

Report says Ospreys may fly again soon

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIRBASE, Japan—The U.S. military's fleet of Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, grounded since December after a fatal crash off the Japanese coast, could be flying again within weeks, according to a media report citing unnamed military officials.

A CV-22B Osprey from Yokota's 21st Special Operations Squadron went down Nov. 29 during a routine training mission off Yakushima, an island in southern Japan.

Investigators probing the crash, which killed eight airmen,

are looking at a possible mishap involving the aircraft's propeller rotor gearbox, the officials said in a Tuesday report by NBC News.

Preliminary findings determined the crash was likely the result of equipment failure, not pilot error, Stars and Stripes previously reported.

Twenty service members, including those killed in the Japan crash, have died in Osprey mishaps the past two years.

Four Marines perished March 18, 2022, in an accident in Norway that was attributed to pilot error.

Three months later, another five Marines died in a Southern

California crash that investigators blamed on a hard clutch engagement associated with the gearbox.

Three Marines died and five were injured Aug. 27 in Australia in a crash still under investigation.

The Osprey grounding could have lasted as long as a year but the aircraft could fly again soon, possibly within weeks, according to the officials quoted by NBC.

Air Force Special Operations Command did not immediately respond to phone calls early Tuesday seeking comment.

Four hundred Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps Ospreys have

been grounded since Dec. 6 in the wake of November's crash. Japan also grounded its fleet of 14 Ospreys.

The Osprey is a fast-moving airframe that can take off like a helicopter and then tilt its engines and propellers to fly like an airplane.

The tiltrotor stand-down is one of the largest military aircraft groundings in terms of affecting three services' flight operations, but it's not the longest.

When the Osprey was still in development, two crashes in 2000 killed 23 Marines and led the Corps to ground the program for nearly 18 months.

USS Halsey heads to India for 50-plus nation exercise

By **ALEX WILSON**
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. guided-missile destroyer joined Japanese and Australian warships for weekend drills before heading to India for a separate, five-day exercise, according to the Navy.

The USS Halsey, Japanese destroyer JS Sazanami and the Australian frigate HMAS Warramunga trained together Saturday and Sunday in the Bay of Bengal, which borders Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the U.S. 7th Fleet said in a news release Monday.

The brief exercise included ship maneuvers, communications drills and information-sharing aimed at improving the "collective ability of the three nations to maintain maritime security and readiness to respond to any regional contingency," according to the release.

After the exercise concluded, the Halsey relocated Monday to Visakhapatnam, India, to join the Milan exercise, 7th Fleet said in a separate news release that day.

That training, led by the Indian navy, includes more than 50 participating countries with sea and

harbor phases scheduled to run until Feb. 27, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Luka Bakic told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

The sea phase includes ship maneuvers, air-defense drills, communications drills, gunnery exercises, war scenarios and "high-end tactical training," according to 7th Fleet.

The Halsey will be the only U.S. ship participating, Bakic said in a follow-up message.

The destroyer's presence near India follows weeks of Navy activity in the South China and Philippine Seas.

The guided-missile destroyer USS John Finn on Friday joined the Sazanami and the Japanese guided-missile destroyer JS Shimakaze for a similar exercise in the South China Sea, Bakic said.

That exercise came just a week after the littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords teamed up with the Philippine patrol vessel BRP Gregorio Del Pilar for their own drills Feb. 9 in the South China Sea. A day earlier, the John Finn and Gabrielle Giffords joined the Sazanami and Warramunga for two days of training in the South China Sea.

Okinawan held for unauthorized entry into Marine base

By **HANA KUSUMOTO**
Stars and Stripes

Japanese police arrested a university student detained by U.S. authorities after he drove onto a U.S. military base on Okinawa last week, according to an Okinawa Police spokesman.

The Japanese student drove onto Camp Foster around 1:22 p.m. Thursday, the police spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

The unidentified male student, 19, of Okinawa city, entered Gate 3, and was detained by U.S. mili-

tary personnel, the spokesman said. Some Japanese government spokespeople may speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

Okinawa police officers took the student to a police station, where he was questioned and offi-

cially arrested on suspicion of violating the status of forces agreement by entering the base without approval, the spokesman said.

The Marine Corps did not immediately respond to phone and email queries requesting more information Tuesday.

Houthis resilient amid US-led airstrikes

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Despite a month of U.S.-led airstrikes, Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels remain capable of launching significant attacks — just this week, they seriously damaged a ship in a crucial strait and apparently downed an American drone worth tens of millions of dollars.

The continued assaults by the Houthis on shipping through the crucial Red Sea corridor — the Bab el-Mandeb Strait — against the backdrop of Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip underscore the challenges in trying to stop the guerrilla-style attacks that have seen them hold onto Yemen's capital and much of the war-ravaged country's north since 2014.

Meanwhile, the campaign has boosted the rebels' standing in the Arab world, despite their own human rights abuses in a

years-long stalemated war with several of America's allies in the region. And the longer their attacks go on, analysts warn the greater the risk that disruptions to international shipping will begin to weigh down on the global economy.

