

Stakes rise in Ukraine as deadline nears

Associated Press

The coming week could bring an important moment in the war between Russia and Ukraine, as President Donald Trump's deadline for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal approaches — or it could simply melt away.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff was expected in Moscow in the middle of this week, just before Trump's Friday deadline for the Kremlin to stop the killing or face potentially severe economic penalties from Washington.

Previous Trump promises, threats and cajoling have failed to yield results, and the stubborn diplomatic stalemate will be hard to clear away. Meanwhile, Ukraine is losing more territory on the front line, although there is no sign of a looming collapse of its defenses.

Witkoff was expected to land in the Russian capital on Wednesday or Thursday, according to Trump, following his trip to Israel and Gaza.

"They would like to see (Witkoff)," Trump said Sunday of the Russians. "They've asked that he meet so we'll see what happens."

Trump, exasperated that Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn't heeded his calls to stop bombing Ukrainian cities, a week ago moved up his ultimatum to impose additional sanctions on Russia as well as introduce secondary tariffs targeting countries that buy Russian oil, including China and India.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that officials are happy to meet with Trump's envoy.

"We are always glad to see Mr. Witkoff in Moscow," he said. "We consider (talks with Witkoff) important, substantive and very useful."

Trump said Sunday that Russia has proved to be "pretty good at avoiding sanctions."

"They're wily characters," he said of the Russians.

The Kremlin has insisted that

international sanctions imposed since its February 2022 invasion of its neighbor have had a limited impact.

Ukraine insists the sanctions are taking their toll on Moscow's war machine and wants Western allies to ramp them up.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday urged the United States, Europe and other nations to impose stronger secondary sanctions on Moscow's energy, trade and banking sectors.

Trump's comments appeared to signal he doesn't have much hope that sanctions will force Putin's hand.

The secondary sanctions also complicate Washington's relations with China and India, who stand accused of helping finance Russia's war effort by buying its oil.

Since taking office in January, Trump has found that stopping the war is harder than he perhaps imagined.

Senior American officials

have warned that the U.S. could walk away from the conflict if peace efforts make no progress.

The diplomatic atmosphere has become more heated as Trump's deadline approaches.

Putin announced last Friday that Russia's new hypersonic missile, the Oreshnik, has entered service.

The Russian leader has hailed its capabilities, saying its multiple warheads that plunge to a target at speeds of up to Mach 10 cannot be intercepted. They are so powerful, he said, that the use of several of them in one conventional strike could be as devastating as a nuclear attack.

Also, one of Putin's top lieutenants warned that the Ukraine war could nudge Russia and the U.S. into armed conflict.

Trump responded to what he called the "highly provocative statements" by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev by ordering the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines.

New CNO and AFRICOM, SOCOM commanders confirmed

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate has confirmed new commanders for U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Special Operations Command as well as the next chief of naval operations, giving the Navy its first permanent military leader in five months.

Adm. Daryl Caudle will take over as the Navy's highest-ranking officer, Air Force Lt. Gen. Dagvin R.M. Anderson will lead U.S. Africa Command and Navy Vice Adm. Frank

Bradley will lead Special Operations Command.

All three were confirmed on Thursday night by unanimous voice vote.

Caudle's confirmation ends a nearly half-year vacancy in the chief of naval operations post, which has not been held by a permanent officer since President Donald Trump fired Adm. Lisa Franchetti in February.

Franchetti became the first woman to serve as the top Navy officer and the first woman to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in November 2023.

Since 2021, Caudle has led U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which is responsible for training and deploying naval forces, and previously served as a vice director on the Joint Staff.

At his confirmation hearing, Caudle spoke of the need to improve chronic delays in shipbuilding and maintenance, invest in modern technology and build a modern fleet that can compete with China's maritime dominance.

He also defended the Navy's loosening of enlistment requirements in recent years, saying they provided more

pathways into the service without lowering standards.

Anderson previously led Special Operations Command's Africa branch. He will be the first airman to lead AFRICOM, which has been commanded by Army and Marine Corps generals since the command's creation in 2007.

Bradley, the commander of Joint Special Operations Command since 2022, previously commanded at all levels of special operations, including leading joint special operations throughout the Middle East and South Asia.

US debuts Dark Eagle for Talisman Sabre

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Army deployed its Dark Eagle hypersonic missile system to Australia's Northern Territory during the Talisman Sabre exercise, marking the weapon's first overseas appearance, the service announced over the weekend.

The deployment marks "a significant milestone for the Army, demonstrating our ability to rapidly deploy and operate advanced capabilities in support of our allies and partners," U.S. Army Pacific posted Sunday on X.

The Army gave no indication that the weapon, with an estimated range of 1,700 miles, was fired in Australia.

The 3rd Multi-Domain Task Force, based in Hawaii, transported the system to Australia, according to an Army news release Saturday.

Defense Department photos show soldiers from B Battery (Dark Eagle), 5th Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment briefing allied troops about the weapon on July 9.

