

## Rocket attack injures 2 at Iraq base

By CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

Two members of the anti-Islamic State coalition suffered minor injuries following a rocket attack on a base housing U.S. troops in western Iraq, while allied troops thwarted a drone attack on a coalition outpost in Syria on Wednesday, military officials said.

About 14 rockets fell on al Asad Air Base at about 12:30 p.m., said U.S. Army Col. Wayne Marotto, a coalition spokesman, who confirmed the injuries and that all personnel had been accounted for. Military officials did not say whether the injured were U.S. service members.

The projectiles landed on the base and its perimeter, and damage was being assessed, Marotto said in a Twitter post.

In Syria, drones were used to attack the al-Omar oil field in Syria's eastern province

of Deir el-Zour on Wednesday morning, the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces said in a statement. The attack was foiled and caused no damage, The Associated Press reported. Several hundred U.S. troops are stationed in northeastern Syria to help fight ISIS.

U.S. military officials in Iraq said they had no further information on the SDF statement Wednesday.

The rocket attack was the fourth on a U.S. compound in Iraq this week.

Late Tuesday, a drone impacted near Irbil International Airport, outside the capital of Iraq's northern Kurdish region. U.S. troops are housed at a facility on the airport grounds.

Just after midnight on Tuesday, a counter-rocket system at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad shot down an armed drone over the diplomatic compound, U.S. officials

said. Three rockets also struck al Asad on Monday. None of the attacks prior to Wednesday caused injuries, Marotto said.

The United States has blamed the repeated rocket attacks over the past several years on Iran-backed militias seeking to oust American forces from the country, where some 2,500 troops remain deployed to assist the government in battling the Islamic State group.

The militia groups began using drones earlier this year with an April attack on the Irbil airport and have conducted at least six so far, with several other attempts thwarted.

"Coalition forces are co-located with our (Iraqi Security Forces) and (Kurdish) Peshmerga partners on ISF bases," Marotto said. "Each attack against the Coalition endangers the lives of ISF and Peshmerga forces."

## DOD cites security reasons for quick Bagram exit

By SARAH CAMMARATA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Senior Afghan officials were told U.S. forces were leaving Bagram Airfield about 48 hours ahead of their departure, but the precise hour was left secret for security reasons, the Pentagon's chief spokesman said Tuesday.

U.S. officials announced Friday that they had completely left Bagram, its biggest airfield in the country and a focal point for military operations in Afghanistan for nearly two decades. Since that time, the Defense Department has faced criticism over reports the Afghanistan base was vacated at night without notice.

"It's not a statement about whether we trust or don't trust our Afghan partners. It's a statement of the fact that we have to consider that this drawdown could be contested by the Taliban, and we have to take that in consideration. It would have been irresponsible [to give the exact time]," Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon.

Bagram's new Afghan commander, Gen. Mir Asadullah Kohistani, told reporters Monday that he found out nearly two hours after the departure that U.S. troops had left the base. Bagram is the seventh and final base to be turned over to the Afghan National Security and Defense Force.

Kirby said top Afghan military and civilian government leadership were notified about the turnover, in the same way that other bases were left to Afghan control as the U.S. withdrawal from the country nears completion. Kirby could not say Tuesday whether Kohistani was notified.

"This wasn't done in a vacuum. I can't speak for the level of information that went down the Afghan chain of command, but I can tell you that Afghan leaders, civilian and military, were appropriately coordinated with and briefed about the turnover of Bagram," he said.

The final discussions occurred about 48 hours prior to the departure, and the briefings included a walkthrough of facilities on the base with senior Afghan officials, Kirby

by said.

Some news reports said the United States shut off electricity at Bagram, which allowed looters to enter the base. Some Afghan soldiers have also offered scathing reviews of how the U.S. left the base.

Kirby said he could not provide details on whether electricity was cut off at the base.

Concerns over how Bagram was turned over come as dozens of districts, including a key district in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province, have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when U.S. and NATO troops officially began to leave the country.

U.S. Central Command said Tuesday that more than 90% of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is complete.

"We'll be done by the end of August, but I think it should be logical that as you get smaller, you want to marshal those resources much more carefully as you press forward," he said.

## DOD cancels JEDI cloud contract with Microsoft

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon said it canceled a disputed cloud-computing contract with Microsoft that could eventually have been worth \$10 billion. It will instead pursue a deal with both Microsoft and Amazon and possibly other cloud service providers.

“With the shifting technology environment, it has become clear that the JEDI Cloud contract, which has long been delayed, no longer meets the requirements to fill the DoD’s capability gaps,” the Pentagon said in a statement Tuesday.

The statement did not directly mention that the Pentagon faced extended legal challenges by Amazon to the original \$1 million contract awarded to Microsoft. Amazon argued that the Microsoft award was tainted by politics, particularly then-President Donald Trump’s antagonism toward Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who stepped down Monday as the company’s chief executive officer. Bezos owns The Washington Post, a newspaper often criticized by Trump.

