

## Moscow: US trying to fan Ukraine discord

*The Washington Post*

A senior Russian diplomat dismissed new U.S. military and intelligence assessments — which estimated Russia could seize Kyiv in days and leave up to 50,000 civilians killed or wounded — as alarmist and as unlikely as an attack by Washington on London.

“Madness and scaremongering continues. ... what if we would say that U.S. could seize London in a week and cause 300K civilian deaths?” Russia’s deputy ambassador to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy, tweeted Sunday.

And parliamentary deputy Artem Turov, a member of President Vladimir Putin’s United Russia party, accused the United States of disseminating fake information and of “doing everything possible to fan a new conflict.”

The updated U.S. military and intelligence assessments briefed to lawmakers and European partners over the past several days were U.S. officials’ bleakest assessment yet of the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine. They came as the Biden administration was also warning that Moscow was considering filming a fake attack against Russian territory or Russian-speaking people by Ukrainian forces as a pretext

to invade its neighbor — a claim the Kremlin has strenuously denied.

Seven people familiar with the assessments said Russian President Vladimir Putin now has 70% of the combat power he needs for an assault that — under the most extreme scenario — could quickly take out the capital, Kyiv, and remove the country’s democratically elected president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Such an invasion, they said, could trigger a refugee crisis as up to 5 million people flee.

As of Friday, there were 83 Russian battalion tactical groups, with about 750 troops each, arrayed for a possible assault. That is up from 60 two weeks ago.

The White House has said the U.S. does not have information that Putin has made a decision to invade. But satellite imagery and other intelligence indicate he has amassed more than 100,000 troops and equipment on the border with Ukraine — one Western security official put the number at 130,000 — potentially positioning for what could become the largest military land offensive in Europe since World War II.

“Our worry would be that you don’t park battle groups ... on the border of another country twice and do nothing,” one European official said, referring to an earlier build-

up last year. “I think that’s the real fear that I have. [Putin’s] now put them all out there. If he does nothing again ... what does that say to the wider international community about the might of Russia?”

The European official and others familiar with the assessments spoke on the condition of anonymity about intelligence matters.

As the U.S. moved to strengthen NATO defenses in Eastern Europe, the head of the Belarusian Security Council, Alexander Volfovich, said there would be “very large” military maneuvers with Russian forces in southern Belarus in coming days, in response to tensions between NATO and Russia over Ukraine. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has played a key role in Russia’s saber-rattling against Ukraine.

U.S. officials are concerned that the massive military exercise with Russia and Belarus, beginning Thursday, could be used as part of a multipronged invasion of Ukraine.

Moscow has denied that it intends to invade Ukraine, but it has made clear it considers the presence of Western troops and weapons in the former Soviet sphere an unacceptable security threat.

## UN: N. Korea seeks to produce material for nukes

*Associated Press*

UNITED NATIONS — North Korea has continued to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs including its capability to produce nuclear device components in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, U.N. experts said in a new report.

The panel of experts said in the executive summary of the report obtained Saturday night by The Associated Press that there was “a marked acceleration” of Pyongyang’s testing and demonstration of new short-range and possibly

medium-range missiles through January, “incorporating both ballistic and guidance technologies and using both solid and liquid propellants.”

“New technologies tested included a possible hypersonic guiding warhead and a maneuverable re-entry vehicle,” the panel said. North Korea also demonstrated “increased capabilities for rapid deployment, wide mobility (including at sea), and improved resilience of its missile forces.”

The experts said North Korea “continued to seek mate-

rial, technology and know-how for these programs overseas, including through cyber means and joint scientific research.”

A year ago, the panel said North Korea had modernized its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberattacks to help finance its programs and continuing to seek material and technology overseas for its arsenal including in Iran.

“Cyberattacks, particularly on cryptocurrency assets, remain an important revenue

source” for Kim Jong Un’s government, the experts monitoring the implementation of sanctions against the North said in the new report.

In recent months, North Korea has launched a variety of weapons systems and threatened to lift the four-year moratorium on more serious weapons tests such as nuclear explosions and ICBM launches. January saw a record nine missile launches, and other weapons it recently tested include a developmental hypersonic missile and a submarine-launched missile.

# 82nd Airborne troops begin to arrive in Poland

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany—Soldiers with the 82nd Airborne Division were slated to begin arriving Sunday in southeastern Poland with more forces to follow in the days ahead, U.S. Army Europe and Africa said in a statement.

The deployment of the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based paratroopers into central Europe comes on the heels of the arrival of Maj. Gen. Christopher Donahue, commander of the 82nd, who landed in Poland on Saturday, USAREUR-AF said.

“Without getting into specific

timelines, the 82nd Airborne Division personnel are scheduled to begin arriving today and over the coming days,” USAREUR-AF said in a statement.

Last week, the first contingent of 18th Airborne Corps troops arrived in Europe, where they will form a joint task force in Wiesbaden, Germany. The contingency headquarters, called Task Force Dragon, will be led by 18th Airborne Corps boss Lt. Gen. Michael Kurilla.

Kurilla is expected to arrive in Wiesbaden in the coming days, an Army spokesman said Sunday. The task force will fall

under the command of U.S. Army Europe and Africa, which is led by Gen. Christopher Cavoli.

