



JOSH SMITH/Stars and Stripes

Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah greets supporters at a rally in Panjshir province. While he has faced accusations of playing up ethnic divides, Abdullah says ethnicity is fading as an issue in Afghan politics.

‘Every ticket is cross-ethnic’

Traditional divisions playing a lesser role in Afghan elections

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

KABUL — When the convoy of armored SUVs carrying Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah wheeled around the corner, the crowd of supporters surged forward, heedless of the police officers and militia

trying to beat them back. Perched on top of his vehicle, surrounded by guards in traditional pakol felt hats, Abdullah waved to the crowd that had been waiting more than four hours for his arrival at a rally in the Panjshir Valley, surrounded by snow-capped peaks. This is Abdullah’s adopted home,

and his history fighting the Soviets in the valley sealed his acceptance among the mostly Tajik population.

There was a time when an Afghan leader might have used a gathering such as this to openly appeal to ethnic or tribal loyalties. But less so in this election.

SEE ETHNIC ON PAGE 6

Blast kills at least 6 at Afghan Interior Ministry
Page 6

UKRAINE UNREST

Breedlove: Crisis shows need for US in Europe

Stars and Stripes

Moscow has enough forces to achieve its goals in three to five days if it invades eastern Ukraine, the top U.S. commander in Europe said in an interview Wednesday, arguing that the U.S. needs to re-examine where and how its troops are deployed in Europe in light of a newly assertive Russia.

“We think it is ready to go and we think it could accomplish its objectives in between three and five days if directed to make the actions.”

‘We think it (Russia) is ready to go and we think it could accomplish its objectives in between three and five days if directed to make the actions.’

Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove
supreme allied commander in Europe

Foreign Policy magazine noted that before March, Breedlove’s primary concern was holding the line against cuts to U.S. military personnel in Europe, where there are now about 67,000 troops, down from about 100,000 in 1990 and some 400,000 at the height of the Cold War.

Although the Pentagon has announced no public proposals to draw down U.S. forces, European Command has been seen by some as low-hanging budgetary fruit since before February. “For years, [European Command] has been the natural bill payer,” said Mark Jacobson, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund in Washington, using Pentagon-speak for a command or program forced to accept cuts in favor of other defense programs.

Breedlove was to testify on Capitol Hill on Tuesday and Wednesday on the EUCOM budget, in which force structure is considered as part of coming defense bills.

SEE BREEDLOVE ON PAGE 9



FACES

Charlie Sheen donates \$1M for new warrior, family center in Md.

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VETERANS

VA backlog down 44 percent since peaking in 2013

Page 3

MLB

Cubs celebrate 100 years at Wrigley Field

Back page



QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Luck of the Jedi I have.”

— A T-shirt worn by Powerball-winner B. Raymond Elston when he picked up a check for \$425 million

See story on Page 11

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MILITARY



ALEX WONG/AP

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, left, listens to Malaysian Defense Minister and acting Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein during a welcoming reception for Southeast Asian defense ministers in Honolulu on Tuesday.

Hagel: Coordination is key in search for missing Flight 370

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

ABOARD A U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT — Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel will meet with Malaysia's defense minister this week amid ongoing criticism about how the search for missing Flight 370 has been conducted and coordinated with other nations.

The defense leaders will come together at a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations hosted by Hagel in Honolulu. A key topic will be how all the countries can better work together during disasters like the missing Malaysian Airlines plane and Typhoon Haiyan that ravaged the Philippines late last year.

"There's always lessons to be learned," Hagel said when asked Tuesday by reporters traveling with him en route to Hawaii about the search for the plane. "We're going to go back, the Malaysians will go back, all the ASEAN nations will go back and walk through this. What could have been done, maybe what should

have been done, what needs to be done better. But coordination is a key part of this."

The desperate search across the southern Indian Ocean for debris from the missing airliner, now in its fourth week, has shown how far nations need to go to better share information and cooperate more aggressively during disasters, said senior defense officials, who spoke to reporters about Hagel's trip on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the meeting publicly in advance.

Their observations reflected ongoing concerns, particularly from some of the families of Chinese passengers who were on the plane, about poor communication and coordination as the disaster unfolded.

Hagel, who has spoken to the Malaysian defense minister twice in recent weeks, said the U.S. has complied with that government's requests. But he said that dealing with the harsh realities of the disappearance, including the massive search area, presents "certain big limitations to how

much we can do."

The U.S. has provided warships, search planes and high-tech equipment designed to help find the plane and its "black box" recorder once a more precise search area is identified.

According to officials, the ASEAN meeting will include discussions on how the nations can conduct military exercises that better mirror real disasters. They will also talk about security issues in the region and the increasing effects of climate change and extreme weather events.

Hagel proposed the idea to have a meeting of the ASEAN ministers as part of the Pentagon's ongoing effort to increase the U.S. focus on Asia.

"I want them to feel even more clarity about the U.S. commitment to the area, our coordination, our communications, the areas where we can cooperate more," Hagel said. "This is not about crowding anybody out. But it is about assuring the freedom of the sea lanes and the openness of our skies and cyber. And we're going to help continue to do that."

Sniper kills 6 Taliban in 1 shot

Stars and Stripes

Pop. BOOM!

A British sniper in Afghanistan killed six insurgents with a single bullet after picking off a suicide bomber whose device then exploded, British newspaper The Daily Telegraph reported Tuesday.

The paper reports that the 20-year-old marksman hit his target from 930 yards, killing the suicide bomber and five others around him when the device went off.

The incident, in Kakaran near Lashkar Gah, Helmand province, happened in December but has only now been disclosed, the paper noted.

Lt. Col. Richard Slack, commander of cavalry regiment 9/12 Royal Lancers, told the Telegraph that the unnamed sharpshooter prevented a major attack by the Taliban: a second suicide vest packed with 44 pounds of explosives was found nearby.

"The guy was wearing a vest. He was identified by the sniper moving down a tree line and coming up over a ditch," Slack is reported as saying.

"He had a shawl on. It rose up and the sniper saw he had a machine gun."

"They were [exchanging fire] and he was moving to a firing position. The sniper engaged him and the guy exploded. There was a pause on the radio and the sniper said, 'I think I've just shot a suicide bomber.' The rest of them were killed in the blast."

'I think I've just shot a suicide bomber.'

British sniper

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MILITARY

VA disability claims backlog drops 44 percent

By Josh Hicks
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs has cut its backlog of pending disability benefit claims by 44 percent since saying in March 2013 that its caseload had reached a “tipping point,” but some veterans organizations are challenging the accuracy of the agency’s numbers.

The latest VA data, released Monday, show that the number of claims stuck in processing for more than 125 days had dropped to 344,000, compared with a high of about 611,000 a year ago.

The department said in a statement Monday that it also has improved its determinations accuracy from 83 percent in 2011 to 91 percent last month and shortened the average wait time for decisions from 282 days to 119 days since March 2013.

“No veteran should have to wait to receive earned benefits,” VA Secretary Eric Shinseki said in the news release, adding that “we still have more work to do.”

Veterans groups have challenged the department’s accuracy claims in recent months. American Legion official Zachary Hearn said at a congressional hearing in December that his organization found errors with 15 percent of the cases it had reviewed.

Hearn said in an interview Monday that Veterans Affairs has “greatly reduced the claims backlog, but we still have concerns with accuracy and the rapid manner in which they are adjudicated.”

Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., said Tuesday that he is monitoring the accuracy matter.

“I think it’s a legitimate concern, and one we want to look at,” he said. “We don’t want to sacrifice accuracy for speed.”

VA spokesman Drew Brookie said Tuesday that the department’s accuracy review program meets “the highest industry standards” and that the Institute for Defense Analyses has verified its soundness.

The nonprofit group provides technical expertise to national security agencies.

The number of backlogged cases — those that have reached the 125-day threshold — has skyrocketed, with the growth largely the result of an influx of claims from veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and new rules that allowed more Agent Orange claims to be filed.

The Obama administration set a goal last year of eliminating the backlog by 2015, implementing an “overtime surge” for processors, prioritizing the oldest claims and training more employees to deal with cases.

The department also began a gradual switch to digital claims processing shortly after Shinseki took office in 2009. It said Tuesday that more than 80 percent of its disability claims are now in a

digital format.

“There’s no question they have undertaken a huge and almost unprecedented transition with a cumbersome paper system,” Sanders said. “I think we are seeing the benefits of that transition.”

Paul Rieckhoff, chief executive officer of Iraq and Afghanistan

Veterans of America, attributed the progress to “fixing predictable and preventable issues,” adding that the hundreds of thousands of remaining cases prove that “we are a long way from declaring victory.”

As Veterans Affairs trims its backlog, the number of appeals

has grown by 50 percent — to more than 250,000 cases — since President Barack Obama took office. The Board of Veterans Appeals has said its caseload will probably double before 2018. Obama vowed in his 2014 State of the Union address to continue the recent progress in trimming

the overall backlog.

His 2015 budget requests \$2.5 billion for the VA division that handles benefits, an increase of \$28.8 million over this year.

The budget also requests \$138.7 million for a Veterans Claims Intake Program to reform and speed up processing.



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MILITARY



Courtesy of Navy Exchange

Flames consume a 300-square-foot Navy Exchange storage building in Jebel Ali, Dubai, on Wednesday. The cause is under investigation.

Navy Exchange warehouse in Dubai destroyed by blaze

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — A fire destroyed a small Navy Exchange warehouse in Jebel Ali, Dubai, on Wednesday morning. No injuries were reported.

The approximately 300-square-foot building contained mostly Navy Pride-themed merchandise and sporting goods for the exchange in Jebel Ali, according

to Navy Exchange Service Command officials. They said the fire will have a minimal effect on distribution.

The NEX is working on options for a replacement warehouse. The cause of the fire is under investigation, and NEX officials are assessing the cost of the damage.

news@stripes.com

Report: DOD not tracking 'revolving door' statistics

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department isn't properly keeping track of senior officials who leave the government to take jobs with defense contractors, the DOD inspector general reported Tuesday.

In the wake of concerns that defense officials with responsibility over contracting were moving to the private sector and improperly influencing the process — the so-called "revolving door" between government and industry — Congress took action in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

The law required generals, flag officers, senior civilians and program officials to seek written legal opinions on their new jobs. Under the provisions of act, the DOD was also required to keep all such opinions and reports accessible in a central database for at least five years — but the DOD inspector general said Tuesday they aren't being done.

The IG report said the database of such documents, known as the

After Government Employment Advice Repository, or AGEARS, was "incomplete with little or no use by specific DOD organizations with significant contracting activity."

Government watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington sued the DOD to get a database of figures, which showed that between January 2012 and May 2013, 379 defense officials had sought opinions.

According to CREW, most sought an opinion on a specific would-be employer, with 13 outgoing or newly retired officials listing Lockheed Martin, the world's largest defense contractor, as a prospective employer. Seven listed Boeing, eight listed General Dynamics, 10 listed Raytheon and 13 listed Northrop Grumman.

The inspector general said the DOD could not provide requested data about postgovernment employment to Congress, and concluded the DOD "may not have fully complied with the intent of this law."

Among the problems the IG identified, records are kept in different locations and many are missing, particularly at the Defense Logistics Agency and the National Security Agency — "organizations with substantial contracting activity," the report said. In response to recommendations from the IG, DOD managers admitted the 2008 NDAA requires a single, central database and took steps in early 2014 to consolidate the reports in the AGEARS system, the report said.

The IG also recommended that the DOD establish a single official in charge of the records.

A press release from the office of Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., who introduced legislation that required the IG review, said she was "extremely disturbed that the Department of Defense is willfully ignoring Congressional intent and not following the letter of the law to address the American public's concerns about the revolving door between the Pentagon and defense contractors."

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Thursday, April 10

Celebrate your brothers and sisters by receiving one free children's meal with a purchase of any children's meal.

National SCRABBLE Day

Sunday, April 13

Unscramble the Scrabble letter tiles for your chance to win up to 10% off your entrée! Select seven letters from the bag and if you can create a word with five tiles or more — you win!

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MILITARY

Pols ask for files in KBR fraud case

By SCOTT HIGHAM
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Two members of a powerful congressional committee on Tuesday asked one of the nation's largest government contractors to produce numerous internal corporate files, signaling a widening investigation into claims that the company covered up reports of fraud.

The members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee sent a letter to the chairman of KBR, William Utt. The lawmakers said they had launched an inquiry into claims that the company required employees seeking to report fraud to sign confidentiality agreements.

Those agreements barred employees from speaking to anyone about their allegations, including government investigators and prosecutors, according to court records and lawyers involved in the case. Those who violated the agreement faced dismissal and legal action.

Attorneys for a whistleblower who is suing KBR and its former parent company, Halliburton, says the confidentiality agreements

violate the False Claims Act and other laws crafted to protect whistleblowers. The request for documents by Congress comes after the Securities and Exchange Commission last month launched its own investigation into the agreements.

The companies have denied the allegations and filed motions to dismiss the case, calling the whistleblower's claims groundless. Halliburton has declined to comment on the case, saying that KBR is now a separate company.

"KBR does not prevent its employees from reporting perceived misconduct," KBR spokesman Richard Goins said. "KBR actively encourages legal and ethical compliance through a vigorous code of business conduct."

The whistleblower case was brought by Harry Barko, a former KBR employee who claimed that Halliburton and KBR inflated the costs of services provided to military bases under a multibillion-dollar logistics contract in Iraq. The suit was filed in 2005, when Halliburton was the parent of the company, then known as Kellogg, Brown & Root.



HONG SINHA/AP

Somber homecoming

U.S. military personnel drape the U.S. flag over a coffin containing possible remains of a U.S. serviceman during a repatriation ceremony at Phnom Penh International Airport, Cambodia, on Wednesday. The possible remains of U.S. soldiers were repatriated to Hawaii for testing.

Critics allege USS Arizona Memorial ticket hoarding

The Associated Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii — Officials say more tickets to visit the USS Arizona Memorial are being picked up online in bulk orders of 65.

Critics blame tour companies, and they say no tickets are left by

the time individual visitors try to reserve them.

Ken DeHoff Jr., the executive director of the Pacific Aviation Museum, said many visitors don't visit Pearl Harbor when they see tickets are sold out online. He added that museum revenues are down

by 20 percent since January.

The National Park Service issues 4,500 free tickets each day to visit the memorial. People may either pick them up in person at the visitor's center in Pearl Harbor or reserve them online for a \$1.50 processing fee.



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THE NEW SANNO

MIDEAST

Blast kills 6 at Afghan Interior Ministry

By RAHIM FAIEZ AND AMIR SHAH
The Associated Press

KABUL — A suicide bomber wearing a military uniform struck the heavily fortified Interior Ministry compound in the heart of Kabul on Wednesday and killed six police officers, authorities said, in an escalation of Taliban violence aimed at disrupting this weekend's presidential election.

Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqi said the bomber got through several checkpoints to reach the ministry gate before detonating his explosives. An Interior Ministry statement said the bomber was among other men in uniform entering the compound.

Within minutes of the blast, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack. It came soon after he issued an emailed statement to the media warning of more violence ahead of Saturday's presidential elections.

Mohammad Karim, who was walking toward the gate to leave the compound, said he was thrown back by the force of the blast. Police then rushed him and others into a safe room.

Police officer Baryalay, who like many Afghans uses only one name, said the blast occurred near a bank that is located close to the entrance gate. Police officers collect their paychecks at the bank.



MASSOUD HOSSEINI/AP

Police guard the main gate of the Afghan Interior Ministry in Kabul after a suicide bomber struck near the entrance of the compound Wednesday.

Farida Hashimi, a female police commander, went for the policemen killed in the explosion — including one named Tamim.

“One of the police who died was my friend,” she said. “They were all my colleagues, but Tamim was my friend, my brother.”

Hashimi criticized the lax security that allowed the bomber to walk past three different check posts.

In Mujahid's earlier warning, he told Afghans to stay away from Saturday's vote, saying election workers and polling centers would be targeted. The Interior Ministry

primarily has responsibility for securing the elections. Several recent high-profile attacks also have threatened to undermine the results by scaring voters away.

Hashimi said the Interior Ministry explosion did not bode well for the elections. Afghans will worry about the ability of Afghanistan's security officials to protect polling stations, she said, when they are unable to protect their own headquarters.

“It will have a very bad effect on the elections,” Hashemi said. “Of course people will wonder how they can keep polling places safe if a bomber can enter this very important government compound.”

Earlier Wednesday, an Afghan official said Taliban gunmen killed nine people, including a candidate running for a seat in the provincial council, who had been abducted in northern Afghanistan.

Sar-i-Pul Provincial Governor Abdul Jabar Haqbeen said authorities received word that the candidate, Hussain Nazari, and the others were killed overnight by their abductors. They were seized by the Taliban three days ago while traveling to the provincial capital.

Haqbeen said they recovered four bodies and one man who was wounded, while the five other bodies, including the candidate's, were in a remote area and have yet to be found.

Haqbeen said authorities were told that Nazari and two others were beheaded.

Ethnic: Makeup of candidates indicates Afghans aren't looking to be divided again

FROM FRONT PAGE

Analysts say that while ethnic identities remain entrenched, all the main candidates have formed multi-ethnic coalitions, making ethnic-based rhetoric less useful to national politicians than in the past.

“Particularly when you've had a war where militia leaders have used ethnicity to drum up support, you've got a hangover in Afghanistan of ethnic-based political organization,” said Kate Clark, who heads the Kabul office of the Afghanistan Analysts Network. “The difference this time is every ticket is cross-ethnic. You can't get into office without having other ethnic groups onboard.”

Ethnicity is an “inevitable” factor in Afghan politics, she said, but the makeup of the presidential campaigns indicates Afghans aren't looking to be divided again.

Saturday's ballot comes at a critical time for Afghanistan. International combat troops are planning to leave by the end of the year after 12 years of war, and the election itself would mark the first peaceful, democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history.

With so much on the line, concerns about traditional fault lines like ethnicity hang over the election. All of the major presidential candidates — and most of the Taliban — hail from the majority Pashtun heritage, though most of the candidates have running mates from other ethnic groups. Afghans and observers alike say ethnicity as a defining source of division in national elections has faded somewhat; many hope for good.

Pashtuns make up 42 percent of Afghanistan's 31 million people,



JOHN SMITH/Stars and Stripes

Women wave flags at a rally for Afghan presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani in Kabul. Afghans say they hope the country is moving away from the ethnic divisions that have marked politics in the past.

while Tajiks account for 27 percent, according to the CIA World Factbook. Hazaras and Uzbeks account for 9 percent each, with other groups comprising the rest.

Ethnicity is more of an issue in Afghanistan than it even was in Iraq, where fighting between rival Muslim sects was often described as ethnic-based. In Afghanistan, many Pashtuns in the south and Dari-speaking Tajiks in the north can't even speak the other language. Other Afghan languages, such as Uzbek and Turkic are even less widely understood.

Abdullah claims to be half Tajik and half Pashtun. Abdullah's main rival, Ashraf Ghani, is a Pashtun who has as a running mate Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, a powerful Uzbek ruler ousted of war crimes.

“All of the teams that are running represent multi-ethnic, multifactional coalitions,” said Graeme Smith, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group in Kabul. “So even though you have this incredibly centralized presidency, with very much a winner-takes-all system, no one faction in the country is trying to take all. Which is great because the way the system is designed you could have had a situation where some Tajik candidate tries to win the presidency for the Tajiks, and that's just not happening.”

While some in Afghanistan may still seek to use ethnicity as a wedge issue, Abdullah says he doubts that such people can once again cause major divisions.

“Among the people, there is a change, there is a generational

change,” he told Stars and Stripes in an interview at his compound in Panjshir. “They see the interests of the country and their own future above these divisions, so there are positive changes.”

The sitting president, Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, who defeated Abdullah in a disputed election in 2009, has accused him of trying to bring Tajiks to power. While open ethnic appeals may not be common, some portions of candidates' platforms are still interpreted through the lens of ethnicity.

Israr Karimzai, an Afghan youth activist, argued that candidates, including Abdullah, who have advocated for more autonomy for Afghan provinces are playing “the ethnic card.”

“The new generation doesn't buy that anymore,” he told Stars and Stripes. “Our elders are divided, but the youth are more united. There are certain candidates that are playing the ethnic card in this election, but Afghans have been through the process of national solidarity and they are aware of national interest.”

Homegrown mass media and national sports like soccer and cricket are among the things that have helped to build a sense of national unity, Karimzai said.

Jandad Spinghar, director of the Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan, the main independent Afghan election monitoring organization, said that while ethnic issues have faded, especially compared with the past, they haven't disappeared altogether.

A real test will come if, as many expect, the election results are disputed.

“It's, unfortunately, a reality in this country,” Spinghar said.

“Politicians are trying to use that.”

With foreign combat troops departing, the balance of power that has existed for the past decade could be shaken, Smith, of the International Crisis Group, warned.

“The sad reality is that over the past dozen years, the international military forces have picked sides in many of these fights,” he said. “So our presence changed the power dynamic in a lot of these places.”

When invading American forces empowered Uzbek militias in northern Afghanistan to fight against the Taliban, for example, whole villages of Pashtuns moved away.

“That's unfinished business,” Smith said. “You can't expect that pendulum to swing one way and not swing back. I think there are some scores to settle here. I think this is why we really need to work at propping up the state because there could be serious problems if we don't.”

Stars and Stripes reporter Heath Druzin contributed to this report. smith.josh@stripes.com @joshonsmith

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PACIFIC

South Korea: Crashed drone likely belonged to Pyongyang

BY ASHLEY ROWLAND
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Two drone aircraft that crashed in South Korean territory — including one believed to have flown over the president's residence — likely belonged to North Korea, government officials said Wednesday.

An unmanned aircraft was found Monday on Baengnyeong Island, about 10 miles from North Korea, following a three-hour exchange of artillery fire between the two Koreas along their disputed maritime border. It was the second drone discovered inside South Korea within the past week.

Their penetration of South Korean airspace raised questions about the nation's air defense capabilities at a time when Pyongyang is taking a more aggressive stance toward the South.

In the last two weeks, North Korea has test-fired medium-range ballistic missiles, threatened to conduct a nuclear test,

and fired more than 500 artillery shells that landed in disputed waters between the two countries.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Tuesday reportedly told military officers that his country's relations with the United States were "graw" and said his military will "thoroughly crush the hostile U.S. policy against the North," according to South Korea's Yonhap News. Kim's remarks were posted on the state-run Korean Central News Agency website.

The discoveries of the unmanned aerial vehicles have only heightened tensions on the peninsula.

