

## China crafts near Taiwan amid Yellen visit

*Associated Press*

BEIJING — China's army sent 13 aircraft and 6 vessels into airspace and waters around Taiwan over 24 hours as of early Saturday, overlapping with United States Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's visit to Beijing aimed at mending strained relations.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said it is monitoring the situation from the air and sea, and land-based missile systems were prepared to respond. It said four Chinese aircraft — two SU-30 fighters, one BZK-005 reconnaissance plane and one Y-8 anti-submarine warfare plane — crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait that serves as a de-facto border between the sides, and had entered Taiwan's southwestern air defense identification zone.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary and sends air and naval missions on virtually a daily basis in an attempt to wear down the island's defense capabilities and intimidate its 23 million people, who thus far seem largely unfazed by such moves.

U.S. support for the self-governing island republic that split from mainland China amid civil war in 1949 remains a major irritant in relations with Beijing.

Shortly before Yellen's arrival, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the headquarters of the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater on Thursday. Its area of operations directly faces the island across the Taiwan Strait.

Addressing commanders at the Jiangsu province headquarters, Xi "stressed

efforts to ... break new ground for theater command development and war preparedness," state media reported.

He called for "enhancing the planning of war and combat ... and stepping up training under real combat conditions to raise the forces' capabilities to fight and win," the reports said.

The PLA, the world's largest standing armed force, serves as the military wing of the Communist Party and is overseen by a committee headed by Xi.

Beijing also objects vigorously to United States military support for Taiwan, and lashed out Wednesday at an upcoming \$440 million sale of cannon shells and other equipment, accusing the U.S. of turning Taiwan into a powder keg.

Yellen is not expected to meet with Xi during her visit.

## Pilot looks forward to tour at helm of Italy base

**By ALISON BATH**

*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — The opportunity of a lifetime almost didn't happen for Capt. John Randazzo.

A few years ago, the decorated Navy helicopter pilot and squadron leader, whose 24-year career spans deployments to the Middle East and service at the Pentagon, was pondering retirement.

Leading a helicopter squadron through the first half of the pandemic and later fulfilling an important but less dynamic role in Washington had left him exhausted and uncertain.

But a conversation with his wife, Laura, brought clarity and Randazzo realized he wasn't quite ready to leave the Navy. A new job on the chief of naval operations' staff as executive assistant to the director of naval air warfare revitalized him.

"I felt that fire again, like I

can make a difference," Randazzo said during an interview last week.

On Friday, Randazzo relieved Capt. James Stewart to become the 36th commander of Naval Support Activity Naples, the service's largest installation in Italy. The hourlong ceremony was overseen by Rear Adm. Brad Collins, commander of Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central.

"This is going to be my most challenging tour, for sure, and the place I can make the biggest impact," said Randazzo, who joined the service in 1995 at 17 and spent a year at the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School before advancing to the academy.

Taking the job wasn't a hard decision.

The mission was ideal, he thought, allowing him to apply the management skills he had refined in supporting service

members and their families, among many responsibilities.

Naples also was the unanimous choice of his wife and two teenage children, who are experiencing their first overseas tour.

He is eager to try his hand at Italian cooking and woodworking, and visit the Sicilian town that shares his surname.

"This tour is a good match point for all of that," said Randazzo, whose grandfather served as an enlisted sailor in Naples in 1946.

It's a big assignment, he acknowledged. The base includes Capodichino, an administrative site near Naples International Airport, as well as family housing, schools and other services at Support Site, about 15 miles away.

A recreation area in nearby Pozzuoli, a port facility in Gaeta and responsibilities at Allied Joint Force Command Naples

also are part of his new role. NSA Naples is home to U.S. 6th Fleet, among 55 commands.

Randazzo said he'll spend his first months on the job building relationships with sailors, staff and others, a process that will help build the trust needed to fulfill the base's mission.

The effort includes empowering people to ask challenging questions, he said.

Friday's ceremony also capped a 26-year Navy career for Stewart, who had commanded the base since June 2020. Stewart steered the base and its more than 10,000 American and Italian personnel through the COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. response in Italy to more than 4,300 Afghan refugees, among other accomplishments.

"For any other commander this might have seemed an overwhelming task but (Stewart is) one of the Navy's best," Collins said.

# Marine set for top adviser post at Pentagon

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Troy Black, the top enlisted Marine, will become the Pentagon's highest ranking enlisted service member, the Defense Department announced Friday.

Black, a 35-year Marine who has served in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, will become the fifth senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or SEAC, according to the Pentagon. Black was selected by Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, for the position, which provides advice and insights on the enlisted force to the top U.S. general and the Pentagon's top civilian leaders.

Black will replace SEAC Ramon "CZ" Colon-Lopez, who is slated to retire Nov. 3 after 33 years in the Air Force. Colon-Lopez has held the SEAC job since December 2019.

