something far more personal anywhere else in the world: kosher sex.

The shop is named for the controversial, best-selling self-help book “Kosher Sex: A Recipe for Passion and Intimacy,” published 20 years ago by American celebrity rabbi Shmuley Boteach. Kosher Sex — the store — was opened last month by Chana Boteach, the rabbi’s daughter, and sells products meant to induce a healthy dose of sexual intimacy and spirituality between committed couples. “People are broken and lonelier than ever before, said Chana Boteach. “We are reclaiming sex and helping to create passion and intimacy between two people.”

The kosher sex shop is gleaming and airy and open, unlike the kind of “red-light district” shops — as Boteach puts it — in some other parts of Tel Aviv. Boteach added that the inventory has been carefully selected to be both “elegant and tasteful.”

Delicately handling one of the silicone toys, she said the spongy material is uniquely designed to fit the contours of a woman’s body. A gold necklace dangling on a display can also double as a sex prop, said Boteach: “For wives to send a subtle message to their husbands about fun later on.” Some of the more high-end products, such as the crystal toys, cost as much as $170.

None of what is on sale is meant to replace a husband, Boteach said. In Judaism, men are commanded to please their wives in the bedroom, and all the products are meant to assist them in doing just that.

Writing about his daughter’s store after it was first publicized in the Jerusalem Post, Rabbi Boteach said “products that rescue marriages from the morgue are absolutely kosher, seeing that they allow husbands and wives to connect through the medium of passion and pleasure.”

He also saluted his daughter’s efforts to bring the core ideas of intimacy and commitment to her generation. “As it turns out, they might be the ones that most need these values,” he wrote.

Boteach said her long-term business goal is to see Kosher Sex stores opening in the United States. In the meantime, she shares retail space with a friend, a fashion designer reimagining denim clothing much in the same way she is reimagining sex. The presence of clothing also helps soften the emphasis on products that some might find uncomfortable or embarrassing.

On a recent day, a group of young women browsed through a rail of denim, then pivoted to a Kosher Sex display. After a while, one of them surreptitiously popped her newly purchased product into her ecofriendly canvas bag and walked out.

“I want people to come in and not feel ashamed; now they can look at the clothing and then turn their attention to the sexy side of the store,” Boteach said.

She recounted how a 79-year-old man recently came into the store and bought a gift for his wife for their 50th wedding anniversary. “He said it was her first” adult toy, Boteach recalled. Selling sex, even the kosher variety and even in the very liberal city of Tel Aviv, can provoke a backlash, though Boteach said the store has received mostly positive feedback.

“I understand that not everyone is comfortable with what I am doing here,” she said. “They think it’s too far, but they are the ones who do not understand Judaism and sexuality.”

There is one thing undeniably old school about Kosher Sex. Like most businesses in Israel, it closes before sundown on Fridays and does not open at all on Saturdays in observance of the Sabbath.

Former leader of Zimbabwe, ex-guerrilla chief dies at 95

**By Farai Mutsvaka and Christopher Torchia**
The Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Former Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe, an ex-guerrilla chief who took power after independence from white minority rule in 1980 and presided over a country that was often a hit, even as many nations on the continent shed the strongman model and moved toward democracy.

A target of international sanctions over the years, Mugabe nevertheless enjoyed acceptance among peers in Africa who chose not to judge him in the same way as Britain, the United States and other Western detractors.

Even as old age took its toll and opposition to his rule increased, he refused to step down until the pressure became unbearable in 2017.

Spry in his impeccably tailored suits, Mugabe maintained a schedule of events and international travel during his rule that defied his advancing age, though signs of weariness mounted. He walked with a limp, fell after stepping off a plane in Zimbabwe, read the wrong speech at the opening of parliament and appeared to be dozing during a news conference in Japan. However, his longevity and frequently dashed rumors of ill health delighted supporters and accounting firms that had sardonically predicted he would live forever.

“Do you want me to punch you to the floor to realize I am still here?” Mugabe told an interviewer from state television who asked him in early 2016 about retirement plans.

After the fighting between black guerrillas and the white rulers of Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was then known, ended, Mugabe reached out to whites. The self-declared Marxist stressed the need for education and built new schools. Tourism and mining flourished, and Zimbabwe was a regional breadbasket.

However, a brutal military campaign waged against an uprising in western Matabeleland province that ended in 1987 aroused a bitter turn in Zimbabwe’s fortunes. As the years went by, Mugabe was widely accused of hanging onto power through violence and vote fraud, notably in a 2008 election that led to a troubled coalition government after regional mediators intervened.

“I have many degrees in violence,” Mugabe once boasted on a campaign trail, raising his fist. “You see this fist. It can smash your face.”

Amid the political turmoil, the economy of Zimbabwe, traditionally rich in agriculture and minerals, deteriorated. Factories were closing, unemployment was rising and the country abandoned its currency for the U.S. dollar in 2009 because of hyperinflation.

On the streets of Harare, the capital, people gathered in small groups Friday and discussed the news.

“I will not shed a tear, not for that cruel man,” said Tariro Makena, a street vendor. “All these problems, he started them, and people now want us to pretend it never happened.”

Others said they missed him.

“Things are worse now. Life was not good but it was never this bad. These people who removed him from power have no clue whatsoever,” said Silas Marongo.
## Retailers urge against open carry in stores

**BY ANNE D’I NNOCENTZIO**  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Drug chains CVS and Walgreens as well as grocery chain Wegmans Food Market have joined the chorus of retailers requesting that customers refrain from openly carrying firearms in their stores even where state laws allow it.

The announcements on Thursday follow similar moves by Walmart, the nation’s largest retailer, as well as Kroger earlier this week. Walmart also said it would stop selling handgun and short-barred rifle ammunition in the aftermath of a string of mass shootings, including one last month inside an El Paso, Texas store that killed 22 customers — the deadliest in the company’s history.

Starbucks, Wendy’s and Target have already asked customers not to openly carry guns in stores unless they’re law enforcement officers. But the retailers have stopped short of introducing an outright ban because they say they don’t want to put employees in confrontational situations. Ken Perkins, president of research firm RetailMetrics, says retailers can’t have their workers, who get paid $15 an hour, trying to pry a gun away from an armed shopper.

Walmart and other big national chains cater to all kinds of customers with different views on guns but store policies have recently been trending toward more restrictions.

“There’s nothing more important than the safety of our customers and employees,” said Wegmans in a Twitter post. “The sight of someone with a gun can be alarming, and we don’t want anyone to feel that way at Wegmans. For this reason, we prefer that customers not openly carry firearms in our stores.”

Retailers are increasingly feeling the need to protect their workers while also keeping customers safe.

At the same time, Perkins believes that any restrictions, including on open carry policies, may discourage gun enthusiasts from patronizing their stores.

Still, it’s a risk some retailers are willing to take.

“The tide is changing in terms of what people are willing to put up with,” Perkins said.

“People’s patience is wearing thin.”

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### H&M stops buying leather from Brazil over Amazon fires

**Associated Press**

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Low-cost fashion retailer H&M said Friday it is suspending leather purchases from Brazil to make sure it is not supporting cattle farming that may be contributing to the fires in the Amazon rainforest.

The move by the Stockholm-based company follows a similar decision by the maker of Vans and Timberland shoes. Some international investors are also trying to put pressure on the Brazilian government, which has been seen as too lax in its approach to protecting the rainforest.

Hennes & Mauritz AB said its temporary ban on leather from Brazil will remain in place “until there are credible assurances … that the leather does not contribute to environmental harm in the Amazon.”

The move may be more about the message than the business impact, as H&M sources the vast majority of its leather from Europe’s meat industry, with only a small part from Brazil.

The company declined to provide figures.

In 2017, less than 1% of H&M’s range of clothes was made of leather and it used synthetic leather products five times as much as real leather. The group has already been moving away from using materials derived from animals.

Last week, VF Corp., the owner of Timberland, Vans and several other shoe and clothing brands said it also stopped buying leather from Brazil because of the rainforest fires.

Based in Greensboro, N.C., VF Corp. said it won’t purchase leather and hide from Brazilian suppliers until it’s assured that the materials “do not contribute to environmental harm in the country.” VF said 5% of the leather it purchases for its products comes from Brazil.

The current fires in the Amazon are largely attributed to people clearing the forest for cattle ranching and crops. About 60% of the Amazon rainforest is in Brazil.

