

Last member of Easy Company dies at 97

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

The last surviving member of Easy Company, the World War II unit made famous by the “Band of Brothers” book and miniseries, has died.

Bradford Freeman died July 3 at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Golden Triangle, in Caledonia, Miss., according to his obituary. He was 97.

Freeman was a paratrooper and private first class with Easy Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division during the war. A mortarman, he parachuted into France at age 19 with a base plate attached to his

chest on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

At a September 2020 event at Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., Freeman said every moment of that jump into Normandy stays with him.

“He was in every major engagement in Europe during World War II,” a Columbus, Miss., local historian, Rufus Ward, said during the event for Freeman’s 96th birthday, according to the Air Force. “He’s a true American hero and we need to honor those people ... we owe them more than we could ever repay them.”

Freeman also parachuted into Operation Market Garden and was wounded during the

Battle of the Bulge. He recovered, rejoined his unit and participated in the occupations of Berchtesgaden in Germany and Austria, according to his obituary.

Freeman was portrayed in the 2001 HBO miniseries, “Band of Brothers,” by actor James Farmer, according to IMDb. The series was based on the bestselling 1992 book, “Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: From Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest,” by Stephen E. Ambrose.

After the war, Freeman returned to Mississippi, married Willie Louise Gurley on June

29, 1947, and worked as a mail carrier for 32 years.

Born Sept. 4, 1924, in Artesia, Miss., Freeman graduated from Artesia High School in 1942. He was a freshman at Mississippi State when he volunteered for the paratroopers. He entered the service on Feb. 4, 1944, according to his obituary.

He is survived by a sister, two daughters, four grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

“Our dad was always astounded that a country boy from Mississippi was able to see so many places and meet so many interesting people,” according to his obituary from Lowndes Funeral Home in Columbus.

Fetal damage trauma sticks with military women after Roe

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

Bari Wald kept it simple when asked about her pregnancy: “We lost the baby.”

The full diagnosis involved severe fetal birth defects 19 weeks into Wald’s first pregnancy, a baby she and her husband desperately wanted but couldn’t imagine bringing into the world to suffer.

And because the military and its insurer, Tricare, will not perform or cover abortions for fetal anomalies, even lethal conditions, it involved a terrifying, failed abortion in a foreign country that almost killed her.

The two-week wait for definitive test results was torture, said Wald, an Air Force reserve officer and Marine’s wife who at the time was stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

“I remember feeling my son kick ... and I didn’t know if I could survive it,” she said of the uncertainty during the wait for the test results and the possibility that her fetus wasn’t healthy.

By federal law, the military provides for abortions only in cases of rape, incest and danger to the mother’s life.

The Defense Department has paid for only 91 abortions since 2016, according to a Defense Health Agency spokesman.

Now, with abortion bans going into effect in many states following the Supreme Court’s reversal of Roe v. Wade, the Pentagon has scrambled to respond.

“The department is examining this decision closely and evaluating our policies to ensure we continue to provide seamless access to reproductive health care as permitted by federal law,” Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said June 22.

But Wald and other military women who told their stories to Stars and Stripes said it’s disingenuous to call Defense Department reproductive health care “seamless.”

They spoke of having to get their care without military support, even in cases when intended, longed-for pregnancies went terribly wrong.

And they said that far from feeling cared for, they felt abandoned by the military at their most vulnerable moments.

“It is the most isolating feeling in the world,” said Kali, an Army officer’s wife who asked that only her first name be used to protect her privacy.

Her delight about carrying a child turned to horror and grief during an ultrasound in April.

“Someone said the words ‘not compatible

with life,’” she said. “I said, ‘What do you mean? We just saw her moving!’”

Kali’s 12-week-old fetus had anencephaly, meaning major parts of the brain and skull were missing. The baby would most likely die in utero, or if delivered would certainly die soon after being born.

“She wasn’t going to make it, and I thought the longer she stays in, maybe the more she would develop, and I didn’t want her to suffer,” Kali said.

“And I couldn’t imagine walking around and people saying, ‘Oh, when are you due?’”

A week later, Kali stepped inside a clinic in Baltimore alongside some 20 other women seeking abortions. Her husband, who had written “the sweetest, saddest letter” to their lost daughter, waited in the car because of coronavirus protocols.

Kali and her husband have since made several donations to the clinic, whose \$950 fee she paid with her credit card. “They were so, so nice. They took such good care of me,” she said of the clinic staff.

Their grief still runs deep.

“No one expects it will ever happen to them. If it does, they should have a choice,” she said. “I’ve always been pro-choice. But now I’m 12 times more pro-choice.”

Yoon vows to punish N. Korea if it provokes

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea may expect swift punishment in the event its communist rulers compromise the security of their neighbor to the south, the president of South Korea said Wednesday.

“First, we should punish North Korea swiftly and adamantly in case of North Korean provocations,” President Yoon Seok Youl told military officials Wednesday, according to a readout of their meeting. “The protection of the people’s safety, property, territory and sovereignty is the military’s fundamental mission.”

