

## Navy landing ships could top nearly \$8B

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

An amphibious ship program critical to a U.S. Marine Corps plan to adapt the service for future warfare could cost billions more than expected, the Congressional Budget Office says.

Costs for the Navy's medium landing ship, or LSM, could range from \$6.2 billion to as much as \$7.8 billion for 18 ships, the CBO said in a report released Thursday. Each ship could cost between \$340 million and \$430 million, depending on how the Navy configures and arms the vessels, the CBO said.

But the Navy says the ships, which would be used to deploy Marine units, will cost \$179.1 million each, according to copy of the service's 2025 long-range shipbuilding plan submitted to Congress in March and posted online by USNI News.

That would bring the cost of 18 ships to \$3.2 billion, using fig-

ures from the report.

"Many facets of the program remain uncertain, such as the number of ships the Navy wants to buy as well as the design and capabilities of the ship," the CBO said.

The agency noted that Navy and Marine Corps officials have called for as many as 35 ships.

"Equally uncertain is the overall cost of the program, because the Navy's estimates have varied widely in its last three shipbuilding plans and budget submissions," the CBO stated.

Proposed in 2020, the program consists of ships designed to carry small Marine Corps units armed with anti-ship or anti-air missiles, particularly in the western Pacific and in any potential conflict with China, according to the CBO.

With a length of 200 to 400 feet, and a crew of 70 sailors and the ability to support 50 embarked Marines, LSMs are smaller and

less costly than other Navy amphibious assault and transport dock ships, the report said.

The ships are a key part of the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concept and its Force Design 2030 program that, among other objectives, seek to readily deploy smaller, agile forces. The Navy plans to start building the ships in 2025.

Differing methods in determining costs and unclear program objectives, such as whether LSMs would be built to sustain combat conditions, may be some of the reasons for the disparity in the Navy and CBO cost estimates.

It's not certain if the Navy and Marine Corps would use LSMs solely to deploy service members ahead of a conflict, or if the vessels also would be used to redeploy and resupply Marine units — an important factor in determining costs, the CBO said.

Ships built mostly to commercial standards would cost less and require fewer modifications like stronger hulls, shock-hardened systems and more armament.

But if the LSMs were configured more like amphibious warships, the per ship cost could mushroom to as much as \$600 million, according to the CBO report.

The Navy, in making its cost estimates over the last three years, specified it has "relied on commercial design standards, which do not have significant survivability and recoverability features," the report stated. But the service has said while the LSM mostly would be built to commercial standards, it would have the survivability and recoverability features of an amphibious warfare ship.

In its analysis, the CBO considered a hybrid commercial-warship model of construction.

## GAO report raises cost of sustaining F-35 fighters

*Bloomberg*

The world's costliest weapons program, Lockheed Martin's F-35 fighter jet, is getting even more expensive, according to a government watchdog.

Nine years after the Marine Corps declared its first F-35s operational, the Pentagon now projects that the cost of operating and maintaining the jet through 2088 will be \$1.58 trillion, 44% higher than originally forecast in 2018, the Government Accountability Office said Monday in a new assessment.

It's another troubling sign for the F-35, which is billed as the stealthiest and most advanced fighter jet ever and sits at the center of U.S. war planning. De-

spite its high price tag and maintenance issues, the U.S. and several allied governments — including Israel — already fly hundreds of F-35s, and it played an important role in helping repel a barrage of Iranian missiles and drones aimed at Israel over the weekend.

The GAO report paints a troubling picture of the plane's readiness, saying that inadequate training, a lack of spare parts and support equipment and a heavy reliance on contractors mean all three services that deploy the jet — the Air Force, Marines and Navy — project they will be able to fly the F-35 less often than originally hoped.

"The F-35 fleet's overall availability has trended downward considerably over the past five years, and none of the variants are meeting availability goals — the percentage of time the aircraft can perform one of its tasked missions," according to the assessment. "The F-35 fleet is not meeting most of its performance goals."

Pentagon officials told auditors that "significant F-35 program cost reductions will only come from flying the aircraft less or reducing the number of aircraft in the fleet."

The Pentagon's progress to improve readiness was to be probed Tuesday afternoon during a hearing by a House Armed

Services subcommittee. The Pentagon's program office in March 2023 when confronted with an overall readiness rate of 54% convened a "War on Readiness" to increase the overall rate by 10% by last month.

The Pentagon last month declared the F-35 ready for full-rate production, a largely symbolic decision because Lockheed already is assembling the jets. The U.S. now has on contract 881 of its planned 2,456 planes. The decision was delayed years beyond its most recent goal of April 2019, but the announcement may give some assurance to the nations committed to spending billions of dollars on the jet.

# Lockheed selected to develop ICBM interceptor for DOD

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Defense giant Lockheed Martin has won a contract to continue development of a new interceptor to protect the United States from an intercontinental ballistic missile attack.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency announced Monday it selected the company as the sole developer of its Next Generation Interceptor program.

The interceptor is slated to be the most technically advanced in the U.S. Ground-Based Mid-course Defense system, a network of radars, interceptors and other equipment used to defend the U.S. from threats posed by countries like North Korea.