Black has served as the sergeant major of the Marine Corps since 2019, during a stretch of time that saw great change in that service. During Black's time as the top Marine, the service eliminated the Corps' tank units and pivoted toward preparing for expeditionary fights after it spent some two decades conducting land wars.

Originally an infantry machine gunner, Black has served at every enlisted level in the Marine Corps, according to his official biography. He deployed in 1989 aboard the USS Forrester supercarrier in support of Operation Just Cause in Panama. One year later, Black deployed to Kuwait with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

He served two tours at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., as a drill instructor and senior drill instructor before combat deployments to Iraq and

Afghanistan, according to his biography. He deployed twice to Iraq between 2003 and 2006 with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines. He then served two deployments to Afghanistan between 2009 and 2011 as the sergeant major for the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines.

Black was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor in 2010 for actions in Afghanistan. He was credited with running several hundred yards through an uncleared area to rescue the remains of a fallen Marine who had been killed by an improvised explosive device. The Bronze Star citation credited him with routinely braving enemy fire during that deployment to lead his Marines from the front on some 50 missions.

Black's "boldness under fire continually imbued his Marines with confidence and a steady resolve," his award citation reads. "He consistently demonstrated a sincere dedication to his Marines

and sailors and inspired them to overcome incredible challenges to accomplish their mission."

The Bronze Star is not Black's only valor award. He has also received a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with "V" device for combat valor, according to the Marine Corps.

Black will become the second Marine to serve as the SEAC. Retired Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia held that job from 2011 to 2015. Two Army sergeant majors have served as SEAC. No service members from the Navy or Space Force have held the job. Colon-Lopez is the only airman to have held the post.

When he takes the top enlisted job at the Pentagon, Black will likely work alongside Air Force Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown, who was nominated by President Joe Biden in May to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Milley is expected to retire by October.

## Russian fighter jets harass US drones over Syria for 3rd day

*Associated Press*

BEIRUT — Russian fighter jets have "harassed" American drones over Syria for a third day in a row, the U.S. military said.

Tension between Russian and U.S. troops is not uncommon in Syria as both countries conduct patrols on the ground as well as overflights. Syria's 12-year conflict has left half a million people dead and over 1 million wounded.

The U.S. military said in a statement that Friday's encounter lasted for about two hours, during which three MQ-9 drones were "once again harassed" by Russian fighter aircraft while flying over Syria.

"Russian aircraft flew 18 unprofessional close passes that caused the MQ-9s to react to avoid unsafe situations," Lt. Gen. Alex

Grynkewich, head of U.S. Air Forces Central Command, said.

Rear Adm. Oleg Gurinov, head of the Russian Reconciliation Center for Syria, said last week that the Russian and Syrian militaries have started a six-day joint training that ends Monday. Gurinov added in comments carried by Syrian state media that Moscow is concerned about the flights of drones by the U.S.-led coalition over northern Syria, calling them "systematic violations of protocols" designed to avoid clashes between the two militaries.

On Friday, a drone attack by the U.S.-led coalition killed a man in northern Syria who was riding a motorcycle. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the man was an ISIS militant.

## Japanese forces recover unexploded WWII shells

By KEISHI KOJA  
*Stars and Stripes*

ITOMAN, Okinawa — Hundreds of unexploded, U.S.-made shells believed to date to the Battle of Okinawa have been recovered from a small island by the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

Eleven members of the 101st Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit, assisted by 10 members of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, collected 420 shells Wednesday and another 160 Thursday from Okahajima, a spokesman for the Ground Self-Defense Force's 15th Brigade told Stars and Stripes by phone Friday.

Okahajima, a half-mile from Itoman city, is a small island

popular with kayakers.

The shells were mostly 3.5- and 3-inch rounds and white phosphorus bombs. The work was complete by noon Friday, the spokesman said.

Japanese police and the Self-Defense Force discovered the shells in February after tourists reported smoke on the island, the brigade spokesman said. Some government spokespeople in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

The spokesman said the removal went forward "without any trouble" and the collected shells were taken to a Ground Self-Defense Force base. They will be detonated or disposed of at a later date.

# Yellen: DC may address curbs' impact on China

Associated Press

BEIJING — Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Sunday said she agreed Washington will listen to Chinese complaints about security-related curbs on U.S. technology exports and might “respond to unintended consequences” as she ended a visit to Beijing aimed at reviving strained relations.

Yellen defended “targeted measures” on trade that China’s leaders complain are aimed at hurting its fledgling tech industries. She said the Biden administration wants to “avoid unneces-

sary repercussions” but gave no indication of possible changes.

Relations between the two biggest economies are at their lowest level in decades due to disputes about technology, security and other irritants. A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology on security grounds that threaten to hamper the ruling Communist Party’s development of smartphones, artificial intelligence and other industries.

“We will open up channels so that they can express concerns

about our actions, and we can explain and possibly in some situations respond to unintended consequences of our actions,” Yellen said at a news conference.

