

US pulls trigger on Abrams for Ukraine

By **DOUG G. WARE**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States will send 31 M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine to help troops in the embattled country beat back invading Russian forces, the White House announced Wednesday.

The move follows more than a week of international pressure on President Joe Biden's administration from allies and speculation about sending battle tanks to Ukraine.

"It's very much a continuation of our efforts to provide Ukraine with the capability that they need to continue to better defend themselves," a senior administration official told reporters.

U.S. officials did not specify which variant of the Abrams — the M1A1 or the M1A2 — would be sent to Ukraine, but they said the tanks will be procured through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative rather than the presidential drawdown authority. Providing weapons and equipment through funding from the initiative is a longer process, and the tanks will be procured from the defense industry and not taken from Defense Department stocks. The officials said

it would be several months before Ukraine receives the tanks. The officials also said training Ukrainian troops on the Abrams is part of the deal and it will take place at an undisclosed location somewhere outside Ukraine.

Along with the announcement of Abrams tanks, the U.S. will send Ukraine eight tactical recovery vehicles, support vehicles, and equipment and funding for "training, maintenance, and sustainment," the Pentagon said.

"It will enhance Ukraine's capacity to defend its territory and achieve strategic objectives," Biden said in his announcement at the White House. "The Abrams tanks are the most capable tanks in the world."

"This is about freedom — freedom for Ukraine, freedom everywhere," he added. "It's about the kind of world we want to live in, the world we want to leave to our children."

Biden and the Pentagon have been asked repeatedly in recent days about Ukraine's requests for tanks such as the M1 Abrams and the German-made Leopard 2. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his armed forces need the stronger,

more maneuverable tanks to fight off Russian forces across the country.

Earlier Wednesday, German officials agreed to send dozens of its Leopard tanks to Ukraine. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told parliament that it took some time to confirm that sending the tanks now is the right move. He also indicated it was important to send them "in close cooperation" with the United States sending the Abrams tanks.

It was reported last week that German officials said they wouldn't send the Leopards unless the U.S. agreed to send the Abrams. The Pentagon has said there's no "linkage" between the two contributions, but U.S. officials stressed Wednesday that a great deal of strategy concerning the evolving war is done in concert with allies.

"Keeping unity inside the alliance with our partners has also been really important," said a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "So, coupled with the near-term commitment the Germans have made on Leopards, we think that the contribution by us with the Abrams represents the long-term commitment."

Report warns of delays for Navy's future attack subs

By **ALISON BATH**
Stars and Stripes

The Navy doesn't have the details to determine if the new submarines the United States will depend upon for its nuclear deterrent will be ready on time, a government watchdog agency warned this week.

The lack of a statistical analysis of the construction schedule for the lead Columbia-class nuclear-powered submarine could leave the service vulnerable to production problems and delays, the Government Accountability Office found.

The Columbia program already is facing setbacks because of challenges in design, materials and quality, according to the GAO report, which was published Tuesday.

The GAO says that potential delays in the Columbia-class program also could end up affecting delivery of future attack subma-

rines, which the Navy relies upon for critical intelligence, special operations and missile attack missions.

The Navy wants to build 12 Columbia-class submarines at a cost of about \$132 billion. Ballistic missile submarines are considered to be the most survivable leg of the nation's nuclear triad, which includes intercontinental missiles and bombs deliverable by aircraft.

Construction on USS District of Columbia, the lead ship of the class, started in October 2020. The Navy aims to see it finished within about 6½ years, six months earlier than originally planned, according to the GAO report.

The service wants to buy one of the boats each year starting in 2026 and plans to purchase two Virginia-class attack submarines annually through 2033, the report states.

But that plan could be at risk. The subma-

rines in both classes are made by the same two shipbuilders, which have pulled workers from Virginia-class production to meet an aggressive Columbia-class construction timeline, the GAO report points out.

A delay in putting the first submarine into service and the resulting domino effect on construction of future boats could leave a critical national defense gap as the Navy seeks to replace older Ohio-class submarines starting in 2027.

"Without updated long-term planning, the Navy cannot be certain that the fiscal year 2024 budget request will be sufficient to meet the production schedule it has planned for these submarine classes," the report stated.

The first Columbia-class submarine must be ready for patrol before October 2030, according to the report.

Ukraine pulls troops back from Donbas town

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian forces have conducted an organized retreat from a town in the eastern region of the Donbas, an official said Wednesday, in what is a rare but modest battlefield triumph for the Kremlin after a series of setbacks in its invasion that began almost 11 months ago.

The Ukrainian army retreat-

ed from the salt-mining town of Soledar to “preserve the lives of the personnel,” Serhii Che-revatyi, a spokesperson for Ukraine’s forces in the east, told The Associated Press. The soldiers pulled back to previously prepared defensive positions, he said.

Moscow has portrayed the battle for Soledar, which lies near the city of Bakhmut, as

key to capturing the entire Donbas. The accomplishment takes the Russian forces closer to Bakhmut, but military analysts have said capturing Soledar is more symbolic than strategic.

