

DOD redactions mean GAO may not issue sub report

Bloomberg

A congressional watchdog probably won't release a sanitized audit raising questions about the construction timetable for the Navy's next-generation submarine because Pentagon censorship has gutted the document, the agency said.

The Government Accountability Office report gives away the gist of its findings with its title: "Columbia Class Submarine: Construction Schedule Is Not Reliable." But the GAO said the Navy and Pentagon blacked out so much of the report that it won't be able to say much more.

Judging by the title, the findings could be another blow for the Pentagon's premier program for a new, \$132 billion class of submarines to be armed with intercontinental ballistic missiles. The program already has little to no margin for error to meet a contractual schedule deadline set by the Navy.

Navy plans call for the first vessel in the 12-submarine program to deploy in 2031, with the service seeking delivery by April 2027 to allow sufficient time for testing and improvements. The Columbia, set to be a cornerstone of the U.S. nuclear triad along with bombers and land-based missiles, is being built by General Dynamics and HII, previously known as Huntington Ingalls Industries.

Nine days after the GAO released the downbeat title of the report, Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro testified to the House appropriations defense panel that the contractors' aspirational 78-month construction schedule — created to provide a margin for unforeseen problems — has now stretched by about six months, pushing it to the Navy's "must-meet" schedule of 84 months, or seven years.

The censorship of the GAO report dated March 20 is the latest example of the Pentagon relying on the label "Controlled Unclassified Information" to block the release of information it doesn't want made public even if none of the details are classified. The CUI label has drawn the ire of

congressional committees, and the Pentagon is reviewing its use. Pentagon Inspector General Robert Storch has a separate inquiry underway to determine whether employees are receiving proper training and if the designation is being overused.

"GAO is still considering the possibility of issuing a public version," the agency said in a statement on the submarine report. "However, based on the extensive CUI markings, we do have a concern that a public report might not appropriately highlight GAO's findings."

Asked why the Pentagon's acquisition office deemed much of the report CUI and whether it will release the Defense Department's formal response, spokesman Jeff Jurgensen said "as the department's response is still under review, we will not comment or release the contents of the report."

"Public release of the report and subsequent comments will be through GAO, as they are the release authority," he said.

The agency disagreed, saying "GAO does not classify any materials as not being able to be public. Only the agencies have that classification authority, and in this case we are following the Navy's determination that the report cannot be publicly released."

Lt. Cmdr. Javan Rasnake, a Navy acquisition spokesman, said the service "followed the standard best practice of rigorously reviewing the material to ensure operational security is maintained. The GAO determines whether versions of their reports will be made publicly releasable."

"Overall, the Columbia program remains on track," Rasnake said.

The supplier base and industrial base workforce remain the top risks to the submarine program, and the Navy is "addressing workforce trade skill gaps and constraints," he said.

The Navy and the GAO were able to reach agreement on public versions of two previous reports about the Columbia program, most recently in January.

Navy destroyer steams through Taiwan Strait

By ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

A Navy guided-missile destroyer steamed through the Taiwan Strait on Sunday, less than a week after Chinese forces concluded a three-day exercise in the area to protest meetings between Taiwan's president and U.S. lawmakers.

Over the course of 16 hours, the USS Milius steamed northeast through the 110-mile-wide channel that separates mainland China from Taiwan, U.S. 7th Fleet spokeswoman Lt. Kristina Wiedemann told Stars and Stripes by email Monday.

She said the destroyer's trip through the area was unrelated to Chinese military exercises there last week.

"This was a routine transit of the Taiwan Strait from the South China Sea to the East China Sea in accordance with international law," she said. "U.S. Navy ships and aircraft routinely use the Taiwan Strait to transit between the two and have done so for many years."

Beijing on April 7 launched a series of exercises in the strait and elsewhere around Taiwan to protest Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen's visit with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on April 6 and U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Michael McCaul on April 8.

Dubbed Joint Sword, the exercise saw scores of aircraft and dozens of ships operating in the region on a daily basis in what China's Defense Ministry described as a "serious warning against the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces colluding with external forces and provocations."

China's Eastern Theater Command monitored "the entire process" of the Milius' journey through the Taiwan Strait, according to a Monday post on the command's official Weibo account. Chinese forces hailed the Milius during its transit, Wiedemann said, but all communications were "consistent with international norms and did not impact the operation."

Sunday's passage marks the Navy's third there this year.

Discord leaks show broad challenge facing DOD

The Washington Post

For years, the U.S. military has pushed to meet prospective Generation Z recruits on Discord, the online group-chat tool where many spend their time. It even runs a 17,000-member chatroom there for service members to talk about first-person shooter games, meet with career counselors and participate in what one sergeant called the “Army of tomorrow.”

But Defense Department officials have also struggled to confront the risks of how Discord’s closed channels operate — and the ease with which they can be used to expose military intelligence. Last month, in a detailed guide aimed specifically at Discord users, Special Operations Command, which oversees the country’s most elite forces, told service members: “Don’t post anything in Discord that you wouldn’t want seen by the general public.”