The system was designed to protect the entire country. It targets ballistic missiles during the longest part of their flight,

after their boosters burn out and while they coast in space toward a target.

Lockheed Martin beat rival defense company Northrop Grumman for the main contract. Both companies were awarded separate contracts to develop initial designs in 2021.

The Missile Defense Agency had expected to select a winning contractor next year, after both companies completed a critical design review. But agency officials told congressional lawmakers last week that they accelerated their decision partly because of budget restraints.

The interceptor program will be worth nearly \$18 billion over its lifetime, according to government estimates.

The first Next Generation Interceptor is expected to be operational by late 2028, the agency said.

# Marine planning domestic terrorism given 9 years

BY J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Marine veteran who firebombed a Planned Parenthood clinic in California and plotted other acts of domestic terrorism while serving on active duty was sentenced to nine years in prison this week.

Chance Brannon, 24, was motivated by neo-Nazi ideology when he threw a Molotov cocktail at the clinic in 2022, according to documents filed in federal court for the Central District of California.

"This defendant's deep-seated hatred led him to commit a firebombing and plan many other acts of violence, including starting a race war," U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said in a statement Monday.

Brannon, who was stationed at Camp Pendleton at the time of the incident, pleaded guilty in November to four charges related to the attack, which shut down the clinic for a day but left no one injured.

The San Juan Capistrano resident described himself as a "domestic terroris[t]," a sen-

tencing memorandum by U.S. District Judge Cormac Carney said.

At the time of his June 2023 arrest, Brannon was a Marine corporal who had joined in 2018, ABC News reported at the time.

Brannon joins other service members who have been convicted of acts of extremism while on active duty. This includes Ethan Melzer, an Army paratrooper sentenced to 45 years in prison for plotting with neo-Nazis to get other soldiers in his unit killed, and Micah Coomer, one of five active-duty troops arrested in connection to the Jan. 6 breach of the Capitol building.

Extremist groups often seek out people with military ties, and a Defense Department Inspector General report in August found military recruiters sometimes skipped steps to screen out enlistees affiliated with criminal gangs or extremist groups.

In his plea agreement, Brannon admitted he and two conspirators planned violent attacks across California.

# Abu Ghraib detainee testifies in DOD contractor trial

*Associated Press*

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — A former detainee at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison described to jurors Monday the type of abuse that is reminiscent of the scandal that erupted there 20 years ago: beatings, being stripped naked and threatened with dogs, stress positions meant to induce exhaustion and pain.

The testimony from Salah Al-Ejaili, a former Al-Jazeera journalist who spent more than a month at Abu Ghraib in 2003, marks the first time that survivors of the U.S. prison in Iraq

have been able to bring their claims of torture to a U.S. jury.

Al-Ejaili and two other Abu Ghraib detainees are suing Virginia-based military contractor CACI, accusing the company of contributing to their torture by sending over civilian interrogators as part of an Army contract. The suit cites evidence in government investigations that CACI contractors encouraged military police to "soften up" detainees ahead of their interrogations.

CACI's lawyer, John O'Connor, acknowledged that some Abu Ghraib detainees suffered

horrific abuse, but offered a three-pronged defense for the company in his opening statement to the jury.

First, he questioned whether the three detainees who filed the lawsuit can actually prove they themselves were abused. They are not pictured in the widely circulated photographs that leaked in 2004 when news of the abuse broke and shocked the world. He told the jury that official records show no formal interrogations of Al-Ejaili, for instance, even though he testified that he was interrogated many times, and frequently

beaten.

CACI's lawyer also said that even if the three plaintiffs were abused, there's no evidence that CACI interrogators inflicted abuse on them. He said the soldiers seen smiling in photos next to naked, abused detainees were the ones who inflicted the abuse, and they were rightly convicted of crimes in military trials.

Lastly, he said that even if CACI employees engaged in wrongdoing, it was the U.S. military, not the company, that oversaw the interrogators' conduct.

# Justices allow ban on gender-affirming care

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is allowing Idaho to enforce its ban on gender-affirming care for transgender youth while lawsuits over the law proceed, reversing lower courts.

The justices' order Monday allows the state to put in place a 2023 law that subjects physicians to up to 10 years in prison if they provide hormones, puberty blockers or other gender-affirming care to people under age 18. Under the court's order, the two transgender teens who sued to challenge the law will still be able to obtain care.

The court's three liberal justices would have kept the law on hold. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote that it would have been better to let the case pro-

ceed "unfettered by our intervention."

Justice Neil Gorsuch of the conservative majority wrote that it is "a welcome development" that the court is reining in an overly broad lower court order.

A federal judge in Idaho had blocked the law in its entirety after determining that it was necessary to do so to protect the teens, who are identified under pseudonyms in court papers.

Lawyers for the teens wrote in court papers that the teens' "gender dysphoria has been dramatically alleviated as a result of puberty blockers and estrogen therapy." The American Civil Liberties Union, representing the teens and their families, called the Supreme Court's order "an awful result for trans-

gender youth and their families across the state. Today's ruling allows the state to shut down the care that thousands of families rely on while sowing further confusion and disruption."