Yellen talked with China’s No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials during 10 hours of meetings. She had a five-hour session Saturday with her Chinese counterpart, Vice Premier He Lifeng. Treasury officials said in advance there were no plans for her to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Yellen received a warm welcome and prominent coverage

by the state press, but Chinese officials gave no sign they would change industrial or other policies that Washington and other governments have said violate Beijing’s free-trade commitments. On Saturday, He said Washington should “adopt a rational and pragmatic attitude” to improve relations.

On Sunday, Yellen announced no agreements on major disputes or plans for future activity but said her department and Chinese officials would have “more frequent and regular” communication.

## 1/6 rioter with guns near Obama home is veteran

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

The man arrested last month with multiple firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition near the Washington, D.C., home of former President Barack Obama is a Navy veteran who served in combat in Iraq, the service said Friday.

Taylor Franklin Taranto, 37, served in the sea service from 2004 to 2010 and earned a Combat Action Ribbon while serving on a deployment to Iraq, Navy records show. The Combat Action Ribbon is awarded to Marines, sailors and Coast Guard members “who have actively participated in ground or surface combat,” according to the services.

Taranto, who is from Washington state, was captured by Washington Metropolitan police June 29 in the neighborhood where the former president and his wife, Michelle, live. The veteran was arrested after Secret Service agents observed him walking near a restricted area close to the Obamas’ home, according to federal prosecutors. A search of the van in which Taranto had been living and parked near the Obamas’ home turned up at least two

firearms, a machete, “hundreds of rounds of nine-millimeter ammunition,” and bomb-making materials, according to court documents.

Taranto was also wanted on four misdemeanor charges related to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection in which he was accused of unlawfully entering the U.S. Capitol. Prosecutors intend to charge him with felony counts, they told a judge during a hearing Thursday, CNN reported. The prosecutors did not reveal the specific charges Taranto might face.

Prosecutors alleged Taranto had made threats online against House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., according to CNN. Raskin is a prominent lawmaker involved in the House investigation into former President Donald Trump’s actions on Jan. 6, 2021.

CNN also reported Taranto was part of a group of people who entered an elementary school near Raskin’s Maryland home, walked throughout the school and used a projector to “display a film related to Jan. 6.” Prosecutors said Taranto had livestreamed the incident online.

## Crews battle cargo ship blaze after at least 2 firefighters die

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Fire crews on Saturday continued to battle flames that have smoldered inside a cargo ship docked at the East Coast’s biggest port, days after the blaze claimed the lives of two New Jersey firefighters and injured five others.

Newark firefighters Augusto “Augie” Acabou and Wayne “Bear” Brooks Jr. were killed in the Wednesday night fire aboard the Grande Costa d’Avorio, an Italian-flagged vessel carrying thousands of vehicles and other goods that was at port in Newark.

Marine firefighting specialists made considerable progress after “actively conducting fire suppression both pier-side and on the water,” the Coast Guard said in a statement.

“As of Saturday afternoon, the fire is contained on the 11th deck and is being suppressed and no longer spreading to other areas of the vessel,” the statement said.

Officials said fire crews arriving at about 9:30 p.m. Wednesday reported a blaze in the rear of the ship on the 10th to 12th levels. About an hour later, a mayday call was issued after a firefighter became trapped inside, and a second mayday call was issued for another firefighter.

Acabou, a firefighter for more than nine years, was rescued from the ship before midnight and was later taken to a hospital, where he died Thursday morning. Brooks, a firefighter for more than 16 years, died early Thursday morning after he was recovered. Gov. Phil Murphy ordered flags to fly at half-staff in the honor of the two, who were remembered by friends and family at a memorial service Friday.

Officials said five other firefighters were injured, one suffering “steam burns from water accumulated on the cargo ship’s floor” and the other four — two from Newark and two from neighboring Elizabeth — experiencing such things as heat exhaustion, smoke inhalation and respiratory distress. Public safety officials said all three Newark fire captains were released from the hospital and the burn victim was in stable condition and completing his recovery at home.

Authorities said an investigation to determine the cause of the fire can’t begin until the fire is out. Officials said “a salvage plan will be developed and implemented once the fire is extinguished and the vessel had been deemed safe to move.”



# Officials defend sending more Ukraine aid

By MATTHEW ADAMS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon announced the U.S. is sending another \$800 million in aid to assist Ukrainian forces that includes cluster munitions as U.S. officials on Friday defended providing Ukraine the controversial weapon to help their attack on entrenched Russian troops.

The new military aid also includes 64 Stryker and Bradley fighting vehicles, air-defense missiles and anti-mine equipment.

Jake Sullivan, national security adviser to President Joe Biden, left the formal announcement Friday to the Pentagon about sending cluster munitions to Ukraine. But he acknowledged during a White House

briefing that this has been a difficult decision and defended the use of the weapon as Ukraine is running out of artillery rounds and Russian forces have been using cluster bombs since the beginning of the war.