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### EXCHANGE RATES

**Military rates**

- Euro (Euro) ................................. 1.2179
- British pound (Sterling) ................. 1.26
- Japanese yen (Yen) ................. 104.95
- South Korean won (Won) .......... 1,167.60

**Commercial rates**

- Bahrain (Dinar) .......................... 0.3770
- British pound (Sterling) ................. 1.26
- China Yuan (Yuan) .................. 7.1779
- Denmark (Kroner) ..................... 6.7520
- Egypt (Pound) ............................. 16.4975
- Euro ........................................ 1.0515
- Hong Kong (Dollar) ............... 7.8404
- Hungary (Forint) .............. 299.40
- Israel (Shekel) ......................... 3.5188
- Japan (Yen) ............................. 106.71
- Kuwait (Dinar) ......................... 3.8394
- Norway (Kroner) .................. 8.9688
- Philippines (Peso) .............. 51.84
- Poland (Zloty) ......................... 3.93
- Russia (Ruble) ......................... 51.18
- Singapore (Dollar) .............. 1.3799
- South Korea (Won) .............. 1,195.89
- Switzerland (Franc) .............. 0.9878
- Thailand (Baht) ...................... 30.61
- Turkey (New Lira) ................. 5.7122

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), zero decimal points are used.

### INTEREST RATES

- Prime rate ................................. 5.26
- Discount rate ......................... 2.75
- Federal funds market rate ......... 3.5%
- 3-month bill ......................... 1.82
- 10-year bond ......................... 2.65

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### WEATHER OUTLOOK

**SATURDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

- Baghdad ...................................... 105/85 (Rain)
- Cairo ........................................ 87/68
- Muscat ....................................... 100/74
- Riyadh ....................................... 104/72
- Kandahar .................................. 94/68
- Dubai ......................................... 105/78
- Al Ain ......................................... 104/72
- Doha .......................................... 96/65
- Jeddah ....................................... 102/78

**SATURDAY IN EUROPE**

- Madrid ....................................... 76/58
- Paris .......................................... 78/55
- Munich ....................................... 70/50
- Berlin ......................................... 75/54
- Vienna ....................................... 75/54
- London ....................................... 70/50
- Rome .......................................... 74/53
- Prague ........................................ 69/48
- Helsinki ..................................... 70/50
- Copenhagen ................................ 76/54
- Stockholm ................................ 76/54

**SUNDAY IN THE PACIFIC**

- Honolulu ................................... 86/81
- Tokyo ......................................... 82/73
- Okinawa ..................................... 85/81
- Misawa ....................................... 79/80
**Burglar breaks into home, cooks breakfast**

**FL** — Authorities say a burglar broke into a Florida home, cooked himself an early morning meal and told the resident there to “go back to sleep.”

The home’s occupant told investigators he awoke to discover the man cooking and eating sometime after 4 a.m. Tuesday.

Fox 13 in Tampa reported the burglar ran from the house when the resident called 911. Detectives from the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office tracked down the suspect in a wooded and swampy area behind the home.

Deputies said Gavin Crim, 19, a Marine, allegedly entered the home through an unlocked rear door. An arrest report mentioned that the suspect may have been under the influence of alcohol.

**Two-headed rattlesnake found in Pine Barrens**

**NJ** — It looks like something from a science fiction movie.

A newborn two-headed timber rattlesnake has been found in New Jersey’s Pine Barrens. Herpetological Associates of Burlington County CEO Bob Zappalorti said the snake has two brains and each head acts independently of the other.

Two employees at the organization spotted the reptile in a nest where a timber rattlesnake was giving birth late last month.

Zappalorti told NJ Advance Media it’s the only two-headed timber rattlesnake ever found in New Jersey. He said it likely wouldn’t be able to survive in the wild because its heads could get snagged on something.

**Trolling for tourists**

Omar the troll sits under the Bob Kerrey pedestrian bridge over the Missouri River after an unveiling ceremony in Omaha, Neb., on Wednesday. Omar, short for Omaha Metro Area River troll, is a painted bronze statue created by John Lajba. The city of Omaha hopes its troll under the bridge will become a tourist attraction.

**Chicken truck crash snarls morning commute**

**CA** — Officials say a truck carrying hundreds of live chickens crashed and erupted in flames, killing hundreds of the birds and snarling Thursday morning’s commute in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The California Highway Patrol said the crash at about 3:30 a.m. shut down the westbound lanes of the busy Highway 80 in San Pablo at San Pablo Dam Road. The lanes remained closed at 7:30 a.m. and crews continued clearing the highway of cages filled with burned chickens.

KTVU reported crews and CHP officers collected about 50 surviving birds that were wandering along the highway.

**Deer lottery is not just about a few bucks**

**ME** — Maine’s deer hunters will learn this week if they’ve been selected for a permit that allows them greater ability to hunt the animals.

Maine manages its large deer population with “any deer” permits that allow hunters to hunt antlerless deer and bucks that have antlers less than three inches in length. Hunters without such a permit can only take longer-antlered bucks.

The any deer permit lottery was scheduled for Friday.

The state intends to issue a little more than 68,000 any deer permits this year. That represents a reduction of about 20% from the previous deer season. Hunters harvested more deer than the state's objective last year.

**Jail guard charged with helping drug dealers**

**MO** — St. Louis jail guard has been charged with allowing two heroin and fentanyl dealers to use her apartment to stash their drugs and guns.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Teneisha Moore, 29, was arrested Wednesday after a raid at her home. Moore, a corrections officer at the St. Louis Medium Security Institution, was at home with her 4-year-old child. She is charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance and one count of aiding and abetting the possession of firearms in furtherance of that drug trafficking crime.

Court documents say a wiretapped conversation between Moore’s gang-member cousins captured them discussing using Moore’s apartment as a “stash house.” Her cousins have been indicted on drug charges. Prosecutors say they supplied multiple lower-level dealers.

**Pool crew leaves behind trail of blue on cliff**

**OH** — Rocky River — Police say a crew coating a swimming pool near Cleveland got caught “blue-handed” dumping waste over a cliff into a river.

Authorities in Rocky River said a paddle boarder alerted them to the dumping last week after seeing bright blue streaks running down the rocky cliff.

Police said the pool waste was being dumped over the cliff and into the Rocky River where it meets Lake Erie.

Officers arrested a member of the crew that was working on the swimming pool.

**Police investigate missing headstones**

**AZ** — Tonopah — Authorities say strong winds during a rainstorm blew over six big rigs in multiple wrecks on Interstate 10 in southwestern Arizona, killing one person and injuring another.

Officials said the wrecks involving tractors pulling box trailers occurred at about 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and that traffic soon after that was able to get around the wrecks by driving on the shoulder or an unaffected lane.

The state Department of Public Safety said the wrecks occurred on both sides of the freeway about 60 miles west of Phoenix and that all affected lanes were cleared by 5 a.m. Thursday.

The National Weather Service said data was not immediately available on wind strengths Wednesday evening in the area.

**Strong winds overturn big rigs on interstate**

**VT** — Hartford — A Vermont golf course has put off a hunt for Canada geese after an outcry from some landowners and area residents.

Quechee Club’s property manager Ken Lalier said Tuesday’s hunt was postponed and a variety of options are being considered again to control the birds.

The Valley News reports that the club received emails, calls and social media appeals urging it to try other approaches. Those included harassing the birds with herding dogs and letting grass grow higher around ponds and the river to dissipate the birds from straying onto greens and fairways.

State wildlife officials said the planned hunt as part of the resident goose hunting season was a sound management practice done at other golf courses in Vermont.
Brilliant and heartbreaking
Eliza explores the perils of technology and our desire to automate intimacy

BY TODD MARTENS
Los Angeles Times

Please, pleads a character we meet in Eliza, just let him talk to a real human. The interactive game unfolds as a not-too-distant nightmare, one in which technology has enabled us to talk to everyone and connect with no one. It also taps our fears over healthcare access and how our always-connected life affects our mental health. It’s a timely work of digital anxiety that captures a generational desire to use apps and technology to solve problems rather than seek to fully understand them.

A work of sci-fi that would likely appeal to fans of “Black Mirror,” Eliza recognizes that the quest for personal understanding is itself a form of play. What puzzle, after all, remains harder to crack than the human mind? Eliza, nodding to the trend of self-help and on-demand therapy apps, imagines a world where our local shrink has been augmented, arguing that an impartial computer program can be just as accurate in diagnosing depression and other ailments as a real-life human. Our digital footprint, the game’s tech proponents tell us, will reveal more secrets than whatever we say to a certified therapist. At least that’s the theory.

Even of course, goes wrong, and Eliza becomes an exploration of mind games, both in our inability to read ourselves and in the misguided belief that a quick fix is a permanent one. We play as Evelyn, a once-prominent tech developer who disappeared from social media for about three years. What inspired her tech and emotional hiatus is an underlying mystery. Evelyn returns to work as a proxy for Eliza, the digital therapist the game is named after, and the program she helped create. In this role, she reads a script, wearing augmented reality glasses that analyze her patients and feed her lines.

In these scenes, Eliza largely puts the player on rails, as Evelyn is instructed not to offer her own insights — it will confuse Eliza’s reading of the patient. Some clients know the game; they’re there to express discontent, get some antidepressants and move on. Others appear stuck, such as the man who begs for Evelyn to turn Eliza off and just talk to him. But there’s a script for that, too.