Idaho Attorney General Raúl Labrador said in a statement that the law "ensures children are not subjected to these life-altering drugs and procedures. Those suffering from gender dysphoria deserve love, support and medical care rooted in biological reality. Denying the basic truth that boys and girls are biologically different hurts our kids."

Gender-affirming care for youth is supported by every major medical organization, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the

American Psychiatric Association.

Medical professionals define gender dysphoria as psychological distress experienced by those whose gender expression does not match their gender identity.

The action comes as the justices may also soon consider whether to take up bans in Kentucky and Tennessee that an appeals court allowed to be enforced in the midst of legal fights.

At least 23 states have enacted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors, and most of those states face lawsuits. A federal judge struck down Arkansas' ban as unconstitutional. Montana's ban is also temporarily on hold.

## 'Rust' weapons supervisor gets 18 months in prison

*Associated Press*

SANTA FE, N.M. — A movie weapons supervisor was sentenced to 18 months in prison in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer by Alec Baldwin on the set of the Western film "Rust," during a hearing Monday in which tearful family members and friends gave testimonials that included calls for justice and a punishment that would instill greater accountability for safety on film sets.

Movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed was convicted in March by a jury on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and has been held for more than a month at a county jail on the outskirts of Santa Fe. Prosecutors blamed Gutierrez-Reed for unwittingly bringing live ammunition onto the set of "Rust," where it was expressly prohibited, and for failing to follow basic gun safety protocols.

Gutierrez-Reed was unsuc-

cessful in her plea for a lesser sentencing, telling the judge she was not the monster that people have made her out to be and had tried to do her best on the set despite not having "proper time, resources and staffing." Gutierrez-Reed plans to appeal the judgment and sentence, defense attorney Jason Bowles said in an email.

Baldwin, the lead actor and coproducer for "Rust," was pointing a gun at Hutchins during a rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe in October 2021 when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

Baldwin has pleaded not guilty to a charge of involuntary manslaughter. He is scheduled for trial in July at a courthouse in Santa Fe.

The sentence against Gutierrez-Reed was delivered by New Mexico Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer, who is overseeing proceedings against Baldwin.

## Pro-Palestine demonstrators disrupt travel to US airports

*Associated Press*

CHICAGO — Pro-Palestinian demonstrators blocked roadways in Illinois, California, New York and the Pacific Northwest on Monday, temporarily shutting down travel into some of the nation's most heavily used airports, onto the Golden Gate and Brooklyn bridges and on a busy West Coast highway.

In Chicago, protesters linked arms and blocked lanes of Interstate 190 leading into O'Hare International Airport around 7 a.m. in a demonstration they said was part of a global "economic blockade to free Palestine," according to Rifqa Falaneh, one of the organizers.

Traffic in the San Francisco Bay Area was snarled for hours as demonstrators shut down all vehicle, pedestrian and bike traffic on the Golden Gate Bridge and chained themselves to 55-gallon drums filled with cement across Interstate 880 in Oakland. Protesters marching into Brooklyn blocked Manhattan-bound traffic

on the Brooklyn Bridge. In Eugene, Ore., protesters blocked Interstate 5, shutting down traffic on the major highway for about 45 minutes.

Protesters said they chose O'Hare in part because it is one of the largest airports. Among other things, they've called for an immediate cease-fire in the war between Israel and Hamas.

Anti-war protesters have demonstrated in Chicago near daily since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that killed around 1,200 people. Israeli warplanes and ground troops have since conducted a scorched-earth campaign on the Gaza Strip.

O'Hare warned travelers on the social platform X to take alternative forms of transportation with car travel "substantially delayed this morning due to protest activity."

Some travelers stuck in standstill traffic left their cars and walked the final leg to the airport along the freeway, trailing their luggage behind them.



# Speaker Johnson pushes on with US aid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defiant and determined, House Speaker Mike Johnson pushed back Tuesday against mounting Republican anger over his proposed U.S. aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other allies, and rejected a call to step aside or risk a vote to oust him from office.

"I am not resigning," Johnson said after a testy morning meeting of fellow House Republicans at the Capitol.

Johnson referred to himself as a "wartime speaker" of the House and indicated in his stron-

gest self-defense that he would press forward with a U.S. national security aid package, a situation that would force him to rely on Democrats to help pass it, over objections from his weakened majority.

"We are simply here trying to do our jobs," Johnson said, calling the motion to oust him "absurd ... not helpful."

Tuesday brought a definitive shift in tone from both the House Republicans and the speaker himself at a pivotal moment as the embattled leader tries, against the wishes of his majori-

ty, to marshal the votes needed to send the stalled national security aid for Israel, Ukraine and other overseas allies to passage.

Johnson appeared emboldened by his meeting late last week with Donald Trump when the Republican former president threw him a political lifeline with a nod of support after their private talk at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. At his own press conference Tuesday, Johnson spoke of the importance of ensuring Trump, who is now at his criminal trial in New York, is re-elected to the White House.