The Pentagon’s chief information officer, John Sherman, told reporters Tuesday that during the lengthy legal fight with Amazon, “the landscape has evolved” with new possibilities for large-scale cloud computing services. Thus it was decided, he said, to start over and seek multiple vendors.

Sherman said JEDI will be replaced by a new program called

Joint Warfighter Cloud Capability, and that both Amazon and Microsoft “likely” will be awarded parts of the business, although neither is guaranteed. Sherman said the three other large cloud service providers — Google, IBM and Oracle — might qualify, too.

Microsoft said in response to the Pentagon announcement, “We understand the DoD’s rationale, and we support them and every military member who needs the mission-critical 21st century technology JEDI would have provided. The DoD faced a difficult choice: Continue with what could be a years-long litigation battle or find another path forward.”

The JEDI project began with the \$1 million contract award for Microsoft, meant as an initial step in a 10-year deal that could have reached \$10 billion in value. The project that will replace it is a five-year program; Sherman said no exact contract value has been set but that it will be “in the billions.” Sherman said the government will negotiate the amount Microsoft will be paid for having its 2019 deal terminated.

Amazon Web Services had long been considered a leading candidate to run the Pentagon’s Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure project, known as JEDI. The project was meant to store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the U.S. military to improve communications with soldiers on the battlefield and use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

## Pentagon extends deployment along US-Mexico border

**BY ROSE L. THAYER**

*Stars and Stripes*

As many as 3,000 troops will be deployed along the U.S. border with Mexico until Sept. 30, 2022, stretching the military’s mission there into a fourth year, the chief Pentagon spokesman said Tuesday.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin approved a request to extend the mission that supports the Department of Homeland Security along the southwest border, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby told reporters. Austin signed the request June 23, according to a defense official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Austin authorized up to 3,000 troops to serve on the mission, which is down from the 4,000 approved to serve at the southwest border for fiscal 2021, Kirby said. Deployments will continue to be staffed primarily by National Guard troops working in a federal status under the command and control of U.S. Northern Command, the defense official said.

About 3,800 troops are deployed now to the southwest border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents. The troops are a

mix of active-duty service members and National Guard troops from nearly two dozen states. Their work includes helping to identify, monitor and analyze patterns of unauthorized entry and alert Border Patrol agents.

The Defense Department has spent more than \$840 million on the mission so far, according to a February report from the Government Accountability Office.

Former President Donald Trump first ordered National Guard troops to the southern border in April 2018 and added active-duty personnel to the mission about six months later.

When President Joe Biden took office in January, he ended construction of a physical border wall initiated by Trump but he has kept the troops in place.

Following the extension of the mission, governors in Ohio and North Dakota announced approval to send Guard troops on the federal deployment.

These federal missions are separate from state-level missions ongoing in Arizona and Texas, where Republican governors disagree with the way that the Biden administration is handling border security.

## Observers watch over sea mammals during shock tests

*Daily Press (Newport News, Va.)*

Detonating explosives next to the USS Gerald R. Ford during this summer’s shock trials is meant to test the aircraft carrier — but a team on the ship makes sure the blasts don’t do the same for marine mammals.

Their watch, in fact, meant the first of three big blasts next to the Ford got off to a late start.

“Once we began our countdown to the explosive event, one of our PSOs (protected species observ-

ers) spotted what was suspected to be a marine mammal,” Lt. Cmdr. Desiree Frame said.

“While we can’t control the behavior of marine animals, we were able to change our actions,” she said. “We stopped the countdown for the evolution and held on station until the 3 ½-nautical mile mitigation zone was clear.”

Rough seas the two previous days had kept the observers from making the kind of careful inspection needed to spot marine life.

That, in turn, meant no blast test.

“We’re looking for splashes or any signs of movement,” said Jennifer Klaib, lead PSO on the Ford for the shock trials.

The nine observers’ job is to scan the seas for 3 ½ miles in every direction from the Ford, beginning hours before the blast.

A spotter plane flies several miles ahead as the Ford moves toward the blast site, and once the carrier is in that area, circles over that 3 ½-mile exclusion zone.

The flow chart detailing what to do if a PSO sees a sign of a whale or dolphin was one part of the work of preparing for the shock trials, the first in 35 years to test how well the Navy’s aircraft carriers can weather a close-by explosion.

During the weeks before the shock trial start last month, the Ford’s sailors wired up sensors in every corner of the carrier. They drilled on scenarios of potential casualties to the crew and damage to the ship.

# Death toll rises at collapsed Fla. condo

Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. — The search for victims of the collapse of a Miami-area high-rise condominium reached its 14th day on Wednesday, as workers uncovered 10 more bodies from the rubble and officials sounded more and more grim about the prospects of finding anyone alive.

Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah broke the discovery of the additional bodies and human remains to family members in a private briefing Wednesday morning. The death toll now stands at 46.

The latest retrieval reflects what rescue officials have said would be a ramped-up pace of work throughout the debris field after the remaining portion of the condo building was demolished Sunday night.