By then, hundreds of classified documents had already spilled onto a Discord server frequented by a 21-year-old National Guard airman, Jack Teixeira, who had used the government secrets, interviews and an FBI charging document suggest, to impress the teenagers and 20-somethings who’d joined the chatroom.

That attempt to flex his military status for online approval ended with Teixeira’s arrest Thursday. On Friday, he was charged with two counts of retaining and sharing classified national defense information, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

But the arrest doesn’t end the dilemma for the military: how to supervise a young workforce that has access to classified secrets but lives much of its life online — including in corners of the internet where many share a fascination with military hardware and an eagerness to show off for strangers and friends. Two-thirds of U.S. military personnel

are under the age of 30, with the vast majority of those under 25.

“Young men who may not feel their life gives them cachet and importance, they’re trying to find that online ... often by attaching themselves to the gravitas of war and combat,” said James D. Ivory, a Virginia Tech professor who researches the social dimensions of online communities and video games.

Some of them, he said, seek to overcome feelings of isolation and gain clout with their peers by spending time in these small online communities where they may feel they can push the boundaries and build camaraderie — even though the groups offer only the illusion of privacy and control.

“We’re seeing massive security breaches and potential global instability just because someone was insecure about their popularity,” he added, “and wanted people to know they knew cool stuff about the military.”

Video games are one of the most popular forms of media for the 18- to 21-year-olds who are the target for the Defense Department’s recruiting efforts and make up much of its junior ranks. The military sponsors esports tournaments to drive interest and advertises on the popular game-streaming site Twitch.

Many gamers have flocked to Discord for its fast-moving mix of public and private chatrooms, known as servers, where members can exchange jokes, memes and voice clips in a place largely invisible to the open web. Founded in 2015 in San Francisco, Discord says its 19 million servers attract 150 million active users every month.

Teixeira’s group first met up on a Discord server devoted to Oxide, a YouTube creator known for his gaming clips and detailed breakdowns of combat rifles, body armor and military loa-

douts. The server, like many on Discord, was frenetic and irreverent: A clip from 2020 shows the room devolving into a chaos of gunfire noises and shouts of “Allahu akbar.”

A close-knit group from that server broke off into its own — named, for a pornographic meme, Thug Shaker Central — where they chatted about guns, games and geopolitics, and exchanged dark and racist jokes, members told *The Washington Post*.

Teixeira began sharing the documents late last year, FBI investigators said. By last month, a group member had reposted some of them in a separate Discord server, effectively sparking their viral spread.

In the offline world, Teixeira had worked in a relatively low-level IT-focused role as a “cyber transport systems specialist” in the Air National Guard, which gave him access to a computer network hosting top-secret information.

He worked at Otis Air National Guard Base in Cape Cod, Mass., far from the grisly realities of combat. When federal agents arrested him Thursday at his family home in the woody suburb of Dighton, Mass., he was dressed in gym shorts and a green T-shirt.

In the Discord server, though, Teixeira had built a devoted following as “O.G.,” framing himself as a gun lover with a honed sense of combat strategy and intimate access to military secrets. A former Thug Shaker Central member told *The Post* that O.G. had shared the documents to educate his peers and build social capital on a slice of the internet where he was king.

Teixeira’s profile on the gaming marketplace Steam shows he had been playing a lot of first-person shooters and military simulations with millions of players: the realistic military shooter “Arma

3,” the hardcore survival game “Project Zomboid” and the battle royale shooter “PUBG: Battlegrounds.”

But he also inhabited a die-hard subculture attracted to the precise details of military weapons, technologies and strategies. His ability to use those secrets to gain him credibility within the group, members said, ended up becoming a temptation he could not ignore.

The leaks could amplify calls in Washington to more closely monitor chatrooms and social media. Such a measure is not unheard of: Undercover governmental investigators have in the past closely monitored jihadi forums organized by Islamic State and al-Qaida militants for the purposes of investigation or intervention.

But civil liberties advocates have argued such tactics could violate Americans’ First Amendment rights of free expression or their Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches.

“We do not have nor do we want a system where the United States government monitors private internet chats,” Glenn Gerstell, the former general counsel of the National Security Agency, told NBC on Wednesday.

On Discord, some servers have already joked about the possibility of being surreptitiously infiltrated by the government. Using a word first coined on the anything-goes message board 4chan, people commonly accuse others of being “glowies” — federal agents whose out-of-place behaviors are so obvious that they practically glow.

But surveilling gamer chatrooms might also end up pushing away the same young recruits the military desperately needs, all for questionable practical gain: The internet is full of ways to anonymously share images, videos and documents.

ISIS leader targeted in Syria by US forces

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A unilateral strike by U.S. troops in northern Syria that targeted an Islamic State senior leader killed at least two people, U.S. Central Command said in a statement Monday.

A helicopter raid by American forces resulted in the deaths of two people who were armed in addition to the “probable death” of a senior ISIS leader responsible for planning attacks in the Middle East and Europe, the command said. No U.S. troops were injured in the raid, CENTCOM said in the statement.

The statement added that no U.S. helicopters were damaged, an apparent reference to local reports saying the opposite.