"The exercise demonstrates the Combatant Command's capacity to project power and support the defense of Australia, a key ally in the region," Adm. Samuel Paparo, head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, said in the news release.

Dark Eagle's debut Down Under shows the Army's ability to rapidly deploy and operate ad-

vanced capabilities, Col. Wade Germann, commander of the multidomain task force, said in Saturday's release.

The U.S. Army is collaborating with Australia's 10th Brigade in Adelaide, South Australia, to plan the deployment of hypersonic weapons, Lt. Gen. Joel Vowell, deputy commander of U.S. Army Pacific, told Stars and Stripes on July 14 at Shoalwater Bay on Australia's east coast.

"We are looking at how we can do that together," he said.

Hypersonic weapons travel at speeds exceeding Mach 5, five times the speed of sound.

The 1st Multi-Domain Task Force at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., was the first

unit to field and integrate Dark Eagle.

In March 2024, the Air Force test-fired its AGM-183A Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon from a B-52H Stratofortress bomber over the Ronald Reagan test site on Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

China has pursued an anti-access, area-denial strategy involving missiles designed to target ships and aircraft near Taiwan and in the South China Sea.

Talisman Sabre, a three-week biennial exercise, concluded Monday. It involved more than 40,000 troops from the United States, Australia and 17 other nations across Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Eligible Marines offered early outs through Sept. 30

By **JOHN VANDIVER**
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is offering early discharges to eligible enlisted Marines in connection with efforts to fine-tune the size of the force, the service said this week.

The Corps said in a force-wide administrative message sent out on Thursday that it is

seeking volunteers already slated to leave the service by Sept. 30.

The offer allows active-duty Marines to separate before the intended expiration of their contracts.

"It is understood that this program may result in temporary risks to some units due to falling below staffing levels," the mes-

sage stated. "Units will not receive early staffing replacement."

The message said commanders' support was critical for the Corps to attain its force-shaping goals, the details of which were not specified.

The message also did not say how many volunteers were needed.

Marines entitled to separation pay upon their normal end of service terms will keep that benefit under early release, as long as they have completed six years of active-duty service, the message said.

However, the amount of separation pay they receive could be affected by early release, the Marines said.

Sailor sentenced over sexually explicit content of children

By **LARA KORTE**
Stars and Stripes

A Virginia sailor who was caught with depictions of the sexual abuse of nearly 30 children was sentenced to six years in prison, according to the Justice Department.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Henry, 43, pleaded guilty in April in federal court in Norfolk to one count of receipt of child pornography, according to

court documents. His sentencing was announced Wednesday.

Henry was assigned to Theater Underseas Surveillance Command, Atlantic.

Last fall, authorities were told of concerns that he was viewing child pornography on his laptop. A witness said she had found a folder on the computer containing sexually explicit videos of children ages 4 to 13, documents said.

A search of his electronic devices found 176 videos and 119 images depicting the sexual abuse of at least 27 children, according to prosecutors.

Henry searched online for messaging app groups using keyword searches of "Teens and Schoolgirls" and "Teen XXX Groups." He used the apps to request abuse material and find more groups, the DOJ said.

He later deleted one of the

apps and told Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents that "there are people looking for predators," prosecutors said.

After serving his sentence, he'll be subject to five years of supervised release and will be required to register as a sex offender. He'll also be forbidden from contact with a child under 18 and is required to pay \$7,000 in restitution.

Abbott threatens Dems who left Texas over map dispute

Associated Press

Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said he would begin trying to remove Democratic lawmakers from office Monday if they do not return after dozens of them left the state in an attempt to block the adoption of redrawn U.S. House maps sought by President Donald Trump.

Some of the lawmakers, including those who left Sunday for Illinois or New York, clapped back, accusing Abbott of using “smoke and mirrors” to make threats that go beyond his legal authority.

The revolt by Democrats in the state House and Abbott’s threat ratcheted up a widening fight over congressional maps that began in Texas but expanded to include Democratic governors who have floated the possibility of rushing to redraw their own

state maps in retaliation. But their options are limited.

The dispute also offers another example of Trump’s aggressive view of presidential power and his grip on the Republican Party nationally, while testing the long-standing balance of powers between the federal government and individual states.

“We’re not going to tolerate our democracy being stolen in a modern-day stagecoach heist by bunch of law breaking cowboys,” New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Monday, flanked by several of the lawmakers who fled. “If Republicans are willing to rewrite rules to give themselves an advantage, then they’re leaving us with no choice: We must do the same. You have to fight fire with fire.”

At the center of the escalating impasse is Trump’s hope of add-

ing five more GOP-leaning congressional seats in Texas before the 2026 midterm elections. That would bolster his party’s chances of preserving its slim U.S. House majority. Republicans currently hold 25 of the state’s 38 seats.

A vote on the proposed maps was set for Monday in the Texas House, but it cannot proceed if Democratic members deny a quorum by going to another state, which puts them beyond the reach of Texas law enforcement.

After one group of Democrats landed Sunday in Chicago, they were welcomed by Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker but declined to say how long they were prepared to stay away from Texas.