Crews “did some significant removal of the pile,” Jadallah said. “They were able to get down to various areas to inspect.”

Jadallah also reported the somber news that so far no new “voids” have been discovered in the areas that became accessible for the first time after the demolition. Rescuers had hoped to find new pockets where there might potentially be survivors.

Still, Jadallah told families the work continues to be a search and rescue operation and has not yet transitioned to a recovery mode.

“We’re not there yet,” he said.

No one has been rescued from the site since the first hours after the building collapsed on June 24 when many of its residents were asleep.

Workers on Tuesday dug through pulverized concrete where the Champlain Towers South building in Surfside once stood, filling buckets that were passed down a line to be emptied and then returned.

The up-close look at the search, in a

video released Tuesday by the Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department, came as eight more deaths were announced — until Wednesday, the most for a single day since the search began. It also came as rain and wind from Tropical Storm Elsa disrupted the effort.

“Unfortunately, we are not seeing anything positive,” county fire chief Alan Cominsky said Tuesday night, referring to workers not finding any open spaces within the mounds of rubble where additional survivors might be found.

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said Tuesday that the families of the missing were preparing for news of “tragic loss.” She said President Joe Biden, who visited the area last week, called on Tuesday to offer his continued support.

“I think everybody will be ready when it’s time to move to the next phase,” she said.

## Fla. spared from major damage as Elsa weakens

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — A weakened Tropical Storm Elsa dumped rain across Florida’s Gulf Coast early Wednesday but appears to have spared the state significant damage and widespread power outages.

Elsa wobbled through the Gulf of Mexico, briefly reaching hurricane strength, but was expected to move ashore as a tropical storm. Tornado warnings were issued in several northern Florida counties, including the Gainesville area, on Wednesday morning.

Heavy rain and gusty winds are expected across northern Florida once the storm makes an expected turn to the northeast. Some flooding is also expected in the region, where the ground is already saturated from heavy rain late last week.

Gov. Ron DeSantis said at a morning news conference that no major structural damage or deaths from the storm had been reported.

“Clearly, this could have been worse,” the Republican governor said, adding that many storm-related deaths come after the system passes. “Be very careful when you’re working to clear debris,” he said.

Tropical storm warnings were canceled for Cape Coral and Fort Myers. Further north, the Tampa Bay metropolitan area — while wet and windy — appears to have emerged mostly unscathed.

Elsa’s maximum sustained winds stood at 65 mph, the Miami-based U.S. National Hurricane Center said Wednesday morning. Its core was about 35 miles west of Cedar Key. It was moving north at 14 mph.

Forecasters said Elsa would slice across inland north Florida as a tropical storm with strong rains and wind, then move to Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia before heading out in the Atlantic Ocean by Friday.

## Biden: Damage minimal in ransomware attack

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said Tuesday that damage to U.S. businesses in the biggest ransomware attack on record appears minimal, though information remained incomplete. The company whose software was exploited said fewer than 1,500 businesses worldwide appeared compromised but cybersecurity experts caution that the incident isn’t over.

Also Tuesday, a security researcher who chatted online with representatives of the Russia-linked REvil gang behind the attack said they claimed to have stolen data from hundreds of companies, but offered no evidence.

Answering a reporter’s question at a vaccine-related White House event, Biden said his national security team had updated him Tuesday morning on the attack, which exploited a powerful remote-management tool run by Miami-based software

company Kaseya in what is known as a supply-chain attack.

“It appears to have caused minimal damage to U.S. businesses but we’re still gathering information,” Biden said. “And I’m going to have more to say about this in the next several days.” An official at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, speaking on condition they not be further identified, said no federal agencies or critical infrastructure appear to have been impacted.

On Wednesday, Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were leading an interagency meeting to discuss the administration’s efforts to counter ransomware.

Friday’s attack hobbled businesses in at least 17 countries. It shuttered most of the 800 supermarkets in the Swedish Coop chain over the weekend because cash registers stopped working, and reportedly knocked more than 100 New Zealand kindergartens offline.



# Haitian president assassinated in his home

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Gunmen assassinated Haitian President Jovenel Moïse and wounded his wife in their home early Wednesday, inflicting more chaos on the Caribbean country that was already enduring gang violence, soaring inflation and protests by opposition supporters who accused the leader of increasing authoritarianism.

Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph, who confirmed the killing, said the police and military were in control of security in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas where a history of dictatorship and political upheaval have long stymied the

consolidation of democratic rule.

Despite Joseph's assurances that order would prevail, there was confusion about who should take control and widespread anxiety among Haitians. Authorities declared a "state of siege" in the country and closed the international airport.

The normally bustling streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, were empty Wednesday. Sporadic gunshots were heard in the distance, public transportation was scarce, and some people searched for businesses that were open to food and water. Businesses had been ransacked in one area earlier.