The first drone — discovered March 24 in Paju, a city near the Demilitarized Zone — is believed to have flown over and taken photographs of the Blue House, the president's office and residence in Seoul, a spokeswoman said Wednesday. Because of security restrictions, she could not discuss whether additional protection measures were being taken at the compound or whether the

discovery of the drone indicated possible lapses in the country's air defense capabilities.

Late Wednesday, South Korean defense officials announced their interim findings after inspecting the two light-blue aircraft — whose paint scheme is similar to a North Korean drone displayed at a military parade in Pyongyang last year. While the drone at the parade was longer than a vehicle, the aircraft found in Paju weighed 33 pounds and was just 6.3 feet long. The one found on Baengnyeong Island was 6 feet long and weighed 27.9 pounds, South Korea's Defense Ministry said.

The size of the unmanned aircraft made it easy for them to avoid detection, officials said. "Because they were so small, it's difficult to distinguish them by eyesight, and some objects that are this small are considered birds by radar," a Blue House spokesman said, adding that it was "common sense" that they would be hard to detect.

During a press briefing



Courtesy of South Korea Defense

Officials inspect the undercarriage of a drone believed to have flown over and taken photographs of the Blue House, the South Korean president's office and residence in Seoul.

Wednesday afternoon, defense officials said the drone found in Paju had "entry-level" (meaning very basic or elementary) technology, but was equipped with a Japanese camera that contained images from sites in Seoul and northern Gyeonggi province.

Spokesman Kim Min-seok said the drone found in Paju was equipped with a small camera similar to those used by civilians. Inscribed on the body of the drone were the dates "2013. 6. 25" and "2014. 6. 25," and North

Korean-style writing indicating that the dates showed when the drone went into service and would expire.

Officials don't know why the drones crashed, Kim said. U.S. Forces Korea — which works closely with the South Korean military — would not discuss the matter, saying it does not comment on operational and intelligence matters.

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As Koreans exchange missiles, USFK commander warns against budget cuts

BY JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The commander of U.S. and U.N. forces in Korea told lawmakers Wednesday that North Korea has the capability to attack the south with "little or no warning," and further budget cuts could hamper the U.S. military's ability to respond.

North Korea has the fourth-largest military in the world and is aggressively enhancing its nonconventional capabilities, including cyber, according to Army Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, the commander of U.S. Forces Korea. Scaparrotti told members of the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday that North Korea's artillery forces are particularly worrisome because they could pound Seoul, where 23 million South Koreans and 50,000 Americans live.

"The Kim Jong Un regime is dangerous and has the capability ... to attack South Korea with little or no warning," Scaparrotti said. Tensions on the peninsula have heightened after North Korea launched about 100 artillery shells into South Korean waters Monday and America's South Korean allies returned fire. All three shells landed in the sea and no injuries were reported, according to South Korean media.

The artillery barrage came in the wake of recent North Korean missile tests and threats to conduct another nuclear test. Two drone aircraft were found in South Korea over the past week,

and are believed to belong to the North, according to South Korean officials.

Last year, the U.S. announced that it would beef up its missile defense capabilities in Fort Greely, Alaska, due to concerns about North Korea's advancing intercontinental ballistic missile and nuclear programs.

The U.S. has maintained a permanent force level of 28,500 troops in South Korea for years, and added another 800 in January with the deployment of a rotational Army battalion to the peninsula.

Scaparrotti said his forces are prepared to counter a North Korean attack, but he's concerned about the readiness of follow-on forces that would be required in any prolonged fight. He warned about the impact of further budget cuts on the U.S. military's ability to fight a major ground war with the North.

"If we were to reduce our Army force size based on the [projected] sequestration [levels of 420,000] ... we would probably be challenged in terms of maintaining a long-duration conflict or one that included stability operations for some time thereafter," he told members of the committee.

North Korea's recent military actions and hostile rhetoric are not a new phenomenon. Scaparrotti views them as part of a pattern that has been recurring for years, especially at this time of year when the U.S. and South Korean forces conduct large-scale joint

training exercises.

"This is a common strategy with North Korea to come out of a period of calm and to use these types of actions to message to both the United States, the international community and South Korea, and also to demonstrate capability," he said. "It's the normal pattern of messaging displeasure with our training, messaging their capabilities, [and] it is something that I expected, particularly about the March-April time frame."

Also notable was the absence of Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, the commander of U.S. European Command. He was scheduled to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday and the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday, but the Pentagon decided that he needed to go back to Europe as Russia has tens of thousands of troops massed along its border with Ukraine after having seized control of Crimea. Rep. Buck McKeon, R-Calif., the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said Breedlove would likely testify later this year.

McKeon said the Ukraine-Russia crisis is a "sobering reminder" of the importance of the American military presence in Europe.

"The question now is how is the force [is] positioned and provisioned to prepare us for a new [security] paradigm," Breedlove told Foreign Policy magazine in an interview published Wednesday.

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PACIFIC

Washington, Beijing spar over Philippines' China Sea dispute

By ERIC SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — U.S. remarks in support of a Philippine marines outpost on a disputed reef are “irresponsible,” and Manila’s international court claim on islands in the South China Sea has “seriously damaged” bilateral relations, Chinese officials said this week.

The terse remarks traded between diplomats came in advance of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel’s trip to Hawaii to talk with representatives from Southeast Asian nations — several of which dispute China’s claim to roughly 90 percent of the South China Sea and its included islands. Hagel is scheduled to fly to Japan, Mongolia and China afterward.

Chinese officials in Beijing and Manila lashed out Tuesday against the Philippines for filing a 4,000-page memorial — akin to an opening argument — at the international Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on March 30. The memorial argues that a Chinese map commonly known as the “9-dash line map,” which Beijing uses to assert control over about 90 percent of the South China Sea, violates international law.

“After the Philippine side initiated the arbitration, the Chinese side promptly made its position clear that China does not accept the arbitration,” said Sun Xiangyang, charge d’affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Manila on Tuesday. “What the Philippine side did seriously damages bilateral relations with China.”

Both countries are signatories to the United Nations Convention



BULLITT MARQUEZ/AP

Protesters rally outside the Chinese consulate in Makati city east of Manila, Philippines, on Wednesday.

on the Law of the Sea. However, Sun said the dispute over South China Sea territories falls outside the framework of the convention.

The court cannot rule on the sovereignty of hundreds of rocks, reefs and islands within the sea — most of which are valuable for the projected billions of dollars worth of energy resources and fisheries in their nearby waters.

But the court can rule on whether several of the oft-submerged islands are actually considered land. If they are not, the areas could revert to the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone, under generally accepted interpretations of international law. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and autono-

mous Taiwan could all use similar arguments against China if the Philippine claim is successful.

Chinese officials also spoke out against a recent resupply mission of a rusting Philippine ship grounded at the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, located about 120 miles west of the Philippine island of Palawan. The shoal has been garrisoned since 1999 by Philippine marines stationed aboard the ship.

Chinese ships attempted to block a Philippine vessel from resupplying the marines on Saturday, but were unsuccessful.

On Monday, State Department deputy spokeswoman Marie Harf told reporters in Washington that the Chinese attempt at obstruction was “a provocative and destabilizing action.”

“This action raises tensions and is inconsistent with the important principle of freedom of navigation,” Harf said.

Although the U.S. takes no position on the sovereignty of the islands, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel told Congress in February that the U.S. supports “the Philippines’ right to seek international arbitration.”

When asked about Harf’s comments, China Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said, “It is without any doubt that the Philippine side is the one who provokes and makes troubles.”

“We urge the U.S. to respect facts, stop making irresponsible remarks and cease to encourage the provocative and risky actions of relevant country,” Hong said.

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BULLITT MARQUEZ/AP

The dilapidated Philippine Navy ship LT 57, the BRP Sierra Madre, with Philippine troops deployed on board, is anchored off Second Thomas Shoal, known as Ayungin Shoal, in the South China Sea.

Old American ship home to Filipinos in China standoff

The Associated Press

ABOARD BRP SIERRA MADRE, Spratly Islands — On board the crumbling carcass of this World War II-era warship, Filipino marine 1st Lt. Mike Pelotera and his eight men make their way to a mid-level deck to raise the Philippine flag up a leaning pole and then salute it. Across the calm, turquoise waters, two Chinese coast guard ships lurk, looking on.

Its hull riddled with holes and rust, the BRP Sierra Madre has become a fragile symbol of the Philippines’ claim to Second Thomas Shoal, a 5-mile-long submerged coral outcrop that has been disputed by China and the Philippines for years.

The Philippine navy inherited the former U.S. tank-landing ship USS Harnett County in 1976, and ran it deliberately aground at Second Thomas Shoal in 1999.

A Chinese frigate and maritime surveillance ships arrived last year to press China’s claim to the shoal, which is believed to be sitting atop undersea oil and gas re-

serves. The move was an example of China’s increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea, something that is alarming the United States, Manila’s longtime ally.

Analysts say China’s strategy is to slowly take possession of islands and outcrops in the South China Sea, using intimidation where necessary but avoiding any major confrontation. Its military might and economic dominance in the region mean it can push its weight around with little fear.

Second Thomas Shoal and the nearby Spratly Islands lie about 700 miles from southern China. China’s Foreign Ministry says Beijing has “indisputable sovereignty” over the shoal.

The Sierra Madre is now effectively a shipwreck, but the Philippine military has not decommissioned it. That makes the ship an extension of the government and means any attack on the ship is tantamount to an assault against the Philippines. The Chinese ships are around 5 miles from the outpost, clearly visible to those onboard.

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UKRAINE UNREST

NATO makes exception to Russia vow

By SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

NATO will continue to cooperate with Russia on projects related to Afghanistan, despite the alliance's vow to suspend most ties with Moscow because of its annexation of Crimea, diplomats said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, NATO's top official warned that Russia would commit a "historic mistake" if it invaded Ukraine.

On Tuesday, NATO foreign ministers decided to suspend all "practical" military and civilian cooperation with Russia in protest over its annexation of Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula. The United States and the European Union previously announced a series of sanctions targeting Russian officials and institutions and threatened to strengthen those measures if Russia moved into eastern Ukraine.

Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen reiterated that there was no sign the Russian army was reducing its buildup along Ukraine's eastern border.

"If Russia were to intervene further in Ukraine ... that would lead to further international isolation of Russia, it would have far-reaching consequences for relations between Russia and the Western world. It would be a miscalculation with huge strategic implications," he told reporters at the end of a two-day meeting of foreign ministers in Brussels.

The ministers from NATO's 28 member states decided to strengthen the defenses of alliance members that feel menaced by Russia's buildup. They also said the alliance would boost cooperation with Ukraine to strengthen that nation's defense capabilities.

The U.S. has deployed six F-15 fighters to reinforce air patrols over the Baltics, along with 12 F-16s to Poland. It also dispatched

Breedlove: Ukraine crisis may modify Europe needs

FROM FRONT PAGE

He was instead sent back to Europe to deal with the Ukraine situation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly had ordered a partial withdrawal of forces amassed near eastern Ukraine, but Breedlove offered a strikingly different assessment.

"I must tell you that we do not see that yet," Breedlove said in the interview. "We are looking for it, and we have not seen movements to the rear."

Moscow maintains its troops have been sent to the border for military exercises, but Breedlove told Foreign Policy that the troops were so well equipped that they could cross into eastern Ukraine within 12 hours and take control within several days. Breedlove said Russia had deployed "the whole package" to the border, including helicopters and attack aircraft, as well as jamming

systems and cyber assets.

The crisis is helping Breedlove make the case that no further cuts to U.S. forces in Europe should be made. In fact, he said, the military presence in Europe should be rethought altogether in light of what has unfolded in recent weeks.

A Pentagon review of infrastructure due this summer will recommend a number of reductions across Europe, Foreign Policy reported. Defense officials have declined to say how the events of recent weeks may affect that review's findings.

Breedlove has acknowledged that there is excess infrastructure for U.S. basing, but is adamant that the U.S. must endeavor to do a comprehensive examination of how the military is deployed throughout Europe.

"The question now is how is the force positioned and provisioned to prepare us for a new paradigm," he said.

a destroyer, the USS Truxtun, to take part in exercises with allies in the Black Sea.

"And more U.S. support is on the way," Secretary of State John Kerry said Monday without elaborating.

Moscow has said it has no intention of invading eastern Ukraine and has dismissed suggestions that its forces represent a threat to any NATO nation. On Tuesday, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia wanted a political settlement to the crisis.

NATO reacted in a similar way to Russia's incursion into Georgia in 2008. The alliance cut ties with Russia and declared there could be no business as usual with Moscow. That freeze lasted for more than a year but was quietly abandoned as cooperation with Moscow intensified in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Diplomats attending the talks in Brussels said the current suspensions would likely affect joint counterterrorism exercises, naval anti-piracy patrols and co-

operation in coping with natural disasters.

They would not affect cooperation with Russia in the Afghan War, said a senior envoy who spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

NATO would continue using a key overland supply route through Russia for its forces in Afghanistan known as the Northern Distribution Network, which carried about 40 percent of all alliance supplies to Afghanistan in 2013. The rail route, leading from northern Afghanistan to Poland and the Baltic nations, is considered crucial because it is safer than the ambush-prone alternative route through Pakistan.

The diplomat said cooperation in equipping and training the Afghan air force in the use of Russian helicopters also would continue, as would joint efforts to fight the Afghan drugs trade.

"These are issues that are vital to both sides, so it's natural to continue working together," the official said.

In Washington, a Defense Department official said there had been no problems with Russia when it came to moving freight through the northern route since the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis.

"Everything is flowing well," said the official, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media on this topic.

But he noted that even if the Russians did cut off the supply route, "it wouldn't stop our operations in Afghanistan, but it would be more expensive ... and more challenging" to ship via other routes.

Unlike for NATO as a whole, only about a quarter of all supplies for U.S. forces in Afghanistan flow through the northern route, according to the Pentagon.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jon Harper in Washington contributed to this report. lekic.slobodan@stripes.com

US plans to send more Marines to Romania

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States is sending 175 more Marines to Romania to extend the U.S. military's ability to respond to crises around the region, the Pentagon announced Wednesday.

Nearly 300 Marines are already present on a rotational basis at the Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base as part of the Black Sea rotational force.

The newly arriving troops, set to depart in coming days from Camp Lejeune, N.C., will be part of the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force headquartered in Moron, Spain.

The Marine unit — which will increase in size from 500 to 675 troops — is tasked by U.S. Africa Command, but could be used elsewhere in the region if needed, Pentagon spokesman Col. Steve Warren told reporters Wednesday.

The move is unrelated to the recent confrontation between Ukraine and Russia over the Crimean Peninsula, he said.

"We've been planning on sending these 175 to Romania for the last several months," Warren said.

"The reason is positioning forces in different locations allows greater flexibility. It's strictly an operational decision."

The United States has sought authorization to add up to 600 troops to the approximately 1,000 now stationed at what the U.S. military calls the MK Air Base in Romania.

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NATION



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

President Barack Obama, with Vice President Joe Biden, speaks Tuesday at the White House.

Health care sign-ups surge

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama boasted Tuesday that 7.1 million people have signed up for the health care law, an unexpected comeback after a disastrous rollout sent his poll numbers plummeting and stirred fears among Democrats facing re-election this fall.

A late wave of enrollments pushed sign-ups higher than critics and even the White House had believed possible. Still, the administration hasn't determined how many of those people have closed the deal by paying their first month's premiums. Also unclear is how many were previously uninsured — the real test of Obama's health care overhaul. The law also expanded coverage for low-income people through Medicaid, but only about half of the states have agreed to implement that option.

The administration also hasn't yet released an updated demo-

graphic breakdown of enrollees, such as the number of younger people whose participation is critical to the law's success.

The late enrollment surge may do little to change the political dynamics heading into the midterm elections, particularly for Democrats running in conservative states where the health law and the president himself remain deeply unpopular. Even Obama's advisers acknowledge that the public's views on the law are unlikely to shift significantly between now and November.

Still, with millions of people now receiving health benefits under the law, Democrats see an opportunity to undercut Republicans still pushing to repeal "Obamacare." GOP lawmakers, wary of overplaying their political hand, are indeed grappling with whether to press forward with repeal or narrow their focus on replacing the law with different

health measures.

In a preview of his party's midterm messaging, Obama declared that while the health law isn't perfect, "the Affordable Care Act is here to stay."

"Why are folks working so hard for people to not have health insurance? Why are they so mad about the idea of people having health insurance?" he asked a group of administration officials and supportive members of Congress in the White House Rose Garden.

Underscoring his point, Obama quoted from letters he said he had received from people helped by the law. Republicans responded in a new round of their own quotes from people complaining about rapidly rising rates.

"The band may be playing in the White House, but hearts aren't light for Americans struggling to afford Obamacare's higher costs," said a release from the Senate Republican Communications Center.

House GOP plan seeks health cuts to balance budget

By ANDREW TAYLOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are pressing ahead with a slashing plan to try to balance the budget within 10 years, relying on big decreases in health care programs for the middle class and the poor, as well as tax increases and Medicare cuts engineered by President Barack Obama.

The GOP fiscal plan by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wis., promises \$5.1 trillion in spending cuts — and unorthodox accounting incorporating the pro-growth effects of deficit cuts — to formulate a budget plan that brings the government's chronically unbalanced books into the black by 2024.

Ryan promises to balance the government's books with cuts to programs such as food stamps and government-paid health care for the poor and working class. It's a nonstarter with Obama but polishes the GOP's supply-side brand heading into midterm elections likely to be determined by the core voters of either party.

The measure should ease through the House budget panel on Wednesday but could face resistance during floor debate next week since it embraces higher spending for agency budgets in 2015, as negotiated between Ryan and Senate Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray, D-Wash., in December. Sixty-two House Republicans opposed the Ryan-Murray pact, and many of them need to come around if its successor is going to pass next week.

The legislation promises to

serve more as a political and policy statement by House Republicans than a realistic attempt to engage Obama and Democrats, who control the Senate, in any serious effort to further cut the deficit. Election-year politics are in play, as are entrenched differences over spending and taxes. Senate Democrats already have announced they will not advance a budget this year, but Ryan pitched his budget as a party-defining document outlining where Republicans would take the nation if they return to power.

"It is not just enough for us to be an opposition party," Ryan said. "We need to be a proposition party. We need to be the alternative party. And we need to show the country the right way forward to get this economy growing, to get our budget, our fiscal house in order."

At issue is the arcane congressional budget process, which employs a nonbinding measure known as a budget resolution to set forth goals for future taxes, spending and deficits. Pull-up legislation is usually limited to one-year appropriations bills rather than more difficult measures to deal with the government's long-term fiscal challenges, which are fueled by spiraling health care costs and the retirement of the baby boom generation.

While repeating the benefits of "Obamacare," Ryan would preserve its tax increases and cuts to providers, including cuts to private insurers under the Medicare Advantage program. Republicans have attacked Democrats for the Medicare cuts used to finance the new health care law.

US Secret Service chief seeks to reassure senators after latest misconduct

By ALICIA A. CALDWELL
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The latest embarrassing episode involving a drunken U.S. Secret Service agent overseas for a presidential trip was an isolated incident, Secret Service Director Julia Pierson said Tuesday.

Pierson and Homeland Security Secretary

Jeh Johnson met with senators from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to talk about the incident involving an agent found drunk in a hotel in the Netherlands last month.

Johnson spent about 15 minutes with the lawmakers while Pierson answered questions in the closed-door meeting for about an hour. Homeland Security said Johnson

went to the meeting to show his support for Pierson.

In her written statement, Pierson told lawmakers she has "made clear to the entire workforce that I will not tolerate unprofessional behavior or misconduct at any level — both on and off duty."

"I remain committed to swiftly and vigorously addressing any instances of mis-

conduct that are brought to my attention and have instructed my senior staff to do the same," Pierson said.

"In addition to instituting and clearly communicating a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to misconduct, I recognize the need to put equal weight on continuously improving our human capital policies and practices."



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NATION

Receding floodwaters aid mudslide search

By MANUEL VALDES
AND LISA BAUMANN
The Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Wash. — Floodwaters are receding at the site of a massive mudslide that crushed a rural Washington state community, allowing crews to expand their search and yielding more human remains in areas that previously couldn't be reached. The views presented Tuesday on a media tour were chilling: shredded homes and twisted cars.

More than 10 days after a large section of a rain-soaked hill crashed down on a neighborhood in the small community of Oso, teams with cadaver dogs are still sifting through debris and soil to determine exactly how many people died in the March 22 mudslide.

The mudslide had dammed up the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River, causing water to pool. Heavy rain last week added to the flooding.

On Tuesday, the weather was dry and sunny again. With the rain stopped, at least for a few days, the floodwaters are receding, which is allowing more crews to switch from water pumping to searching.

Here are some facts and observations in one of the worst natural disasters to hit Washington state in this century:

The dead

Officials have so far confirmed the deaths of 28 people. They range in age from 4-month-old So-niah Heustis to Lewis F. Vandenberg, 71. A total of 20 people are

missing. They range in age from Brooke Sillers, 2, to Bonnie J. Gulkison, 91.

The mudslide site

From a vantage point about a mile from the collapsed hillside, the magnitude of the slide is chilling, even if only a part of it can be seen. Where there was a state highway, there's now a bed of mud and debris as much as 80 feet deep in some spots.

"The mountain didn't slide like an avalanche that starts at the top and slides down," said Lt. Richard Burke, a firefighter and incident spokesman. "It actually blew out at the bottom. And all of that energy, because of the weight on top of it, blew across the river and brought all that water and material in it."

The valley then channeled

the slide like a bowl.

"Like a big soup bowl, it kind of sloshed up the bank and came back down," Burke said.

Nothing has yet been removed from the field. The debris is contaminated with remains of septic tanks and other "contaminants" found in cars and garages. Crews have begun piling up trees and house items in different sections, Burke added.

Search effort division supervisor Steve Harris said, "Cars and propane tanks and all the things people have around their homes is in the debris mix."

Search for remains

Crews are being careful in their search for human remains. Harris said boots with sonar are among the pieces of equipment put to use.

"We've been able to channel the water," Burke said. "We got less folks controlling the water and more folks with their hands on the ground. And that's what we need."

Financial costs

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee says the mudslide caused about \$10 million in damage to homes destroyed in the slide area and their contents. He estimates further costs of \$32.1 million for search and recovery efforts, and to remove all the debris. But he says the costs could go higher.

How long to search?

Harris said, "From what I've seen, it's going to take a long time."



STEVE BOWNSTEDT, QUINCY (ILL.) HERALD WHIRL/AP

A tow truck, firetruck and emergency response personnel work on the scene of an overturned school bus near the rural northeast town of Ewing, Mo., on Tuesday.

