

Trump VP pick fuels European angst

Bloomberg News

When an outraged Ukrainian lawmaker berated J.D. Vance at this year's Munich Security Conference over the Republicans' blocking of aid to his country, the U.S. senator listened patiently. But Oleksiy Honcharenko couldn't change his mind.

That task will now fall to European allies and Ukrainian politicians after former President Donald Trump picked Vance as his running mate in his election campaign, in a decisive break with the U.S. foreign policy old guard.

European officials said Vance's nomination confirms their worst fears about the potential next Republican administration. It's a sign they will have to do more to prove to the U.S. that it has interest in defending the Continent through continued support for Kyiv.

Vance is "very smart, sly and cold-blooded," Honcharenko told Bloomberg on Tuesday. But his nomination is a "very difficult

scenario for us. He is very skeptical toward Ukraine and this war."

That sense of alarm may be more widespread amid calls for U.S. President Joe Biden to withdraw his candidacy just months before the presidential election, compelling foreign partners to more seriously consider the prospect of a second Trump presidency.

During his first four years in office, the Republican president threatened to wind down the U.S. contribution to NATO and hectored alliance members, especially Germany, for not spending enough on defense.

That was before the war in Ukraine, where U.S. military support has been crucial for Kyiv to stay in the fight. Vance has been a staunch critic of this approach. A recent Russian missile attack on a children's hospital in Kyiv didn't change his mind.

"It's tragic and terrible," Vance, who served with the U.S.

military in Iraq, told Bloomberg on Monday. "It doesn't change my underlying view that America doesn't have the capacity and doesn't have the interest to respond to every tragedy that exists in the world."

Vance has also been very candid about his position on Ukraine in private meetings, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

He argued that the U.S. should spend aid money it gives Kyiv on schools and hospitals at home instead of those in Ukraine, the person said.

In an April op-ed for *The New York Times*, Vance characterized the war as unwinnable due to Russia's large military-industrial capacity and the problems that Ukraine's aging population present for further rounds of mobilization.

"A defensive strategy can work" for Ukraine, he said while making clear he opposed sending Patriot missile systems that

enable the country to shoot down Russian missiles and drones.

"He takes an even more radical stance on Ukraine than Trump and wants to end military support," said Nils Schmid, the foreign affairs spokesman for the ruling Social Democrats in German parliament. "Vance owes his entire political career to Trump and would also put personal loyalty to Trump above the Constitution as vice president."

While Vance's criticism of expensive foreign entanglements shares much with U.S. isolationists, he isn't opposed to them in principle. For him, China is the biggest threat to the U.S. and needs to be prioritized accordingly.

"The thing that we need to prevent more than anything is a Chinese invasion of Taiwan," he told the Heritage Foundation in April 2023.

That provides an opening for Europe to make its case to Vance, one senior official said.

Airline's decision complicates moving pets back to US

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**

Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — An airline relied upon to send many Europe-based military families with pets back to the United States plans to stop transporting most dogs beginning next month, a decision that could mean added costs and complications at the height of the military moving season.

Lufthansa, a German airline that code shares with United Airlines on many flights from Europe, made the decision to stop accepting pet dogs starting Aug. 1 in reaction to a new U.S. rule that requires airlines to verify canine

health records.

Lufthansa is one of the primary carriers in Germany used to fly service members on permanent change of station orders back to the U.S., said Vera Flierl, an agent at the Vilseck office for Sato Travel, the agency responsible for booking official flights for military personnel.

The commercial airline is the only one used for pets during hot summer months, because they alone have temperature-controlled cargo areas among airlines the SATO office is authorized to book, she said.

"We're still waiting for something in writing where they said

either the pets which are confirmed [after Aug. 1] are still good or if they will also get canceled," Flierl said.

Service dogs will still be accepted, as required by U.S. law, Lufthansa spokesman Tal Muscal said in an emailed statement Thursday. He did not respond to a follow-up email asking whether pre-existing reservations past Aug. 1 would be honored.

Lufthansa's decision is a result of a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rule released in May.

It states that any dog imported to the U.S. starting Aug. 1 must be at least 6 months old, healthy and

microchipped. Dogs must also have proof of rabies vaccination and serologic test results from a CDC-approved laboratory.

If airlines fail to police the new requirements, they could be held responsible for shipping the animals back to the country of departure within 72 hours.

The rule is primarily focused on preventing the reintroduction of canine rabies, which was eradicated in the U.S. in 2007.

Airlines for America, an industry trade organization representing American, Delta and United Airlines, among others, on July 9 sent a letter to the CDC requesting an extension.

CENTCOM: Attacks signify ISIS regrouping

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The number of attacks claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria is on pace to more than double from last year, indicating that the terrorist group is working to regain its strength, according to U.S. Central Command.

In the first six months of the year, ISIS has claimed 153 attacks in those two countries and is “attempting to reconstitute following several years of decreased capability,” CENTCOM said in a statement Tuesday.