Ukraine’s military, which has held out in Soledar against a monthslong onslaught of superior Russian forces, has said its fierce defense of the eastern

stronghold helped tie up Russian forces.

Russia claimed almost two weeks ago that it had taken Soledar, but Ukraine denied it.

Taking control of the town would potentially allow Russian forces to cut supply lines to Ukrainian forces in Bakhmut, though the strength of Ukraine’s new defensive positions was not known.

Army secretary sets sights on infrastructure

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii — Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth arrived in Hawaii on Sunday evening to get a firsthand look at the deteriorating condition of the service’s buildings, particularly barracks.

“I was able to see some of the barracks at Schofield,” she told reporters Tuesday afternoon at Schofield Barracks on Oahu, shortly before holding a town hall meeting in the base’s movie theater as part of her four-day visit.

“They took me into one of the basically what we call a Q4 barrack, which is our least hospitable barrack, I think it’s fair to say, and I wasn’t happy with what I saw, frankly,” she said. “Those are the kinds of things that I want us to get after.”

A Q4-rated barrack is one that fails to meet minimum standards but for which the cost of improvements exceeds 40% of the

cost of replacing it.

Flagging infrastructure is an Army-wide problem, but the issue is especially acute in Hawaii.

A Congressional Budget Office report issued in November found that the Army would need to spend \$34 billion to renovate and modernize aging buildings on its bases, with a quarter of that alone going to upgrade structures in Hawaii and on Fort Bragg, N.C.

Army structures in Hawaii — at Schofield Barracks, Fort Shafter and Tripler Army Medical Center — and at Fort Bragg, N.C., accounted for a “significantly larger” share of both deferred maintenance and upgrade cost estimates as compared to other locations, the report said.

Deferred maintenance is work that the Army has determined is needed to meet its mission goals, but has not been carried out.

Based on 2020 figures provided by the Army, the CBO estimated it would cost \$4 bil-

lion to complete deferred maintenance and renovate Army structures in Hawaii.

The price tag for such work at Fort Bragg was even higher at an estimated \$8.4 billion.

The consequence of delayed maintenance made headlines in August when hundreds of Fort Bragg soldiers were forced to move from barracks because of persistent mold fostered by dilapidated air conditioning systems.

Wormuth said Gen. Edward Daly, commander of U.S. Army Materiel Command, had recently brought a team to Hawaii to conduct assessments of the infrastructure.

Officials from the Army’s Installations, Energy and Environment Office have also sent a team to do the same, she said.

The results of those assessments have been presented to Gen. Charles Flynn, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, and in February, Flynn is slated to brief Wormuth and Gen. James McConville, Army chief of staff, she said.

Marine’s daughter injured after escalator fall in Okinawa

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The 7-year-old daughter of an Okinawa-based Marine remained hospitalized Wednesday after falling nearly three stories from a shopping mall escalator near Camp Kinser.

The accident happened

around 12:50 p.m. Saturday at San-A Urasoe West Coast Parco City, an Urasoe Fire Department spokesman told Stars and Stripes on Monday. The unidentified girl fell from just below the fourth floor to the first floor, he said.

The girl has a parent assigned to the 3rd Marine Logistics Group, which supports the

III Marine Expeditionary Force and is headquartered at Kinser, group spokesman Capt. Johnny Coronel told Stars and Stripes by email Wednesday. He declined to name the girl or her Marine parent.

The girl was leaning on the railing of an ascending escalator when she lost her balance and fell through an 8-inch gap

between the escalator and a wall, Japanese national broadcaster NHK reported Saturday.

The girl was unconscious and given CPR, according to the report. Coronel declined to provide the girl’s condition Wednesday but said she was “receiving proper medical treatment.”

New report delves into mass attacks across US

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As the nation reels from a week of high-profile shootings, a new report on mass attacks calls for communities to intervene early when they see warning signs of violence, encourages businesses to consider workplace violence prevention plans and highlights the connection between domestic violence, misogyny and mass attacks.

The report, released Wednesday by the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center, analyzed 173 mass attacks carried out over a five-year period from January 2016 to December 2020 in public or semi-public places such as businesses, schools or churches.

It was released as the United States experienced a particularly deadly start to the new year that has left 39 people dead in six mass killings, including one this week in Monterey Park, Calif., that left 11 people dead at a dance hall as they welcomed in the Lunar New Year.

"It's just happening way too often," said Lina Alathari, the center's director, during a news conference ahead of the report's release. Alathari said that while the center had not specifically studied the shootings that took place this week, there are themes seen

"over and over again" when analyzing mass attacks.

The report noted that nearly two-thirds of attackers exhibited behaviors or communications "that were so concerning, they should have been met with an immediate response." It said these concerns were often shared with law enforcement, employers, school staff or parents. But in one-fifth of the cases, the concerning behavior wasn't relayed to anyone "in a position to respond, demonstrating a continued need to promote and facilitate bystander reporting."

The report also called for greater attention toward domestic violence and misogyny, noting that nearly half of the attackers studied had a history of domestic violence, misogynistic behavior or both.