"Ukraine would not be using these munitions in some foreign land," Sullivan said. "This is their country they're defending. These are their citizens they're protecting and they are motivated to use any weapon system they have in a way that minimizes risks to those citizens."

The announcement comes as Ukrainian forces struggle to break through Russia's front line during a counteroffensive that began last month. There is a growing sentiment among Western officials that Ukraine needs to seize on the summer

weather, conditions on the ground and any impact that the short-lived revolt last weekend by Russian mercenary forces might have done to its military cohesion. But Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, last week dismissed concerns that Ukraine's counteroffensive is moving too slow. He said he thought the initial campaign would take six weeks to 10 weeks.

"It's going to be very difficult. It's going to be very long," he said June 30 at the National Press Club in Washington. "No one should have any illusions about any of that."

Milley also said the U.S. has been thinking about providing the munitions "for a long time." He said Ukrainian forces already have used cluster bombs

received from other countries.

Cluster munitions are weapons that break open in the air and disperse smaller bomblets across a large stretch of area when detonated. Proponents of banning cluster bombs contend they kill indiscriminately and endanger civilians long after their use. The Human Rights Watch, an international advocacy group, published a report on Thursday that said both sides have used cluster munitions that have killed Ukrainian citizens and urged the U.S. not to supply them.

More than 100 countries signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2008, which bans the use, production or stockpiling of these munitions. Russia, Ukraine and the U.S. did not sign the treaty.

## NATO unity tested by potential of Ukraine's entry

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — As the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues with no end in sight, NATO's much-celebrated unity faces fresh strains when leaders gather for their annual summit this week in Vilnius, Lithuania. The world's biggest security alliance is struggling to reach an agreement on admitting Sweden as its 32nd member. Military spending by member nations lags behind long-standing goals. An inability to compromise over who should serve as NATO's next leader forced an extension of the current secretary-general's term for an extra year.

Perhaps the most difficult questions are over how Ukraine should be eased into NATO. Some maintain admitting Ukraine would fulfill a promise made years ago and

be a necessary step to deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. Others fear it would be seen as a provocation that could spiral into an even wider conflict.

"I don't think it's ready for membership in NATO," President Joe Biden told CNN in an interview airing Sunday. He said joining NATO requires countries to "meet all the qualifications, from democratization to a whole range of other issues."

He said the United States should provide long-term security assistance to Ukraine — "the capacity to defend themselves" — as it does with Israel.

Bickering among friends is not uncommon, and the current catalogue of disputes pales in comparison with past fears that Donald Trump would turn his back on the alli-

ance during his presidency. But the current challenges come at a moment when Biden and his counterparts are heavily invested in demonstrating harmony among members.

"Any fissure, any lack of solidarity provides an opportunity for those who would oppose the alliance," said Douglas Lute, U.S. ambassador to NATO under President Barack Obama.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is eager to exploit divisions as he struggles to gain ground in Ukraine and faces political challenges at home, including the aftermath of a brief revolt by the Wagner mercenary group.

"You don't want to present any openings," Lute said. "You don't want to present any gaps or seams."

## S. Korea berates OK of Fukushima wastewater release

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean opposition lawmakers sharply criticized the head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog on Sunday for its approval of Japanese plans to release treated wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant.

They met with Rafael Grossi in a tense meeting in Seoul that took place while protesters screamed outside the door.

The IAEA last week approved the Japanese discharge plans, saying the process would meet international safety standards and pose negligible environmental and health impacts. South Korea's government

has also endorsed the safety of the Japanese plans.

In his meeting with members of the liberal Democratic Party, which controls a majority in South Korea's parliament, Grossi said the IAEA's review of the Japanese plans was based on "transparent" and "scientific" research.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Fireworks target people, police in Minneapolis

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — Large groups of people used fireworks to target other people and police in Minneapolis over the Fourth of July holiday, even as police staffing doubled and the city took other measures to try and avoid such trouble.

The “brazen and reckless” discharge of fireworks didn’t result in any serious injuries, Police Chief Brian O’Hara said.

Authorities said that at 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, up to 50 teenagers and young adults shot fireworks from the Plymouth Avenue Bridge at Boom Island Park and targeted people and police officers. The 17-year-old boy who launched fireworks at a parked police squad car was arrested on suspicion of second-degree assault.

At about 12:30 a.m. Wednesday, police converged on “a large group of teens and young adults involved in a riot” in which fireworks were used to target people and officers.

At 2:38 a.m., police responded to a report of commercial-grade fireworks being launched from a vehicle “into a crowded area within feet of pedestrians” at a park. Four men were arrested.

### Science center to display space shuttle vertically

**CA** LOS ANGELES — The lengthy process of putting the retired space shuttle Endeavour on display in the vertical launch position will begin this month in Los Angeles.

The California Science Cen-

ter announced Thursday that the six-month process will get underway July 20 at the future Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center currently under construction in Exposition Park.