In all, 2,000 troops from Fort Bragg are taking part in the mission in Germany and Poland, which is focused on reassuring allies worried about potential Russian aggression connected to Moscow’s military buildup around Ukraine.

On Thursday, U.S. forces in Poland began setting the stage for the arrival of the 82nd in Poland, operating out of an airfield in Rzeszow, a southeastern Polish town not far from the Ukrainian border.

In other moves, the U.S. Ar-

my is also preparing to soon send 1,000 soldiers from the Vilseck, Germany, 2nd Cavalry Regiment to Romania to bolster defenses there. A date has not yet been announced for the push into Romania, where U.S. European Command already has about 900 troops positioned on regular rotation.

In Poland, the 82nd soldiers will join a force of roughly 4,000 U.S. service members already operating in various parts of the country on a rotational basis, including hundreds of soldiers supporting a NATO mission just 50 miles from Russia’s military exclave of Kaliningrad.

## IG report finds lag in vaccine delivery for troops overseas

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army and Air Force didn’t prioritize overseas service members and dependents who had no other COVID-19 vaccination options, leading to long distribution delays at many U.S. bases last year, a Pentagon Inspector General’s report said.

The report confirmed what many in places such as Germany and Japan already knew after waiting months longer for the shots than their counterparts based elsewhere.

When the vaccines first became available in late 2020, the Defense Health Agency rolled out a tiered plan. Those first in line included health care workers, first responders, deploying troops and special operations personnel, said the report released Thursday, which looked at the challenges DHA faced between February and May 2021.

At the time, coronavirus vaccination was not mandatory for service members or DOD civilians, and supply was limited. But shots became increasingly available

off base in the United States to a broader part of the population during that same time period, unlike in most of Europe and Asia.

The Navy told the IG that it prioritized vaccine distribution overseas, including in Europe, while Army and Air Force officials said they did not, the report said. Sailors and their families in Naples, Italy, were among the first people anywhere in Europe to receive the vaccine, when the command opened up eligibility to beneficiaries aged 18 and up in January 2021. The Navy base in Sicily soon followed suit.

Meanwhile, some commands had difficulty identifying DOD civilians and contractors eligible for the vaccine within their treatment area because they did not typically receive military health care. And many people were confused by the system. In a survey conducted by the IG, 67.44% did not know which tier they were part of, the report said. As a result, “an individual might not have known when they were eligible... potentially delaying them from receiving the vaccine,” it said.

## Navy: SEAL candidate dies after finishing Hell Week test

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — One Navy SEAL candidate died and a second was in the hospital after falling ill just hours after they successfully completed the grueling Hell Week test that ends the first phase of assessment and selection for Navy commandos, the Navy said Saturday.

The Navy said both were rushed to the hospital in California. The Navy said neither one had experienced an accident or unusual incident during the five-and-a-half-day Hell Week.

The test is part of the SEALs BUD/S class, which involves basic underwater demolition, survival and other combat tactics. It comes in the fourth week as SEAL candidates are being assessed and hoping to be selected for training within the Naval Special Warfare Basic Training Command.

One of the candidates died at Sharp Coronado Hospital in Coronado, Calif., on Friday. The other was in stable condition at

Naval Medical Center San Diego.

The Navy said the cause of death was not immediately known and was under investigation. The sailor’s name was being withheld until 24 hours after his family was notified, in accordance with Navy policy.

The SEAL program tests physical and psychological strength along with water competency and leadership skills. The program is so grueling that at least 50% to 60% don’t make it through Hell Week, when candidates are pushed to the limit.

The last SEAL candidate to die during the assessment phase was 21-year-old Seaman James Derek Lovelace in 2016. He was struggling to tread water in full gear in a giant pool when his instructor pushed him underwater at least twice. He lost consciousness and died.

The latest death also comes just two months after a Navy SEAL commander died from injuries he suffered during a training accident in Virginia.

# VMI to make changes to honor court system

*Associated Press*

LEXINGTON, Va. — The Virginia Military Institute said it will change its student-run honor court to make it more fair to cadets as part of a response to a state-ordered investigation into racism and sexism at the school.

VMI detailed the reforms in a progress report Friday, *The Washington Post* reported. The 70-page report, which the college gave to General Assembly members and the Virginia secretary of education, describes initiatives approved, enacted or begun last year. Those initiatives included mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training for administrators and members of VMI's Board of Visitors, and changes to the Lexington school's one-strike-and-you're-out honor court system.

Data obtained by the newspaper showed

Black students at VMI were expelled by the honor court at a disproportionately high rate for the three academic years between the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2020. Though Black cadets made up about 6% of the student body, they represented about 43% of those expelled for honor code violations.

Twelve out of the 28 VMI students dismissed in those three academic years were Black. When students of color were included in the count, the number of expelled rose to 15, or about 54% of the total, even though minorities made up only about 21% of the student population in that three-year period.

Barnes & Thornburg, a law firm hired by the state to investigate racism and sexism at VMI, recommended in its final report that the college "consider changing" its policy of allowing convictions without unanimous

verdicts by student juries.

