

Biden ends reelection bid, endorses Harris

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 race for the White House on Sunday, ending his bid for reelection following a disastrous debate with Donald Trump that raised doubts about his fitness for office just four months before the election.

The decision comes after escalating pressure from Biden's Democratic allies to step aside following the June 27 debate, in which the 81-year-old president trailed off, often gave nonsensical answers and failed to call out the former president's many falsehoods.

Biden plans to serve out the remainder of his term in office, which ends at noon ET on Jan. 20, 2025.

"It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on full-

filling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Biden wrote in a letter posted to his X account.

Nearly 30 minutes later, Biden threw his support behind Vice President Kamala Harris, the party's instant favorite for the nomination at its August convention in Chicago.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year," he said in another post on X. "Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump."

Biden's decision came as he has been isolating at his Delaware beach house after being diagnosed with COVID-19 last week, huddling with a shrinking circle of close confidants and family members about his political future. Biden said he would address the nation later this week to provide "detail" about his decision.

The White House confirmed the authenticity of the letter.

The announcement is the lat-

est jolt to a campaign for the White House that both political parties see as the most consequential election in generations, coming just over a week after the attempted assassination of Trump at a Pennsylvania rally.

A party's presumptive presidential nominee has never stepped out of the race so close to the election. The closest parallel would be President Lyndon Johnson who, besieged by the Vietnam War, announced in March 1968 that he would not seek another term.

Now, Democrats have to urgently try to bring coherence to the nominating process in a matter of weeks and persuade voters in a stunningly short amount of time that their nominee can handle the job and beat Trump. And for his part, Trump must shift his focus to a new opponent after years of training his attention on Biden.

The decision marks a swift and stunning end to Biden's 52 years in electoral politics, as

donors, lawmakers and even aides expressed to him their doubts that he could convince voters that he could plausibly handle the job for another four years.

Biden won the vast majority of delegates and every nominating contest but one, which would have made his nomination a formality. Now that he has dropped out, those delegates will be free to support another candidate.

Harris, 59, is the only candidate who can directly tap into the Biden campaign's war chest, according to federal campaign finance rules.

The Democratic National Convention is scheduled to be held Aug. 19-22 in Chicago, but the party had announced it would hold a virtual roll call to formally nominate Biden before in-person proceedings begin.

The date for the roll call hasn't been set, and it's unlikely that will happen since the field is suddenly wide open.

Gen. Cavoli notes boost in Europe defense spending

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — American allies in Europe are aware their "house is on fire," sparking the kinds of military reforms the United States has been seeking for years, the top U.S. commander on the Continent said this week.

"This is a different Europe from what we complained about for years," U.S. European Command's Gen. Christopher Cavoli said Thursday.

Cavoli, who also serves as NATO's supreme allied commander, said Russia's war in Ukraine has generated a sense of urgency in European capitals, where there is an awareness that Moscow will pose a long-

term threat regardless of how the war turns out.

"I think it is underappreciated in the United States just how much our European allies have awakened to the fact that the house is on fire," Cavoli said during a discussion at the Aspen Institute in Colorado. "This is not a show, and this is not just rhetoric. This is true concern about the stability of their continent and the survival of their states."

Cavoli pointed to increased defense spending among allies in Europe and efforts underway to ramp up the Continent's industrial base, which has diminished over the years. The Army general also said Europe's invigorated military efforts will help the

United States' contribution in Europe "produce the most value."

"This is exactly the moment when American interests will be advanced most by American continued participation," he said.

But Cavoli's comments come at a time of uncertainty over the future shape of the U.S. mission in Europe, which could turn on the outcome of the U.S. presidential election.

While the administration of President Joe Biden has shown intent to further boost military capabilities in Europe, last week announcing a plan to send long-range artillery and hypersonic missiles in the coming years, former President Donald Trump is likely to go in a different direction if he returns to the White House.

Commission opens inquiry of war in Afghanistan

The Washington Post

Against the backdrop of America's roiling political landscape and two raging foreign wars, a coterie of former U.S. government officials and academics Friday opened what will be an extensive examination of the United States' 20-year foray in Afghanistan — the nation's longest conflict.

"Today we make history," said Shamila N. Chaudhary, co-chair of the Afghanistan War Commission. "Never before has the United States commissioned such a wide-ranging independent legislative assessment of its own decision-making in the aftermath of a conflict."

The mission is daunting. The 16-member bipartisan panel has been tasked by Congress with determining what went wrong and what U.S. leaders could do differently the next time the United States goes to war. Their mandate encompasses policies and actions taken by four presidential administrations, the U.S. military, the State Department, U.S. allies and many other agencies, organizations and people.