Yoon’s remarks are his strongest yet on North Korea since he took office two months ago. A former prosecutor and member of

the conservative People Power Party, Yoon campaigned on stronger ties with South Korea’s ally the United States and on a stiffer response to North Korean provocations.

So far in his short administration, the South and the U.S. on June 6 launched missiles and on June 7 sortied fighter jets in response to North Korea firing eight short-range missiles on June 5.

Yoon cited North Korea’s record number of missile tests so far this year and the threat of it resuming nuclear weapons tests, as well as the “incompleteness of the security situation in Northeast Asia,” as proof of a need for a “strong national defense power.”

Yoon suggested additional, “fundamental,” but unspecified measures against North Korea.

North Korea has launched 17

rounds of missiles in tests so far this year, including an unprecedented barrage in June.

Yoon during the meeting also encouraged the military alliance between Seoul and Washington.

“We need to raise the effectiveness of the extended deterrence based on the [South Korea]-U.S. alliance,” he said, according to the readout.

Yoon’s comments come seven weeks after his meeting in Seoul with President Joe Biden, during which the two agreed to reconsider joint exercises by the two nations’ militaries.

Field maneuvers by the two countries’ militaries were suspended in 2018 in favor of computer simulations under South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Donald Trump. Trump and Moon at the

time were negotiating with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. North Korea’s state-run media characterizes large-scale exercises by the allies as a rehearsal for an invasion of the North.

On Tuesday, U.S. Forces Korea and the Ministry of Defense announced the start of a 10-day military exercise in South Korea that includes F-35A Lightning II stealth fighters. The training is the first time F-35s from both countries will exercise together.

Ahead of Biden’s visit in late May, U.S. authorities warned that North Korea was preparing its first test of a nuclear device since 2017. The International Atomic Energy Agency, which was expelled from North Korea in 2019, afterward described evidence of an upcoming nuclear test as “deeply regrettable.”

Biden awards Medals of Honor to 4 Vietnam vets

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — One soldier led his unit through a deadly ambush in 1968. Another defended a besieged fire base in 1972. A third directed airstrikes after a crash landing in 1971. And a fourth single-handedly cleared a trench of enemy troops in 1966.

President Joe Biden on Tuesday awarded four Army veterans — Spc. 5th Class Dwight Birdwell, Maj. John J. Duffy, Spc. 5th Class Dennis M. Fujii and Staff Sgt. Edward N. Kaneshiro — the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest recognition for combat valor, for their actions in the Vietnam War.

“It’s just astounding when you hear what each of them had done,” Biden told the 250 guests who gathered for the White House ceremony. “They went far

above and beyond the call of duty. It’s a phrase always used, but it takes on life when you see these men.”

Each of the men had their previous medals for gallantry upgraded and Kaneshiro, who died during combat in 1967, was honored posthumously. Kaneshiro’s son, John Kaneshiro, accepted the award on behalf of his father.

“It’s been a long journey to this day for these heroes,” Biden said. “More than 50 years have passed since ... as young men these soldiers first proved their mettle but time has not diminished their astonishing bravery, their selflessness in putting the lives of others ahead of their own and the gratitude that we as a nation owe them.”

More than 3,500 service members have received the medal since its inception in the 1860s.

Army seeks info about using hemp for snipers’ camouflage

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Army wants to learn more about the possible camouflage benefits of hemp, a product derived from cannabis that could help better conceal its snipers from enemy forces.

In a request for information issued last week, the service said it is interested in how hemp yarn could be used to “break up the snipers’ outline.”

The Army’s uniform office said the request does not constitute a formal solicitation for proposals and will not directly lead to any contract awards. The request is focused on how to use 400,000 yards of hemp as well as jute yarn.

While hemp is legal in the U.S., the Defense Department prohibits the use of hemp-derived products for consumption by troops because some contain THC, the active element in marijuana, and

could trigger a positive drug test. However, the DOD doesn’t prohibit use of durable goods containing hemp, such as rope or clothing. The Improved Ghillie System is the Army’s effort to meet the camouflage needs of its snipers. Ghillie suits are typically weathered with mud, sand, water or whatever else is necessary to help snipers blend in.

The program calls for “amenable camouflage materials” such as hemp that can be used to change the appearance of the sniper, the Army announcement said. Such fibers will help conceal the sniper and scout, allowing them to remain undetected when they are close to enemy forces, the request for information stated.

The Hemp Foundation, an industry advocacy group, says the fabric could help the military meet many of its needs in terms of durability and staying dry.

Police: Shooting suspect mulled 2nd attack

Associated Press

HIGHLAND PARK, Ill. — The man charged with killing seven people at an Independence Day parade confessed to police that he unleashed a hail of bullets from a rooftop in suburban Chicago and then fled to the Madison, Wis., area, where he contemplated shooting up an event there, authorities said Wednesday.

Robert Crimo III turned back to Illinois, where he was later arrested after deciding he was not prepared to pull off a shooting in Wisconsin, Lake County Major Crime Task Force spokesman Christopher Covelli said.