But VMI, which received \$21.6 million in state funding for the 2021-22 academic year, reported Friday that it will continue to allow student prosecutors to win cases with non-unanimous verdicts. One concession the school did make was that student juries will expand in size and guilty verdicts will require nine out of 11 jury votes instead of five of seven votes.

All of the new honor court changes will go into effect in August, at the beginning of the next academic year.

The college also said it will begin retaining "key demographic data" to "monitor the fairness of the system." VMI's chief diversity officer, Jamica Love, will help "facilitate annual reviews" of the honor system, the report said.

## Thousands still without power as storm moves on

*Associated Press*

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The winter storm that caused hundreds of thousands of power outages and contributed to hundreds of traffic accidents from Texas to Maine had moved out to sea Saturday, and while most locations were returning to normal, many people in the Memphis, Tenn., area were without electricity and could be in the dark for a full week.

On Saturday morning the local utility, Memphis Light, Gas and Water reported more than 90,000 customers, more than 20% of the utility's total, remained without power.

During a late morning news conference from the hard-hit Frayser neighborhood of Memphis, utility President J.T. Young said he hoped that between 25,000 and 30,000 customers could have their power back before the end of the day Saturday.

More than 80 line crews were working to restore power, officials said.

Young said the storm that hit Thursday was probably the third-largest outage event in the

last 30 years, coming close to, but not eclipsing, a 1994 event. Young said all customers might not get their power back until Thursday.

"We want everyone to be safe. We want you to be safe and we certainly want our crews to be safe as they do what they do," he said.

During the news conference, officials said hundreds of trees were down on power lines. In a broadcast on the utility's Facebook page, Young showed an area where a string of 13 power poles were on the ground due to the ice buildup.

The National Weather Service forecasted temperatures to be in the low 30s in Memphis on Saturday.

Meanwhile, in central New York's Ulster County along the Hudson River, more than 42,000 customers were without power Saturday. Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. said crews were working to restore electric service after snow and ice caused damage and outages. The county opened several warming centers and was distributing bottled water and dry ice to residents.

## Report says recent blaze was not 1st fire at fertilizer plant

*Associated Press*

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Officials in a North Carolina city confirmed Saturday that firefighters responded to a call in late December about a smoldering pile of "fertilizer material" at a plant where, weeks later, an explosion and uncontrolled flames would force thousands to flee their homes.

Winston-Salem firefighters were called to the Winston Weaver Co. plant on Dec. 26, according to an incident report released by the fire department and obtained by the Winston-Salem Journal in response to a public records request.

Nearby residents called 911 and reported seeing haze and smelling smoke in the area around the plant. Firefighters dispatched to the plant noted "a haze coming from the top of the building."

"Employees at the business met Engine 8, stating that a pile of fertilizer material was smoldering," the seven-page report says, adding that the first firefighters inside the building determined there was "no risk of explosion" and flooded the area with water.

The report blamed the incident on an electrical failure that caused machinery to stop operating properly.

"The pile of material was smoldering due to equipment used in the manufacturing process dropping hot materials into the pile," the report said. "At no point did the pile produce any flames or fire damage."

Adam Parrish, a spokesperson for Winston Weaver, declined to comment to the newspaper on Saturday.

Rick McIntyre is the lead investigator on the massive fertilizer plant fire that started last Monday night. In a Thursday morning briefing, McIntyre said Winston Weaver Co. has had minor fires "within the past couple years." He said those occurred in electrical equipment. McIntyre did not mention a December fire.

Officials on Thursday also said the explosion threat from the fire had "greatly diminished" since much of a combustible chemical had burned off, allowing firefighters to return to the site to spray down what's left.

# Ex-envoy: US groups shouldn't meddle in Canada

Associated Press

TORONTO — A former U.S. ambassador to Canada said groups in the United States need to cease interfering in what many call an occupation in Canada's capital, as protesters opposed to vaccine mandates and COVID-19 restrictions held rallies in cities across the country in a show of solidarity with a weeklong demonstration in Ottawa.

"Under no circumstances should any group in the USA fund disruptive activities in Canada. Period. Full stop," Bruce Heyman, a former U.S. ambassador under President Barack Obama, tweeted late Saturday.

After crowdfunding site Go-

FundMe said it would refund or redirect to charities the vast majority of millions raised by demonstrators protesting COVID-19 measures in the Canadian capital, prominent U.S. Republicans like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis complained.

"It is a fraud for @gofundme to commandeer \$9M in donations sent to support truckers and give it to causes of their own choosing," DeSantis tweeted.

He added he would investigate these deceptive practices and that donors should be given a refund. But GoFundMe had already changed its mind and said it would be issuing refunds to all. GoFundMe said it cut off funding for the orga-

nizers because it had determined the effort violated the site's terms of service due to unlawful activity. Ontario Premier Doug Ford called the protests an occupation.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton tweeted: "Patriotic Texans donated to Canadian truckers' worthy cause."

In Canada's largest city, Toronto, police set up roadblocks throughout downtown, preventing any protesters in trucks or cars from getting near the provincial legislature, which is near where five major hospitals are located. And police later moved in to clear a key intersection in the city.