Bocchit Edmond, the Haitian

ambassador to the United States, said the attack on the 53-year-old Moïse was carried out by "well-trained professional commandos" and "foreign mercenaries" who were masquerading as agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Moïse's wife, Martine, was in stable but critical condition and efforts were under way to move her to Miami for treatment, Edmond said in Washington.

Haiti has asked the U.S. government for assistance with the investigation, he said, adding that the assassins could have escaped over the land border to the Dominican Republic or by sea.

"We know for sure that if they are not currently in Haiti," he

said, refusing to comment on who they were.

Haiti appeared to be heading for fresh volatility ahead of general elections later this year. Moïse had been ruling by decree for more than a year after failing to hold elections, and the opposition demanded he step down in recent months, saying he was leading it toward yet another grim period of authoritarianism.

Joseph said the gunmen spoke Spanish or English, but he gave no details on the attack.

Former President Michel Martelly, whom Moïse succeeded, called the assassination "a hard blow for our country and for Haitian democracy, which is struggling to find its way."

## NY can try to sue gun makers under new law

Associated Press

ALBANY — New York can try to sue gun manufacturers over harm caused by their products under legislation that Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed Tuesday.

The new law comes at a time when New York City in particular is facing a rise in shootings. Overall, violence is well short of the historic highs of the 1990s, or even in the New York of the early 2000s.

But the Democratic-led Legislature has pushed to pass several gun control measures this year, including legislation that would prohibit the sale, purchase or transfer of firearms to anyone with an outstanding warrant for a felony or serious offense.

The federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act of 2005 gave gun manufacturers immunity from lawsuits related to the criminal misuse of their products. Supporters of New York's bill argue that gun manufacturers can still be held liable if they violate other laws

concerning the sale or marketing of firearms.

"Plain and simple, this was federal overreach to protect the gun industry in every way possible," Attorney General Letitia James said. "But, today, New York state took an important step to right that wrong and protect its citizens from gun violence."

It's unclear, however, whether that argument will survive being challenged in court.

James said she is "ready to defend" the law, which, for example, would allow her or a locality to sue gun manufacturers for harming the public by neglecting to take steps to prevent firearms from being sold unlawfully in New York.

Cuomo also said Tuesday that he would declare gun violence in his state to be a "disaster emergency" and start tracking hotspots of shootings. Cuomo said declaring the emergency will make it easier to spend money on efforts to address and reduce gun violence.

## 100 people shot over violent holiday weekend in Chicago

Associated Press

CHICAGO — One hundred people — including two police officers — were shot in Chicago over the long Fourth of July weekend, including 18 homicides, the city's police department said Tuesday.

Among those injured were at least a dozen children with at least three of the minors in critical condition.

The bloodshed was comparable to the long Fourth of July weekend last year, when 17 people were fatally shot and 70 more were wounded. A 7-year-old girl and 14-year-old boy were among the dead that weekend.

Police Superintendent David Brown put much of the blame for the gun violence on a court system that allows people charged with violent crimes, including murder, to be released from custody on electronic monitoring.

"The courts releasing people charged with murder back into the communities ... is creating an unsafe environment for all of us," Brown said at a news conference.

Cook County Chief Judge Tim-

othy Evans took issue with Brown's criticism of electronic monitoring, saying in a statement Tuesday that it is "based on the constitutional principle should not be imprisonment before they are tried, unless they pose a significant danger to the community."

Evans did not mention Brown by name or respond directly to his comments about a 7-year-old girl who was fatally shot in April, allegedly by a man who was on electronic monitoring in another case. But he made it clear that such comments were unfair.

"Looking at individual tragic cases in isolation may contribute to the speculation that releasing individuals before trial rather than incarcerating them — whether by placing them on Electronic Monitoring or other forms of supervision — means an increase in crime," he said. "But speculation based on isolated cases is not the same as reality based on a complete picture, and research has shown that bail reform has not led to an increase in crime."

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**World's tallest horse dies at age 20**

**WI** POYNETTE — The world's tallest horse died in Wisconsin.

The 20-year-old Belgian named Big Jake died several weeks ago, WMTV reported. The horse lived on Smokey Hollow Farm in Poynette.

Big Jake was 6-foot-10 and weighed 2,500 pounds. The Guinness Book of World Records certified him as the world's tallest living horse in 2010.

The farm's owner, Jerry Gilbert, said Big Jake was a "superstar" and a "truly magnificent animal." He said Big Jake was born in Nebraska and weighed 240 pounds at birth, about 100 pounds heavier at birth than a typical Belgian foal.

**Members of firefighter band help driver**

**MA** QUINCY — A group of off-duty Massachusetts firefighters in a bagpipe and drum band participating in a Fourth of July parade jumped into action when the driver of a parade float went into cardiac arrest.

The members of the Greater Boston Firefighters Pipes and Drums were behind a school near the end of the parade in Quincy when they heard a commotion, according to a Facebook post by the Quincy firefighters union.

They noticed the driver of a flatbed truck hauling a float slumped over the wheel as the vehicle slowly rolled forward.

