

## Russia puts nuclear forces on alert

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — In a dramatic escalation of East-West tensions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian nuclear forces put on high alert Sunday in response to what he called "aggressive statements" by leading NATO powers.

The directive to put Russia's nuclear weapons in an increased state of readiness for launch raised fears that the crisis could boil over into nuclear warfare, whether by design or mistake.

Putin's step is "potentially putting in play forces that, if there's a miscalculation, could make things much, much more dangerous," said a senior U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Amid the mounting tensions, Ukraine announced that a delegation would meet with Russian officials for talks. But the Kremlin's

ultimate aims in Ukraine — and what steps might be enough to satisfy Moscow — remained unclear.

The fast-moving developments came as Russian troops drew closer to Kyiv, a city of almost 3 million, street fighting broke out in Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, and strategic ports in the country's south came under pressure from attackers. Ukrainian defenders put up stiff resistance that appeared to slow the Russian invasion.

Putin, in giving the nuclear alert directive, cited not only statements by NATO members — who have rushed to reinforce the military alliance's members in Eastern Europe — but the hard-hitting financial sanctions imposed by the West against Russia, including Putin himself.

Speaking at a meeting with his top officials, Putin told his defense minister and the chief of the military's General Staff to put nuclear

forces in a "special regime of combat duty."

"Western countries aren't only taking unfriendly actions against our country in the economic sphere, but top officials from leading NATO members made aggressive statements regarding our country," Putin said in televised comments.

U.S. defense officials would not disclose their current nuclear alert level except to say that the military is prepared all times to defend its homeland and allies.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told CNN, in reaction to Russia's nuclear alert: "This is dangerous rhetoric. This is a behavior which is irresponsible."

Around the same time as Putin's nuclear move, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office announced that the two sides would meet at an unspecified location on the Belarusian border. The statement did not give a precise time for the meeting.

## US intel, while accurate, did little to deter Putin's attack

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — For months, the White House made highly unusual releases of intelligence findings about Russian President Vladimir Putin's plans to attack Ukraine. Hoping to preempt an invasion, it released details of Russian troop buildups and warned repeatedly that a major assault was imminent.

In the end, Putin attacked anyway.

Critics of U.S. intelligence — including Russian officials who dismissed invasion allegations as fantasy — had been pointing to past failures like the false identification of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But Russia's invasion so far has played out largely as the Biden administration said it would back in December, with nearly 200,000 troops striking from several sides of Ukraine.

Lawmakers from both political parties on Thursday said the accurate predictions were a credit to the often-criticized U.S. intelligence community.

But whether the White House's unprecedented public campaign delayed or limited Putin's plans could be debated for years. And some have said both Washington and Kyiv could have done more with the information the two governments had beforehand.

Ukrainians are fighting a vastly more powerful Russian army all over their country, with deaths reported on both sides and explosions in several cities. There are fears Russia may try to depose Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, even as Putin claims that Russia is only trying to protect residents of two separatist territories in eastern Ukraine.

Announcing new sanctions on Thursday, President Joe Biden cited his administration's moves to warn of what it knew of Putin's intentions.

"We shared declassified evidence about Russia's plans and false pretext so that there could be no confusion or cover-up about what Putin's doing," he said. "Putin is the aggressor. Putin chose this war. And now he and his country will bear the consequences."

Sen. Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee, noted several results of the public campaign: weakening any potential move by Putin to create a "false-flag" operation to justify war, undercutting any potential coup in Kyiv that might have appeared to be led by Ukrainians and unifying allies who quickly denounced Putin's aggression this

week and backed tough sanctions.

Still, Washington and Kyiv were often publicly and privately at odds about the nature of the Russian threat and what needed to be done.

Zelenskyy tried to publicly downplay American warnings of an imminent major outbreak for months, noting that Ukraine remained locked in an eight-year war over the eastern Donbas region fighting Russian-backed separatists.

"The one area that I wish we could have been more effective is convincing the Ukrainians themselves to further mobilize their troops, their reserves," Warner said Thursday. "I'm not saying that would have stopped the Russian invasion. The Russian forces are so overwhelming. But it might have allowed a bit of a better fight."

# EU to further aid Ukraine, obstruct Russia

*Associated press*

BRUSSELS — The European Union plans to close its airspace to Russian airlines, fund weapons purchase to Ukraine and ban some pro-Kremlin media outlets in its latest response to Russia's invasion, European Commission officials said Sunday.

The measures, which Commission President Ursula von

der Leyen said she expected to be endorsed, would mark the first time the 27-nation bloc finances the purchase and delivery of weapons and equipment to a country under attack.

The EU's plan to fund weapons purchases was unprecedented and would use millions of euros to help buy air defense systems, anti-tank weapons, ammunition and other military

equipment to Ukraine's armed forces. It would also supply things like fuel, protective gear, helmets and first aid kits.

Von der Leyen said beyond the weapons purchases, EU nations would shut down EU airspace for Russians — decisions that over a dozen EU members had already announced.

She said the EU will also ban "the Kremlin's media machine.