Thousands descended in Ottawa again on Saturday. Par-

ticipants roasted hot dogs and doled out baked goods under tarps, while two men on horseback traipsed through the town, one carrying a flag in support of former U.S. President Donald Trump. Residents of Ottawa are furious at the nonstop blaring of horns, traffic disruption and harassment, and fear no end is in sight.

The "freedom truck convoy" has attracted support from Trump and many Republicans.

"The Freedom Convoy is peacefully protesting the harsh policies of far left lunatic Justin Trudeau, who has destroyed Canada with insane COVID mandates," Trump said in a statement released Friday.

## Russia hits new daily virus record of over 180K cases

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia is reporting a record daily count of new coronavirus infections of 180,071, a tenfold spike from a month ago as the highly contagious omicron variant spreads through the country.

The figure released by the state coronavirus task force Sunday was about 2,800 cases more than recorded the previous day and continued a surge that began in mid-January, when daily new cases were around 17,000.

Although the number of infections has increased dramatically in recent weeks, the task force reported that daily deaths from COVID-19 are holding steady or marginally declining: 661 deaths were recorded over the past 24 hours, compared with 796 on Jan. 6.

For the entire course of the pandemic, the task force has reported 12.8 million infections and 335,414 deaths.

Despite the soaring infections, President Vladimir Putin

told Russia's top business association last week that authorities are not planning any lockdowns or other additional restrictions because of the surge. Moreover, the government lifted the seven-day self-isolation restrictions for those who come into contact with COVID-19 patients.

Faced with the biggest virus surge yet, Russian authorities have generally resisted imposing any major restrictions and repeatedly rejected the idea of introducing a lockdown.

In recent weeks, a growing number of Russian regions have started introducing restrictions for those under 18, as officials noted that the current surge affects children much more than the previous ones. In many areas, schools have either switched to remote learning or extended holidays for students. In St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city, minors have been temporarily barred from most public places.

## Ill. judge blocks school mask mandate; state set to appeal

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A central Illinois judge has issued a temporary restraining order that prevents school districts statewide from requiring students to wear masks in classrooms, saying Gov. J.B. Pritzker overstepped his legal authority with a mask mandate that has angered many parents and teachers alike.

In a ruling issued Friday in response to a lawsuit filed by a group of parents and teachers, Sangamon County Circuit Judge Raylene Grischow also determined that several more of Pritzker's emergency orders to combat the spread of COVID-19, including one issued last year that mandates vaccinations for school employees, are "null and void."

"This court acknowledges the tragic toll the COVID-19 pandemic has taken, not only on this state but throughout the nation and globe," Grischow wrote in a ruling that affects 146 Illinois school districts, including the public school system in Chicago. "Nevertheless, it is the duty of the Courts to preserve the rule of law and en-

sure that all branches of government act within the boundaries of the authority granted under the Constitution."

Pritzker had harsh words for the judge's decision and quickly urged the state's attorney general's office to appeal, suggesting the ruling could spark another surge in the virus and force schools to close their doors and revert to online classes.

"The grave consequence of this misguided decision is that schools in these districts no longer have sufficient tools to keep students and staff safe while COVID-19 continues to threaten our communities — and this may force schools to go remote," Pritzker said in a statement.

Attorney General Kwame Raoul agreed with Pritzker that the ruling would make it more difficult to protect students and school employees from the virus, and said he would appeal.

Pedro Martinez, Chicago Public Schools chief executive officer, issued a statement Saturday saying that CPS's mask mandate for students would stand.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Man trespassed, fed baby at neonatal care unit**

**IA** DES MOINES — A man charged with sneaking into a neonatal unit at a Des Moines hospital and feeding a baby that wasn't his has not explained his motive, police said.

Adam Wedig, 36, was charged with two counts of criminal trespass.

Police said Wedig got into the NICU at MercyOne and bottled-feed a baby despite having no connection to the baby's family.

He told police he didn't intend to hurt the child, KCCI-TV reported.

Des Moines police Sgt. Paul Parizek said Wedig acknowledged he was a man seen on videotape at the hospital but didn't offer a motive.

**6 at jail hospitalized after fentanyl OD, exposure**

**OR** GRANTS PASS — Four people in Josephine County jail custody and two deputies were hospitalized because of fentanyl overdose and exposure, according to the Josephine County Sheriff's Office.

Four inmates were found to be under the influence of fentanyl and two deputies were exposed to it, the Mail Tribune reported.

Two of the four in jail custody were discovered unconscious, according to a news release from the sheriff's office. Officials said jail medical staff and deputies performed lifesaving measures in order to revive them, including administering "several doses of Narcan."

Preliminary investigation showed someone recently being held in the jail smuggled the drugs by "hiding them in his

person," then later sharing them with other people in custody, according to the sheriff's office.

**Couple charged in \$2.1M theft from warehouse**

**IL** CAROL STREAM — A Chicago couple has been charged in the theft of merchandise valued at more than \$2 million from a retail distribution company.

German Ramirez-Mendoza, 31, and Sara Garcia del Valle, 35, were arrested and charged with felony theft, the DuPage County State's Attorney's Office said in a release.

Authorities allege that merchandise was stolen from the distribution company's warehouse in suburban Chicago's Carol Stream where Ramirez-Mendoza worked. Nearly \$9,000 worth of fragrances from the warehouse was found in September in a vehicle driven by Ramirez-Mendoza, according to the state's attorney's office.