Members of the band jumped into the cab, stopped the truck,

pulled the ailing driver free, and started performing life-saving measures. Someone retrieved a defibrillator from a fire truck, which was used to administer two shocks and revive the driver, who was then taken to a hospital.

**Officials investigate spike of ill, dying birds**

**IN** INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana officials are asking people to take down bird feeders as they try to determine an unexplained increase in sick and dying songbirds.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has counted 285 ill or dead birds since May.

The Indianapolis Star reported that officials aren't sure what's causing the birds to become ill, including eye swelling, crusty discharge and neurological issues.

State officials ask residents to take in any bird feeders and baths to prevent birds from gathering there and transmitting the disease to others.

**Police raid illegal pot growing operation**

**OR** GRANTS PASS — Multiple law enforcement agencies served a search warrant at an illegal marijuana grow operation in southwestern Oregon, authorities said.

More than 86,500 illegal marijuana plants were seized and destroyed in Selma, and a fire-arm, water pumps and generators were seized as evidence, according to a Josephine County Sheriff's Office news release.

Twelve people were detained because of safety concerns, au-

thorities said.

**Rare wolverine caught on doorbell camera**

**UT** SALT LAKE CITY — Wildlife officials said a rare animal spotted in a Utah neighborhood likely has been on the move in search of a new place to live.

A home doorbell camera caught the wolverine on video in west Layton about 15 miles west of Salt Lake City, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources officials believe it was the same animal seen on nearby Antelope Island in early May.

Wolverines have been spotted in Utah only six times. The last time before this year was in 2016.

**2 hurt when ice cream shop ceiling collapses**

**CT** WEST HARTFORD — Two people were injured when the ceiling of a Connecticut ice cream shop collapsed, authorities said.

Two people inside Milkcraft suffered minor injuries, West Hartford Fire Chief Greg Priest said. One of the victims was taken to a local hospital for treatment, he said.

Six employees and at least a dozen customers were inside the shop when the ceiling collapsed, authorities said.

**Police: Man arrested after rocks hit vehicles**

**WA** SEATTLE — The Washington State Patrol said a man was arrested in connection with at least four incidents in which concrete rocks were hurled at passing

vehicles traveling in the southbound lanes of Interstate 5 during the overnight hours.

KOMO reported the man was being held at the King County Jail, where he faces charges of second-degree assault and second-degree malicious mischief.

In answering complaints, a trooper arrived at the scene and saw a man walking southbound on the other side of the concrete barrier. The trooper saw several chunks of concrete nearby that appeared to have been broken off from the barrier, the patrol said.

There were at least four victims who told patrol troopers that their vehicles had been struck by chunks of concrete.

**Boys help turtles cross dangerous road**

**IA** VENTURA — The road running between a marsh wildlife area and Clear Lake in Ventura in northern Iowa is dangerous for turtles, even with a turtle crossing sign.

So five boys spent some time this summer helping the turtles cross it. On one recent summer day, they spent several hours assisting turtles, saving 20 to 30 from being flattened by motorists, the Mason City Globe Gazette reported.

"One time, I saw a pile of flattened turtles and two baby turtles, their parents must've died, so that motivated me to save other turtles," said 10-year-old Zacaious Moe, one of the boys.

Four friends have joined Zacaious in the turtle rescuing — Keygan Hoover, 9; Blake Meyer, 8; Cole Meyer, 10, and Casen Wenzel, 8.

— From wire reports

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# Phoenix takes Game 1 of NBA Finals

*Associated Press*

PHOENIX — Chris Paul waited 16 years to get to the NBA Finals, bringing with him a team starving for its first championship.

The setting was entirely new.

The performance was same ol' Chris Paul.

"Just knew he's ready," Phoenix forward Mikal Bridges said. "He's prepared his whole life for this moment and it shows out there on the court."

Paul had 32 points and nine assists in an NBA Finals debut that was well worth the wait, Devin Booker scored 27 points and the Suns beat the returning Giannis Antetokounmpo and his Milwaukee Bucks 118-105 on Tuesday night in Game 1.

Paul scored 16 points during a sensational third quarter that had Phoenix fans who waited 28 years to see the NBA Finals again screaming in delight.

"Every time he shoots it we think it's going in," Booker said.

It almost did in the third quarter, when Paul was 6-for-7 and made all three three-pointers.

Finally playing for the title in his 16th season, the star point guard has the Suns in the NBA Finals for only the third time, and it sure looked as if they could make this ending different than the other two.

"We've been building all season long for these moments," Paul said. "We're going to keep playing. This is just one game. We've got to stay locked in."

Deandre Ayton added 22 points and 19 rebounds to continue his breakout stretch of play in his first postseason.

Antetokounmpo had 20 points and 17 rebounds after missing two games with a hype-extended left knee. Khris Middleton scored 29 points, but the Bucks will have to play from behind again after dropping Game 1 for the third straight series.