The state-owned Russia Today and Sputnik, as well as their subsidiaries, will no longer be able to spread their lies to justify Putin's war and to sow division in our union."

Von der Leyen added that the EU will also target Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko for supporting Russia's widespread military campaign in Ukraine.

## High penalties hit central bank reserves in Russia

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The United States and European nations agreed Saturday to impose the most potentially crippling financial penalties yet on Russia over its unrelenting invasion of Ukraine, going after the central bank reserves that underpin the Russian economy and severing some Russian banks from a vital global financial network.

The decision, announced as Ukrainian forces battled Saturday to hold Russian forces back from Ukraine's capital and residents sheltered in subway tunnels, basements and underground garages, has potential to spread the pain of Western retaliation for President Vladimir Putin's invasion to ordinary Russians far more than previous rounds of penalties.

"Putin embarked on a path aiming to destroy Ukraine, but what he is also doing, in fact, is destroying the future of his own country," EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

Japan joined the United States and European nations in cutting key Russian banks from the SWIFT international financial banking system. Japan will

also freeze assets of Putin and other top Russian officials, while sending \$100 million in emergency humanitarian aid to Ukraine, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters.

While U.S. and European officials made clear they still were working out the mechanics of how to implement the latest measures, and intend to spare Russia's oil and natural gas exports, the sanctions in total potentially could amount to some of the toughest levied on a nation in modern times. If fully carried out as planned, the measures will severely damage the Russian economy and markedly constrain its ability to import and export goods.

The U.S. and European allies announced the moves in a joint statement as part of a new round of financial sanctions meant to "hold Russia to account and collectively ensure that this war is a strategic failure for Putin."

The central bank restrictions target access to the more than \$600 billion in reserves that the Kremlin has at its disposal, and are meant to block Russia's ability to support the ruble as it plunges in value amid tightening Western sanctions.

## Germany defense spending up to \$113B in major shift

*Associated Press*

BRUSSELS — In one of the most significant shifts in European security policy in decades, Germany announced Sunday that it was committing \$113 billion to a special armed forces fund and would keep its defense spending above 2% of GDP from now on, a move brought on by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The announcement, which came hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian nuclear forces put on high alert, underscored how Russia's war on Ukraine was rewriting Europe's post-World War II security policy in ways that were unthinkable only a few weeks ago.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's announcement of new defense funding is significant for Germany, which has come under criticism from the United States and other NATO allies for not investing adequately in its defense budget. NATO member states committed to spending 2% of their GDP on defense, but Germany has consistently spent much less.

"It's clear we need to invest significantly more in the security of our country, in order to protect our freedom and our de-

mocracy," Scholz told a special session of the Bundestag in Berlin.

Scholz said the fund was currently a one-time measure for 2022. It wasn't immediately clear whether similar funding would be allocated in future years. But Scholz indicated Germany will exceed the 2% of GDP threshold going forward, signaling an overall future increase in defense spending.

A day earlier, Germany announced another major shift in policy, saying it will send weapons and other supplies directly to Ukraine, including 500 Stinger missiles, which are used to shoot down helicopters and warplanes, and 1,000 anti-tank weapons.

Israel, meanwhile, announced it was sending 100 tons of humanitarian aid — medical equipment and medicine, tents, sleeping bags and blankets — to help civilians caught up in the fighting in Ukraine.

Israel also offered itself as a potential mediator during a phone call between Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Putin, the Kremlin and Israel said. Bennett spoke also Friday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

# Ukrainians return from abroad to fight

*Associated Press*

MEDYKA, Poland — While hundreds of thousands of refugees are leaving Ukraine amid Russia's attack on the country, some Ukrainian men and women are returning home from across Europe to help defend their homeland.

Poland's Border Guard said Sunday that some 22,000 people have crossed into Ukraine since Thursday, when Russia invaded the country. At the checkpoint in Medyka, in southeastern Poland, many were standing in a line early Sunday to cross into Ukraine.

"We have to defend our homeland. Who else if not us," said a mustachioed man in front of a group of some 20 Ukrainian truck drivers walking to the checkpoint to enter Ukraine. They came from across Europe to return to Ukraine. They spoke to The Associated Press in Ukrainian and in Russian.

Another man in the group said: "The Russians should be afraid. We are not afraid."

Members of the group declined to give their names, or only gave their first names, citing their security and that of their families.

Denis, 28, who has spent six months working at construction sites in Poland, said he was returning to Ukraine where his "everything" is.

"I'm on my own here in Poland. Why should I be here? So I go, for the homeland," said Denis, with a small Ukrainian blue-and-yellow national flag on his winter jacket.

"I want to go back to join the army, to fight. We will see, we hope we will win. I want to go back, that's all," he said.

Before the recent exodus, there were an estimated 1 million Ukrainians in Poland, working or studying.

On Ukraine's side of the bor-

der, a man was directing those arriving to a place where cars and buses were waiting to take them onward.

The Czech Republic, which borders Poland to the southwest, is planning to support Ukrainian families living in the country whose men decide to return home to fight.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is preparing bonuses to families who would lose income if "the men need to join the (Ukrainian) army," Minister Marian Jurecka said.