Authorities later found more than \$2.1 million in merchandise from Victoria's Secret, American Eagle, Michael Kors, Sephora, Foot Locker and other retailers in the couple's home and in rented storage units, prosecutors said.

**2 men charged after 'junk boat' abandoned in river**

**VT** SWANTON — Two Vermont men are facing misdemeanor charges after they abandoned what is described as a "junk boat" on the Missisquoi River in the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge in Swanton, federal prosecutors said.

The two men are charged with abandoning and discarding personal property and dumping

garbage, debris and refuse on a National Wildlife Refuge.

Prosecutors said one of the men bought a boat last summer, stripped the engine and then sold it. Rather than paying to dispose of the boat properly, he got another man to help him tow the boat to the river where it was set adrift, prosecutors said.

**School principal faces child exploitation charge**

**MS** CLEVELAND — An elementary school principal in Mississippi has been charged with attempted child exploitation following an investigation by the Bolivar County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities said Norman Keith Aycock was arrested following "an investigation of inappropriate behavior."

He faces charges of attempted child exploitation and is being held at the Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility, news outlets reported.

Aycock served as the elementary principal at Bayou Academy, which is located in Cleveland. School officials have not released details on his current employment status.

The announcement comes the same day the school said a camera had been placed in a varsity girls' locker room.

**Man taught bomb making to person targeting police**

**NC** RALEIGH — A North Carolina man who runs a company that "teaches military tactics to the everyday citizen" has been charged with showing someone how to make a bomb that would kill people in federal law enforcement, the U.S. Department of Justice announced.

The charges stem from a visit that an unnamed person made to Christopher Arthur's home, during which Arthur offered instructions for making improvised explosive devices, federal authorities said in a news release.

But Arthur had already been on the FBI's radar since at least May 2020. That's when police found multiple tactical instruction manuals — written by Arthur — in the home of a man who had just been killed in a shootout with officers in New York, federal authorities said.

Federal officials said Arthur provided his bomb-making instructions knowing that the person "intended to kill federal law enforcement who might come to his home."

After Arthur was arrested, federal authorities said they found multiple bombs and bomb components at his house, along with a pistol suppressor and bulk gunpowder, the news release said.

**Barge and tugboat ran aground onto beach**

**FL** DEERFIELD BEACH — A barge and a tugboat have washed ashore on a South Florida beach, officials said.

The vessels ran aground at Deerfield Beach, just south of the Boca Raton Inlet, the U.S. Coast Guard posted on its official Twitter account. Four people were aboard the vessels, and no injuries were reported.

Shoreside operations began to remove fuel and oil and to mitigate the pollution risk to the area. There weren't any immediate signs of pollution near the site.

— From wire reports



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# Shiffrin is America's golden girl

Associated Press

Bode Miller remembers first seeing Mikaela Shiffrin ski, more than a decade ago. She was in her early teens, not yet old enough to compete at the sport's top level; he already owned a handful of Olympic medals and a pair of World Cup overall titles.

The Americans were training at Golden Peak in Vail, Colo., and Miller was impressed by the junior across the way. Her slalom style brought to mind Vreni Schneider, a Swiss racer in the 1980s and 1990s who was a three-time Olympic champion.

"Almost like she wasn't moving down the hill. There just wasn't the variables that it felt like were always present in my skiing, which was this three-dimensional wobble in every direction. Seemed like she was just moving laterally, just dut-dut-dut-dut-dut-dut-dut-dut," Miller said by phone, mimicking a metronome's back-and-forth clicking. "Effortlessly staying in balance."

Everyone in Alpine skiing keeps an eye on Shiffrin nowa-

days, of course, and the rest of the world will do so at the Beijing Olympics starting Monday, when she will be the defending champ in the giant slalom.

Her accomplishments at age 26 include three Olympic medals (two golds), 11 world championship medals (six golds), three World Cup overall titles and 73 career race wins (behind only Ingemar Stenmark's 86 and Lindsey Vonn's 82).

"I'm a huge fan," Miller said. "She's the best racer that I've ever seen, male or female."

Why?

"She's physically spectacular as a ski racer with strength and her general physiology. She had the right upbringing. Great support," said Miller, whose six Olympic medals are tied for the second most in Alpine history. "She just has a lot of gifts to work with. Fortunately, she has the intangibles that partner up with those really well. Her tactical knowledge and awareness is really strong. She just doesn't make the same errors that other people make. And that's a function of technique, but it's also

just tactics. It's her approach, her understanding, of how to get from Point A to Point B quickly enough to win without taking any undue risk."

Mike Day, in his sixth season as Shiffrin's main coach with the U.S. ski team, recalls his first chance to watch her: a slalom during a youth event at Sunday River Resort in Newry, Maine.

"Prior to that, I only ever heard her name and the lore of 'Mikaela Shiffrin,'" said Day, who worked for a ski company at the time.

"The race is still vivid for a couple of reasons. First, her skiing was just phenomenally high level for that age. Technical proficiency and tactical proficiency was mind-blowing. But the second reason was she won the race by 10 or 12 seconds. ... I remember saying to a friend of mine on the hill that day: 'That girl should be skiing (in the) World Cup next year, without a doubt,'" Day said in a video interview. "I think I was one of a million people that probably said the same thing."

