

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Army OKs masks for soldiers in S. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. Forces Korea has changed its policy to allow soldiers and other troops to wear filtering masks while in uniform as protection against poor air quality in South Korea.

Army regulations had barred soldiers from wearing the masks, which cover noses and mouths, in uniform unless they had a certified medical condition that merited an exception. By contrast, the Air Force permitted masks when pollution hit a certain level.

The new policy, posted Monday, says all servicemembers may wear approved masks while outdoors in uniform when the air-quality index is reported as orange or higher, referring to a color scheme showing pollution levels.

The change comes as people in South Korea have endured record levels of fine dust that

has smothered the country and prompted rising worries in the military community as soldiers spend a lot of time training and working outdoors.

Stars and Stripes first reported about the concerns early last month as South Korea was blanketed in record levels of fine dust for days.

More than 3,400 people signed a petition posted on Change.org last month calling for USFK, the main command in South Korea, to allow the use of masks.

“From 2015-17, air pollution levels near U.S. bases in (South Korea) exceeded U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for poor air quality approximately 100 days each year,” according to the policy.

The problem is heightened in the winter and early spring due primarily to a pollutant known as PM 2.5, fine particulate matter that can clog lungs and cause several health problems.

“Military personnel are au-

thorized to wear an approved particulate filtering disposable mask while outdoors in uniform when the AQI is reported as Orange (101-150) or higher for PM,” the policy said.

It said masks worn with uniforms must have filtration ratings of N-95 or higher, which means they may be effective at blocking up to 95 percent of fine particulates, as determined by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

Troops should also modify outdoor activity when the air quality hits dangerous levels, it said, adding that indoor use of the masks was not authorized.

South Korea has the worst air quality among a group of 35 wealthy nations, according to the most recent data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

USFK also revised its policy two years ago to give commanders at each level more latitude to move training indoors or postpone activities based on

air quality. Masks were not allowed at that time, and many said that outdoor training and other activities continued regardless of air-quality index levels.

The Air Force, meanwhile, has been more lenient thanks to a policy put in place in June 2017 by the 51st Fighter Wing at Osan Air Base, south of Seoul.

Bases also keep the communities informed with updates on Facebook and internal alert systems.

Air pollution is linked to health problems ranging from eye irritation to upper respiratory symptoms in the short term and chronic respiratory diseases like asthma in the long term. Children and the elderly are considered particularly vulnerable.

South Korea has long suffered from a phenomenon known locally as “yellow dust,” which refers to contaminated fine sand particles that blow from the desert regions of China and Mongolia.

US brings advanced F-35Bs to Balikatan exercise

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

The United States and the Philippines have kicked off Balikatan 2019, an annual military exercise involving thousands of troops and, for the first time, advanced F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters training in the Southeast Asian nation.

The drills, which are to include 4,000 Filipino, 3,500 American and 50 Australian troops, began Monday with a ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City and will run until April 12, according to local news reports.

During Balikatan, U.S. and

Philippine forces will conduct amphibious operations, live-fire training, urban operations, aviation operations and counterterrorism response on the islands of Luzon and Palawan, the Defense Department said in a news release.

“Balikatan focuses on maritime security and amphibious capabilities, as well as multinational interoperability through military exchanges,” it said.

The F-35B is the Marine Corps’ short-takeoff, vertical-landing version of the joint strike fighter, designed for air support of Marines on the ground.

The Japan-based amphibious assault ship USS Wasp with F-35Bs and Marines on board from Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force 4 — led by the 4th Marine Regiment — arrived Saturday in Subic Bay, the news release said.

“We are excited to visit the Philippines for the first time since Wasp was forward deployed to 7th Fleet,” the ship’s commander, Capt. Colby Howard said in the news release.

“Balikatan is a great opportunity for the Navy-Marine Corps team and our allies from the Republic of the Philippines to learn from one another, and

further improve our ability to operate together,” he added.

Personnel from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will observe this year’s exercise, the news release said.

Australian Special Forces, medical, engineering and chaplaincy personnel will join the drills, the Australian Defense Force said in a statement.

“The exercise allows us to build our relationship with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the United States Indo-Pacific Command,” the Australian chief of joint operations, Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, said in the statement.

Troops were trolled on April Fools' Day

BY JAMES BOLINGER

Stars and Stripes

For a brief period of suspended disbelief Monday, the Air Force authorized beards for its airmen and the Marine Corps approved barracks pets for members of the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

But the joke was on the airmen who tossed their razors or Marines who beelined to the animal shelter. They'd been trolled on April Fools' Day.

The Facebook post about beards by Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, had attracted more than 1,400 shares and comments as of Monday afternoon. It was also shared by the

popular Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook account.

The post featured a bearded man wearing a camouflage uniform beneath a headline claiming the Air Force had authorized beards, a topic that airmen regularly ask the service to review.

The same day, the Defense Visual Information Service Distribution website, a source of official news from the military, released a statement from the III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa, Japan.

"III MEF Allows Pets in Barracks" announced that a new Marine Corps order allows Marines living in the barracks to keep one pet if they submit a

package to their chain of command and complete a class, Pet Care and Training 100.1.