23 are hurt in Mo. school bus accident

The Associated Press

EWING, Mo. — Nearly two dozen students were injured after their school bus overturned along a rural road northeast Missouri.

The Missouri Highway Patrol said the bus rolled into a ditch

along a two-lane road Tuesday afternoon near Ewing, which is about 125 miles northwest of St. Louis. No other vehicles were involved.

The patrol said 18 students suffered minor injuries and five were more seriously hurt.

Lewis County Sheriff David Parrish said the driver and most of the students were treated at hospitals and released Tuesday. He said "a few" students remain hospitalized but that none of their injuries appears to be life-threatening.

Scandal-weary voters give DC mayor the boot

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reeling from allegations by federal prosecutors that he knew about the dirty tricks that helped him get elected four years ago, District of Columbia Mayor Vincent Gray tried to rally his base. But his core supporters weren't nearly enough, as a scandal-weary electorate rallied behind a much-younger challenger who promised honest and ethical leadership.

D.C. Councilmember Muriel

Bowser defeated Gray in Tuesday's Democratic mayoral primary, leaving Gray to serve nine months as a lame duck with potential criminal charges hanging over his head.

The defining moment of the election occurred three weeks earlier in a courtroom. Federal prosecutors say Gray knew about an illegal \$668,000 slush fund that helped him defeat incumbent Adrian Fenty in 2010. Five people involved with his previous campaign have pleaded guilty to

felonies, and the new allegations surfaced as part of a plea deal for the businessman who provided the illegal funds.

The Democratic primary winner has gone on to win every mayoral election in the district, where 75 percent of registered voters are Democrats. But Bowser will face a credible challenger this November: independent D.C. Councilmember David Catania, 46, a former Republican who has championed progressive causes since leaving the party in 2004.

\$425 million Powerball winner wants privacy

By CHANNING JOSEPH
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The winner of one of the largest Powerball jackpots in history has finally come forward — but he still hasn't quite revealed his identity.

B. Raymond Buxton, a Northern California man, waited more than a month to accept his prize on Tuesday at the California Lottery headquarters in Sacramento.

In a photo taken after he claimed the money on Tuesday, Buxton was covering his face with an oversized check for \$425 million. Perhaps the only clue to his identity was his unusual shirt, which featured a picture of the Star Wars character Yoda and read, "Luck of the Jedi I have."

"He really wants to live a private life as best he can," Buxton's publicist Sam Singer told The Associated Press. "He was a solidly middle-class American, and today he is a solidly wealthy one."

Buxton is hoping to remain out of the limelight and doesn't want to speak directly to the media, Singer said. He also won't reveal his age, address or what he did for a living until his very recent retirement.

One reason that Buxton wanted to come forward on April 1 — April Fool's Day — is simply that he has a healthy sense of humor, Singer said. "He still can't believe it's not a prank on him. But the reality is Ray Buxton is the winner."

Another reason is that Buxton has been working since February with an attorney and financial adviser to establish new bank accounts, set up a charity and sort out tax issues.

Buxton bought the sole winning ticket for the Feb. 19 drawing at the Dixon Landing Chevron station in the San Francisco Bay Area city of Milpitas, about 10 miles north of San Jose.



CALIFORNIA LOTTERY/AP

Powerball winner B. Raymond Buxton holds a check for \$425 million on Tuesday in Sacramento, Calif.

STARS AND STRIPES

OPINION

Obama must face terrorism realities

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By TRUDY RUBIN
 Philadelphia Inquirer

Dear President Obama: Last week, you were superbusy in Europe, warning Vladimir Putin not to invade eastern Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Moscow's takeover of Crimea is a done deal, and there's even more worrying stuff going on elsewhere. Your CIA chief, John Brennan, just told a House panel that al-Qaida central is now using Syrian territory to train Western jihadis to attack Europe and America.

In Afghanistan (remember Afghanistan?), Taliban bombers are threatening this week's elections. They are getting help from the intelligence services of our supposed ally, Pakistan, even as we prepare to exit the country. Equally worrying, the Pakistani Taliban are wreaking havoc inside nuclear-armed Pakistan, whose government has no apparent strategy to counter them — except to beg for peace.

There's a link between all these headaches, and you sometimes seem to get it, but your foreign policy doesn't reflect that understanding. Isn't it time your team started connecting the dots?

We know you hoped the world had entered a new era in the 21st century in which nations could solve messy problems by diplomacy, not force. Putin put an end to such illusions. As they say in the military, "It is what it is," and your foreign policy has to adjust.

You were correct to say last week in Belgium that Russia isn't our top geopolitical threat (listen up, Mitt Romney). You are also right that Russia is only a "regional power" that mainly threatens its immediate neighbors (though your public insults to Putin could make him more aggressive).

You also said you were "much more concerned when it comes to our security with the prospect of a nuclear weapon going off in Manhattan." In other words, the biggest threat to the United States is the possibility that jihadis could access nuclear weapons. Yet that threat is expanding on your watch.

Over the last two years, a new jihadi safe haven has emerged in large areas of eastern Syria stretching through western Iraq. Thousands of foreign jihadis have poured into the area, including about 1,200 American and European Muslims.

Yet for the last two years, as moderate Syrian rebel groups lost ground to better-armed jihadis, you refused to confront reality in Syria. You clung to a diplomatic



President Barack Obama looks back as he boards Air Force One at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Saturday on his way back to Washington after a weeklong trip abroad.

PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAS/AP

strategy that depended on Putin to persuade his ally, Syrian President Bashar Assad, to stand down. Your officials still insist that only diplomacy can end the conflict, but such diplomacy still depends on Russia. As Putin's move on Crimea should have made obvious, the Russian isn't moved by appeals to international law.

The only thing that might grab Putin's attention and compel him to bargain would be a shift in the playing field — if it looked as if Assad's fortunes were declining. Achieving that would require you to greenlight delivery of portable anti-aircraft systems that vetted Syrian rebel groups could use to shoot down Assad's planes and helicopters — which rain missiles and "barrel bombs" on civilians.

Yet your team is still haggling over whether to approve delivery of even a handful of such weapons. Yes, there is a risk that some might go astray, but that can be addressed by designing careful controls, which vetted rebel groups are ready to agree to.

If you remain paralyzed, Assad looks certain to retain power in the coastal part of the country and a belt that includes the major cities. The rest of Syria will remain a failed state, giving jihadis a safe haven from which to destabilize Iraq, Jordan and Leb-

anon, and to threaten Israel — along with the West. Think of it as a new Afghanistan on the Mediterranean that shares a border with Turkey, a NATO nation.

Meantime, Afghanistan trembles under Taliban attack as U.S. forces exit. Next door, Pakistan's weak government and uncertain military fail to halt the growth of jihadi terrorism in their nuclear-armed country. One could imagine some of those Pakistani weapons someday finding their way to the new Syrian jihadistan.

So if you really believe nuclear terrorism is America's number one security challenge, Mr. President, you can no longer dither over Syria.

You've sensibly said the United States won't use force against the Russians, even if Putin invades eastern Ukraine. In this case, we must play a long game, using economic and energy tools to constrain the Russian leader.

But on Syria, it's long past time to take a lesson from Putin and back diplomacy with power. To smash the new terrorist stronghold in Syria we take more than sending meals-ready-to-eat to moderate rebels. Tough talk is no substitute for deeds.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

US should lift ban on phone-friendly skies

By ADAM MINTER
 Bloomberg News

What would the friendly skies look like if you could use your cellphone on flights in U.S. airspace? On Wednesday, comments closed on a proposed Department of Transportation rule that would continue the long-standing U.S. ban on in-flight use of cellphones, and the response was overwhelming and predictable: "Increased conflict and misery" predicted one of the 1,760 respondents. "Violence on the aircraft," surmised another. Members of Congress seem to agree: In February, a House Committee voted to require the DOT to issue a ban, never mind the public comments.

The sentiment is understandable, emotional and entirely irrational. Currently, more than 4,000 planes globally have been outfitted with Wi-Fi and cellular service, and the experiences of airlines and civil aviation authorities suggest that phones are

no more detrimental to a safe in-flight experience than free wine and beer on international flights.

Take, for example, Emirates, the Dubai-based international carrier that — according to its comments filed with the DOT — has offered "in-flight voice connectivity" since 2008. During that period, passengers have made more than 1 million calls on their own phones with "only two negative complaints registered to date." Strikingly, of the users of the service, the third most frequent, according to Emirates, are Americans.

This is not just self-serving rationalization of an airline hoping to earn the right to earn extra fees from passengers stuck on long-haul flights. The results are supported by data obtained during a 2012 Federal Aviation Administration study of 11 civil aviation authorities around the world that allow in-flight calling. The conclusions, far from suggesting an in-flight battlefield, reveal a far more benign picture:

In all likelihood, the cost of in-flight calls is likely to be the most effective curb on the

chaotic cabin environment that critics fear. To make calls, passengers will be routed through on-board call stations that don't interfere with plane communications and which — not coincidentally — allow airlines to charge handsomely for the privilege of calling in-flight to arrange your airport pickup. It's the very reason why, for example, the in-seat satellite phones that appeared on U.S. airplanes in the early 1990s never became a non-flight problem: Rates could exceed \$3 per minute.

Due to the U.S. ban, the more than 20 airlines that allow in-flight voice calls must currently shut down those services when they enter U.S. airspace. So far, at least, there's absolutely no evidence that such flights are any more safe or placid over Virginia than they are over France. In fact, they're probably just more inconvenient and less profitable.

Adam Minter is a regular contributor to Bloomberg View based in Shanghai and the author of "Junkyard Planet," a book on the global recycling industry.

OPINION

Setting realistic expectations for Afghan elections

BY NOAH COBURN
AND RONALD E. NEUMANN

U.S. strategic interests will be enormously affected by the outcome of Afghanistan's presidential elections. With the vote for Hamid Karzai's replacement looming, as well as elections for provincial councils, it is time to set realistic expectations and make sure our actions relate to our interests. Informed, patient diplomacy by the United States would go far in ensuring that the substantial gains made in Afghanistan over the past decade, at great cost, are not lost due to haste.

Regardless of the efforts of the international community or the improving electoral bodies in Afghanistan, the April 5 elections will be corrupt, filled with fraud and marred by violence. Election officials and monitors have been targeted. Paradoxically, that reflects the success of the previous four elections in Afghanistan. Local power brokers, commanders and the Taliban are so invested in the electoral system and the resources that it generates that they are using both legitimate and illegitimate approaches to win or disrupt the voting.

At this point, the United States needs to understand that what is most important in these upcoming elections is Afghanistan's long-term stability. That is best achieved through a peaceful transfer of power to a new president with authority recognized broadly by Afghans. Democracy is, of course, important, and beyond a point its neglect would undermine stability, but the priority should not be on holding perfect elections.

Afghans are likely to tolerate many types of procedural irregularities and small-scale fraud. Widespread violence and a breakdown of the tenuous political balance are likely only if these manipulations are seen as overtly propelling into office a candidate with little national support. Instead, Afghans are primarily preparing for both a national and, through provincial elections, local long-term renegotiation of political power. This is the challenge that the international community needs to focus on.

The power transfer started by these elections is likely to take months. A run-off is likely. Time will be needed to resolve disputed vote counts. Karzai needs an honor-



MASSOUD HOSSAINI/AP

An Afghan policeman stands guard as supporters of Afghan presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani listen to his speech during a campaign rally in Kabul on Tuesday.

able exit, but he must exit. New ministers and governors will be appointed. Power brokers are working to deliver votes to reaffirm their local authority. Even the most democratic-looking youth groups have been largely co-opted by the political elite into these machinations to trade votes for influence with several potential bidders.

The United States and other international actors need to shape their initial response carefully in the days after the voting. For example, turnout is not likely

to say much about the long-term effects of these elections. In an honor-based system, accusations of fraud are an attack on one's prestige as much as on his politics, which will lead to more such accusations. These reports are not as important as whether leaders decide to use these complaints as political tools in an attempt to overturn the elections.

How the international community responds to such accusations is critical. The initial U.S. response should be more

focused on maintaining calm than on assessing how free the elections were; it should leave space for Afghan reactions to dominate. All of the political steps that are bound to follow Saturday's voting must be Afghan-driven, but that does not contradict the need for a strong U.S. diplomatic role in maintaining the peace.

Afghan voters and leaders still care deeply about whether their political system appears democratic to outside observers, and they care about electing a leader the international community will do business with. Many will seek to know whom the United States "really supports." While the Obama administration should remain neutral, we should not expect our show of neutrality to be believed. It would also have an effect if U.S. officials were to speak strongly against a candidate, as many Afghans would not vote for someone whose election would mean the end of U.S. or international aid. Washington would be wise to prepare for a role as a quiet referee and potential mediator in the negotiations over fraud that is likely to emerge.

This will be even more challenging given the recent attacks on the Serena Hotel, where many international monitors were staying, and the Kabul election headquarters. Monitors are essential to reassure both the international community and Afghans that the voting has been the decisive element in the selection of the new president.

It will take generations for democracy to take root in Afghanistan. But the fact that these elections are being held reflects the way that democratic practices have begun to become a part of the Afghan political system. The United States should continue to declare its support for the most transparent and clear elections possible, but the inevitable failure to achieve a perfectly free and fair vote should not trump the primary U.S. goal of a peaceful transfer of power. Without such a peaceful transition, there is little hope for the future of Afghan democracy anyway.

Noah Coburn is a political anthropologist at Bennington College and the author of "Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan." Ronald E. Neumann is president of the American Academy of Diplomacy and was U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

Virtual reality meets cold, hard cash — \$2 billion of it

BY ALEXANDRA PETRI
The Washington Post

Congratulations, Oculus! The virtual reality company managed to get itself purchased by Facebook before producing the first consumer version of its product.

"I'm impressed; usually forms of media have to come into existence first before they are taken over and ruined by ad companies. This may be a new record," one person commented online about the deal.

I am not an expert in virtual reality. Actual reality is hard enough to navigate, and I have barely mastered the interface, and I am 26 years old. I can't get the dang thing to save. I still walk into things. I haven't gotten frowny to work, even though that's clearly a built-in command. I keep repeating elaborate series of actions that never obtain any result. I am forever putting down important items and forgetting them. I can't figure out how to get extra lives. I spend most of my time wandering around making unnecessary hand gestures and murmuring to myself like a dim wack who has been surprised by a new piece of furniture.

I am not an expert in virtual reality. Actual reality is hard enough to navigate. I have barely mastered the interface, and I am 26 years old.

I haven't even managed to steal any automobiles, and if I have any superpowers, I have yet to unlock them. No one ever tells me what my objectives are; to an uninformed observer, it would appear that my only consistent one is to get coffee every day, no matter what else is going on, and that doesn't seem right. Other players keep zooming past me, flying airplanes and conducting heists and making millions of dollars.

But one person who seems to have gotten actual reality to work is Palmer Luckey, of Oculus VR. Facebook announced last week that it would buy Oculus for \$2 billion. Luckey wrote a note on Reddit trying to explain why this was a good idea (I can think of at least 2 billion reasons!).

Reddit is up in arms. Judging by many of the comments, the people who lavishly crowd-funded the virtual reality project through Kickstarter, to the tune of \$2 mil-

lion in 2012, are up in arms, too.

This says less about Oculus and more about Kickstarter. Kickstarting, in general, consists of people giving you hope and you giving them money. But it's all muddled by the terminology — project, backer. As Patrick Klepek wrote on GiantBomb.com, "Backer. That's a problematic term. It sounds too much like investor. It implies more control than what Kickstarter actually offers."

Sometimes this works. You get your magical fly swatter from the future without a hitch, and everyone goes home happy. Sometimes, though, it doesn't. I'm still waiting for that novel I Kickstarted months and months ago. (No pressure.)

But this is the trouble with Kickstarter — you get the spurious sense of being an investor without any of the perks. You are, as Klepek noted, emotionally invested. You

paid money. You had feelings. That seems like an investment where you're paying for nothing.

"Backing a project is more than just giving someone money," Kickstarter's website notes. "It's supporting their dream to create something that they want to see exist in the world. ... Some projects take longer than anticipated, but creators who are transparent about issues and delays usually find their backers to be understanding."

But it's all in the fine print. You get perks but no say. You give people your money so that they will, you hope, make you things. But there is no guarantee that they will make the things in question and, anyway, you have no equity.

To a degree, it's the same problem Facebook has — the one that makes us so mistrustful of it. It's free because you're not the consumer, you're the product. It feels like one experience — it's designed to give you that experience — but it's actually another.

When you give money to make a Kickstarter project happen, you're not the investor, you're the consumer. Talk about virtual reality.

Alexandra Petri writes the ComPost blog at washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost.

NATION

Court tosses limits on campaign contributions

By MARK SHERMAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court struck down limits Wednesday in U.S. law on the overall campaign contributions the biggest individual donors may make to candidates, political parties and political action committees.

The justices said in a 5-4 vote that Americans have a right to give the legal maximum to candidates for Congress and president, as well as to parties and PACs, without worrying that they will violate the law when they bump up against a limit on all contributions, set at \$123,200 for 2013 and 2014. That includes a separate \$48,600 cap on contributions to candidates.

Their decision does not undermine limits on individual contributions to candidates for president or Congress, now \$2,600 an election.

Chief Justice John Roberts announced the decision, which split the court's liberal and conservative justices. Roberts said the aggregate limits do not act to prevent

corruption, the rationale the court has upheld as justifying limits.

The overall limits "intrude without justification on a citizen's ability to exercise 'the most fundamental First Amendment activities,'" Roberts said, referring to the U.S. Constitution and quoting from the court's seminal 1976 campaign finance ruling in *Buckley v. Valeo*.

Justice Stephen Breyer, writing for the liberal dissenters, took the unusual step of reading a summary of his opinion from the bench.

Congress enacted the limits in the wake of 1970s abuses to discourage big contributors from trying to buy votes with their donations and to restore public confidence in the campaign finance system.

In a series of rulings in recent years, the Roberts court has struck down provisions of federal law aimed at limiting the influence of big donors as unconstitutional curbs on free speech rights.

Most notably, in 2010, the court divided 5 to 4 in the Citizens Unit-

ed case to free corporations and labor unions to spend as much as they wish on campaign advocacy, as long as it is independent of candidates and their campaigns. That decision did not affect contribution limits to individual candidates, political parties and political action committees.

Republican activist Shaun McCutcheon, the national Republican Party and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell challenged the overall limits on what contributors may give in a two-year federal election cycle.

Relaxed campaign finance rules have reduced the influence of political parties, they argued.

McCutcheon gave the symbolically significant \$1,776 to 15 candidates for Congress and wanted to give the same amount to 12 others. Doing so would have put him in violation of the cap.

The court did not heed warnings from Solicitor General Donald Verrilli Jr. that donors would be able to funnel large amounts of money to a favored candidate.



NICK UY/AP

A bronze statue of a young Korean girl in Central Park in Glendale, Calif., honors so-called "comfort women" from World War II.

Asian rivals in US drive local politics

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — All politics is local, the saying goes. But in some American cities, local politics has gone international, with city governments finding themselves caught in historical disputes between two close U.S. allies: Japan and South Korea.

Korean-Americans have won approval for local memorials for the victims of Japanese sexual slavery during World War II, over the objections of Japan. They have also pressed states to change school textbooks to address geographical differences with Japan.

Those campaigns have gathered steam as relations between South Korea and Japan have soured despite Washington's effort to quell tensions between its two principal allies in Asia. They reflect the growing political power of Korean-Americans in states where they have a sizable presence. Many are first- and second-generation immigrants whose ties to Korea are fresh and for whom nationalist causes still resonate.

Japanese-Americans, many of whom have more distant ties to their ancestral homeland, tend to be a less cohesive political force. Japan itself, rather than Americans of Japanese descent, has stepped into these local disputes, raising as they directly with governments at the city and state

level. Japan says it has already apologized for the estimated 200,000 "comfort women" recruited for sex by Japan's imperial army. With some prodding from Washington, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last month quashed speculation he planned to review the apology.

But Japan views the memorials and demands for textbook changes as unwarranted attempts to drag its differences with South Korea into the domestic affairs of the U.S., which both countries prize as their chief diplomatic and security partner.

"We think it is not appropriate for local politics to be affected by the differences of opinion of its residents' home countries," Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement after being asked about it by The Associated Press.

Local governments in the U.S. have approved at least four comfort women memorials since 2010. The highest-profile one is a bronze statue in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale.

Phyllis Kim, spokeswoman for the Korean-American Forum of California, which pushed for that memorial, said it's an issue of universal human rights that transcends borders.

She said Japan has to take "full responsibility for its crimes of the past like the Germans did for the Holocaust."

Runner is safe after 2 days in mountain snow

By TERRY COLLINS
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A Northern California man who survived two days in freezing temperatures in a snowy mountainous region said what he wanted most after the end of his ordeal was a hamburger.

"I'm grateful. Thank you very much," Robert Root said Tuesday as he was loaded into an awaiting ambulance. He was taken to Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital in nearby Auburn, Calif., where he was treated and released by Tuesday evening, said Robin Montgomery, a hospital spokeswoman.

Root said he wanted an In-N-Out hamburger upon his release, said Placer County Sheriff's spokeswoman Dena Erwin.

Root, 55, of Modesto, was wearing only a light jacket, shorts and running shoes when rescuers discovered him walking on a bridge on the Western States trail Tuesday afternoon, Erwin said.

Covered in metallic blankets and other warm materials, a disheveled and red-faced Root smiled at TV reporters after authorities slowly brought him down in an all-terrain vehicle from the snowy trail in the Sierra Nevada, about 200 miles east of San Francisco.

"It's just amazing. He was found alive, alert and talking," Erwin said. "Just amazing."

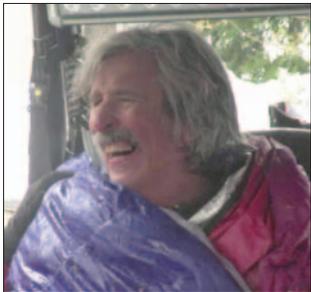
The news of Root's discovery spread quickly in Modesto, said Heidi Ryan, who belongs to the same running club as Root.

"I feel like I'm still a little numb, but that's just me," Ryan said. "I'm still processing it."

Root's extensive search began Monday morning before he became separated from fellow members of the Shadow-Chase Running Club along the trail near Foresthill.

The runners who were out Sunday were split into groups. When his group briefly stopped, Root decided to run ahead and join the faster group, but he took a wrong turn on the trail, Erwin said.