On Monday, both the Houthis and Western officials acknowledged one of the most-serious attacks on shipping launched by the rebels. The Houthis targeted the Belize-flagged bulk carrier Rubymar with two anti-ship ballistic missiles, one of which struck the vessel, the U.S. military's Central Command said.

The Rubymar, which already had reported problems with its propulsion back in November, apparently became inoperable, forcing her crew to abandon the vessel.

The Rubymar attack marked one of a few direct, serious hits

by the Houthi rebels on shipping. In late January, another direct hit set a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker ablaze for hours.

Meanwhile, the Houthis early Tuesday released footage of what they described as a surface-to-air missile bringing down a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone off the coast of Hodeida, a Yemeni port city they hold on the Red Sea. The footage included a video of men dragging pieces of debris from the water onto a beach.

Images of the debris, which included writing in English and what seemed to be electrical equipment, appeared to correspond to known pieces of the Reaper, usually used in attack missions and surveillance flights. Central Command and the U.S. Air Force's Mideast arm have not responded to questions from the AP over the apparent downing.

In November, the Pentagon acknowledged the loss of an MQ-9, also shot down by the rebels over the Red Sea.

Since the Houthis seized the country's north and its capital of Sanaa in 2014, the U.S. military has lost at least four drones to shootdowns by the rebels — in 2017, 2019 and this year.

Meanwhile, the Houthis claimed an attack on the Sea Champion, a Greek-flagged, U.S.-owned bulk carrier bound for Aden, Yemen, carrying grain from Argentina.

The rebels separately claimed an attack on the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier Navis Fortuna, a ship that had been broadcasting its destination as Italy with an "all Chinese" crew to avoid being targeted. Private security firm Ambrey reported that the vessel sustained minor damage in a drone attack.

New evacuations ordered by Israel in north of Gaza

Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israel ordered new evacuations from parts of Gaza City on Tuesday, as a study led by the U.N. children's agency found that one in six children are acutely malnourished in the isolated and largely devastated north of the territory, where the city is located.

The report finds deepening misery across the territory, where Israel's air and ground offensive, launched in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, has killed over 29,000 Palestinians, obliterated entire neighborhoods and displaced more than 80% of the population.

Israel has vowed to expand the offensive to the Gaza Strip's southernmost city of Rafah, where more than half of the ter-

ritory's population of 2.3 million has sought refuge from fighting elsewhere. Many have crowded into sprawling tent camps and overflowing U.N.-run shelters near the Egyptian border.

The United States, Israel's top ally, has been working with mediators Egypt and Qatar to try to broker another cease-fire and hostage release agreement. Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was in Cairo to meet with Egyptian officials Tuesday, but there was no expectation of a breakthrough.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military ordered the evacuation of the Zaytoun and Turkoman neighborhoods on the southern edge of Gaza City, an indication that Palestinian militants are still putting up stiff resistance.

Zelenskyy: Delays in aid making life 'very difficult'

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Delays in weapons deliveries from Western allies to Ukraine are opening a door for Russian battlefield advances, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, making the fight "very difficult" along parts of the front line where the Kremlin's forces captured a strategic city last weekend ahead of the war's two-year anniversary.

Zelenskyy and other officials have often expressed frustration at the slowness of promised aid deliveries, especially since signs of war fatigue have emerged. European countries are struggling to find enough stocks to send to Kyiv, and U.S. help worth \$60 billion is stalled over political differences. That

appears to be playing into the hands of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Even so, more help is heading Ukraine's way, as Sweden announced Tuesday its biggest aid package so far and Canada said it was expediting the delivery of more than 800 drones.

Zelenskyy, in his daily video address late Monday, said Russia has built up troops at some points along the 930-mile front line, apparently aiming to pounce on any perceived defensive weaknesses.

"They (the Russians) are taking advantage of delays in aid to Ukraine," he said after visiting the command post in the area of Kupiansk, in the northeastern Kharkiv region, on Monday.

Biden heads to Calif. to rev up fundraising

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden heads to California on Tuesday looking to soak up more cash for his reelection bid during a three-day swing through the state.

Going into the trip, Biden's campaign and the Democratic National Committee announced Tuesday that they had collected \$42 million in contributions during January from 422,000 donors. Biden ended January with \$130 million in cash on hand. Campaign officials said that is the highest total amassed by any Democratic candidate at this point in the cycle.

Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez called the haul "an indisputable show of strength to start the election year."

"While Team Biden-Harris continues to build on its fundraising machine, Republicans are divided — either spending money fighting Donald Trump, or spending money in support of Donald Trump's extreme and losing agenda," she said.

The campaign will need to keep fundraising for what is expected to be a hotly contest-

ed and expensive battle with former President Trump, who has emerged as the GOP's likely nominee.

This week's trip to Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area will mark Biden's third visit to California in just over two months for political events. He's trying to make up for lost time after largely avoiding the Democratic donor stronghold during last year's strikes by the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA.

Biden heads first to Los Angeles, where he will take part in a fundraiser.