About half the attacks in the study involved a business location, and attackers often had a prior relationship with the business, as an employee, a customer or a former employer.

"Workplaces should establish behavioral threat assessment programs as a component of their workplace violence prevention plans, and businesses should also establish proactive relationships with area law enforcement so that they may work collaboratively to respond to incidents," the report read.

McCarthy says he'll block Schiff, Swalwell from intelligence panel

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Speaker Kevin McCarthy reiterated Tuesday that he will block Democratic Reps. Adam Schiff and Eric Swalwell of California from serving on the House committee that oversees national intelligence, saying the decision was not based on political payback but because "integrity matters, and they have failed in that place."

In the previous Congress, Democrats booted Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Paul Gosar of Arizona from their committee assignments for incendiary commentary that they said incited potential violence against colleagues.

Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, in a letter sent to McCarthy over the weekend, asked that Schiff and Swalwell be reappoint-

ed to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a prestigious panel with access to sensitive, classified information. There is no "precedent or justification" for rejecting them, Jeffries said.

Unlike most committees, appointments to the Intelligence panel are the prerogative of the speaker, with input from the minority leader.

McCarthy insisted that "this is not similar to what the Democrats did. Those members will have other committees, but the Intel Committee is different. The Intel Committee's responsibility is the national security to America.

"Hakeem Jeffries has 200 other people who can serve on that committee," he added.

He sent his formal response to Jeffries in a letter he posted Tuesday night on Twitter.

Egg price surge prompts probe on price-gouging

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — With egg prices more than doubling in the past year, calls are coming for an investigation into possible price gouging.

U.S. Sen. Jack Reed sent a letter Tuesday asking for the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether egg prices have been improperly manipulated by producers. A farmer-led advocacy group called Farm Action made a similar request last week arguing that there "appears to be a collusive scheme among industry leaders to turn inflationary conditions and an avian flu outbreak into an opportunity to extract egregious profits."

The spike in egg prices has been attributed to the millions of chickens that were slaughtered to limit the spread of bird flu and farmers having to compensate for inflation driving up their costs.

But even though roughly 43 million of the 58 million birds slaughtered over the past year to help control bird flu have been egg-laying chickens, the size of the total flock has only been down 5% to 6% at any one time from its normal size of about 320 million hens.

The national average retail price of a dozen eggs hit \$4.25 in December, up from \$1.79 a year earlier, according to the latest government data.

"At a time when food prices are high and many Americans are struggling to afford their groceries, we must examine the industry's role in perpetuating high prices and hold those responsible accountable for their actions," Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat, said in his letter to the FTC.

But trade groups have said egg prices are largely determined by commodity markets, and experts have said the bird flu outbreak — combined with the skyrocketing cost of fuel, feed, labor and packaging and continued strong demand for eggs — is the real culprit for the price increases.

"Current egg prices reflect many factors, most of which are outside the control of an egg farmer," said Emily Metz, president and CEO of the American Egg Board trade group.

Purdue University agricultural economist Jayson Lusk said "in my view, the basic economics of the situation well explain the price rise." He said small reductions in egg supply can result in large price increases because consumer demand for eggs doesn't waiver much.

Severe US weather threat moves east

Associated Press

PASADENA, Texas — A winter storm that brought severe weather to the Gulf Coast and wintry precipitation to the north was headed east Wednesday, a day after tornadoes caused widespread damage in the Houston area and injured three people in Louisiana.

On Tuesday, forecasters issued a rare tornado emergency for the Houston area as the storm system moved through the heavily populated area. Substantial damage was reported in cities east of Houston, but there were no reports of injuries.

In Louisiana, three people suffered “mild to moderate injuries” when their mobile homes were flipped or destroyed after a tornado hit the

Morel Lane area north of Baton Rouge, the Pointe Coupee Parish Sheriff’s Office said.

The storm on Wednesday was expected to bring damaging winds to parts of Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, forecasters said. Winter weather advisories stretched from southern Missouri to Maine, with areas of New England expected to see 8 to 12 inches of snow, the National Weather Service said.

In Texas, several businesses in Pasadena, east of Houston, sustained major damage, including the city’s animal shelter. Nearby, fences were blown over and shingles and sections of roofs were torn from homes. The American Red Cross said it was opening a shelter in Pasadena.

In Baytown, there were downed power lines and damage to homes and businesses, but no reports of serious injuries, said Baytown spokesperson Jason Calder.

Officials in nearby Deer Park said the tornado did severe damage to a nursing home. Residents had to be taken away, but no one was hurt.

“There is one aspect of me that’s amazed that no one got injured,” Deer Park Mayor Jerry Mouton Jr. said as emergency crews worked to restore power. “We will deal with the property and recover and rebuild.”

Many of the suburbs in the area have a heavy presence of petrochemical facilities.

Shell Chemicals’ location in Deer Park was flaring, or burn-

ing off natural gas, after it lost steam because of severe weather, according to Shell spokesperson Curtis Smith.