## Snowboarder earns 1st gold for New Zealand

Associated Press

ZHANGJIAKOU, China — She scaled "The Great Wall." She navigated, and dominated, the toughest course she had ever ridden. But if Zoi Sadowski Synnott thought the hard part was over once she crossed the Olympic finish line, she had another thing coming.

More to the point, New Zealand's first Winter Games champion had the silver and bronze medalists coming straight at her.

After watching the run that knocked them down a notch Sunday, American Julia Marino and Australian Tess Coady ran out and wrestled the new Kiwi slopestyle champion into a dogpile on the snow. They were celebrating a day that women's snowboarding had been waiting four years to see.

## German Ludwig, 36, takes luge gold

BEIJING — Johannes Ludwig let all his rivals know back in November that he would be the one to beat at the Beijing Olympics.

He was right.

Ludwig is the Olympic men's champion for the first time, making him the oldest — he's eight days shy of turning 36 — to win that race's gold medal. Ludwig finished four runs at the Yanqing Sliding Center in 3 minutes, 48.735 seconds, 0.160 seconds ahead of Wolfgang Kindl of Austria and 0.951 seconds ahead of bronze medalist Dominik Fischnaller of Italy.

All three American men advanced to the fourth heat. Chris Mazdzer, the silver medalist from the Pyeongchang Games, was eighth. Tucker West finished 13th — his best finish in three Olympic appearances. And Jonny Gustafson was 19th in his Olympic debut.

## US-Canada hockey rivalry set to resume

Associated Press

BEIJING — The last thing Cammi Granato and her U.S. women's hockey teammates needed to see after a 10-hour bus ride through the Maritimes was arriving at their hotel and finding the Canadians staying at the same place.

It was bad enough the two heated rivals had to confront each other on ice. In those early days — the late 1990s and 2000s — of what's developed into one of the world's fiercest rivalries, the two sides were ready to drop their gloves when and where ever.

Granato, the first woman inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame and captain of the first women's team to win a hockey

gold medal at the 1998 Nagano Olympics, laughs at the memory now. And yet, hate is not too strong of a word to describe the steam-hot grudge the two teams had developed for each other.

"Oh, it was real. It was a real hate," Granato said. "That's the team that is always standing in your way of what you want."

Gold has always been the goal, with the next chapter of U.S. versus Canada beginning Monday when they meet in a Group A preliminary round game at the Beijing Olympics.

The Americans enter the tournament as defending champions after ending Canada's four-Olympic championship run in dramatic flourish with a 3-2 shootout win in 2018. Mo-

nique Lamoureux-Morando scored to tie the game with 6:21 left in regulation, before her twin sister Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson sealed it in the shootout.

Canada, naturally, exacted a sliver of revenge in August by ending the Americans' five-tournament run of world championship titles on Marie-Philip Poulin's goal in a 3-2 overtime win.

Now they prepare to gather at Wukesong Sports Centre for what is highly anticipated to be the first of two meetings between the global powers, with a rematch expected in the gold-medal game next week.

# LeBron has triple in return, leads Lakers to OT victory

*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James returned from a five-game absence due to injury and had a triple-double of 29 points, 13 rebounds, 10 assists, and the Los Angeles Lakers rallied from a 21-point, second-quarter deficit, beating the New York Knicks 122-115 in overtime Saturday night.

James missed the games due to swelling in his left knee, but came back to play in a nationally televised game and with the Lakers three games under .500.

“He’s incredible. I guess the time off served him well,” Los Angeles coach Frank Vogel said. “We didn’t want to play him 39 minutes, but overtime impacted that.”

“He was special tonight. Just a great performance.”

It was the Lakers’ largest comeback since they rallied from 21 down at Denver in 2015.

James was 13-for-24 from the field and tied a season high in rebounds. Los Angeles led the entire five-minute overtime after James drove the floor and dunked after RJ Barrett turned it over.

It was James’ fourth triple-double of the season, the 103rd of his career and fifth against the Knicks.

“After the first quarter, the knee loosened up a lot more, my mind loosened up a lot more and I was able just to play basketball,” James said. “Happy I was able to make a few plays to help us win.”

Malik Monk scored 29 points and Anthony Davis added 28 points and 17 rebounds for the Lakers, who had dropped four of five coming in. “He’s doing LeBron type things — efficient from the field; he did what he was supposed to do,” said Davis, who had a double-double for the fourth straight game. “He’s a big part of our team with his voice, leadership and play-making ability. He came back and showed it.”

**Suns 95, Wizards 80:** Deandre Ayton had 20 points and 16 rebounds in an efficient 24 minutes and NBA-leading Phoenix rebounded from a streak-ending loss to win at short-handed Washington.

Ayton, playing his third game since returning from a sprained right ankle, and the Suns bounced back from a loss Thursday night at Atlanta that ended their 11-game winning streak.

“We were locked in, especially in the second quarter, when we really started closing in our defense,” Ayton said about a period in

which the Suns held the Wizards to 4-of-21 shooting from the floor and 0-for-9 from three-point range. “We were counting (our stops). It was fun out there.”