“We will do whatever it takes. What that looks like, we don’t know,” said state Rep. Gene Wu, the Texas House Democratic Caucus leader.

Thousands of workers at Boeing go on strike

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Thousands of workers at three Boeing manufacturing plants went on strike overnight less than a year after the company boosted wages to end a separate, 53-day strike by 33,000 aircraft workers.

On Monday, about 3,200 workers at Boeing facilities in St. Louis; St. Charles, Mo.; and Mascoutah, Ill., voted to reject a modified four-year labor agreement with Boeing, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union said.

In a post on X, the union said: “3,200 highly-skilled IAM Union members at Boeing went on strike at midnight because enough is enough.”

The vote followed members’ rejection last week of an earlier proposal from the troubled aerospace giant, which had included a 20% wage increase over four years.

“IAM District 837 members build the aircraft and defense systems that keep our country safe,” said Sam Cicinelli, Midwest territory general vice president for the union, in a statement.

The union members rejected the latest proposal after a week-long cooling-off period.

Boeing warned over the weekend that it anticipated the strike after workers rejected its most recent offer that included a 20% wage hike over four years.

“We’re disappointed our employees rejected an offer that featured 40% average wage growth and resolved their primary issue on alternative work schedules,” said Dan Gillian, Boeing Air Dominance vice president and general manager, and senior St. Louis site executive.

Far-right Israeli minister visits, prays at flashpoint holy site in Jerusalem

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — A far-right Israeli minister visited and prayed at Jerusalem’s most sensitive holy site on Sunday, triggering regional condemnation and fears that the provocative move could further escalate tensions.

With Israel facing global criticism over famine-like conditions in the besieged strip, Itamar Ben-Gvir’s visit to the hillside compound threatened to further set back efforts by international mediators to halt Israel’s military offensive in Gaza.

The area, which Jews call the Temple Mount, is the holiest site in Judaism and was home to the ancient temples. Muslims call the site the Noble Sanctuary. Today it is home to the Al-Aqsa

Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.

Visits to the site by Israeli officials are considered a provocation across the Muslim world and openly praying violates a longstanding status quo. Jews have been allowed to tour it but are barred from praying, with Israeli police and troops providing security. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said after Ben-Gvir’s visit that Israel would not change the norms governing the site.

Sunday’s visit was swiftly condemned as an incitement by Palestinian leaders as well as Jordan, the Al-Aqsa Mosque’s custodian, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Houthi rebels in Yemen said they fired three drones at Israel; Israel’s military said a

“suspicious aerial target launched from Yemen” was intercepted.

Ben-Gvir visited following Hamas’ release of videos showing two emaciated Israeli hostages. The videos caused an uproar in Israel and raised pressure on the government to reach a deal to bring home the remaining 50 hostages who were captured on Oct. 7, 2023, in the Hamas-led attack that triggered the war.

The videos — released by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the second-largest militant group in Gaza — triggered outrage across the Israeli political spectrum after the hostages, speaking under duress, described grim conditions and an urgent lack of food.

Yokosuka warns of 1-handed macaque

BY ALEX WILSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A one-handed monkey is causing a stir in and around the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet, prompting warnings to residents after multiple sightings of the wandering primate.

The Japanese macaque, missing its left hand, was first seen Friday about a mile southwest of the base and was last spotted Sunday afternoon approximately 3 miles northwest, according to Yokosuka city's website.

Base spokesman Justin Keller confirmed the monkey was sighted on base Friday, but there were no reported incidents or injuries. He emphasized that anyone who spots a monkey on base should promptly notify security.

As of Monday, no new sightings had been reported in Yoko-

suka, a city environmental official told Stars and Stripes by phone. The animal was seen earlier that day, however, in nearby Yokohama's Kanazawa ward, the Yokosuka city website said.

The macaque may be the same animal reported multiple times in Kanagawa prefecture since May. A monkey missing its left hand was spotted May 13 in Sagami-hara, home to the U.S. Army's Camp Zama, roughly 30 miles from the naval base.

Not many monkeys are missing their left hand, the Yokosuka city official said. He could not confirm, however, whether the primate spotted over the weekend is the same one observed earlier this year.

The monkey may have traveled through Kamakura, Zushi and Hayama before reaching Yokosuka, according to the city's website. The animal's first

reported sighting was in May near Chigasaki, about 14 miles west of the naval base.

Base officials posted a warning Friday evening on the installation's Facebook page, advising people to avoid the monkey.

"Please do not approach, catch or try to feed wild animals," the post read.

The warning drew significant engagement, with more than 100 comments as of Monday afternoon. Several commenters claimed to have seen the monkey on base.

Petty Officer 1st Class Stephen Mayfield photographed the monkey near the main gate. He told Stars and Stripes via Messenger on Monday that he saw the animal while leaving the base. Although he did not see the monkey enter the installation, other social media users claimed it had.

While wild monkeys are not

generally considered dangerous, they can become aggressive if provoked. Sudden movements, loud noises and direct eye contact may agitate them.