A photograph accompanying the announcement showed a lance corporal holding a short-haired orange cat in her barracks room.

The story continued that all pets would be required to wear a reflective belt outside their residences to ensure their "safety and protection," be fitted with a microchip and obtain a photo ID to be carried by the owner.

The announcement listed acceptable pets: dogs, cats, fish smaller than 6 inches, hedgehogs and bearded dragons, as long as they "maintain groom-

ing standards." Rodents and rabbits would not be permitted under any circumstance, according to the report.

The article concluded: "Happy April Fools' Day, III MEF!"

III MEF spokesman Lt. David Mancilla said there's a purpose behind such pranks.

"April Fools' Day allows III Marine Expeditionary Force the opportunity to build camaraderie and foster esprit de corps within our ranks, as well as highlight that the most lethal and ready military force in the Indo-Pacific region can have a sense of humor," he told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday.

Crews will survey land for Trump's border wall

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

Surveyors from the Army Corps of Engineers will spend the next week assessing sites near Yuma, Ariz., and El Paso, Texas, where construction of a border wall is projected to begin as early as next month, a defense official confirmed Friday.

The teams arrived Thursday following the transfer of funds to the corps to begin work, said Army Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, Pentagon spokesman.

The Defense Department announced March 25 that acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan authorized \$1 billion to the Army Corps of Engineers to begin planning and executing 57 miles of 18-foot-high fencing. The authorization also includes constructing and improving roads and installing lighting.

At the request of the Department of Homeland Security, the work will occur within the Yuma and El Paso sectors of the border, according to a news release about Shanahan's authorization. The El Paso sector

includes the two most western counties in Texas and all of New Mexico, based on Customs and Border Patrol's website. Yuma includes the western portion of Arizona and Blythe Station in California.

Combined, the sectors include 394 miles of the border.

Following the assessment, the corps of engineers will bid out the construction of the wall, Davis said. Army engineers will not build it. He said he estimates the Army will award a contract by the end of April and construction could begin shortly thereafter.

The construction of the wall is in support of a national emergency declaration President Donald Trump issued Feb. 15 in response to a high number of Central American families seeking asylum at the U.S. border with Mexico.

Troops are providing temporary vehicle barriers, fencing and concertina wire at ports of entry designated by Border Patrol in El Paso and Laredo field office areas. That work is expected to finish in a few weeks, she said.

2 Marine pilots killed in Arizona helicopter crash

Associated Press

YUMA, Ariz. — Two Marine pilots died in a helicopter crash during a training mission in southwestern Arizona, U.S. Marine Corps officials said Sunday.

The AH-1Z Viper crashed Saturday night while the pilots were conducting a training mission as part of a weapons and tactical instructor course, according to the Marine Corps.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

Capt. Gabriel Adibe, a Marine Corps spokesman, said the helicopter crashed on the vast Marine Corps Air Station Yuma training grounds but no additional information was immediately available.

The names of the pilots who died have not been released pending notification of their families.

The station is located about 2 miles from Yuma, and the 1,300-square-mile training ground is one of the world's largest military installations.

There have been several

fatal crashes involving Marine Corps aircraft near Yuma over the years.

In 1996, a Marine electronic-warfare plane went down during a training mission on a gunnery range near the Gila Mountains, about 40 miles east of the Yuma station, killing all four people aboard.

The crew was from the Marine base at Cherry Point, N.C., and was training at Yuma.

Two Marine pilots, a crew chief and a Navy corpsman died in a 2007 crash of a search and rescue helicopter near the Colorado River during a training mission. The crewmembers were attached to a headquarters squadron of Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma.

In 2012, seven Marines were killed when an AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter and a UH-1Y Huey utility helicopter collided in midair during a training exercise in a remote area of the Yuma training grounds. The crash site was in the Chocolate Mountains on the California side of the range.

Official: Trump team overruled denials of security clearances

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A career official in the White House security office says dozens of people in President Donald Trump's administration were granted security clearances despite "disqualifying issues" in their backgrounds, such as concerns about foreign influence, drug use and criminal conduct.

Tricia Newbold, an 18-year government employee who oversees the issuance of clearances for some senior White House aides, said she compiled a list of at least 25 officials who were initially denied security clearances last year because of their backgrounds. But she said senior Trump aides overturned those decisions, moves that she said weren't made "in the best interest of national security."

Newbold's allegations were detailed in a letter and memo released Monday by Rep. Elijah Cummings, of Maryland, chairman of the House Oversight and Reform committee. Cummings' panel has been investigating security clearances issued to senior officials including Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, former national security adviser Michael Flynn, and former White House aide Rob Porter.

The documents don't identify the officials on Newbold's list but they note that two are "current senior White House officials."

The release of the information comes about a month after The New York Times reported that Trump ordered officials to grant Kushner a clearance over the objections of national security officials and after Newbold spoke out to NBC News and other news outlets about her concerns.