Phoenix led by 25 before the midpoint of the second quarter, 27 at half and 36 in the third quarter. The Wizards set offensive season lows — and the Suns defensive bests — for points in a quarter (11 in the second), half (33 in the first) and game.

Chris Paul added 14 points and nine assists for Phoenix, Cameron Johnson and Mikal Bridges each scored 12 points, and Devin Booker had 11.

**Bucks 137, Trail Blazers 108:** Bobby Portis Jr. had a season-high 30 points, hitting six three-pointers, and visiting Milwaukee handed Portland its fifth straight loss.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 29 points, with a season-high four three-pointers, and nine rebounds. Portis was 11-for-13 from the field and 6-for-8 from three-point range.

Anfernee Simons and Ben McLemore each had 19 points for the Trail Blazers.

**Grizzlies 135, Magic 115:** Ja Morant scored 33 points in three quarters and visiting Memphis led by 31 points against NBA-worst Orlando.

Morant scored 22 points in the first half to help the Grizzlies win their second straight and fifth in six games. They had a 14-0 run in the first quarter and led 76-56 at the half.

Cole Anthony scored 17 of his 22 points in the first half for the Magic.

**Heat 104, Hornets 86:** Jimmy Butler scored 27 points, Bam Adebayo added 20 points and 12 rebounds and Miami won on the road to hand slumping Charlotte its fourth straight loss.

Tyler Herro had 19 points behind five three-pointers for the Heat, who scored 27 points off 20 turnovers by the Hornets while holding them to 38.4% shooting from the floor.

Terry Rozier had 16 points for Charlotte.

**Kings 113, Thunder 103:** Harrison Barnes had 24 points and nine rebounds and host Sacramento held on to beat Oklahoma City. Tyrese Haliburton added 13 points and a career-high 17 assists to help the Kings win for the second time in three games following a seven-game losing streak. Moe Harkless also had a double-double for Sacramento with 18 points and 11 rebounds. Josh Giddey scored a season-high 24 points for the Thunder.

# Metropolitan earns a win in All-Star Game, Giroux is MVP

*Associated Press*

LAS VEGAS — If any hockey executive is somehow still uncertain whether Claude Giroux can deliver on the biggest stages, the Philadelphia captain’s MVP performance in the NHL All-Star Game demonstrated his skills under pressure one more time.

Giroux scored three goals and the Metropolitan Division beat the Central Division 5-3 on Saturday in the final 3-on-3 match to win the NHL All-Star Game.

Giroux excelled under the bright lights as he nears a critical moment in his career: It’s well-known around the NHL that the 34-year-old star could be on the move before next month’s trade deadline after spending his entire career with the Flyers.

“I’m not going to think about this right now,” Giroux said. “Just enjoy the weekend. There’s a lot of things to figure out, but that’s for another day.”

The seven-time All-Star won his first MVP award with two goals in the final and another in the semifinal. Giroux also picked up the \$1 million check shared among the winning players as the captain of the Metropolitan squad — a job he got at late notice in place of Alex Ovechkin, who tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the week.

“It’s funny how everybody was just on the same page today, when we had never played together before,” Giroux said.

New Jersey’s Jack Hughes, at 20 the youngest All-Star, also scored three goals for the Metropolitan team in the All-Star extravaganza’s first trip to Las Vegas, which has become a major stage for hockey’s top league since the expansion Vegas Golden Knights entered in 2017.

Giroux clearly took the All-Star showcase seriously, even if he was thinking more about a relaxing weekend with his family than his NHL future. After 985 career games in Philly, Giroux is an asset that could be cashed in by Philadelphia before he hits unrestricted free agency this summer.

“Anytime you represent your team, it’s been an honor to put that jersey on,” Giroux said. “For 14 years, it’s been a lot of fun, and to represent that team is great.”

Carolina’s Frederik Andersen was the standout goalie, allowing just three goals and picking up an assist.

# No. 9 Duke rolls in Coach K's Chapel Hill finale

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Mike Krzyzewski walked off North Carolina's homecourt a final time, armed with one more victory and the sound of a once-rowdy crowd mustering only a meager set of boos.

Ninth-ranked Duke ensured its retiring Hall of Fame coach could savor that moment Saturday night, thanks to a dominating opening stretch and a star-level performance from a blossoming freshman that had long since driven the blue-clad fans for the exits.

A.J. Griffin scored a season-high 27 points to help the Blue Devils beat the rival Tar Heels 87-67, earning a fifth straight win overall in Krzyzewski's final visit to Chapel Hill.

"We wanted to send him out with a win, because he definitely deserves it," said Duke's Wendell Moore Jr., who had 13 points, eight rebounds and five assists to highlight the Blue Devils' backcourt dominance.

No. 1 Auburn 74, Georgia 72: Wendell Green Jr. made a tie-breaking layup with four seconds remaining and the Tigers got past the host Bulldogs to extend the nation's longest winning streak to 19 games.

**No. 2 Gonzaga 90, BYU 57:** Chet Holmgren had 20 points, 17 rebounds, six assists and five blocks to lead the visiting Bulldogs over the skidding Cougars.