An extensive search began on the rugged terrain, but it was suspended due to darkness and falling tem-



KTXL Fox 40 Sacramento

Trail runner Robert Root smiles after being rescued Tuesday after being lost in snowy conditions for two days near Foresthill, Calif.

peratures. Root ended up on a cliff overlooking the American River, where he scooted into some shrubbery for warmth and slept off and on throughout Sunday night, Erwin said.

More than 60 searchers resumed Monday using motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, search dogs and two helicopters. Five members of the Tahoe Nordic Search Team spent the night looking for Root after snow began to fall earlier in the morning.

On Monday, Root spent the morning trying to find his way out, but he ended up back at the same spot, spending a second night in the same area, Erwin said.

Root said he survived on energy supplements and a small amount of water he carried with him, and when he couldn't stop shaking, he compressed and released his muscles over and over to stay warm, she added.

Erwin said crews went looking for Root again Tuesday. Root decided to head "up and west," and when he got to the El Dorado Bridge, he saw a couple of people wearing bright-colored uniforms he thought were searchers and walked up to them.

"They said, 'Are you Bob Root?'" Erwin said. "He said, 'Yes, I am.'"

Chrysler issues SUV recall

The Associated Press

DETROIT — Chrysler is recalling nearly 870,000 SUVs because corrosion may make the vehicles' brakes harder to use.

Jeep Grand Cherokee and Dodge Durango SUVs from the 2011 through 2014 model years are involved.

Chrysler says crimp joints in the brake boosters can corrode if they're exposed to water. If the water freezes, the boosters won't brake as they usually do.

Chrysler began investigating

after some customers said their brakes felt too firm when pressed down. The company knows of one accident, but no injuries, due to the defect.

Dealers will install a shield to protect the boosters for free and replace boosters that aren't working properly.

Chrysler has since changed the design to make the boosters more corrosion resistant.

Chrysler will notify owners of the recall, which involves 867,995 vehicles.

WORLD

Police: Jet mystery may never be solved

BY EILEEN NG
AND NICK PERRY
The Associated Press

KUALALUMPUR, Malaysia—A police investigation may never determine the reason why the Malaysia Airlines jetliner disappeared, and search planes scouring the Indian Ocean for any sign of its wreckage aren't certain to find anything either, officials said Wednesday.

The assessment by Malaysian and Australian officials underscored the lack of knowledge authorities have about what happened on Flight 370. It also points to a scenario that becomes more likely with every passing day — that the fate of the Boeing 777 and the 239 people onboard

“Investigations may go on and on and on. We have to clear every little thing. At the end of the investigations, we may not even know the real cause.”

Khalid Abu Bakar
Malaysian inspector general

might remain a mystery forever.

The plane disappeared March 8 on a flight to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur after its transponders, which make the plane visible to commercial radar, were shut off.

Police are investigating the pilots and crew for any evidence suggesting they may have hijacked or sabotaged the plane. The backgrounds of the passengers, two-thirds of whom were Chinese, have been checked by local and in-

ternational investigators and nothing suspicious has been found.

“Investigations may go on and on and on. We have to clear every little thing,” Inspector General Khalid Abu Bakar told reporters. “At the end of the investigations, we may not even know the real cause. We may not even know the reason for this incident.”

Police are also investigating the cargo and the food served on the plane to eliminate pos-

sible poisoning of passengers and crew, he said.

The current search area is a 85,000-square mile patch of sea roughly a 2½-hour flight from Perth, Australia.

Angus Houston, the head of a joint agency coordinating the multinational search effort out of Australia, said no time frame had been set for the search to end, but that a new approach would be needed if nothing showed up.

Bombs hit riot police at Cairo University; 1 dead

CAIRO—Three bombs exploded Wednesday outside Cairo University's main campus, hitting riot police deployed against near daily protests by Islamist students, killing a police general and wounding seven others, including several top police officers.

The bombings were the latest in a campaign of attacks targeting Egypt's police and military that began with the ouster last summer of Islamist President Mohamed Morsi. The attacks are taking place amid a fierce crackdown by security forces against pro-Morsi protesters and members of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood.

Bombings around Iraq kill 8 ahead of elections

BAGHDAD—A series of bombings in Iraq killed eight people Wednesday, including army recruits, as the country prepares for parliamentary elections later this month.

The deadliest attack took place in the town of Riyadh, about 180 miles northwest of the capital, Baghdad. There, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives while standing next to army recruits waiting in line at the gate of a military base to apply for jobs early in the morning, police Col. Fatah Rasheed said.

The explosion killed five recruits and wounded 14, Rasheed said. Separately, police said a bomb blast in a commercial street killed two people and wounded six in Madain, about 14 miles southeast of Baghdad.

In western Baghdad, a bomb exploded in a commercial street, killing one person and wounding five, police said.

Old bomb explodes in Bangkok shop, killing 7

BANGKOK—Workers at a scrap shop in Thailand's capital on Wednesday accidentally detonated a large bomb believed to have been dropped during World War II, killing at least seven people and injuring 19 others, police said.

Police bomb squad chief Kamthorn Aichachoren said construction workers found the bomb buried at a building site and sold it to the scrap shop in northern Bangkok. He said workers at the shop were using a gas-powered thermal cutter to take the bomb apart when it exploded.

N. Korea opens race to runner-tourists

TOKYO—For the first time ever, North Korea is opening up the streets of its capital to runner-tourists for the annual Pyongyang marathon.

Tourism companies say they are getting inundated by requests to sign up for the April 13 event, which will include amateur runners from around the world. The race includes a full marathon — with a handful of world-class, invitation-only athletes — a half marathon and a 10-kilometer run.

The opening of the race to recreational runners is in keeping with the North's ongoing, but sporadic, effort to earn cash revenue by boosting tourism.

From The Associated Press



MICHAEL PROBST/AP

German pilots strike cancels hundreds of flights

Lufthansa pilots gather for a rally as they went on a three-day strike in Frankfurt, Germany, on Wednesday. Lufthansa said it has canceled almost 900 domestic and intercontinental flights on the first day of the strike by the pilots union over a wage dispute. Airline spokeswoman Barbara Schaedler said it expects to cancel about 3,800 flights altogether, affecting more than 425,000 passengers.

Experts: Chile's magnitude-8.2 earthquake was not 'the big one'

BY LUIS ANDRES HENAO
The Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile—Authorities in northern Chile discovered surprisingly light damage and just six reported deaths Wednesday from a magnitude-8.2 quake — a remarkably low toll for such a powerful shift in the Earth's crust.

President Michelle Bachelet flew to the region to review damage in daylight after declaring a state of emergency and sending a military plane with 100 anti-riot police to join 300 soldiers who were deployed to prevent looting and round up escaped prisoners.

Thousands of people evacuated from low-lying areas were returning home after a spending a long night outside due to the threat of a tsunami. The government's mandatory order

to leave the coast was spread through cellphone text messages and Twitter, and reinforced by blaring sirens in neighborhoods where people regularly practice earthquake drills.

Seawater flooded city streets and washed away some fishing boats in Iquique, but by early Wednesday no major tsunami damage was apparent.

Tuesday night's quake was not the big one seismologists expect eventually.

“Could be tomorrow, could be in 50 years; we do not know when it's going to occur,” said Mike Simons, a seismologist at the Geological Survey. “But the key point here is that this magnitude-8.2 is not the large earthquake that we were expecting for this area. We're actually still expecting potentially an even larger earthquake.”



CRISTIAN VIVEROS/AP

Fishing boats are washed ashore by a small tsunami in Iquique, Chile, after a magnitude-8.2 quake struck the coast Wednesday

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Tree trimmer survives chain saw cut to neck

PA PITTSBURGH — A tree trimmer was recovering a day after he was rushed to a Pittsburgh hospital with a chain saw blade still embedded in his neck following a work-related accident.

An X-ray released Tuesday shows the saw still in the neck of James Valentine, 21.

He was up at a tree in a harness when he was struck in the neck by the saw Monday afternoon in Ross Township. Another worker helped him down, and workers left the saw in place so Valentine wouldn't bleed more than he already was.

Valentine had emergency surgery to repair his injuries at Allegheny General Hospital, where doctors say the saw missed major arteries and, instead, cut into Valentine's muscle.

Blast rocks gas plant; 5 employees injured

WA PLYMOUTH — A large explosion rocked a natural gas processing plant on the Washington-Oregon border Monday, injuring five workers, causing about 400 people to evacuate from nearby farms and homes and emitting a mushroom cloud of black smoke that was visible for more than a mile.

The 8:20 a.m. blast at the Williams Northwest Pipeline facility near the Washington town of Plymouth, along the Columbia River, sparked a fire and punctured one of the facility's two giant storage tanks for liquefied natural gas.

Benton County Sheriff Steven Keane said a relatively small amount of gas leaked from the tank to the ground in a moat-like containment area. But it then evaporated, blowing away to the northeast, he said.

Man gets 25 years for shooting at White House

DC WASHINGTON — An Idaho man who pleaded guilty to firing an assault rifle at the White House in 2011, striking the executive mansion more than 100 feet from the target, sentenced Monday to 25 years in prison.

Prosecutors initially charged Oscar Ramiro Ortega-Hernandez with attempting to assassinate President Barack Obama but agreed to drop the charge as part of a plea deal last year. Ortega-Hernandez instead pleaded guilty to two charges including damaging the home.

The president and first lady Michelle Obama were not home at the time of the shooting, and no one was injured. Prosecutors said Ortega-Hernandez, 23, jeopardized the lives of others.

'Burrito byway' would highlight state's best

NM SANTA FE — The New Mexico Tourism Department is looking for the state's best breakfast burritos.

The department Monday opened nominations for limited spots on what it has dubbed the "New Mexico True Breakfast Burrito Byway."

Along with tourism officials, the breakfast burrito was devel-

THE CENSUS

63

The number of years that have passed since a tiny Renoir painting was stolen from the Baltimore Museum of Art. Pierre-Auguste Renoir's painting "On the Shore of the Seine," painted about 1879, is back on display as the centerpiece of a new exhibition, "The Renoir Returns." The painting, just 5½ by 9 inches, became the subject of a dramatic legal dispute after a Virginia woman claimed she bought it at a flea market for \$7. Others, including her brother, disputed the story. A judge ultimately awarded ownership back to the museum.



\$5,600

The amount a suburban Portland, Ore., wild cat sanctuary was fined for two serious violations, one of which likely contributed to an employee being mangled to death by a cougar. The Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Division found WildCat Haven violated its two-person safety procedure by allowing employees to work alone with the wild cats. Renee Radzwin-Chapman, 36, was killed at the sanctuary while working inside the enclosure, with two cougars roaming nearby unsecured and a third cougar locked in a smaller cage inside the enclosure. Investigators also found the latches on cages to be inadequately designed.



NATALIE KOLB, THE MUSKEGON (MICH.) CHRONICLE/AP

Saving Chocolate Chip

Toby Gabriel holds a 6-foot-long python named Chocolate Chip, which was rescued from a house fire in Muskegon, Mich. Firefighter Scott Hemmelsbach said he reluctantly agreed to enter the two-story, smoke-filled house Sunday night to retrieve the snake, which he described as "weighty." "I would do it for any creature," Hemmelsbach said. "I'm just glad it had a happy ending."

oped by a Santa Fe restaurant. It has also become a staple of Albuquerque's International Balloon Fiesta, where a hand-held breakfast is a necessity.

The "New Mexico True Breakfast Burrito Byway" will identify the best of the burritos across New Mexico, based on nominations made by the public over the next two weeks.

Building evacuated over shaky balcony

NY NEW YORK — About 500 people attending an event at a historic synagogue-turned-performance space in lower Manhattan had to be evacuated from the building after firefighters discovered cracks in a mezzanine balcony.

Officials said firefighters were responding to a smoke condition at 172 Norfolk St. on Monday when attendees alerted them that the

balcony was shaking. Firefighters inspected the balcony and found structural cracks.

The 1949 Gothic Revival synagogue is home to the Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts and is used as an art gallery and performance space.

Casino art project turns billboards to love notes

NV LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas Strip casino is turning its flashy LED signs into giant love notes to the masses.

The Cosmopolitan casino plans to start broadcasting the animated works of contemporary British artist Emin every hour for about three minutes, starting on Monday.

Passersby will see about a dozen giant indoor and outdoor marquees go black and an invisible hand writing phrases such as "I promise to love you" in glowing letters.

Sherriff: Alcohol a factor in midshipman's death

MD BERLIN — The Worcester County Sheriff's Office said alcohol was a factor in the skateboarding accident that claimed the life of a Naval Academy midshipman.

Lt. Ed Schreier said Hans Loewen, 20, of Hampstead, N.C., was holding on to a Jeep while riding a skateboard on March 22 during a camping trip with other midshipmen at Assateague Island National Seashore. Schreier said the Jeep was traveling about 15 mph when the skateboard and tire touched, throwing Loewen from the board and the tire ran over his head. He died Saturday while in a coma.

Schreier said alcohol is a factor in the incident but investigators are gathering more details. He said the driver of the Jeep had been drinking alcohol, but

any decision on charges is up to prosecutors.

Search ends for man swept to sea

CA GUADALUPE — Rescuers have ended their search for a 43-year-old man swept to sea during a baptism ceremony on a Southern California beach.

The U.S. Coast Guard said the search was called off about midnight Sunday and there are no plans to resume it. A wave pulled three people into the ocean about 10 a.m. off Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve and only two managed to return to shore on their own.

Pastor Maurigro Cervantes, of Jesus Christ Light of the Sky Church, said his cousin, Benito Flores, was helping perform a baptism when he was swept away.

From wire reports

FACES

WWE star ready for his main-event moment

By JOHN TAYLOR
The Washington Post

For wrestling royalty, Roman Reigns traveled a crooked path to the bright lights of World Wrestling Entertainment. His father, Sika, and uncle, Afa, worked as the Wild Samoans, who won the WWE (known at the time as WWF) tag-team championship three times in the early 1980s and were inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2007. Other wrestling relatives include cousins Yokozuna, a former WWF champion, and the current tag-team champions, the Usos.

But rather than leap into the ring, Reigns (born Leati Joseph Anoa'i) first tried butting heads in football. He played defensive tackle at Georgia Tech, earning first-team all-ACC honors in 2006, before spending time in NFL training camps.

In 2010, Reigns signed a developmental contract with WWE. His surprise debut came two years later at Survivor Series, when he and teammates Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins interfered in a title match.

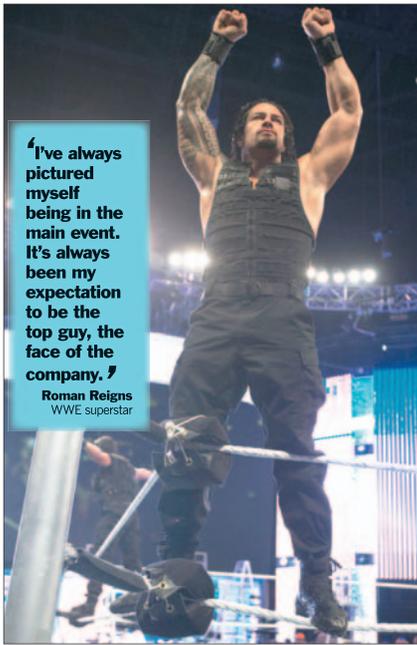
That trio, known as The Shield, is still wreaking havoc. Calling themselves the "house of justice," they have won over fans with a unique ring entrance and an intense style that combines high-flying artistry with the power moves of the 6-foot-3, 265-pound Reigns, who has slimmed down — and muscled up — from his football days.

WrestleMania 30 is April 6 in New Orleans, and The Shield will face Kane and the New Age Outlaws in a six-man tag match.

Reigns, 28, spoke with The Washington Post about the evolution of his career and character. This is an edited version of that conversation.

You came from a large and prominent wrestling family, but didn't dive right into the sport. Why did you wait?

My mom and dad wanted me to just go to school and do something new. Especially down here I grew up in the South [Florida], football is such a big thing. And last time we checked, pro wrestling didn't get you a scholarship to college.



I've always pictured myself being in the main event. It's always been my expectation to be the top guy, the face of the company.

—Roman Reigns
WWE superstar

Roman Reigns, a former college football star, has experienced a successful run early in his WWE career. Reigns will be part of a tag match at WrestleMania on Sunday. The show is April 8 on AFN-Xtra.

ERIC JOHNSON/The Washington Post

Once I got a bit older and we could see there could be a future in football, it was everyone's blessing to chase that dream. And it did me a lot of good. It put me through college, it gave me an education, it got me a little taste of pro ball and a lot of good memories. I don't regret any of it.

When you turned to wrestling, you didn't go with a Samoan name, character or outfit, as so many from your family have.

Was that your decision?

It was a process. Of course, immediately the thought was: "He's Samoan, so let's run with that." But then I think they saw my personality, being more of a cultured guy going to college, playing ball, things like that, just the kind of guy I am, you know, just be me — don't try and focus on a nationality or an ethnicity or anything like that. Be just myself.

The Shield has wrestled some

of the best matches in WWE of late. On "Raw" in Chicago, the crowd was chanting your name as well as "This is awesome," and I noticed you broke out in a huge smile during the heat of the match. Do you notice crowd reaction, and does it affect how you perform?

I try to live in the moment. When you're in a singles match, you're in there, and the guy's on top of you, and you're in a hold and you're being smothered. You're in the fight at all times. But when we're doing these team fights, you have a little time to take in the moment and just absorb the energy of the crowd.

You're experiencing team success, but you're having individual moments that stand out. You keep getting mentioned as a main eventer and future champion. Where do you see this going?

I've always pictured myself being in the main event. It's always been my expectation to be the top guy, the face of the company, the one with all of that responsibility. But that should be everybody's goal. I didn't get into this to just be in the middle of the pack. If you want to do that, go work in a different line of work. This isn't the place to camouflage yourself. I'm trying to be the most exotic animal on this safari.

In a way, WrestleMania 30 — WWE's equivalent of the Super Bowl — marks the end of your season. How does that affect your approach? And when that show is in the books, what's next?

It's Mania first. We want to get there the right way, and we want to just tear the house down. We wanna burn it down, put cracks in the wall, just demolish that place and have an awesome match.

As far as the next day? There's going to be some gaps. There are going to be a bunch of big names that are gonna compete [at WrestleMania] and then not be there on Monday. That's when guys like myself, just the rest of The Shield, Cesaro, the Usos ... there's a bunch of guys who want this and are willing to work every single day. If I'm a fan of the WWE, I would feel safe to know that your entertainment is in the right hands.



Sheen shows charitable side at dedication of USO center

HELENA ANDREWS
AND EMILY HELL
The Washington Post

This is Charlie Sheen like we've never seen him before.

First, the actor has a sunnier opinion these days of George W. Bush, whose administration he once accused of lying about the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. After meeting the former president Monday at the dedication of a new USO center outside the District of Columbia, he called Bush an "absolute gentleman."

"He did the best he could with what he was confronted with, and it is beyond anything I can comprehend," Sheen told Washington Post staffer Julie Ann McKellogg. Sheen is showing off his philanthropic side, donating \$1 million to the building of the new 16,000-square-foot Warrior and Family Center in Bethesda, Md.

There were none of his typical antics when he met with injured soldiers to inspect an arts and music rehabilitation program dedicated to him.

Is Sheen being humble?

"I don't even know enough fancy words to describe it," he said. "I just have to have this experience marinate through my soul."

Sheen also says we should expect an "epic and life changing" announcement from him in the next month. He would only say that it has to do with music.

Is he or isn't he? Strahan rumored to be joining 'Good Morning America' part time

The Associated Press

Talk-show host and former football star Michael Strahan is coyly talking about, but not confirming, reports that he's expected to soon join the cast of ABC's "Good Morning America" on a part-time basis.

Strahan was asked by co-host Kelly Ripa on "Live With Kelly and Michael" Wednesday if he was doing it, and Strahan replied: "I don't know. If I read the papers I am."

A person with knowledge of the negotiations who requested anonymity because the deal hasn't been completed said Tuesday that Stra-

han will work semi-regularly during the show's first hour. He will continue as host of "Live With Kelly and Michael."

He said he couldn't do "GMA" every day because he's already too busy. He works for Fox Sports during the football season. He assured "Live" viewers that the talk show is his top priority. "I would never do anything to jeopardize the quality of what we do here and the enjoyment of what we do here," he said.

25 albums to be preserved

U2's classic album "The Joshua Tree," Linda Ronstadt's "Heart Like a Wheel" and an early, influential Christian rock album will play on for-

ever, or at least as long as the Library of Congress is around.

These albums from the 1970s and 1980s are among 25 recordings selected for long-term preservation in the library's National Recording Registry, chosen for their cultural, historical or aesthetic importance. Among those seminal sounds of the 20th century announced Wednesday are Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate Son" and the Everly Brothers' "Cathy's Clown." Larry Norman's Christian 1972 album "Do Not Disturb This Planet" is the first Christian rock album chosen for the registry.

Librarian of Congress James Billington said the recordings represent part of America's culture and history. "As technology continually changes and formats become obsolete, we must ensure that our nation's aural legacy is protected," he said.

Other news

■ **Kanye West** announced Tuesday he has postponed seven concerts in Australia scheduled for May until September because of "unexpected timing requirements" to finish his new album.

■ **Stephen Colbert** is done with the "Colbert Report" Twitter account. He and one of Twitter's founders, Biz Stone, symbolically blew it up on Monday's show. The account has been removed from Twitter.

■ It's good news for novelist Veronica Roth: "Divergent" is a hit at the box office and bookstores. A spokeswoman for HarperCollins Children's Books said Tuesday that the young adult series set in a dystopian future has been selling 500,000 copies a week over the past three weeks. The movie "Divergent" was released March 21 and has made nearly \$100 million.