The raid took place east of Aleppo and involved two missiles fired at a building where an ISIS

commander had been living for a few months, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said in a Facebook post Monday.

The operation killed two members of the Soqour Al-Shamal faction, a Turkish-backed militia, and took place in an area of Syria controlled by militant groups backed by Turkey, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights post said.

A U.S. official confirmed that the post referred to the same CENTCOM raid Monday.

U.S. forces will do a DNA test on human remains they secured from the raid, said the U.S. official, who insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the record.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said the operation was launched from a base near

the town of Kobani and also said the attack targeted Soqour Al-Shamal, The Associated Press reported Monday. The SDF has partnered with the United States in anti-ISIS operations.

The Syrian volunteer rescue group known as the White Helmets reported a helicopter raid at approximately 1:30 a.m. Monday in a post on its Twitter page. The White Helmets also said the raid took place east of Aleppo, adding the group had transported two injured people to a hospital for treatment and that the two died. A third person was killed as well, and family members took that person's body, according to the group.

The U.S. has about 900 service members in Syria, part of joint efforts with Kurdish fighters to prevent an ISIS resurgence, according to CENTCOM. The U.S. also

has about 170 contractors in Syria, CENTCOM spokesman Lt. Col. Dave Eastburn said last month.

These forces launched at least 34 operations against ISIS in the first three months of the year, statements by CENTCOM said.

In 2019, ISIS, which took over much of Iraq and Syria in 2014, lost the last territory it held. About 10,000 ISIS fighters remain in detention camps in northeastern Syria.

In October 2022, the leader of ISIS, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, was killed in battle with Syrian rebels in southern Syria. His predecessor, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, was killed in a U.S. raid in northwestern Syria earlier that year. ISIS founder Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi died in a raid by U.S. forces in October 2019.

Navy unveils 5 early design ideas for future DC museum

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Navy on Thursday unveiled five eye-catching design concepts for its planned new national museum in Washington, D.C.

The ideas are not part of an official design competition, which will come later, but are meant to signal the progress of an enterprise that could bring a dramatic new presence to M Street near the Navy Yard, the Navy says.

The offerings, displayed at an afternoon event at the Navy Yard, came from noted architectural firms, and presented some striking designs — one of a building with wings that look like sails, and one with a submarine conning tower in a pool of water out front.

“I was kind of blown away,” said retired Rear Adm. Samuel J. Cox, director of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

“It’s not the final design competition for actually building the museum,” he said in a telephone

interview last Tuesday. “But one of these firms could wind up being the finalist for that when it occurs. Or it could be somebody else.”

The formal competition will come after the Navy Museum Development Foundation raises enough money to move forward, he said. The Navy envisions a museum campus of about 270,000 square feet, including about 100,000 square feet of gallery space, according to MGAC, a consulting firm for the service.

The Navy announced in January that five architecture firms had been chosen to develop ideas for the new museum. Frank Gehry Partners offered what looks like a majestic building largely made of glass. The DLR Group presented a design that included the submarine conning tower. Perkins+Will’s design featured a glass facade flanked by wings that resembled a sailing ship.

The service hopes to break ground in the fall of 2025.

Thousands enjoy Iwakuni open house despite rain

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — A rainy day dampened but failed to deter crowds from the first open house at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni south of Hiroshima since the start of the COVID pandemic.

Approximately 62,000 people attended the 44th Friendship Day on Saturday at MCAS Iwakuni, base spokesman Maj. Gerard Farao told Stars and Stripes by email Monday. That figure is less than half the estimated 165,000 who visited the last open house in 2019.

Morning rain canceled some aerial demonstrations and pushed others into the early afternoon, including flights by a Japanese aerobatic team in an EA300 and a Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II.

Despite the weather, spectators watched the Pacific Air Force F-16 Demonstration Team and a Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet

flyover. But the headliner, the Japan Air Self-Defense Force demonstration team, Blue Impulse, did not make it off the ground.

“While the weather may not have been exactly what we wanted, and there had to be a few adjustments made to the schedule, it was great to see the smiles on everyone’s faces,” Col. Richard Rusnok, the base commander, said in post Sunday on the base’s official Facebook page.

The event was jointly hosted by Fleet Air Wing 31 of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, U.S. Navy Carrier Air Wing 5 and the Marine Corps’ Marine Aircraft Group 12.

One visitor who attended previous open houses noticed an improvement in collaboration.

“This one is a markup. I’ve seen a lot more cohesiveness between the forces,” John Watson, 63, a Canadian living near Takamatsu, Japan, told Stars and Stripes at the event.

SpaceX scrubs 1st launch attempt of its new rocket

Associated Press

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas — SpaceX called off its first launch attempt of its giant rocket Monday after a problem cropped up during fueling,

Elon Musk's company had planned to fly the nearly 400-foot Starship rocket from the southern tip of Texas, near the Mexican border.

The countdown was halted at the 40-second mark because of a stuck valve in the first-stage booster.

Launch controllers couldn't fix the frozen valve in time, and canceled the attempt. The countdown continued, and fueling was completed, as a dress rehearsal.