Here’s where the game gets sinister. Its world is so cold that even a personal touch is false. Most of Evelyn’s patients are overwhelmed with modern life and technology’s performative aspects. They see friends’ social media timelines as real and struggle not to become happy or succeed but to maintain an illusion.

Evelyn at the start is checked out. Everything designed to help has failed. We click through her smartphone, and see the exercise app that nags her, the emails she hasn’t answered and the texts from friends that overwhelm her each night to the point that she can’t be bothered to muster the energy to hang the art she had framed. No longer online, she has become a mystery to friends, and worse, herself.

Though Eliza doesn’t saddle the player with anything to solve — we guide Evelyn through the day by directing her conversations — it still presents quite the puzzle.

Platforms: iOS, PC, Linux
Online: zachtronics.com/eliza

Search through secretly recorded videos to discover the truth in Telling Lies

BY CHRISTOPHER BYRD
Special to The Washington Post

Nothing I’ve played this year has felt as intimate or fully human as Telling Lies, the latest from Sam Barlow. According to psychologists, the vast majority of children grasp the concept of lying by age 4. We lie to ourselves and others for any number of reasons: to make ourselves look better, to further our interests, to spare the feelings of others, to dodge confrontations, to avoid reckoning with our more unsavory traits, or just because our tongues run away from us. Telling Lies threads a story around a generational desire to work as a proxy for Eliza, as a real-life human. Our digital footprint, the game’s tech proponents tell us, will reveal more secrets than whatever we say to a certified therapist. At least that’s the theory.

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Online: zachtronics.com/eliza

More game reviews at stripes.com/games
The place is hard to find. You must drive into the mountains above Santa Cruz, Calif., following a road that turns from asphalt to dirt, then park at the top of a rise and look for a path whose entrance is deliberately concealed by brush.

A handful of men and women arrive here on a weekday afternoon in late spring, tramping through tall pines and occasional poison oak to get to an odd sort of playground.

Fashioned from plywood and metal pipe, the makeshift obstacle course looks like a children’s jungle gym, only larger and considerably more dangerous. The man who built it offers his guests a word of advice.

“You have to go hard,” David Campbell says. “Like you mean it.”

Everyone laces up their shoes and soon they are swinging from ropes that hang from trees and scrambling up a sheer wall, reaching for the ledge on top. A mini-trampoline launches them toward rings that dangle overhead.

The practice session continues for hours as Campbell and his friends prepare for the season finale of “American Ninja Warrior,” a summer reality show that has contestants racing through obstacle courses in various cities, hoping to make it to the national finals in Las Vegas where they can win $1 million by finishing the last stage.

Only two people accomplished that feat through the first 10 seasons, but difficulty is part of the allure. The NBC series has fostered a subculture of athletes who love testing themselves against the quirky, daunting obstacles. Some are former high school gymnasts or college track stars who are hungry to keep competing; others grew up strong and fast but never quite fit with traditional sports.

Finding a niche community to call home, they train in specialized gyms that have popped up across the country or maybe they wrangle an invitation from Campbell, a trim 41-year-old they call “The Godfather.”

Shortly before the national finals — which were taped in June and aired Aug. 26 — he convenes a workout at his homemade course. Brian Kretsch shows up, along with a Catholic lay worker known as the “Papal Ninja” and a stuntwoman, Jessie Graff, who ranks among the top female competitors.

Most everyone is nursing sore shoulders and creaky ankles at this point in the year. It hurts when they miss a step or lose their grip on a high bar, tumbling to the ground, rising slowly to brush themselves off.

“I call it the joy of finding your limits,” Graff says. “Of hanging onto an obstacle until everything is trembling and still refusing to let go.”

The idea came from Japan, from a game show called “Sasuke” that debuted in the late 1990s with a mammoth course dubbed “Mt. Midoriyama.” Arthur Smith heard about it from a friend.

“I loved it,” he recalls. “I loved the athleticism.” A former network executive who started his own production company, Smith devised an American version that has grown to include qualifying events and regional finals, all feeding into the Las Vegas championship. Some obstacles have been borrowed from the Japanese; others have been created by a team of U.S. designers.

The courses demand an array of skills. Competitors need explosiveness to charge up the 14½-foot “Warped Wall” and grip-strength to navigate the “Cliffhanger,” where they hang by their fingertips while swinging from a series of ledges. The “Jumping Spider” forces them to leap into a narrow corridor and catch themselves by jamming their outstretched hands and feet against the walls on either side.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

UP FOR THE TASK
Ninja Warrior contestants love to test themselves against the quirkiest obstacles you’ve ever seen

BY DAVID WHARTON ■ Los Angeles Times

Stuntwoman and Ninja Warrior contestant Jessie Graff, top and above, practices for the finals of “American Ninja Warrior” on a homemade obstacle course in Scotts Valley, Calif., on June 12.

Photos by Gina Ferazzi • Los Angeles Times
A day after training in the mountains, Campbell tells a similar story. His house had burned down and he was staying with his brother, who had cable. He says: “There was a void in my life.”

None of the early contestants guessed “American Ninja Warrior” would become a network success, picked up by NBC in 2015 and now the subject of an NBC series called “American Ninja Warrior.”

It might seem counterintuitive, but Smith insists that viewers want the show to be arduous; they want most seasons to end without a winner. He pushes his designers to be more devious.

Courses often include a “balance” element that requires sprinting across uneven steps, an unsteady bridge or a series of spinning blocks. Though no real strength or speed is required, these finicky obstacles can be the scariest.

“You make a tiny mistake,” Graff says, “and it’s over.”

It figures that Akbar Gbajabiamila had an attitude. The former pro football player thought he had already seen the world’s best athletes when “American Ninja Warrior” brought him aboard as a color commentator in 2013.

“I came in with a little NFL arrogance,” he says.

A big man whose enthusiasm matched his defensive lineman’s size, Gbajabiamila and co-host Matt Iseman ham it up from their broadcasting platform, with lots of yelling and laughing. “This isn’t scripted,” Gbajabiamila says. “But we’re telling a story.”

From the beginning, Smith knew “American Ninja Warrior” needed more than athleticism. He recalls walking into the first production meeting and asking: How do we sell the competitors?

It became apparent the show would attract a variety of people, with engineers and lawyers going up against guys who worked part-time jobs to leave room for training. Many showed up in colorful outfits and adopted nicknames such as “The Beast” and the “Bayou Ninja.”

Smith figured he could market these personas through the sort of up-close-and-personal segments he had produced while supervising Olympic coverage for a Canadian network. Viewers learned about the “Cowboy Ninja” caring for a wife with multiple sclerosis, the “Island Ninja” losing his mother, and “Ninja Phil” overcoming an autism spectrum disorder and chronic anxiety to compete. “What would the runs be without the stories?” Smith asks. “We’ve had so many great people overcoming things or changing their lives … you have to make viewers care.”

Television cannot fully convey the size and scale of the obstacles, the distances to be jumped, the heights to be climbed. Football and basketball players tend to struggle; the best contestants are leaner and lighter, possessing a distinct skill set. Gymnasts such as the “Papal Ninja” — his real name is Sean Bryan — do well because they know how to jump off trampolines and control their bodies in mid-air. Rock climbing, which requires length and strong hands, has produced the two most successful competitors.

Isaac Caldiero and Geoff “Popeye” Bitten completed the finals course in 2015, with Caldiero taking the $1 million prize because he climbed the last, 75-foot rope three seconds faster. They are the only finishers so far, though NBC has now begun running commercials that state: This is the season history will be made. One ninja will win it all.

“In America, we believe traditional sports are the height of athleticism,” Gbajabiamila says. “I can tell you, there’s not a player in the NFL who can do what these ninjas are doing.”

These acrobatics take place high above ground; most runs end with a trip or slip, the contestant falling into a pool of water below. If you’re cooked, you’re out.

“You want a little bit of success, but it can never be easy,” Smith says. “We have a warehouse where the obstacles are prototyped and we bring in people who are Ninja-types to do the testing.”

Graff totyped and we bring in people who are gymnasts to do the testing. “These are the conversations we have,” Graff says, growing antsy. “It’s a ninja thing.”

Blame the producers, who constantly switch and substitute obstacles, keeping each week’s configuration a secret until the last moment. Contestants endlessly theorize about what they might face next. As Campbell says: “It’s all about the beta.”

The term comes from climbing, where it refers to the skills required to scale a particular rock face. In “American Ninja Warrior,” it might denote the correct arm position on the “Salmon Ladder” or the best technique for launching off a trampoline.

When practice finally begins at the Northern California gym, Graff and Kretsch discuss the art of the lache — flying through the air from one high bar to another.

Contestants often share tips, perhaps because all of them — tall and short, teen- age and middle-aged, male and female — face the same course on the same terms.