It also sets the stage for another fight between the White House and the Democratic-controlled House. Cummings said he will move this week to authorize his first subpoena in the probe.

Cummings said the subpoena will be for the deposition of Carl Kline, who served as the White House personnel security director and supervised Newbold. He has since left the White House for the Defense Department.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

Newbold laid out her experience in the White House during a March 23 interview with bipartisan committee staff. Portions of that interview were in the memo released by Cummings.

According to the memo, Newbold's list of overturned security clearance denials included "two current senior White House officials, as well as contractors and individuals throughout different components of the Executive Office of the President."

Newbold said she raised her concerns up the chain of command in the White House to no avail. Instead, she said, the White House retaliated, suspending her in January for 14 days without pay for not following a new policy requiring that documents be scanned as separate PDF files rather than one single PDF file.

Newbold said that when she returned to work in February, she was cut out of the security clearance process and removed from a supervisory responsibility.

The committee has previously singled out Flynn, Porter and Kushner as it sought records from the White House about how their clearances were handled.

House panel to subpoena Mueller's full report

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The House Judiciary Committee plans to vote Wednesday to authorize subpoenas to obtain the full report of special counsel Robert Mueller, escalating a feud with the Justice Department over a lengthy document detailing findings about Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, on Monday announced plans for the panel's vote, which would take place a day after a deadline the committee set for Attorney General William P. Barr to share the report.

Barr pledged last week to release a redacted version by mid-April, well after Nadler's deadline.

"As I have made clear, Congress requires the full and complete Special Counsel report, without redactions, as well as access to the underlying evidence," Nadler said in a statement Monday.

Barr informed Congress on March 24 of Mueller's main findings, writing in a four-page letter to the heads of the House and Senate Judiciary committees that the Mueller report did not establish a criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia to sway the election and offered no conclusion on whether the president sought to obstruct justice during the investigation.

Nadler said Monday that his Democratic-led panel also plans to vote to authorize subpoenas for five former White House aides who might have received documents relevant to the special counsel's investigation: former White House counsel Donald McGahn; former chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon; former communications director Hope Hicks; former chief of staff Reince Priebus; and Ann Donaldson, McGahn's former chief of staff.

US airlines hit by delays after glitch

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A technical glitch at an outside aviation company led to delays at major U.S. airlines Monday.

The issue has been resolved, but it may cause some travelers a disruption in plans. Delays that began appearing first in Chicago, New York, Miami and Boston spread to Dallas, Atlanta, Detroit and the District of Columbia.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the technical issue hit a number of airlines and advised travelers to con-

tact airlines directly for flight information and updates. Airlines say travelers should check online for the latest updates on flights.

American Airlines said the technical issue was related to AeroData, a company that makes aircraft location and balancing technology. The glitch affected a few of American's regional carriers.

Southwest Airlines lifted an internal ground stop at 7:05 Eastern that had been implemented for about 40 minutes. The airline anticipates scattered delays.

Some United Airlines regional carriers were hampered by the issue, which resulted in delays for select United Express flights, the company said. About 150 flights were affected, according to United.

"Some flights that were affected have departed, and we're working to get all affected flights back on schedule," United said.

Delta said the outage prevented some of its Delta Connection flights from leaving on time. The airline doesn't anticipate flight cancellations.

No murder charge for 2nd suspect in Kim death

Associated Press

SHAH ALAM, Malaysia — Two years after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's half brother was killed, a Malaysian court on Monday told the only remaining suspect in custody that she would not face a murder charge, perhaps signaling the end of a case that had sparked international intrigue.

The move to reduce the charge against the Vietnamese woman, Doan Thi Huong, came three weeks after an even more stunning development in the case when prosecutors unexpectedly dropped the murder charge against Huong's Indonesian co-defendant and immediately freed her.

The two women had been the only suspects in custody after four North Korean suspects fled Malaysia following the killing of Kim Jong Nam in a Kuala Lumpur airport terminal on the morning of Feb. 13, 2017.

Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow with the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, said the decision not to charge the two women with murder likely marked the end of the case.

"This is pretty much the end as the real culprits are apparently hiding behind the veil of diplomatic immunity and state-sponsored sanctuary," Oh said.

Huong and the Indonesian woman, Siti Aisyah, have said they thought they were participating in a prank for a TV show and did not know they actually had been taking part in a high-profile murder. The two were arrested and accused of smearing VX nerve agent on Kim's face.

Lawyers for the women have previously said they were pawns in a political assassination with clear links to the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, and that the prosecution failed to show the women had any intention to kill. Intent to kill is crucial to a murder charge under Malaysian law.

TSA's social media highlight weird stuff seized at airport

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — David Johnston stood over a table full of peculiar items confiscated at Dulles International Airport: a glittery clutch with brass knuckles as a clasp, a perfume bottle shaped like a grenade, a rusted circular saw blade and a pocket-sized pitchfork.

None of those was quite right. Then Johnston saw it: a guitar shaped like a semi-automatic rifle. Bingo. It will do nicely for the Transportation Security Administration's social media accounts.