"To date, there have been no reports of monkeys harming people in the city, but if you do see one, avoid making eye contact with it, back away slowly and calmly, and leave the area," Yokosuka city's website warns.

The city also warns against feeding monkeys or pointing cameras at them, and residents are advised to close doors and windows completely. If left alone, monkeys typically return to mountainous areas, it added.

Under Japan's wildlife protection laws, monkeys cannot be captured unless they have caused injuries, according to a Nov. 2 report by Mainichi, a Japanese newspaper, about an earlier sighting of a macaque missing its left hand.

Primate sanctuary helps vets find peace, overcome PTSD

Associated Press

PERKINSTON, Miss. — In the embrace of a cheerfully chattering spider monkey named Louie, an Army veteran who grappled for decades with post-traumatic stress disorder says he finally feels at peace.

"Being out here has brought a lot of faith back to me," said John Richard. "There's no feeling like it."

The bond began last fall when John Richard was helping two married veterans set up the Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary, volunteering his time to build the enclosure that's now Louie's home in rural southeast Mississippi.

During a recent visit, Louie quickly scampered up Richard's body, wrapping his arms and tail around him in a sort of hug. Richard, in turn, placed his hand on the primate's back and whispered sweetly until Louie disentangled himself and swung away.

"He's making his little sounds in my ear, and you know, he's always telling you, 'Oh, I

love you,'" Richard said. "I know you're OK. I know you're not going to hurt me."

Richard said his connection with Louie helped more than any other PTSD treatment he received since being diagnosed more than 20 years ago.

It's a similar story for the sanctuary's founder, April Stewart, an Air Force veteran who said she developed PTSD as a result of military sexual trauma.

Her 15-acre property, nestled amid woods and farmland, is filled with rescue dogs, two rather noisy geese and a black cat. It's also now home to three spider monkeys, two squirrel monkeys and two kinkajous, a tropical mammal that is closely related to raccoons.

Stewart and her husband, also a veteran, decided to open the sanctuary in October after first rescuing and rehoming monkeys.

The sanctuary's goal is to provide as natural a habitat as possible for the animals, Stewart said, and bring them together with their own species.

Denmark zoo wants small pet donations to feed to predators

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — A zoo in Denmark is asking for donations of small pets as food for its predators.

The Aalborg zoo said it is trying to mimic the natural food chain of the animals housed there "for the sake of both animal welfare and professional integrity" and offers assurances the pets will be "gently euthanized" by trained staff.

The zoo in northern Denmark explained in a Facebook post that "if you have a healthy animal that needs to be given away for various reasons, feel free to donate it to us."

The zoo points to guinea pigs, rabbits and chickens as possible donations. After being euthanized, the animals will be used as fodder, the zoo said.

"That way, nothing goes to waste — and we ensure natural behavior, nutrition and well-being of our predators," the zoo said.

The zoo, which could not immediately be reached for additional details, does not list other pets or animals as possible donations.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

5 people charged in 'vicious,' bloody brawl

OH COLUMBUS — Five people have been charged in a bloody, late-night brawl in downtown Cincinnati that involved dozens of people and raised concerns about crime in the Ohio city.

A video of the fight showed a crowd milling about before several people start throwing punches. One man falls to the ground and was repeatedly punched and kicked by bystanders. Another woman is punched in the face and falls to the ground, lying motionless before another woman helps her. She can be seen bleeding from the mouth.

"I am outraged by the vicious fight that occurred downtown," Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval said in a statement. "It is horrifying to watch, and this is unacceptable and disgusting behavior is intolerable in any part of our community."

Police Chief Teresa Theetge said more people would be charged, warning that anyone who "put their hands on another individual during this incident in an attempt to cause harm will face consequences."

Man made threats; probe finds explosives

TN OLD FORT — Officers found 14 improvised explosive devices while executing a search warrant for a man who had threatened to kill public officials and tried to detonate the devices as he was being arrested, Tennessee authorities said.

Detectives and deputies went to a home in Old Fort, about 45 miles east of Chattanooga, seek-

ing to apprehend the 54-year-old suspect, the Polk County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

After taking him into custody, the officers noticed "something was smoldering" in the bedroom where he was found, the sheriff's office said.

They saw what appeared to be an improvised explosive device and evacuated the home. Subsequently, bomb squad officers and agents with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, found the 14 devices, the sheriff's office said.

The suspect had active warrants for threatening to kill public officials and law enforcement personnel in the county.

Man missing at Grand Canyon for over a week

AZ GRAND CANYON — A search is underway at the Grand Canyon for a New Jersey man who went missing there early last week.

Thomas Daniel Gibbs, 35 of Freehold, was last heard from around noon on July 22, according to a press release from the National Park Service.

Investigators believe he was in the Grandview Trail and Horseshoe Mesa area prior to his disappearance.

His family reported him missing Monday. His Tesla Cybertruck was found later that same day in the Grand Canyon's Grandview Point parking lot on the South Rim, park officials said.

His disappearance comes as the Dragon Bravo fire rages on amid extreme heat warnings in the region, forcing the park service to close off certain parts of Grand Canyon National Park.