He'll also make campaign stops in San Francisco and Los Altos Hills this week and deliver a policy speech near Los Angeles on Wednesday.

Biden made a quick visit to Los Angeles earlier this month for a meeting with supporters in the city's upscale Bel Air neighborhood.

He and first lady Jill Biden also spent a weekend in December in the Los Angeles area for campaign events.

The first lady is traveling Tuesday to Guilford, Conn., to hold a campaign fundraiser on behalf of her husband.

Rep. Tlaib endorses protest vote against Biden in Mich.

The Detroit News

DETROIT — U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib is endorsing the campaign urging fellow Michigan Democrats to vote "uncommitted" in the Feb. 27 presidential primary in protest of President Joe Biden's policy in Gaza.

In a video posted to social media Saturday, Tlaib said it's important to not just march against the "genocide" in Gaza but to form a voting bloc to effect change.

"Something that is a bullhorn to say enough is enough. We don't want a country that supports wars and bombs and destruction. We want to support life. We want to stand up for every single life killed in Gaza," Tlaib said.

"This is the way you can raise our voices, to make us even more visible. Right now, we feel completely neglected — neglected and just unseen by our government. If you want us to be louder, then come here and vote uncommitted."

Tlaib was standing outside the Ford Civic Center in Dearborn, which is an early voting center for next Tuesday's presidential primary.

Tlaib, a three-term congresswoman, is the first member of Congress in Michigan and the highest-profile official to date to get behind the Listen to Michi-

gan campaign, which aims to pressure Biden into overhauling his approach to the war between Israel and Hamas.

The Arab American and Muslim activists leading the effort hope to show Biden that Michigan Democrats who oppose the administration's approach in Gaza control what could be Biden's margin of victory for a second term. They point to former President Donald Trump winning the state by about 10,700 votes in 2016 and Biden winning it by about 154,000 in 2020.

Listen to Michigan's campaign manager is Tlaib's younger sister, Layla Elabed, who said volunteers for the effort made 150,000 phone calls in its first week. They also planned phone banks through the weekend in Dearborn and a 3 p.m. rally Tuesday at the University of Michigan's campus in Ann Arbor.

The campaign also announced its first ad buy Friday, which was described as six figures for a mailer distributed in the Metro Detroit region and a digital ad on YouTube.

Thirty-two state and local officials, including state lawmakers, have pledged to vote "uncommitted" on Democratic primary ballots, as well as former Rep. Andy Levin, D-Mich.

Trump's sneakers sold out, but sneakerheads not buying

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Through a sea of boos (and some cheers) Donald Trump announced his inaugural venture into the sneaker world at Philadelphia's Sneaker Con. The Saturday launch marked the first time a former U.S. president has unveiled a sneaker line — and some say that's for good reason.

The metallic gold high-tops — priced at \$400 and limited to 1,000 pairs — sold out within the

day. But sneakerheads say they aren't the ones purchasing them.

Online, the shoes were quickly mocked for their slightly off resemblance to Nike Air Force 1s and Jordan 1s.

"Scammer 1s," Alvin Blanco at Hip-Hop Wired called them in a viral tweet. "Those the January 6s" another post said, referencing the 2021 attack in which Trump supporters stormed the Capitol as Joe Biden's presidential victory was

being certified. Their official title is the "Never Surrender Gold Hi-Tops."

In Philadelphia, the response to the sneakers themselves was tepid at best and hateful at worst. At Sneaker Con, Trump said of the audible boos and groans, "there's a lot of emotion in this room."

"Philadelphians would literally boo god," local author Kim Kelly said in response to a video circulating of the exchange. "[I

don't know] why he thought this would go well for him."

There's a cologne too. And a perfume. In addition to the \$399 high tops, the Get Trump Sneaker page has two low-top athletic style sneakers — the T-Red Wave and the POTUS 45 — priced at \$199 each. There's also a cologne and perfume, each called Victory47 both priced at \$99. Everything besides the gold high-tops is still available for purchase.

Man who killed first responders was not allowed to have guns

Associated Press

A man who killed himself after fatally shooting two police officers and a firefighter in a wooded Minneapolis-area neighborhood wasn't legally allowed to have guns after a previous assault conviction and was entangled in a yearslong dispute over the custody and financial support of his three oldest children, court records show.

Authorities on Monday identified Shannon Gooden, 38, as the man who opened fire on police in the affluent suburb of Burnsville after they responded to a domestic disturbance call early Sunday. The unidentified caller reported that Gooden had barricaded himself in his home with family members, including seven children aged 2 to 15.

Authorities said Gooden killed Officers Paul Elmstrand and Matthew Ruge, both 27, and Adam Finseth, 40, a firefighter and paramedic who was assigned to the city's SWAT team. Another officer, Sgt. Adam Mellicott, was shot and wounded.

Gooden was found dead inside the home hours later; au-

thorities said Tuesday he shot himself in the head.

Gooden's standoff with police came only two days before a scheduled district court hearing over his ongoing legal disputes with the mother of his three oldest children.

The attorney representing Gooden in that dispute, Robert Manson, did not return a telephone message seeking comment.