There are about 200,000 Ukrainian workers in the Czech Republic, the majority of them men.

Czech railways say Ukrainian men traveling back to Ukraine can take any train free of charge. They need to travel through Poland or Slovakia to reach Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has stayed in the

capital, Kyiv, boosting the morale of Ukrainian fighters as Russian troops were closing in on the city and huge explosions lit up the sky early Sunday. Zelenskyy has banned men of military age, 18 to 60, from leaving the country. Ukrainian authorities have also called on foreign volunteers to come and fight in Ukraine's defense.

In Israel, the media reported that the Ukrainian Embassy there had posted a call for anyone willing to join the fight against Russia to travel to Ukraine. The invitation, marked "Urgent" on the embassy's Facebook page, was later removed, the reports said. Israeli leaders are cautious in how they speak of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The country is home to hundreds of thousands of people with roots in Ukraine or Russia, or in both countries, and has sought good ties with both Moscow and Kyiv.

## Ukraine citizens form militias as Russian forces near

*The Washington Post*

KHARKIV, Ukraine — In a downtown government office building, men and women in military fatigues carried rocket-propelled grenades through hallways lined with ornate white crown molding. Others had AK-47s with loaded clips slung over the shoulders. Sandbags rested along windows — protection in case of potential blasts.

One of the city's public buses pulled up to the building. There were hundreds of boxes of bullets inside.

This was the scene of the makeshift Ukrainian Territorial Defense headquarters in the eastern city of Kharkiv on Saturday morning — right around the time artillery strikes from the Russian military hit the area for a third straight day. Even as the smell of sulfur wafted through the streets, more than 100 people waited in line to join the civilian reserve force.

Ukraine's Territorial Defense, which is believed to have more than 130,000 volunteers, has been conducting weekend training sessions for months in preparation to help defend its turf from Russia. Now that the attack has started, Ukrainians across the

country are mobilizing and turning to the Territorial Defense to arm them and send them into the fight. Anyone between 18 and 60 can join.

"What's there to be afraid of?" said 19-year-old Yevgeniy Belinkyi, who was waiting to enlist in Kharkiv. "When I'm sitting around, I'm scared. And here there's nothing to fear. Here, I know what's happening, and I hope my loved ones will be all right."

"I will make sure they are all right," he said.

It's the sort of civilian insurgency that Ukraine is counting on to help fend off a Russian military that has significantly more manpower and firepower. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tweeted Thursday: "We will give weapons to anyone who wants to defend the country. Be ready to support Ukraine in the squares of our cities."

In Kyiv, a line stretched down the block at a police station to receive weapons and bullets that officials handed out after brief background checks. Interior Minister Denis Monastyrsky said in a video message that volunteers in Kyiv alone were given more than 25,000 automatic rifles, about 10 mil-

lion bullets and rocket-propelled grenades and launchers.

Ukraine's Territorial Defense, now a division of the country's armed forces, has already been praised by Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov for helping hold off the Russian assault on Kyiv since Friday. In the northeastern city of Sumy, 90 miles north of Kharkiv, a civilian defense force seized a Russian armored vehicle and interrogated the soldier in it, according to social media videos verified by The Washington Post.

At the Kharkiv headquarters, a man in camouflage and armed with an assault rifle tried to organize the growing crowd of volunteers. He asked those with military service experience to get in line on the right and everyone else to line up on the left. He said he worked in an office until the start of the Russian invasion.

"Everything that Russia always threatened us with is now happening," said Boris Redin, a pro-democracy activist who uses a blue-and-yellow tent on Kharkiv's main square as his headquarters. "Now we're simply forced to fight back and defend ourselves. But we'll do it with fun and pleasure."



# Russian-style move on Taiwan seen as unlikely

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — The Russian attack on Ukraine has put a spotlight on another place that could face an invasion by its larger neighbor, as some analysts draw quick comparisons to China's threats to assert its control over self-ruled Taiwan.

While similarities exist and Taiwan is a democracy that has defied a more powerful authoritarian government, the differences are much greater. And for many on the island, the war in Ukraine, and war in general, feels far away.

"I think our situation is not very similar to Ukraine's, whether it's political or in terms of connections," said Ethan Lin, a 40-year-

old who works in the service industry. "China has many exchanges with Taiwan in several areas, so I don't think it's that dangerous."

Taiwan, an island of 23 million people about 100 miles off China's eastern coast, is self-ruled, but claimed by China. The decades-old issue has grown more intense since independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen took the helm in Taiwan in 2016, and China stepped up military pressure on the island, sending ships into nearby waters and fighter jets in its direction.

The critical question for Taiwan is whether the United States, which is not sending troops to defend Ukraine, would intervene if

China invaded. The U.S. has no official ties with Taiwan but has historical relations and sells Taiwan billions of dollars worth of weapons. It is also bound by its own law to ensure Taiwan can defend itself.

Taiwan is also a dominant player in the production of semiconductors that are used in everything from smartphones to cars.