Johnson also spoke over the weekend with President Joe Biden as well as other congressional leaders about the emerging U.S. aid package, which the speaker plans to move in separate votes for each section—with bills for Ukraine, Israel, the Indo-Pacific region. He spoke about it with Biden again late Monday.

It's a complicated approach that breaks apart the Senate's \$95 billion aid package for separate votes, and then stitches it back together for the president's signature.

## More potential jurors dismissed in Trump's NY trial

Associated Press

NEW YORK — More potential jurors were dismissed Tuesday from Donald Trump's hush money case as lawyers worked for a second day to find a panel of New Yorkers to decide whether the Republican will become the first former president convicted of a crime.

The first day of the historic trial in Manhattan ended Monday with no one yet chosen to be on the panel of 12 jurors and six alternates. In short order Tuesday morning, eight others were excused after saying they could not be impartial or because they had other commitments. Dozens

of potential jurors have yet to be questioned, in a process which could take several more days or even weeks.

It's the first of Trump's four criminal cases to go to trial, and it may be the only one to reach a verdict before voters decide in November whether the presumptive GOP presidential nominee should return to the White House.

The trial puts Trump's legal problems at the center of the closely contested race against President Joe Biden. Trump has painted himself as the victim of a politically motivated justice system working to deprive him of

another term. It also presents a major test for the criminal justice system because the allegations are being viewed through a partisan lens, and Trump's attacks on prosecutors and the judge threaten to undermine the public's faith in the courts.

Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records as part of an alleged effort to keep salacious — and, he says, bogus — stories about his sex life from emerging during his 2016 campaign.

Before entering the courtroom, Trump stopped briefly to address a TV camera in the hallway, repeating his claim that the

judge is biased against him and the case is politically motivated.

"This is a trial that should have never been brought," Trump said. After he went inside, reporters saw him wink at one of the court officers and mouth, "How are you?" as he walked down the aisle. Trump then took his seat at the defense table with his attorneys.

With the trial expected to last for six weeks or more, multiple jury pool members brought up plans they have for Memorial Day and beyond.

Several possible jurors were dismissed after saying they weren't sure they could be fair.

## Mayorkas impeachment articles being sent to Senate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Mike Johnson said he is sending impeachment charges against Alejandro Mayorkas to the Senate on Tuesday, forcing senators to convene a trial on the allegations that the Homeland Security secretary has "willfully and systematically" refused to enforce existing immigration laws. But the proceedings may not last long.

While the Senate is obligated to convene a trial under the rules of impeachment once the charges are walked across the Capitol, Democrats are expected to try to dismiss or table the charges before the arguments get underway.

Majority Democrats have said the GOP case against Mayorkas doesn't rise to the "high crimes and misdemeanors" laid out as a bar for impeachment in the Constitution,

and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., likely has enough votes to end the trial immediately if he decides to do so. The proceedings will not begin until Wednesday.

Opening the Senate for the week, Schumer said he wants to "address this issue as expeditiously as possible."

"Impeachment should never be used to settle a policy disagreement," Schumer said. "That would set a horrible prec-

edent for the Congress."

Senators will be sworn in Wednesday as jurors, turning the chamber into the court of impeachment. The Senate will then issue a summons to Mayorkas to inform him of the charges and ask for a written answer. He will not have to appear in the Senate at any point.

What happens after that is unclear. Impeachment rules generally allow the Senate to decide how to proceed.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Man falls 6 floors, dies trying to escape shooting**

**SC** MYRTLE BEACH — A man plunged nearly six stories to his death after shots were fired in a room at a South Carolina beachfront hotel, Myrtle Beach police said.

No one was injured in the gunfire early Sunday at a sixth-floor room at Hotel Blue, investigators said. But a man who ran out on the balcony and tried to scale down the building to escape ended up falling, police said.

The man died a short time later at a hospital from massive trauma to his upper body, the Horry County Coroner's Office said.

Everyone involved in the shooting has been identified and the gun that was used has been found, police said. Authorities did not say whether anyone has been charged, but said the investigation is ongoing.

**\$790K sex harassment jury payment overturned**

**IA** DES MOINES — Inappropriate comments by a superior to a social worker and between other employees at the state Department of Human Services did not justify a \$790,000 jury award for sexual harassment, the Iowa Supreme Court has ruled.

Friday's ruling reversed a lower court's verdict for Tracy White, a social work administrator and manager who sued the state agency in 2019, alleging a pervasive pattern of harassment and sexual conduct, the Des Moines Register reported.

Her lawsuit alleged lewd and graphic remarks by others in the office, including a superior jok-

ing about her wearing leather and whipping him; managers showing favoritism for more attractive and less assertive female employees; and a sexually charged atmosphere in which workers called women "eye candy" and joked about the tightness of their clothing.

White, who continued to work for the department after filing suit, testified in a 2021 trial that she suffered depression, shingles and other effects of stress related to a hostile work environment.

But the Supreme Court ruled that White failed to prove that the alleged misconduct she personally experienced was "severe or pervasive enough," and that much of it involved alleged harassment of other employees, not her.