Wolves' return helps with recovery of aspens

MT YELLOWSTONE — Three decades after wolves were reintroduced in Yellowstone National Park, aspen stands are recovering, a new analysis suggested.

Published in Forest Ecology and Management, the study looks at what happened after 1995, when wolves were reintroduced to the park. During most of the 20th century, there were no apex predators in the park aside from bears and cougars, and elk increased to record numbers.

In previous years, the elk had kept young aspen to 3.28 feet or less in height, preventing the trees from growing to their natural height of up to 40 feet.

Now that wolves are back and bears and cougars prey on elk in the park, the researchers write, elk numbers are down and aspen stands are growing new trees again, with young trees more than 5 centimeters' diameter at breast height found for the first time in more than 80 years.

Moose collision kills driver, hurts passenger

AK DENALI PARK — A driver was killed and a passenger in his car injured after hitting a moose near the entrance to Alaska's Denali National Park and Preserve.

The vehicle's collision with the moose occurred around 1 a.m. Friday, just south of the entrance to the Denali Park Road near Mile 235 of the George Parks Highway, also referred to as the Parks Highway, the park said in a statement.

The 24-year-old male driver,

who was from Bulgaria, was pronounced dead at the scene. The 24-year-old female passenger, who is from North Macedonia, was taken to a Fairbanks hospital.

The National Park Service is investigating the incident and working with the Bulgarian Embassy to notify the driver's family.

"The collision serves as a sobering reminder of the hazards of wildlife along Alaska's roadways," the park said.

"Moose, caribou, and other large animals are often active at dawn, dusk, and nighttime hours, and can be difficult to see."

Whale dies after collision with boat

NJ BARNEGAT TOWNSHIP — A minke whale died off the New Jersey shore after a collision that nearly tipped over a small boat and threw a person overboard.

Social media video of the collision in Barnegat Bay showed the motor boat rocking after the impact and the 20-foot whale splashing near the craft before swimming away. The person thrown overboard manages to tread water next to the boat.

The whale was found dead after it came to rest on a sandbar in shallow water. Marine authorities were not able to get close to the whale due to tidal conditions, according to the Marine Mammal Stranding Center, a not-for-profit rescue, rehabilitation and release organization.

Jay Pagel, stranding coordinator at the center, said there were reports the whale had injuries prior to the collision captured on video.

— From wire reports

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Lyles wins 200, is shoved by Bednarek

Associated Press

Noah Lyles landed the day's biggest blow on the track, passing Kenny Bednarek for the win, then looking his way to talk some trash.

Bednarek's answer was a two-handed shove in the back after the finish line, some more heated words and a challenge for a rematch that can't come soon enough.

The U.S. track championships turned physical Sunday, with Lyles and Bednarek getting involved in a shoving and shouting match as they crossed the finish line of a hotly contested 200-meter final at Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore.

"Like I've said before, Noah's going to be Noah," Bednarek said. "If he wants to stare me down, that's fine."

Lyles reeled in Bednarek and crossed in 19.63 seconds for a .04-second victory that sets up a rematch at the world championships Sept. 19 in Tokyo.

The best action in Round 1 came after the finish line. There was jawing, the shove and then Lyles turning around, backed-

aling, reaching his arms out and bouncing up and down like a boxer before lobbing a few more choice words at Bednarek.

Their argument bled into the start of what is normally a celebratory NBC winner's interview.

"I tell ya, if you've got a problem, I expect a call," Bednarek said, as the network's Lewis Johnson moved the mic between the runners.

Lyles replied: "You know what, you're right. You're right. Let's talk after this."

Though they shook hands during that tense post-race, Bednarek was fired up well after the sprinters had left the track.

"The summary is, don't do that to me," he said. "I don't do any of that stuff. It's not good character right there. That's pretty much it. At the end of the day, he won the race. I've got to give him props. He was the better man today."

The win itself was no big surprise for Lyles, the three-time defending world champion who will have to get past Bednarek to make it four in Tokyo. Bednarek

was asked what Lyles said as he turned around and gloated after securing his fifth national title at his favorite distance.

"What he said didn't matter, it's just what he did," Bednarek said. "Unsportsmanlike (expletive) and I don't deal with that. It's a respect factor. He's fresh. Last time we lined it up, I beat him, that's all I can say. Next time we line up, I'm going to win. That's all that matters."

Asked to expand on his role in the tiff, Lyles was less forthcoming: "On coach's orders, no comment."

As is common in a year after the Olympics — and in an era after Usain Bolt — track is a sport desperately in need of some energy. Who else to provide it than Lyles, the sport's most engaging character this side of Sha'Carri Richardson, who found herself in off-the-track headlines again this weekend after being arrested for domestic violence.

Up to now, track media and the runners themselves have tried to generate rivalries between Lyles and Erriyon

Knighton (fizzled), or Lyles and Letsile Tebogo (beat him in the Olympics last year) or, of course, between Lyles and NFL receiver Tyreek Hill (supposed grudge match that never took place).