"Taiwan's economy and technology is important to the U.S., and perhaps the U.S. will value Taiwan more, but we have to see how the conflict plays out," said Kao-Cheng Wang, a professor at the Graduate Institute of International Affairs and strategic studies at Tamkang University in Taiwan.

While China's President Xi Jinping has stressed that "peaceful reunification" is in the best interests of both sides, China's Cabinet-level Taiwan Affairs Office routinely issues angry threats to crush moves by Taiwanese politicians to continue pushing for an independent country, although it's been left with only 14 diplomatic allies.

China has not ruled out force if necessary to achieve reunification, but for now, military action remains unlikely and outside events will have relatively little effect on Beijing's calculations, said Li Minjiang, a Chinese international relations expert at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

## S. Korea says North test-fires another likely ballistic missile

BY DAVID CHOI  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea fired a suspected ballistic missile off its eastern coast around 7:52 a.m. Sunday, South Korea's military told Stars and Stripes in a text message after the launch.

"Our military is... tracking and monitoring related trends in preparation for additional launches," the message said.

It flew about 186 miles at a peak altitude of 385 miles, according to South Korea's military. The Japan Coast Guard said the missile splashed down into the East Sea/Sea of Japan.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said it was consulting with regional allies about the test.

"The United States condemns this launch and calls on [North Korea] to refrain from further destabilizing acts," the command said in a statement on Sunday. "While we have assessed that this event does not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel, territory, or that of our allies, we will continue to monitor the situation."

It's the first launch by the com-

munist regime since Jan. 30, when it test-fired a Hwasong-12 intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S. territory of Guam. That launch marked a turning point in what had already been an active year — the Hwasong-12 was the longest-range missile fired by North Korea since 2017 and was the seventh round of tests in January.

Foreign policy experts from South Korea theorized North Korea would refrain from angering China, its closest ally, by not conducting weapons tests as Beijing hosted the Winter Olympics Feb. 4-20.

South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong spoke by phone with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Saturday to discuss the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as well as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to a statement that day from South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pyeongyang has continued to aim bellicose statements at the U.S. and South Korea through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and state-run news agency.

## Fence around Capitol being reinstalled for Biden speech

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fencing installed around the U.S. Capitol for months after the January 2021 insurrection will be put back up before President Joe Biden's State of the Union address Tuesday as concern grows about potential demonstrations or truck convoys snarling traffic in the nation's capital.

Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger said in a statement Sunday that the fence will be erected around the Capitol building for the speech and is being put up "out of an abundance of caution," in consultation with the Secret Service.

The move comes as officials in Washington prepare for trucker convoys that are planning protests against pandemic restrictions beginning this week. The Pentagon has already approved the deployment of 700 unarmed National Guard troops to be used to assist with traffic control during potential demonstrations.

Modeled after recent trucker protests in Canada, separate truck convoys have been planned

through online forums. Many have different starting points, departure dates and routes, though some are scheduled to arrive in time for the State of the Union address. Others may arrive afterward.

Manger said his force's "mission to protect the United States Congress, the Capitol, and the legislative process remains unwavering," Manger said.

The fence had been a stark symbol of the fear many in the Capitol felt after the mob pushed its way past overwhelmed police officers, broke through windows and doors and ransacked the Capitol as Congress was voting to certify Joe Biden's electoral win. It remained up for several months.

Manger said Capitol Police have requested assistance from outside law enforcement before Tuesday's address in addition to the request for help from the National Guard. Metropolitan Police Department Chief Robert Contee has said his department would devote additional policing in a rolling state of heightened alert over the next few weeks.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Teacher fired, banned after slapping student**

**IN** ELKHART — A northern Indiana teacher was fired and banned from school property after an incident in which he allegedly slapped a student.

Baugo Community School Superintendent Byron Sanders said Jimtown High School teacher Mike Hosinski confronted a student about a hoodie sweatshirt the student was wearing. The two argued in a hallway and Hosinski slapped the student in the face so hard the student's head hit a wall, Sanders said.

The student suffered visible injuries and was treated by medical staff, Sanders said.

Administrators contacted the Indiana Department of Child Services and the Elkhart County Sheriff's Office and both agencies are investigating the incident.

**Woman hit, killed by own running car in postal lot**

**NV** RENO — A 72-year-old woman apparently was struck and killed by her own car in a parking lot after she got out of the running vehicle to enter a post office in south Reno, authorities said.

A witness came across the woman on the ground in an empty parking spot with extensive injuries at the Steamboat Post Office near Bishop Manogue High School, the Washoe County sheriff's office said. Sheriff's deputies responded to the scene and the woman was transported to a regional hospital where she later was pronounced dead.

Sheriff's investigators determined the woman, whose name

has not been released, was the registered owner of the car. They believe she "was struck by her own vehicle after she exited it in order to enter the post office," the sheriff's office said in a statement.