An Illinois judge ordered Crimo to be held without bail. Police found the shells of 83 bullets and three ammunition magazines on the rooftop that he fired from, Lake County Assistant State's Attorney Ben Dillon said in court.

Crimo's attorney said he intends to enter a not guilty plea to all charges.

Prosecutors have promised to seek dozens more.

A rifle "similar to an AR-15" was used to spray more than 70 rounds from atop a commercial building into the parade crowd, a spokesman for the Lake County Major Crime Task Force said.

A seventh victim died Tuesday. More than three dozen other people were wounded in the attack, which Task Force spokesman Christopher Covelli said the suspect had planned for several weeks.

The assault happened less than three years after police went to Crimo's home following a call from a family member who said he was threatening "to kill everyone" there.

Covelli said police confiscated 16 knives, a dagger and a sword, but said there was no sign he had any guns at the time, in September 2019.

Police in April 2019 also responded to a reported suicide attempt by the suspect, Covelli said.

Crimo legally purchased the rifle used in the attack in Illinois within the past year, Covelli said. In all, police said, he purchased five firearms, which were recovered by officers at his father's home.

The revelation about his gun purchases is just the latest example of young men who were able to obtain guns and carry out massacres in recent months despite glaring warning signs about their mental health and inclination to violence.

Illinois state police, who issue gun own-

ers' licenses, said Crimo applied for a license in December 2019, when he was 19. His father sponsored his application.

At the time "there was insufficient basis to establish a clear and present danger" and deny the application, state police said in a statement.

Investigators who have interrogated the suspect and reviewed his social media posts have not determined a motive or found any indication that he targeted victims by race, religion or other protected status, Covelli said.

At the July 4 parade, the shots were initially mistaken for fireworks before hundreds of revelers fled in terror.

A day later, baby strollers, lawn chairs and other items left behind by panicked parade goers remained inside a wide police perimeter. Outside the police tape, some residents drove up to collect blankets and chairs they abandoned.

David Shapiro, 47, said the gunfire quickly turned the parade into "chaos."

"People didn't know right away where the gunfire was coming from, whether the gunman was in front or behind you chasing you," he said Tuesday as he retrieved a stroller and lawn chairs.

FDA issues stay on order banning all sales of Juul

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration issued an administrative stay Tuesday on the order it issued last month for vaping company Juul to pull its electronic cigarettes from the market.

The agency said on Twitter that the stay temporarily suspends the marketing denial order while it conducts further review, but does not rescind it.

The FDA issued the initial order banning Juul sales on June 23.

A day later, a federal appeals court temporarily blocked the government ban.

The initial FDA action was part of a sweeping effort by the agency to bring scientific scrutiny to the multibillion-dollar vaping industry after years of

regulatory delays.

To stay on the market, companies must show that their e-cigarettes benefit public health. In practice, that means proving that adult smokers who use them are likely to quit or reduce their smoking, while teens are unlikely to get hooked on them.

The FDA originally said Juul's application left regulators with significant questions and didn't include enough information to evaluate any potential health risks.

Juul said it submitted enough information and data to address all issues raised.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit granted Juul's request for a hold while the court reviews the case.

Judges keeping Capitol riot trials in DC amid bias claims

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For some of the Washington, D.C., residents who reported for jury duty last month, a pro-Trump mob's assault on the U.S. Capitol felt like a personal attack.

Ahead of a trial for a Michigan man charged in the riot, one prospective juror said a police officer injured during the melee is a close friend. Another has friends who are congressional staffers or journalists who worked at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Neither of them served on the federal jury that swiftly convicted Anthony Robert Williams of storming the Capitol to obstruct Congress from certifying Joe Biden's 2020 presidential electoral victory.

But their personal connections to the riot highlight the

challenge facing judges and attorneys in choosing impartial jurors in Washington to decide the hundreds of criminal cases stemming from the insurrection — especially as lawmakers hold high-profile public hearings on the insurrection less than a mile from the courthouse.

A growing number of defendants are pushing to have their trials moved out of Washington, saying the outcome of the first trials proves the odds are unfairly stacked against Jan. 6 defendants in the nation's capital.

More than three dozen Capitol riot defendants have asked to have their trials moved out of Washington, including at least nine who filed their requests in June. None has succeeded so far.

Russia pounds rebel province in Ukraine

Associated Press

GRAMATORSK, Ukraine — Russian shelling killed at least eight civilians in eastern Ukraine over the past 24 hours and wounded 25 more, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday. Pro-Russia separatists said attacks by Ukrainian forces killed four civilians.

The Ukrainian presidential office said Russian forces targeted cities and villages in the country's southeast, with most civilian casualties occurring in Donetsk province, where Russia stepped up its offensive in recent days.

Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in a Telegram post that two people died in the city of Avdiivka, which is located in the center of the province, and the Donetsk cities of Sloviansk, Krasnohorivka and Kurakhove each reported one civilian killed.

"Every crime will be punished," he wrote.