The commission has 18 months to carry out its research and until August 2026 to deliver a final public report.

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 ended the war, but delivered the coun-

try back into the hands of the Taliban, an enemy Washington spent trillions of dollars trying to vanquish beginning in the aftermath of 9/11. The bloody and chaotic exit resulted in the deaths of 13 U.S. service members and scores of Afghans, left thousands of American allies behind to an uncertain fate, triggered broad, bipartisan outrage and gave rise to bitterly politicized congressional inquiries and hearings.

The Republican-led House Foreign Affairs Committee is expected next month to deliver a final report detailing the findings of its investigation of the withdrawal. That inquiry has

featured hours of heated and sometimes emotional testimony from Biden administration officials, military commanders, veterans and their families. The committee next week intends to interview Jen Psaki, President Biden's White House press secretary at the time of the withdrawal.

The war commission's 4½-hour discussion Friday, held in the Washington headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, featured former ambassadors, military officers and CIA personnel as witnesses. It drew a small crowd of observers, many of whom were also connected to the war.

Very little damage in drone hit on al Asad

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A drone launched by Iran-backed militants struck a base in western Iraq where U.S. and other international forces are deployed, the Pentagon said Thursday.

The militants launched two drones Tuesday targeting al Asad Air Base in Iraq. One of the drones was shot down and the other hit the base causing minimal damage, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said.

No casualties have been reported, according to a Reuters report.

This was the first attack against U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria since April.

At the time, a fighter jet from the U.S.-led coalition in the two countries destroyed a militant rocket launcher after a failed attack near a base in Syria hosting U.S. troops. No U.S. personnel were injured in the attack at the base near Rumalyn, the Penta-

gon had said.

Also in April, there were reports drones were launched at al Asad.

There was no indication whether al Asad was the target, defense officials said at the time. But the Pentagon confirmed Thursday that there was an attack near al Asad on April 22.

The U.S. military began airstrikes in Iraq and Syria on Feb. 2 in response to a Jan. 28 drone attack in Jordan that killed three American soldiers. U.S. forces struck some 85 targets, and military officials credited the response for deterring militant groups in the two countries from continuing attacks against U.S. forces.

The attack Tuesday comes less than a week before an expected visit by a high-level Iraqi military delegation to Washington to continue talks on ending the U.S.-led military coalition in the country, Reuters reported.

Marines release details of sobriety checks in Japan

By BRIAN McELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Sobriety checks at Marine Corps installations in Japan began at 8 p.m. Friday and will continue through Saturday, the service announced, part of a response to Okinawa prefecture's discontent over two recent alleged sex crimes.

The checks will be in place across all Marine Corps bases through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman Capt. Brett Dornhege-Lazaroff said by phone Friday. This includes 100% Breathalyzer tests for all drivers and walkers leaving bases between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.

During the day, breath tests may be randomized if 10 or more cars are in line to exit, he said.

Incoming gate checks for licenses, registration and random sobriety tests will be in place, but the service is aiming to avoid

adding to off-base traffic.

"We want to keep it on our side of the fence line," Dornhege-Lazaroff said.

"Several" people with blood-alcohol content over Japan's 0.03% legal limit were stopped July 12 and 13, he said. The exact number of people or their statuses were not available Friday.

"We did prevent several DUIs, but I don't have an official number," he said. "It was not all service members, either."

Two recent indictments of service members on sexual assault charges led Okinawa prefecture to deliver formal complaints to the U.S. and Japanese governments calling for changes to the status of forces agreement for U.S. troops on the island.

Discussions are still underway to make the current Marine Corps liberty policy on Okinawa apply to all troops on the island, Dornhege-Lazaroff said.

Trump, Vance hold first rally as running mates

Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Donald Trump held his first campaign rally since he survived an assassination attempt Saturday, returning to the battleground state of Michigan alongside his newly named running mate.

“It was exactly one week ago, even to the hour, even to the minute,” Trump told the crowd, reflecting on the July 13 shooting in Pennsylvania that left him with a bloodied ear, killed one of his supporters and left two others injured.

“I stand before you only by the grace of almighty God,” he said, the white gauze on his ear now replaced by a skin-colored bandage. “I shouldn’t be here right now,” he went on.

Trump was joined by Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance at the pair’s first event together since they became the GOP’s nominees at

the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

“I find it hard to believe that a week ago, an assassin tried to take Donald Trump’s life, and now we have got a hell of a crowd in Michigan to welcome him back on the campaign trail,” Vance said before Trump’s arrival.