**Hank the Tank turns out to be 3 different bears**

**CA** SOUTH LAKE TAHOE — Hank the Tank is actually a three-bear battalion.

DNA evidence now shows that the 500-pound black bear the public had nicknamed "Hank the Tank" is, in fact, at least three not-so-little bears who have damaged more than 30 properties around Lake Tahoe in recent months.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife said it will soon begin trapping bears in the South Lake Tahoe area to tag the animals and collect evidence for genetic analysis. The bears will be released in a "suitable habitat" and the agency said no trapped animals will be euthanized as part of the project.

The bears are responsible for more than 150 incident reports in the region straddling Northern California and Nevada.

**Racist, anti-Semitic flyers found in books at campus**

**MA** WILLIAMSTOWN — Copies of racist and anti-Semitic flyers have been discovered inside history books at a Williams College campus library.

Officials at the college have posted a sign at the entrance of Sawyer Library alerting library users about the flyers, and asking anyone who finds additional flyers to tell library officials.

The flyers are designed to re-

semble Confederate States of America currency including images of the Confederate Flag, and a profile of Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. The flyers also include Bible verses and images of the Star of David.

Campus security officials have been notified and a bias incident report also filed, according to officials.

**Maintenance man accused of grave marker theft**

**NC** BURLINGTON — The head of maintenance at a North Carolina memorial park is accused by authorities of stealing more than 200 grave markers, a sheriff's office said.

The News & Observer of Raleigh reported William Allen Shannon Jr., 47, is accused of taking the brass grave markers from Alamance Memorial Park in Burlington, according to a release from the Alamance County Sheriff's Office

Deputies said the markers had been in storage and were discovered missing Dec. 16. Investigators determined there was no break-in, and that turned the focus of the investigation to employees who would have had access to the storage closets.

Shannon was arrested and charged with felony larceny by employee and felony obtaining property by false pretense, according to the sheriff's office.

**Officials apologize to teen wrongly charged**

**IL** WAUKEGAN — The mayor and the interim police chief of a Chicago suburb apologized to a teenager who was wrongly charged with attempted murder in the shooting

of a store clerk even though he was playing basketball for his high school at the time of the shooting.

In separate statements, Waukegan Mayor Ann Taylor and interim Police Chief Keith Zupec pointed to failures in the way the case was handled.

The teen was charged with attempted murder and placed in juvenile detention, where he spent two days, the Lake County News-Sun reported. He was released after investigators realized that he couldn't have taken part in the shooting because he was playing basketball at a school in Lincolnshire when it happened.

Zupec said the city and the Lake County state's attorney's office will review the matter.

**Beer thief fatally shot by convenience store guard**

**OK** TULSA — A man who tried to steal beer from a convenience store in north Tulsa was fatally shot by a security guard after pointing a gun at the guard, police said.

Dewayne James, 21, died after being shot outside the store, Officer Andre Baul said.

The name of the guard has not been released. The guard has not been arrested and has not been interviewed because he has requested an attorney, Baul said.

The guard told officers that he confronted James outside the store after James left without paying for the beer he had taken, according to police Capt. Ryan Woods. The guard said James then pointed a gun at him.

Woods said the guard then shot James, who was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

— From wire reports



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**Reporting World, National and Military News**

# St. Mary's knocks off No. 1 Gonzaga

*Associated Press*

MORAGA, Calif. — Saint Mary's finally has its first perfect record at home — and a memorable win over top-ranked Gonzaga to go with it.

Tommy Kuhse had 14 points and six rebounds for the No. 23 Gaels, who beat the No. 1 Bulldogs 67-57 on Saturday night to prevent Gonzaga from completing another undefeated run in the West Coast Conference.

"That's really special," St. Mary's coach Randy Bennett said after his squad completed a 16-0 run at McKeon Pavilion. "It's been hard to get. We lost it one year to Loyola Marymount in our last home game. It's been something hard to get and we finally got it. Especially when it's against the No. 1 team in the country, it just makes it ... a night you'll never forget."

The top six teams in the AP poll all lost Saturday, and seven of the top nine; only No. 7 Duke won.

The Gaels ended the Bulldogs' 17-game winning streak, beating a No. 1 team for the first time since knocking off the Zags in the 2019 conference tournament title game.

"It's kind of life in late February and early March, especially on the road," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. His team

clinched the WCC regular-season title last weekend.

Fans poured onto the court in a wild celebration of St. Mary's 18th consecutive win at McKeon Pavilion dating to last season.

Matthias Tass added 13 points for the Gaels (24-6, 12-3) and made a pivotal block with 1:15 remaining. Kyle Bowman made a pair of clutch three-pointers after missing his first seven shots.

"I wanted to go in the middle of the circle and kiss the logo but people were running on the court so it was difficult," Tass said. "It was definitely a surreal moment."

Rasir Bolton scored 16 points for the Bulldogs (24-3, 13-1). Drew Timme had six points and eight rebounds, but shot 2 of 10.

Saint Mary's had lost seven straight to its rivals from the Pacific Northwest, including five straight at home.

Gonzaga had beaten the Gaels handily two weeks earlier and had won 34 consecutive conference games, 33 by double-digits. But Saint Mary's never let the Bulldogs get comfortable on Saturday, leading from start to finish while winning their fourth straight since that loss in Spokane.