“We are taking steps to minimize any noise, light, or smoke associated with this activity, though it’s expected to continue until the units are restarted,” Smith said via email. “There is no threat to the community, nor are there any indications a nearby tornado touched down within the Chemicals facility.”

The storm system was also bringing snow and ice to much of the central U.S.

More than 160,000 homes and businesses were without power Wednesday morning in northern Arkansas and southern Missouri after heavy snow fell in the Ozarks a day earlier.

Election probe report to stay hidden from public

Associated Press

ATLANTA — A judge said Tuesday that a final report produced by a special grand jury tasked with investigating whether then-President Donald Trump and his allies broke the law as they tried to overturn his 2020 election defeat in Georgia will remain under wraps for now.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney said he was considering whether to release the report after hearing arguments from prosecutors, who urged it be kept secret until they decide whether to file any charges, and a coalition of media organizations, which pressed for its release.

The report is expected to include recommendations for Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis on possible criminal prosecution.

If McBurney decides to disseminate the report, as the spe-

cial grand jury urged, he must also determine whether any parts of it should be redacted.

A coalition of news organizations, including The Associated Press, argued in favor of releasing the report in full, saying public interest in the report is “extraordinary.”

Attorney Tom Clyde, representing the news media, said arguments for keeping the report secret would typically be a case involving minors or highly private information.

Willis argued Tuesday that disclosing the report now could violate the rights of potential defendants and could negatively affect the ability to prosecute those who may be charged with crimes.

“We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and we think for future defendants to be treated fairly, it is not appropriate at this time to have this report released,” Willis said.

Lawyer: Admins warned before boy shot teacher

Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — Concerned teachers and employees warned administrators at a Virginia elementary school three times that a 6-year-old boy had a gun and was threatening other students in the hours before he shot and wounded a teacher, “but the administration could not be bothered,” a lawyer for the teacher said Wednesday.

Diane Toscano, an attorney for Abigail Zwerner, said during a news conference that she has notified the Newport News School Board that the 25-year-old teacher at Richneck Elementary School plans to sue the school district over the Jan. 6 shooting, which left Zwerner with serious injuries.

“On that day, over the course of a few hours, three different times — three times — school administration was warned by concerned teachers and employees that the boy had a gun

on him at the school and was threatening people. But the administration could not be bothered,” Toscano said.

She said that at about 12:30 p.m., one teacher told administrators that she had taken it upon herself to search the boy’s bookbag but warned that she thought he had the gun in his pocket.

Toscano said that after 1 p.m., another boy told his teacher that the student had shown him the gun and threatened to shoot him, and that the teacher reported that to administrators.

Another employee later asked for permission to search the boy after hearing about the gun but “was told to wait the situation out because the school day was almost over,” Toscano said.

Zwerner had also told school administrators at around 11:15 a.m. that day that the boy had threatened to beat up another child.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Body taken with stolen van found 90 miles away

IL CHICAGO — A man's remains were recovered Monday in Chicago, two days after they were in a van stolen from a funeral home in Rockford, police said.

The remains were recovered Monday evening on Chicago's South Side, Rockford police said on Twitter.

Someone took the van Saturday from a funeral home in Rockford, police said. The man's body was inside the van at the time.

The van was found Sunday in Chicago but the man's remains were not inside, police said. Rockford is about 90 miles northwest of Chicago.

Authorities released a photo of a suspect Monday. Anyone with information was asked to contact Rockford police.

Jay-Z-funded lawsuits end as state improves prison

MS JACKSON — Attorneys hired by Jay-Z and other entertainers have ended two lawsuits they filed on behalf of Mississippi inmates in 2020 over what they said were squalid living conditions at the state's oldest prison — a facility that came under Justice Department scrutiny after outbursts of deadly violence by inmates.

Even before the violence at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman in 2019 and 2020, state health inspectors had found repeated problems with broken toilets and moldy showers. Inmates said some cell doors did not lock, and it was common to see rats and roaches.

The lawsuits were dismissed Jan. 13 after the inmates' attor-

neys and the state Department of Corrections said improvements have been made during the past three years, including installing air conditioning in most of the prison, renovating some bathrooms and updating the electrical, water and sewer systems.

Lifeguard wins Hawaii surfing 'Super Bowl'

HI HONOLULU — Luke Shepardson was declared the winner in one of the world's most prestigious and storied surfing contests held in Hawaii over the weekend for the first time in seven years.

Shepardson was declared the winner Sunday of The Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational, while John John Florence — the winner of the event in 2016, the last time it happened — was named runner-up. Shepardson, a Honolulu Ocean Safety lifeguard, scored 89.1 points out of a possible 90 to edge out defending champion Florence, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

Mark Healey took third place and Billy Kemper took fourth.

The competition also featured female surfers for the first time in its 39-year history, and six competed. Andrea Moller made history as the first woman to ride a competitive wave at "The Eddie," the newspaper reported.

Bill banning sale of kangaroo introduced

OR PORTLAND — A bill that would ban the sale of kangaroo parts has been introduced in the Oregon Legislature, taking aim at sports apparel manufacturers that use leather from the animals to make their products.