The initial step, dubbed “Go for Stack,” will be installation of the bottom portion of the solid rocket boosters known as aft skirts upon which will be stacked the booster segments, the external tank and then Endeavour.

The 20-story tall display will show the shuttle as it would appear waiting on a launch pad.

Endeavour was built as a replacement for the destroyed shuttle Challenger and flew 25 missions between 1992 and 2011.

### TikTok, others sue state to block banning of app

**MT** MISSOULA — TikTok Inc. and a group of five content creators who are suing the state of Montana over its law banning the video sharing app are now asking a federal judge to block implementation of the law while the case moves through the courts.

The separate requests for preliminary injunctions were filed in federal court in Missoula. The cases challenging the law were filed in May and have since been consolidated by U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy.

Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen had the bill drafted over concerns — shared by the FBI and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken — that the app, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, could be used to allow the Chinese government to access in-

formation on U.S. citizens or push pro-Beijing misinformation that could influence the public. TikTok has said none of this has ever happened.

### Hackers admit sending hoax UConn message

**CT** STORRS — A shadowy hacking group has taken responsibility for breaching the University of Connecticut’s network and sending an email to the community that claimed the school’s president had died.

The hoax email went to everyone on the school’s undergraduate listserv informing students of the “Unfortunate Passing of Radenka Maric.”

A hacking group called “SiegedSec” claimed responsibility. The group has also claimed responsibility for hacking government websites in several states that it said on its Telegram channel were targeted for acting to ban gender-affirming care.

In an online chat interview with The Hartford Courant, a person claiming to be the group’s leader said the UConn break-in was not political. Instead, he did it “for the lulz,” the pure hacker pleasure of showing it could be done.

### Settlement reached in gambling violations case

**ND** BISMARCK — North Dakota’s attorney general announced a settlement with three gambling equipment distributors he accused in April of violating the state’s charitable gambling laws and regulations.

The settlement includes a

\$125,000 fine and acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

Attorney General Drew Wrigley in April filed an administrative complaint accusing Western Distributing Co., Plains Gaming Distributing Inc. and Midwest Gaming Distributing Inc. of facilitating excessive rent payments and attempting to influence bars’ charitable gambling activities through the Wall of Honor veterans nonprofit.

Wrigley had alleged a scheme involving the Wall of Honor was an enticement to get bars to use electronic pull tab machines provided exclusively by the three distributors, and to influence bars to switch charitable gambling organizations, The Bismarck Tribune reported.

### Police officer rescues cows from burning barn

**WI** STURGEON BAY — A Wisconsin police officer who ran into a burning barn and found three cows near flames says the bovines “made a beeline” for the safety of a pasture once he opened a gate holding them back.

Sturgeon Bay police officer Andrew Crabb was nearing the end of his overnight shift when he spotted smoke coming from a barn at a farm. He stopped, dashed across a field and entered the barn, finding the cows trapped and mooing in distress.

Police body camera video shows Crabb entering the barn, with flames near the animals. After he removes a chain from the gate, Crabb says “come on guys” and the cows quickly make their way out of the barn.

— From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# Three Tigers combine to no-hit Jays

Associated Press

DETROIT — Matt Manning wasn't upset about being pulled while pitching a no-hitter.

He said he didn't even realize it until someone told him in the dugout.

"I had no idea," he said. "I was like, 'Well, dang,'"

By the time the game was over, everyone at Comerica Park knew what Manning and relievers Jason Foley and Alex Lange had achieved.

Foley and Lange finished what Manning started, and the Tigers no-hit the Toronto Blue

Jays in a 2-0 win on Saturday.

Manning (3-1) pitched 6½ innings and Foley got four straight outs.

Lange, the Tigers closer, came in for the ninth and struck out Bo Bichette on three pitches. Brandon Belt lined out to center field, and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. grounded out to third on an 0-2 pitch.

It was the ninth no-hitter in Tigers history and the first combined one. It was the first no-hitter for the franchise since Spencer Turnbull no-hit the Seattle Mariners on May 18, 2021. De-

troit no-hit the Blue Jays for the second time — Justin Verlander did it at Toronto on May 7, 2011.

Verlander also pitched the most recent no-hitter against the Blue Jays, doing it for Houston on Sept. 1, 2019.

It's second no-hitter in the majors this season after Domingo Germán's perfect game for the New York Yankees at Oakland on June 28. The last combined no-hitter in the regular season was by the Houston Astros against the Yankees on June 25, 2022, and the Astros repeated the feat — again with

Cristian Javier as the starting pitcher — against the Philadelphia Phillies in Game 4 of the World Series on Nov. 2.

The Tigers celebrated at the mound with Manning and Foley joining the crowd.

"How about that, Detroit?" Lange yelled to the crowd while being interviewed on the field with Manning, Foley and catcher Eric Haase. "Thank you for sitting through the rain to cheer for us."

Manning was replaced after walking Cavan Biggio with two outs in the seventh.