Johnston, TSA's social media director, is following in the footsteps of Curtis "Bob" Burns, who created unlikely internet buzz for the not-always-beloved agency by showcasing the weirdest stuff travelers pack in their carry-ons. He died suddenly in October at age 48.

Burns' work created a model for other federal agencies. The quirky photos combined with a hefty dose of dad humor helped lure in more than a million followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram who would then see important messages about the dos and don'ts of airline travel.

"How are we going to replace Bob? The reality is, we can't," said Johnston. "We had a unique situation with him, but we can still be entertaining and help people as we find our way forward without him."

On the blog, Burns shared a

weekly count of firearms that TSA officers found at checkpoints nationwide. He did a summary of knives and all manner of other bizarre and sometimes scary items that travelers had stuffed into their bags, pockets, purses or briefcases.

In one Instagram post, someone tried to bring on a glove with razors for fingers and Burns (naturally) made a "Nightmare on Elm Street" joke: "It's safe to sleep on Elm Street again. Freddy lost his glove at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport."

The agency's Instagram account won three Webby awards last year, including the People's Voice Award for weird social content marketing. In his acceptance speech, Burns eyed the award, shook it and declared, "This Webby is carry-on approved."

Johnston, who worked with Burns for about three years and has been in government jobs for nearly a decade, has tried to keep it up all on his own, but it's been tough.

Johnston sent out a Valentine's Day post that showed off a throwing star, ax and double-edged dagger confiscated from a passenger's carry-on bag. ("Safe travels, you romantic fool!") And it was national puppy day recently, so that was an excuse for a photo of Cole, a big-eyed TSA explosives detection dog.

TSA is growing its social media staff — bringing in

three more workers to expand its presence. The staff will continue to use fodder sent in by officers around the country, who seize all manner of unusual items people try to bring onboard.

But it's hard to find people who have both the government know-how and a sense of humor that resonates.

Johnston said the thing that made Burns' posts so special was Burns himself. "When you look at his posts, you're seeing a window into his soul. It really was from his heart. He was a fun, happy guy."

Burns' sister-in-law, Candy Creech, said he had a dry sense of humor and a hefty dose of patriotism. He had served in the Gulf War, and he worked in airports before taking over social media and believed there was public negativity around TSA. He wanted to change that.

At Dulles, in the prohibited items section, Johnston saw a few possibilities for TSA's YouTube series called "They Brought What?" including a large snow globe with a white fairy imprisoned in some kind of liquid (it's creepy and it has liquid, so they can highlight the liquid restrictions).

"The bottom line is our social media pages make travelers better informed so they have a better experience and it frees up our officers to do what they need to do — look for the bad actors," he said.

Mozambique reports 1st post-cyclone cholera death

Associated Press

BEIRA, Mozambique — Mozambique's cyclone-hit city of Beira has confirmed its first death from cholera as the number of cases of the disease has jumped to 517.

To control the outbreak, emergency clinics have been set up across Beira, a city of

500,000, said Mozambican national health director Ussene Isse, according to broadcaster TVM. Cases of the acute diarrheal disease have risen dramatically since the first five were confirmed last week. Cyclone Idai severely damaged Beira's water system when it hit on March 14.

Some 900,000 cholera vaccine doses were set to arrive Monday, according to the World Health Organization. Cholera, spread by contaminated water and food, can kill within hours but is relatively easy to treat.

More than 815 people in three countries were killed by Cyclone Idai and its effects.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police targeting ATV gangs; 1 man arrested

FL ORLANDO — Orlando Police arrested a man they say was part of a swarm of dirt bikers that hit a patrol car and that more arrests are expected.

The arrest comes as authorities are cracking down on groups of all-terrain vehicle riders who in recent weeks have hit a sheriff's deputy and assaulted a pregnant woman and her husband after a fender bender.

Orange County Sheriff John Mina said police agencies throughout central Florida met last week to plan tactics for discouraging the groups of ATV and motorcycle riders. The Orlando Sentinel reported the riders run red lights, pop wheelies and weave in and out of traffic.

University's new brew is Strawberry Milkman

NH DURHAM — A partnership between the experimental agriculture and beer brewing programs at the University of New Hampshire has produced another brew.

Strawberry Milkman is the third beer to be developed as part of the partnership between the university's brewing science program and the New Hampshire Agriculture Experiment Station.

It's described as a sweet, cloudy India pale ale and is made using strawberries developed for optimal production in New England using advanced genetic techniques.

Police arrest 9, use pepper spray at mall

MD DUNDALK — Police made nine arrests and used pepper spray to break up a disturbance involv-

ing hundreds of teens at a Baltimore County shopping mall.

Baltimore County police told news outlets the disturbance began about 9 p.m. Friday at Eastpoint Mall in Dundalk after an event there. Police said they received complaints about fights breaking out and property damage as roughly 300 teens exited the mall.

Police spokesman Shawn Vinson said nine juveniles were arrested on charges including robbery, assault and destruction of property. Local police used pepper spray to gain control of the situation, and called in Maryland State Police.