Soccer cleats are one of the only products made from kangaroo leather that are routinely sold in Oregon, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported. The measure would impact Nike, which is based in Oregon and the state's largest employer.

In a news release, the Center for a Humane Economy, Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation welcomed the move.

Nike didn't respond to OPB's request for comment, but the company told ESPN last month that it uses kangaroo leather in a "small portion" of its soccer shoes and that it "works with leather suppliers that source animal skins from processors that use sound animal husbandry and humane treatment, whether farmed, domesticated or wild managed."

School hopes lights can go off after costly glitch

MA WILBRAHAM — It's hoped that the lights at a western Massachusetts high school will be able to be turned off by the end of next month, about a year-and-a-half after a computer glitch kept the lights on night and day, officials said.

The unusual challenge faced by Minnechaug Regional High School in Wilbraham means there has been no way to turn the lights off short of unscrewing bulbs or flipping circuit breakers that leave entire sections of the building in the dark.

In a November 2021 story, the school's student newspaper, The Smoke Signal, reported that a computer server that controlled what was supposed to be a lighting system designed to save pow-

er, failed in August 2021 and could not be fixed.

The school reached out to the original installer and found the company had changed hands several times. Global supply chain issues kept delaying efforts to get the parts needed to fix the system.

Paul Mustone, the president of the Reflex Lighting Group, which now owns the company that originally installed the system in 2012, said they are ready to go next month. Mustone also said there will be a remote override switch to ensure this will not happen again.

Confederate's remains moved to hometown

VA CULPEPER — The remains of a Confederate general unearthed from beneath a monument at the center of a Virginia intersection have been reinterred at a cemetery in his hometown.

Last month, Richmond, which served as the Confederacy's capital for most of the Civil War, removed the statue of Confederate Gen. A.P. Hill and the general's remains buried beneath after a court battle. On Saturday, hundreds of people, including Confederate reenactors, gathered to pay their respects to the general at a ceremony in Fairview Cemetery in Culpeper, Hill's hometown, The Free Lance-Star reported.

The coffin draped in an old Virginia flag was brought into the cemetery on a mule-drawn wagon followed by a riderless horse. After a eulogy, song and prayers, there was a 21-gun salute and three rounds were fired from a cannon.

— From wire reports

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Rolen voted into Baseball Hall of Fame

Associated Press

Scott Rolen sat with his son in the parking lot outside Indiana's Bloomington South High School in 2018, waiting to coach grade schoolers in basketball and listening on the radio for results of his first appearance on baseball's Hall of Fame ballot.

"Dad, I think you're getting in," Rolen recalled 10-year-old Finn predicting.

Rolen received 10.2% of the vote, double the 5% minimum to remain on the ballot the following year but far short of the 75% needed for election.

"Did we win?" dad remembered his son asking. "I said, 'Oh, we won. Yes, we won.'"

Rolen came a long way in a few short years and was elected to the Hall on his sixth try Tuesday, the slick-fielding third baseman achieving baseball's highest honor with five votes to spare.

A seven-time All-Star and eight-time Gold Glove winner,

Rolen was picked on 297 of 389 ballots cast by the Baseball Writers' Association of America for 76.3%. That made his modest 10.2% debut the lowest first-ballot percentage of a player later elected; the previous mark had been 17% in 1970 by Duke Snider, who was voted in with 86.5% in 1980.

"There was actually never a point in my life that I thought I was going to be a Hall of Fame baseball player," Rolen said. "Never did I think I was going to get drafted. Never did I think I was going to play in the major leagues. Never going to be whatever."

Rolen will join Fred McGriff, elected last month by the contemporary baseball era committee, as the Class of 2023 inducted July 23 in Cooperstown.

First baseman Todd Helton was second with 281 votes (72.2%) and reliever Billy Wagner third with 265 (68.1%). Helton moved up from 52% and has five more appearances left

on the ballot, while Wagner rose from 51% and has two additional chances.

Rolen batted .281 with 316 homers and 1,287 RBIs for Philadelphia (1996-2002), St. Louis (2002-07), Toronto (2008-09) and Cincinnati (2009-12). He was a unanimous pick as the 1997 NL Rookie of the Year and hit .421 as the Cardinals won the 2006 World Series.

His Hall vote rose steadily to 17.2% in 2019, 35.3% in 2020, 52.9% in 2021 and 63.2% last year. He didn't need to follow Ryan Thibodaux's Hall of Fame Ballot Tracker this year.

"My phone would blow up about every day from my son and my buddies and everybody telling me where it was," Rolen said.

He waited Tuesday at home in Bloomington — he was runner-up for Indiana's Mr. Basketball in 1993 — with his parents, wife, son, daughter, brother and his brother's family.

"When the phone call came

and I saw Baseball Hall of Fame on my phone," Rolen said, "you kind of look around, like, that actually did just happen."

They all cried, and a few minutes later Finn asked him to go out and toss a baseball.