Camaraderie has helped all of them improve at training and figuring out obstacles, which has forced producers to adjust.

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A big man whose enthusiasm matched his defensive lineman’s size, Gbajabiamila joined something that purposely blurred the line between sport and entertainment.

The show usually tapes overnight, from 9 p.m. to sunrise, to facilitate dramatic lighting. Gbajabiamila and co-host Matt Iseman ham it up from their broadcasting platform, with lots of yelling and laughing. “This isn’t scripted,” Gbajabiamila says. “But we’re telling a story.”

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Amazon has big ambitions for its devices. It thinks Alexa, the virtual assistant inside its smart speaker, could help doctors diagnose mental illness, autism, concussions and Parkinson’s disease. It even hopes Alexa will detect when you’re having a heart attack.

At present, Alexa can perform a handful of health care-related tasks: “She” can track blood glucose levels, describe symptoms, access post-surgical care instructions, monitor home prescription deliveries and make same-day appointments at the nearest urgent care center.

Amazon has partnered with numerous health care companies to let consumers and employees use Alexa for health care purposes. Workers at Cigna Corp. can manage their health improvement goals and earn wellness incentives with Alexa. And Alexa helps people who use Omron Healthcare’s blood pressure monitor, HeartGuide, track their readings.

But new opportunities are emerging since Alexa won permission to use protected patient health records controlled under the U.S. privacy law known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Before, Alexa had been limited to providing generic responses about medical conditions. Now that it can transmit private patient information, Amazon has extended its Alexa Skills Kit, the software development tools used to add functions. Soon, the virtual assistant will be able to send and receive individualized patient records, allowing health care companies to create services for consumers to use at home.

Amazon’s efforts in this domain are important because, with its 100 million smart devices in use worldwide, it could radically change the way consumers get health information and even treatment. Analysts expect 55% of U.S. households will have smart speakers by 2022.

Some of Alexa’s new skills depend on a little-understood feature of the devices: They listen to every sound around them. They have to in order to be ready to respond to a request, like “Alexa, how many tablespoons in a half-pint?” or “Put carrots on the shopping list.”

University of Washington researchers recently published a study in which they taught Alexa and two other devices — an iPhone 5s and a Samsung Galaxy S4 — to listen for so-called agonal breathing, the distinct gasping sounds that are an early warning sign in about half of all cardiac arrests. These devices correctly identified agonal breathing in 97% of instances, while registering a false positive only 0.2% of the time.

Earlier research had shown that a machine learning system could recognize cardiac arrest during 911 emergency calls more accurately and far faster than human dispatchers could.

“Amazon, which declined to comment for this article, holds a patent on an acoustic technology that recognizes and could act on significant audio interruptions. Combined with patented technology from the University of Washington that differentiates coughs and sneezes from other background noises, for example, Alexa could discern when someone is ill and suggest solutions,” Administrative Editor for the Mayo Clinic.

Because Amazon also holds patents on monitoring blood flow and heart rate through an Alexa-enabled camera, Alexa could send vitals to a doctor’s office before you head to your appointment and continue to monitor your condition after you get home.

“By using Alexa, you can get a second opinion,” said Dr. Sandhya Pruthi, lead investigator for several breast cancer prevention trials at the Mayo Clinic. “Alexa can couple a practical interaction around health care with an interaction that can engage the patient, even delight the patient,” said elder care advocate Laurie Orlov.

Financial details about Alexa are not publicly available. Amazon has not released data on financial operations related to health care.
Pork knuckle perfection

Poland’s Brovaria in the city center serves up one of the best meals in Europe

By Brian Ferguson
Stars and Stripes

A visit to Poland must include the Brovaria in Poznan city center for lunch or dinner. Poznan is a quick one-hour flight from Frankfurt, or a short drive for U.S. military members stationed in the city.

The Brovaria brews its own beer, offers a full bar and restaurant and even has its own 21-room hotel. The bar has a wide variety of drinks available, but the brew house’s signature beers are a must.

The service at the restaurant was also good. Our waiter arrived at our table about 30 seconds after we were seated, and he made sure we had what we touched it and the mashed potatoes actually had butter and salt in them, unlike some I have had since arriving in Europe more than a year ago. The meat fell off the bone when my fork touched it and the mashed potatoes actually had butter and salt in them, unlike some I have had in Germany. I did not try her dish, as I don’t like most veg-

Feeling adventurous, I ordered the pork knuckle, which was recommended by the restaurant staff. It was served with mashed potatoes and sauerkraut. My friend ordered the vegetable tart, a pizza-like pastry with lentils, mushrooms, red onions, herbs and cheese sauce. She said it was delicious.

Not only was the food good, but the price was unbelievable. The currency in Poland is the zloty. One dollar equals about four zloty. Our total bill was 100 zloty, or $25.

The entire experience at Brovaria was splendid, and I would go back any day of the week.

The pork knuckle lived up to its staff recommendation at Brovaria in Poznan, Poland. It’s served with sauerkraut and buttery, salty mashed potatoes.

Strawberries, pistachios, olive oil make splendid cake

By Becky Krystal
The Washington Post

I recently came across this Strawberry and Pistachio Olive Oil Cake. The recipe caught my eye because of the trifecta of title ingredients, all of which I adore. Also intriguing: The cake is gluten-free and quick to come together in a single bowl, after you’ve ground the pistachios in a food processor. Because the batter is so reliant on nuts, a little extra care is required. Nuts tend to burn easily, so I found it necessary to cover the cake part-way through cooking to keep it from getting too dark and bitter. Similarly, you want to make sure you don’t overbake the cake. You’ll be rewarded with a very tender, aromatic cake that would be right at home with a cup of tea or coffee.

STRAWBERRY AND PISTACHIO OLIVE OIL CAKE

Serve with creme fraiche or yogurt and extra strawberries.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups (225 grams) shelled raw pista-

1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
3 large eggs
2 egg yolks
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 ½ cups (150 grams) fine corn-

1 teaspoon baking powder

7 ounces (200 grams) straw-

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 de-

Put about 1 ½ cups (200 grams) of the pistachios in a food processor, and process until finely ground.

Using a hand mixer, beat the sugar and eggs together on medium-high until pale and fluffy, about 5 minutes. With the mixer running, add the olive oil, beating until thoroughly combined.

Gently fold in the ground pistachios, cornmeal or polenta, baking powder and salt. Fold in the strawberries, then scrape the batter into the pan and smooth the top with a spoon or offset spatula. Roughly chop the remaining ½ cup (25 grams) pistachios and scatter over the top.

Bake (middle rack) for 45 to 50 minutes, until the cake is golden and well-risen and a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean.

Transfer to a wire rack and let the cake cool to room tempera-

Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Strawberry and Pistachio Olive Oil Cake

Photography by Brian Ferguson, Stars and Stripes
OPINION

Treat fentanyl crisis like a poisoning

By BYRCE PARKO, JONATHAN P. CARLINGS and BEAU KILMER
Special to the Los Angeles Times

THE UCs. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released findings from surveillance data for 2017, and they are shocking. Of the estimated 47,000 deaths from opioids last year, roughly 80% were due to synthetic opioids, most of them fentanyl.

America’s fentanyl problem is far deadlier than the opioid crisis with other drugs. It also has a fundamentally different character. For most victims, fentanyl was not their drug of choice. Rather, they were unknowingly buying down the value of their own drug of choice with any postmarked, strong effects and little risk. In the case of heroin, it is largely the street chemist who is selling fentanyl, perhaps to other addicts. If a person who is on heroin is sold a fentanyl-laced tablet, it is a different story. The fentanyl is not the drug of choice, but rather a way to get more for their money.

What is happening with fentanyl is unlikely the trajectory of previous drug epidemics. Those typically involved “contagious” opioids, which third parties could pass along to others who may have been ignorant of the drug’s risks. This was the case with prescription opioids, which were prescribed aggressively for chronic pain. Some individuals who sought pain treatment now have an opioid addiction order to others who got the pills from neighbors or friends for recreational use.

In the case of fentanyl, it is largely the suppliers—users who have embraced the drug because it is an ideal cost-cutting substitute. Synthetic opioids are highly potent, so they are much cheaper than heroin—perhaps as much as 99% cheaper per dose after adjusting for potency. It is easier to acquire. Anyone with an internet connection can purchase synthetic opioids that are most frequently made in China and delivered through the mail or by parcel service. Some Mexican crime syndicates trafficking heroin are also adding fentanyl to their portfolios. This drug has sold itself with 100 times more potent than morphine, to heroin and counterfeit tablets made to look like genuine prescription medications. Adding a few grains of fentanyl gives a powerful kick, a few more turn deadly.

In short, most of the people exposed to an opioid crisis are users buying their own drugs and don’t want to use it. Rather than increasing the number of users, fentanyl is driving up the death rate.