**State joins deal to ease social worker licenses**

**ME** AUGUSTA — Maine is set to become the latest state to join an interstate compact for social worker licensure.

The proposal is designed to make it easier for social workers to practice in new states. Proponents have said the process of seeking a separate license in each state is time consuming and inefficient, and leaves communities with unmet needs.

The Maine Legislature passed a bill to join the compact Friday. Seven other states have enacted similar legislation, and the proposal is pending in at least 19 others, according to the National Association of Social Workers.

New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut are all considering proposals to

join the compact, supporters of the proposal said. The closest state to New England that has enacted legislation is Virginia.

**Ex-morgue boss' wife guilty of moving remains**

**PA** WILLIAMSPORT — The wife of a former Harvard Medical School morgue manager has pleaded guilty to a federal charge after investigators said she shipped stolen human body parts — including hands, feet and heads — to buyers.

Denise Lodge, 64, of Goffstown, N.H., pleaded guilty Friday in U.S. District Court in the Middle District of Pennsylvania to a charge of interstate transportation of stolen goods, according to court records.

Federal prosecutors last year announced charges against Lodge, her husband Cedric and five other people in an alleged scheme in which a nationwide network of people bought and sold human remains stolen from Harvard and a mortuary in Arkansas.

Prosecutors alleged that Denise Lodge negotiated online sales of a number of items between 2018 and March 2020 including two dozen hands, two feet, nine spines, portions of skulls, five dissected human faces and two dissected heads, PennLive.com reported.

**Pilot with backpack-style paramotor dies in crash**

**AZ** MARICOPA — A pilot flying solo and using a backpack-style paramotor device died Sunday when the small aircraft crashed in the city of Maricopa, authorities said.

A city spokesman said the crash occurred around 7 a.m. about 4 miles from the Ak-Chin Regional Airport.

Maricopa police and firefighters said the pilot was dead at the scene.

The pilot's name wasn't immediately available. City police said the cause of the crash will be investigated.

**Semiautomatic firearm ban passes state House**

**CO** DENVER — Colorado's Democratic-controlled House on Sunday passed a bill that would ban the sale and transfer of semiautomatic firearms, a major step for the legislation after roughly the same bill was swiftly killed by Democrats last year.

The bill, which passed on a 35-27 vote, is now on its way to the Democratic-led state Senate. If it passes there, it could bring Colorado in line with 10 other states — including California, New York and Illinois — that have prohibitions on semiautomatic guns.

Colorado's political history is purple, shifting blue only recently. The bill's chances of success in the state Senate are lower than they were in the House, where Democrats have a 46-19 majority and a bigger far-left flank. Gov. Jared Polis, also a Democrat, has indicated his wariness over such a ban.

Last year, a similar bill died in committee, with some Democratic lawmakers citing concerns over the sweep of a ban and promises they made to their constituents to avoid government overreach affecting most gun owners' rights.

— From wire reports

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# Olympians excited to have fans in Paris

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The biggest races, routines and games for many of this generation's Olympic athletes were contested in front of mostly empty stands, largely devoid of coaches to help them out or friends and family to cheer them on.

That was three years ago at the COVID-19 Summer Olympics and two years ago at the COVID-19 Winter Olympics. Now that they're preparing for the Paris Olympics that begin in July — and a return to something that feels normal — the Americans heading back to the Games know they can never take for granted the screaming fans and a hug from Mom or Dad.

"I think it's super important to be able to share these massive moments with people you care about," said BMX rider Alise Willoughby, who has been to the last three Olympics.

Willoughby and about 100 other U.S. athletes are doing in-

terviews and photo shoots this week at the Team USA media summit at a hotel in Times Square — an event that itself was made impossible in the lead-up to the Tokyo Games in 2021 amid the coronavirus pandemic.

One topic of conversation this week is how grateful the bikers, rowers, gymnasts and the rest are to be past the days of contact tracing, quarantines and daily swabbing or spitting for COVID-19 tests inside the so-called Olympic bubble.

In Paris, there will be celebrations with relatives and one-on-one contact with coaches, most of whom were not allowed into the venues three years ago. The USA House — a traditional stop for athletes to wind down and kick back, especially after they're done competing — will be doing brisk business once again.

Mostly, athletes are looking forward to the chance to soak in the feeling from the crowd, an

element sorely missing in the cavernous and largely unfilled venues in Tokyo.

"I'll be able to see the audience's emotions. I want to build that with them and I can tailor my routines to that," said American rhythmic gymnast Evita Griskenas, who plans French music to accompany one routine and an "All-American" number for another, all with the goal of getting fans caught up in the moment.

Griskenas said she already feels a different vibe. Preparing for the Olympics in Tokyo — Games that were initially delayed by a year, then held in an atmosphere nobody quite recognized — became a largely solitary, and joyless, affair.

"It turned into training in my basement and throwing things outside," she said.

This year, a different experience awaits, and some athletes are even looking forward to a crowd rooting against them because, hey, at least it's a crowd.

"The boys have been saying, 'We want to play France in, like, the semifinals,'" rugby player Perry Baker said. "You just visualize how big that can be, and how fun that can be. Their crowd. Our crowd. We live for those moments."