"It's 30 degrees here. It's going to snow about 12 inches tomorrow, and my son and I were in the driveway playing catch," Rolen said.

Then they walked a short distance to his brother's house to celebrate.

"I promised everybody great steaks no matter what, and I had to turn the tongs over," Rolen said. "I was normally going to grill for everybody but now my brother-in-law's grilling."

Rolen played shortstop, second base, third, right field, center, left and pitcher at Jasper High School before settling at third in his sophomore or junior year. He will be the 18th third baseman in the Hall, the fewest of any position.

Shiffrin adds to record total with 84th victory

Associated Press

SAN VIGILIO DI MAREBBE, Italy — Mikaela Shiffrin didn't wait long to add to her record total of World Cup wins.

A day after securing record victory No. 83, Shiffrin added her 84th win on Wednesday in another giant slalom on the same course.

And like how she did it a day earlier, Shiffrin led from start to finish, dominating the first run down the steep Erta course and then adding to her advantage in the second run.

Shiffrin finished a massive 0.82 seconds ahead of two-time Olympic silver medalist Ragnhild Mowinckel and 1.19 ahead of Olympic champion Sara Hector.

When Shiffrin reached the finish after her second run, she collapsed to the snow in appar-

ent exhaustion — with her skis still attached to her boots — before Mowinckel and Hector came over to congratulate her and help her up.

"Oh my gosh," Shiffrin said. "I was pushing so hard and I just hoped I ended up on the right side of all the gates. Now I'm a bit dead mentally — just so tired. But when you ski like that it keeps your energy going so just an incredible feeling."

While Tuesday's win moved Shiffrin ahead of the previous women's mark of 82 victories held by former American teammate Lindsey Vonn, Wednesday's victory moved her within two of the overall record — between men and women — of 86 wins held by Ingemar Stenmark.

Vonn retired four years ago when injuries cut her career

short, while Stenmark raced in the 1970s and 80s.

If Shiffrin wins two slaloms in Spindleruv Mlyn, Czech Republic, this weekend, she could match Stenmark on Sunday.

"Technically, it is possible," Shiffrin said with a laugh. "We'll see if I can put the energy on my slalom skis for two more races."

Spindleruv was where Shiffrin made her World Cup debut as a 15-year-old prodigy nearly 12 years ago.

"It's a special place for me," she said. "So I'm really looking forward to going."

Former World Cup giant slalom champion Marta Bassino was on track for the podium before she lost control a few gates from the finish and plowed through a gate, which hit her hard in the shins.

It was Shiffrin's 10th win of the season and her 19th career victory in giant slalom, moving her within one of Vreni Schneider's record of 20 in the discipline.

Shiffrin said she had a late night after her record-breaking day.

"But it was a really nice evening," she said. "It was so nice to see messages from people and so much support and so much excitement about the race. I was definitely looking a lot at all of that and then trying to go to bed and have a good night's sleep. And I was awake at midnight. I was awake at 3. Then I was awake at 5. I was hungry all night. I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm a mess.'"

Still, Shiffrin managed to pull herself together in order to bring out her best skiing again.

James scores 46 in Lakers' loss to Clippers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James hit a career-high nine three-pointers while scoring 46 points, but the Los Angeles Clippers hit 19 three-pointers of their own on the way to a comfortable 133-115 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

James scored at least 40 points against the Clippers for the first time in his 20-year career, giving him a 40-point game against all 30 teams in the NBA. James hit his record ninth three-pointer with 6:45 to play, setting a career high from distance in his 1,404th game.

"I was able to make a few shots tonight and try to help us stay in the game," James said. "But the Clippers, they are really good. Exceptionally good when they're shooting the three-ball, and tonight they did that."

Indeed, James' brilliance wasn't nearly enough: The Lakers never caught up after falling behind by 23 points, and James spent the final minutes on the bench after the Clippers pulled away for their 10th consecutive victory over their are-

na co-tenants in downtown Los Angeles since former Lakers guard Tyrone Lue became the Clippers' coach.

Paul George had 27 points and nine rebounds, and Kawhi Leonard added 25 points in the Clippers' third straight win overall. The Clippers never trailed largely because they hit a season-high 15 three-pointers in the first half while scoring a season-high 77 points in the first half.

Heat 98, Celtics 95: Bam Adebayo had 30 points and 15 rebounds, including the jump shot that put host Miami ahead to stay with 20.4 seconds remaining, and the Heat rallied from 14 down to beat Boston.

Haywood Highsmith had 15 points and 10 rebounds, Max Strus scored 13 points and Victor Oladipo had 12 points for the Heat.

A 15-0 run in the fourth quarter lifted the Heat, who split the regular-season series with the Celtics 2-2.

Wizards 127, Mavericks 126: Kyle Kuzma scored 30 points and made one of two free throws to break a tie with 4.2 seconds remaining, lifting vis-

iting Washington past Dallas.

Luka Doncic had 41 points and 15 rebounds for the Mavericks. Doncic still had on the jersey he ripped when he missed a free throw that would have put Dallas in front with 12.5 seconds to go when he bumped Kuzma on a drive along the sideline. The Mavericks challenged, but the call was confirmed. Kuzma missed the first free throw, but swished the second.