This distinction is important: It means our traditional methods for responding to drug epidemics won’t work. Usually government agencies focus on preventing experimentation, reducing supply, price or availability. Fentanyl buyers aren’t buying because they can’t afford to buy other drugs. They are buying because they have much more they are buying because they have much more:

- It is better to conceptualize the fentanyl problem like a poisoning outbreak. The problem is out there, no matter what is done to it be minimized? How can its spread to other regions be contained?
- Efforts to disrupt the illegal drug purchases, for instance, might look very different than traditional drug interdiction efforts. It could include hacking or seizing websites that sell the drugs. Law enforcement might set up fake websites that offer fentanyl but never deliver it. The failure of some sites to fulfill orders could allow police to disrupt of drug-based sales generally.
- Eliminating the supply entirely seems impossible. But delaying fentanyl’s expansion in the western United States by even a few years could save thousands of lives. Today, fentanyl deaths are concentrated in Appalachia, New England and parts of the Midwest. In 2017, if the rest of the country had a per capita rate of synthetic opioid overdoses just half that in Washington, England’s, some 9,000 more Americans would have died from synthetic opioids that year.

Policy makers should be expanding access to naloxone, the overdose reversal medication, but also must look beyond that. Some states are considering legalizing marijuana and other drugs to help other countries include supervising consumption of illegal drugs so overdoses don’t become fatal. Providing heroin-assisted treatment for those who have not benefitted from other therapies.

Yet, these still may not be enough. Vancover has embraced harm reduction interventions and still has a synthetic opioid-involved overdose death rate just half of the state’s. Perhaps some day Canada and other rich countries can do the same. ted in the western United States by even a few years could save thousands of lives. Today, fentanyl deaths are concentrated in Appalachia, New England and parts of the Midwest. In 2017, if the rest of the country had a per capita rate of synthetic opioid overdoses just half that in Washington, England’s, some 9,000 more Americans would have died from synthetic opioids that year.

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**Thursday's transactions**

**BASEBALL**

*American League* — Baltimore Ravens released RHP Tony Edelman, and INF Jake Peterson out of their taxi squad.

*National League* — Atlanta Braves recalled OF/INF Adam Duvall and placed on the 60-day IL. (Knee).

*Central Division* — Chicago Cubs optioned C Taylor Anthoney to Triple-A South Bend.

*Eastern Division* — New York Yankees placed LHP Nestor Cortes Jr. (oblique) on the 10-day IL. Replaced RHP Julia Chuang from the taxi squad.

*Western Division* — Los Angeles Dodgers optioned RHP Davis Martin to Triple-A Oklahoma City.

**Football**

*Buffalo Bills* — Transferred LHP Jon Rosario from the practice squad to the taxi squad. Signed DE Marcell Dareus to a 1 ½-length victory at Del Mar.

*Eagles* — Recalled INF David Bote from the Gwinnett (IL) and placed Jackson on the IL. (Knee)...

**Soccer**

*Eastern Conference* — Charleston Battery vs. Saint Vincent Rupert, 16, featherweights; Thomas Quillin vs. Alfredo Angulo, 12, super middleweights.

*West Conference* — In the new Arthur Ashe Stadium.

**Pro basketball**


*West Conference* — LA Clippers 127, Phoenix 119

*WNBA* — Connecticut Sun 94, Las Vegas 72

**Pro football**

*Pro bowl* — New England Patriots 34, Houston Texans 7

**Scores**

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**Pro soccer**

*MLS* — Chicago Fire 1, New York City FC 0

*NASL* — Minnesota United FC 0, Charlotte FC 0

**Pro volleyball**

*AVP* — Trucking financial awards.

**Pro wrestling**

*AEW* — Chris Jericho vs. Adam Page.

**Other sports**

*Football* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Basketball* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Soccer* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Baseball* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Football* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Soccer* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Basketball* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Football* — Thursday’s transactions.

*Soccer* — Thursday’s transactions.
Briefly

**Chiefs give Hill 3-year extension**

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Kansas City Chiefs signed Tyreek Hill to a three-year, $54 million contract extension Friday, locking up the playmaking wide receiver whose off-the-field issues left his future in the NFL in question just a couple of months ago. He ranks 14th all-time in points scored and 15th in assists in 1,566 career games with Boston and San Jose. Hill was barred from the Chiefs facility all offseason after audio recordings emerged indicating he was associated with anti-gay messages. His off-the-field issues left his future in the NFL in question just a couple of months ago. The video was disseminated by an organization called Focus on the Family, which has promoted an organization called Focus on the Family, which has promoted policies widely viewed as hostile to the LGBTQ community.

Brees said Thursday his only intention was to encourage Christian students to take their bibles to school. Brees says he was not aware "at all" that Focus on the Family was associated with anti-gay messaging, inequality or "any type of hate."

**Sharks sign Thornton, 40, to 1-year, $2M deal**

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Joe Thornton has 413 goals and 1,065 assists in 1,566 career games with Boston and San Jose. Thornton was a four-time All-Star and scored 70 or more points in seven consecutive seasons. He quickly became the face of the franchise, winning the Hart Trophy as MVP in his first season, leading the team to back-to-back conference finals appearances in 2010-11 and a run to the Stanley Cup Final three years ago before a loss to Pittsburgh in the final.

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Thornton arrived in San Jose in a franchise-altering trade from Boston on Nov. 30, 2005, turning the Sharks into a perennial Cup contender that can never quite pull it out. He was free to resume work a week before training camp for the finalized contract. Thornton back, but it took until the start of her U.S. Open championship who will face 19-year-old Elina Svitolina of Ukraine at Arthur Ashe Stadium on Thursday night, reaching her fourth final in the past six major tournaments.

“’If someone told me a year ago it seems, honestly, crazy,” said Williams. “It’s just impressive, I guess,” Williams said. “I don’t think anyone else at this point. That’s why she is who she is. You are playing in front of the best tennis player in the world,” Svitolina said. “If you don’t take it, she just grabs it. And there’s no chance to take it back.”

Since returning to the tour last season after more than a year away while having a baby, she was the runner-up at Wimbledon twice, losing to Angelique Kerber in 2018 and to Simona Halep in July, and was also the runner-up, of course, a year ago at the U.S. Open, losing to Naomi Osaka. That one in New York was, and forever will be, overshadowed by Williams’ extended argument with chair umpire Carlos Ramos, who docked her a point, then a game — and was barred by the U.S. Tennis Association from officiating any matches her or her older sister, Venus, played in this year’s tournament.

The 15th-seeded Andreescu reached her first major title match in only her fourth appearance at a Slam by eliminating No. 13 Belinda Bencic of Switzerland 7-6 (3), 7-5.

Williams turned in an increasingly impressive performance for a 6-3, 6-1 victory over No. 5-seeded Elina Svitolina of Ukraine at Arthur Ashe Stadium on Thursday night, reaching her fourth final in the past six major tournaments.

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**SPORTS BRIEFS/US OPEN**

**One more for 24: Serena moves into US Open final**

BY HOWARD FENDRICH Associated Press

NEW YORK — By no means was Serena Williams perfect at the start of her U.S. Open semifinal.

She faced three break points in the opening game and managed to pull it out. She trailed 40-love in the second, then came through again. Another trio of break points arrived later in that initial set. Once more, Williams was up to the task. Soon enough, she was on her way to yet another final at Flushing Meadows — and yet another shot at Grand Slam singles trophy No. 24.

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## American League

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## Wild-card race

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## Calendar


**Oct. 11** — League Championship Series start.

**Oct. 22** — World Series starts.

## Stars and Stripes

### Thursday, Rays vs. Blue Jays

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**White Sox, Indians**

### Saturday, Sept. 7

**Chicago** vs. **Boston**

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### Twins, Red Sox

**Minnesota** vs. **Boston**

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### Athletics vs. Angels

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### This date in baseball

1988 — Warner Johnson pitched his first no-hitter.


1914 — The Boston Braves had to move to Providence, Rhode Island, because they couldn’t use their stadium due to the Red Sox playing the rest of their home games.

1962 — Maury Wills of Los Angeles piloted the second base hit and stole four bases in a single game.

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**MLB Scoreboard**

*Saturday, September 7, 2019*
Fried lets loose as Braves close on NL East title

By Paul Newberry
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Max Fried knew his night was about done.

So, with the final pitch of the most dominant performance of his big league career, he unleashed a 96 mph fastball.

“Just leave it all out there,” Fried said. “If he got me, he got me.”

No worries. Juan Soto swung and missed. Strike three.

Fried allowed just one baserunner over seven innings — an infield single in the first — to push the Atlanta Braves a step closer to their second straight NL East title with a 4-2 win over the Washington Nationals on Thursday in Atlanta.