No people or satellites were aboard. There won't be another try until at least Wednesday.

The company plans to use Starship to send people and cargo to the moon and, ultimately, Mars.

On the eve of the launch attempt, cars, campers, RVs and even bicycles and horses jammed the only road leading to the launch pad, where the stainless steel rocket towered above the flat scrubland and prairie. Enthusiasts posed in front of the giant letters that spelled out Starbase at the entrance of the SpaceX complex, and in front of the rocket two miles farther down the road, which ended at the gulf.

On Monday, spectators were barred from the area, and instead packed a beach about six miles away on South Padre Island.

Ernesto and Maria Carreon drove two hours from Mission, Texas, with their two daughters, 5 and 7, to watch.

"I got sad. They got sad," when the launch attempt was canceled, Maria Carreon said.

They can't return for the next try but planned to have fun on the beach Monday.

Scientists say bats imperiled by climate

Associated Press

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — More than half of North America's bat species are likely to diminish significantly as climate change, disease and habitat loss take their toll, scientists warned Monday.

A report by experts from the U.S., Canada and Mexico said 81 of the continent's 154 known bat types "are at risk of severe population decline" in the next 15 years.

The "state of the bats" report was published by the North American Bat Conservation Alliance, a consortium of government agencies and private organizations.

"They need our help to survive," said Winifred Frick, chief scientist at Bat Conservation International, one of the participating groups. "We face a biodiversity crisis globally and bats play a very important role in healthy ecosystems needed to protect our planet."

Bats give U.S. agriculture a \$3.7 billion annual boost by gobbling crop-destroying insects, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Some are plant pollinators. Bats also serve as prey for other animals, including hawks, owls and weasels.

Millions have died since 2006 from a fungal disease called white-nose syndrome, which attacks hibernating bats and creates fuzzy spots on their muzzles and wings.

It causes them to wake early from hibernation and sometimes fly outside. They can burn up winter fat stores and eventually starve.

Eight U.S. bat species are listed as endangered, or on the brink of extinction.

Fox News, Dominion Voting trial delayed; settlement a possibility

The Washington Post

The beginning of the much-anticipated defamation case between Dominion Voting Systems and Fox News has been delayed by one day, until Tuesday, to allow both parties to hold conversations about the possibility of a settlement, according to two sources with knowledge of the situation.

The judge in the case, Eric M. Davis, said in court Monday morning that one-day delays are not uncommon in such cases. "This does not seem unusual to me," he said.

He suggested the trial will still continue as scheduled, with prospective jurors expected to arrive Tuesday morning. Jury selection had been scheduled to conclude on Monday and then both sides were expected to give opening statements, kicking off a weeklong trial.

Voting technology company

Dominion filed a \$1.6 billion defamation lawsuit against the network alleging that Fox guests and hosts defamed the company and severely damaged its business by connecting it to a plot to fraudulently steal the 2020 presidential election.

The judge announced the delay Sunday night and said Monday he would not give any further information about the cause. "This is not a press conference," he said. "I don't do that."

But two people familiar with the case said the two sides were scheduled to meet Monday to determine if a last-minute deal to avoid trial could be brokered.

One of the people said the judge had asked the parties to make a final effort to settle the issue before proceeding with a trial.

The two people spoke on the condition of anonymity to disclose sensitive information.

Spokespeople for Dominion and for Fox News's parent company, Fox Corp., declined to comment.

Late settlement talks were first reported by the Wall Street Journal, which, like Fox News, is controlled by Rupert Murdoch's family.

Fox and Dominion engaged in a round of mediation in December 2022 but were unable to reach a settlement agreement at that time, the court has previously said.

If the case proceeds to trial, a jury would ultimately decide how much to award Dominion in damages; the voting technology company's lawsuit sought \$1 billion in "lost enterprise value" and \$600 million in lost profits.

Fox has aggressively contested Dominion's figures as out of line with the voting technology company's value.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: 5 people shot, 2 dead at chicken fight

HONOLULU — Two victims died after five people were shot during an altercation at a late-night chicken fight Friday in Honolulu, police said.

Honolulu police responded to a call about shots fired just past midnight Friday and were searching Saturday for a suspect believed to be in his 20s who allegedly shot the others who were attending the event, KHON-TV reported.

“At the end of the fight, a group of males started arguing and then it escalated to a physical altercation, at some point gunshots were fired, hitting the five people who were in the immediate area,” Honolulu Police Department Lt. Deena Thoemmes told KHON.

Police said a 59-year-old woman and a 34-year-old man were pronounced dead at a hospital, KHON reported. Three men aged 38, 40 and 57 were shot, but were treated and released from a hospital, KHON reported.

Police aware of letters sent to lawmakers

ME AUGUSTA — Maine legislative leaders notified Capitol Police that inflammatory letters from a white nationalist organization have been mailed to lawmakers’ homes in an attempt to harass and intimidate, they announced Friday.

“We cannot state this forcefully enough: We have zero tolerance for white nationalist groups’ behavior or intimidation,” Senate President Troy Jackson and House Speaker Rachel Talbot

Ross, both Democrats, said in a statement Friday.