Michael Strahan



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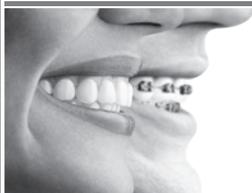
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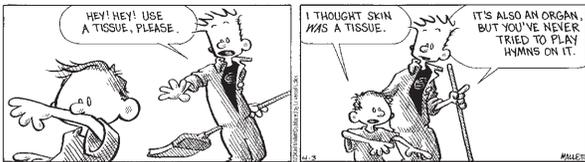
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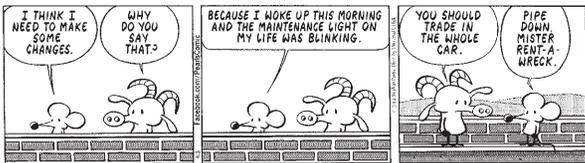
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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ACROSS

- 1 The Georgia Peach
- 5 Total
- 8 Somewhere out there
- 12 Small
- 13 — picture paints 1,000 words, ...
- 14 Big rig
- 15 Painter Joan
- 16 Neither mate
- 17 Settled up
- 18 Elton John's "— and the Jets"
- 20 Pace
- 22 Locomotive front
- 26 Dud on the road
- 29 Shade
- 30 Comic Philips
- 31 Yard sale condition
- 32 Remiss
- 33 Overly proper
- 34 — de mer
- 35 Shriners's chapeau
- 36 Sew loosely
- 37 Earthmovers
- 40 "Phoey!"
- 41 Learn by heart
- 45 Actress Cameron
- 47 Earlier
- 49 "The Music Man" locale
- 50 Pinnacle
- 51 Scoundrel
- 52 Portent
- 53 Mamie's
- 24 Send out
- 25 City on seven hills
- 26 Mary's follower
- 27 Jacob's brother
- 28 Pond creators near factories
- 32 "The Big Bang Theory" character
- 33 Ardor
- 35 Dime portrait
- 36 Lingerie item
- 38 Enjoys the hammock
- 39 Overact
- 42 Heavy reading
- 43 Rams' mates
- 44 Carry on
- 45 Slight touch
- 46 Lemieux milieu
- 48 Festive

DOWN

- 1 Barber's tool
- 2 Garfield's pal
- 3 Given life
- 4 Super Bowl XLVIII losers
- 5 Muscle connector
- 6 E.T.'s craft?
- 7 Actress Hemingway
- 8 Jellied entree
- 9 Darts' parts
- 10 Parisian pal
- 11 Dispose (of)
- 19 Charged bit
- 21 Chowed down
- 23 Actor Palminteri

Answer to Previous Puzzle

	E	S	Q		S	T	D					
F	R	A	U		S	H	O	O	T			
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4-3

CRYPTOQUIP

NK ZAM CQFY HYYTVZ
 UCQLO FNUNAT VNHY RCQR
 AK Q HNTJAL Q OLNTWY.

N'X WQVV ZAM LYJQV-YZYX.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN NANNY POPPINS CREATED HER SPECIAL MAGICAL CAROUSEL, I WOULD SAY IT WAS A MARY-GO-ROUND.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals I

GOLF

Can Tiger go the distance?

New surgery raises doubts whether Woods' body can endure, thrive

By JIM LITKE
The Associated Press

Maybe we were just focused on the wrong body part.

Ever since Tiger Woods' SUV veered off course at the end of his driveway in Florida nearly six years ago, the questions have been about his head. And all the while, it's the rest of his body — the left side mostly — that's been breaking down before our eyes. Maybe, like Icarus, it turns out Woods just wasn't built to go the distance.

He broke into big-time golf at 20, thin as a 2-iron and swinging with all the abandon of a kid. He putted without nerves, hit the ball farther and passed by many career signposts so breathtakingly fast, and with such ease, that his future seemed to be on cruise-control already.

But Woods is 38 now, and despite sparking the fitness craze that revolutionized professional golf, he's falling apart like a used car.

Woods announced Tuesday he would skip the Masters for the first time in his career to begin yet another rehab from the latest of at least a half-dozen surgeries. For all the comparisons to Jack Nicklaus, in light of his latest breakdown, it might be more apt to look at Mickey Mantle.

A chain-reaction series of injuries hobbled the Yankee slugger through the final few seasons of a career that should have been even better — not to mention longer. Mantle's bad luck, as one writer memorably put it, was to be "a million-dollar talent propped up on dime-store knees."

At this point it's worth noting that Mantle had a drinking problem. And that he contributed to his own demise as a ballplayer by staying out late too many nights,

something to which Woods has already pleaded guilty. But the way the injuries dogged Mantle at the end, sapping both his power and speed, may turn out to be the more instructive parallel.

Woods' latest surgery, called a microsdisectomy, was to relieve the pain from a pinched nerve in his back. Problems with his back first surfaced last summer, then resumed this spring, culminating in Woods' withdrawal from the Honda Classic and a final-round 78 a week later at Doral, where he looked visibly weakened.

A bad back is worrisome enough. That it arrives at the end of a string of injuries to Woods' left leg, knee and elbow, as well as both Achilles tendons — and almost all of them in the last half-dozen years — makes you wonder whether it's part of a larger pattern.

In a statement on his website, Woods called the setback "frustrating" but "something my doctors advised me to do for my immediate and long-term health."

The website also pointed out that swinging a golf club could have caused the pinched nerve, and as anybody who's ever swung one for a couple of rounds can attest, it can damage plenty of other body parts as well.

Woods has been doing that since age 3, and until the surgeries began piling up, it seemed as if he could go on doing it long enough to win more major tournaments that anyone had. But he's been stuck at 14 since the 2008 U.S. Open, and suddenly it's relevant that he's playing a game that has knocked just about every other great champion off its pedestal by the mid-to-late 30s.

Woods certainly knows the litany: Bobby Jones retired at 28, Tom Watson and Byron Nelson never won another after 33;

Arnold Palmer, 34; and Walter Hagen, 36. Gary Player won only one after 38 and Nick Faldo his last at 39. Ben Hogan was an outlier, winning into his early 40s.

Nicklaus, the one that always matters most to Woods, won all but one of his by age 40, covering an 18-year span. And the last one, the 1986 Masters at age 46, was what people mean by the phrase, "catching lightning in a bottle."

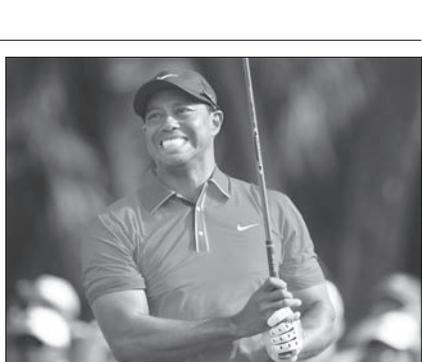
Woods may still be good for one of those, as well as a few more regular tour events, which he's continued to win with some regularity. More important, perhaps, he isn't conceding anything. He needs four more PGA Tour wins to pass Sam Snead and five more majors to go by Nicklaus.

"There are a couple (of) records by two outstanding individuals and players that I hope one day to break," Woods said Tuesday on his website. "As I've said many times, Sam and Jack reached their milestones over an entire career. I plan to have a lot of years left in mine."

Even if Woods is right, this much is already different. A lot of those kids he inspired to take up the game blow their drives past his, and they don't spit up leads the way Woods' peers used to the second his name popped up on the leaderboard. The last time some of them saw Woods make a putt that mattered in a major was on TV.

So it matters less, at the moment anyway, where Woods' head is at than how quickly — maybe even whether — the rest of his body holds. Deep as that bunker he was standing in looked before, his shot looks a lot tougher now.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at jlitke@ap.org and follow him at Twitter.com/jimlitke



ROBERT DUROS, SUN SENTINEL/MCT

Tiger Woods announced Tuesday that he will skip the Masters to recover from the latest of more than a half-dozen surgeries.

Woods' woes

A look at the injuries for Tiger Woods: December 1994 — Surgery on left knee to remove two benign tumors and scar tissue. Dec. 13, 2002 — Surgery on left knee to remove fluid inside and outside the ACL and remove benign cysts from his left knee. Misses the season opener in 2003. August 2007 — Ruptures the ACL in his left knee while running on a golf course after the British Open, but is able to keep playing. Wins five of the last six tournaments he plays, including the PGA Championship for his 13th major. April 15, 2008 — Two days after the Masters, has arthroscopic surgery on his left knee to repair cartilage damage. May 2008 — Advised weeks before the U.S. Open that he has two stress fractures of the left tibia and should rest for six weeks, the first three weeks on crutches. June 24, 2008 — Eight days after winning the U.S. Open, has surgery to repair the ACL in his left knee by using a tendon from his right thigh. Additional cartilage damage is repaired. Misses the rest of the season and does not return until the Match Play Championship at the end of February 2009. December 2008 — Injured his Achilles tendon in his right leg as he was running while preparing to return to golf. May 2009 — Hospitalized overnight with a sore neck and a cut lip that required five stitches when the SUV he was driving ran over a fire hydrant and into a tree. May 9, 2010 — Withdrawn from the final round of the Players Championship, citing a bulging disk. He later said it was a neck issue that caused tingling in his right side, and that it first became a problem as he began practicing harder for his return to the Masters a month earlier. April 10, 2011 — Injures his left Achilles tendon hitting from an awkward stance on the 17th at Augusta. Withdraws from the Wells Fargo Championship. May 12, 2011 — Withdraws from the

Players Championship after a 4CL on the front nine. Diagnosed with an MCL sprain in his left knee and in his left Achilles tendon. He misses the next two months, including two majors, returning at the Bridgestone Invitational.

March 11, 2012 — Feels tightness in his left Achilles tendon and withdraws after 11 holes of the final round in the Cadillac Championship at Doral. Aug. 24, 2012 — Moves stiffly during the second round of The Barclays and later says he felt pain in his lower back, which he attributed to a soft mashing in his hotel room. June 13, 2013 — Is seen shaking his left arm during the opening round of the U.S. Open. He later says it's a left elbow strain that he injured while winning The Players Championship a month earlier. He misses two tournaments and returns at the British Open. Aug. 11, 2013 — Said he felt tightness in his back during the final round of the PGA Championship. Aug. 21, 2013 — Two weeks after the PGA Championship, he has a sore neck and puts on the back nine of the pro-am at The Barclays, complaining of a stiff neck and back that he attributed to a soft bed in the hotel. By Sunday at The Barclays, he dropped to his knees after one shot because of back spasms.

March 2, 2014 — Withdraws after 13 holes of the final round at the Honda Classic because of lower back pain and spasms, describing it as similar to what he felt at The Barclays. March 9, 2014 — Plays the final 12 holes with pain in his lower back. He shoots 78, the highest score of his career in a final round. March 19, 2014 — Withdraws from the Arnie Palmer Invitational because of the persistent pain in his back. He was the two-time defending champion. March 21, 2014 — His surgery in Utah for a pinched nerve.

—The Associated Press

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SPORTSBBOARD

Sports on AFN

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College basketball

NCAA Men's tournament

FINAL FOUR
At Arlington, Texas
National Semifinals
Saturday, April 5
UConn (38-9) vs. Florida (46-2)
Kentucky (28-10) vs. Wisconsin (30-7)
National Championship
Monday, April 7
Semifinal winners

Men's NIT

At New York
First Round
Tuesday, April 1
SMU vs. Clemson
Cincinnati vs. Florida State 64, OT
Championship
Thursday, April 3
SMU (27-9) vs. Minnesota (24-13)

CBI

Championship Series
(Best-of-three)
Friday, April 4
Siena 61, Fresno State 57, Siena leads series 1-0
Wednesday, April 2
Fresno State (20-17) at Siena (19-17)
Saturday, April 5
Fresno State at Siena, if necessary

CIT

Semifinals
Tuesday, April 2
Mary 75, DePaul 65
Yale (23-12) vs. Murray State (22-11)

NCAA Women's tournament

LINCOLN REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
At Lincoln, Neb.
Saturday, March 29
Stanford 87, Penn State 57
Monday, March 31
Regional Championship
UConn 70, Texas A&M 57
STANFORD REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
At Stanford, Calif.
Saturday, March 29
Stanford 87, Penn State 57
Monday, March 31
Regional Championship
Stanford 74, North Carolina 58
NOTRE DAME REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
At Notre Dame, Ind.
Saturday, March 29
Baylor 90, Kentucky 72
Monday, April 1
Regional Championship
Notre Dame 68, Baylor 69

Louisville, Ky.
Saturday, March 29
Maryland 73, Tennessee 62
Louisville, Ky.
Sunday, March 30
Regional Championship
Louisville 50, LSU 47
Maryland 76, Louisville 73
Louisville, Ky.
Sunday, March 30
At Nashville, Tenn.
National Semifinals
Saturday, April 5
UConn (38-9) vs. Stanford (33-3)
Texas Tech (36-0) vs. Maryland (28-6)

National Championship
Tuesday, April 8
Semifinal winners

Women's NIT

Semifinals
Wednesday, April 2
Rutgers (28-12) vs. Florida (23-12)
South Dakota State (26-9) at UTEP (28-7)
Championship
April 5
Semifinal winners

AP Women's All-America Team

Statistics Through March 27
Chiney Ogunkurtu, Stanford, 6-4, senior, 60.5 ppg, 10.8 rpg, 1.8 apg, 1.1 spg, 61.1 pct, 70.7 pct, (36 first-team votes, 180 total votes)
Odyssey Sims, Baylor, 5-8, senior, 17.9 ppg, 4.6 apg, 2.0 rpg, 89.6 pct, (36, 192)
Breanna Stewart, Connecticut, 6-3, sophomore, Syracuse, N.Y., 19.7 ppg, 8.3 rpg, 3.1 apg, 2.8 spg, (36, 180)
Ashley McBride, Notre Dame, 5-11, senior, Erie, Pa., 17.4 ppg, 5.3 rpg, 3.9 apg, 40.9 pct, (33, 122)
Alyssa Thomas, Maryland, 6-2, senior, Harrisburg, Pa., 18.6 ppg, 10.9 rpg, 4.3 rpg, 91.1 pct, (29, 154)
Second Team
Bria Hartnett, Connecticut, 5-10, senior, North Baylor, N.Y., 16.5 ppg, 4.4 apg, 3.6 rpg, 48.7 pct, (4, 100)
Jewell Lloyd, Notre Dame, 5-10, sophomore, Lincolnwood, Ill., 18.4 ppg, 6.3 rpg, 2.8 spg, 87.1 pct, (82, 41)
Shoni Schimmel, Louisville, senior, Moore, Ore., 17.1 ppg, 5.9 rpg, 81.4 pct, (5, 88)
Stephanie Young, Connecticut, 6-2, senior, Port Jervis, N.Y., 12.4 ppg, 9.0 ppg, 3.4 apg, 56.6 pct, (3, 10)
Jordan Hooper, Nebraska, 6-2, senior, Alliance, Neb., 20.4 ppg, 9.1 rpg, 80.3 pct, (0, 74)
Third Team
Tiffany Mitchell, North Carolina, 5-9, Charlotte, N.C., 15.6 ppg, 5.6 rpg, 3.5 apg, 89.9 pct, (2, 50)
Maggie Lucas, Penn State, 4-10, senior, York, Pa., 21.5 ppg, 4.2 ppg, 94.9 pct, (0, 47)
Tricia Liston, Duke, 6-1, senior, River Forest, Ill., 17.2 ppg, 5.2 rpg, 48.3 pct, 85.2 pct, (0, 23)
Natalie Schemm, Notre Dame, 6-3, senior, Guelph, Ontario, 14.5 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 70.5 pct, (0, 4)
Elizabeth Williams, Duke, 6-3, junior, Virginia Beach, Va., 13.8 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 71.3 pct, (0, 2)
Honorable Mention
Jilligan Alvarez, Oregon State, Rachel Banham, Minnesota; Tiffany Bais, Oklahoma State; Britany Bales, Oklahoma State; Bussie, West Virginia; Hallie Christoferson, Iowa State; Jerica Cole, Florida International; Rachel Lachar, North Carolina; Aaryn Eilenberg, Oklahoma; Marshaetta Sattin, West Virginia; Chelsea Gray, Duke; Deariah Harbly, Wake Forest; Norah Hammar, Florida State; Brittany Tennessee; Bri Holmes, West Virginia; Kayla Howard, Maryland; Hryhko DePaolo, Mariah Jefferson, Connecticut; Jamie Kaprielian, Tellese; Jessica Kuster, Rice; Sarah Lantz, Virginia; Valerie McFarland, Mississippi; Yvonne Maria Morgan, Georgia; Brittany Martinez, Iowa; Kaiena Mossiquide-Lewis, Mississippi State; Brittany O'Neill, Kentucky; Haiden Palmer, Gonzaga; Ebony Rowe, Middle Tennessee; Jennifer Schott, Utah State; Meighan Simmons, Tennessee; Rachel Threlkoff, Nebraska; Kayla Thornhill, UTEP; Courtney Walker, Texas A&M; Aleighsa Welch, South Carolina.

AP Women's NIT Semifinals
Friday, April 4
UConn (38-9) vs. Florida (46-2)
Kentucky (28-10) vs. Wisconsin (30-7)
National Championship
Monday, April 7
Semifinal winners

Regional Semifinals
Saturday, April 5
UConn (38-9) vs. Florida (46-2)
Kentucky (28-10) vs. Wisconsin (30-7)
National Championship
Monday, April 7
Semifinal winners

College hockey

NCAA Division I tournament

NORTHEAST REGIONAL
First Round
Friday, March 28
Boston College 4, Denver 2
Boston College 4, Minnesota State 1
Championship
Saturday, March 29
Boston College 4, UMass-Lowell 3
At Bridgeport, Conn.
First Round
Friday, March 28
UConn (N) 5, Vermont 4
Providence 4, Quinnipiac 0
Saturday, March 29
UConn (N) 4, Quinnipiac 3
Midwest Regional
At Cincinnati
First Round
Friday, March 28
Ferris State 3, Wisconsin 2
North Dakota 5, Wisconsin 2
Saturday, March 29
North Dakota 3, Wisconsin 1, 2OT
WEST REGIONAL
First Round
At St. Paul, Minn.
Friday, March 28
UConn (N) 5, Vermont 4
Providence 4, Quinnipiac 0
Saturday, March 29
UConn (N) 4, Quinnipiac 3

World rankings

Table with columns: Rank, Team, Points, Goals, Assists, Points per game, Goals per game, Assists per game. Includes teams like USA, Canada, Russia, etc.

24. Nick Watney USA 2.58

Tennis

Monterrey Open

At Sierra Madre Tennis Club
Monday, March 31
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
First Round
Lukácsik Károly, Hungary, def. Daria Jakupovic, Slovenia, 7-6, 6-0.
Alexandr Dolgopriyazhnikov, Slovakia, def. Olga Govortsova, Belarus, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Monica Puig (8), Puerto Rico, def. Olga Puchkova, Russia, 6-0, 6-2.
Aleksandra Wozniak, Canada, def. Marcela Zacarias, Mexico, 3-6, 6-0, 6-1.
Caroline Wozniacki (3), Denmark, def. Coco Vandeweghe, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (4).

Ana Ivanovic (2), Serbia, def. Urszula Radwan, Poland, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.
Doubles
First Round
Amandine Hesse, France, and Hsu Chieh-yi, United States, def. Elitsa Kostova, Bulgaria, and Adriana Perez, Venezuela, 6-3, 6-4.
Daria Jurak, Croatia, and Megan Moulton-Levy (3), United States, def. Heidi El Tabach, Canada, and Julie Kick, United States, 7-5, 4-6, 10-7.

Asia Muhammad and Aliie Will, United States, def. Liga Dekmejian, Latvia, and Nikola Ivanovic, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (4).
Gabriela Dobrowski, Canada, and Oksana Kalashnikova, Russia, def. Alejandra Cisneros and Camila Fuentes, Mexico, 6-3, 6-4.
Timea Babos, Hungary, and Olga Govortsova, Belarus, def. Kristina Mladenovic and Tatjana Panova, France, 6-3, 4-6, 13-11.

Family Circle Cup

At The Family Circle Tennis Center
Charleston, S.C.
Surface: Hard (Outdoor)
Singles
First Round
Daniela Hantuchova (12), Slovakia, def. Shelby Rogers, United States, 7-5, 7-5.
Zhang Shuai (10), China, def. Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, 6-4, 6-3.
Vania King, United States, def. Julia Glushko, Kazakhstan, 6-3, 6-4.
Elena Vesnina, Russia, def. Anna Schmiedtova, Slovakia, 6-2, 6-1.
First Round
Andrea Zakharenko, United States, def. Barbara Zakharenko, Czech Republic.
Leonora Pehlivska (14), Germany, def. Lea Fruska, Serbia, 6-7, 6-3.
Lourdes Dominguez Lino, Spain, def. Anabel Medina Garrigues, Spain, 6-3, 6-6.

Marina Erakovic, New Zealand, def. Alicia Molik, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.
Peng Shuai, China, def. Caroline Garcia, France, 6-3, 6-4.
Second Round
Sam Stosur (7), Australia, def. Vladislava Shtromova, Kazakhstan, 6-7, 6-4.
Teliana Pereira, Brazil, def. Sorana Cristea (8), Romania, 6-3, 6-4.
Eugenie Bouchard (6), Canada, def. Aliona Bolbot, Romania, 6-3, 6-4.
Lilija Cepelova, Slovakia, def. Serena Williams (1), United States, 6-4, 6-4.
Lucie Safarova, Czech Republic, def. Virginia Razzano, France, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Doubles

First Round
Jelena Jankovic, Serbia, and Andrea Petkovic, Germany, def. Liezel Huber and Felicia Raymond, United States, 6-3, 6-4.
Sorana Cristea, Romania, and Maria Kirilenko, Russia, def. Alicia Rosolska, Poland, and Stanelle Scherers, South Africa, 6-3, 11-9.
Julia Georges and Anna-Lena Groenfeild, Germany, def. Lucette Hingter, Slovakia, and Varvara Lepchenko, United States, 6-2, 6-7 (3), 10-4.

AP spotlight

1930 — The Montreal Canadiens win the NHL Stanley Cup by defeating the Boston Bruins.
1964 — Ken Dorsey's overtime goal gives the Toronto Maple Leafs a 1-0 victory over the Boston Bruins in semifinals of the Stanley Cup playoffs. The goal comes at one hour, 44 minutes and 42 seconds after the start of the one-hour regulation game.

1977 — Alan Ralston of the Boston Bruins scores his 1,000th point with an assist for a 7-1 triumph over the Toronto Maple Leafs.
1988 — Louisiana Tech wins the NCAA women's basketball title by defeating a 56-64 come-from-behind victory over Utah State.

1988 — Amy Alcott shoots a 1-under 71 to win the Dinah Shore by two shots over Colleen Walker.
1989 — Michigan beats Seton Hall 80-69 to win the American basketball championship. Rumeal Robinson hits two free throws with 3 seconds left for the Wolverines.
1993 — Jim Montgomery's three goals in the third period of Maine to tie the comeback win over Lake Superior State for the NCAA hockey title.

Deals

Tuesday's transactions

NEW YORK Yankees Placed INF Brendan Ryan on the 15-day DL, retroactive to March 22. Selected the contract of Yungwoon Son from Scranton. Willie Barré (L), Designated INF Eduardo Nunez for assignment to Sacramento (PCL) for a rehab assignment.