Brewers’ Moran K’s brother in debut

30-year-old makes history in Milwaukee’s win over Miami

By Wes Crosby
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Brian Moran waited 10 years to make his major league debut. As he began pitching to his younger brother Colin, he realized he wouldn’t have wanted it any other way.

Brian struck out Colin, becoming the first player in big league history to make his debut while facing his brother on the mound, in the Marlin’s 10-7 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Thursday in Pittsburgh.

“It’s incredible,” Brian said. “I think the last three days have been some of the most exciting, moving days that I’ve experienced. I don’t think you could dream up a cooler situation. I’m so excited I got to share it with my family. I got to get out on a big league mound.”

Brian (1-0) entered in the fourth inning with the Marlins trailing 5-2. After Bryan Reynolds led off with a groundout, Colin stepped to the plate having doubled in each of his first two at-bats.

The 30-year-old Brian fell behind 3-1 before throwing back-to-back sliders to strike out Colin looking. The 26-year-old Colin shouted toward the mound on his way back to the dugout.

“He’s been my inspiration my whole life,” Colin said. “He’s never given up. That’s kind of been the theme of his career: I wasn’t even given, probably. A lesser man would have given up with the road he’s had to go through.”

Moran hit Josh Bell with a pitch and then got Melky Cabrera to fly out in his only inning of work.

The Marlins rallied for four runs in the fifth, allowing Brian to get the win. Colin finished 2-4-for-4.

“I felt bad for the dad. And happy,” Pirates manager Clint Hurdle said. “It’s a special moment. It really is a very special moment. The parents have to be so proud, so pleased.”

They became the first siblings to face each other in a pitcher-batter scenario with one of the brothers making his major league debut, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

“It’s just fun to see that,” Marlins manager Don Mattingly said. “Knowing what these guys have probably been through as brothers growing up. It’s kind of fun for me, I’m sure, that family, but it was really the right spot in the game. It worked out where it was a left-handed section for us in the right part of the game.”

The older Moran was 2-3 with a 3.15 ERA in 43 appearances for Triple-A New Orleans this season. He made his professional debut in Seattle’s farm system with rookie-level Pulaski in 2009.

“There’s a certain element of it being meant to be,” said Brian, who blew a kiss to his wife, Jackie, as he came off the field.

“It’s been everything and more. It’s worth the wait, and I couldn’t be more excited.”

Schwarber’s slam powers Cubs past Brewers

Astros 11, Mariners 9 (13): Michael Brantley hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the 13th inning to give Houston a victory over visiting Seattle in a game they trailed by seven runs.

Houston rookie Kyle Tucker hit his first major league homer in the sixth and tied the score 9-all in the 12th with an RBI single. Josh Reddick also went deep and Jose Altuve have a two-run triple for the AL West leaders, who were down 7-0 in the second.

San Francisco has lost five of six and eight of 10, dropping 9 ½ games back for the second AL wild card.

That’s on the road to make his major league debut at Minnesota.

Cubs 11, Cardinals 10 (13): Chicago rookie Kyle Tucker hit his first major league homer in the sixth and tied the score 9-all in the 12th with an RBI single. Josh Reddick also went deep and Jose Altuve have a two-run triple for the AL West leaders, who were down 7-0 in the second.

Cardinals 10, Giants 0: At St. Louis, Dakota Hudson (15-6) pitched six innings of one-hit ball and hit a two-run single for his first big league RBIs.

The Indians fell 6½ games behind the AL Central-leading Twins heading into a three-game series at Minnesota.

Twins 2, Red Sox 1: At Boston, left fielder Eddie Rosario threw out Rafael Devers at home plate for the final out, dropping the defending World Series champions 6 ½ games back for the second AL wild card.

That’s on the road to make his major league debut at Minnesota.

Tigers 6, Royals 4: At Kansas City, Jordy Mercer put his team ahead with its third home run of the fourth inning, and Detroit overcame a three-run deficit in a victory for the first time this year.

Rangers 3, Orioles 1: Rookie Kolby Al- lard (4-0) allowed one run and eight hits in 6 ½ innings to win his third straight start, and Nick Solak hit a go-ahead, two-run homer off John Means (10-10) in the seventh.

MLB
Michigan hopes it’s prepared for Army’s triple-option offense

BY LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — No. 7 Michigan is facing a team it has been preparing to play since spring practice, when defensive coordinator Don Brown carved out extra time to study a scheme rarely seen in modern college football.

Army, which runs a triple option, is coming to the Big House to resume a series that has been idle for more than a half-century.

“They have a unique style of offense which is very, very effective,” Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh said. “We kind of decided to play the game for the challenge of it.

“Historically, they’re 5-4 ahead of us, so we’d like to even that up.”

Army won the first five meetings and the Wolverines won the next four with the last matchup coming in 1962. Michigan is a heavy favorite to even the all-time series, but the Black Knights should have plenty of confidence Saturday after winning a program-record 11 games last season. They have won 10 straight, trailing only Clemson’s current run, since losing at Oklahoma in overtime.

Army is facing a top-10 team for a third straight year.

“I don’t know that we need to play games like that every single week, but to play a game like that each year is really important to this program,” coach Jeff Monken said. “It certainly is to the guys that play here, but it’s also important to the legacy of the guys who play here to play those kind of games and challenge the very best teams in America.”

Here are some other things to watch:

See how they run: Army averaged more than 300 yards rushing per game last season, trailing only Georgia Tech, and led the nation with 63-plus rushing attempts a game.

It wasn’t a fluke. The Black Knights led major college football in rushing two years ago and ranked second in 2016.

Senior Kelvin Hopkins ran for 1,017 yards and 17 touchdowns last season. He averaged fewer than eight passes per game, totaling 1,026 yards passing with six touchdowns and three interceptions. Hopkins ran for a touch- down and threw for a score on one of three passes he completed in eight attempts in last week’s 11-7 win over Rice.

Quite a comeback: The Wolverines weren’t sure a month ago when or if coach Monken would return from a bout with a colitis diagnosis that landed him in the hospital. He was able to practice a week before the season began and clearly was ready to play, intercepting a pass and recovering a fumble in his first career start.

“Everybody was just thrilled for Army,” Harbaugh said. "Going for it: Army led the nation in fourth-down conversions last season, successfully going for it 31 of 36 times. The 86-percent success rate validated Monken’s penchant for gambiling when most coaches would choose to punt.

“If the analytics book says go for it on fourth-and-1, most people wouldn’t do that even if that’s what the book says,” Hopkins said. “Coach Monken believes in what we do here and he believes in us as a team. We’ve got to come through on that. More than times not, that’s something we want. We’re begging him to let us go for it. We’ve just got to capitalize.”

Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh said he’d like to even up the Wolverines’ 5-4 deficit to Army in the all-time series.
Clemson's Travis Etienne runs down the sideline for a 90-yard touchdown during the first half of last week's game against Georgia Tech. Etienne finished with 205 yards rushing, but is likely to find running room harder to come by Saturday against Texas A&M.

**Top 25 Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>No. 24 Boise State vs. Marshall</th>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>No. 1 Clemson vs. No. 12 Texas A&amp;M</td>
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<td>No. 4 Alabama vs. New Mexico State</td>
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<td>No. 1 Georgia vs. Murray State</td>
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<td>No. 5 Oklahoma vs. South Dakota</td>
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<td>No. 0 Ohio State vs. Cincinnati</td>
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<td>No. 3 LSU at No. 6 Tennessee</td>
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<td>No. 7 Michigan vs. Army</td>
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<td>No. 10 Auburn vs. Tulsa</td>
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<td>No. 11 Southern Mississippi vs. Georgia Tech</td>
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<td>No. 16 Oregon vs. Utah State</td>
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<td>No. 17 Wisconsin vs. Central Michigan</td>
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<td>No. 18 MCF at FAU</td>
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<td>No. 19 Michigan State vs. Western Michigan</td>
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<td>No. 20 Iowa vs. Rutgers</td>
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<td>No. 21 Rice vs. No. 17 Stanford at Southern Cal</td>
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<td>No. 22 Washington State vs. Northern Colorado</td>
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<td>No. 23 Stanford at Southern Cal</td>
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<td>No. 25 Nebraska at Colorado</td>
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<th>SERVICE ACADEMIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Air Force (1-0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last week: beat Colgate 48-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Army (1-0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last week: beat Rice 14-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy (1-0)</td>
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<td>Last week: beat Holy Cross 45-7</td>
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**Power Five Standings**

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<td>Clemson</td>
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<td>West Virginia</td>
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<th>Pac-12 Conference Overall</th>
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<td>Arizona State</td>
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<th>SEC Conference Overall</th>
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<td>Texas A&amp;M</td>
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**Key Power Five Matchups**

**Cincinnati (1-0) at No. 5 Ohio State (1-0)**

6 p.m. Saturday CET

**AFN-Sports**

Series record — Ohio State leads 14-2.