## Reds' De La Cruz steals three bases in one inning

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Elly De La Cruz became the first Reds player since 1919 to steal second, third and home in the same inning, the latest electrifying play from the franchise-changing rookie, and Cincinnati beat the Milwaukee Brewers 8-5 on Saturday.

De La Cruz broke a 5-5 tie in the seventh inning with a two-out RBI single off Elvis Peguero, then made the reliever's life miserable in a span of two pitches. He stole second on a 1-1 offering from Peguero (1-2). On the next pitch, De La Cruz swiped third without a throw.

The rattled reliever caught the ball from catcher William Contreras in front of the mound and turned his back as he walked slowly toward the rubber. Pausing only to put his helmet back on, De La Cruz walked down the third base line, broke into a sprint and easily beat Peguero's rushed throw to the plate.

De La Cruz bounced up in jubilation and skipped toward the dugout, leaping to high-five his teammates. After Joey Votto made the last out, Peguero was booed off the field.

De La Cruz became the sec-

ond player since the expansion era started in 1961 to steal three bases in a single plate appearance. Minnesota's Rod Carew achieved the feat on May 18, 1969, with Harmon Killebrew at the plate in the third inning with Detroit's Mickey Lolich on the mound and Bill Freehan behind the plate.

The last player to steal all three bases in the same inning was Miami's Jon Berti in a 3-0 win at the New York Mets on Aug. 25, 2020.

The surging Reds, who were 27-33 when De La Cruz was promoted from the minors on June 6, improved to 23-7 since and expanded their lead over Milwaukee in the NL Central to two games.

**Braves 6, Rays 1:** All-Star Spencer Strider struck out 11 and won his seventh straight decision as majors-leading Atlanta beat host Tampa Bay for its 20th victory in 22 games.

**Dodgers 10, Angels 5:** All-Star Mookie Betts hit his 10th leadoff homer — tying the most in the first half in major league history — and the host Dodgers hit five homers for the second straight game in a win over the slumping Angels,

who have lost 10 straight in the Freeway Series.

**Astros 3, Mariners 2:** Martín Maldonado hit a tiebreaking solo home run in the eighth inning to send host Houston past Seattle.

**Guardians 10, Royals 6:** Top prospect Gavin Williams struck out seven in 5½ innings for his first victory in the majors and brothers Bo and Josh Naylor drove in two runs apiece as host Cleveland beat Kansas City and moved into first place in the AL Central.

**Yankees 6, Cubs 3:** Giancarlo Stanton hit a homer in the first inning and added a two-run shot after a video review in the fifth, leading host New York past Chicago.

**Orioles 6, Twins 2:** Adam Frazier had a two-run single in a six-run second inning and Tyler Wells worked six solid innings as visiting Baltimore beat Minnesota.

**Cardinals 3, White Sox 0:** Miles Mikolas pitched seven efficient innings, Jordan Walker hit a solo homer in the ninth inning and visiting St. Louis beat Chicago.

**Diamondbacks 3, Pirates 2 (10):** Corbin Carroll singled with the bases loaded in the

10th inning for NL West-leading Arizona in a win over visiting Pittsburgh.

**Marlins 5, Phillies 3:** Jorge Soler homered and hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly as Miami ended Philadelphia's franchise-record tying 13-game road winning streak.

**Red Sox 10, Athletics 3:** Jarren Duran and Alex Verdugo hit two-run homers, and Masataka Yoshida had his sixth consecutive multi-hit game in host Boston's win over MLB-worst Oakland.

**Giants 5, Rockies 3:** Michael Conforto and Austin Slater hit two-run homers to lead host San Francisco past Colorado.

**Nationals 8, Rangers 3:** Jeimer Candelario and Joey Meneses hit back-to-back home runs in the first inning, Alex Call also went deep and host Washington snapped a five-game skid with a win over AL West-leading Texas.

**Padres 3, Mets 1:** Blake Snell allowed one hit and struck out 11 in six shutout innings, Matthew Batten hit a two-run shot for his first homer in the majors and host San Diego halted New York's winning streak at six games.



# No. 1 Alcaraz won't fret about humility

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Let other players downplay their championship chances at Wimbledon. Let other players profess — feign? — humility. Let other players express caution in Week 1 that it's still way too early to be talking about the possibility of reaching the final at the end of the fortnight.

Carlos Alcaraz is not interested in any of that. He is No. 1 in the ATP rankings and No. 1 in the seedings at the All England Club and embraces that status. Every bit of it.

So on Saturday, after reaching the fourth round at the All England Club with a 6-3, 6-7 (6), 6-3, 7-5 victory over No. 25 Nicolas Jarry at Centre Court, when he was asked whether it comes as something of a shock to him to already be one of the faces of the Grand Slam tournament, and already one of its favorites, at the ripe old age of 20, Alcaraz shrugged.

"Well, I'm not surprised, honestly, 'cause I know my skills. I know what I'm capable of," Al-

caraz said, wearing the white bucket hat that's become his signature news conference accessory. "(It's) something that I work really hard (for): to be in that position, to be what I am right now."