There was no answer Monday evening at a phone listing for a woman described in court records as Gooden's girlfriend.

Court records show the state barred Gooden from possessing guns after he pleaded guilty in 2008 to second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon. Prosecutors said he threw rocks and pulled a knife on a man in a Burnsville shopping mall parking lot.

Authorities have not provided details about Sunday's call that led police to Gooden's home.

Court records suggest he cared for seven children — the three oldest by one woman, two more with another and that

woman's two children from a previous relationship.

Court records also show his disputes over the parenting of his oldest three children had grown increasingly contentious. He accused their mother, Noemi Torres, of neglect and she called him "controlling" and accused him of abusing her and the children.

Torres told KARE-TV that their three kids, 12- and 15-year-old boys and a 14-year-old daughter, were in the house during the standoff. She said that her daughter told Torres that Gooden put earmuffs on her before he started shooting, and that she wasn't scared until he asked, "Do you want to come with me?" meaning die with him.

Torres also told KARE-TV that Gooden had previously said he'd shoot police if she called 911 on him.

"I'm going to have a standoff," Torres quoted him as saying, according to brief interview excerpts KARE-TV posted on social media. "I'm going to kill everybody."

Hungary to approve Sweden's NATO bid

Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — A vote in Hungary's parliament on ratifying Sweden's bid to join NATO could come as early as Monday, according to a senior member of the country's governing Fidesz party. It would bring an end to more than 18 months of delays by the nationalist government that have frustrated Hungary's allies.

In a letter Tuesday to the speaker of the parliament, the head of the Fidesz caucus, Mate Kocsis, requested that a vote be scheduled for the opening day of the spring session, which begins on Monday.

Kocsis wrote that Fidesz, which has repeatedly blocked a vote on the matter, will opt to support Sweden's bid to join the trans-Atlantic military alliance.

Hungary is the only one of NATO's 31 existing members not to have ratified Sweden's bid.

The Hungarian government faces mounting pressure to act after delaying the move for more than 1½-years since admitting a new country to the military alliance requires unanimous approval.

On Sunday, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators visited Hungary and announced they would submit a joint resolution to Congress condemning alleged democratic backsliding in the country and urging Prime Minister Viktor Orban to move forward on approving Sweden's accession as soon as possible.

Sen. Chris Murphy said in Budapest on Sunday that members of the Hungarian government and Fidesz had refused to meet with the delegation.

"It's good news that our dispute with Sweden is nearing a conclusion," Orban said.

Astronomers discover what may be the brightest object in the universe

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Astronomers have discovered what may be the brightest object in the universe, a quasar with a black hole at its heart growing so fast that it swallows the equivalent of a sun a day.

The record-breaking quasar shines 500 trillion times brighter than our sun. The black hole powering this distant quasar is more than 17 billion times more immense than our sun, an Australian-led team reported Monday in the journal *Nature As-*

tronomy.

While the quasar resembles a mere dot in images, scientists envision a ferocious place.

The rotating disk around the quasar's black hole — the luminous swirling gas and other matter from gobbled-up stars — is like a cosmic hurricane.

"This quasar is the most violent place that we know in the universe," lead author Christian Wolf of Australian National University said in an email.

The European Southern Observatory spotted the object,

J0529-4351, during a 1980 sky survey, but it was thought to be a star. It was not identified as a quasar — the extremely active and luminous core of a galaxy — until last year. Observations by telescopes in Australia and Chile's Atacama Desert clinched it.

"The exciting thing about this quasar is that it was hiding in plain sight and was misclassified as a star previously," Yale University's Priyamvada Natarajan, who was not involved in the study, said in an email.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police chief crashes into car while evading gunfire

NM ALBUQUERQUE — The police chief in New Mexico’s most populous city crashed his car into another vehicle after he attempted to avoid gunfire while on his way to a Saturday morning press conference.

The Albuquerque Journal reported that Albuquerque Police Department Chief Harold Medina and his wife, who was in the truck with him, were not injured, but the driver of the classic Mustang that he crashed into was taken to the hospital with serious injuries.

Department spokesperson Gilbert Gallegos told the Associated Press that Medina had pulled his vehicle over by a homeless encampment that was blocking a sidewalk, which the department has recently enforced. He called for officers to look at the encampment before a fight broke out between two people, with one person pulling a gun.

The person with the gun shot at the other person, who ran in the direction of Medina’s truck, Gallegos said. The department is still attempting to find the shooter.

2 people arrested after children’s remains found

CO PUEBLO — Two people have been arrested on charges of murder and abuse of a corpse after the discovery of a girl’s body encased in concrete and a boy’s remains in a suitcase in Colorado, according to police and public jail records.

The City of Pueblo Police De-

partment announced the arrest of Corena Rose Minjarez, 36, on Friday, and county jail records show the second suspect, Jesus Dominguez, 35, was also in custody as of Sunday.

Police found the girl’s remains in a metal container filled with concrete in a storage unit last month, according to authorities. The unit was being cleared out after the rent wasn’t paid. As part of the investigation, police began searching for two children last seen in the summer of 2018, Jesus Dominguez Jr. and Yesenia Dominguez.