**What's at stake?** — A loss to the Bearcats would be devastating to Ohio State, which hasn't lost a game to an in-state rival since dropping a 7-6 contest to Oberlin in 1921. Cincinnati has some momentum after knocking off UCLA in its opener and is looking for a signature win for third-year coach Luke Fickell, who spent 16 years on the Ohio State staff. New Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields食品accounted for five touchdowns in Buckeyes' opening win over FAU, but he made some rookie miscues that must be worked out. The Bearcats — especially on defense — have the talent to give Ohio State a game.

**Players to watch** — Cincinnati: QB Desmond Ridder. The sophomore, in his second year as the starter, was 18-for-26 for 242 yards and a pair of touchdowns against UCLA.

**Ohio State: DE Chase Young. One of the best defensive players in the country terrorized FAU and is expected to get even better. He finished with five tackles and 1.5 sacks.**

**FACTS & FIGURES** — Ohio State has a huge advantage in the series, with Cincinnati's wins coming in 1896 and 1897. The Bearcats nearly pulled off the upset in 2002 at Paul Brown Stadium, losing 23-19. ... Fickell was a four-year starter at nose tackle for the Buckeyes from 1993-96. ... Ohio State has won 41 consecutive games against in-state schools. ... Ohio State has kicked 179 straight extra points dating to Oct. 22, 2016. That's third in the nation. ... Cincinnati has won 12 of its last 14 games dating to last season.

**No. 12 Texas A&M (1-0) at No. 1 Clemson (1-0)**

9:30 p.m. Saturday CET

**AFN-Sports**

Series record — Texas A&M leads 3-2.

**What's at stake?** — A highly anticipated nonconference matchup that could dent Clemson's chances of defending its national title and propel A&M into the conversation for a College Football Playoff spot.

**Key matchup** — Texas A&M vs. Clemson. Mond threw for 430 yards and three touchdowns, two of them in the final quarter as the Aggies came from behind to win.

**Players to watch** — Texas A&M: QB Kellen Mond. Mond accounted for five passing touchdowns, one of them in the final quarter as the Aggies came from behind to win.

**Clemson:** QB Trevor Lawrence. The sophomore didn't have the flashy debut some expected after leading the Tigers to a national title as a freshman and looking poised to a national title as a freshman and looking poised to repeat.

**Facts & figures** — Matchup of longtime coaching rivals in Texas A&M's Jimbo Fisher and Clemson's Dabo Swinney. Swinney won the last three meetings when Fisher coached Florida State and last year's game with A&M. ... Clemson has won 16 straight games, one shy of its all-time win streak set in 2014 and 2015. ... Mond opened with 192 yards passing and four total touchdowns in A&M's opening victory.

**Travis Etienne had a career-high 205 yards rushing for Clemson to go with three touchdowns, one of them from 90 yards out. ... Clemson has won eight of its past nine games against SEC opponents since the start of the 2016 season.**

**No. 6 LSU (1-0) at No. 9 Texas (1-0)**

1:30 a.m. Sunday CET

**AFN-Sports**

Series record — Texas leads 9-7-1.

**What's at stake?** — Think big picture. The winner of one of the season's top nonconference matchups could get a big boost at the end of the year if it is still in the mix for College Football Playoff. Plus, there's bragging rights in the East Texas recruiting battles.

**Key matchup** — Texas quarterback Sam Ehlinger vs. LSU defensive back Grant Delpit and Kristian Fulton. Ehlinger set a Big 12 record last season for most pass attempts without an interception. He tied his career high with four touchdown passes last week against Louisiana Tech. But Delpit and Fulton likely make this the most talented secondary Texas will face this season.

**Players to watch** — LSU: Quarterback Joe Burrow. LSU has a new up-tempo offense and Burrow ran it to perfection last week with five touchdown passes in one half.

**Texas:** Left tackle Sam Cosmi vs. LSU edge rusher K'Lavon Chaisson. There's a lot riding on Cosmi, who must protect Ehlinger's blind side and get a push in a Texas running game that has been decimated by injuries. Chaisson missed most of last season with a knee injury and will be eager to make up for the lost time with big plays. He'll have to rush the passer and contain Ehlinger from running outside.

**Facts & figures** — Ehlinger has a 9-1 to 1 touchdown-interception ratio over his last 14 games. Burrow has 12 touchdowns passes in LSU's last three games dating to last season. ... Texas star Keaontay Ingram is the Longhorns' only healthy scholarship running back. The "emergency" players behind him are converted quarterback Roschon Johnson and converted linebacker David Gbenda.

— Associated Press
ALL-AMERICA WATCH

Expecting Moore: Purdue WR has big goals

BY MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Rondale Moore understands his record-breaking freshman season is history. He wants to put even more pressure on opponents by chasing bigger goals and finding new ways to take advantage of a Purdue defense perfectly tailored to his strengths.

"I think this year, it's more being able to get out there and know exactly where the ball is going, know the coverage before they actually get into it," he said. "Some things I didn't realize last year, and I can look up now and understand what's really going on. I'm almost trying to get myself to think like a quarterback." His new approach could make defensive coordinators around the country grimace after watching the fleet-footed Moore electrify college football last season when he raked up 313 all-purpose yards against eventual Big Ten West Division champion Northwestern in his college debut and broke Otis Armstrong's school record for all-purpose yards in a game.

It wasn't just the Wildcats. Moore had 12 receptions and 170 yards against Ohio State, nine catches for 114 yards against Wisconsin and 12 receptions for 141 yards against rival Indiana — logging two TDs against all three. When the season ended, Moore had broken the school record for all-purpose yards in one season (2,215), tied the school record for all-purpose yards in a game (313) and had a school record-breaking freshman season with a total of 11 catches for 124 yards last week in the Boilermakers' season opener against Nevada.

"I'm here to win games and help my teammates get better," he said. "Putting up numbers doesn't define me as a player. I want to help us to get bigger bowl games and compete for a national championship.

A season-opening loss at Nevada certainly didn't help. But Moore is accustomed to facing long odds.

When he arrived on campus, many wondered how Kentucky's reigning Gatorade Player of the Year, listed generously at 5-foot-9 and 172 pounds in 2018, would hold up in the rugged Big Ten. He did just fine.

Today, he's at 180 pounds and has a new perspective on practice.

"I keep of taken a different approach to things, just finding a different way that doesn't involve taking 1,000 reps," he said. "I'm trying to go about it slowly, doing what I can do to get better each day by focusing on little things like the Jugs (machine), obviously not going out and running 16-yard comebacks or something. Just catching balls, catching tennis balls.

The hope in West Lafayette is the extra weight is a more structured workout regimen that will add some wrinkles to get his top playmaker more involved Saturday against Vanderbilt.

"We may have to get it to him behind the line of scrimmage and we've got to be creative with that. And occasionally you may have to just throw it deep when two guys are bracketing him," Brohm said. "There's a lot of different ways to get that done."

Mark Humphrey/AP

Lower-rung SEC teams struggle out of the gate

LOWER-RUNG SEC TEAMS STRUGGLE OUT OF THE GATE

By John Zenor
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — With several SEC teams reeling from opening-week losses, the Southeastern Conference didn’t look like “top to bottom” the best league in the country as its coaches have long proclaimed.

Only the top teams did their part. SEC teams in the bottom portion of the standings are looking to rebound after embarrassing setbacks, highlighted by Tennessee’s loss to Georgia State. So, yes, the top of the SEC is still mighty with Georgia and Alabama, but it leaves some of the other teams looking formidable in their openers.

For the bottom half, after a weekend that was just as painful there’s a lot of work to do.

Four SEC teams fell to unranked nonconference opponents in the first full weekend of games. Memphis and South Carolina dropped a decision to North Carolina — and lost its starting quarterback. Plus, freshman-heavy Arkansas had a close, 20-13 win over FCS Portland State.

Then there was Tennessee, which got rocky Topped. The Volunteers fell in a Sun Belt Conference game that had lost its last seven games and was a 26-point underdog.

Upsets and sloppy performances happen in first games sometimes, it’s not the end of the world — even if it feels like it to fans of a handful of programs.

No. 2 Alabama and No. 3 Georgia — which played Vanderbilt — rolled to victories. No. 10 Auburn got the league’s biggest win, knocking off then-No. 11 Oregon 27-21 on a late touchdown.

No. 6 LSU and No. 12 Texas A&M routed overmatched opponents as expected. A week earlier, No. 11 Florida struggled but survived against Miami.

Half of the Top 12 teams in the Top 25 are from the SEC.

As for the rest, they’re trying to salvage solid seasons from bad beginnings. Tennessee receiver Juan Jennings says the team leaders have to let younger teammates “know what happened last weekend is unacceptable and it won’t happen again.”

“We’re going to get this right," Jennings said. "I’m not worried about anything else other than this team and what we’ve got going in here. It’s a great program, great people are here and a lot of people here with talent who are ready to go out and execute and we’re going to get that done.”