The letters last week claimed “ethnic Europeans” are being defamed, disenfranchised and threatened with “demographic replacement.”

“The groups issuing these messages masquerade as seeking social justice, yet in reality distort information to create false equivalency to misdirect the public and stoke racial tensions. The state Legislature is a place where lawmakers, members of the public and professional staff deserve safety, security and the certainty that the democratic process will operate without harassment,” the leaders said.

Rutgers, unions agree to terms, classes to resume

NJ NEW BRUNSWICK — Rutgers University and union representatives have announced an agreement on a framework for new contracts with several faculty unions, allowing a halt to a five-day strike that was the first such job action in the 257-year history of New Jersey’s flagship university,

Rutgers said early Saturday that the agreement on the framework on economic issues was reached late Friday night with the aid of Gov. Phil Murphy, and closure on that framework “will allow our 67,000 students to resume their studies and pursue their academic degrees.”

The unions representing professors, part-time lecturers and graduate student workers told members that they had agreed to suspend the strike and return to work, but more issues need to be resolved before members would have a tentative agreement to

vote on.

The unions said the framework included “significant” pay increases for adjuncts and substantial raises for graduate student workers, as well as more job security for adjunct and nontenure-track faculty, union representation for graduate fellows and other improvements.

Ferry runs aground, no reports of injuries

WA SEATTLE — A passenger ferry carrying hundreds of people ran aground near Bainbridge Island west of Seattle on Saturday but there were no reports of injuries or contamination, authorities said.

The Walla Walla ran aground in Rich Passage around 4:30 p.m. as it was traveling from the city of Bremerton to Seattle, according to Washington State Ferries, a division of the state Department of Transportation.

“Initial indications are the vessel suffered a generator failure,” but investigators were still looking into exactly what happened, the agency said.

There were 596 passengers and 15 crew members aboard, according to ferries spokesperson Diane Rhodes. A tug boat and the Coast Guard were on the scene.

Man accused of arson, murder in wildfire death

WV FAYETTEVILLE — A West Virginia man has been charged with murder after a forestry worker was killed trying to extinguish a fire the man is accused of setting.

The fire was reported on Tuesday night in the Tucker Hollow

area of Fayette County. Overnight, the fire grew to consume several hundred acres.

On Thursday, forester Cody Mullens was fatally injured by a falling tree while fighting the fire. The Division of Forestry was able to determine that the fire was intentionally set, Fayette County Sheriff Mike Fridley said Friday in a news release. The arson investigation led to the arrest of David A. Bass, of Kimberly.

In addition to the murder charge, Bass is charged with four counts of felony wildland arson.

Paper mill temporarily closes for fungal illness

MI ESCANABA — A paper mill in northern Michigan will close for up to three weeks for a scrubbing after authorities confirmed at least 21 cases of a fungal infection among workers since March along with dozens more probable cases.

The illness, blastomycosis, is related to a fungus that grows in moist soil and decomposing wood and leaves, according to the public health department in Delta County. Blastomycosis does not pass from person to person, the department said. Common symptoms are cough, fever, shortness of breath, joint pain and weight loss.

The Billerud Paper Mill in Escanaba, which employs more than 800 people, will close temporarily, the company said Thursday. The mill will undergo “deep cleaning in high traffic areas through the mill” as well as other steps, including vent inspections, filter replacements and tests on raw materials, said Kevin Kuznicki, president of Billerud North America.

— From wire reports

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Injuries already mounting in NBA playoffs

Associated Press

Anthony Davis scared Los Angeles Lakers fans by grabbing at his right shoulder and saying he couldn't move his arm.

Luckily for the Lakers, Davis rebounded from a stinger and returned for the start of the third quarter. Yet injuries over the span of a couple of hours Sunday sidelined two-time NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, two-time All-Star Ja Morant and Tyler Herro, keeping them from finishing their playoff openers.

Injuries to some of the NBA's top stars has dimmed the start of this postseason with title hopes possibly fading just as quickly depending on how bad they're hurt.

"We'll monitor him and see how he does, see how he wakes up, how he feels," Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer said of Antetokounmpo.

Both Antetokounmpo and the Memphis Grizzlies' Morant were hurt on drives to the basket where each landed awkwardly.

Antetokounmpo came down hard on his backside after being

fouled by Miami's Kevin Love. The Bucks' forward got up slowly with 4:13 left in the first quarter. He picked up his second foul about 2½ minutes later but played about 11 minutes for the Eastern Conference's No. 1 seed.

The Bucks went on to lose 130-117 to Miami with the Heat winning despite Herro breaking his right hand apparently while diving for a loose ball late in the first half. The starter was obviously hurting in front of the Miami bench at the end of the second quarter.

The Heat disclosed the severity of his injury at halftime. Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said Herro, seen with a cast on his hand after the game, won't play Game 2 on Wednesday night and the Heat will figure out what to do next.

"I got the same diagnosis that you all heard," Spoelstra said.