Kyrylenko urged the province's more

than 350,000 remaining residents to flee late Tuesday, saying that evacuating Donetsk was necessary to save lives and allow the Ukrainian army to put up a better defense against the Russian advance.

Donetsk is part of the Donbas, a mostly Russian-speaking industrial area where Ukraine's most experienced soldiers are concentrated. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday declared the complete seizure of the region's other province, Luhansk, after Ukrainian troops withdrew from the last city under their control.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai denied Wednesday that the Russians had completely captured the province. Heavy fighting continued in villages around Lysychansk, the city Ukrainian soldiers withdrew from and which Russian troops took Sunday, he said.

"The Russians have paid a high price, but the Luhansk region is not fully captured by

the Russian army," Haidai said. "Some settlements have been overrun by each side several times already."

He accused Russian forces of scorched earth tactics, "burning down and destroying everything on their way."

Up to 15,000 residents remain in Lysychansk and some 8,000 in the nearby city of Sievierodonetsk, which Russian and separatist fighters seized last month, Haidai said. Pro-Russian separatists have fought Ukrainian forces and controlled much of the Donbas for eight years. Before Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, Putin recognized the independence of the two self-proclaimed separatist republics in the region.

Separatist authorities in Donetsk said Wednesday that four civilians were killed and another 14 wounded in Ukrainian shelling over the past 24 hours. News reports said shelling hit an ammunition depot on Tuesday, triggering massive explosions.

UK's Boris Johnson battles to remain prime minister

Associated Press

LONDON—A defiant British Prime Minister Boris Johnson battled to stay in power Wednesday after the resignation of two top ministers and a slew of more junior officials, who said they could no longer serve under his scandal-tarred leadership.

Johnson is known for his uncanny ability to wiggle out of tight spots, but a series of accusations of misdeeds have pushed him to the brink, and some of his fellow Conservative lawmakers now worry that the leader renowned for his affability could be a liability in elections.

Many are also concerned about the ability

of a weakened Johnson, who only narrowly survived a no-confidence vote last month, to govern at a time of increasing economic and social strain.

At the weekly Prime Minister's Questions session in Parliament on Wednesday, members of the opposition Labour Party shouted "Go! Go!" Then, more damningly, members of his own Conservative Party challenged the leader. Lawmaker Tim Loughton was the first to ask whether there was anything that might prompt him to resign.

"Frankly the job of the prime minister in difficult circumstances, when he's been given a colossal mandate, is to keep going," Johnson

replied.

His fellow Conservatives listened quietly, offering little support.

The grilling was the first of two challenges Wednesday for the leader. He must still get through a long-scheduled interrogation by a committee of senior lawmakers later in the day.

How he handles the tough questions could indicate whether a simmering rebellion in his Conservative Party can gather enough strength to oust him. Also on the horizon is a vote in a powerful party committee that could signal whether lawmakers have the appetite to push for another no-confidence measure.

Spain's famous Bull Run festival returns after hiatus

Associated Press

PAMPLONA, Spain — Thousands of revelers erupted in celebration Wednesday as the traditional "chupinazo" firework was ignited to start the San Fermín bull-run festival in the Spanish city of Pamplona, ending a two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Rain did nothing to dampen the atmosphere as crowds, nearly all dressed in the traditional garb of white trousers and shirt with red sash and neckerchief, crammed the tiny town hall square for the noon event.

After the firework exploded, the revelers continued spraying each other with red wine.

The highlight of the nine-day festival are the early morning "encierros," or bull runs, starting on Thursday, when thousands of thrill-seekers madly scramble to avoid six bulls as they charge along a winding, cobblestoned route to the city's bullring. Spectators watch from balconies and the wooden barricades set up to line the course. The rest of each day is for eating, drinking, dancing and cultural entertainment.

The festival was made world famous by Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises." Before the pandemic made it impossible to hold in 2020 and 2021, it hadn't been suspended since the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

Former soccer player and coach Juan Carlos Unzué had the honor of launching the little rocket from the town hall balcony. Unzué had to retire from coaching in 2018 after being diagnosed with the neurodegenerative disease ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Property owners barred from parking car on it

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco couple that parked their car for decades on a paved part of their property in front of their home has been banned from doing so unless they want to risk steep fines.

KGO-TV reported that city officials sent a letter to Judy and Ed Craine telling them they can't park on the pavement on their property on a hilly street even though they have for 36 years. With the letter came a notice of a \$1,542 fine and the threat of a \$250-a-day fee for continued parking on their property.

Dan Sider, the city's planning chief, said a decadesold city code to preserve neighborhood aesthetics prohibits residents from amassing cars in their yards. Officials looked into the issue at the Craines' property after receiving an anonymous complaint.

The city ended up tossing the fines after the couple agreed to stop parking on the pavement. If the Craines build a cover for the paved property or a garage, officials said they can resume parking on it — in compliance with city code.

18-year-old man dies in fireworks explosion

MN BROOKLYN PARK — An 18-year-old man died after a firework exploded in his face in a Minneapolis suburb.