The statement did not include data from 2023 for comparison.

The announcement, 10 years after ISIS declared itself a caliphate and brutally ruled over territories it seized, follows tes-

timony by CENTCOM commander Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla in March blaming a surge of ISIS assaults in both countries this year on a barrage of Iran-backed attacks on U.S. forces.

Those include a Jan. 28 drone assault on a U.S. base in Jordan that killed three soldiers and injured at least 40 others.

The attacks forced Operation Inherent Resolve, the U.S.-led fight against ISIS, to “come off plan as we prioritized protecting our forces in Iraq and Syria,” Kurilla told the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 7.

“The ensuing spike in ISIS attacks demonstrates the gravity of disruptions to the international effort to permanently defeat the group,” Kurilla said.

Since the U.S.-led coalition

was formed in September 2014, it has seen success in eliminating ISIS’s grip on Iraq and Syria, although some cells remain.

Analysts also have pointed to worrisome indications that the group is resurging, particularly in central Syria.

For example, ISIS militants conducted at least 215 attacks in Syria in 2023, a 168% increase over the total in 2022, the international nonprofit Counter Extremism Project said in a March report.

“After suffering significant losses in 2021 and 2022, ISIS took on a renewed aggressive posture in 2023 — not only through carrying out more attacks on military and civilian targets in Syria, but also by reintroducing tactics that have not been com-

monplace for several years,” Gregory Waters, an analyst for the group who authored the report, said in March.

Despite the recent increases, overall ISIS-claimed attacks trended downward since at least 2019, according to a March 20 report from The Washington Institute for Far East Policy.

The report concluded that changes to U.S. posture in the region “could have far-reaching implications for global counterterrorism efforts and regional security.”

Since January, there have been 196 U.S. and coalition member operations in Iraq and Syria, resulting in the deaths of 44 ISIS operatives and the detention of 166 others, CENTCOM said.

Court voids adoption of Afghan orphan by Marine

Associated Press

A Virginia appellate court ruled Tuesday that a U.S. Marine should never have been granted an adoption of an Afghan orphan and voided the custody order he’s relied on to raise the girl for nearly three years. The decision marked a major turning point in a bitter custody battle that has international ramifications far greater than the fate of one child.

The appeals court decision dealt a significant blow in Marine Maj. Joshua Mast’s yearslong legal quest to keep the child, who was orphaned on the battlefield in Afghanistan in 2019.

Mast and his wife, Stephanie, convinced the courts in his hometown in rural Fluvanna County, Va., to grant him an adoption of the child, even though she remained in Afghanistan as the government there tracked down her extended family and reunited her with them. The family fled Af-

ghanistan with thousands of other evacuees when the Taliban took over in the summer of 2021. Once she arrived in the United States, Mast used the Fluvanna County documents to convince federal government officials to take the child from her Afghan relatives and give her to him.

She turns 5 years old this month. The Masts have insisted they are her legal parents and “acted admirably” to save a child in a desperate and dangerous situation. The Afghan family, who challenged Mast’s adoption, have not seen her for nearly three years.

The child’s fate is still in limbo: The decision by the appellate court Tuesday does not clarify who should ultimately get to raise the girl, and she remains with the Mast family for now. No government agencies involved would clarify Tuesday what the next steps might entail.

Senators to seek back pay after promotion delays

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Upcoming negotiations over an annual defense policy bill will see lawmakers debate a measure that would grant back pay to military officers whose promotions were delayed by the Senate.

The Senate Armed Services Committee’s version of the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act, which was filed last week, attempts to rectify the financial damage caused by a monthslong hold on promotions Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., initiated last year.

The House version of the bill, which passed the chamber last month, makes no such effort.

Senators said they will fight in the coming months to secure language in the compromise version of the legislation that gives the more than 400 senior officers affected by Tuberville’s block ret-

roactive promotion dates and back pay.

Tuberville began his blockade in February 2023 in a bid to force the Pentagon to rescind a policy granting leave and travel cost reimbursement to troops who need to travel to obtain reproductive health care, including abortions. He eventually dropped his hold under immense pressure from members of both parties.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, of which Tuberville is a member, voted on its version of the bill last month and the legislation now heads to the full Senate for consideration.

Sens. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., and Joe Manchin, I-W.Va., first introduced legislation to adjust affected service members’ promotions and make other administrative fixes in December. The standalone bill was co-sponsored by Tuberville and unanimously passed the Senate that month.

Trump is feted by his former rivals

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Donald Trump was celebrated Tuesday at the Republican National Convention by former rivals who just months ago leveled harsh critiques about him, a show of unity that contrasts with the divisions increasingly ripping through the Democratic Party.

Nikki Haley, the former U.N. ambassador who was Trump's final challenger in the GOP primary, directly addressed her supporters after taking the stage to a mix of cheers and boos.

"My message to them is simple: You don't have to agree with Trump 100% of the time to vote for him," Haley said.