Nuggets 99, Pelicans 98: Nikola Jokic capped a 25-point, 11-rebound, 10-assist performance in his return from hamstring tightness with a go-ahead floater in the paint with 16.9 seconds left, helping visiting Denver beat undermanned New Orleans.

Jamal Murray scored 25 points for the Nuggets, who led for nearly the entire game and were ahead by as many as 19 points before New Orleans stormed back in the fourth quarter to take its only lead of the second half at 98-97 with 36.9 seconds left. After Jokic put Denver back in front, the Pelicans had three shots to win it in the final seconds before

losing their fifth straight.

Suns 128, Hornets 97: Cam Johnson scored 24 points, Dario Saric added 19 and host Phoenix beat Charlotte for its fourth straight victory.

The Suns built a 30-point lead midway through the second quarter, though Charlotte cut it to 58-50 early in the third. Phoenix rebuilt its lead to 98-77 by the fourth before cruising to the comfortable victory.

Knicks 105, Cavaliers 103: Julius Randle had 36 points and 13 rebounds, and his eighth three-pointer snapped a tie with 2:07 left as host New York beat Cleveland.

RJ Barrett added 16 points and Jalen Brunson had 14 for the Knicks, who snapped a four-game losing streak. Jarrett Allen had 24 points and 12 rebounds for Cleveland, while Darius Garland added 22 points and six assists.

Pacers 116, Bulls 110: Myles Turner and Bennedict Mathurin each scored 26 points and Mathurin's short, go-ahead basket with 29.1 seconds left helped host Indiana close out a rally from 21 points down to beat Chicago.

Iowa State holds on for upset of No. 5 Kansas State

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Jaren Holmes matched his season high with 23 points as No. 12 Iowa State held on to beat No. 5 Kansas State 80-76 on Tuesday night.

The Cyclones (15-4, 6-2 Big 12) moved into a three-way tie atop the conference standings with the Wildcats and Texas.

Iowa State shot 57.1% — including 62.5% in the second half — and scored 25 points off turnovers.

"It felt like as much as any game this year ... it was our guys being so connected," Cyclones coach T.J. Otzelberger said. "And just making plays for one another."

Gabe Kalscheur added 19 points for Iowa State. Osun Osunniyi finished with 16.

Markquis Nowell led Kansas State (17-3, 6-2) with 23 points.

No. 10 Texas 89, Oklahoma State 75: Marcus Carr scored 21 points and the host Longhorns completed a regular-season sweep of the Cowboys.

Timmy Allen scored 17 points and Brock Cunningham scored 15 for Texas (17-3, 6-2 Big 12), which improved to 10-2 under interim head coach Rodney Terry. That surge has the Longhorns in the thick of the Big 12 title chase.

No. 11 TCU 79, Oklahoma 52: Mike Miles Jr. scored 23 points and the host Horned Frogs led throughout against the Sooners after scoring the game's first 11 points.

Damion Baugh and Micah Peavy added 13 points apiece for TCU (16-4, 5-3 Big 12). Emanuel Miller grabbed 10 rebounds while Eddie Lampkin Jr., the team's leading rebounder, sat on the bench with a

protective boot on his left foot because of a high ankle sprain sustained in the win over the reigning national champion Jayhawks three days earlier.

No. 20 Miami 86, Florida State 63: Nijel Pack and Isaiah Wong scored 18 points apiece as the visiting Hurricanes cruised past the Seminoles.

Norchad Omier had 12 points and 11 rebounds for Miami (16-4, 7-3 Atlantic Coast Conference), which halted a nine-game slide to Florida State (7-14, 5-5).

No. 24 Clemson 72, Georgia Tech 51: PJ Hall scored 17 points and Brevin Galloway added 14 as the host Tigers beat the Yellow Jackets, continuing their surprising start in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Clemson (17-4 overall) is 9-1 and in first place midway through the ACC season.

Letang lifts Penguins over Panthers in OT

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Amid a nightmarish season off the ice, Kris Letang has been searching for joy. A sense of normalcy.

He found a little of both Tuesday night.

The veteran Pittsburgh defenseman scored twice in his return from a lower-body injury, the second with 54 seconds left in overtime to give the Penguins a 7-6 victory over Florida.

“I was just happy to be out there,” Letang said. “Be in the atmosphere of the team.”

Letang’s 17th season with Pittsburgh has been pockmarked by health issues and a profound sense of loss. He missed two weeks after suffering the second stroke of his career shortly after Thanksgiving. He then tweaked something in a loss to Detroit on Dec. 28.

His father died unexpectedly a few days later, and Letang spent an extended amount of time with his family in his native Montreal, with his teammates making an unexpected stop to join Letang for his father’s wake at the end of a West Coast swing earlier this month.

The Penguins activated him

off injured reserve on Tuesday afternoon.

Letang responded with four points in a rollicking game that featured 13 goals, the last being Letang’s one-timer from just above the left circle on the power play that gave Pittsburgh just its fourth win in 12 overtime games this season.