The incident was the first publicly reported death in Minnesota from fireworks this year, according to the Minneapolis

Star Tribune.

Police in Brooklyn Park responded to the scene and found a man with severe wounds to his head and face, and a friend who was performing CPR on him.

The man later died at a local hospital.

In 2021, 17 Minnesotans were injured by fireworks, down from 78 injuries in 2020.

State's stricter plastic bag ban goes into effect

DE WILMINGTON — A tightened-up plastic bag ban took effect July 1 in Delaware.

The law prohibits all businesses other than restaurants from distributing plastic carryout bags, the News Journal reported.

Some establishments are instead offering reusable bags, either free or at a cost, according to the newspaper.

The Delaware General Assembly passed a law banning some plastic bags in 2019 and then updated that law in 2021, expanding both the bags banned and the stores impacted, according to the state Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

Man indicted in deputy's killing with 18 charges

MD SALISBURY — A 21-year-old Maryland man accused of killing a sheriff's deputy in June was indicted on a total of 18 charges.

Austin Jacob Allen Davidson was indicted on charges including first- and second-degree murder, using a firearm in the commission of a violent crime, and multiple counts relating to

illegal firearm possession, The Star Democrat reported. The charges stem from the June 12 shooting that left Wicomico County Deputy First Class Glenn Hilliard dead.

Authorities have said Hilliard was trying to arrest Davidson on multiple felony warrants, saw him coming out of an apartment complex and began a foot pursuit. Davidson, of Delmar, shot at Hilliard multiple times, fatally injuring him, according to authorities.

Davidson was prohibited from owning firearms after a 2019 felony armed robbery conviction for which he served no jail time, according to the newspaper.

Woman charged after 1,000 pigs found dead

IA SAC CITY — An Iowa woman faces criminal charges after more than 1,000 pigs were found dead on a property.

KCCI-TV reported that the Sac County Sheriff's Office, responding to a call, found the animals dead at two confinement sites. Authorities said Elana Laber, 33, was responsible for maintaining the sites.

The sheriff's office said the pigs had been dead for at least a week and had no access to food or water.

Laber is charged with two counts of first-degree criminal mischief and two counts of livestock neglect.

Missing Canadian girl found; suspect arrested

OR OREGON CITY — A 13-year-old girl who went missing from Edmon-

ton, Alberta, for more than a week was found in Oregon and the man accused of kidnapping her was detained in jail, authorities said.

FBI agents helped arrest Noah Madrano, 41, on accusations of luring the girl from Canada to the United States, according to an email from the media office of the FBI in Portland. The girl from Edmonton was found in Oregon City. Madrano was being held on state charges, the email said.

The Edmonton Police Service said in a statement that the girl went missing on June 24. An investigation by Edmonton police, Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, Oregon City Police and the FBI located the girl and the man last weekend, the statement said.

Contract reached to fund ferry linking states

KY MARION — A new contract was reached to continue service by the Cave-in-Rock Ferry, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet said.

The ferry connects Kentucky 91 in Crittenden County with Illinois 1 in Hardin County, Ill., carrying some 500 vehicles daily over the Ohio River.

The \$3.3 million contract lasts until June 30, 2024. The ferry is funded jointly by the cabinet and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The ferry serves as a tourist attraction, and it also links hiking and outdoor activities in southern Illinois' Shawnee National Forest with the Amish community of Crittenden County, the cabinet said.

— From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

With no points, stress mounts on players

Associated Press

Imagine this happening in your line of work: Posted online and regularly updated for the entire world to see is an objective, black-and-white assessment of how you've been faring over the past 52 weeks, how you compare to your colleagues and competitors and how your current status compares to that of a day, a week, a month, a year ago.

Essentially, that's what the rankings are for a professional tennis player. Match victories are rewarded with points, which generally remain on a player's record for 12 months, then drop off. They are, in many ways, the sport's currency.

"It's the most stressful thing about our job," said Paula Badosa, a Spaniard who entered Wimbledon at No. 3 in the women's rankings. "We spend so much time thinking about the rankings: 'If you win this match ...' or 'If you lose against this player, you're going to lose your spot.' It's a lot."

At Wimbledon, the Grand Slam tournament that concludes Sunday, there is an additional — and unprecedented — source of angst: No one is earning any ranking points at all. That's because the WTA women's tour and ATP men's tour decided not to give them out in

response to the All England Club's ban on athletes from Russia and Belarus over the war in Ukraine.

So someone like Ons Jabeur is dealing with two sets of emotions. She is excited, of course, about what she's done over the past 1½ weeks on the grass courts, reaching her first Grand Slam semifinal and becoming the first Arab woman to get that far at a major. Her five wins moved her closer to the trophy and earned plenty of money (at least 535,000 pounds, or about \$640,000).

There's also a bit of a downer amid the euphoria.

"I'm not going to lie to you. The more you do good, the more you regret not (getting) any points," said Jabeur, a 27-year-old from Tunisia who is ranked No. 2 and will face close friend Tatjana Maria, 34, of Germany in Thursday's semifinals.