Morant came into Sunday's first-round Western Conference series with his right hand already bandaged after being hurt in a win that clinched the No. 2 seed for the Grizzlies for a second straight season.

Then he drove to the basket

against the 6-foot-10 Davis with 5:48 left with Memphis trailing the Lakers 105-101. His right hand appeared to bend the wrong direction as he hit the court. Morant writhed in pain, then ran toward the Grizzlies' bench letting out a yell near midcourt before sprinting to the locker room.

Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins said X-rays were negative and the Grizzlies will do further testing taking this injury one day at a time.

"I'm not the medical expert," Jenkins said.

Morant said he's doubtful for Game 2 on Wednesday night with Memphis down 0-1 following a 128-112 loss.

"Tough man, especially with everything I've been through pretty much this season," said Morant, who was suspended by the NBA for eight games in March after livestreaming himself holding a gun at a Denver-area strip club.

The guard who set the Grizzlies' single-season scoring record averaging 26.2 points a game wants to play. Memphis already is without center Steven Adams because of an injured

knee and reserve big man Brandon Clarke tore an Achilles tendon in March.

"Another incident where that's pretty much in jeopardy," said Morant, who missed the final three games of Memphis' semifinals loss to eventual champ Golden State last season with an injured knee.

Pain level and how effective he can be will decide if Morant can play.

"I feel like I can go out there and be somewhat myself, I'll be playing," Morant said. "If not, I don't want to do anything to hurt the team."

The Clippers survived their opener by beating No. 4 seed Phoenix 115-110 without eight-time All-Star guard Paul George, who's been sidelined by sprained right knee since late March.

Lakers coach Darvin Ham may have been the happiest coach after sending Davis to the locker room with 1:15 left in the second quarter to make sure the medical team started working on the eight-time All-Star immediately.

"Just happy he's OK," Ham said.

Leonard scores 38 points to lift Clippers over Suns

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Kawhi Leonard had a great shooting night while Russell Westbrook had a horrible one.

Both players nonetheless had a huge impact for the Los Angeles Clippers in their 115-110 win over the Phoenix Suns in the teams' Western Conference playoff series opener on Sunday.

Leonard poured in 38 points, including two late three-pointers, while Westbrook was a menace everywhere except the scoring column. The veteran guard shot just 3-for-19 from the field, but finished with nine points, 10 rebounds, eight as-

sists, three blocks and two steals.

Eric Gordon added 19 points and hit a late three that kept the Clippers ahead.

Kevin Durant scored 27 points for the Suns, who lost for the first time with him on the floor. Phoenix acquired the two-time NBA Finals MVP from Brooklyn in February, and injuries limited him to eight games — all Suns wins.

Nuggets 109, Timberwolves 80: Jamal Murray overcame some early jitters to have 24 points and eight assists in his first playoff game since the 2020 NBA bubble as top-seeded Denver routed Minnesota.

Michael Porter Jr., who scored 18 points in his first playoff game since missing last year's run with a bad back, said Murray used his time off after blowing out his left knee in 2021 to improve his basketball IQ.

Heat 130, Bucks 117: Jimmy Butler scored 35 points and visiting Miami capitalized on Giannis Antetokounmpo's early exit to beat top-seeded Milwaukee in an Eastern Conference playoff opener featuring two notable injuries.

The top-seeded Bucks lost Antetokounmpo to a lower back bruise early in the second quarter. Miami's Tyler Herro broke his right hand later in the period.

Lakers 128, Grizzlies 112: Rui Hachimura had a career-best playoff scoring performance with 29 points, including 21 in the second half, and LeBron James added 21 points and 11 rebounds as visiting Los Angeles beat Memphis in the opening game of their Western Conference series.

Austin Reaves added 23 points, including nine straight in the closing minutes as the Lakers pulled away. Anthony Davis had 22 points and 12 rebounds, and D'Angelo Russell, who scored only two points in the Lakers' play-in win over the Minnesota Timberwolves, finished with 19 points.

Larson pushes past Logano, solves Martinsville at last

Associated Press

MARTINSVILLE, Va. — Kyle Larson never thought he would tame the half-mile, paperclip-shaped track at Martinsville Speedway.

And then came Sunday.

Larson passed Joey Logano with 29 laps to go and went on to win his second Cup Series race of the season.

It was the 21st career Cup Series win for Larson and 15th in the past three seasons for the 2021 Cup champion.

Larson has struggled mightily at Martinsville in the past.

In his previous 17 races here, he had only three top-five finishes and never finished better than third.

"I never, ever would have thought I would have won here," Larson said. "This place has been so tough on me and just does not suit my driving style at all. ... I just can't believe it."

Because of his lack of past success at the track, Larson joked that he doesn't have room for the 6-foot tall grandfather clock awarded to the winner.

Larson said the clock immediately becomes one of his most prized possessions, because it serves as a reminder of how hard he has worked to win at a track where he never felt comfortable.

"I've left here just mad. I've hated this place, and I've wished it would flood," Larson said with a laugh. "I wished a lot of bad things on this place."