She was followed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a onetime Trump ally turned primary rival who has worked to rebuild his relationship with the former president since dropping out of the primary.

"Donald Trump has been demonized. He's been sued. He's been prosecuted. And he nearly lost his life," DeSantis told the crowd. "We cannot let him down. And we cannot let America down."

Such overtures are typical in political conventions, where the purpose is often to bring a party together after bitter primaries. But the Haley and DeSantis appearances were particularly notable given the personal animosity that defined this year's GOP contest — much of that being directed by Trump at Haley and DeSantis.

The displays of unity stood in stark contrast to the dynamic facing Democrats, many of whom are increasingly uncertain that President Joe Biden is the right choice to take on Trump in the November election.

DeSantis was once seen as

best positioned to challenge Trump's position at the top of the party.

As a presidential candidate, he was slow to criticize Trump directly before eventually accusing him of repeatedly failing to follow through on his promises.

Haley, meanwhile, painted Trump as chaotic and suggested the 78-year-old was too old to serve another term. Unlike DeSantis, she did not immediately endorse Trump after she dropped out, instead waiting a few months to announce he had her vote.

Biden's campaign resurrected Haley's criticisms Tuesday. Austin Weatherford, a spokesperson for the campaign, said in a statement, "Ambassador Haley said it best herself: someone who doesn't respect our military, doesn't know right from wrong, and 'surrounds himself in chaos' can't be president."

Trump's survival of an attempted assassination Saturday at a rally in Pennsylvania was on the minds of many inside the hall.

One of the delegates in the crowd could be seen with a folded white piece of paper over his ear — an apparent tribute to the bandage Trump wore when he entered the hall Monday to a roaring crowd.

Trump was again wearing a bandage when he arrived Tuesday night, appearing even earlier in the arena than he did the night before. Trump entered a few minutes after his newly chosen running mate, Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance.

Several speakers Tuesday also spotlighted immigration, a key element of former Trump's political brand that helped endear him to the GOP base when he began his first campaign in 2015.

Threat from Iran prompted increased protection for Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A threat on Donald Trump's life from Iran prompted additional security in the days before Saturday's campaign rally, but it was unrelated to the assassination attempt on the Republican presidential nominee, two U.S. officials said Tuesday, as law enforcement warned of the potential for more violence inspired by the shooting.

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said officials have been tracking Iranian threats against Trump administration officials for years, dating back to the last administration. Trump ordered the 2020 killing of Qassem Soleimani, who led the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force.

"These threats arise from

Iran's desire to seek revenge for the killing of Qassem Soleimani. We consider this a national and homeland security matter of the highest priority," Watson said.

Iran has rejected the accusations regarding plots to assassinate former Trump, calling them politically motivated. The state-run IRNA news agency quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani as saying Iran "strongly rejects any involvement in the recent armed attack on Trump or claims about Iran's intention for such an action."

The U.S. Secret Service and the Trump campaign were made aware of the latest threat, prompting a surge in resources and assets, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence matters.

Secret Service security now under investigation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Department of Homeland Security's inspector general says it has opened up an investigation into the Secret Service's handling of security for former President Donald Trump on the day a gunman tried to assassinate him at a Pennsylvania rally.

In a brief notice posted to the inspector general's website, the agency said the objective of the probe is to "Evaluate the United States Secret Service's (Secret Service) process for securing former President Trump's July 13, 2024 campaign event."

There was no date given for when the investigation was launched. The notice was among a long list of ongoing cases that the inspector general's

office is pursuing.

President Joe Biden already had directed an independent review of the security at the rally.

The shooting has raised questions about how the gunman was able to climb onto a roof with a clear line of site to the former president, who was injured.

Secret Service Director Kim Cheatle said the agency understands the importance of the review ordered by Biden and would fully participate in it as well as with congressional committees looking into the shooting. She said the agency was working to understand how Saturday's shooting happened and to make sure something like it never does again.

The agency has roughly 7,800 staff members.

Dems aim to nominate Biden during first week of August

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats will look to hold a virtual vote to make President Joe Biden their party's nominee in the first week of August, as Biden has rebuffed calls from some in his party to quit the race after his disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump.

The Democratic National Convention's rules committee will meet on Friday to discuss its plans, according to a letter sent to members obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press, and will finalize them next week. The letter from co-chairs Bishop Leah D. Daughtry and Gov. Tim Walz states that the virtual vote won't take place before Aug. 1 but that the party

is still committed to holding a vote before Aug. 7, which had been Ohio's filing deadline.

"We will not be implementing a rushed virtual voting process," Daughtry and Walz wrote, "though we will begin our important consideration of how a virtual voting process would work."

The party announced in May that it would hold an early roll call to ensure Biden would qualify for the ballot in Ohio, which originally had an Aug. 7 deadline, but the state has since changed its rules. The Biden campaign insists that the party must operate under Ohio's initial rules to ensure Republican lawmakers can't mount legal challenges to keep the president

off the ballot.