**Arizona State 87, No. 3 UCLA 84 (3 OT):** The Sun Devils set off a wild late-night court storming, getting 24 points from Marreon Jackson and 16 from Jalen Graham to outlast the visiting Bruins in triple overtime.

Arizona State (7-13, 3-7 Pac-12) built a 10-point lead with a 21-4 run spanning half-

time, but couldn't shake UCLA (16-4, 8-3).

**No. 4 Purdue 82, Michigan 76:** Jaden Ivey scored 23 points and Trevion Williams added 19 as the host Boilermakers snapped a five-game losing streak to the Wolverines and became the first team to reach 1,000 Big Ten wins.

**No. 5 Kentucky 66, Alabama 55:** TyTy Washington scored 15 points, Oscar Tshiebwe had 15 rebounds and the Wildcats won on the road for their fourth straight win.

**No. 7 Arizona 72, No. 19 Southern Cal 63:** Azuolas Tubelis scored 18 points and grabbed 11 rebounds and Kerr Kriisa added 13 points as the Wildcats extended their home unbeaten streak to 15 games dating to last season.

**No. 10 Kansas 83, No. 8 Baylor 59:** Christian Braun and Ochai Agbaji each scored 18 points as the host Jayhawks held on to the top spot in the Big 12 Conference race.

**No. 11 Wisconsin, 51, Penn State 49:** Tyler Wahl made a tie-breaking layup with 30.5 seconds left to help extend the Badgers' home winning streak in the series to 21.

**No. 12 Villanova 85, No. 17 UConn 74:** Eric Dixon scored a career-high 24 points as the host Wildcats won their fifth game of the season against a Top 25 team.

**Rutgers 84, No. 13 Michigan State 63:** Paul Mulcahy had his first-career double-double with 15 points and a career-high 12 assists and Ron Harper Jr. added 17 points to key Scarlet Knights' rout at home over the Spartans.

**No. 14 Texas Tech 60, West Virginia 53:** Bryson Williams scored 15 points and Terrence Shannon sparked a second-half

comeback for the Red Raiders, who for the second time in six road games.

**No. 18 Illinois 74, Indiana 57:** Trent Frazier scored 23 points and Kofi Cockburn added 17 as the visiting Illini surged to their fourth straight win.

**DePaul 69, No. 21 Xavier 65:** Courvoisier McCauley scored 21 points and Jalen Terry had 13 as the short-handed Blue Devils snapped a four-game losing streak against the host Musketeers.

**No. 23 Texas 63, No. 20 Iowa State 41:** Marcus Carr and Andrew Jones each scored 14 points as the host Longhorns used a barrage of three-pointers in the opening minutes of the second half to pull away.

**No. 22 Tennessee 81, South Carolina 57:** Zakai Zeigler tied his career high with 18 points, all in the second half, including back-to-back three-pointers that broke open a tight game as the visiting Vols won their fifth straight Southeastern Conference game.

**Vanderbilt 75, No. 25 LSU 66:** Rodney Chatman scored a season-high 24 points as the host Commodores pulled off their biggest win of the season.

**Navy 56, Loyola (Md.) 55:** Jaylen Walker's jumper with 11 seconds remaining gave the Midshipmen a road win. John Carter Jr. and Daniel Deaver scored 15 points each for Navy (15-8, 8-4 Patriot League).

**Holy Cross 69, Army 65:** Gerrale Gates had 23 points and 10 rebounds as the Crusaders took a road win.

**New Mexico 91, Air Force 77:** The Lobos took a road win as Jaelen House had a career-high 42 points. Jake Heidbreder scored a season-high 20 points and had six rebounds for the Falcons (10-11, 3-7).

## Quarterbacks, defenses shine during Senior Bowl

Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — The pass rushers did their best to steal the show from quarterbacks Desmond Ridder and Kenny Pickett in the Senior Bowl.

Cincinnati's Ridder threw two touchdown passes and the National team had eight sacks in a 20-10 victory over the American team Saturday.

"We didn't come out here to lollygag through it," Minnesota defensive lineman Boye Mafe said. "We told each other to go out and

have our best games and play our best football. This was our last time to get to represent our schools, so why not go out on a good note."

Ridder helped finish off a job started by Pittsburgh's Pickett, a Heisman Trophy finalist who was 6-of-6 passing for 89 yards and a touchdown despite only playing the first quarter.

The National pass rushers made it a tough afternoon for their quarterback counterparts, polishing off the weeklong show-

case for top senior and graduated junior NFL prospects.

Oklahoma's Perrion Winfrey, Penn State's Jesse Luketa and Mafe each had two sacks. Luketa and Mafe also both forced a fumble on sacks of North Carolina quarterback Sam Howell.

Winfrey was the overall game MVP, while Mafe was the National player of the game and Western Kentucky defensive lineman DeAngelo Malone was picked as the top American team player.

Winfrey wore a jersey signed

by teammates and got to follow in the Senior Bowl footsteps of Los Angeles Rams defensive lineman Aaron Donald, a 2014 alum of the game.

Pickett and Liberty's Malik Willis were among the Senior Bowl passers vying with Mississippi's Matt Corral to be the first quarterback picked.

Willis started for the American team and mainly flashed his running and scrambling ability. He passed for just 11 yards but ran for a game-high 54 on four carries.