Logano, who was forced to begin the race in the back of the field after his crew found a leak in his water tank prior to the start, finished second, followed by Martin Truex Jr., Denny Hamlin and Chase Briscoe.

Logano was thrilled with his result, knowing he didn't have the car to hold off Larson late in

the race on a restart.

"We got lapped twice, and at one point I would have been happy to finish on the lead lap," Logano said with a laugh.

His luck changed when he stayed on the track and caught a timely yellow caution flag, helping him suddenly land in the top five and in contention to win.

"There are days when you are mad about second place, but today is not one of those," Logano said.

Chase Elliott, voted NASCAR's most popular driver the past five years, finished 10th in his first race since breaking his leg. He ran in the mid-20s for most of the race before closing strong.

Polesitter Ryan Preece dominated early, leading the first 136 laps before a speeding penalty on pit row sent him to the back of the field. He never challenged again.

Knight's hat trick leads US to gold

Associated Press

BRAMPTON, Ontario — For all the focus on the United States' young and retooled roster, it was who else but Hilary Knight — the team's most experienced and accomplished star — who played a pivotal role in securing her nation's 10th women's world hockey championships gold medal and first in four years.

The 33-year-old Knight scored three times, including the go-ahead goal with 3:10 left in regulation, in a 6-3 win over Canada, and on their cross-border rival's home soil in suburban Toronto on Sunday.

Apologizing for her voice being hoarse from a celebration that featured the Americans singing a rousing rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner," Knight broke into a smile and said, "Yeah, it's been a while."

The Americans overcame three one-goal deficits and the sting of losing the past three gold-medal meetings against Canada — the past two world championships and the 2022 Beijing Winter Games — to reclaim gold for the first time since a 2-1 shootout win over Finland in 2019.

"It's hard to beat Canada. It's hard to beat Canada in Canada, right? So we definitely felt like an underdog," Knight added. "People are always rooting against us, but somehow we persevere and it feels sweeter that way."

Caroline Harvey had a goal and assist, and Abbey Murphy and Cayla Barnes, with an empty-net goal, also scored. The Americans scored four unanswered goals in the third period. Aerin Frankel stopped 24 shots.

With a U.S. roster featuring five players making their tournament debuts, Knight scored twice in the span of 27 seconds to capitalize on a two-player advantage with the game tied at 3.

Kirkwood claims first IndyCar victory

Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. — As Kyle Kirkwood crossed the finish line for his first career IndyCar win, his new race strategist urged him to soak up the sights and sounds of victory.

It nearly brought the 24-year-old to tears.

"A first win, it's a big deal for any driver. I guarantee even Mario Andretti, all the wins he's had, he still remembers the first one," said Bryan Herta, who was moved to Kirkwood's strategist one race ago.

"This is just as important milestone because it's one thing to be a guy who people think can win in IndyCar. It's something else to be somebody who has won in IndyCar."

Kirkwood held off teammate

Romain Grosjean on the downtown streets of Long Beach to give Andretti Autosport a 1-2 finish Sunday at the most prestigious street course race in the United States. Coincidentally, team owner Michael Andretti scored his first career win at Long Beach in 1986 and Mario Andretti became the only American driver to win a Formula One race on American soil when the grand prix was an F1 event in 1977.

"This is such a special race, I grew up watching it, and to win here is such a dream come true. The next best race to win, outside of this one, is Indianapolis," Kirkwood said. "And the feeling I got, it was like trying to hold tears back in the car, which is something I never really felt be-

fore."

Kirkwood won the first pole of his career on Saturday and then parlayed it into his first career victory in a breakthrough for Andretti Autosport. The team showed at last month's season-opener that it had clearly made massive offseason strides, but all four Andretti drivers were crashed out of the race.

Then at Texas two weeks ago, three of the four Andretti drivers crashed with Kirkwood's car damaged in a pit lane incident with Alexander Rossi.

It was maddening for Michael Andretti, who had such hope for a turnaround after the organization managed only two wins.

"That's what we needed, that's the medicine we needed," Andretti said.

Cole has MLB's 2nd complete game this year

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gerrit Cole pitched a two-hitter with 10 strikeouts for his fourth career shutout and the second complete game in the majors this season, leading the New York Yankees to a 2-0 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Sunday.

DJ LeMahieu homered and hit an RBI single for the Yankees, who earned a split of the four-game series after putting slugger Giancarlo Stanton on the injured list with a hamstring strain before the game. New York has won or split its first five series for the first time since 2010, the Elias Sports Bureau said.

Cole (4-0) lowered his ERA to 0.95 in four starts, finishing off the Twins on 109 pitches in 2 hours, 7 minutes. He got the final nine outs on just 25 pitches and retired former Astros teammate Carlos Correa on a fly ball to end it.

"I think it's just old school, but we had our work cut out for us today," Cole said of the rare complete game. "We were facing a great team, a great pitcher, so, just more satisfied with the win."

It was Cole's seventh career complete game and his first shutout since July 10, 2021, at Houston. The only other complete game in the big leagues this year was also a shutout against Minnesota, when reigning NL Cy Young Award winner Sandy Alcantara threw a three-hitter for Miami in a 1-0 win on April 4 that lasted 1 hour, 57 minutes.