The letter from Daughtry and Walz comes a day after a contingent of House Democrats wary of swiftly nominating Biden as the party's pick for reelection circulated another letter raising "serious concerns" about plans for a virtual roll call. Their letter to the Democratic National Committee, which has not yet been sent, says it would be a "terrible idea" to stifle debate about the party's nominee with the early roll call vote.

"It could deeply undermine the morale and unity of Democrats," said the letter obtained by the AP.

The Democratic National Convention is scheduled for Aug. 19-22 in Chicago.

Biden mulls high court term limits, ethics code

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden is seriously considering proposals to establish term limits for U.S. Supreme Court justices, and an ethics code that would be enforceable under law amid growing concerns that the justices are not held accountable, according to three people briefed on the plans.

It would mark a major shift for Biden, the former head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who has long resisted calls to reform the high court, though since taking office he has been increasingly vocal about his belief that the court is abandoning mainstream constitutional interpretation. The details were first reported by The Washington Post.

Any changes would require congressional approval, which would be unlikely in a divided Congress. But with Republican nominee Donald Trump bragging about putting the three justices on the high court who are now part of the conservative majority, Biden's call for major changes could help animate his voters.

Biden is also considering calling for a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the broad immunity for presidents granted by the court in its most recent term, after Donald Trump claimed he was immune from prosecution for his actions on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of his supporters violently descended on the U.S. Capitol.

The people were not authorized to speak publicly about proposals that have not been finalized and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Former CIA official charged with being secret agent for S. Korean intelligence

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A former CIA employee and senior official at the National Security Council has been charged with serving as a secret agent for South Korea's intelligence service, the U.S. Justice Department said.

Sue Mi Terry accepted luxury goods, including fancy handbags, and expensive dinners at sushi restaurants in exchange for advocating South Korean government positions during media appearances, sharing nonpublic information with intelligence officers and facilitating access for South Korean officials to U.S. government officials, according to an indictment filed in federal court in Manhattan.

She also admitted to the FBI that she served as a source of information for South Korean in-

telligence, including by passing handwritten notes from an off-the-record June 2022 meeting that she participated in with Secretary of State Antony Blinken about U.S. government policy toward North Korea, the indictment says.

Prosecutors say South Korean intelligence officers also covertly paid her more than \$37,000 for a public policy program that Terry controlled that was focused on Korean affairs.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service, its main spy agency, said Wednesday that intelligence authorities in South Korea and the U.S. are closely communicating over the case. South Korea's Foreign Ministry separately said it was not appropriate to comment on a case that is under judicial proceedings in a foreign country.

The conduct at issue oc-

curred in the years after Terry left the U.S. government and worked at think tanks, where she became a prominent public policy voice on foreign affairs.

Lee Wolosky, a lawyer for Terry, said in a statement that the "allegations are unfounded and distort the work of a scholar and news analyst known for her independence and years of service to the United States." He said she had not held a security clearance for more than a decade and her views have been consistent.

"In fact, she was a harsh critic of the South Korean government during times this indictment alleges that she was acting on its behalf," he said. "Once the facts are made clear it will be evident the government made a significant mistake."

Terry served in the government from 2001 to 2011.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Church where shooting occurred set for demolition

TX FLORESVILLE — A judge on Monday cleared the way for the demolition of the small Texas church in Sutherland Springs where a gunman killed more than two dozen worshippers in 2017.

Following the shooting at First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, the church turned the sanctuary where the attack took place into a memorial. Members of First Baptist then voted in 2021 to tear down the building but church leaders have not publicly said when it would be razed.

A new church was completed for the congregation about a year and a half after the shooting.

State District Judge Jennifer Dillingham earlier this month granted a temporary restraining order sought by some families who wanted to stop the planned demolition.

But on Monday, state District Judge Russell Wilson denied a request to extend that order, again raising the prospect that the church could soon be torn down.

College president resigns after nursing faculty quit

ND DICKINSON — The president of Dickinson State University in North Dakota announced his resignation on Monday, days after the school's nursing faculty quit.

In a video, Steve Easton announced his departure and acknowledged "turmoil between some in the faculty and the administration."

Seven faculty members resigned last Wednesday, KFYY-TV reported. Former Assistant Professor of Nursing Trista Keith told the station that the nursing faculty were notified their accreditation has been in jeopardy in recent years.

She also cited insufficient time and resources for faculty to meet the accreditation requirements, among other reasons the faculty resigned.

In a statement, the North Dakota Board of Nursing said it did not force Easton's resignation or disallow hiring but on Friday had issued a standard notice to the university "of multiple nursing program shortcomings for review" at a coming board meeting, due to the faculty departures.

'Most eligible bachelor' lawyer sentenced for rape

MA BOSTON — A former Boston lawyer and prosecutor who was once named one of People magazine's most eligible bachelors was sentenced Monday to between five and 10 years in state prison for rape.

Gary Zerola, 52, was found guilty last month after a jury deliberated for five hours and has been incarcerated since then.