Michigan is one of the handful of crucial swing states expected to determine the outcome of November’s presidential election. Trump narrowly won the state by just over 10,000 votes in 2016, but Democrat Joe Biden flipped it back in 2020, winning by a margin of 154,000 votes on his way to the presidency.

After appearing uncharacteristically subdued and emotional during the Republican convention, Trump returned to his usual rally mode, insulting his Democratic rivals, repeating

his lies about the 2020 election and peppering his address with jokes that sparked laughter from an enthusiastic audience.

At one point, Trump glanced at a screen showing him from an unusual angle and joked about his comb-over.

But Trump also talked about the shooting, acting out how he’d turned his head to look up at a chart of southern border crossings projected on a giant screen, narrowly dodging the bullet that hit his ear.

“I owe immigration my life,” he said.

Hours before he took the stage, Trump’s supporters crowded the streets of downtown Grand Rapids in anticipation of the former president’s remarks. Supporters began lining up Friday morning, and by Saturday afternoon, the line stretched close to a mile from the entrance of the 12,000-seat

Van Andel Arena.

Downtown Grand Rapids saw a significant police presence, with officers stationed on nearly every block, while others patrolled on horseback and bicycles. The heightened security outside the venue created a tense environment, with some attendees mentioning that drones overhead had made them nervous. The event was held indoors, which makes it easier to secure.

Attendees were required to pass through a metal detector upon entering the arena, yet the presence of security inside appeared consistent with previous events.

“This is the tightest I’ve ever seen the security,” said Renee White, who said that she’s been to 33 of Trump’s rallies. “We usually can bring in some small bags, but today I had to just leave stuff out there.”

Gunman flew drone over rally site ahead of event

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The gunman in the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump is believed to have flown a drone around the Pennsylvania rally site ahead of time in an apparent attempt to scope out the site before the event, a law enforcement official said Saturday.

The drone has been recovered by the FBI, which is leading the investigation into last Saturday’s shooting at the rally by 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks.

Crooks fired multiple rounds from the roof of a building adjacent to the Butler Farm Show grounds, where Trump was speaking, before being fatally shot by a Secret Service counter sniper. The existence of the device and its use at some point before the shooting could help ex-

plain why Crooks knew to fire from the point.

The official who described the drone was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity. Details of the drone were first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Trump said last week that one bullet clipped his right ear. A memo released Saturday by the Trump campaign and authored by Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson, who served as the GOP nominee’s White House physician, said that Trump sustained a gunshot wound to the right ear from a high-powered rifle that came “less than a quarter of an inch from entering his head, and struck the top of his right ear.”

The FBI is continuing to investigate what may have motivated Crooks to carry out the attack.

S. Korea boosts broadcasts after North’s trash balloons

By DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea briefly resumed loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts aimed at North Korea on Thursday, the same day Pyongyang sent roughly 40 trash-laden balloons across the border, according to the South’s Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The broadcasts started that night and stopped the next morning, the Joint Chiefs said in a statement to news reporters early Friday.

“The South Korean military’s future response depends entirely on North Korea’s actions,” the statement said.

The content of the broadcasts was undisclosed. Previous broadcasts included South Korean pop music and news reports from Seoul.

The latest round of North Ko-

rean balloons was sent late Thursday toward west Gyeonggi province, the South’s most populous region, according to the Joint Chiefs. South Korea’s mass-alert system advised citizens on their cellphones not to touch the balloon payloads and report them to the nearest military unit or police station.

The balloons were carrying paper trash with no hazardous substances found after a preliminary investigation, the Joint Chiefs said.

North Korea since May 28 has sent thousands of balloons carrying bags of household trash and manure across its southern border, according to the South’s Ministry of National Defense. The descending balloons damaged a few parked vehicles and residential roofs, and caused some flight delays, according to South Korea’s Ministry of Interior.

Israel shoots down missile fired from Yemen

Associated Press

The Israeli military said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen early Sunday, hours after Israeli warplanes struck several Houthi targets in the Arabian Peninsula country.

The Israeli airstrikes — in response to a deadly Houthi drone strike on Tel Aviv — were the first time Israel is known to have responded to repeated Houthi attacks throughout its nine-month war against Hamas. The burst of violence between the distant enemies has threatened to open a new front as Israel battles a series of Iranian proxies across the region.

The Israeli army late Saturday confirmed the airstrikes in the western Yemeni port city of Hodeidah, a Houthi stronghold and crucial entry point for aid and other supplies.

It said the strikes, carried out by dozens of aircraft, including U.S.-made F-15 and F-35 warplanes, were a response to hundreds of Houthi attacks.