Mets 4, Athletics 3 (10): Pete Alonso tied the score in the ninth inning with his major league-leading eighth home run, and visiting New York beat struggling Oakland to complete a three-game sweep.

Eduardo Escobar scored the go-ahead in

the 10th on a wild pitch by Sam Moll (0-2). Francisco Lindor and Tommy Pham also homered for the Mets, who won their fourth straight.

Red Sox 2, Angels 1: Garrett Whitlock threw seven innings of one-run ball and Justin Turner hit a two-run homer to give host Boston a win over Los Angeles in a game that lasted just under two hours.

Los Angeles star Shohei Ohtani had his 36-game on-base streak halted; it had been the longest in MLB.

Cardinals 5, Pirates 4 (10): Tommy Edman hit an RBI single in the 10th inning to give host St. Louis a win over Pittsburgh to salvage a split of the four-game series.

With runners on first and second and one out, Nolan Gorman drove in Paul Goldschmidt with a tying double. Lars Nootbaar was walked intentionally by Wil Crowe (0-1) and rookie Jordan Walker struck out before Edman singled back up the middle.

Rays 8, Blue Jays 1: Shane Bieber pitched six effective innings in his fourth straight win, and visiting Tampa Bay avoided a three-game sweep by Toronto.

Christian Bethancourt hit a three-run homer to help the Rays rebound from their first two losses of the season. Yandy Díaz reached four times, and Josh Lowe had two hits and three RBIs.

Diamondbacks 5, Marlins 0: Zac Gallen pitched two-hit ball into the seventh inning in visiting Arizona's win over Alcantara and Miami.

Corbin Carroll homered for Arizona, and Pavin Smith and Christian Walker also had two hits apiece.

Mariners 1, Rockies 0: Luis Castillo retired his first 18 batters, Jarred Kelenic hit

an RBI single and host Seattle completed a three-game sweep.

Kelenic extended his hitting streak to a career-best 10 games and played outstanding defense in right field, including a diving catch in the eighth inning that saved a run.

Cubs 3, Dodgers 2: Patrick Wisdom homered for the third straight game, Cody Bellinger also went deep and visiting Chicago took two of three in the series.

Nationals 7, Guardians 6: Host Washington tied the game on a reviewed call in the eighth inning and Joey Meneses followed with a go-ahead RBI single two batters later for a win over Cleveland that averted a three-game sweep.

Orioles 8, White Sox 4: Cedric Mullins had three hits and four RBIs, including a tie-breaking single in his team's three-run eighth inning, and visiting Baltimore rallied for the win in the rubber game of the week-end series.

Braves 5, Royals 4: Vaughn Grissom hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the ninth, Ozzie Albies homered and visiting Atlanta beat Kansas City for the series sweep.

Brewers 1, Padres 0: Wade Miley pitched seven sharp innings and Devin Williams escaped a bases-loaded jam in the ninth, helping visiting Milwaukee beat Yu Darvish and San Diego.

Phillies 14, Reds 3: Visiting Philadelphia bounced back from one of its worst losses of the early season with a drubbing of Cincinnati to earn a split of their four-game series.

Rangers 9, Astros 1: Marcus Semien hit a grand slam to cap a six-run seventh inning as visiting Texas won a series in Houston for the first time since July 2018.

Fitzpatrick wins RBC Heritage on 3rd extra hole

Associated Press

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — Matt Fitzpatrick's earliest memories of Harbour Town were as a spectator wondering if Tiger Woods would play the RBC Heritage.

He was always disappointed, since Woods only played once at Hilton Head, in 1999, when Fitzpatrick was 4 years old.

"I remember saying to my dad, 'Is Tiger (Woods) going to be here?'" he recalled.

Now, Fitzpatrick's got a sweet-

er memory at the Pete Dye layout he played as a child on vacations.

Fitzpatrick defeated defending champion Jordan Spieth on the third playoff hole on Sunday, stuffing his approach in close on the par-4 18th to secure his first victory since the U.S. Open last June.

"I think I can retire now," joked the 28-year-old Englishman, who uses a Harbour Town-style lighthouse headcover. "This is one I really wanted."

Fitzpatrick hit 9-iron to within 1

foot on the closing lighthouse hole to set up the winning birdie.

Fitzpatrick had to sweat out a couple of prime chances by Spieth on the first two extra holes. Spieth raised his putter in triumph before watching his 12-foot birdie putt catch the right edge and spin out the first time the pair played the 18th. Then Spieth's 9-foot birdie attempt ran out of steam on the right edge at the 17th hole.

"I felt every putt he hit was going to go in," Fitzpatrick said.

Spieth still doesn't understand how the that first playoff putt didn't drop.

"I think if I hit the same putt 10 times, it does in eight," Spieth said. "It should go left at the very end there on the grain. It just wasn't meant to be."

Fitzpatrick won \$3.6 million from the elevated purse of \$20 million in the sixth designated event of the year on the PGA Tour, topping a field that included seven of the world's top 10 players.