He was acquitted of a greater charge of aggravated rape and burglary.

Prosecutors said that Zerola, in January 2021, paid more than \$2,000 for a night of drinking with a woman he was dating and her 21-year-old friend who'd just graduated from college.

The friend became intoxicated and had to be helped back to her Beacon Hill apartment.

Zerola later entered the

apartment without permission and sexually assaulted the woman around 2 a.m. while she was sleeping, prosecutors said.

Pickup truck collides with horse-drawn buggy

VA FARMVILLE — One person was killed and six others injured when a pickup truck collided with the horse-drawn buggy they were traveling in, Virginia State Police said.

The crash happened just before 7 p.m. Sunday in the 2700 block of Cumberland Road in the Farmville area of Cumberland County, police said in a news release. The area is about 50 miles west of Richmond.

Seven people were on board the buggy at the time of the crash.

One died on the scene and the other six were taken to a hospital with injuries that ranged from serious to life-threatening, police said.

The driver of the pickup was not injured.

The crash was under investigation, police said.

Hospital executives charged in \$15M scheme

IL CHICAGO — Federal authorities have charged a former Loretto Hospital executive in a scheme to embezzle \$15 million from the health care facility.

In an indictment filed late last week, Anosh Ahmed was charged with eight counts of wire fraud, four counts of embezzlement, 11 counts of aiding and abetting embezzlement and three counts of money laundering.

Ahmed was chief financial of-

ficer and CEO of the safety-net hospital when he resigned in 2021 for his involvement in questionable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, a controversy that's not part of the federal indictment.

The indictments allege that Ahmed and others engaged in a scheme from 2018 to 2022 to siphon money from the hospital. They allegedly made requests for hospital payments to vendors for goods and services never provided. They directed the money through a computerized system to accounts they controlled, authorities said.

Baltimore officials sue to block 'baby bonus'

MD BALTIMORE — Baltimore's mayor and city council have filed a lawsuit seeking to stop a proposal that would let voters decide whether to give all new parents a one-time \$1,000 "baby bonus" meant to help alleviate childhood poverty from birth.

The complaint was filed Thursday, according to online court records.

It came not long after organizers secured the necessary 10,000 signatures to bring the question to voters as a ballot initiative in November.

City leaders argue that the proposal is unconstitutional and should be blocked from the ballot because it would give voters too much say over legislative decisions, effectively "usurping those powers" from their elected officials.

An estimated 7,000 children are born in Baltimore each year, so the program would cost about \$7 million annually.

— From wire reports

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Duran's 2-run HR gives AL win over NL

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Speedy Jarren Duran describes himself as a player who keeps his head down, works hard and never thinks of himself as being better than anybody else.

Duran turned some heads in his first All-Star Game, hitting a tiebreaking two-run homer for the American League and being awarded the MVP trophy named after Boston Red Sox legend Ted Williams.

“That’s an honor. Who else would I want to try to follow in the footsteps of besides a guy like that, who is not just a great baseball player but a great human being,” Duran said after becoming the fifth Red Sox player selected All-Star Game MVP. “That guy was awesome, and I’m honored to be able to have his award.”

The decisive homer came in the fifth inning Tuesday night as the AL beat the National League 5-3 for its 10th win in the past 11 All-Star Games.

Pittsburgh rookie Paul Skenes pitched a hitless first for the NL, twice hitting 100 mph, and Shohei Ohtani also went deep in Texas with a three-run homer for a 3-0 lead in the third.

Juan Soto hit a two-run double and scored on David Fry’s single to tie the score in the AL third, and Duran went deep off Cincinnati’s Hunter Greene.

“It’s a surreal moment. So I’m just thankful to be here,” said Duran, who was one of 39 first-time All-Stars this year.

Oakland right-hander Mason Miller got the win after throwing a 103.6 mph pitch, the fastest in

the All-Star Game since tracking began in 2008. Hard-throwing Cleveland closer Emmanuel Clase struck out two in the ninth for the save.

The 22-year-old Skenes, who has pitched only 11 big league games since being the No. 1 overall pick in the draft last July, became the first rookie starter since 1995 and had the fewest games played for any player to make an All-Star team. The right-hander threw a hitless first, with a two-out walk to Soto before his Yankees teammate Aaron Judge grounded into a forceout on the next pitch.

Skenes threw 11 of 16 pitches for strikes, with seven fastballs up to 100.1 mph.

“Frankly, I wish I’d had a few more pitches to do that today,” said Skenes, who has a good mix of pitches to go with the hard stuff. “It’s cool to bring eyes to the game.”

Ohtani, who has gone deep 29 times in the first season of his record \$700 million, 10-year deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers, pulled a 400-foot drive to right off Tanner Houck. That came after the Boston right-hander allowed singles to the first two batters he faced: No. 9 batter Jurickson Proffar and leadoff hitter Ketel Marte.