The children hadn’t been reported missing, according to the police department’s news release.

Then the investigation led police to a vehicle owned by Minjarez in a scrap yard, where they found a boy’s remains in a suitcase in the trunk of the car, police said. By Feb. 15, DNA testing showed the remains belonged to the two missing children.

Quake outside small city among several in area

TX FALLS CITY — An earthquake of 4.7 magnitude that struck early Saturday morning near a small Texas city, one of several that have occurred in the area in recent days, could be felt dozens of miles away, including in San Antonio.

There were no immediate reports of major damage or injuries from the earthquake at 12:32 a.m. that was centered about 2 miles southeast of Falls City, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Falls City, which has a population of about 500 people, is about 45 miles south-

east of San Antonio.

About 10 minutes earlier, the area had a 4.4 magnitude earthquake, the U.S. Geological Survey said. There have been several earthquakes in the area in recent days and about 30 in the area over the past three weeks, but all the others have been lower in magnitude.

Governor signs his new legislative maps into law

WI MADISON — Wisconsin Democratic Gov. Tony Evers signed new legislative district maps into law on Monday that he proposed and that the Republicans who control the Legislature passed to avoid having the liberal-controlled state Supreme Court draw the lines.

Democrats hailed the signing as a major political victory in the swing state where the Legislature has been firmly under Republican control for more than a decade, even as Democrats have won 14 of the past 17 statewide elections.

Democrats are almost certain to gain seats in the state Assembly and state Senate under the new maps, which will be in place for the November election. Republicans have been operating since 2011 under maps they drew that were recognized as among the most gerrymandered in the country.

Convicted killer who fled in custody 4 days later

AZ PHOENIX — A convicted murderer who fled from a halfway house in the Phoenix metro area is back in custody, authorities said.

Officials with the Arizona De-

partment of Corrections, Rehabilitation & Reentry said Daniel Cahill was arrested Saturday afternoon by the department’s fugitive apprehension unit in partnership with the U.S. Marshals Service.

They said Cahill was booked into the Arizona State Prison Complex-Phoenix on a violation of community supervision.

Cahill was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison in April 1980 for the stabbing death of a 39-year-old Tempe woman in December 1979.

Airports to make tens of millions in fixes

MA BOSTON — Three of the biggest airports in New England are slated to make improvements to control towers, gates and mechanical systems under a nearly \$1 billion federal plan to strengthen the nation’s air travel infrastructure.

The largest of the New England grants is going to Logan International Airport in Boston. The airport will receive \$12 million toward a two-phase project to expand and renovate an existing traffic control tower, the Federal Aviation Administration said in documents.

Bradley International Airport near Hartford, Conn., will receive \$5.4 million to pay for improvements associated with terminal expansion and renovation, the FAA said. Portland International Jetport in Maine is set to receive \$10.4 million to install new passenger boarding bridges and make additional improvements, the agency said.

— From wire reports



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Byron wins Daytona 500 under caution

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — The goal was obvious to William Byron: put the No. 24 Chevrolet in Victory Lane in the 2024 Daytona 500 to launch Hendrick Motorsports' 40th anniversary season.

Mission accomplished, even if Byron had to complete an agonizing final lap under caution around Daytona International Speedway awaiting the winner to be declared.

"Did we win it? Did we win it?" Byron kept asking over his radio.

The emotion he heard over his radio from crew chief Rudy Fugle confirmed Byron had just won the biggest race of his career.

"Well, no one told me. And Rudy was crying on the radio, so I was like 'Dude, I hope he's crying for good reason,'" Byron said. "I guess he was a ball of emotion there, and so I was like 'Did we actually win or not?'"

Byron snapped Hendrick Motorsports' nine-race Daytona 500 losing streak with a win Monday in the rain-delayed "Great American Race." He

crossed under the white flag denoting the final lap at the exact moment a crash broke out behind him. The caution flag was thrown and he wasn't quite sure if he was the official winner as he circled Daytona one final time.

The last Hendrick driver to win the Daytona 500 was Dale Earnhardt Jr. in 2014. The 26-year-old from Charlotte, N.C., is the sixth different driver to win the 500 for Rick Hendrick, the winningest team owner in NASCAR history who made his way to Victory Lane on the actual 40th anniversary of his first Cup win.

"The first time we came here, we didn't think we had any business even being here," Hendrick said in Victory Lane. "We felt way out of our league. Now here we are 40 years later. You couldn't write the script any better. To win this on the 40th, to the day, it's just awesome."

The ninth Daytona 500 win for Hendrick Motorsports tied the team with Petty Enterprises for most in NASCAR history.

"William Byron was already a superstar, and I mean, he just

went to another level of being superstar," said Hendrick vice chairman Jeff Gordon, himself a three-time Daytona 500 winner in the No. 24 Chevrolet.

"I wasn't driving the car, but I felt like I was making every lap out there with him," he said. "We're going to celebrate. This is a huge win."