With crowds, naturally, come other issues that were mostly set on the sideline in 2021. On Monday, French President Emmanuel Macron said the much-touted opening ceremony scheduled for the Seine River could be moved to the Stade de France if the security threat is deemed too high.

Asked what she thought of that possibility, Nicole Deal, the chief of security for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, said other than her main goal — athlete safety — she wants to provide the best experience for the athletes.

"Security is an underpinning and a foundation. We're not the main show," Deal said.

## No surprise: Iowa's Clark taken first in WNBA Draft

Associated Press

NEW YORK— Caitlin Clark admitted she was a bit nervous before being chosen with the No. 1 pick in the WNBA Draft by the Indiana Fever, even though it was no surprise.

"I dreamed of this moment since I was in second grade, and it's taken a lot of hard work, a lot of ups and downs, but more than anything, just trying to soak it in," Clark said.

The former Iowa star became a household name among basketball fans during her record-breaking college career, and she will now try to help revive the Indiana franchise along with last season's No. 1 pick, Aliyah Boston, who previously played with Clark on a USA Basketball Under-19 team.

"Obviously going to an orga-

nization that has, in my eyes, one of the best post players in the entire world," Clark said. "My point guard eyes just light up at that. And obviously, Aliyah has been one of my teammates before. I'm excited. I can't wait."

The Fever taking Clark had been a foregone conclusion since she announced on Feb. 29 she would turn pro. Nearly 17,000 tickets were claimed to watch the draft at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, home to the Fever.

Clark has helped bring millions of fans to the women's game with her signature shots from the midcourt logo and passing ability. The NCAA's all-time scoring leader was a big reason why a record 18.9 million viewers tuned in to the national championship game,

which Iowa lost to unbeaten South Carolina. The Hawkeyes were also the national runners-up to LSU a year earlier.

It's been a whirlwind few weeks for Clark. After the title game, she flew to Los Angeles to receive the John R. Wooden Award and then came to New York for an appearance on "Saturday Night Live."

"I think obviously the course of the last few weeks has been pretty insane in my life, the last two months playing basketball as long as I possibly could in my college career," Clark said. "I think the biggest thing is I'm just very lucky to be in this moment, and all these opportunities and these things, they're once in a lifetime."

Clark, who wore a white Prada jacket and skirt, hugged her

parents and brothers and Iowa coach Lisa Bluder after she was drafted.

The draft was held at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in front of 1,000 fans, who bought all the tickets within 15 minutes of them going on sale a few months ago.

Los Angeles chose Stanford's Cameron Brink at No. 2. She'll get to stay in California and gives the Sparks a two-way player.

"When they called my name, a huge wave of emotions hit me," Brink said. "I saw my mom tearing up and my dad and it hit home."

A prolific scorer, Brink was also the Naismith Defensive Player of the Year. The Sparks needed to replace franchise player Nneka Ogwumike, who left for Seattle in free agency.



# Guardians spoil Patriots' Day for Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Will Brennan hit a pinch-hit, two-run homer in the seventh inning and the Cleveland Guardians beat the Red Sox 6-0 on Monday in Boston's traditional Patriots' Day game.

José Ramirez and Gabriel Arias each added an RBI double for Cleveland, which has started 8-2 on the road.

Wearing their white jerseys with red letters that read "Boston" across the front, which was inspired by the first game back after the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013, the Red Sox were held to three hits.

Boston left fielder Tyler O'Neill had to leave the game in the eighth after colliding with third baseman Rafael Devers when the two were chasing a shallow pop up.

"He has a big gash here," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said while pointing at his forehead, talking about O'Neill. "He got eight stitches. He's going through the concussion protocol, hopefully everything's fine."

Making his season debut after starting on the injured list due to a viral illness, Guardians starter Xzavion Curry held the Red Sox to two singles in five innings.

"It's tough to get the body going for an 11 a.m. game," Guardians manager Stephen Vogt said. "He was hungry for the start. We could have started at 6 this morning and I think he would have been ready to go."

**Orioles 7, Twins 4:** Cedric Mullins saved a run with an exceptional diving catch in deep left-center, then homered and drove in three runs for host Baltimore in a victory over Minnesota.

Jordan Westburg drove in two runs during his third career three-hit day, which came two days after his second. Ryan O'Hearn and Gunnar Henderson also homered for the Orioles, who have won five of their six series openers.

Ryan Jeffers and Jose Miranda each had three hits and two RBIs for Minnesota. Miranda homered and singled in runs, while Jeffers doubled in both runners Yennier Cano inherited from Keegan Akin.

**Rangers 1, Tigers 0:** Michael Lorenzen pitched five spotless innings in his debut and three relievers completed a five-hit shutout as visiting Texas topped Detroit.

Lorenzen gave up three hits and walked five while notching four strikeouts against his former team. Lorenzen represented the Tigers at the All-Star Game last season before he was traded to Philadelphia.

Jonah Heim had two hits and scored the only run.