“I haven’t really hit well in the All-Star Game, so I’m just relieved that I put the ball in play,” Ohtani said. “I just focused on having a regular at-bat as if I was in the regular season.”

When Ohtani went against Miller in the fifth, he struck out on an 89.2 mph slider well inside and out of the strike zone. That

was after twice taking strikes on fastballs of more than 100 mph.

Ohtani’s first All-Star homer made him the first Dodgers player to go deep in the Midsummer Classic since Hall of Fame catcher Mike Piazza in 1996. Eleven days after his 30th birthday, Ohtani was an All-Star for the fourth time — his first with the NL.

Baltimore’s Anthony Santander, after taking over for Soto in right field, had a two-out single in the fifth before Duran’s 413-foot homer to right-center after he had replaced Judge in center. Duran took a 95.9 mph fastball before going deep on an 86 mph splitter.

“I knew he threw really hard, so I was just praying he would throw me a first pitch fastball so I could see how hard it was. After that, I was hoping to get a pitch up,” Duran said. “He happened to leave a pitch up. I happened to put a good swing on it.”

The last Red Sox player to be the All-Star MVP was J.D. Drew in 2008, following Pedro Martinez in 1999, Roger Clemens in 1986 and Carl Yastrzemski in 1970.

Duran was voted by his peers as an All-Star after being the first AL player to go into the break with at least 100 hits, 10 triples, 10 homers and 20 stolen bases.

The AL has a 48-44-2 record in the All-Star Game, and had won nine in a row before the National League’s 3-2 victory last year.

AL starter Corbin Burnes arrived in Texas the morning of the game after spending time at home with his newborn twin

daughters. The Baltimore right-hander allowed a walk and then a two-out double to Bryce Harper before getting out of his inning on a comebacker by William Contreras, his catcher last season in Milwaukee.

After his underhand toss of the ball to first base, Burnes had a big smile on his face when he kept jogging and wrapped his arm around Contreras on the baseline.

Quick game

Played in 2 hours, 28 minutes, it was the shortest All-Star Game since 1988, a game the AL won 2-1 in Cincinnati that took only two minutes less.

Won in both leagues

Bruce Bochy of the host Rangers became the first manager to win World Series titles and All-Star Games in both leagues. Bochy is now 2-3 as an All-Star manager, leading the NL to a win in 2011. He won the World Series three times with the NL’s San Francisco Giants in 2010, 2012 and 2014, then led the Rangers to their first championship in his debut season with them last year.

Up next

The MLB regular series resumes Friday when 14 games are scheduled, with Milwaukee and Minnesota the only teams that won’t play until Saturday. Philadelphia (62-34) has the best record in the majors and Cleveland (58-37) has an AL-best .611 winning percentage, though Baltimore and the Yankees also have 58 wins.

Bears get rookies Williams, Odunze in camp on time

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Chicago Bears locked in their top two rookies Tuesday, agreeing to four-year contracts with No. 1 overall draft pick Caleb Williams and No. 9 selection Rome Odunze and avoiding any training camp drama with their prized quarterback and receiver.

A person familiar with the deal confirmed the agreement with Williams to The Associated Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the contract. Williams gets a slotted \$39.49 million fully guaranteed deal, with a \$25.5-million signing bonus.

The Bears announced Odunze also

signed. The club has options for 2028 on both players.

Williams, the 2022 Heisman Trophy winner, is widely viewed as a generational talent. He put up huge numbers in college, with 93 touchdown passes and 14 interceptions during three seasons at Oklahoma and Southern California.

Skenes 'one of them' with hitless All-Star inning

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Paul Skenes walked onto the Globe Life Field mound, 66 days after his major league debut, 13 months after he was pitching in college. The public-address system played Smash Mouth's "All Star," and he really was one.

"I don't think I blacked out when I was out there, but I was pretty close," he said.

Skenes had become the fifth rookie to start an All-Star Game, retiring Steven Kwan, Gunnar Henderson and Aaron Judge in a hitless first inning of the National League's 5-3 loss on Tuesday night. Baseball's best watched as the 6-foot-6 wonder threw at up to 100.1 mph.

"The coolest part about it is they're so accepting and welcomed me with open arms into the clubhouse," he beamed.

Unlike some veterans who depart midgame, Skenes stayed in the dugout for a few innings to soak up their knowledge, then retreated to the clubhouse for more teammate talk and a little nibble.

A few minutes after the final out, he walked into the postgame interview room wearing a cus-

tom-made white suit from the Pittsburgh tailor David Alan. He felt slightly disheveled, with his white shirt partially unbuttoned.

"I look like Colonel Sanders," he said.

Skenes's girlfriend, gymnast/influencer Livvy Dunne, had given him a cream Dior necktie he wore to Monday's news conference after she skipped his start in Milwaukee last week and went shopping in Chicago. The way he's pitching, he's going to be looked at as a tastemaker. That's quite a transition from two years ago, when he was a U.S. Air Force Academy cadet, or even last year, when he led LSU to the NCAA title.