Byron, who had never finished higher than 21st in the Daytona 500, is a self-taught racer who used computer equipment to hone his skills. He made it to the championship last season when he won a career-high six races, but lost out on the title to Ryan Blaney, the older brother of Byron's longtime girlfriend.

"I'm just a kid from racing on computers and winning the Daytona 500, I can't believe it," Byron said. "I wish my dad was here. He's sick, but this is for him, man. We've been through so much, and we sat up in the grandstands together and watched the race."

The fourth, and final, caution of the race began when Hendrick driver Alex Bowman hit Byron from behind and it

caused Byron to sideswipe Brad Keselowski and trigger a 23-car crash that caused a red flag that lasted more than 15 minutes.

There were four laps remaining on the final restart and Byron was in second in the No. 24 Chevrolet. He and Ross Chastain of Trackhouse Racing pushed back and forth for the lead and it was Byron out front as a crash broke out behind him just as he'd crossed under the white flag marking the final lap of the race.

Byron was followed by teammate Bowman in a 1-2 sweep for Chevrolet and Hendrick. Christopher Bell in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing finished third and was followed by a Chevy from Corey Lajoie of Spire Motorsports and a Toyota from Bubba Wallace for 23XI Racing.

AJ Allmendinger was sixth in a Chevy for Kaulig Racing and was followed by John Hunter Nemecheck in a Toyota for Legacy Motor Club. Chase Briscoe was eighth in a Ford for Stewart-Haas Racing, followed by Legacy driver Erik Jones and SHR teammate Noah Gragson.

Bowman triggers crash, escapes to finish second

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Alex Bowman never saw how "the big one" started. He just knew he was involved.

He was surprised to learn he triggered it.

Bowman sparked the crash that involved nearly two dozen cars and knocked six former NASCAR champions out of contention in the Daytona 500 on Monday night.

Bowman was bump-drafting Hendrick Motorsports teammate William Byron on the backstretch with nine laps to go when Byron lost control, turned into Brad Keselowski and pretty much wrecked the field.

"I can't even see far enough (ahead) to see that Byron hitting Keselowski is what started it," Bowman said. "I knew I had William in a spot that I didn't want to have him in. But we're all just sort of sandwiched up there.

"I was lifting to try to get off him once he

was aimed the wrong place. But we're all just shoving each other. That's what speedway racing has kind of become. If it's my fault, I didn't mean to crash anybody by any means."

Byron and Bowman were the biggest beneficiaries of the melee. They escaped with little damage to their cars and went on to give Hendrick a 1-2 finish in "The Great American Race."

The damage was epic for everyone else, even for a race that is known for spectacular crashes and mangled cars in every direction.

"Some of those situations where you get to be that ping-pong guy between two cars, you're a little bit along for the ride," Bowman said.

Bowman's ride was hardly as detrimental as it was for at least 20 others. Defending Cup Series champion Ryan Blaney was

knocked out along with fellow former champs Chase Elliott, Keselowski, Kyle Larson, Joey Logano and Martin Truex Jr.

Three-time Daytona 500 champ Denny Hamlin as well as the past two winners of NASCAR's season opener, Austin Cindric and Ricky Stenhouse Jr., were also involved.

"Speedway racing again," Logano said. "It's a lot of fun until this happens. It was pretty interesting with a lot of pushing and shoving there at the end. ... The pushes are stupid the whole time. The whole thing, everybody just gets more and more intense.

"You know it's going to happen. Anyone can see it happening. You just know it. It happens every year. With 10 to go, there's going to be a caution. You just hope you're not in it and you can't ride around. ... It's usually the people that start the wreck that stay alive. That's the frustrating part."

Houston wins another Big 12 showdown

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Jamal Shead had 26 points, including 20 in the second half, and No. 2 Houston took sole possession of first place in the Big 12 with a 73-65 win over No. 6 Iowa State on Monday night.

Emanuel Sharp added 20 points and four steals for the Cougars (23-3, 10-3), who won their 20th consecutive home game — the longest active streak in the country. They hold a one-game lead over the Cyclones (20-6, 9-4) with five games remaining in the regular season for both teams.

“I’m impressed with our kids’ tenacity and toughness,” Houston coach Kelvin Sampson said. “We never let them get it below (five or six points). We’d always make a play.”

Shead shot 5-for-7 from the field and 8-for-9 at the free-throw line in the second half. He finished 6-for-10 from the floor

with six assists and three of Houston’s 13 steals.

“Jamal Shead paid his dues, and those are the guys that when it comes time to step up, you can depend on,” Sampson said. “He was the guy that was not going to let us lose tonight.”

Houston, which never trailed, turned 16 Iowa State turnovers into 20 points. Meanwhile, the Cougars committed only nine turnovers.

“If you have single-digit turnovers against Iowa State, you have a chance,” Sampson said. “I thought the key tonight was single-digit turnovers. We had nine turnovers, and we turned them over 16 times and scored 20 points off their turnovers. That was the story of the game for us.”

Iowa State coach T.J. Otzelberger called Shead “amazing.”