"I don't just look at myself, but I also look at Tatjana," Jabeur said. "Now she makes a good run, and she doesn't have points."

A player such as the 103rd-ranked Maria loses out on the jump she would have received for faring so well a year after missing Wimbledon because she had just given birth.

And players who did well at

the event a year ago do not get the chance to "defend" those points. The 2,000 earned by Novak Djokovic for his 2021 championship, for example, will simply drop off his record next week with zero replenishment, even if he ends up with the title again.

Returning a season later to the site of success can weigh on athletes who are well aware that those year-old points are about to disappear.

"That's inevitable. And if you don't think about it, people remind you," said Tamara Zidansek, a 24-year-old Slovenian who reached the French Open semifinals while ranked No. 85 in 2021.

That was the main reason for her rise to a career-best No. 22; she is down to No. 60 after losing in the third round in Paris in 2022.

"It's probably different for everyone, but I spend a lot of time thinking about the rankings," said Taylor Fritz, the highest-ranked U.S. man at No. 13 entering Wimbledon, who won't get the significant bump that his quarterfinals appearance Wednesday usually would bring. "It's a big part of my goals to be in the top 10, top five."

A vocal critic of the ban and the tours' response, Djokovic

estimates "90-plus percent of the players who are playing in this tournament, and the ones that are not playing, are going to be more affected by" the zero-points situation than he will.

So true. Rankings are a "benchmark," as 2021 U.S. Open semifinalist Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada put it.

As he also noted, they're so much more. Endorsement deals can be tied to the rankings. Favorable seedings, which might make a path through a bracket easier, come via the rankings. Access to the main draws at tournaments are based on the rankings.

"That's how the system is," said Auger-Aliassime, who lost in the first round last week, "and you have to accept early in your career that's how it's going to be."

Players are well aware how easy — and unhealthy — it can be to become rankings-obsessed.

"I stopped looking at points and rankings because I felt like that wouldn't help me," said Denis Shapovalov, a semifinalist last year at Wimbledon who has been in the top 10 and now is No. 16. "I just taught myself to only look at my game and how I can improve and where I'm at level-wise."

Tempestuous Kyrgios reaches Wimbledon semifinals

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Give Nick Kyrgios credit for honesty: Even he did not think this day ever would arrive, the talented, tempestuous Australian is a semifinalist at Wimbledon.

Kyrgios became the first unseeded and lowest-ranked man to get to the final four at the All England Club since 2008 by playing what, for him, amounts to a restrained and efficient brand of tennis in a 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (5) victory over Chile's Cristian Garin at No. 1 Court on Wednesday.

"I thought my ship had sailed," the 27-year-old said. "Obviously, I didn't go about things great early in my career and may

have wasted that little window. But just really proud of the way I've just come back out here."

Kyrgios, who is ranked 40th, has garnered more attention for his behavior on and off the court than his skills with a racket in hand. His match against the unseeded Garin, a 26-year-old, came a day after police in Canberra, Australia, said that Kyrgios is due in court next month to face an allegation of common assault stemming from something that happened in December.

After his first-round victory at Wimbledon last week, Kyrgios was fined \$10,000 for spitting in the direction of a heckling spectator. His third-round victory over No. 4 seed

Stefanos Tsitsipas was as contentious as can be, and Kyrgios was fined another \$4,000 for an audible obscenity; afterward, Tsitsipas called him a "bully" and "evil."

In Friday's semifinals, Kyrgios will face either No. 2 seed Rafael Nadal or No. 11 Taylor Fritz. The other semifinal will be No. 1 Novak Djokovic against No. 9 Cam Norrie.

The women's semifinals Thursday will be 2019 champion Simona Halep against No. 17 Elena Rybakina, and No. 3 Ons Jabeur against unseeded Tatjana Maria.

Halep advanced by eliminating No. 20 Amanda Anisimova of the United States 6-2, 6-4, and Rybakina came back to defeat Ajla Tomljanovic 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Sharks hire Grier as NHL's first Black GM

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — The San Jose Sharks' three-month search for a general manager ended with a barrier-breaking hire as the team made longtime NHL forward Mike Grier the first Black GM in league history.

"It means a lot to me," Grier said at his introductory news conference Tuesday. "It's not something I take lightly. I realize there's a responsibility that comes with the territory. But I'm up for it. How I carry myself and how this organization carries himself, I think we'll do well and hopefully we'll leave a footprint and open some doors for people to follow."

Grier fills the spot that opened when Doug Wilson stepped away for health reasons on April 7. Wilson had taken a leave of absence in November with Joe Will serving in the interim role since then.

Team President Jonathan Becher said Grier emerged from a pool of dozens of candidates because of his experience as a player, scout, coach and executive over the last few decades and his commitment to building a winning culture in San Jose.

But he acknowledged the history-making nature of the hire as well.

"I hope you do serve as an inspiration to lots of people and that I hope you're the

first and certainly not the last," Becher told Grier.