OAKLAND Athletics — Assigned RHP Fernando Rodriguez to Sacramento (PCL) for a rehab assignment.
TEXAS Rangers — Designated C Chris Dimuzis for assignment. Selected the contract of RHP Daniel McCutchen from Round Rock. Designated INF Michael Kirkman outright to Round Rock.

ATLANTA Braves Assigned LHP Mike Minor to Mississippi (SL) for a rehab assignment.
BASKETBALL
Los Angeles Sparks — Signed ATM Seattle for the second time this season. Filed Sacramento F Reggie Evans \$1,000 for allowing New Orleans F Anthony Davis in the face during the season.

National Basketball Association Boston Celtics — Signed ATM Seattle for the second time this season. Filed Sacramento F Reggie Evans \$1,000 for allowing New Orleans F Anthony Davis in the face during the season.

National Football League Arizona Cardinals — Signed CBS Lequan Lewis and Eddie White to two-year contracts.
Denver Broncos — Signed CB Chris Smith to a one-year contract.

New Orleans Saints — Agreed to contract with QB Drew Brees to a one-year contract.
New York Giants — Signed WR/KR Jacoby Jones to a one-year contract. Oakland Raiders — Released Mike Briel.

Pittsburgh Steelers — Signed CB Mike McCain to a one-year contract. Pittsburgh Pirates — Signed RHP Kenny Britt, DJ Alex Carrington, QB Shaun Hill, and QB Ryan Harris to one-year contracts. Tampa Bay Buccaneers — Signed RB Jose Williams to a one-year contract.

National Hockey League Carolina Hurricanes — Recalled F Chris Terry from Charlotte (AHL) on an emergency basis.
Dallas Stars — Assigned D Troy Murray to AHL.
Detroit Red Wings — Reassigned RW Zach Nastasiuk from Owen Sound (AHL) to AHL.

Edmonton Oilers — Assigned G Lauri Marsson to AHL.
Los Angeles Kings — Recalled F Bobby Butler and D Jonathan Racine from San Antonio (AHL) to AHL.
Los Angeles Kings — Signed F Michael Mersch to a three-year, entry-level contract. G Chris Drriedger to a three-year, entry-level contract.

New Jersey Devils — Recalled F Mike Sieto from Albany (AHL).
Washington Capitals — Signed F Garrett Thompson to a one-year, entry-level contract. G Chris Drriedger to a three-year, entry-level contract.

San Jose Sharks Reassigned D Mirco Mueller to AHL.
Tampa Bay Lightning — Signed F Adam Grier to an AHL contract and assigned him to Syracuse (AHL).

Washington Capitals — Recalled F Chris Brown from Hershey (AHL). Reassigned D Brett Flemming from Reading (AHL) to AHL.

WINNIEPEG Jets — Reassigned G Eric Conroy from AHL. Recalled F Morrissey from Prince Albert (AHL) to AHL. Recalled F William (Wilky) from St. John's to Ontario (ECHL).

Major League Soccer

SPORTING KANSAS CITY — Signed MI midfielder.
WINTER SPORTS
U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association — Named Trisha Worthington executive vice president and chief development officer.

CARROLL COLLEGE
Carroll College — Named Doug Mello men's soccer coach.
Carroll College — Named Whitley assistant defensive coordinator/linebackers coach and Barnard defensive coordinator.
LOUISIANA-MONROE — Named Jeff Smith men's basketball coach.

LSU — Announced F Johnny O'Bryant to the team.
LOUISIANA TECH — Named Tyler Summitt women's basketball coach.
New Mexico State — Named Steve Wojciechowski men's basketball coach.
New Mexico State — Named Brian Fish men's basketball coach.

NEW MEXICO STATE — Named Perri Motta men's basketball coach.
TOLEDO — Extended the contract of head coach Tom Izzo to the 2016 season through the 2021 season.
UTAH VALLEY — Named Brian White from the football team.

UT MARTIN — Signed women's basketball coach.
UTAH VALLEY — Extended the contract extension through the 2019-20 season.

Pro soccer

MLS

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, Goals For, Goals Against. Includes teams like Columbus, Sporting KC, Toronto FC, etc.

Western Conference

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, Goals For, Goals Against. Includes teams like FC Dallas, Real Salt Lake, etc.

Eastern Conference

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, Goals For, Goals Against. Includes teams like Philadelphia 1, Montreal 1, etc.

Sunday, March 29

Philadelphia 1, Montreal 1, tie
D.C. United 2, Chicago 2, tie
Sporting Kansas City 1, Colorado 2
Vancouver 2, Houston 1
Portland 2, Seattle 1
Real Salt Lake 3, Toronto FC 0
Colorado 2, Seattle 1
New England 2, San Jose 1

Sunday, March 30

New York 1, Chicago 1, tie
Saturday's games
Seattle FC Portland
New York at Montreal
Portland at Chicago
Toronto FC at United
Colorado at Vancouver
Seattle at D.C. United
FC Dallas at Sporting Kansas City
Houston at San Jose
Los Angeles at Chicago
Houston at San Jose
Los Angeles at Chicago

NBA

Hawks cling to 8th spot

Despite injuries, struggles, Atlanta still has edge on Knicks in East

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Kyle Korver checks out the NBA standings every morning.

He knows how close the Atlanta Hawks are cutting it just to make the playoffs.

"I know who's playing who, I know who they're playing next," the Hawks guard said. "We're supposed to focus on ourselves, but I'm looking at everything."

After a miserable couple of months, the Hawks are barely clinging to the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, one game ahead of the New York Knicks with nine games left in the regular season.

"The eighth playoff spot is ours right now," Korver said. "We have to keep on playing like it is."

The remaining schedule certainly favors the Hawks (32-41).

They have played two fewer games than the Knicks (32-43) and still have contests against lightweight teams such as Cleveland (30-45), Detroit (27-47), Boston (23-51) and Milwaukee (14-60). Also, Atlanta plays six of its last nine at Philips Arena, where the team has a 11-14 this season despite drawing some of the league's smallest crowds.

New York, on the other hand, plays nothing but above-.500 teams the rest of the way, with four of its last seven games at Madison Square Garden.

Still, given all the struggles the Hawks have endured — losing 20 of their last 27 games — no one is taking anything for granted.

"We all know what's on the line," Korver said.

Atlanta is in the midst of a major rebuilding job under general manager Danny Ferry and rookie coach Mike Budenholzer — a task that didn't get any easier



JASON GETZ/AP

Hawks forward Paul Millsap drives past 76ers forward Thaddeus Young on Monday. Millsap scored a game high 28 points in the win.

when the team's best player, center Al Horford, went down with a season-ending injury the day after Christmas.

Even without Horford, the Hawks were still playing surprisingly well at the beginning of February, climbing four games over .500 and in the mix for home-court advantage in the opening round of the playoffs.

That's when the injuries really began to pile up. Horford's replacement, Pero Antic, missed 17 games with a stress fracture in his right ankle. His replacement, Gustavo Ayon, was also lost for the season after undergoing shoulder surgery. All-Star forward Paul Millsap missed five games with a right knee contusion. And Korver, the team's best outside threat, sat out six straight games with a bad back before returning Monday night, desperate to help the Hawks turn things around.

They did, even after falling behind by 14 points early on against the lowly Philadelphia 76ers, who had just broken a record-tying 26-game losing streak. The Hawks rallied to win 103-95, snapping a six-game skid of their own.

"If we had lost this game, it would have been tough," Korver

said. "We didn't play great, but we played harder, we played with a purpose."

Budenholzer has been coaching with a purpose, too, benching double-figure scorer Lou Williams for two weeks even though his skills were clearly needed.

The message resonated with the team, and Williams has played with more effort since returning to the rotation. He scored 22 points in the win over the 76ers, his best showing since late December.

"You can't take your opportunities for granted," teammate DeMarre Carroll said. "I give coach credit for doing that."

The Hawks might be better off missing the playoffs for the first time since 2007, considering they will surely have to face either two-time defending champ Miami or Indiana in the opening round.

Given their slim odds of beating either of those powerhouses, there are surely some Atlanta fans pulling for the team to slide into the lottery of a potentially deep draft.

But Budenholzer and his players aren't ready to give up on this season.

"We've got to stick it up now," Carroll said. "We're trying to make the playoffs."

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
y-Miami	51	23	.689	—
y-Indiana	42	32	.569	9½
x-Toronto	42	32	.569	9½
x-Chicago	40	34	.541	11
x-Brooklyn	40	34	.541	11
Washington	38	36	.514	13½
Charlotte	38	36	.514	13½
Atlanta	32	41	.438	19

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	32	43	.427	20
Cleveland	25	50	.333	27
Detroit	27	47	.365	24½
Boston	23	51	.311	28½
Orlando	22	52	.297	30
Philadelphia	16	58	.216	35½
Milwaukee	14	60	.189	37½

Western Conference

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Antonio	56	26	.683	—
x-Oklahoma City	54	28	.659	2
x-L.A. Clippers	52	30	.634	4
Houston	49	33	.596	7
Phoenix	49	33	.596	7
Golden State	46	36	.562	10
Memphis	44	38	.535	14
Phoenix	44	38	.535	14

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	44	31	.587	14½
Minnesota	36	37	.493	21½
New Orleans	32	42	.435	26
Denver	32	42	.435	26
Sacramento	26	48	.351	32
L.A. Lakers	25	49	.338	33
Utah	23	52	.307	35½

Monday's games
San Antonio 103, Indiana 77
Charlotte 100, Washington 94
Miami 93, Toronto 83
Detroit 116, Milwaukee 111
San Antonio 103, Philadelphia 95
Chicago 94, Boston 80
L.A. Clippers 114, Minnesota 104
Orlando 102, New Orleans 97
Memphis 94, Denver 92

Tuesday's games
Brooklyn 105, Houston 96
Golden State 122, Dallas 120, OT
Portland 124, L.A. Lakers 112
New York 102, Utah 98

Wednesday's games
Cleveland at Orlando
Boston at Philadelphia
Brooklyn at New York
Houston at Toronto
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix
Chicago at Atlanta
Memphis at Minnesota
Golden State at San Antonio
New Orleans at Denver
L.A. Lakers at Sacramento
Dallas at L.A. Lakers

Friday's games
Denver at Memphis
Indiana at Toronto
Orlando at Charlotte
Detroit at Brooklyn
Philadelphia at Boston
Minnesota at Miami
L.A. Clippers at Washington
Washington at New York
Oklahoma City at Houston
New Orleans at Utah
Phoenix at Portland
Sacramento at Golden State
Dallas at L.A. Lakers

Tuesday

Warriors 122, Mavs 120 (OT)
GOLDEN STATE — Igoudala 7-9 1-16, Green 4-9 0-9, O'Neal 9-12 2-20, Curry 10-17 0-2 1-7, Gasol 11-17, Spalding gets 4 7-0 8, Barnes 0-0 0-0, Blake 0-3 0-0, Crawford 2-0 0-0 0-0, Totals 122-120 (OT)

MILAS — Maron 4-8 0-0 8, Nowitzki 13-21 1-33, Dalember 1-2 0-2, Calderon 3-9 1-18, Ellis 11-23 3-4-7, Carter 4-13 1-2 12, Wright 5-6 4-4 1-4, Harris 3-7 2-2, Golden State 0-3 0-0, Blair 3-4 0-0, Totals 122-120 (OT)

Crowder 30 23 4-2 12-22
Dallas 21 41 19 27 12-20
Three-point Goals—Golden State 15-31 (Crawford) 5-7, Thompson 4-9, Curry 3-6, Igoudala 2-5, Green 1-11, Blake 0-5, Dallas 14-30 (Nowitzki 6-8, Carter 3-7, Harris 2-4, Ellis 2-5, Calderon 1-4, Crowder 0-2), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Golden State 47 (Spights) 9, Dallas 48 (Nowitzki 11), Assists—Golden State 33 (Curry 10), Dallas 27 (Ellis, Calderon 6), Total Fouls—Golden State 16, Dallas 12, Technicals—None, A-20,223 (19,200).

Nets 105, Rockets 96

HOUSTON — Parsons 7-15 0-16, Motiejunas 0-2 0-0, Asik 8-2 6-12, Lin 6-14 2-2 16, Harden 10-16 16-26, Casspi 3-10 0-0-7, Garcia 4-9 0-10, Canaan 1-8 0-2, Hamilton 2-8 2-7, Totals 92-82, 28-96

BROOKLYN — Johnson 13-21 2-2, Pierce 2-4 0-4, Plumlee 5-6 1-3 11, Williams 6-14 0-12, Livingston 0-2 6-17, Anderson 1-3 2-4, Blatche 6-12 1-2 13, Felton 2-3 0-2, Teague 0-1 0-0, Collins 0-0 0-0, Totals 44-83 1-13 105.

Brooklyn 25 25 23 22-105
Houston 24 27 28 19-96
Three-point Goals—Houston 10-35 (Lin 2-4, Garcia 2-5, Harden 2-6, Parsons 2-7, Hamilton 1-4, Casspi 1-5, Canaan 0-4), Brooklyn 2-6 (Johnson 0-3, Teistove 2-5, Blatche 0-1, Pierce 0-2, Anderson 0-2, Gutierrez 0-2, Williams 0-3), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Houston 54 (Asik 23), Brooklyn 49 (Teistove 7), Assists—Houston 20 (Harden 7), Brooklyn 23 (Williams 6), Total Fouls—Houston 16, Brooklyn 26, Technicals—Houston Coach McElroy, Houston defensive three second, A-17,372 (17,732).

Trail Blazers 124, Lakers 112

PORTLAND — Batum 6-13 0-11, Aldridge 12-20 7-8 1, Lopez 4-5 2-2 20,illard 0-2 2-3 24, Matthews 5-12 0-0 10, Robinson 3-7 1-2 7, Williams 3-11 0-8, Barton 4-8 0-2 5, Wright 0-0 0-0, McCollum 0-0 0-0, Claver 0-0 0-0 0-0, Totals 46-99 19-124.

L.A. Lakers — Bazemore 6-6 3-0 14, Gasol 4-9 1-9, Kaman 6-9 1-6 10, Marshall 2-4 2-2 5, Meeke 2-7 0-4, Nash 2-5 6-6 1, Henry 0-0 0-0, Sacre 1-3 1-2 3, Kelly 2-8 2-9, Young 15-26 4-8 40, Totals 41-92 19-122.

Portland 23 34 30 33-124
L.A. Lakers 27 34 22 29-112
Three-point Goals—Portland 13-29 (Lillard 5-10, Batum 4-5, Williams 2-6, Matthews 2-7, McCollum 0-1), L.A. Lakers 11-25 (Henry 6-13, Marshall 2-3, Bazemore 2-4, Kelly 1-3), Meeke 0-0, Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Portland 60 (Aldridge 15), L.A. Lakers 46 (Kelly 8), Assists—Portland 33 (Lillard 8), L.A. Lakers 31 (Nash 10), Total Fouls—Portland 16, L.A. Lakers 26, Technicals—Matthews, L.A. Lakers defensive three second, Flagrant Fouls—Leonard, Siegfried—Leonard (16,897).

Roundup

Nets end 14-game skid vs. Rockets, clinch playoffs

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Brooklyn Nets clinched a playoff berth by beating the Houston Rockets for the first time in eight years, getting 32 points from Joe Johnson in a 105-96 victory on Tuesday night.

Shaun Livingston added 17 points for the Nets, who extended their home winning streak to 14 games, longest in their NBA history and tops in the league this season. They also pulled within 1½ games of Toronto and Chicago for the No. 3 seed in the Eastern Conference.

"We've just been playing and trying to protect home court. They came in here and we try to send them on their way with a loss, and that's for everybody," Livingston said. "It just happens to be we've been playing good basketball against the West."

The Nets ended a 14-game skid against Houston with their first victory in the series since March 13, 2006.

Harden scored 26 points for Houston, which lost its second straight fol-

lowing a five-game winning streak. Still without Dwight Howard because of a sore left ankle, the Rockets shot just 38 percent from the field.

The Nets held the NBA's second-highest scoring team 11 points below its average and finished its non-conference schedule with an 18-12 record. The Nets are 30-12 overall since Jan. 1 and haven't lost at Barclays Center in more than two months.

Warriors 122, Mavericks 120 (OT): At Dallas, Stephen Curry made a tiebreaking jumper in the final second of overtime, lifting Golden State to the win.
Curry finished with 23 points and 10 rebounds. Klay Thompson led Golden State with 27 points, and Jermaine O'Neal added 20.

Dallas led by three until Thompson made a three-pointer with 1:01 remaining in regulation.
O'Neal blocked a Dallas shot with the game tied at 120, setting the stage for Curry's winning move. He dribbled the ball to

the left side of the court and hit from 20 feet.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 33 points and 11 rebounds. He had 16 in the Mavericks' 41-point second quarter.

Dallas dropped from seventh in the Western Conference to ninth, a half-game behind Memphis and Phoenix in the final two playoff positions.

Trail Blazers 124, Lakers 112: Damian Lillard scored 34 points, and Marcus Aldridge had 31 points and 15 rebounds as Portland overpowered host Los Angeles.

The Blazers' fourth straight victory, coupled with Houston's loss at Brooklyn, moved Portland within 1½ games of the Rockets for fourth place in the Western Conference and home-court advantage in the opening round of the playoffs. The Rockets have three games in hand.

Nick Young, the fifth and last player off the Los Angeles bench, made his first eight shots and finished 15-for-26 with a season-high 40 points.



JOHN MINICILLO/AP

Nets guard Shaun Livingston dunks as Rockets Omri Casspi, left, and Omer Asik watch during the second half on Tuesday.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
y-Tampa Bay	75	52	17	131	241	158
x-Boston Bay	76	42	25	99	226	202
x-Montreal	75	43	27	110	209	192

Metropolitan Division

x-Pittsburgh	76	48	23	5	101	233	189
N.Y. Rangers	77	43	29	4	90	210	184
Philadelphia	75	39	27	9	87	213	211

Wild Card

Detroit	75	35	26	14	84	202	213
Columbus	75	35	30	7	83	210	203

Western Conference

Central Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
x-St. Louis	75	51	17	109	241	168	
x-Colorado	75	48	21	6	102	230	204
x-Chicago	75	45	25	19	99	248	200

Pacific Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
x-Anaheim	75	49	18	8	106	244	191
x-San Jose	77	48	20	9	107	237	186
x-Vancouver	74	44	26	6	99	194	226

Wild Card

Minnesota	75	37	27	11	89	189	191
Dallas	75	37	27	11	85	195	212

Phoenix 76 37 27 13 85 207 214
Vancouver 77 34 32 11 79 185 209
Tampa Bay 76 33 32 11 77 190 229
Nashville 76 32 32 11 77 190 229
San Jose 77 48 20 9 107 237 186
Colorado 74 44 26 6 102 230 204
Edmonton 76 26 41 9 61 188 254

Note: Top three teams in each division and the two teams with the most points in each conference qualify for the playoffs. The top two teams in each division qualify for a first-round bye. The top two teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs. The top two teams in each division qualify for a first-round bye. The top two teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs.



ALEX BRANNAN/AP

Washington Capitals goalie Braden Holtby can't stop a short-handed goal by Dallas Stars left wing Ryan Garbutt in the third period of Tuesday's game at Verizon Center in Washington. The Stars won 5-0 as Dallas earned its fifth victory in the past six games.

Islanders 4, Panthers 2

Lightning 3, Canadiens 1

Montreal 1 0 0 1-1
Tampa Bay 1 0 0 1-3

First Period—1, Montreal, Galagher 9 (Goelzer/ky, Weaver), 10:18.
Second Period—2, Tampa Bay, Callahan 17 (Pailat, Hedman), 9:19 (pp).
Third Period—3, Tampa Bay, Johnson 25 (Hesman, 12:41 (sh), 4). Tampa Bay, Killorn 17 (Pailat, Brown), 19:15 (en-pp).
Shots on Goal—Montreal 10-10-6-26.
Tampa Bay 10-11-12-33.
Power-play opportunities—Montreal 0 of 4; Tampa Bay 2 of 9.
Goals—Montreal, Price 32-19.5 (32 shots-30 saves). Tampa Bay, Bishop 37-12-7 (26-25).
A—18-808 (19,204). T—2:38.

Maple Leafs 3, Flames 2

Calgary 0 0 1 1-2
Toronto 0 0 1 1-3

First Period—1, Toronto, McMelem 4 (Franson), 5:0, 2, Calgary, Stajan 13 (02:3, San Jose, Boyle), 12:00.
Second Period—3, Toronto, Bolland 8, 2:16; 4, Toronto, Clarkson 5 (Raymond), 5:47; 5, Toronto, Pavesic 6 (Colborne, Bero), 7:24.
Shots on Goal—Calgary 9-10-10-24.
Toronto 7-6-9-22.
Power-play opportunities—Calgary 0 of 2; Toronto 0 of 1.
Goals—Calgary, Ramo 14-13-4 (22 shots-30 saves). Toronto, Bernier 26-19 (24-22).
A—19-842 (18,819). T—2:34.

Stars 5, Capitals 0

Washington 1 2 2-5
Washington 1, Dallas, Seguin 33 (0:0-0-0).
First Period—2, Dallas, Whitney 9 (Chasson, Goligoski), 9:16; 3, Dallas, Jeffrey 1 (Chasson, David), 9:50.
Second Period—4, Dallas, Jeffrey 2 (Whitney, Chasson), 9:55; 5, Dallas, Garth 16 (Griffin, Ladd), 14:57.
Shots on Goal—Dallas 14-15-7-36.
Power-play opportunities—Dallas 0 of 4; Washington 0 of 5.
Goals—Boyles, Lehtonen 30-18-10 (35 shots-35 saves). Washington, Halak 28-12-7 (23-20). Holtby (9:50 second, 13-11).
A—18-506 (18,506). T—2:25.

Jets 2, Coyotes 1 (SO)

Winnipeg 1 0 0 0-2
Phoenix 1 0 0 0-1

First Winnipeg won shootout 1-0.
Phoenix—1, Winnipeg, Ladd 23 (Lietie), 10:01.
Second Period—2, Phoenix, Michael 2 (Vermette, Boedker), 19:27.
Goals—Winnipeg, Pavesic 21 (Lette, Nadeau), 6:01; Phoenix 0 (Boedker, Ng, Vrblan), 20:00.
Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 8-6-6-22-22.
Phoenix 8-14-6-23-23.
Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 0 of 1; Phoenix 0 of 2.
Goals—Winnipeg, Pavesic 21-25-27 (32-22-12). Phoenix, Greiss 9-6-3 (22-21).
A—18-724 (17,125). T—2:36.