"They were extremely more aggressive. They got after us and played us really really physical," Few said of the Gaels. "That was

it."

Gonzaga trailed by 16 with 13 minutes remaining and got to 57-50 before Bowen buried a three-pointer. The Bulldogs responded with four points, but Bowen made another three and Logan Johnson sank a pair of free throws.

The game drew a packed house at McKeon Pavilion, with scouts from the Warriors, Knicks and Pistons in attendance.

Two nights after thumping San Francisco 89-73, Gonzaga appeared sluggish and out of sync. The Bulldogs shot 31% in the first half and were outscored 17-5 over the final seven minutes before the break.

Timme, taunted by Saint Mary's fans before the game as he practiced shooting from midcourt, was smothered by defenders every time he got the ball in the paint. Gonzaga's leading scorer missed all eight shots he took in the first half, was called for a three-second violation in the key in the second half and nearly got a technical foul after inadvertently tossing the ball near a referee's head.

"He got his touches but after three or four bounces we had three guys surrounding him and knocking the ball out of his hands in the first half," Tass said. "That kind of ruined his rhythm."

## Second time the charm for Buffs

*Associated Press*

BOULDER, Colo. — Hanging with the Arizona Wildcats for one half wasn't going to cut it for Colorado this time.

About six weeks after watching a four-point halftime deficit in Arizona turn into a blowout, the Buffaloes went into the locker room trailing the Wildcats by five Saturday night and vowed not to let them get away again.

K.J. Simpson and Tristan da Silva led a second-half surge that carried Colorado to a 79-63 upset of the nation's second-ranked team, matching the highest-ranked opponent ever beaten by the Buffaloes.

"Yeah, 'Bari said it in the locker room," da Silva said of teammate Jabari Walker. "We've been in this situation a few weeks ago at Arizona. And you know, we said to ourselves, we can't let this happen again, basically.

"So, we went out there and gave it even more than in the first half. It paid off."

Fans stormed the floor after the Colorado (19-10, 11-8 Pac-12) snapped the Wildcats'

nine-game winning streak by outscoring Arizona 47-26 in the second half.

The loss by the nation's second-ranked team added to a shocking Saturday in which top-ranked Gonzaga, No. 3 Auburn, No. 4 Purdue, No. 5 Kansas and No. 6 Kentucky all lost, as did No. 9 Texas Tech. The six losses by AP Top 10 teams in the same day matched the most ever.

Da Silva scored 13 of his team-high 19 points in the second half and Simpson scored all but one of his 13 points after halftime.

The Wildcats (25-3, 15-2) led 37-32 at the break, but their leading scorer, Benedict Mathurin, was held scoreless in the second half after scoring 12 points in the first half. Azuolas Tubelis led Arizona with 13 points.

### Poll implications

Arizona's reprieve may be the other top-10 teams also losing, but this was a blowout. Its other losses were 77-73 at No. 19 Tennessee on Dec. 22 and 75-59 at No. 7 UCLA on Jan. 25.

## No. 10 Bears rally to defeat No. 5 Jayhawks

*Associated Press*

WACO, Texas — Jeremy Sochan and his teammates kept encouraging each other after 10th-ranked Baylor got down big early again against No. 5 Kansas, only three weeks after an embarrassing loss to the Jayhawks. The Bears then started making big impact plays.

Sochan had a block that led to a layup by Adam Flagler right after his two-handed slam dunk in a big run before halftime, and Baylor finally took the lead after the break in an 80-70 victory Saturday night that kept Kansas from wrapping up a share of their 20th Big 12 title.

"They were the aggressor in the first game and in the first six minutes this time," Sochan said. "But we matched their mentality and their strength and just beat them."

The Bears (24-5, 12-4 Big 12) didn't lead until the opening minute after halftime.



# MLB talks produce progress, anger

Associated Press

JUPITER, Fla. — Major League Baseball negotiations took several steps forward and overcame a possible breakdown after testy talks Saturday, leaving less than two days until management's deadline for an agreement to salvage opening day on March 31 and a 162-game schedule.

While the sides moved toward each other on some topics, they remained far apart on the biggest economic issues: luxury tax thresholds and rates, the minimum salary and the new pre-arbitration bonus pool.

Players were angered by the state of negotiations at the end of Saturday's session and would not commit to extending talks. After internal discussions, they agreed to meet Sunday.

MLB says if there is not an agreement by the end of Monday, it would start canceling regular-season games because there will not be enough training time to play a full schedule. Players have not said whether they agree to that as a deadline and could make do with a shorter spring training.

Once Monday passes, the length of the schedule would become yet another issue in the dispute, along with possible lost pay and service time.

The union has told MLB if games are missed and salaries are lost, clubs should not expect players to agree to management proposals to expand the postseason and allow advertisements on uniforms and helmets.

For all the rancor, there was progress that saw the sides align on some issues.

Teams agreed for the first time to credit a full year of major league service to players who finish first or second in Rookie of the Year voting in each league by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, as long as they are among the top 100 prospects and did not spend the full season on the big league roster. This would address the union's contention that teams are delaying debuts of budding stars to delay their free agency.