And when he was asked how difficult it is to avoid thinking about a potential matchup against Novak Djokovic — owner of four consecutive trophies, and seven overall, at Wimbledon; owner of a men's-record 23 major championships in total — Alcaraz again dismissed the premise.

"Well, not only tennis fans, sports fans, want (that) final," Alcaraz said, his ever-present smile melting into a chuckle. "Myself, as well, honestly."

He then briefly, but ever so briefly, trotted out the types of things athletes are often trained to think they're "supposed" to tell the media — about how he's "really focused on the next round" ... and how the next player he'd meet produces "great tennis on grass" ... and how that'll "be really tough" ...

and blah, blah, blah — before course-correcting and returning to a more frank glimpse into his mindset.

"But obviously," said Alcaraz, who will face 2021 runner-up Matteo Berrettini for a quarterfinal berth, "my dream is to play a final here. Even better (if it) is Novak."

Soon enough, the reigning U.S. Open champion was back on a roll, discussing how he feels "really comfortable" in the grass-court event's main stadium ... how he has "a lot of confidence right now" ... how his style doesn't "change too much," no matter what the surface is ... how his flexibility and explosiveness are the two qualities of his game he's proudest of.

None of it sounded unduly arrogant. None of it seemed untrue, either. Especially when taking into account what other players say about Alcaraz.

"He's showing who he is," said Berrettini, who missed Wimbledon a year ago because he tested positive for COVID-19 and beat Alexander Zverev in

straight sets Saturday. "The first time I played him two years ago, I felt this kid is special."

No. 10 Frances Tiafoe, a 25-year-old American, was among the players whose third-round contests were affected by yet more rain Saturday: His match was early in the third set after he dropped the first two against three-time major semifinalist Grigor Dimitrov when they were sent home for the evening.

The winner of that one will go up against No. 6 Holger Rune, the 20-year-old from Denmark who saved two match points — and benefited from his foe's questionable decision to try an underarm serve at 8-all in the final tiebreaker — along the way to edging No. 31 Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 6-3, 4-6, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (10-8). Rune twice was a point from losing at 5-4 in the fifth set; then he trailed 8-5 in the first-to-10 concluding tiebreaker before racing to the finish, helped in part by taking advantage of that short serve that he punished with a winning return.

## Huggins: No resignation, demands to be reinstated

Associated Press

Bob Huggins says he never resigned as West Virginia's basketball coach following a drunken-driving arrest and wants his job back, according to a letter from his attorney to the university.

Huggins' Cleveland-based attorney, David A. Campbell, wrote to the university Friday that Huggins "never signed a resignation letter and never communicated a resignation to anyone at WVU," according to the letter, which was obtained by The Associated Press on Saturday.

The letter threatens a lawsuit if Huggins isn't reinstated. Huggins' demands were first reported by West Virginia network MetroNews.

Huggins was charged with driving under the influence in

Pittsburgh on June 16. A breath test determined Huggins' blood-alcohol content was more than twice the legal limit. His resignation was announced by the university the following night. A week later, assistant coach Josh Eilert was promoted to interim head coach for the 2023-24 season.

Campbell's letter said the university announced Huggins' resignation "based on a text message from Coach Huggins' wife" to Steve Uryasz, West Virginia's deputy athletic director.

WVU said Huggins met with his players and members of the basketball staff on June 17 "to announce that he would no longer be coaching the team." It said Huggins "clearly" communicated his resignation and retirement

in writing and that "both parties have reasonably relied on that resignation and retirement notification in a number of ways since then."

The university provided The AP with a copy of a notice sent by Huggins' wife, June, that same day. It read: "Please accept this correspondence as my formal notice of resignation as WVU Head Basketball Coach and as notice of my retirement from West Virginia University, effective immediately."

The notice was sent from an email address associated with June Huggins, with a signature indicating it was sent via iPhone. It was sent to Uryasz's email address and did not appear to be a text message, as Campbell claimed.

West Virginia athletic director Wren Baker responded an hour later by writing, "We accept your resignation and wish you the best in retirement. We appreciate your many years of dedication to WVU."

Less than an hour after that, the university released two statements. One announced Huggins' resignation.

The other was titled "A Message from Bob Huggins to the WVU Community" and began, "Today, I have submitted a letter to President Gordon Gee and Vice President and Director of Athletics Wren Baker informing them of my resignation and intention to retire as head men's basketball coach at West Virginia University effective immediately."

# Wemby Show begins, opens with circus

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The final numbers for Victor Wembanyama in his Summer League debut: nine points on 2-for-13 shooting, eight rebounds, five blocked shots, three assists.

Not on the stat sheet: countless pictures and videos captured on phones, the couple dozen times he applauded teammates, and all the autographs that a very friendly San Antonio Spurs coach named Gregg Popovich signed at half-time for kids and other fans.