Turns out, they probably should have looked at the lane next to him. Bednarek has won silver and beaten Lyles the last two times they've lined up in the 200 at the Olympics, even though Lyles has had issues at both — in Tokyo with his mental health, then in Paris with COVID.

Bednarek referenced some long-simmering issues between the two.

"Just some personal stuff we've got to handle," he said.

But when asked for something, anything, about this burgeoning rivalry, Lyles demurred, instead focusing on what a difficult year this has been for him after an injury in April kept him out of spikes until June.

"If they ain't gonna beat me now, they ain't gonna beat me ever," Lyles said.

Yamashita holds off Hull to win Women's British title

Associated Press

PORTHCRAWL, Wales — Miyu Yamashita, of Japan, captured her first major title Sunday when she withstood a charge by Charley Hull by not making a bogey until the outcome of the Women's British Open was no longer in doubt. She closed with a 2-under 70 for a two-shot victory.

Yamashita holed two big par putts on the back nine at Royal Porthcawl, the last one when Hull had closed to within one shot of the lead.

Her final test was the 401-yard 16th, one of the toughest on the course. Yamashita, who turned 24 on Saturday, drilled her drive down the middle and

found the green, nearly holing a 45-foot putt. That gave her a three-shot lead with two holes to play.

Her final act was a tap-in for par to finish on 11-under 277, and she raised both arms to celebrate. Yamashita wiped away tears as she headed to the scoring trailer.

"To be part of such a moment in history is something very, very special," Yamashita said through an interpreter at the trophy presentation.

Hull gave it her best shot. She started the final round three shots behind, made three birdies in a four-hole stretch to get into the mix and then holed a 20-foot birdie on the 14th to get

within one shot of the lead.

Behind her on the course, Yamashita hit into a bunker off the tee at the par-5 13th, blasted out and still had a long way for her third, missing the green to the left. She chipped weakly to 18 feet and buried the par putt.

She also poured in an 8-foot par putt to stay at 12 under, right after Hull got to 11 under.

The English star blinked first. Hull didn't get any help from the wind on her tee shot on the 16th, which found a pot bunker and left her no chance of reaching the green. Her third shot bounded off the back of the green, and she had to make a 20-footer to escape with bogey.

Hull bogeyed the 17th, and

her chances were done. She closed with a 69 and finished as a runner-up in a major for the fourth time. Minami Katsu was never seriously in the mix, but her closing birdie gave her a 69 to tie for second.

"I felt pretty good about how I fought back over the weekend," said Hull, who was 11 shots behind after two rounds.

A Lim Kim, the 2020 U.S. Women's Open champion, hit wedge to 5 feet for birdie on the second hole to tie Yamashita for the lead. But she made a series of blunders, starting with a three-putt on the third hole, and fell back. She had six bogeys in her round of 73 and tied for fourth with Rio Takeda (71).

NASCAR's Byron seeks playoff momentum

Associated Press

NEWTON, Iowa — William Byron was already locked into the NASCAR Cup Series playoffs and was second in the regular-season point standings heading into Sunday's race at Iowa Speedway.

Still, Byron didn't like how things were going heading into the closing stretch of the regular season.

He had five finishes of 27th or worse in the last eight races, and coming to a track where he has had success in the past, he wanted to regain some confidence with the playoffs approaching.

"I think we've been fast every weekend," Byron said. "I mean, I can't think of a week when we've been slow, it's just the results haven't come together. And it was starting to wear on us a little bit and starting to create some kind of, 'What's going to happen next?'"

What happened next, though, was Byron getting his second win of the season Sunday, gambling on fuel mileage for a win that he thought had changed the momentum of his season.

Byron went the last 144 laps of the 350-lap race without a stop, and a third stage filled with caution flags helped him conserve enough fuel to get to the finish.

He left Iowa Speedway, where he has now won in all three of NASCAR's series, with an 18-point lead over Hendrick Motorsports teammate Chase Elliott for the regular-season title.

"This is going to kind of put the pendulum the other way," Byron said.

Byron won the season-opening Daytona 500 and has eight top-10 finishes this season, including three second-place finishes. But he had a 37th-place finish at Atlanta, a 40th-place finish at the Chicago street race and 31st-

place finish at Dover. He was 16th last week at Indianapolis, when he had to make a late pit stop for fuel.

Surviving to win this one is something crew chief Rudy Fugle expected.

"He's an awesome driver," Fugle said. "I think he's the best driver, all-around, in the field right now. He's mine, and I should say that. But I really think he's maturing and getting the experience to show that off. He's very well-diversified, and then he's a fighter. He's got a hard line and fights through anything. There's no quit in him."

Byron had fuel-mileage issues late at Michigan, and again last week at Indianapolis. Even with that, Fugle knew he could still gamble with his driver.

"Those are things that he's gotten better as well over the years, rolling with the punches and what happens next," Fugle said. "And

next thing you know, you're leading and you get a chance to win."

Byron admitted he was nervous as the laps dwindled on Sunday.