The sides also agreed the proposed lottery in the annual amateur draft would be for the first six selections. Teams had angered the union by linking that to players agreeing to

expand the postseason from 10 teams to 14, rather than the 12 the union prefers.

The players moved toward MLB on salary arbitration, cutting from 75% to 35% for those who would be eligible from the group with at least two seasons of service but less than three. Management says it will not move from 22%, the cutoff since 2013.

With the move Saturday, the eligibility of only about 15-18 players annually is at issue.

Clubs stayed at a \$214 million tax threshold, up from \$210 million last season, and cut the tax rate for exceeding the threshold.

MLB characterized its tax proposal as intentionally lousy, in response to a union tax proposal teams felt was equally lousy.

Players object to the rates as increases from the current figures. The union would raise the threshold to \$245 million this year and increase it to \$273 million by 2026.

The union withdrew its proposal to cut revenue sharing by \$30 million annually but kept its plan to give small-market teams an incentive to grow locally generated revenue.

## Lightning spoil Preds' outdoor debut in Nashville

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tampa Bay Lightning sure know how to spoil a great party.

Steven Stamkos scored the game-winner at 11:31 of the third period as the Lightning beat the Nashville Predators 3-2 Saturday night to put a damper on the first outdoor NHL game in Music City.

Stamkos also had two assists. Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist, and Brayden Point also scored the first goal as Tampa Bay became the NHL's 27th franchise to finally play an outdoor game. The Lightning now have won four straight to pull within a point of Atlantic Division-leading Florida.

"I know one team wins the game, but I don't know how anybody in the end can leave on a downer after the event that was put on," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said of the entire night. "It was exceptional."

Tanner Jeannot and Filip

Forsberg each scored a power-play goal for Nashville, which dropped to 0-2 in outdoor games. The Predators also snapped a two-game win streak.

**Oilers 4, Panthers 3:** Derek Ryan got his first NHL hat trick as the visiting Edmonton snapped a two-game losing streak.

After goalie Mikko Koskinen denied Mason Marchment's shot on a 3-on-1 break near the end of the second period, Ryan tapped in a pass from Evander Kane for the hat trick and a 4-2 lead.

Leon Draisaitl netted his team-leading 36th goal, and Connor McDavid had two assists for the Oilers, who are 6-2 under new coach Jay Woodcroft.

**Flyers 2, Capitals 1:** Cam Atkinson had a goal and an assist and Claude Giroux also scored to lead host Philadelphia. Carter Hart made 27 saves for the Flyers, who snapped a six-game losing streak and won for just the

third time in 22 games.

T.J. Oshie scored for Washington, which lost its second straight.

**Penguins 1, Rangers 0:** Tristan Jarry turned aside 27 shots to outduel Igor Shesterkin, and Evgeni Malkin scored his eighth goal of the season to lead host Pittsburgh.

Jarry bounced back from a rough performance in a loss to New Jersey by picking up his 11th career shutout and fourth this season. Malkin provided the difference with a power-play goal 5:09 into the third as the Penguins ended a three-game losing streak to slip past New York into second place in the Metropolitan Division.

**Canadiens 2, Senators 1:** Arturi Lehkonen scored twice and visiting Montreal got its fifth straight win.

Andrew Hammond stopped 26 shots to for the Canadiens to improve to 2-0-0 in two starts this season.

Maple Leafs 10, Red Wings 7: Mitchell Marner had four goals and two assists, including a natural hat trick during the first 9:19 of the second period to lead Toronto to a win at Detroit.

Marner scored on two shots from the right circle and one from the left during a one-man barrage to open the middle period that pushed the Maple Leafs ahead 6-1.

**Bruins 3, Sharks 1:** Brad Marchand had two goals and an assist, and visiting Boston got its fourth straight win.

**Avalanche 3, Golden Knights 2:** Nathan MacKinnon scored in the third period to lift Colorado to a win at Vegas.

**Flames 7, Wild 3:** Matthew Tkachuk and Tyler Toffoli each had two goals and an assist, and Calgary tied a franchise record with its 11th straight home win.

**Kings 5, Islanders 2:** Matt Roy and Trevor Moore had a goal and an assist, and host Los Angeles won its fifth straight.

# Morant lifts Grizzlies with career-high 46

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Ja Morant spun and flipped in an over-the-shoulder layup. He threw down a vicious alley-oop dunk.

Memphis' All-Star put on quite a display for the Chicago crowd and might have gotten little extra lift seeing highlights of Michael Jordan on the video board.

Morant scored a franchise-record 46 points and the Grizzlies hung on to beat DeMar DeRozan and the Bulls 116-110 on Saturday night.

"I did watch it," he said. "And then, I did start scoring a lot. It probably played a part in it."

Memphis let a 17-point lead shrink to one before squeezing it out after losing two in a row. It also stopped Chicago's six-game winning streak.

Morant surpassed his previous regular-season high of 44 points. He had 47 in a play-off loss to Utah last season.