**Mets 6, Pirates 3:** Harrison Bader drove in the go-ahead run in the eighth inning for the second day in a row, hitting a two-run double off an angry Aroldis Chapman that lifted host New York over Pittsburgh.

New York overcame a 3-0, sixth-inning deficit and reached .500 for the first time this season. The Mets have won eight of 11 following an 0-5 start under first-year manager Carlos Mendoza.

Chapman (0-1) was ejected by plate umpire Edwin Moscoso for arguing balls and strikes after Bader's double. The Mets stole three bases in the eighth against the Pirates, who have allowed 13 steals this season without throwing out a runner.

**Giants 4, Marlins 3:** Jung Hoo Lee had two hits, including a tying single in the seventh inning, and visiting San Francisco overcame an early three-run deficit to beat Miami.

Kyle Harrison (2-1) allowed three runs in six innings. The rookie left-hander gave up eight hits, walked one and struck out two.

**Angels 7, Rays 3:** Mike Trout's two-run homer highlighted a five-run outburst in the eighth inning and visiting

Los Angeles beat Tampa Bay.

Trout gave the Angels a 2-1 lead with his seventh homer, a 111.1 mph, 420-foot shot down the left-field line off Pat Maton (0-1). Matt Thaiss extended the Angels' lead to 5-1 with three-run double.

**Blue Jays 3, Yankees 1:** Chris Bassitt pitched into the seventh inning to win his second straight start, Alejandro Kirk reached base three times and host Toronto beat New York.

Bassitt (2-2) allowed one run and four hits in 6⅓ innings. The right-hander walked two and struck out five, ending his outing by fanning Gleyber Torres.

**Phillies 2, Rockies 1 (10):** Cristian Pache hit a walk-off single with one out in the 10th inning after Bryce Harper made a leaping, run-saving catch in the top of the frame to lift host Philadelphia to a win over Colorado.

Colorado Rockies left-hander Kyle Freeland appeared to injure his right, non-throwing shoulder while being used as a pinch-runner in the ninth inning.

**Royals 2, White Sox 0:** Seth Lugo pitched seven crisp innings, Vinnie Pasquantino homered and visiting Kansas City beat Chicago.

Lugo (3-0) allowed four hits — all singles — in his third straight win. The right-hander struck out four and walked one.

**Padres 7, Brewers 3:** Jackson Merrill went 3-for-5 and singled home two runs during a six-run rally in the fifth inning as visiting San Diego defeated Milwaukee.

The Padres trailed 3-1 before their unusual outburst in the fifth. The rally featured no extra-base hits, but did include six singles, a walk, a passed ball, catcher's interference and a pitch-clock violation.

**Braves 6, Astros 1:** Austin Riley had three hits, including an RBI single in a four-run ninth inning as visiting Atlanta

pulled away for a victory over Houston.

Orlando Arcia and Marcell Ozuna also had RBI singles in the ninth to help break open a 2-1 game.

**Cardinals 3, Athletics 1:** Sonny Gray struck out six and didn't walk a batter over six scoreless innings to beat his former club, and Willson Contreras doubled twice and drove in a run for visiting St. Louis in its win against Oakland.

Nolan Arenado hit an RBI single in the first to stake Gray (2-0) to an early lead against an Oakland team that had won three of four and drew a crowd of 5,508.

**Mariners 9, Reds 3:** Jorge Polanco and Mitch Haniger homered, and Seattle's slumping offense produced a season high in runs as the host Mariners beat Cincinnati.

The Mariners had their highest scoring game since Aug. 26, 2023, when they scored 13 times against the Kansas City Royals. Seattle entered Monday's game batting .204.

**Nationals 6, Dodgers 4:** Luis García Jr. hit a three-run homer, his first of the season, CJ Abrams also went deep and visiting Washington defeated Los Angeles.

Washington starter Mitchell Parker (1-0) allowed two runs and four hits in five innings during his major league debut. The left-hander struck out four and walked none after getting called up earlier in the day from Triple-A Rochester.

**Cubs 3, Diamondbacks 2 (11):** Nico Hoerner scored the tying run from second base on a wild pitch in the ninth inning, then delivered the go-ahead single in the 11th as visiting Chicago rallied past Arizona.

Michael Busch homered for the Cubs leading off the second on an 0-2 pitch from Merrill Kelly. It was the rookie's sixth of the season and fifth straight game with a home run, tying the franchise record.

# Caps blank Bruins, close in on playoffs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John Carlson scored another big goal, Charlie Lindgren stopped all 16 shots he faced and the Washington Capitals moved another step closer to the playoffs by beating the Boston Bruins 2-0 on Monday night.

Nic Dowd sealed it with an empty-netter with 11.7 seconds left, and now a win at Philadelphia on Tuesday night would put Washington back in the playoffs, regardless of other results around the NHL.

The Capitals, if they make it, would be the second wild card in the Eastern Conference after the New York Islanders clinched third place in the Metropolitan Division.

Boston also still had something to play for in its regular-season finale Tuesday night at home against Ottawa: the Atlantic Division title, with Florida just one point back in the standings. The Bruins could have wrapped it up by beating the Caps, but couldn't match the urgency of an opponent fighting for its playoff life.