“A guy with his competitive spirit, his fight and his drive,” Otzelberger said. “You know

when he’s going to the foul line, he’s going to cash in and make sure that his team is successful, and he certainly did that tonight.”

Keshon Gilbert had 17 points for the Cyclones, who outrebounded Houston 39-30. Tre King and Curtis Jones scored 13 apiece.

Both teams shot 42% from the field.

“We just weren’t able to make enough plays to cut into that lead to get position where we needed to be to be successful tonight,” Otzelberger said.

The Cyclones got as close as three early in the second half, but Houston built its lead back to 43-32 on a 3-pointer by Sharp with 15 minutes left.

Iowa State continued to chip away, getting the deficit down to four several times in the second half, with the last coming on a 3 by King with 8:22 to go. But the Cougars scored the next four

points and went back ahead by eight on a layup by J’Wan Roberts with 7:18 left.

“They just hit timely shot after timely shot,” Otzelberger said. “Anytime we had any type of surge or push, they would hit a big shot and answer.”

Texas 62, Kansas State 56: Max Abmas became the 12th player in men’s Division I history to reach 3,000 career points and the host Longhorns held off the Wildcats.

Abmas, a graduate transfer who played his first four seasons for Oral Roberts, entered play needing six points to reach the milestone. He finished with eight and has scored 450 points for Texas (17-9, 6-7 Big 12 Conference) this season.

Dylan Disu finished with a game-high 20 points for Texas. He made 5 of 11 shots from the floor and 10 of his 11 free throws, adding eight rebounds and three steals.

Pacers’ Haliburton shines in All-Star spotlight

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton found himself playing a new role on NBA All-Star weekend — host.

He served as Indianapolis’ unofficial ambassador. He became a part-time concierge, offering suggestions for restaurant choices and places to visit. He promoted the NBA’s 2K esports league, even doubled as a ticket broker. He made a video thanking local fans for their support. And he did all of it in addition to his full-time job.

Yet Haliburton proved himself every bit as valuable, versatile and successful off the court over the past week as he’s been on it this season — and did it all with a smile.

“It’s been a zoo, it’s been a lot, but it’s been a lot of fun,” he said Saturday afternoon still in the midst of this wild, whirlwind ad-

venture. “I’ve been told I’m kind of like the prom king of the weekend, so I’m just doing whatever I’m asked to do.”

The 23-year-old two-time All-Star never complained. He rarely does.

Instead, Haliburton thrived underneath the bright spotlight of one of the NBA’s biggest stages, re-introducing basketball fans to the Pacers, his new hometown and himself as potentially the next star in Indiana’s rich hoops tradition.

He shouldered everything from the seemingly endless interviews for TV and being mic’d up for the game, to purchasing a luxury suite at the arena because it was more affordable to accommodate all of the ticket requests.

Many All-Star regulars such as LeBron James, Kevin Durant or Damian Lillard have created plans to navigate what can be a

grueling All-Star weekend schedule.

Few, though, play the starring role in front of their home fans. The closest James, Durant or Lillard came was two years ago when James, with the Lakers, returned to Cleveland. Stephen Curry might get his chance next season when San Francisco will host.

But Haliburton, the former Iowa State star who grew up in Wisconsin, got the opportunity in just his second All-Star trip.

The fourth-year pro cherished every moment — his grand entrance at Thursday night’s inaugural Opening Celebration in a shiny, blue and gold No. 24 IndyCar; mingling with three Indiana Hall of Fame icons in Larry Bird, Reggie Miller and Oscar Robertson; cheering teammates Benedict Mathurin and Oscar Tshiebwe in Friday night’s Rising Stars

games and winning Saturday night’s skills challenge with Mathurin and Pacers center Myles Turner before being eliminated in a tiebreaking round of the 3-point contest.

Yet none of it affected Haliburton’s play Sunday. He opened the game by making five consecutive 3s, finished with 32 points, seven rebounds and six assists on 11-for-15 shooting and went home after leaving quite an impression.

“His teammates love him, fans love him. I’m excited to watch his career going forward because I know he’s going to do some incredible things here in Indiana,” Durant said. “But just for the game of basketball as a whole, you can tell he’s one of those point guards that the next generation, kids in elementary school, middle school kids will be looking up to.”

Wild set team record for goals in win

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Joel Eriksson Ek and Kirill Kaprizov each had hat tricks and tied the franchise record with six points for the Minnesota Wild, who faced a three-goal deficit in the second period before storming back with six unanswered goals in a record-filled 10-7 victory over the NHL-leading Vancouver Canucks on Monday.

“You could feel the way we were engaged in the game that there was no letdown,” Wild coach John Hynes said. “Whether it was 4-1 or 5-2, the mindset was still the same.”

Minnesota’s six scores in a span of 5:45 was the fastest such flurry in the NHL in 25 years, since Washington had six goals in 4:47 in a 10-1 win against Tampa Bay on Feb. 3, 1999.

Eriksson Ek and Kaprizov each had three assists.