Teen trying to save dog is injured

DE NEW CASTLE — Firefighters said a 17-year-old suffered smoke inhalation trying to save a dog from a burning home in Delaware.

The News Journal in Wilmington reported that the fire occurred Saturday in a home on Robinson Drive near New Castle.

Firefighters from the Minquadale Fire Co. arrived and found the teen running in and out of the house trying to get the dog. He was taken to the hospital for treatment, and firefighters rescued the dog.

Gifted lottery ticket pays off for woman

SC CHARLESTON — A Charleston woman was given a \$3 lottery ticket and it paid off, winning her \$100,000.

WCIV-TV reported that the winning ticket was purchased at Dodges Store #863 on Johns Island. That business received \$1,000 for selling the ticket.

Having never played the lottery before, the woman

— whose name has not been released — was surprised when the Lady Jumbo Bucks Crossword ticket spelled out 11 words to win her the game's top prize. She said the ticket was a gift from "a dear friend" and she still "gets emotional thinking about it."

Girlfriend surprised with tasty proposal

SD SIOUX FALLS — A Sioux Falls woman recently visited her favorite bakery on the premise that she had won free cupcakes, but she left the shop with an engagement ring.

The Argus Leader reported that Paige TeGantvoort was excited when she received an email notification that she was the winner of a free prize from Oh My Cupcakes! in Sioux Falls. She planned to claim her prize with her boyfriend, Chase Weeden.

When TeGantvoort entered the bakery, the owner met her with a box containing six cupcakes. Her name was written on one, and the rest read "Will you marry me?"

TeGantvoort accepted while customers erupted in applause.

Pipe dream turns into nightmare for pit bull

NC CLAREMONT — A pit bull intent on chasing down a opossum was foiled when he ended up wedged about 100 feet into a pipe in North Carolina.

Claremont rescue Chief Eric Jones said in a Facebook post that his agency was called to the scene on March 26.

Rescuers dug holes in different locations to try to find Rocky, eventually locating him at a junction between the cast iron and corrugated pipe.

News outlets reported rescu-

ers took about two hours, using an electric saw, to free the 2-foot-tall dog from the 1-foot-tall pipe.

Boy missing a year found with father

FL SANFORD — A Texas boy missing for more than a year has been found safe in Florida with his father.

Sanford police said Joshua Graham, 9, was taken from Texas by his father in 2017. Authorities said Kenneth Graham, 52, did not have custody of his son and did not tell the boy's mother he was taking him.

Authorities said they located the father and son Saturday while investigating a suspicious vehicle. The child was reported missing earlier in the week. Police did not say why he was not reported sooner.

The boy is under the care of child welfare officials until he can be reunited with his mother.

Public ban on vaping extended to cannabis

CA LOS ANGELES — Vaping and cannabis will now fall under the existing smoking bans at Los Angeles County beaches, parks, government buildings and other locations.

The Los Angeles Times said the county Board of Supervisors on Tuesday updated the legal definition of "smoke" and "smoking" to cover e-cigarettes and pot.

The cannabis legalization measure Proposition 64 already bans public consumption, but county officials said they updated the ordinance to make clear using pot is illegal in places where tobacco smoking is forbidden.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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Winston, Michigan State take down top-seed Duke

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Cassius Winston put Michigan State on his shoulders and carried the Spartans into the Final Four for the first time since 2015.

The do-everything point guard took over the game when his team faced its biggest deficit and led second-seeded Michigan State to a 68-67 victory over Duke that likely ended Zion Williamson's collegiate career.

Williamson, the presumptive top pick in the NBA Draft and the biggest star of this NCAA Tournament, had a game-high 24 points and 14 rebounds for Duke. But it was Winston who stole the show with 20 points and 10 assists. He made nine of his 23 shots and never shied away from taking it at Duke and shooting at nearly every opportunity in the East Regional final Sunday.

"Now is not the time to doubt yourself," Winston said. "We've been working, we've been playing all year to get to these moments. Now's not the time to shy away from those big moments."

The biggest moment is yet to come.

Michigan State will play Texas Tech in one national semifinal Saturday in Minneapolis. Virginia faces Auburn in the other.

"We're not done yet, and it feels good," senior guard Matt McQuaid said.

Michigan State is in the Final Four for the eighth time under coach Tom Izzo, who beat Duke's Mike Krzyzewski for just the second time in 13 meetings and second time in seven NCAA Tournament games. Izzo is in the Final Four for the eighth time in his career and tied Krzyzewski what would have been a record 13th appearance.

Duke fell one step short of the Final Four after finally coming out on the losing end of a nail-biter. The loss likely ended Williamson's college career, as the freshman sensation is expected to leave Duke for the NBA.

"We're very upset, obviously, but congrats to Michigan State," Williamson said. "Just looking around the locker room and see your teammates, your brothers and you just think this group will probably never play together again."

Auburn into Final Four for 1st time

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The confetti was still swirling around Auburn coach Bruce Pearl when he gazed over a team headed to the first Final Four in school history and declared, "This one was for Chuma!"