“It was kind of surreal, you know?” Letang said. “I didn’t know what to think or how it was going to go. These guys supported me for the last month — it’s just great to be back.”

Bruins 4, Canadiens 2: Patrice Bergeron broke a tie with 2:55 left and NHL-leading Boston beat host Montreal for its sixth straight victory.

Taylor Hall and David Krejci also scored for Boston in the first game of the season between the rivals. David Pastrnak had an empty-netter in the final minute and added three assists.

Devils 3, Golden Knights 2 (OT): Dougie Hamilton scored late to tie the game and netted a power-play goal with 1:06 left in overtime to lead host New Jersey over Vegas.

Ondrej Palat also scored and

Vitek Vanecek made 28 saves as the Devils improved to 7-0-1 in their last eight games. Vanecek has won a career-best eight games in a row, becoming New Jersey’s first goalie to do that since Martin Brodeur in 2007-08.

Predators 2, Jets 1: Tanner Jeannot scored early in the third period and Juuse Saros made 32 saves and host Nashville earned its fourth win in five games.

Cody Glass had the Predators’ other goal.

Kings 4, Flyers 3 (OT): Kevin Fiala scored 1:09 into overtime to clinch the win for visiting Los Angeles.

Anze Kopitar scored two goals and Samuel Fagemo added one for the Kings.

Lightning 4, Wild 2: Steven Stamkos scored the tiebreaking goal with 5:38 remaining and Tampa Bay won its 10th consecutive home game.

Nikita Kucherov scored into an empty net with 16.4 seconds left, handing Minnesota its third straight loss.

Avalanche 3, Capitals 2: Artturi Lehkonen, Andrew Cogliano and Alex Newhook scored

against former teammate Darcy Kuemper and host Colorado gave coach Jared Bednar his franchise-record 266th victory.

Logan O’Connor added two assists, Nathan MacKinnon had an assist for his 700th point and Alexandar Georgiev made 37 saves in the Avs’ season-best sixth straight victory. They moved into third place in the Central Division, one point ahead of Minnesota.

Sabres 5, Blues 3: Tage Thompson and Jeff Skinner each had a goal and two assists as visiting Buffalo snapped a nine-game losing streak in St. Louis dating to Jan. 21, 2012.

Red Wings 3, Sharks 2 (OT): Andrew Copp scored 25 seconds into overtime to give host Detroit the win over San Jose.

Canucks 5, Blackhawks 2: Dakota Joshua and Sheldon Dries scored 34 seconds apart in the third period, and host Vancouver gave Rick Tocchet a victory in his first game as coach.

Ducks 5, Coyotes 2: Cam Fowler had two goals and an assist, Anthony Stolarz stopped 37 shots and visiting Anaheim’s strong start held off Arizona.

Paul tops Shelton in Australian Open, faces Djokovic next

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Tommy Paul received a lot less attention than his younger, less-experienced, opponent, Ben Shelton, heading into their all-American quarterfinal at the Australian Open.

Perhaps that was a product of the fascination with the out-of-nowhere Shelton: Just 20, and less than a year after winning an NCAA title for the University of Florida, he was traveling outside of the United States for the first time and participating in his second Grand Slam tournament.

So the loud shouts heard most often emanating from the Rod Laver Arena stands on Wednesday, under the sun that carried the temperature to 87 degrees Fahrenheit, were for one of the pair: “Let’s go, Benny! Let’s go!” or “Benny, Benny, Benny! Oi, Oi, Oi!” or “Go, Gators!”

“He had a pretty good trip,” Paul noted.

Paul’s story is a pretty good one, too, and it is the one that will keep going at Melbourne Park: The 25-year-old was a star in the juniors and is now making good on that promise in the pros, using a 7-6 (6), 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 victory over Shelton to reach his first Grand Slam semifinal in his 14th appearance at a major.

“Every junior to pro has a different path. ... Mine has been, like, the slowest,” the 35th-ranked Paul said, mentioning a group of Americans he grew up with: Taylor Fritz, Frances Tiafoe, Reilly Opelka. “I like to think the last four years of my career has just been like steady steps moving up. I mean, that’s what it’s felt like. I feel like hopefully 2023 is the year where I really make a big jump.”

As a bonus, Paul’s mother was in the crowd for the biggest victory of his career. He said

she booked a flight after he won his fourth-round match, then went straight from work to the airport to make the long journey from the U.S.

“She’s done a lot for me, from when I was really young until now. She’s sacrificed a ton to get me here,” Paul said. “She deserves to be here and deserves to see me win big matches.”

Paul’s next opponent will be 21-time Grand Slam singles champion Novak Djokovic, who overwhelmed No. 5 seed Andrey Rublev 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. After dealing with a worrisome left hamstring in his first two matches, Djokovic has been on quite a roll: He’s won his past 11 sets and dropped a total of 27 games in that span as he chases a 10th championship in Melbourne — “something that sends a message,” he said, “to all my opponents remaining in the draw.”