Grier spent three of his 14 seasons in the NHL with the Sharks from 2006-09. He retired in 2011 after playing 1,060 career games, and has spent time as a scout in Chicago, an assistant coach in New Jersey and most recently the hockey operations advisor for the New York Rangers, where he was given many of the responsibilities of an assistant general manager.

The hire comes less than a week after Will announced that head coach Bob Boughner and three of his assistants wouldn't return next season. Will said he made the move two months after the season ended to give the new general manager a clean slate. Grier has a tough task in San Jose in trying to rebuild a team that has missed the playoffs for three straight seasons for the first time in franchise history.

Grier will have to get to work quickly, dealing with the draft Thursday and Friday, the start of free agency next week and the need to hire a coaching staff and build up the front office.

Grier said the draft and free agency are the immediate priorities as well as trying to create more salary cap flexibility if possible before he turns to the coaching search.

"I just think that's a challenge to try to

get everything in order as quickly as possible, but still doing it the right way and being thorough," he said. "It's all a challenge but everything I'm looking forward to."

Grier said he's not interested in tearing the team down and doing a complete rebuild but acknowledged taking one step back to move forward may be necessary.

San Jose has many high-priced veterans on the roster and could look to either trade defensemen Brent Burns or Erik Karlsson or buy out defenseman Marc-Edouard Vlasic to create more flexibility.

"It's definitely a balance," Grier said. "I don't want to get ahead of myself and be the kid in a candy store and be like 'I can go get this. I can go get that.' We've got to stay patient and stick with the vision that we believe in and not rush things. I think we'll set a path and stay the course and not rush anything and get ahead of ourselves and end up digging a hole that we can't get out of in the future."

Grier comes from a family of successful sports executives. His brother, Chris, serves as general manager of the NFL's Miami Dolphins, and his father, Bobby, served as a longtime coach and front office executive for the New England Patriots and Houston Texans.

Woods looks at British Open as historic opportunity

Associated Press

The British Open is scheduled for Royal Liverpool, Royal Troon and Royal Portrush over the next three years. The Old Course at St. Andrews typically is used every five years.

That adds to the perspective of Tiger Woods playing this year.

When he said Tuesday that "this is a pretty historic Open," Woods just as well could have been talking about himself as the 150th anniversary of golf's oldest championship.

"I'm lucky enough to be part of the past champions that have won there, and want to play there again, and I don't know when they are ever going to go back while I'm still able to play at a high level," Woods said at the J.P. McManus Pro-Am in Ireland. "I want to be able to give it at least one more run at a high level."

Woods won in 2000 by eight shots to complete the career Grand Slam at age 24. He won again in 2005 to complete a different kind of slam. Each time Jack Nicklaus

played a major for the last time, Woods won.

He is 46 and still walking gingerly at times from his right leg and ankle being pieced back together following his February 2021 car crash outside of Los Angeles.

Woods returned to play the Masters and PGA Championship, both times making the cut, though he withdrew after the third round at Southern Hills. He skipped the U.S. Open, though not necessarily by choice.

"The plan was to play the U.S. Open, but physically I was not able to do that," Woods said at Adare Manor. "There's no way physically I could have done that. I had some issues with my leg and it would have put this tournament in jeopardy, and so there's no reason to do that."

That he is even playing is remarkable considering the nature of his injuries, particularly the threat of having part of his leg amputated, which doctors were able to avoid. He has no idea how much longer he can play, or at least compete. Woods is unlikely to tee it up after the British Open until

December, either at his Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas or what has become his fifth major, the PNC Championship with son Charlie.

"If you asked me last year whether I would play golf again, all of my surgeons would have said, 'No,'" Woods said. "Now if you say, 'Play at a championship level,' well, that window is definitely not as long as I would like it to be."

Branden Grace of South Africa, coming off a \$4 million prize from winning the LIV Golf event in Oregon, was among those with LIV contracts who were added to the Scottish Open field. He joins Ian Poulter, Adrian Otaegui and Justin Harding, who won a temporary stay from European tour suspensions.

Will that lead to awkward moments? Not really. The European tour put Harding and Otaegui as a twosome in the first tee time of the tournament, which starts Thursday. Poulter and Grace play as a twosome in the first group out Thursday afternoon.

Reds squeak past Mets on sac fly in 9th

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The New York Mets wasted a stellar performance by Max Scherzer in his return from an oblique injury, losing 1-0 to the Cincinnati Reds on Mike Moustakas' game-ending sacrifice fly on Tuesday night.

Scherzer struck out 11 while pitching six innings of two-hit ball in his first big league start since May 18.

"I felt great," he said. "No issues whatsoever today. Felt strong all the way through. (The oblique) never tightened up on me, so that's a good thing."

Reds rookie Nick Lodolo combined with four relievers on a six-hitter. Lodolo struck out eight in 4⅓ innings in his return from a back injury.

Hunter Strickland (2-2) got three outs for the win against the NL East leaders.