Matt Boldy, Mats Zuccarello, Marco Rossi and Jonas Brodin also scored for the Wild, who set franchise goal records for a single game and a single period with seven scores in the third. They also registered their fastest four-goal stretch in team history, all on the power play in

a span of 2:17 to take a 6-5 lead early in the third period.

The Canucks (37-14-6) took seven penalties and lost their second straight game. They fell to 28-7-2 when scoring first. Nikita Zadorov and Brock Boeser scored in the third period, cutting the lead to 8-7 with 2:08 to go, before the Wild tacked on two empty-netters.

Bruins 4, Stars 3 (SO): Brad Marchand and Charlie McAvoy scored in the shootout and host Boston snapped a four-game losing streak with a win over Dallas.

Marchand kept Boston’s bid alive in the shootout after Dallas took a 1-0 lead. McAvoy put the Stars in a position where they needed to score, but Jeremy Swayman stopped 8 of 9 shots in the shootout and finished the game with 43 saves.

The win enabled the Bruins to jump past Florida for first place in the Atlantic Division.

Flames 6, Jets 3: Nazem Kadri had two goals and an assist as host Calgary rallied from a two-goal deficit to snap Winnipeg’s three-game winning streak.

Jonathan Huberdeau and Andrew Mangiapane had a goal

and an assist and Oliver Kylington and Blake Coleman also scored for Calgary, which snapped a three-game losing streak. Rasmus Andersson had a pair of assists.

Hurricanes 6, Blackhawks 3: Martin Necas and Sebastian Aho each had a goal and an assist, and host Carolina held on to beat Chicago.

Michael Bunting, Jesperi Kotkaniemi, Brent Burns and Jordan Martinook also scored for the Hurricanes, who have won three straight and eight of 10. Spencer Martin, claimed off waivers in January, had 14 saves to win his third straight start.

Golden Knights 4, Sharks 0: Mason Morelli had a goal and an assist in his NHL debut, Logan Thompson had his fourth career shutout and visiting Vegas completed a season sweep against San Jose.

Keegan Kolesar, Michael Amadio and William Karlsson also scored to help the Golden Knights snap a two-game skid. Alec Martinez had three assists.

Maple Leafs 4, Blues 2: Auston Matthews scored his NHL-leading 49th goal of the season and added an assist, and visit-

ing Toronto won its fourth game in a row and swept the two-game series with St. Louis.

Matthews, the top pick in the 2016 NHL Draft, had recorded hat tricks in his two previous games. His go-ahead goal came on a power play in the beginning of the third period. He has scored 14 goals and nine assists on the power play this season.

Oilers 6, Coyotes 3: Evander Kane scored two of visiting Edmonton’s four goals in the third period, Connor McDavid added two assists to extend his NHL lead and the Oilers stretched Arizona’s losing streak to 10 games.

Senators 4, Lightning 2: Mathieu Joseph had two goals, Anton Forsberg made 23 saves and visiting Ottawa beat Tampa Bay.

Red Wings 4, Kraken 3 (OT): Ben Chiarot scored 1:06 into overtime, Patrick Kane got his 800th career assist and visiting Detroit beat Seattle.

Ducks 4, Sabres 3: Troy Terry scored the go-ahead goal with 64 seconds left in the second period and had two assists, and visiting Anaheim swept the two-game season series with Buffalo.

Trout wants to stay with Angels; Rendon talks priorities

Associated Press

Mike Trout discussed his future and Anthony Rendon talked about his priorities as the Los Angeles Angels stars spoke Monday when position players started workouts at spring training camps across Arizona and Florida.

Trout, a three-time MVP and 11-time All-Star who has played in only one postseason series, said he has no interest in requesting a trade as the Angels retool following two-time MVP Shohei Ohtani’s move to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The 32-year-old Trout has spent his entire 13-year career with the Angels and signed a \$426.5 million, 12-year contract in 2019. The Angels went 73-89 last year for their eighth consecutive losing season. They haven’t

reached the playoffs since 2014, when they were swept by Kansas City in the Division Series.

“I think the easy way out is to ask for a trade,” Trout told reporters. “There might be a time, maybe. I really haven’t thought about this. When I signed that contract, I’m loyal. I want to win a championship here. The overall picture of winning a championship or getting to the playoffs here is the bigger satisfaction than bailing out or taking the easy way out. I think that’s been my mindset. Maybe down the road, if some things change.”

Trout says he continued to lobby owner Arte Moreno and upper management for free-agent additions that can boost the Angels following the departure of Ohtani, who signed a \$700 million, 10-year deal with the

Dodgers.

One big free-agent move the Angels did make in recent years was the signing of Rendon to a \$245 million, seven-year deal in December 2019 as he was coming off a World Series title with Washington. Rendon, a two-time Silver Slugger winner in seven seasons with the Nationals, hasn’t played more than 58 games in any of his four years with the Angels because of injuries.

Rendon spoke Monday about how his enthusiasm for the game has remained the same throughout his career, but he also noted that baseball has “never been a top priority for me.”

“This is a job,” Rendon told reporters. “I do this to make a living. My faith, my family come first before this job.”