"I knew what to expect," he said. "I knew what to look for, and all that in terms of if I ran out of fuel. But I was just thinking about preserving as much as I could, doing a lot of different things in the car, lifting early and just not using a lot of throttle percentage. So just the guys did a really good job coaching me on what to do."

Now, Byron said, he has new fuel to get to the playoffs.

"I really feel like we needed to win a race like this, we deserve to win a race based on how we've grown all year, and it just wasn't happening," Byron said. "It's just a big relief for us to have one kind of go our way. We've just been running so well this year, I feel like this is going to be a big momentum boost for our team."

Rookie TE Warren starting to find fit at Colts' camp

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Tyler Warren still appreciates the blue-and-white team colors.

Everything else has changed — his number, the shade of blue he wears, even his new decals-laden helmet.

This is what happens when the best tight end in college football turns pro. Warren, Penn State's most versatile player in 2024, now finds himself on a steep, speedy and increasingly steady learning curve at training camp with the Indianapolis Colts.

"I think it's been kind of normal installing and learning the offense, just taking your time and trying to understand it," he said after just a couple of workouts. "It does take stuff (to do) on my own, right? We go through it in the meeting, but when I go back to the hotel room looking over it again, doing walk-throughs with somebody is, I think, is the most helpful."

Starting over isn't easy for anyone, though Warren seems uniquely suited to make a smooth transition.

He played center and quarterback as a prep star in Virginia. He played fullback at Penn State before moving to tight end. Then last season, the Nittany Lion coaches threw

out the vanilla playbook and tailored it to Warren's unusual skill set.

It seemed there was nothing he couldn't do.

Warren set a single-season school record with 104 receptions, topped the 1,000-yard mark, emerged as a short-yardage rushing beast and became the first Big Ten tight end to rush for four scores in one season since 1956. He even threw a TD pass and returned a kickoff.

The resume was so impressive that he earned the John Mackey Award and All-American honors, helped Penn State reach the College Football Playoff and improved his draft stock.

Indianapolis took him No. 14 overall in the draft and it hasn't taken long for Warren to showcase his skills in camp, including Thursday night when he made an off-balance, one-handed stab while falling down for a first down. The play drew a loud roar from the crowd and praise from coach Shane Steichen.

"It was an incredible catch," Steichen said. "But I did get some backlash because some of the guys thought it was a sack and it might have been. I'll take that back. It probably, definitely was, but I was watching the route. It was a heck of a catch, and you saw that on his

college tape."

It's a major improvement from Warren's first few practices when he struggled to hold onto the passes thrown by Anthony Richardson and Daniel Jones, who are battling to be the Colts' starting quarterback.

Indy has plenty of depth with seven tight ends on the roster and five with NFL experience, but they've not had a reliable go-to player at the position since two-time Pro Bowler Jack Doyle retired following the 2021 season.

Just how much do the Colts think of Warren?

Because linebacker and four-time captain Zaire Franklin, last year's league tackling leader, wears Warren's college number, 44, they gave him No. 84, Doyle's old number, and started experimenting with the playbook — just like the Penn State staff.

"We're putting a lot on his plate, and sometimes you push them a little bit beyond their threshold," offensive coordinator Jim Bob Cooter said. "I think he's going to be a very versatile piece for us. We're going to try a bunch of different stuff with him, give him a bunch of shots at a bunch of different aspects playing offensive football."

Sánchez leads Phillies past Tigers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Cristopher Sánchez pitched eight sparkling innings, Kyle Schwarber hit his 38th homer and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Detroit Tigers 2-0 on Sunday night.

Philadelphia took two of three in the weekend series to move back into first place in the NL East, a half-game better than the New York Mets.

Sánchez (10-3) surrendered five hits, struck out six and walked one. He allowed only one base-runner to reach third.

Jhoan Duran handled the ninth for his second save with the Phillies and No. 18 overall. The hard-throwing closer fanned Riley Greene with a 102.5 mph fastball for the final out.

Schwarber made it 2-0 when he connected against Tyler Holton with two down in the eighth, hitting a 435-foot drive to center.

Schwarber is tied with Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani for the NL lead in home runs. It was Schwarber's 15th homer this season off a lefty, which leads all of baseball and matches a career high for the slugger.

Detroit wasted a sharp performance by Charlie Morton (7-9), who pitched six innings of one-run ball.

Max Kepler drove in Philadelphia's first run with a groundout in the second.

Braves 4, Reds 2: Eli White hit a three-run homer and a solo shot, helping visiting Atlanta beat Cincinnati in the rain-delayed MLB Speedway Classic at Bristol Motor Speedway.

White's first homer of the afternoon gave the Braves a 3-1 lead in the second inning at the historic racetrack. He added his sixth homer of the season on a leadoff shot in the seventh.

Atlanta came in having clinched the season series, winning four of the first six games against the Reds. The teams split the first two in Cincinnati before coming to Bristol.

Royals 7, Blue Jays 4 (10):

Kyle Isbel hit an RBI double in the 10th inning, and visiting Kansas City rallied to beat Toronto.