The Wemby Show is underway. The outcome on Friday night doesn't matter much and will be forgotten in the next couple of days — for the record, the Spurs beat the Charlotte Hornets 76-68. But for the 17,500 people who bought tickets, most of them just to say they saw Wembanyama's first time sweating in a Spurs game uniform, it was a night to remember.

A night to remember for the No. 1 pick, too.

"Special moment," Wembanyama said. "Really special to wear that jersey for a first time. It's really an honor."

Wembanyama did a lot of things well, which can't be a surprise. He screened well. Passed well; he even had a left-handed shovel pass for an assist. Defended well at times; Charlotte's Brandon Miller, the No. 2 pick in the draft, tried a three-pointer from about five or six feet beyond the arc in the first half, and Wembanyama threw his left arm skyward and blocked it with ease. And his four-point play with 2:50 left put the Spurs up by 14, just about sealing the win.

"He's a legit 7-6," Miller said afterward, only slightly exaggerating Wembanyama's official height of 7 feet, 3½ inches. "Victor is a great guy, great off the court. He's going to have a great career, and just to see him step up to the challenge, I think that shows a lot of heart."

Wembanyama struggled with shooting and airballed a

pair of three-point tries in the fourth quarter, got moved out of the way on a few rebound opportunities, was sort of dunked on when he was trying to defend a lob to Charlotte's Kai Jones — Wembanyama couldn't reach it, and fouled Jones as he threw the ball down — and had tons of moments that he'll learn from on film.

"All in all, I think he did a good job. ... You can see his basketball IQ is elite," Spurs summer coach Matt Nielsen said.

Again, none of it mattered much, good or bad. Wembanyama's body of work in France over the last three years more than proved his enormous potential. A 30-point game or an 0-for-30 game on Friday night wouldn't have changed anything.

There were hundreds of phones pointed at the tunnel where he emerged for a six-minute warmup before the game. Some tickets went for

more than \$200 on the resale market; that's pretty much unheard of for the Summer League. Fans in Spurs jerseys — they were obviously new jerseys, since they had Wembanyama's name on them — started showing up inside the arena two games before the Spurs-Hornets matchup just to make sure they had a good seat. No. 3 draft pick Scoot Henderson played in the previous game for Portland; he came out and stood courtside for some of the second half of the Spurs game.

"I'm glad a lot of people could get to see us play," Wembanyama said.

Jerry West was courtside, as was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who'll join Wembanyama on stage at NBA Con on Saturday for a conversation between a legend and someone who is expected to become a legend.

The numbers didn't matter. Wembanyama overshadowed everyone. And everything.

The debut was a circus. Everyone expected it would be.

## Plans revealed for November in-season NBA tournament

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Coming soon: the NBA Cup.

The NBA unveiled the details Saturday of its inaugural in-season tournament, which will have a prize pool of about \$18 million and will be capped by a championship game — which won't count in the standings — in Las Vegas on Dec. 9. It's an event that NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wanted for years, giving teams a trophy to play for during the regular season.

And now, it's finally reality.

"This is a concept that has been rumbling around the league office for about 15 years," Silver said. "It's not a new concept in sports. For those that follow particularly international soccer, it's a long tradition of having in-season tourna-

ments ... so we thought, what a perfect opportunity for a global league like the NBA and it's a perfect fit for our game."

The tournament payouts for players on standard contracts will be \$500,000 apiece for those on the winning team, \$200,000 apiece for those on the runner-up, \$100,000 apiece for those on the teams that lose semifinal games and \$50,000 for those on the teams that lose in the quarterfinals.

Two-way players on any of those teams are eligible for up to half those amounts, depending on how many games they spend on a roster during the tournament.

"I can see what the aim could be," said Miami guard Josh Richardson, who follows global soccer closely and understands

the parallels Silver makes when comparing it to in-season tournaments that sport has around the world. "It gives you another chance to win something, for real. I think that's a big part."

Games will start on Nov. 3, being played mostly on Tuesdays and Fridays in November — except for Nov. 7, when the NBA will play no games to commemorate Election Day. That announcement came Saturday, and will mark the second consecutive year when the NBA has no games on that date with hopes of promoting civic awareness and engagement.

The Final Four will be in Las Vegas.

"This city knows how to host big events," Silver said.

Teams were assigned to a five-team group. They'll play

one game against each other; the six group winners will make the quarterfinals, as will the best two second-place teams from the groups.

They were chosen as follows:  
**West Group A** — Memphis, Phoenix, the Los Angeles Lakers, Utah and Portland.

**West Group B** — Denver, the Los Angeles Clippers, New Orleans, Dallas and Houston.

**West Group C** — Sacramento, Golden State, Minnesota, Oklahoma City and San Antonio.

**East Group A** — Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, Indiana and Detroit.

**East Group B** — Milwaukee, New York, Miami, Washington and Charlotte.

**East Group C** — Boston, Brooklyn, Toronto, Chicago and Orlando.