South Carolina’s 24-20 loss to North Carolina was costly beyond the final score. Quarterback Jake Bentley, who threw two fourth-quarter interceptions in the game, is out indefinitely with a sprained foot that could require season-ending surgery. That leaves freshman Ryan Hilinski to start, albeit against Charleston Southern.

Mississippi came into the season buoyed by former Clemson starter Brett taking over at quarterback. And he did put up 423 passing yards in a 57-31 loss to Wyoming with two touchdowns and an interception.

The Tigers’ defense struggled, with Wyoming scoring 27 points in the second quarter to rally from a 20-touchdown deficit.

Missouri does begin a five-game home stand against West Virginia Saturday.

"I’ve challenged our team and our staff and everybody in our organization to look at it (like) one game’s not going to define us," Tigers coach Barry Odom said.

Who’s hot

Oklahoma QB Jalen Hurts

With one national championship and three championship game appearances on his résumé, Hurts left Alabama to chase another title and the possibility of becoming the third straight Sooners quarterback to win the Heisman Trophy. He’s off to a great start. In Oklahoma’s 49-31 victory over Arizona Saturday, Hurts was 20-for-23 with 332 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions while running 16 times for 176 yards and three more scores.

Who’s not

Texas QB Sam Ehlinger vs. LSU S Grant Delpit

In this year’s only top-10 matchup, the eyes of Texas want to see if the multidimensional junior quarterback can help the ninth-ranked Longhorns build momentum against No. 6 LSU. Ehlinger threw for 276 yards and four touchdowns in a 45-14 rout of Louisiana Tech. It won’t be as easy against a Tigers defense that could require season-ending surgery. That leaves freshman Ryan Hilinski to start, albeit against Charleston Southern.

Michigan State, came into the season buoyed by former Clemson starter Brett taking over at quarterback. And he did put up 423 passing yards in a 57-31 loss to Wyoming with two touchdowns and an interception.

The Tigers’ defense struggled, with Wyoming scoring 27 points in the second quarter to rally from a 20-touchdown deficit.

Missouri does begin a five-game home stand against West Virginia Saturday.

"I’ve challenged our team and our staff and everybody in our organization to look at it (like) one game’s not going to define us,” Tigers coach Barry Odom said.
Bears’ offense struggles in opening loss

BY JAY COHEN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Errant passes. Shaky blocking. Questionable play-calling.

It sure looked as if Mitchell Trubisky and company could have used more pre-season work.

Trubisky and the Chicago Bears were shut down by the Green Bay Packers on Thursday night, losing 10-3 in an ugly NFL opener that showered cold water on any championship dreams in the Windy City.

‘Three points is ridiculous,’ coach Matt Nagy said.

About 90 miles up the I-94 highway, the Cubs outscored the Bears in a 10-5 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers. Kyle Schwarber topped Eddy Pineiro’s 38-yard field goal with a grand slam.

Khalil Mack and Chicago’s fierce defense showed up, sacking Aaron Rodgers five times and limiting the Packers to 223 yards.

But the Bears offense left the defense up all night, hurting itself with repeated mistakes.

“It was a frustrating game,” Nagy said. “It came out as an 8-yard loss. Then when we did get into a rhythm we’d have penalties.

There was no sign of any improvement for Trubisky in his second year under Nagy. He missed several throws and finished 26-for-45 for 238 yards.

But just 46 yards on the ground after trading leading rusher Jordan Howard to Philadelphia in March. Trubisky was sacked five times and a handful of penalties torched a couple of drives.

“It just seemed a little scattered tonight, with all our personnel,” Trubisky said, “and just trying to find a rhythm and trying to find our identity on offense. We’ve been in bad situations and shut ourselves in the foot.”

Nagy showed a deft touch while coaching the Bears to a 12-4 record and the NFC North title in his first season in charge. Trubisky passed for 3,223 yards and 24 touchdowns, and Nagy was named NFL Coach of the Year.

Looking to stay healthy, Nagy barely played his biggest stars in the preseason. Trubisky was behind center for three plays in the first exhibition game, handing off each time.

“You could maybe attribute it to that,” Trubisky said. “But I think that’s kind of a stretch. It’s just we were uncharacteristic of who we usually are tonight as an offense.”

Nagy brushed off the idea altogether.

“Is it a preseason thing? No, it’s not a preseason thing,” he said. “Our defense, they played pretty well today not playing in the preseason. But what it comes down to is just us needing to be better.”

Chicago’s defense hardly slacked, getting five sacks — tying the most it has had against Rodgers. But it could do little with the ball and Trubisky never found his stride. He even was sacked on Chicago’s final offensive play.

“I think it was just slippiness by myself and as an offense as a whole,” Trubisky said. “Just going through all our procedures, it was just tough. We couldn’t find a rhythm.”

Kicking game: Mason Crosby made a 39-yard field goal in the final period for Green Bay, while Chicago got a 38-yarder from Eddy Pineiro. Bears fans rejoiced in relief on the first score of the night, losing 10-3 in an ugly NFL opener that showered cold water on any championship dreams in the Windy City.

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers runs during the second half of Thursday’s 10-3 win over the Bears in Chicago.

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“Yeah, it was fun to watch,” Rodgers said. “It’s been a long time since I’ve seen a performance like that. Obviously, all the credit of credit to Mike Pettine and his staff, but to those players, just incredible.

Including five sacks of their own on a clearly befuddled Mitchell Trubisky. Plus the only turnover on a clearly befuddled Mitchell Trubisky.

“People came up with some really nice plays but I did myself to a high standard and I didn’t play great tonight, but to watch a defense like that, man, that gives you a lot of confidence about where this team can go.”

Green Bay went into the end zone with the game in hand on a beauty reception by tight end Jimmy Graham — a former college basketball player who boxed out to perfect position on the play. That was the difference, thanks to the stingy Packers D.

Before we started, we came together as a team, I told everybody, ‘Let’s shock the world on three,’ said linebacker Za’Darius Smith, a free agency addition. “And I felt like we did that tonight.”

The game also was marked by Shanghai interference and penalties. But the Packers made the fewest mistakes and now lead the league’s longest series 98-95. Green Bay has won 16 of the last 19 regular-season meetings, and Rodgers is 17-5.

The Packers’ Preston Smith, left, sacks Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky during the second half on Thursday in Chicago. Trubisky finished 26-for-45 for 228 yards.

Bears head coach Matt Nagy

Thursday’s game

Green Bay 10, Chicago 3

Thursday’s game

Seattle 17, Buffalo 14

Seattle won for the first time under head coach Pete Carroll.

Pittsburgh 26, Cleveland 23

Pittsburgh won its opener for the first time under head coach Mike Tomlin.

New England 30, Miami 10

New England started off the season for the first time under head coach Bill Belichick.

Chicago 3, Minnesota 0

Chicago won its opener for the first time under head coach Matt Nagy.

Detroit 28, L.A. Rams 21

Detroit won for the first time under head coach Matt Patricia.

Arizona 28, Baltimore 23

Arizona won for the first time under head coach Steve Wilks.

Indianapolis 40, Tennessee 10

Indianapolis won for the first time under head coach Frank Reich.

Kansas City 38, Green Bay 28

Kansas City won for the first time under head coach Andy Reid.

New Orleans 52, Washington 13

New Orleans won for the first time under head coach Sean Payton.

Philadelphia 21, Detroit 17

Philadelphia won for the first time under head coach Doug Pederson.

Cincinnati 23, Seattle 17

Cincinnati won for the first time under head coach Zac Taylor.
Big-time defense
Packers smother Trubisky, Bears in old-school opener

By Barry Wilner
Associated Press

To open its celebration of its 100th season, the NFL got a throwback to, well, the 1920s. You know, one of those knock-down-drag-out defensive confrontations that ends up 10-3.

That’s the score the Green Bay Packers beat the Chicago Bears by on Thursday night. And while it was ugly on offense, likely in great part due to the lack of action so many regulars on that side of the ball got in the preseason, it was a thing of beauty for the defenders in green, gold and white. On this night, the Packers were the Monsters of the Midway.

“I think we woke a lot of people up,” defensive end Montravius Adams said. “A lot of people didn’t believe in us. They had us ranked low, but we don’t care about that outside noise.”

There was plenty of noise heading into Soldier Field about Chicago’s D, which was dominant in 2018 as the Bears won the NFC North. And it played quite well against Aaron Rodgers and the Pack, sacking Rodgers five times and yielding only 213 yards.

But the Packers were stingier.

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Beasts quarterback Mitchell Trubisky is sacked by the Packers’ Blake Martinez (50) and Adrian Amos (31) during the first half of Thursday’s NFL regular-season opener in Chicago. Green Bay sacked Trubisky five times in a 10-3 victory.