Vinnie Pasquantino hit a tying single with two out in the eighth, and the Royals scored five in the 10th while taking two of three from the AL East-leading Blue Jays.

Kansas City is 24-12 in series finales, winning its past nine.

Giants 12, Mets 4: Rafael Deviers snapped out of a slump with a homer and four RBIs in visiting San Francisco's victory over New York.

Rookie Carson Whisenhunt (1-0) threw 5½ innings for his first win in the majors to help the Giants take two of three from the Mets following a six-game losing streak.

New York dropped a half-game behind Philadelphia for the NL East lead.

Dodgers 3, Rays 0: Freddie Freeman scored one run and drove in another to snap visiting Los Angeles' 18-inning scoreless drought and lead it over Tampa Bay.

Andy Pages singled off Mason Englert (0-1) in the sixth to drive in Freddie Freeman, who extended his on-base streak to 18 games with a first-inning single and added another RBI single in the seventh to make it 2-0.

Shohei Ohtani doubled and scored on Mookie Betts' sacrifice fly in the ninth.

Twins 5, Guardians 4: Trevor Larnach had a two-run single in a four-run first inning and visiting Minnesota beat Cleveland to avoid a three-game sweep.

Matt Wallner and Royce Lewis also drove in runs in the first against Joey Cantillo (2-2), who struck out a season-high nine over 5½ innings. Kody Clemens' bunt single in the eighth plated DaShawn Keirse Jr. with an insurance run.

Erasmo Ramírez entered and retired Daniel Schneemann and José Ramírez in order to close out the win.

Marlins 7, Yankees 3: Kyle

Stowers hit a three-run homer and host Miami completed the first sweep of New York in franchise history.

Stowers made it 6-1 when he connected on an 0-2 fastball from Brent Headrick, who entered in the fourth with two on after starter Luis Gil (0-1) was lifted 3½ innings into his season debut.

Cubs 5, Orioles 3: Justin Turner hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning to give host Chicago a victory over Baltimore.

Leading off the ninth, Dansby Swanson reached on a throwing error on third baseman Jordan Westburg. Manager Craig Counsell then sent Turner to the plate to hit for Michael Busch. Turner drove the first pitch he saw from Keegan Akin (3-1), a 92.8 mph fastball, deep to left-center for the game-ending shot.

Pirates 9, Rockies 5: Spencer Horwitz homered twice and drove in a career-high six runs to lead visiting Pittsburgh to a win over Colorado, avoiding a series sweep.

Horwitz hit a two-run homer in the second inning, added a three-run shot in the sixth and knocked in his sixth run with a ground out in the eighth. The Pirates' 27-year-old leadoff hitter has five homers and 31 RBIs in 61 games this season.

Mariners 5, Rangers 4: Julio Rodriguez homered to become the first player in major league history with 20 or more home runs and 20 or more stolen bases in each of his first four seasons, and host Seattle beat Texas.

Rodriguez hit a two-run shot in the third inning and singled in the fifth inning.

Jorge Polanco added a solo shot in the second and shortstop J.P. Crawford smacked a two-run blast in the fourth against Rangers starter Jacob deGrom (10-4).

Angels 8, White Sox 5: Taylor Ward hit a game-ending three-run homer in the ninth inning, Zach Neto had a home run and three RBIs and host Los Angeles beat Chicago to avoid a three-

game sweep.

The White Sox took a 4-0 lead in the first inning when Robert had an RBI single and Colson Montgomery followed with a three-run home run. Chicago made it 5-0 in the third on Montgomery's RBI single.

The Angels started their rally in the sixth with a leadoff home from Neto. Ward had an RBI single, and Mike Trout scored on a wild pitch. LA tied it in the seventh on a two-run double from Neto.

Red Sox 6, Astros 1: Trevor Story and Cedanne Rafaela had consecutive RBI singles in a six-run fourth inning filled with five Houston mistakes, Lucas Giolito pitched a season-high eight stellar innings and host Boston beat the Astros to complete a series sweep.

Connor Wong added a sacrifice fly and Wilyer Abreu was credited with a sacrifice on a safety squeeze for an RBI during the inning, sending the Red Sox to their third straight win over the AL West leaders and fifth in a row overall.

Brewers 14, Nationals 3: Brice Turang hit two two-run homers, and visiting Milwaukee completed its first season sweep of Washington.

The Brewers set a club record for a three-game series with 56 hits.

Diamondbacks 6, Athletics 4: Blaze Alexander homered to help visiting Arizona beat the Athletics.

Alek Thomas and Geraldo Perdomo each had three hits as the Diamondbacks won the rubber game of the weekend set. Tyler Locklear had two hits and scored two runs.

Padres 7, Cardinals 3: Dylan Cease allowed one hit over five innings, Jake Cronenworth and Ramon Laureano homered as host San Diego beat St. Louis.

Cease (4-10) struck out nine with a walk as the Padres (62-50) won for the seventh time in eight games and moved three games behind the NL West-leading Dodgers (65-47).