"The next two," Pearl added with a triumphant grin, "are for Auburn."

Drawing inspiration from injured forward Chuma Okeke, the No. 5 seed Tigers finished off a joyful romp through college basketball royalty by bringing down the winningest program of all. Their 77-71 overtime win over second-seeded Kentucky in the finals of the Midwest Region on Sunday came after blowouts of Kansas and North Carolina that served notice: Auburn is more than a football school.

Jared Harper led the way with 26 points, including the tying basket in regulation and a crucial series of layups in overtime. Bryce Brown added 24 points and Anfernee McLemore came up big in the extra session, helping Auburn (30-9) set a school record for wins with its 12th straight overall.

"We wanted to make history," Pearl said. "You have to understand, at Auburn

in athletics, we're not Cinderellas in anything. We're really, really good in all those other sports. We win championships. Been a long time since men's basketball has been good."

Okeke was there in more than just spirit, too. The sophomore forward, who tore his ACL in the final minutes against the Tar Heels, was rolled behind the bench in a wheelchair early in the second half.

He was still there when the wild celebration finally began.

"Moving him to the gym, sitting him on the bench — he doesn't want the camera on him," Pearl said. "He must have been watching the first half at the hotel and said, 'I can't stay here. I got to go.'"

The Tigers had only reached the Elite Eight once before, and that was 33 years ago. But after twice losing to Kentucky during the regular season, they rose to the occasion on the game's biggest stage.

Next stop: the Final Four and a national semifinal date with Virginia.

"I'm so glad we came out and battled the whole entire 40 minutes for Chuma," Brown said. "If he was out there, he would have made a huge difference."

Women's roundup

Ionescu, Oregon knock off No. 1 Mississippi State

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Thanks to another stellar performance from Sabrina Ionescu and a lift from a home-state crowd, Oregon is heading to its first women's Final Four.

Ionescu had 31 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, and the second-seeded Ducks beat No. 1 seed Mississippi State 88-84 on Saturday.

Satou Sabally had 22 points and seven rebounds for the Ducks (33-4), who head to Tampa to face the winner of Monday's game between top overall seed Baylor and Iowa.

At the final buzzer, Ionescu jumped into teammate Ruthy Hebard's arms, and coach Kelly Graves flashed an "O" with his hands to the crowd. The Ducks had been eliminated in the Elite Eight the past two seasons.

Teaira McCowan had 19 points and 15 rebounds in her final game for the Bulldogs (33-3), who had played in the NCAA title game for the past two seasons. Two of Mississippi State's losses this season were to Oregon, and the first one was a true road game.

This time, Mississippi State just felt like the away team, even though the Bulldogs wore their home whites. Attendance at the Moda Center was announced at 11,534, with the vast majority cheering on the Ducks — a tough draw for a top seed.

Ionescu's jumper put Oregon up 78-73 with just under three minutes left. After McCowan made a pair of free throws, Ionescu added a three.

Bre'Amber Scott's layup with 54 seconds left pulled the Bulldogs within 81-77, but Maite Cazorla answered with a three-pointer for the Ducks. Jazzmun Holmes' jumper cut the margin to five points with 26.4 seconds to go, but Mississippi State could not catch up.

UConn 80, Louisville 73: Katie Lou Samuelson put UConn on her injured back and shot the Huskies into a record 12th straight Final Four.

Samuelson scored 29 points and second-seeded UConn held off No. 1 Louisville.

The Huskies (35-2) have won six national championships and had a 111-game winning streak during their remarkable Final Four run. They will be looking to try and reach the title game for the first time in three years after they have lost on last-second shots in the past two national semifinals.

Samuelson hit seven of the team's 14 three-pointers, including many big shots in the fourth quarter.

MLB roundup

Yelich helps push Brewers over Cards

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Christian Yelich hit his fourth homer of the season in the first inning and a two-run double in the ninth, leading the Milwaukee Brewers to a dramatic 5-4 win over the St. Louis Cardinals on Sunday.

Ben Gamel led off the ninth with a pinch-hit double and advanced on Lorenzo Cain's infield single off reliever Jordan Hicks' glove. Yelich then hit a liner into the gap in left-center, driving in Gamel and Cain.

Yelich tossed his helmet in the air in celebration as Cain slid face first across the plate, giving Milwaukee three wins in its opening four-game set against rival St. Louis. Yelich's teammates rushed the field and doused the reigning NL MVP with Gatorade in a raucous celebration at second.

"We were just trying to find a way to push one across and tie the game," Yelich said. "[Hicks] has great stuff. One snuck in the line, and Lo's deflected off his glove and we were able to pull it off."

Yelich began his day with a long drive into the second deck in right against Michael Wacha, tying the major league record for homers in consecutive games to start a season. He also became the first player to win the MVP award and then homer in his first four games of the next season.

"What we're witnessing is

greatness," Milwaukee slugger Ryan Braun said. "It's absolutely incredible."

Paul Goldschmidt, Matt Carpenter and Paul DeJong homered for St. Louis, but Hicks (0-1) blew his first save opportunity of the season.