Rangers 3, Canucks 1

N.Y. Rangers 2 0 1 1-3
Canucks 1 0 1 0-2

First Period—1, N.Y. Rangers, Carroll 4 (Boyle, Stastny), 10:00.
Second Period—4, N.Y. Rangers, St. Louis 30 (Brassard, Zuccarello), 14:43 (pp).
Third Period—3, Vancouver, Keasler 24 (Nash), 10:15.
Shots on Goal—N.Y. Rangers, St. Louis 30 (23-16).
Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Rangers 1 of 1; Phoenix 0 of 2.
Goals—N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 31-23-25 (35-25 saves). Vancouver, Ladd 15-16-5 (31-28).
A—18-910 (18,910). T—2:44.

Tuesday

Hurricanes 4, Penguins 1

Carolina 1 1 1 1-3
Pittsburgh 1 2 1 0-4

First Period—1, Pittsburgh, Kunitz 4 (Stempniak, Crosby), 9:01, 2, Carolina, Frenette 10 (Crosby), 12:59.
Second Period—3, Carolina, Lindholm 7 (Frenette), 12:59; 4, Carolina, Lindholm 8 (Skinner), 14:57.
Third Period—5, Carolina, Estaal 18 (Lokton), 1:47.
Shots on Goal—Carolina 11-12-5-28.
Pittsburgh 14-6-11-23.
Goals—Carolina, Khudobin 17-12-11 (31 shots-30 saves). Pittsburgh, Fleury 30 (28-14).
A—18-635 (18,387). T—2:26.

Sabres 3, Devils 2 (SO)

New Jersey 0 1 1 0-2
Buffalo 0 2 0 0-3

Second Period—1, New Jersey, Zubrus 11 (Ryder, Ranger), 8:16.
Third Period—2, Buffalo, Ennis 20 (Leino, Stafford), 1:39; 3, Buffalo, Ennis 21 (Hodgson, Stafford), 4:44 (pp), 4, New Jersey, Ranger 7 (Greene, Girardi), 6:58 (pp).
Shootout—New Jersey 2 (Josefson G, Bruner NG, Zidlicky NG, Jagr G, Tzajac NG, Connor NG, Flynn NG, G. Gasstin NG, Leino NG). Buffalo 3 (Ennis G, Hodgson NG, Girard NG).
Shots on Goal—New Jersey 10-11-10-4-35.
Buffalo 8-14-11-4-27.
Power-play opportunities—New Jersey 1 of 2; Buffalo 0 of 3.
Goals—New Jersey, Schneider 14-14-11 (30 shots-35 saves). Buffalo, Leueven 12-10-5 (35-33).
A—19-070 (19,070). T—2:48.

Monday's games

Ottawa 2, Carolina 1, 5:0
 New Jersey 6, Florida 3
 Anaheim 5, Winnipeg 4, OT
 Minnesota 3, Los Angeles 2

Tuesday's games

Buffalo 3, New Jersey 5, SO
 St. Louis 1, Philadelphia 0, 5:0
 Toronto 2, Phoenix 2
 Toronto 3, Calgary 2
 Colorado 3, Pittsburgh 2
 Carolina 4, Pittsburgh 1
 Dallas 5, Washington 0
 Colorado 3, Philadelphia 2, OT
 Tampa Bay 3, Montreal 1
 Vancouver 3, Vancouver 3
 San Jose 5, Edmonton 4

Wednesday's games

N.Y. Islanders at Ottawa
 Boston at Detroit
 Philadelphia at Anaheim
 Phoenix at Los Angeles

Thursday's games

Columbus at Philadelphia
 Carolina at Carolina
 Boston at Toronto
 Calgary at Tampa Bay
 Minnesota at Chicago
 Buffalo at St. Louis
 Philadelphia at Winnipeg
 N.Y. Rangers at Colorado
 Los Angeles at San Jose

Through April 3

GP	Pts	G	A	Pts
Sidney Crosby, Pit	57	31	52	87
Ryan Getzlaf, Aht	71	31	52	87
Claude Giroux, Phi	75	25	53	78
Patrick Kane, Chi	77	36	41	77
Tyler Seguin, Dal	75	33	44	77
Cory Perry, Aht	75	39	36	76

Roundup
Stars jump back into West playoff picture

Seguin nets 33rd as Dallas routs Washington

The Associated Press
 WASHINGTON — The Dallas Stars and Washington Capitals both began the game one point away from a playoff spot.

The Stars' They played like a team determined to get to there for the first time since 2008. The Capitals? They looked like a group tired of having its yearly routine disrupted by such a trivial thing as postseason hockey.

It was no contest. The Stars' 5-0 win over the Capitals on Tuesday was a victory of confidence over embarrassment. Dallas has won five of six, outscoring opponents 16-5 over its past three games.

"It's a big obstacle," said Ray Whitney, who scored in the second period. "It's been, what, five years now? ... We're no different than anybody else who's been out for a while. We want to get in pretty bad."

The victory, at least for a few hours, moved the Stars one point ahead of the Phoenix Coyotes for the final postseason berth in the Western Conference. The Coyotes then moved into a tie with Dallas by picking up a point in a shootout loss to Winnipeg late Tuesday.

The Capitals were booted heavily in their home rink, particularly after an abysmal stretch in the second period in which they allowed several odd-man rushes, took a slashing penalty and gave up two goals in 34 seconds.

"If I was a fan, I'd be doing us right now," said goaltender Braden Holtby, who relieved Jaroslav Halak in the second period after Dallas' third goal. "A playoff race like we're in? To lose 5-0, it's awful. There's no words for it."

The Capitals began their run of playoff seasons in 2008. Like Dallas, they started the day as a ninth-place team, but they ended up dropping a spot to 10th. They would lose a tiebreaker against every team contending for the final postseason spots in the Eastern Conference. They have lost four straight and were shut out for the seventh time this season.

Alex Ovechkin, the league's leading scorer, hasn't scored a 5-on-5 goal in over a month. "If somehow we make the playoffs playing like this, who are we kidding?" coach Adam Oates said. "We have to figure out a way to get better. We have to stick together."

Tyler Seguin scored his 33rd goal. Dustin Jeffrey got his first two of the season, and Whitney and Ryan Garbutt also scored for the Stars. Alex Chasson had three assists, and Kari Lehtonen made 35 saves for his fourth shutout.

After over-relying on Seguin and Jamie Benn to carry the scoring load, Dallas suddenly has been getting points from seemingly everyone.

"If you look at our top line, I think a lot of teams are focusing on that. They're getting the harder matchups," said Jeffrey, who has been back and forth to the minors after being claimed off waivers in November. "We have to be able to score up and down our lineup."

Seguin redirected Benn's wrist from the left circle in the first period, then there were Capitals miscues aplenty in the second, with the Stars taking advantage.

Alex Goligoski's long pass sprang a 2-on-0 break for Whitney's goal. Jeffrey scored shortly afterward, then again in the third. Garbutt capped the scoring with a short-handed goal on a breakaway.

Lightning 3, Canadiens 1
 Tyler Johnson scored the go-ahead goal on a short-handed breakaway late in the third period as host Tampa Bay and Montreal both clinched playoff berths.

Blues 1, Flyers 0 (SO)
 Ryan Miller stopped 31 shots and T.J. Oshie and Kevin Shattenkirk scored in a shootout in host St. Louis' victory over Philadelphia.

Sharks 5, Oilers 4
 Patrick Marleau scored his 32nd goal of the season with 7:29 left in the Jose over time.

Sabres 3, Devils 2 (SO)
 Tyler Ennis scored twice in the third period and again in the shootout as host Buffalo kept New Jersey winless in shootouts this season at 0-11.

Avanache 3, Blue Jackets 2 (OT)
 Gabriel Landeskog scored twice, including a power-play goal at 4:27 of overtime to help Colorado beat host Columbus and extend its winning streak to four.

Jets 2, Coyotes 1 (SO)
 Andrew Ladd scored in regulation and in the second round of the shootout and Ondrej Pavelec stopped Antoine Vermette's attempt to send Winnipeg past host Phoenix.

Hurricanes 4, Penguins 1
 Rookie Elias Lindholm scored twice for the first multi-goal game of his career as visiting Carolina led hostless Pittsburgh a chance to wrap up the Metropolitan Division tie.

Rangers 3, Canucks 1
 Martin St. Louis scored his first goal with New York and Henrik Lundqvist made 34 saves in the victory over host Vancouver.

Islanders 4, Panthers 2
 Josh Bailey scored and assisted as host New York kept up its strong finish with a victory over Florida.

Maple Leafs 3, Flames 2
 Jay McClement, Dave Blom and David Clarkson scored in host Toronto's victory over Calgary, snapping an eight-game losing streak to remain in the playoff chase.

HIGH SCHOOLS: DODDS PACIFIC

Freshmen making their mark this season

By Dave Ornauer
Stars and Stripes

It can be tough enough for a freshman just to make the roster of a high school varsity sports team, much less bear the burden of playing a major role on that team.

Yet first-year players are positively thriving throughout the Pacific this season.

Hannah Weaver and Hannah Frederick are helping Seoul American softball to an unbeaten DODDS-Korea record. Zama's Heather Hurley, Sheina Staley and Alli Chiarenza have coach Adele Coats thinking of a title in the Far East Division II tie in three seasons.

In the discus pits at Yokota, Christian Sonnenberg is unbeaten this season. Ally Strauss' hat trick rallied Kadena girls soccer to a 3-2 win at Okinawa Christian International. Panthers shortstop Macalah Danielsens is one of the team's key batters. Matthew C. Perry's Bobbi Hill leads Division II girls soccer with 10 goals.

"They're wonderful," Collins said of her freshman triad, adding that Staley is "stopping everything" behind the plate and "you can tell Heather has played. She's confident on the mound. They're getting better and better every game."

For the Falcons, Weaver, in particular, "looks like she's been at it a while," coach Julian Harden said. "She's a gifted athlete, she has that enthusiasm, that drive, that attitude that coaches look for that made me say I'll find a place for her on this team."

While most freshmen confess to nerves, as Strauss said she suffered before Wednesday's 1-0 loss at Kubasaki, others seem to relish the challenge, such as Dragons freshman keeper Kelliana Rios.

She was promoted from junior varsity to replace Harleigh Lewis, who had been red-carded in her previous match and had to sit out Wednesday's match. And Rios came away with a clean sheet and "no worries at all. No pressure at all."

On the other side of the spectrum are those coaches starting freshmen simply because they otherwise would be short of players. "They are the glue that keeps



PHOTOS BY DAVE ORNAUER, TOP, ANJU YAMANAKA, BOTTOM LEFT, AND TYLER ESPINOZA, BOTTOM RIGHT/Stars and Stripes

A number of freshmen have excelled this season in their first year of varsity competition. Clockwise, from top, Macalah Danielsens is one of Kadena's leading hitters in softball; Yokota's Christian Sonnenberg leads DODDS-Japan discus throwers with a throw of 41 meters and is unbeaten in 10 meets; Matthew C. Perry striker Bobbi Hill, on right, leads Division II girls soccer teams in goals with 10 and assists with seven.

my team together." Daegu baseball coach Michael Downes said. "If I didn't have five or six players who only have (youth services) experience, I wouldn't have a team," said coach Rich Walrath of first-year girls soccer program

Humphreys. While Kaylee Spielman came from Texas and had played for 10 years and Isabella Nocera came to Humphreys from Heidelberg Select in Germany, "a number of my freshmen do not have experi-

ence," said Walrath, who has been coaching military and high school teams for 20 years.

"Look at what we do in DODDS as ... developmental. It gives them the opportunity to develop skills, fall in love with the game I fell in

love with in the 1970s in Germany, develop confidence and do things other than hanging out, Facebook, whatever young folks do these days."

The numbers of freshman athletes with prior experience in clubs or youth sports coming to DODDS high schools in recent years has risen, but it's not across the board and it can create a wide gap between veterans of their sports and those starting out, coaches say.

Many club veterans "make a year-round commitment to soccer at an early age (and) are the ones who can make an easy transition to DODDS soccer," said Mike Callahan, who coaches his freshman son, Junta, at Kadena. Junta matriculated in Okinawa's FC Ryukyu youth academy.

Two Kadena freshmen trained in Okinawa's Diplomats multi-age-group youth program, including Strauss. Yokota freshman right-hander Clay Brownell played club ball in the States before arriving in the Pacific 18 months ago. Danielsens and several Kadena and Kubasaki teammates also play in the Lady Ambassadors club program.

Such programs "give kids confidence and gives them the technical skills to move forward in the tactical and strategic portions of the game," Walrath said.

But not everybody is so blessed. "We keep our fingers crossed during the summer and PCS shuffle, hoping for the best," Zama boys soccer coach Marc Norton said.

He has one player, Roman Duarte, who played club ball in Florida. "Since he's had tens of thousands more touches ... he is better developed" than his Trojans teammates. Unless more club veterans PCS in or Zama is allowed to play Japanese teams, "I don't expect our level to increase."

Still, the presence of freshmen in the lineup can have other qualitative benefits, coaches say. They're sometimes more coachable than experienced players.

"They are a reminder to the 'vets' that they cannot just ... coast through the season — there are some really hungry players out there who are willing to work into becoming better players," Nile C. Kinnick boys soccer coach Robert Tiffany said.

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Top performances

Girls soccer

■ Sydney Johnson scored three times and added three assists in Kubasaki's 12-2 win on Friday over Okinawa Christian International. Johnson scored on a free kick in the 73rd minute, the lone goal of a 1-0 win on Wednesday over Kadena.

■ Kaile Johnson collected her DODDS-Pacific Division I-leading 13th goal of the season as Kinnick handed American Japan in a 3-1 loss.

Softball

■ C.C. Franis struck out 15 Humphreys Black-hawks batters in Osan's 6-1 road win Wednesday.

■ Jihey Rhodes had a combined five hits, drove in five runs and stole five bases as Seoul American defeated Daegu 14-10 on Saturday after downing Osan 10-5 on Friday.

■ Freshman Alli Chiarenza got two pitching wins and helped herself by hitting two home runs and driving in four runs as Zama swept a three-game series from Robert D. Edgren.

Baseball

■ Dominic Shea pitched two-hit ball over five innings and Justin Sego got the save as Kadena edged Kubasaki 3-1 on Wednesday. It's the first

two-game winning streak for the Panthers over the Dragons in nine seasons.

■ Nile C. Kinnick senior right-hander Daniel Ross struck out 16 Yokota batters, outpitching Leo Austin, who fanned 14 Red Devils, and Chris McDonald drove in two runs as Kinnick edged Yokota 3-2 on Saturday.

Track and field

■ Anchored by senior Rahman Famell, Kubasaki's 400-meter relay team set a Pacific record with a time of 42.9 seconds Saturday. That broke Kubasaki's three-year-old mark of 43.34.

■ Distance runner Nicole Castro won two races and Timi Wardner the hurdles events as Humphreys girls won the team points chase in the program's debut Saturday.

Boys soccer

■ JoJo Byrnes scored a combined eight goals, Ben Cook added seven and Roman Duarte had three assists to power Zama past Edgren 13-0 on Saturday and Yokota 6-2 on Tuesday.

■ HokYung Adkins netted his 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th goals of the season, helping Seoul American win the first DODDS-Korea jamboree.



HIGH SCHOOLS: DODDS EUROPE



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA L. DEMOTT/Stars and Stripes

Above: Kaiserslautern's Hannahlee Acuavera dribbles up field during practice Tuesday. **Below:** Goalkeeper Anthony Walker, left, has been on the boys varsity team for four years, while sophomore midfielder Ryan Rimmler, right, is a relative newcomer.



Kaiserslautern goals include beating rival

Ramstein isn't only obstacle for soccer teams

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

O KAIERSLAUTERN, Germany ne could look at the story of Kaiserslautern's ongoing — and one-sided — soccer feud with Ramstein as a simple, straightforward one.

No one on this year's boys or girls teams has ever celebrated a Kaiserslautern win over the archrival Royals. One could presume that the program's all-encompassing goal, then, is to do just that.

That's not exactly the case. Beating Ramstein is a goal, but not either Raiders team's primary goal. Each team's primary objective this season is to win a European championship, a feat that would likely require a win over Ramstein at some point. In the meantime, games against Ramstein, like Thursday evening's girls and boys doubleheader under the lights of Kaiserslautern's new stadium, are simply a means to that eventual end.

At times, beating Ramstein is paramount.

"The Ramstein game is something special for me. I have a few friends who go to that school," sophomore midfielder Ryan Rimmler said. "And I don't like losing. Especially against our rival school."

Junior striker Lacey Peace, called up this year from the junior varsity ranks, agreed.

"Us girls are more like, 'We must get them,' than we are in our other games," Peace said during the Raiders' Tuesday practice, clenching her hands in a gesture of intensity.

That's the kind of wild-eyed determination one might expect from a long-frustrated program such as Kaiserslautern. But it's not as severe as all that.

"We're still practicing the same," Peace said moments later. "As hard as we normally do."

And players said that if they eventually graduate or move away without ever beating Ramstein, the moments that make up their Kaiserslautern career will remain just as memorable.

"The last four years we've had really, really amazing teams. And we've come a long way," senior striker Hannahlee Acuavera said, citing the Raiders girls' consecutive third-place finishes in the last two European tournaments. "I think we were grateful for third place. We worked really hard. That was better than going home with nothing at all."

"It was a lot of fun." But as sensible as those comments sound, Acuavera, now in her fourth year as a varsity player, is also prone to fantasizing about a hypothetical win over Ramstein.

"I want it more than anything in this world," Acuavera said. "I love soccer so much."

Like Acuavera, Kaiserslautern boys goalkeeper Anthony Walker is in his fourth year as a member of the Raiders varsity. He recalled a game in his sophomore season, his first year as a starter, in which a "cheap" goal allowed Ramstein to escape with a 1-1 tie. The memory of that non-victory, and the string of losses that followed it, fuels Walker's desire for "revenge."

"I only have a few more chances, and I want to leave the school knowing that I have beaten the rivals," Walker said.

A case of single-minded obsession? Not so much.

"We know that they're strong, we know they're a good team and we know we need to work as hard as we do for any game," Walker said. "Not to get it in our heads that it's Ramstein and we need to work extra hard. Because if we do that we'll overpower ourselves and make mistakes. "It's just another game for us."

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Top performances

Boys soccer

John Arnold, Wiesbaden: The senior midfielder scored three goals and added an assist in a 5-0 Warriors win over Bitburg on Saturday.

Luke Ross, Naples: The Wildcats blasted Signella 7-2 on Saturday thanks in large part to the three-goal, one-assist hat trick turned in by Ross.

Jacob Nantz, Hohenfels: The Tigers built an early 2-0 lead over Division I rival Viseck on Saturday, with both scores coming from Nantz, before taking a 3-2 loss.

Girls soccer

Begona Rodriguez Bravo, SHAPE: Bravo, indeed. The Spartans star has played a part in every Spartans goal this season, including two goals scored in the Spartans' 2-2 tie with Lakenheath on Saturday.

Kelsey Ortwine, Patch: The explosive Panthers offense has the playmaker it needs in Ortwine, who assisted on four Patch goals in a 5-0 win over Ansbach on Saturday.

Camela Brind'Amour-Riffou, AFNORTH: The Lions standout piled up three goals and three as-

sists over two weekend games, a loss to Lakenheath and a win over Menwith Hill.

Softball

Megan Buffington, Vicenza: The Cougars ace mowed down 22 Naples batters in a 10-9 loss to the Wildcats on Friday. She notched a 10-0 shutout win over Signella later in the day.

Vicky Krause, Naples: The senior star led the Wildcats to four weekend wins. She was particularly prolific on Friday, notching six hits, three RBIs and five runs scored in wins over Vicenza and Avi-

ano and earning the pitching win over the Saints.

Baseball

George Shaffer, Naples: The Wildcats heavy hitter was unstopable in four weekend victories. His combined line: 9-for-13 at the plate with 15 RBIs.

Patrick Young, Ramstein: The Royals enjoyed a revolving door to the plate in two routs of Bitburg, but Young got hot out even under those circumstances with a five runs scored and four RBIs during the doubleheader.

MLB



LENNY IONELZA/AP

Dodgers starting pitcher Zack Greinke threw five innings against the Padres in a 3-2 win.

NL roundup

Greinke, Puig lift Dodgers

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Yasiel Puig hit a 410-foot drive for a two-run homer and Zack Greinke won his season debut, leading the Los Angeles Dodgers to a 3-2 victory against the San Diego Padres on Tuesday.

Carl Crawford started the game with a base hit and Puig then drove a 2-1 pitch from Ian Kennedy into the balcony on the third deck of the Western Metal Supply Co. Building in the left-field corner. It was his first homer.

It was the second time Kennedy faced the Dodgers since June 11, when, while with Arizona, he hit Puig and Greinke with pitches, inciting a brawl at Dodger Stadium. Kennedy was suspended 10 games. He was traded to the Padres on July 31.

San Diego loaded the bases with two outs in the ninth against Kenley Jansen, on singles by Yonder Alonso and Will Venable, and a walk to Yasmani Grandal. The closer then struck out pinch-hitter Nick Hundley to earn his second save in two chances.

Greinke (1-0) went five innings, allowing two runs and two hits while striking out five and walking two.

Marlins 4, Rockies 3: Nathan Eovaldi pitched six innings as host Miami made the most of five hits to beat Colorado for the second night in a row.

Braves 5, Brewers 2: Freddie Freeman hit a pair of solo home runs and Jason Heyward added a two-run shot to back a solid outing by Alex Wood.

Heyward's homer off Kyle Lohse (0-1) put the visiting Braves on top 2-1 in the fifth and snapped a string of 22 scoreless innings against the Brewers.

Diamondbacks 5, Giants 4: A.J. Pollock broke out of a 0-for-13 start to the season with three hits, scoring twice and driving in a run for host Arizona.

Wade Miley (1-1) gave up four runs in the first then blanked the Giants for the next six innings.

Ten things to know about Wrigley

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Wrigley Field is turning 100 this year. Here are 10 things you might not know about the ballpark:

1. The ivy wall is used as a hiding place. One ball flies into Wrigley Field's ivy-covered wall and two pop out. It's happened a few times over the years, the result, some say of balls being hit there during batting practice and remaining there until something — an outfielder, maybe — slams into the wall to dislodge it. But there are also stories that players hid balls there in case they needed to find one quickly to throw a runner out. And it's said the Cubs' Hank Sauer found it a convenient place to store tobacco pouches.