A 22-year-old right-hander with just 11 big league appearances, the fewest for an All-Star, Skenes took the mound wearing high socks with horizontal bands of yellow, light blue, maroon and navy.

He retired Kwan, the major league batting leader, on a pop-up and induced a weak comeback from Henderson.

Juan Soto worked out a seven-pitch walk after fouling off a 100.1 mph offering.

"I was trying to take him deep.

Not going to lie," Soto said with a grin during a joint interview with Judge. "But definitely after two strikes I was trying to work that at-bat because I wanted to make sure he faced him, too. I got my job done."

Judge grounded into an inning-ending forceout on the next pitch, a 99.7 mph four-seamer.

"He was really looking at me after he fouled that heater off," Judge said of Soto. "He wanted that pitch back, that's for sure."

Skenes joined Dave Stenhouse (1962), Mark Fidrych (1976), Fernando Valenzuela (1981) and Hideo Nomo (1995) as the only rookie All-Star starters. He threw 11 of 16 pitches for strikes, starting in the zone with all four batters. He mixed seven fastballs and seven splinkers with one curveball and one slider.

He treasured his time up close with Shohei Ohtani, who put the NL ahead with a three-run homer in the third off Tanner Houck. Ohtani had homered off Skenes last month.

"I tried to enjoy the three hours or so that I had on the same team with him because that's probably only going to happen

once a year," Skenes said. "A guy like him, I'm sure everybody is probably going up to him, so I kind of tried to stay out of his way. Talked to him about a couple different things and, yeah, watched him. I was in the weight room when he was in the weight room and just tried to watch him kind of do his thing and learn from that."

Skenes also tried to tap into Chris Sale, Tyler Glasnow, Logan Webb and Hunter Greene.

"Even if I get one tiny piece of advice or something that can — one tiny nugget from them, it could help," he said.

Last year's No. 1 pick in the amateur draft, Skenes made his big league debut May 11 and is 6-0 with a 1.90 ERA for the Pirates, striking out 89 and walking 13 in 66⅓ innings.

He had hoped to have more time on the mound in front of a national audience.

"Frankly, I wish I had a few more pitches," Skenes said.

He no longer perceived himself an outsider looking in at the greats. That was the greatest transformation.

"I feel like I'm one of them," he said.

Ohtani hits 3-run homer in National League's loss

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Shohei Ohtani added another first to his unique resume: first player to get a win and hit a home run in All-Star play.

"I haven't really hit well during the All-Star Game, so I'm just relieved that I put a good ball in play," Ohtani said through a translator after putting the National League ahead with a three-run homer in Tuesday night's 5-3 loss to the American League.

Ohtani had been 1 for 4 with a pair of walks and a strikeout in three previous All-Star Games. The first two-way All-Star for three straight years through 2023, he got the win in the 2021 game at Denver's Coors Field.

Ohtani walked in the first inning against Baltimore's Corbin Burnes, then came to the plate in the third after Jurickson Profar

singled leading off and Ketel Marte reached on a 109.5 mph hit that deflected off second baseman Marcus Semien.

Tanner Houck fell behind 2-0 in the count and Ohtani drove a splitter over the middle of the plate 400 feet, a half-dozen rows into the right-field seats for his first All-Star home run.

"I was really just focused on having a regular at-bat as if I was in the regular season," Ohtani said.

He is 1 for 5 with three walks against Houck. He hit an RBI single while pitching the Los Angeles Angels to an 8-0 win at Boston on May 5, 2022.

"A splitter, just down, middle," Houck said of the All-Star homer. "Get it away a little bit more, maybe a little bit better pitch."

Ohtani is hitting .316 with an NL-high 29 homers, 69 RBIs and 23 stolen bases for the

Los Angeles Dodgers. He became the first Dodgers player to homer in an All-Star Game since Mike Piazza off Cleveland's Charles Nagy in 1996 at Philadelphia's Veterans Stadium.

In one of the night's marquee matchups, Ohtani faced Oakland reliever Mason Miller in the fifth. Miller started him with a called strike on a 100.6 mph pitch on the inside corner, then threw a slider inside. Ohtani took a 101.8 mph pitch at the bottom of the zone for strike two, then swung over a slider at his back foot.

"Overall, very heavy," Ohtani said. "He threw a lot of really good quality pitches."

Miller faced Ohtani with a plan.

"I was just trying to execute fastballs down. I know once I established that, the slider below is open, so got right to it," Miller said.

British Open last chance of year to win major

Associated Press

Rory McIlroy sees the British Open as little more than the next opportunity to end 10 years without a major, not atonement for his late collapse in the U.S. Open.

It's the last opportunity this year, not only for the hard-luck McIlroy but everyone else who earned a spot at Royal Troon, the links course along the Ayrshire coast of Scotland that first hosted golf's oldest championship a century ago.