No one exemplified that more for Washington than Dylan Strome, who won a faceoff, controlled the puck and set up Carl-

son's goal on a blast from the point 12 minutes in.

Jeremy Swayman was great in goal for Boston, making 23 saves, including a sliding stop on All-Star Tom Wilson in the second period and one on Alex Ovechkin during a penalty kill in the third.

**Islanders 4, Devils 1:** Kyle Palmieri and Brock Nelson each had a goal and an assist and Patrick Roy-led New York clinched one of the two remaining playoff berths in the Eastern Conference with a victory over host New Jersey.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Kyle MacLean also scored as the Islanders secured third place in the Metropolitan Division and earned their fifth postseason berth in the six seasons. Semyon Varamov made 23 saves for his fifth straight win and helped New York extend its point streak to eight games (7-0-1).

**Sabres 4, Lightning 2:** Dylan Cozens scored twice and visiting Buffalo concluded another disappointing season with a win over playoff-bound Tampa Bay.

Jordan Greenway and Zach Benson also scored for the Sabres, who fired coach Don Granato on Tuesday after missing the playoffs for an NHL-

record 13th consecutive season.

**Penguins 4, Predators 2:** Sidney Crosby scored his 42nd goal and added an assist as host Pittsburgh preserved its playoff hopes with a win over Nashville.

Erik Karlsson also had a goal and an assist for the Penguins, and Reilly Smith and Emil Bemstrom also scored. Alex Nedeljkovic made 28 saves while making his 12th straight start for Pittsburgh, which remains one point behind Washington and Detroit for the Eastern Conference's second wild card.

**Red Wings 5, Canadiens 4 (OT):** Lucas Raymond scored 4:35 into overtime after he tallied a game-tying goal with 1:17 left in regulation, lifting host Detroit to a comeback win over Montreal.

Detroit drew iron on two shots in overtime before Raymond's shot from the right circle got past Sam Montembeault.

**Rangers 4, Senators 0:** Artemi Panarin had a goal and an assist, Igor Shesterkin made 26 saves for his fourth shutout of the season, and host New York beat Ottawa to clinch the Presidents' Trophy for the NHL's best regular-season record.

Jack Roslovic, Adam Fox and Alexis Lafreniere also scored

and Chris Kreider had two assists as the Rangers won their league-best 55th game and finished with 114 points — both franchise records — and will have home ice advantage throughout the playoffs.

New York won for the fifth time in seven games and went 26-7-1 in its last 34 games. The Rangers previously won the Presidents' Trophy in 1991-92, 1993-94 — when they won the Stanley Cup for the only time since 1940 — and 2014-15.

**Wild 3, Kings 1:** Kirill Kaprizov had a goal and an assist, and visiting Minnesota beat Los Angeles.

Blake Lizotte scored and Cam Talbot allowed three goals on 25 shots as the Kings lost firm control of their path to third place in the Pacific Division. They are one point ahead of Vegas.

**Oilers 9, Sharks 2:** Warren Foegele scored twice and Adam Henrique and Dylan Holloway each had a goal and two assists as host Edmonton beat San Jose.

Connor McDavid had a goal and added his 100th assist of the season, becoming just the fourth player in NHL history to hit the milestone behind Wayne Gretzky (11 times), Mario Lemieux and Bobby Orr.

## Hawks' Young ready for play-in after 3-game tuneup

Associated Press

ATLANTA — A healthy Trae Young gives the Atlanta Hawks their best hope for overcoming season-long injury woes and advancing past the Chicago Bulls in the Eastern Conference play-in tournament.

Young hopes he can provide his normal production after playing three games at the end of the regular season. His minutes were restricted after missing 23 games with a torn ligament in his left pinkie, but he said he hopes to have his normal minutes in Wednesday night's game at Chicago.

Young's return wasn't enough to prevent the Hawks from entering the play-in tournament with a six-game losing streak. He averaged 25.7 points in the regular season, but was limited to 14, 19 and 12 points in his three-game warmup for the play-in tournament.

"I feel a lot better," Young said after Monday's practice, adding he gained confidence from seeing his playing time rise to 32 minutes in an ugly 157-115 loss at Indiana to close the regular season. Young had 12 points and 11 assists in the loss.

"I'm just trying to make sure I can play at least close to my minutes that I played in the regular season in play-in games," Young said.

After already losing forward Saddiq Bey to a season-ending knee injury, the Hawks will be without two other key players in their frontcourt, forward Jalen Johnson and center Onyeka Okongwu, for the play-in.

"That's just something, as I've said, really, it's no different than throughout the course of the year," said coach Quin Snyder. "The guys that you do have, they

have to be ready to go and have to play at a high level, and you can't lament those things. So we'll be ready."

Johnson averages 16.0 points and 8.7 rebounds; he will miss at least three weeks with a right ankle sprain. Okongwu has inflammation in his left big toe. He averages 10.2 points and 6.8 rebounds.

"Obviously you just play the cards you're dealt," Young said. "That's just my mentality. You know I feel like we can still win with the players we have, so I'm going to go out there and try to do it."