2. The highest scoring game was played there. The Cubs and the Phillies played the highest scoring game in Major League Baseball history, a 26-23 affair: The Cubs won, at Wrigley on Aug. 25, 1922. The Phillies only used two pitchers the entire game.

3. Gehrig's homer. A dozen years before Babe Ruth's famed "Called Shot," teammate Lou Gehrig hit an equally dramatic homer. Gehrig was 17 when his high school team traveled to Chicago to take on a Chicago team. In the bottom of the ninth, with two outs and his team down 8-6, Gehrig hit a ball over wall and onto Sheffield Avenue to win the game.

4. The field has changed over time. The Wrigley Field grandstand is one of the most familiar sites in all of baseball. What isn't widely known is that the grandstand once stood about where the pitcher's mound is today. In the 1920s, the grandstand was sliced into 11 pieces, put on rollers and rolled back to where it is today and reassembled.

5. There was a time where it was tough to find a crowd. Year after year, the Chicago Cubs drew the fewest fans in all of baseball. Eight years in a row, until 2011, attendance topped the 3 million mark. But the Cubs drew tiny crowds for years, with one game in 1966 played before fewer than



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Reds center fielder Willy Taveras is almost lost in the ivy after catching a long fly ball at Wrigley Field last July. There are stories that players hid balls in the ivy in case they needed to find one quickly to throw a runner out.

600 fans. For a 15-year stretch ending in 1967, the Cubs never drew as many as 1 million fans and drew as few as 609,000.

6. It pioneered firsts. Wrigley was the first ballpark where fans could keep foul balls. The first permanent concession stands? They were at Wrigley. The first stadium with organ music? That was Wrigley, too.

7. There Was A Bear On The Field. Joa, a live Cub, greeted fans at the first National League game at the stadium in 1916. Local zookeeper Cy Devry led Joa around the park and even to home plate for photographers.

8. Classic touches came later. The famed marquee, scoreboard and ivy were not original parts of the ballpark. The marquee went up in 1934 and was more of a bluish color at the time. The ivy was installed three years

later. The scoreboard originally was a reddish brown with a white clock and was painted its familiar dark green in 1944.

9. It's not just for baseball. Wrigley Field has hosted everything from boxing to soccer to pro wrestling to the circus to the rodeo to concerts to a Chicago Blackhawks game. But the most unusual event? Ski jumping. On back-to-back weekends in January 1944, ski jumpers leapt from scaffolding covered in snow and ice, landing behind second base.

10. No One Has (Really) Hit The Scoreboard. About that famed scoreboard: No one's hit it. Actually no one's hit it with a batted ball, but Sam Sneed did with a golf ball. Tearing off from home plate, he drove one off the scoreboard and sent one over it before the 1951 opener against the Reds.

Field's: Park was built with retrofitting, expansion in mind

FROM BACK PAGE

what it is about Wrigley that is unique [and] the kind of place people will come to even when the team is bad."

But don't be so quick to call Wrigley Field a tired, old home of a perennial loser. It may have been the last ballpark to install lights for night games, but the park's ivy-covered walls are a defining feature of what was once a sparkling, modern ballpark run by men who were trying to create a new experience for fans.

The park was built by a man named Charles Weeghman for a team in a competition called the Federal League, which was trying to give the more established National and American Leagues — which the Cubs and the cross-town White Sox played in — a run for their money.

After hiring the same architect who a few years earlier designed Comiskey Park for the White Sox, workers needed just two months to demolish the buildings that once housed a seminary and build a simple, single-story grandstand and the rest of the 14,000-seat Weeghman Park just in time for the start of the 1914 season. Finished two years after Boston's Fenway Park, it cost about \$250,000. Two years after the park opened,

“The Cubs is sort of a Chicago institution that is not entirely dependent on the exact nature of Wrigley Field.”

John Paul Stevens

Former U.S. Supreme Court justice

the Cubs moved in.

“It was considered a great looking park, a lot nicer than the rat-infested park the Cubs were playing in on the West Side,” said Stuart Shea, author of “Wrigley Field: The Long Life and Contentious Times of the Friendly Confiner.”

More important is that it was built with an eye to the future: It could be retrofitted and expanded, something that was considered genius, he said.

From almost the day it was built, the owners started tinkering with the place. After nine homers were hit in the first three games — an astronomical total for the time — the Chicago Federals, the original tenants, picked up the left field fence and moved it back. In the early '20s, the Cubs expanded the seating capacity and the size of the playing field itself by slicing the grandstand into 11 pieces and moving them to create more space. The pitcher's

mound today sits where the batters' box used to be.

Wrigley also was keen to understand the Cubs were losing money because women simply refused to come, or let their children come, to a filthy and unsafe ballpark.

The park, renamed Cubs Park in 1919, began to feel different than anyplace else, Shea believes the reasons start with Weeghman's obsession with cleanliness, something he learned in the restaurant business. Hartig said it was William Wrigley Jr., team owner P.K. Wrigley's father, who, after a couple years of investing in the team, bought Weeghman's shares and started making changes.

“The Cubs were really the first ones to start cleaning the ballpark after every single game and [make] sure that the players always had the cleanest uniforms,” Hartig said.

Wrigley also cleaned up the way the park operated. He hired

a professional ushering service. The Cubs also started to view the park as a “green space,” kind of like an urban oasis, said Tim Wiles, former director of research at the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Now, the famed ballpark is in for another makeover: The \$500 million project, which includes a Jumbotron proposal, is on hold because the team wants assurances from the neighboring rooftop owners that they won't sue over obstructed views.

The Cubs have also said repeatedly they don't want to destroy what makes Wrigley one of the most popular and recognizable sporting venues in the country.

Still, the team argues Wrigley needs to be brought into the 21st century, generate more revenue and attract younger fans who expect things like Jumbotrons.

While some disagree, others say no change will erase what makes Wrigley Field what it is.

“The Cubs is sort of a Chicago institution that is not entirely dependent on the exact nature of Wrigley Field,” said former U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, who watched Babe Ruth's called shot from his seat near third base. “There's sort of a spirit that goes with the Cubs.”

NFL/SPORTS BRIEFS

Redskins sign explosive receiver Jackson



MICHAEL PEREZ/AP

Wide receiver DeSean Jackson, shown eluding Atlanta Falcons cornerback Asante Samuel last season, was signed by Washington on Tuesday. It was the Redskins' biggest move yet of the offseason, adding a three-time Pro Bowl receiver less than a week after the dynamic playmaker was released by the rival Philadelphia Eagles.

Ex-Eagle dynamic on the field, a distraction off of it

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Adding DeSean Jackson to an offense with Robert Griffin III should make the Washington Redskins fun to watch again.

Adding Jackson to a locker room culture undergoing yet another overhaul could be the greater challenge.

Washington made its biggest move yet of the 2014 offseason on Wednesday when Jackson returned to Redskins Park to sign his contract after two days of visits and negotiations, highlighted by a recruiting-style evening out with cornerback DeAngelo Hall, receiver Pierre Garçon and rapper Wale.

Jackson will get \$16 million guaranteed in the three-year, \$24 million deal, according to a person familiar with the terms who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the Redskins did not publicly disclose the financial details.

The Redskins are getting a three-time Pro Bowl receiver with speed, someone who single-handedly can change a defense's approach. He set career highs with 82 catches for 1,332 yards last year for the NFC East champion Philadelphia Eagles. And Jackson, who led the NFL in punt return average in 2009, can give a badly needed boost to Wash-

ington's special teams, although his production in the return game has waned in the past three years.

The Redskins are also getting a player not afraid to speak his mind and who isn't shy about his talents. He had a history of off-the-field issues in his six seasons with the Eagles. Among the lowlights: In 2011, he was deactivated for a game for being late for a team meeting and dropped more passes than usual, part of a season-long spillover from his unfulfilled desire for a new contract that led to an 11-day training camp holdout.

Last year, in Chip Kelly's first season as the Eagles' coach, Jackson fumed at members of the coaching staff on the sideline during a game and had to be restrained by two teammates, upset because he didn't get the ball when he was wide open. After the season was over, he lobbied for yet another new contract — just two years, \$48.2 million deal that included a \$10 million signing bonus.

The Eagles decided enough was enough and tried unsuccessfully to trade Jackson. They released him last week, and Jackson on the same day issued a statement aimed at quashing another off-the-field report, denying any involvement in gang activity near his hometown in Southern

California.

The Redskins are coming off a 3-13 season overwhelmed by bad chemistry between coach Mike Shanahan and franchise player Griffin. Shanahan was fired and replaced by Jay Gruden, who will be trying to set a new tone in the locker room.

The Redskins are losing one of their veteran leaders, linebacker London Fletcher, who has announced plans to retire. Fletcher's replacement, leadership-wise, might be safety Ryan Clark, who agreed to terms earlier this week and signed his deal Wednesday. The 34-year-old Clark returns to Washington after eight seasons with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

If Jackson fits in, he'll join an offense that includes skill players Griffin, Garçon, Andre Roberts, Jordan Reed and Alfred Morris — a formidable lineup if the line holds up.

The Redskins had been relatively cautious this offseason with general manager Bruce Allen in charge of the roster for the first time. Their biggest move previously had been at the expense of another NFC East rival, signing defensive lineman Jason Hatcher as a free agent from the Dallas Cowboys.

Briefly

College athletes take labor cause to Capitol Hill

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Members of a group trying to unionize college athletes sought out potential congressional allies Wednesday as they braced for an appeal of a ruling that said full scholarship athletes at Northwestern University are employees who have the right to form a union.

Former Northwestern quarterback Kain Colter, the face of a movement to give college athletes the right to unionize, and Ramogi Huma, the founder and president of the National College Players Association, had meetings scheduled with lawmakers over a two-day period.

"The goal is to make athletes have a seat at the table. Health and safety of athletes is the concern, especially to reduce the risk of brain trauma," Huma said outside the Capitol before heading to a meeting with Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio.

Among the others they expected to meet with were Rep. George Miller of California, the top Democrat on the House Education and Labor Committee, and Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., whose district includes Northwestern. They intended to make clear

one of their chief concerns, providing for athletes' medical needs. Huma said the group also was concerned that the NCAA would lobby Congress to prohibit unionizing by college athletes.

"We want to make sure they have an opportunity to hear from us directly," Huma said.

Back in Evanston, Ill., the Wildcats resumed spring practice Tuesday for the first time since the decision from a regional labor official that cleared the way for the formation of a union, setting up Northwestern as ground zero for the effort to organize athletes. The school is appealing.

When members of the football team had the chance to sign union cards back in January, some players signed their names, others did not.

Running back Venrick Mark said Tuesday that he wondered if the ones who did realized the ramifications of the decision and where it would lead.

"I don't know if people kind of knew what they were going to get into or if they thought it was going to turn out the way it did," he said.

"But at the end of the day, now it's time to get back to work. I mean, we have a job to do."

Whether being a student athlete is a job is at the center of a national debate over whether college athletes should unionize.

Could there be a division between players who signed union cards and those who did not? And what about the team's relationship with coach Pat Fitzgerald?

"It doesn't threaten anything," said Mark, who would not say whether he signed a union card.

"Northwestern has treated us all well and we know that. And we know that it is a privilege to be here so at the end of the day we're all going to support our former teammate, but we also know we're here to get a degree and we're also here to play football."

Serena Williams upset in Charleston

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Serena Williams was eliminated from the Family Circle Cup on Tuesday, stunned 6-4, 6-4 by Jana Cepelova of Slovakia in the second round.

"I'm really just dead. I need some weeks off where I don't think about tennis and kind of regroup," Williams said after the match. "I've had a long couple

of years, and I'm really a little fatigued."

Williams, the top seed and defending champion in Charleston, was looking for her second straight title and her third this year after winning a record seventh Sony Open last weekend.

Barcelona banned from signing players for year

Barcelona was banned by FIFA from signing any new players for next season after being found guilty on Wednesday of repeatedly breaching transfer regulations.

The heavy sanction, which covers the summer and January transfer windows, followed an investigation over the past year into the Spanish champion's signing of players under the age of 18 from 2009 to 2013.

FIFA found the signing of 10 un-named players to be in breach of its rules covering the protection of minors. A fine of 450,000 Swiss francs (\$509,000) was also imposed on Barcelona, which was given 90 days "to regularize the situation of all minor players concerned."

The Spanish Football Federa-

tion was also found by the world governing body to have violated the rules covering the registration of minors and fined 500,000 Swiss francs (\$565,500).

The punishment, which prevents Barcelona from signing any players until the summer of 2015, leaves recent agreements with Borussia Monchengladbach goalkeeper Marc-Andre Ter Stegen and Croatian teenager Alen Halilovic to join the club in July in Limbo.

Barcelona, which has not commented on the sanctions, has three working days to inform FIFA of an intention to appeal and then a further week to provide its reasons for challenging the punishment.

Giants sign free agent DE Robert Ayers

ROBERT RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Giants have signed former Denver Broncos defensive end Robert Ayers.

Ayers' addition Wednesday makes him the 13th veteran the team has signed since free agency started.

Ayers had a career-high 5.5 sacks last season for the Broncos.

WOMEN'S NCAA TOURNAMENT

Maryland takes out Louisville

BY TERESA M. WALKER
The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Maryland Terrapins took down the top seed to reach the Louisville Regional final, then knocked off the home team in its own arena before the sixth-largest crowd ever at this point of the NCAA tournament.

Now they want more. “We’ll just try to fly under the radar and just be who we are,” coach Brenda Frese said after Maryland held off Louisville 76-73 Tuesday night. The Terps’ latest upset sent them to the first Final Four since they won the national championship in 2006.

“Nobody expected us to be able to walk in here in front of 15,000-plus fans to be able to pull off this upset. It’s easy to say that a team should win on their home court, but this team just keeps believing that they can keep staying grounded and we’ll just continue to be true to ourselves.”

All-American Alyssa Thomas scored 22 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for Maryland (28-6), which reached the school’s fourth Final Four. The Terrapins’ second straight upset in Louisville was essentially a home game for the third-seeded Cardinals, and the crowd, which numbered 14,002, was mostly in Louisville red.

The Cardinals’ fans really turned up the volume with 2:03 left when Louisville (33-5) went on a furious rally after Maryland had been up 12.

Frese even took a timeout after



TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP

Maryland’s Malina Howard, left, shoots as Louisville’s Antonia Slaughter defends during the first half of their regional championship game on Tuesday in Louisville, Ky.

Thomas, her All-American, hit only one of two free throws with 3.5 seconds left.

Given the choice by Frese whether to foul or play defense, the Terrapins chose to double-team Shoni Schimmel and it paid off when the final shot of the Louisville star’s career clanged off the back rim.

“I was actually kind of open for me to take that shot,” said Schimmel, who had 31 points. “We perfected it, the ball just didn’t go in. The one that didn’t go in was

the last shot I wanted. But it just didn’t fall. Nothing much you can do about that.”

The fourth-seeded Terrapins will play undefeated Notre Dame (35-0) on Sunday in Nashville in a national semifinal.

Lexie Brown added 20 points for Maryland with her dad, former NBA player Dee Brown, in the stands.

Antonita Slaughter added 16 points for Louisville and Asia Taylor had 12.

Stanford outlasts North Carolina

BY JANIE MCCAULEY
The Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — All season long, Hall of Fame coach Tara VanDerveer pushed and challenged her players to do more in support of Chiney Ogwumike.

From knocking down three-pointers on the perimeter, to pounding the boards in the paint and even doing the little things like chasing down loose balls, Ogwumike needed help.

That supporting cast is a big reason Ogwumike and Stanford, after heading back to the Final Four a year ago after an early exit in the regional semifinals that served as 12 months of motivation.

Ogwumike had 20 points and 10 rebounds on a night she was far from her top form and Mikaela Ruff scored a career-high 17 points on the way to regional MVP honors in leading second-seeded Stanford past North Carolina 74-65 Tuesday night.

Music City, here come the Cardinal for the program’s 12th Final Four and a rematch with top-seeded Connecticut — winners of 44 straight games, including 76-57 at Stanford on Nov. 11.

“Nobody expects us to win



MARGIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Stanford’s Bonnie Samuelson celebrates after making a three-point shot during the first half of their regional final Tuesday in Stanford, Calif.

and that just fuels us,” Ruff said. “We’re just going to have fun.”

In front of a cheering home crowd, Amber Orange added 14 points and Bonnie Samuelson knocked down three three-pointers for 13 points off the bench for Stanford (33-3), which had its streak of five straight Final Fours snapped last March.

Since the disappointment of

that early exit against Georgia in the Spokane Regional semifinals, Ogwumike, Ruff and their fellow seniors have made it their mission to get back to women’s basketball’s biggest stage.

“At the beginning of the year when the regional sites came out and I saw they were going to Stanford, I was determined to play here, to win here to go to the Final Four,” Ruff said.

When it was decided, Stanford’s players jumped in delight and quickly pulled on hats and T-shirts and began dancing at center court. They had earned it.

“I have the utmost faith in my teammates,” Ogwumike said. “We’ve had so many people who just wanted to keep this year going. Sometimes people say you can’t win only on heart, but tonight I think we did.”

Allisha Gray scored 19 points for No. 4 seed North Carolina (27-10), which couldn’t pull off a Final Four reunion with Sylvia Hatchell after the coach’s season-long battle with leukemia. Hatchell had permission from her doctors to travel to Nashville if her team reached the Final Four.

Notre Dame, UConn headline Final Four

Both teams going to Nashville still undefeated

BY DOUG FEINBERG
The Associated Press

UConn and Notre Dame have been on a collision course all season for what would be an unprecedented national championship game.

Now the two unbeaten teams are each one victory away from a showdown in Music City. Standing in the way of the historic matchup are Maryland and Stanford.

“If they just wanted a Connecticut-Notre Dame showdown, what’d they make us do this for?” Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer quipped.

The Cardinal will face the top-seeded Huskies while the Irish will play the Terrapins on Sunday in the Final Four in Nashville, Tenn. Both games are rematches from earlier in the season.

Connecticut, which has won 44 straight games, advanced to the national semifinals for the seventh straight season. The Huskies won the national championship last year and are trying to win a record ninth title after beating Texas A&M in the regional finals.

“It’s not easy to beat anybody at this time of the year because everybody is playing their best basketball,” UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. “We beat a pretty good team ... and I’m proud of my team. I thought we were really, really good when we needed to be really, really good.”

Like the Huskies, the Irish have been to four straight Final Fours. They are the sixth school to reach the national semifinals in four consecutive years, joining UConn, LSU, Stanford, Louisiana Tech and Tennessee.

“It means so much to our program. I think it’s a statement,” McGraw said. “When Skylar (Diggins) came in, I think people expected that we would be in the Final Four, and then when Skylar graduated I don’t think anyone expected that we’d be back in the Final Four. So I think it says a lot about this team.”

The Irish’s chances of winning their first national championship since 2001 took a big blow when forward Natalie Achonwa tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee in the regional final victory over Baylor.

“We still believe,” McGraw said. “She got us to this point, now somebody else has to finish it.”

Achonwa was third on the team at 14.9 points per game, but the Irish will miss her most on the court since she led the Irish in rebounding with 7.7 per game.

The Terps advanced to their first Final Four since winning the national championship in 2006.

“There was a lot of déjà vu the last couple days,” Maryland coach Brenda Frese said. “It brings back special memories from 2006. Really, the teamwork is the same, when you talk about your players



(4) Maryland (28-6) vs. (1) Notre Dame (35-0)
AFN Sports
12:30 a.m. Monday CET
7:30 a.m. Monday JKT



(1) Connecticut (37-0) vs. (2) Stanford (33-3)
AFN Sports
3 a.m. Monday CET
10 a.m. Sunday JKT

and your staff and support staff, very similar to ‘06 in terms of just being lined up together.”

Frese doesn’t mind that all the talk seems to be about the two unbeaten teams.

“I love it. It’s par for the course,” she said. “We’ll just try to fly under the radar and be who we are. Nobody expected us to be able to pull off this upset. It’s easy to say that a team should win on their home court, but this team just keeps believing and they’re just staying grounded, and we’ll just continue to be true to ourselves.”

Maryland will have a chance to avenge an 87-83 loss to Notre Dame in late January. Both Stanford and Notre Dame advanced winning regional finals at home, while Maryland had to go into Louisville to move on.

“We had them at home and let it slip away,” Maryland star Alyssa Thomas said. “We’re a different team now and looking forward to the matchup.”

All-American Chiney Ogwumike has the Cardinal back in the national semifinals for the sixth time in seven years after beating North Carolina 74-65. Stanford was eliminated in the regional semifinals by Georgia last season, ending a streak of five straight trips to the Final Four.

Now Ogwumike has the Cardinal trying to win their first championship since 1992. Stanford had chances, losing to Tennessee in the 2008 championship game and to Connecticut for the 2010 title.

SPORTS



Jackson, Redskins reach \$24M, 3-year deal
NFL, Page 30



CHARLES REX ARNDT/AP

Above: The famed Wrigley Field marquee was not originally part of Wrigley Field. The marquee went up in 1934 and was more of a bluish color at the time. Top right: Crowds line up along the sidewalk outside Weeghtman Park on May 14, 1914. The park was home to the Federal League's Chicago Whales. Right: On Aug. 25, 1916, Cubs player George Pierce pets a bear cub while teammate Roger Bresnahan holds its leash at the first National League game at Weeghtman Park.

MLB

Field's days

Cubs trying to find balance between history and innovation as Wrigley reaches its centennial

Photos courtesy of the Chicago History Museum

By DON BABWIN AND ANDREW SELIGMAN
The Associated Press

It's hard to think of Wrigley Field as anything but a place of heartbreak — a place where fans wait, season after season, for an elusive World Series title that never comes.

Yet in the century without a championship, the ballpark has been first time and time again in changing the way America watches baseball.

It was the first to let fans keep foul balls. The first

with permanent concession stands. The first with organ music. The first to clean the park and broadcast games as part of an effort to diversify the fan base and attract women and their kids to a game traditionally more popular among men.

"We think of all this as so obvious, but back then this was considered revolutionary," said Cubs historian Ed Hartig.

The ballpark will mark its 100th birthday this spring, and the Cubs plan a celebration in April to honor one of the nation's most classic ballparks, where runs still register on a manual scoreboard and watch-

ing a game is like taking a step back in time. As the centennial approaches, the Cubs and Chicago have found themselves stuck in a debate about how far to go in modernizing the ballpark with the same Jumbotron that towers over other fields.

"When you put a Jumbotron in the outfield I think you are messing with what makes Wrigley Wrigley," said Phillip Bess, director of graduate studies at the University of Notre Dame's architecture school who helped lead an effort to save Fenwick Park from demolition. "If the Cubs do that it means they really don't understand

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