Mariners 10, Red Sox 8: Omar Narvaez hit a three-run homer off Rick Porcello in host Seattle's seven-run third inning.

Dee Gordon had two hits and three RBIs as Seattle put together another impressive performance at the plate. The Mariners scored 34 times while taking three of four from the defending World Series champions in their first series at home.

Jay Bruce also connected for Seattle, and Mitch Haniger had two hits and two RBIs. The Mariners have 15 homers so far, hitting at least one in each of their six games.

Nationals 6, Mets 5: Trea Turner homered twice, including a game-ending solo shot, and host Washington beat New York for its first win of the season.

Turner earlier hit a three-run homer and also scored in the fifth to put the Nationals up 4-1. They let a 5-2 lead evaporate in the eighth before Turner ended it with a drive off Justin Wilson (0-1).

Patrick Corbin gave up two runs and seven hits in six innings in his Washington debut.

Orioles 7, Yankees 5: Re-

nato Nunez, Trey Mancini and Joey Rickard hit Baltimore's first home runs of the year to beat host New York in a game delayed more than three hours by rain.

Coming off a 115-loss season under Buck Showalter, the Orioles and new manager Brandon Hyde opened by taking two of three from the 100-win Yankees. Baltimore hadn't won two in a row since August.

Padres 3, Giants 1: Manny Machado drove in the go-ahead run with a bases-loaded grounder for host San Diego in the seventh inning.

Chris Paddack struck out seven in five impressive innings in his major league debut. Four pitchers combined on a two-hitter for the Padres, who took three of four from San Francisco.

Rangers 11, Cubs 10: Joey Gallo scored on a wild pitch in the ninth inning, sending host Texas to the win.

With one out in the ninth and Chicago playing five infielders, Gallo raced home from third base when Pedro Strop's pitch bounced past catcher Willson Contreras.

Delino DeShields hit his first career grand slam for Texas. Jeff Mathis and Asdrubal Cabrera also went deep.

Rays 3, Astros 1: Yonny Chirinos covered splendidly for a taxed bullpen, Austin Meadows hit his second homer and host Tampa Bay took three of four games from Houston.

The Rays had planned to use an opener for the first time this season, but manager Kevin Cash instead turned to the 25-year-old Chirinos rather than push his fatigued relievers. Chirinos pitched seven innings of one-run ball.

White Sox 6, Royals 3: Lucas Giolito took a no-hit bid into the seventh inning in his first start of the season, and visiting Chicago averted a three-game sweep.

Yonder Alonso and Jose Abreu homered on consecutive pitches in the fourth off starter Jorge Lopez (0-1).

Twins 9, Indians 3: Nelson Cruz hit his first homer with host Minnesota, and Michael Pineda was stellar in his first pitching appearance since 2017.

Pineda had Tommy John surgery after his previous start July 5, 2017, while with the New York Yankees, and this was his first time back on a big league mound. Pineda pitched four scoreless innings, striking out five with one hit and one walk.

Dodgers 8, Diamondbacks 7: A.J. Pollock hit a key two-run double during host Los Angeles' eighth-inning rally.

Pollock tied it at 7 with a shot down the line against Yoshihisa Hirano (0-1) and advanced to third when right fielder Adam Jones misplayed the ball. Pollock, a former Diamondback who signed with Los Angeles this offseason, scored on Max Muncy's sacrifice fly.

Harper helps power Phillies to sweep of Braves

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Bryce Harper turned Philly into a baseball city again with his star power, his slugging and a sweep. With a pair of mammoth homers making him at home in his new digs, Harper is now ready for a blast from the past.

The six-time All-Star homered for the second straight game to cap a fantastic debut weekend and the Philadelphia Phillies completed a three-game sweep of the

Atlanta Braves with a 5-1 victory Sunday night.

Harper connected on a solo shot to right field off Shane Carle in the seventh inning that had the crowd resuming its "MVP!" chants from a day earlier and the Phillie Phanatic dancing atop the dugout.

"If it hits the front row, I'm fine," Harper said. "I don't care how far it goes. It's not how far, it's how many."

The sweep was complete — and now it's time for an early reunion.

Harper, the hit of the city, is back on familiar turf this week when the Phillies head to Washington for a two-game set with the Nationals.

The outfielder left as a free agent for the Phillies and a 13-year, \$330 million contract and digs in to an unknown fan reaction on Tuesday.

"I'm sure some cheers, some boos as well," Harper said.

Jake Arrieta (1-0) walked six, struck out six and allowed a run in six innings.

NBA roundup

Warriors roll to Pacific title

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry scored 25 points with five three-pointers and the Golden State Warriors beat Charlotte 137-90 on Sunday night to clinch their fifth straight Pacific Division title and hand the Hornets their worst loss of the season.

Curry has made five or more threes in a career-best eight straight games. He has 335 so far, his second-most in a season behind the NBA-record 402 he hit in 2015-16.

Klay Thompson scored Golden State's initial nine points and finished with 24 and six threes.

"Obviously when you're scoring like we were tonight it's fun for everybody, no matter who's finishing the possessions," Curry said.