Tommy Pham led off the ninth with a double into the right-field corner against Seth

Lugo (1-2). After two walks, Moustakas' deep fly ball to center drove in Pham.

"It is kind of how you want to draw it up when you're coming up to win the game," Moustakas said. "You just get a pitch to hit and don't miss it."

Astros 9, Royals 7: Yordan Alvarez threw out Hunter Dozier at the plate from just short of the warning track in left field to preserve a two-run, eighth-inning lead, then hit his 25th homer as host Houston beat Kansas City.

Marlins 2, Angels 1: Sandy Alcantara pitched eight dominant innings and host Miami beat Los Angeles for its sixth straight win.

Orioles 10, Rangers 9 (10): Cedric Mullins doubled home the winning run in the 10th inning and host Baltimore beat Texas in a wild game that featured several comebacks and clutch home runs.

Phillies 11, Nationals 0: Kyle Schwarber homered

twice, running his NL-best total to 25, and Philadelphia routed visiting Washington.

Pirates 5, Yankees 2: Rookie outfielder Jack Suwinski hit his 14th home run, Daniel Vogelbach added his 11th and host Pittsburgh beat New York.

Braves 7, Cardinals 1: Austin Riley homered and drove in three runs, Ian Anderson allowed one run in a bounce-back start and host Atlanta beat struggling St. Louis.

Twins 8, White Sox 2: Alex Kirilloff hit two of Minnesota's five homers and Jorge Polanco went deep on his birthday for the second time in a win at Chicago.

Dodgers 5, Rockies 2: Max Muncy and Mookie Betts hit first-pitch home runs to power host Los Angeles past last-place Colorado.

Mariners 6, Padres 2: Logan Gilbert (10-3) tied for the major league lead in wins, Sam Haggerty homered and Seattle

won at San Diego.

Cubs 8, Brewers 3: Seiya Suzuki homered for the second straight night as Chicago overcame Kyle Hendricks' early exit and won at Milwaukee.

Rays 8, Red Sox 4: Kevin Kiermaier hit an early three-run double and broke a tie with an RBI grounder during a four-run sixth inning that sent Tampa Bay to a win at Boston.

Tigers 11, Guardians 4: Riley Greene and Victor Reyes drove in three runs apiece, Eric Haase blasted a two-run homer and host Detroit pounded Cleveland.

Athletics 5, Blue Jays 3: Stephen Piscotty homered, Adrián Martínez struck out five over five solid innings and Oakland beat visiting Toronto.

Diamondbacks 6, Giants 2: Daulton Varsho hit a three-run homer in the eighth inning after Josh Rojas caused problems with his speed, and host Arizona extended San Francisco's losing streak to six games.

Driver meltdown at Mid-Ohio left Andretti furious

Associated Press

Michael Andretti acknowledged Tuesday that the meltdown of his IndyCar team at Mid-Ohio was unacceptable and said his four drivers will be expected to work together as teammates the remainder of the season.

Andretti led an emergency meeting after Sunday's race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, where a fracture in the Andretti Autosport lineup was fully revealed.

Romain Grosjean and Alexander Rossi played bumper cars in a race for position that turned personal. Rossi also hit rookie teammate Devlin DeFrancesco, Grosjean hit Colton Herta and IndyCar penalized both Rossi and Grosjean for avoidable contact.

After the race, team owner

Andretti was seen having a heated conversation with Rossi's father, and he pulled all four drivers inside to discuss the debacle.

"Our race results in Mid-Ohio did not go as planned. Sunday's display was disappointing and unacceptable and not the way we operate — on or off the track," Andretti said Tuesday in a statement provided to The Associated Press.

"Racing is a passionate sport and we have four highly competitive drivers; however, we are one team at Andretti and our drivers need to remember that we expect them to work together for the betterment of the team. That's the way it will be going forward."

Grosjean raced for nearly a decade in Formula One before his time in the series ended in

a 2020 crash from which he escaped from the burning wreckage of his car, earning the nickname "The Phoenix." He switched to IndyCar the next season and overperformed while driving for Dale Coyne Racing, which helped the Frenchman land a better seat at front-runner Andretti Autosport.

Rossi decided earlier this year that his seventh season with Andretti would be his last. The winner of the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500 in 2016 has signed with Arrow McLaren SP for 2023.

Grosjean and Rossi raced against each other five times in F1 in 2015, when Rossi got a handful of starts driving for Manor Marussia. Grosjean finished 13th and Rossi was 14th in Rossi's F1 debut. Rossi's

time in F1 ran out at the end of that season and he's been with Andretti since.

He and Grosjean don't care for each other, and Grosjean didn't back down following the Mid-Ohio postrace lecture from the boss. Grosjean called Rossi "an absolute idiot" afterward.

Rossi stressed that he was committed to working as part of the Andretti organization through the remaining seven races, but declined to comment further.

The Andretti organization has just one win so far this season — Herta on the road course at Indianapolis Motor Speedway — and Rossi at eighth is the highest-ranked Andretti driver in the standings. Grosjean has one podium finish and is ranked 14th.