"We know it's not going to be easy. We know it's going to be tough," Middleton said. "There's times where we're going to be down in this series. But this series isn't over. We're down. We've still got to keep competing and just playing."

The series opener was the

first NBA Finals game in Phoenix since Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls won their third straight championship here in Game 6 in 1993. The Suns, who came into the NBA with Milwaukee in 1968, made their only other finals appearance in 1976.

They hadn't even made the playoffs since 2010 and just two years ago were last in the Western Conference with a 19-63 record.

But Booker was already headed for stardom by then, and 2018 No. 1 pick Ayton has played at that level in the postseason. Paul has been steady as always since his arrival in an offseason trade.

Now 36 and a 10-time All-NBA selection, he is on the list of best players to never win a championship. It appeared he might never even get to play for one until Oklahoma City dealt him to Phoenix, then on the rise, and he might be the final piece that takes it all the way to the top.

Despite so many debuts on the Finals stage — the Suns' Jae Crowder was the only player

who had appeared in them, and that was for Miami at a neutral site last year — there didn't appear to be many first-time jitters.

But Paul shifted the team into another gear in the third. His opening jumper provided the first double-digit lead of the game, and he followed with a four-point play for the Suns' next basket.

He scored eight straight Phoenix points later in the period, hitting a three-pointer, dancing around Bobby Portis for a layup and then hitting another three. He then fired a pass to Ayton, who was fouled and made both free throws to make it 88-68 with 2:20 left.

"Their pick-and-roll game is tough to guard," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "I think we've just got to keep getting better. We'll look at the film. We'll see how we can maybe take away some of the rhythm."

Milwaukee also is making its third finals appearance, having won the title in 1971 but not getting another chance since losing in 1974.

## Federer falls in straight sets to Hurkacz in quarters

*Associated Press*

WIMBLEDON, England — Roger Federer has been feted by plenty of ovations at Centre Court. None quite like this one, though. This was not a celebration. It felt more like a "Thank you" or — just in case — a "Goodbye."

The eight-time Wimbledon champion lost 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-0 to 14th-seeded Hubert Hurkacz of Poland in the quarterfinals at the All England Club on Wednesday, a surprisingly lopsided finish to Federer's 22nd appearance in the tournament.

Federer underwent two operations on his right knee in 2020 and was sidelined for more than 12 months in all. He arrived at

Wimbledon having played a total of eight matches this season.

Factor in age — Federer turns 40 on Aug. 8, so this was his last major in his 30s — and maybe it was just too much to ask that he make his way to the closing weekend, even if this is a tournament he's won more than any other man, and even if it's contested on a surface, grass, on which he's best.

He simply never was able to summon the serving and shot-making that have carried him to 20 Grand Slam titles overall, tied with Rafael Nadal for the men's record.

Hurkacz, 24, never had made it beyond the third round at any major; that's when he lost to No-

vak Djokovic at Wimbledon two years ago.

Still, Hurkacz looked quite comfortable on this unfamiliar stage. He played sublimely, with three times as many winners, 36, as unforced errors, 12.

In the opening set, he didn't face so much as a single break point and was guilty of just four unforced errors to Federer's 10.

It appeared Federer finally was beginning to make some headway early in the second set, earning a trio of break points and nosing ahead 2-0 on a double-fault. After his second serve found the net, Hurkacz pointed an index finger at his temple, then shook his head.

Federer then weathered

three break points in the next game to lead 3-0.

But Hurkacz conceded nothing. Undaunted by the setting, the stakes, the foe or the almost-uniformly-for-Federer fans, Hurkacz claimed four of the next five games to pull even at 4-all, breaking along the way with a stinging forehand return of a 101 mph serve that rushed Federer and drew a backhand into the net.

In the tiebreaker — which was preceded by loud chants from the full-to-capacity stands of "Let's go, Roger! Let's go!" and rhythmic clapping — it was more of the same: Hurkacz hitting his spots and Federer stumbling.



# Camp Pop: US basketball opens practice

Associated Press

Gregg Popovich knows he doesn't have to spend a whole lot of time teaching the game of basketball to his U.S. Olympic players.

His top priority right now: Making those players a team.

That process is officially underway, with the Americans holding their first practice together Tuesday in Las Vegas to prepare for an Olympic Games that begin in less than three weeks. Popovich's message in the first team meeting on Monday night and in the first practice on Tuesday was simple and similar, in that he wants the unit to find a way to jell quickly — knowing that many of the international teams they'll face at the Olympics have played together for years.

"We've got to take advantage of their abilities, their strengths and play together, play for each other, with one thought in mind," Popovich said. "That's winning the whole deal."

This is the first Olympics for Popovich as head coach. He coached the U.S. at the Basket-

ball World Cup in China in 2019, taking a team that was put together after about three dozen invitees and commitments backed out of playing. The result was a seventh-place finish, the worst for the U.S. men in a major international competition.