Willy Hernangomez scored 22 points — 14 on free throws — for the Hornets. Charlotte leading scorer and All-Star Kemba Walker was held to nine points for his third game of the

season not reaching double figures.

Wizards 95, Nuggets 90: Tony Brown Jr. scored 24 points, Thomas Bryant and Jabari Parker each had 20, and Washington held host Denver to just 28 points in the second half.

Nikola Jokic had 23 points and 14 rebounds for Denver, which lost for the third time in five games and saw its lead in the Northwest Division over Portland cut to three games.

The loss came at price for Denver. Starting point guard Jamal Murray left the game in the third quarter with a sprained left ankle and didn't return.

Mavericks 106, Thunder 103: Trey Burke had 25 points and eight assists, Dwight Powell scored the winning basket on a dunk with 21 seconds left and Dallas, playing without star rookie Luka Doncic, stunned host Oklahoma City.

Russell Westbrook had 25 points, 11 rebounds and 11 as-

sists for his 30th triple-double of the season.

Hawks 136, Bucks 135 (OT): Trae Young grabbed a deflected inbound pass and made a last-second jumper to lift Atlanta over short-handed Milwaukee.

The host Bucks played without Giannis Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton. Antetokounmpo, one of the favorites for the NBA MVP award, was held out due to right ankle sprain. Middleton has a sore groin.

Clippers 113, Grizzlies 96: Danilo Gallinari had 27 points and 15 rebounds, and Los Angeles routed visiting Memphis for its league-leading 13th win in 15 games.

Lakers 130, Pelicans 102: Alex Caruso scored a career-high 23 points in his 20th NBA game of the season, and visiting Los Angeles beat New Orleans.

Kings 113, Spurs 106: Buddy Hield scored 26 points and host Sacramento snapped an 11-game skid in San Antonio.

Hamlin gets win despite pit penalties

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Denny Hamlin had such a fast car at Texas that he was able to win even after two penalties on pit road and some other issues during green flag conditions.

While Hamlin was reviewing all that happened, crew chief Chris Gabehart interrupted — "I think you passed 327 cars by my count, but maybe not," he said.

Hamlin, who once missed the entry to pit road and also ran out of fuel during the race, did do a lot of passing to get to Victory Lane on Sunday. He led the final 12 laps and 45 overall to overcome those miscues and the penalties — one when he exited pit road too fast early in the day and another for a debatable tire violation against his team during a stop just past the halfway point.

"I was just beating my head against the steering wheel thinking, 'Man, we're going to finish bad with a really fast race car,'" Hamlin said. "We just kept digging and Chris kept doing a good job encouraging us. We had a long way to go. We kept passing cars and passing cars."

Hamlin's Joe Gibbs Racing No. 11 Toyota finished more than 2.7 seconds ahead of Clint Bowyer. The 334-lap race at the 1½-mile track, with only three cautions outside the two stage stoppages, featured 27 lead changes among 13 drivers.

It was the 33rd career victory for Hamlin. He won the season-opening Daytona 500 after he went winless last year and ended a streak of 12 consecutive seasons getting into Victory Lane.

All four Stewart-Haas Racing cars finished in the top eight, led by Bowyer and Daniel Suarez finishing third. Aric Almirola and Kevin Harvick were seventh and eighth.

Erik Jones, another Gibbs driver, finished fourth and polesitter Jimmie Johnson was fifth.

NHL roundup

Flames clinch top spot in West

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — It wasn't discussed before the Calgary Flames took the ice Sunday.

It didn't have to be.

With a first divisional championship in 13 years within their grasp, they left nothing to chance.

The Flames scored three times in less than two minutes late in the first period on their way to clinching the top spots in the Western Conference and the Pacific Division with a 5-3 victory over the San Jose Sharks on Sunday night.

"Nothing was said," Flames goalie Mike Smith said when asked about the mood in the locker before the game. "It was

pretty quiet as far as talking about that. There was a feeling that everyone knew what was at stake here, and I think we did a good job of looking after what we needed to look after."

Sean Monahan, Mark Jankowski, Dalton Prout, Mikael Backlund and Michael Frolik all scored for Calgary, which won for the eighth time in 11 games. The Flames will have home-ice advantage throughout the Western Conference playoffs.

It's the first time they have won their division since 2006.

Coyotes 4, Wild 0: Darcy Kuemper made 36 saves for his fifth shutout of the season, Josh Archibald scored two goals and

host Arizona kept its playoff push going.

Penguins 3, Hurricanes 1: Matt Murray stopped 37 shots and host Pittsburgh inched closer to a playoff berth.

Rangers 3, Flyers 0: Alexander Georgiev made 29 saves and Ryan Strome scored for the third consecutive game to lead visiting New York.

Blue Jackets 4, Sabres 0: Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 38 shots, leading visiting Columbus to its fifth straight victory.

Red Wings 6, Bruins 3: Taro Hirose scored his first NHL goal early in the third period, just 8 seconds after Anthony Mantha completed his first hat trick for Detroit.