For Scottie Scheffler, Xander Schauffele and Bryson DeChambeau, it's a chance to join five other players in the last 25 years who have won two majors or more in the same season. For Patrick Cantlay and Tommy Fleetwood, it's a chance to get their first one.

And when another name is engraved onto the silver base of the claret jug, and the R&A introduces "the champion golfer of the year," it will be 263 days until the next major.

So much anticipation for the Masters when the major championship began in April. So much desperation just three months later.

"It's hard to explain and it sounds negative, but it's like, 'If I don't win this, it's another year

without a major.' It's just the unfortunate reality," Justin Thomas said. "We only get four tries in a year. And then once it's done, all right, got to wait until next year."

Justin Rose won his first major at Merion in the 2013 U.S. Open, and it only gave him stronger belief that he could pick up another by the end of the year. What impressed him was Phil Mickelson losing the 54-hole lead at Merion — his sixth runner-up at the only major he never won — and then winning the claret jug a month later.

"To turn yourself around quite quickly within that month takes a fair effort," Rose said.

So where does that leave McIlroy?

He has been stung before in the majors, as long as 13 years ago when he lost a four-shot lead in the Masters, as recently as two years ago when he shared the 54-hole lead at St. Andrews only to two-putt every green in the final round.

The finish at Pinehurst No. 2 was harsh. Leading with three holes to play, he missed two par putts so close he could practically see the bottom of the cup and finished one shot behind Bryson

DeChambeau.

He wound up with the silver medal. It felt like it should have been a purple heart.

"It will be hard, for sure," Rose said. "But I think he's probably got the bit between the teeth. I've always felt that way about Rory. When he gets criticized, when people start to doubt him, that's when he starts to play his best."

The 152nd Open returns to Royal Troon for the 10th time, a beautiful links and classic in the sense that eight of the nine holes go south along the Firth of Clyde and before heading back into the prevailing wind toward the clubhouse.

The exception is No. 8, the signature at Royal Troon, a 123-yard hole known as the "Postage Stamp." It's the shortest hole in the current British Open rotation, and it is two holes after the longest par 5 (623 yards) of any Open course.

Most curious about these links is the par 4s are relatively short going out with the wind, and they are quite longer coming back into the wind.

"You've got to make your score on the front nine and hang on," McIlroy said.

Colin Montgomerie, whose fa-

ther was the longtime secretary at Royal Troon, summed it up years ago: "If you're not under par when you make the turn, you may as well head over to Prestwick for lunch."

McIlroy had a decent finish when the Open was last at Royal Troon in 2016. He tied for fifth, though that was one finish in a major that might require an asterisk.

"It felt like I wasn't in the tournament," he said.

Golf has seemed like a one-man show for so much of the year, and it starts with Scheffler. He already had six PGA Tour victories before the end of June — the last player to do that was Tom Watson in 1980. One was the Masters. Another was The Players Championship. The other four were signature events against the strongest fields.

The consistency from tee-to-green is at a level not seen since Tiger Woods in his prime. Woods typically won multiple majors when he had his best seasons. Scheffler winning a second this year would put this season in a truly elite category. He is assured of being No. 1 in the world longer than any player since Woods in the late 2000s.

Messi asked to apologize for Argentina players' racist chant

Associated Press

Lionel Messi faced calls Wednesday to apologize for racist chants made by Argentina's players after they won the Copa America. An Argentinean government official said Messi, who is the team captain, and the president of the country's soccer federation, Claudio Tapia, should apologize after a video was shared on social media showing members of Argentina's triumphant squad singing a racist chant about French players with African heritage.

Midfielder Enzo Fernandez said he was "truly sorry" for the incident and his Premier League club Chelsea said it had begun disciplinary action, describing discriminatory behavior as "completely unacceptable."

It is unclear from the video if Messi — widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all time — participated in the

chant. But Argentina's sports sub-secretary, Julio Garro, said he should say sorry either way.

"The national team captain must also come out to apologize for this case. The same AFA (Argentina Football Association) president," Garro said in radio statements. "I think it is appropriate. It leaves us as a country in a bad position, with so much glory."

Argentina beat Colombia 1-0 on Sunday. Afterward, a video posted on Instagram showed Fernandez and Argentina players chanting about France's team as they celebrated.

The same chants — by some Argentina fans — emerged before the team beat France in the World Cup final in 2022. The derogatory chants single out France players of African heritage, from several countries, and holding a French passport.

FIFA said it was also looking into the incident after the French soccer federation pledged to file a complaint with the sport's world governing body over "racist and discriminatory remarks."

Chelsea's response came after one of Fernandez's clubmates, France defender Wesley Fofana, posted the video on his social media accounts Tuesday and called it "uninhibited racism."

Fofana has family ties to Ivory Coast and is among several French players who are Black in the Chelsea first-team squad.

"We are proud to be a diverse, inclusive club where people from all cultures, communities and identities feel welcome," Chelsea said in a statement Wednesday. "We acknowledge and appreciate our player's public apology and will use this as an opportunity to educate."