This roster is different. It has a past NBA Finals MVP in Kevin Durant. It has players with NBA championship rings such as Durant, Draymond Green and Kevin Love — a list that will grow after the NBA Finals since three U.S. Olympians are playing in that Milwaukee-Phoenix matchup.

"They are bona fide big-time players, so they're not here to develop their individual games," Popovich said. "They're here to come together, become a team, fall in love as quickly as possible, and want it as badly as foreign teams want it."

Players — nine of the 12 on the Olympic team anyway, the exceptions being Milwaukee teammates Khristian Middleton and Jrue Holiday, plus Phoenix's Devin Booker, all absent

because they're playing in the NBA Finals — arrived in Las Vegas on Monday, were taken to their hotel to get settled in and take their first coronavirus test, then gathered for a team meeting in the evening.

Popovich greeted them all warmly, then started talking about the challenge that awaits.

"We know what we're supposed to do," U.S. center Bam Adebayo said.

Practices started Tuesday and will continue through the end of the week. The U.S. plays its first international friendly on Saturday against Nigeria, and they'll be spending most waking hours together over the next few weeks — which is exactly what Popovich wants.

U.S. forward Jayson Tatum of the Boston Celtics played his college basketball at Duke, for former Olympic coach Mike Krzyzewski, and now will play for Popovich at the Tokyo Games. Tatum also played for Popovich at the Basketball World Cup in China two years ago and said one aspect of the coach's personality shocked him.

"He has an amazing sense of humor," Tatum said. "I guess the casual fan sees the person who does those interviews postgame, but that's not the case of who he is at all. I absolutely love spending time with him and now building a relationship with him. I'm just really fortunate to say I played under Pop and Coach K."

The U.S. won the last three Olympic gold medals under Krzyzewski, and now it's Popovich's turn. The U.S. will be favored, and remains the world's No. 1-ranked team by FIBA. Day 1 was about getting some basic offense and defense installed — "trying to invent the wheel will not work," Popovich said — and establishing how the Americans want to play.

After that, it was time to resume the team-building.

"They're sacrificing a lot," Popovich said. "After the year in COVID — actually more than that — to leave their families, and to commit to represent their country at this point I think is really laudable and a great sacrifice."

## No relay: Sprinter Richardson left off Olympic team

Associated Press

Banned sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson was not on the Olympic roster released Tuesday by USA Track and Field, a decision that means the American champion's positive test for marijuana will cost her a chance at running on the relay team in Tokyo, in addition to her spot in the 100-meter individual race.

Richardson's positive test nullified her win at the Olympic trials in Eugene, Ore., last month and the spot that went with it for Tokyo in the 100. Her 30-day suspension will end before the start of the relays on Aug. 5, which left open the possibility she could win a medal as part of the 4x100 relay team.

But her name was missing from the 130-person roster USATF sent out. The federation had two discretionary picks beyond the top four finishers in the 100-meter final at trials but chose not to offer a spot to the 21-

year-old sprinter, who was expected to challenge for Olympic gold.

Asked about how Richardson was taking the news, her agent, Renaldo Nehemiah, responded: "We haven't spoken about it at all. It was actually not a topic we focused on."

In a statement, USATF said it was "incredibly sympathetic toward Sha'Carri Richardson's extenuating circumstances" and "fully agrees" that international rules regarding marijuana should be reevaluated.

"So while our heartfelt understanding lies with Sha'Carri, we must also maintain fairness for all of the athletes who attempted to realize their dreams by securing a place on the U.S. Olympic Track & Field Team," the statement read.

In this case, that meant offering the remaining relay spots to the sixth- and seventh-place finishers, each of whom moved up in the pecking order after Richardson's DQ.

They are English Gardner and Aleia Hobbs.

Richardson tested positive for a chemical found in marijuana after her victory on June 19. She said the stress of her biological mother's recent death combined with the pressure of preparing for trials led her to use the drug.

"I was definitely triggered and blinded by emotions, blinded by badness, and hurting, and hiding hurt," she said on NBC's "Today" show. "I know I can't hide myself, so in some type of way, I was trying to hide my pain."

Shortly after the 2012 Olympics, international regulators loosened restrictions on marijuana use, increasing the threshold for a positive test to a level designed to catch athletes only who were using it in the immediate hours before competition. Potential bans were reduced from two years to as little as the 30-day suspension that Richardson is serving.

# Phillies hand Cubs an 11th straight loss

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Bryce Harper can feel everything coming together for him and the rest of the Phillies' lineup. At the moment, they are crushing the ball.

Harper homered and tied a career high with five hits, Andrew McCutchen smacked a grand slam and Philadelphia handed Chicago its 11th straight loss, beating the Cubs 15-10 on Tuesday night.

Rhys Hoskins also went deep. The Phillies jumped on former teammate Jake Arrieta (5-9) after beating Chicago 13-3 the previous night and finished two shy of a season high with 16 hits.

"I think we're coming into our own as a team," Harper said. "Everybody's getting healthy. And we're just looking forward to the next couple of games, getting into the All-Star break and enjoying our time down, coming back and get going."