Morant scored 16 in the first half and 20 in the third quarter. He made 15 of 28 shots, including three three-pointers, and was 13-for-15 at the foul line.

"I've seen too many of them. Kinda boring now," Steven Adams said of Morant's game in jest. "He's such an amazing player."

Adams added 12 points and a season-high 21 rebounds, and the Grizzlies frustrated DeRozan even though the five-time All-Star scored 31 points.

**Nets 126, Bucks 123:** Kyrie Irving

scored a season-high 38 points and Brooklyn stopped its recent slide by winning at Milwaukee.

Bruce Brown made a three-pointer to put the Nets ahead for good 118-116 with 1:38 left.

Brooklyn ended a two-game skid and won for just the third time in 16 games. The Bucks have dropped four of their last five.

Milwaukee had one last chance with 2.1 seconds and no timeouts remaining. Wesley Matthews threw a long inbound pass to Giannis Antetokounmpo, who had a clean look at a game-tying three-point attempt that bounced off the rim.

Bobby Portis had 30 points and 12 rebounds for the Bucks.

**Hawks 127, Raptors 100:** Trae Young returned to his All-Star form by scoring 41 points and host Atlanta rode a dominant third quarter to rout Toronto.

Young was 17-for-24 from the field, 6-for-6 from the line and had 11 assists in his strong bounce-back game. He shot only 3-for-17 from the field in the Hawks' 112-108 loss at Chicago on Thursday night, his first game after starting in the All-Star Game.

Young rebounded by making his first four shots against the Raptors in his fifth game of the season scoring more than 40 points. He set a career high with 56 points at Portland on Jan. 3.

Fred VanVleet led Toronto with 24 points and nine assists after being listed as questionable with right knee soreness. Precious

Achiuwa added a season-high 21 points.

**Heat 133, Spurs 129:** Bam Adebayo scored a season-high 36 points, Tyler Herro added 27 off the bench and host Miami overcame an early 16-point deficit to beat San Antonio. Jimmy Butler scored 27 points in 30 minutes to help the Eastern Conference-leading Heat improve to 40-21. Butler didn't play in the fourth quarter.

**Nuggets 115, Kings 110:** Monte Morris hit a tiebreaking three-pointer with 28 seconds left, and Nikola Jokic had 18 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds to lead host Denver.

It was Jokic's 16th triple-double of the season and the 73rd of his career. His rebound with 19 seconds remaining finished the triple-double and helped the Nuggets to their second win over Sacramento in three nights.

**Cavaliers 92, Wizards 86:** Lauri Markkanen scored 23 points, and All-Star center Jarrett Allen had 18 points and 14 rebounds and host Cleveland beat Washington.

The Wizards matched the largest lead of the game at 84-75 on Daniel Gafford's follow shot with 6:39 remaining, but the Cavs answered with 12 straight points, capped by two free throws by Allen to pull in front for good.

**Celtics 113, Pistons 104:** Jaylen Brown scored 27 points, and Jayson Tatum had 26 points and 11 rebounds and Boston won at Detroit. The Celtics have won 11 of 12 games, the blemish a 112-111 home loss to the Pistons on Feb. 16.

## Ukrainian athletes seek sanctions against Russia

Associated Press

Earlier this month, Ukrainian skeleton rider Vladyslav Heraskevych flashed a sign at the Olympics: "No war in Ukraine." On Sunday, he was hunkered down about 93 miles outside of his nation's capital with weapons nearby in case he needs to defend his country.

"I am a student," the 23-year-old said. "I am not experienced in these type of things. But I am ready to stand strong and help in any way I can."

With Russian troops encircling the capital of Kyiv, Heraskevych was among some four dozen athletes from Ukraine and elsewhere who sent an

open letter to Olympic and Paralympic leaders, urging them to immediately suspend the Russian and Belarusian Olympic and Paralympic Committees.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine, supported by Belarus, is a clear breach of the Olympic and Paralympic Charters — a breach that must be met with strong sanctions," said the letter addressed to IOC President Thomas Bach and his counterpart on the International Paralympic Committee, Andrew Parsons.

The letter said more Ukrainians would have signed the letter but "it has been a challenge

to speak with all athletes from Ukraine as they are seeking safety in bomb shelters."

The advocacy group Global Athlete helped coordinate the letter, which also was signed by sliders from the U.S., Latvia and the Netherlands, members of the Russian fencing team and the Belarus Sport Solidarity Athletes Federation.

The International Olympic Committee has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, saying it violated the Olympic Truce. It has called on international federations to cancel or move events planned in Russia and Belarus and to stop using the countries' flags and national

anthems.

Neither the IOC nor the IPC have taken direct action against the countries themselves, however. The Paralympics start next Friday.

Other athletic groups appear to be taking action against Russia:

■ The Czech Republic joined Poland and Sweden on Sunday in refusing to play Russia in the 2022 World Cup qualifying playoffs next month in response to that nation's invasion of Ukraine. The head of world champion France's soccer federation said Sunday he favored excluding the Russians from the competition.