The Cubs, meanwhile, extended their worst skid since they dropped 12 in a row in May 2012. They remained winless since Zach Davies and three relievers combined to no-hit the Dodgers in Los Angeles on June 24.

Harper hit his seventh homer in 13 games when he crushed a three-run drive in the seventh, extending the lead to 15-4. He finished with a season-high four RBIs. McCutchen, the game's fourth batter, smacked his third career grand slam and second this season in the first inning.

# Ohtani pitches, hits Angels to a victory over Red Sox

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani pitched seven innings of five-hit ball and hit an early RBI double, leading the Los Angeles Angels to a 5-3 defeat of the Boston Red Sox.

Ohtani yielded two runs and struck out four, winning his matchup with fellow All-Star Nathan Eovaldi.

Ohtani (4-1) didn't walk a batter. Although he went 1-for-4 at the plate and failed to homer for the second straight game after hitting 14 in his previous 17 games, Ohtani still cracked a double in the first inning that drove in the Angels' first run.

Max Stassi hit a two-run homer and doubled and singled for the Angels, while David Fletcher went 4-for-4 in their fifth win in six games.

**Padres 7, Nationals 4:** Wil Myers hit a three-run homer and had five RBIs, and Manny Machado celebrated his 29th birthday with three hits and three runs as host San Diego beat Washington.

Machado singled in the go-ahead run during the three-run fifth and had two doubles.

**Yankees 12, Mariners 1:** Giancarlo Stanton clubbed a three-run homer off the railing of the second deck in the first inning, Luke Voit had a career-high five hits and three RBIs, and New York won at Seattle.

DJ LeMahieu singled in each of the first three innings, becoming the first Yankees player to have three hits in the first three innings since Aaron Judge in April 2018.

**Pirates 2, Braves 1:** Bryan Reynolds drew a four-pitch walk from Tyler Matzek, forcing in the winning run in the ninth inning as host Pittsburgh beat Atlanta and extended its winning streak to three games.

Matzek (0-3) threw just eight of 20 pitches for strikes.

**Orioles 7, Blue Jays 5:** Pedro Severino and Cedric Mullins homered off Steven Matz, Anthony Santander also went deep and host Baltimore beat Toronto.

**Rangers 10, Tigers 5:** John Hicks became the first player to homer in his first four games with the Rangers/Washington Senators franchise and added a go-ahead single in the seventh inning to lead host Texas over Detroit.

**Astros 9, Athletics 6:** Yordan Álvarez hit two homers and drove in five runs, José Altuve drove in the go-ahead run with a single and host Houston rallied to beat Oakland for its fifth straight win.

**White Sox 4, Twins 1:** Carlos Rodón pitched six strong innings and Chicago took advantage of sloppy play to win at Minnesota.

**Marlins 2, Dodgers 1 (10):** Automatic runner Starling Marte advanced to third on Blake Treinen's wild pitch and continued home when catcher Will Smith threw wildly past third base for a game-ending error in the 10th inning, giving host Miami a win over Los Angeles.

**Royals 7, Reds 6:** Salvador Perez's walk-off single capped Kansas City's four-run rally in a win over visiting Cincinnati.

**Diamondbacks 4, Rockies 3:** David Peralta was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to force in the winning run, and Arizona beat visiting Colorado.

**Cardinals 6, Giants 5:** Nolan Arenado and Edmundo Sosa homered to back Adam Wainwright's fourth straight winning decision, Paul Goldschmidt hit a go-ahead two-run single in the fourth inning and St. Louis won at San Francisco.

# Top defensemen relatively quiet through 4 games

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — With star defenseman Shea Weber having a relatively quiet series, an argument can be made that Montreal is fortunate to still be playing in the Stanley Cup Final.

The same could be said about the likelihood of Tampa Bay being on the brink of repeating as champion without last year's playoff MVP Victor Hedman on top of his game through four games.

Both players had forgettable moments in Game 4.

Weber sat in the penalty box, unable to help his team, while the Canadiens staved off pos-

sible elimination in the final 61 seconds of regulation and first three minutes of overtime before Montreal extended its season with a 3-2 victory on Monday night.

Weber's high-sticking penalty against the Lightning's Ondrej Palat put Montreal in a vulnerable position, but the Canadiens captain was bailed out by one of the NHL's best penalty-killing units before Josh Anderson won it with a goal a little under four minutes into overtime.

"It shows the character of our group again," Montreal coach Dominique Ducharme said. "There was no question we were going to do

everything we could to kill that penalty for our captain."

In addition to being one of the NHL's top defenders, Hedman is a key contributor on Tampa Bay's potent power play.

But after leading last year's title run, the reigning Conn Smythe winner hasn't been as dominant in helping the reigning champs build a 3-1 series lead against the Canadiens.

A big moment for Hedman in Game 4 was being set up in the high slot on a power play, only to have his shot glance off Carey Price's blocker and off the left post with 4:15 left in the second period.