The Health Ministry in Yemen said the Israeli strikes killed six people and wounded 83 others, many with severe burns from a major fire. Another three people were missing, the ministry said in a statement shared

by the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul salam posted on X that the “blatant Israeli aggression” targeted fuel storage facilities and the province’s power station.

“The Israeli enemy picked those targets specifically as part of their targeting of the Yemeni economy,” said Abdul-Malek al-Houthi, leader of the rebels.

The Israeli military said the surface-to-surface missile fired Sunday was intercepted before reaching Israeli territory.

Israel, along with the United States, the United Kingdom and other Western allies with forces in the region, have intercepted almost all the Houthi missiles and drones. But early Friday, a Houthi drone penetrated Israel’s air defenses and crashed into Tel Aviv, Israel’s commercial and cultural capital, killing one person.

An Israeli air force official said Sunday that human error accidentally classified the drone as a non-threat as Israel was simultaneously tracking other drones launched from Yemen and approaching Israel from the east.

The Israeli military said Saturday’s strike on Hodeidah, more than 1,000 miles from Israel, was among the most complicated

and longest-distance operations by its air force. It said it hit the port because the area is used to deliver Iranian arms to Yemen.

Israel’s defense minister, Yoav Gallant, vowed to carry out similar strikes “in any place where it may be required.”

The Houthis are among several Iranian-backed groups to have attacked Israel in solidarity with Hamas since the Oct. 7 attack by the Palestinian militant group triggered the ongoing Israeli offensive in Gaza.

In addition to fighting Hamas, the Israeli military has been engaged in daily clashes with the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon. These clashes have raised concerns the fighting could spill over into a full-blown war with Lebanon and beyond.

Yemen has been engulfed in civil war since 2014, when the Houthis seized much of the north and forced the internationally recognized government to flee from Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition intervened in support of government forces, and in time the conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The war has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, and created one of the world’s worst humanitarian disasters.

Japanese police withheld info on alleged sex crimes

BY KEISHI KOJA
AND ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese police in three prefectures withheld information on cases involving five people connected to the U.S. military and suspected of sexual offenses since 2021, officials told Stars and Stripes on Friday.

Police in Kanagawa, Aomori and Yamaguchi prefectures, where a total of four U.S. bases are located, did not publicly re-

lease information about those allegations or alert their local governments to them, according to prefectural and city offices that manage relations with the U.S. military.

None of the suspects appear to have been charged with crimes. None of their service affiliations or duty stations were disclosed by police spokespeople in any of the five incidents.

The incidents, first reported Thursday by Kyodo News, surfaced after the Okinawa prefec-

tural government complained this month that local police and prosecutors withheld information on two service members indicted on alleged sex offenses since December.

Information about three other service members suspected of sexual offenses since February 2023 on Okinawa surfaced because of those complaints. None of the three was charged with a crime, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said July 3.

Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Wright, spokesman for U.S. Forces Japan, declined to comment on the individual cases but said USFJ takes all investigations seriously.

“USFJ has consistently adhered to agreed practices and standing bilateral agreements, working closely with the Government of Japan in the reporting of serious incidents and accidents,” he told Stars and Stripes by email Friday evening.

Philippines, China reach deal to stop naval clashes

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — China and the Philippines reached a deal they hope will end confrontations at the most fiercely disputed shoal in the South China Sea, the Philippine government said Sunday.

The Philippines occupies Second Thomas Shoal but China also claims it, and increasingly hostile clashes at sea have sparked fears of larger conflicts that could involve the United States.

The crucial deal was reached Sunday, af-

ter a series of meetings between Philippine and Chinese diplomats in Manila and exchanges of diplomatic notes that aimed to establish a mutually acceptable arrangement at the shoal without conceding either side’s territorial claims.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Official arrested, accused of biting police officer

NY NEW YORK — A New York City Council member accused of biting a police official complained Thursday that officers used excessive force as she strove to help someone who was lying under a barricade at a protest.

Brooklyn Democrat Susan Zhuang didn't address the biting allegation as she gave her version of the encounter, but she insisted "what happened to me should not happen."

Zhuang was charged Wednesday with felony assault and various misdemeanors and violations. A court complaint said she bit a deputy police chief's forearm and resisted being handcuffed after she and other protesters were told to stop pushing barricades toward officers.

Police, citing an arrest report before the complaint was released, said Zhuang was blocking officers from getting to a woman on the ground.

Zhuang, a conservative Democrat who ran on a pro-police platform last year, said she was trying to help the woman. The council member said officers came up behind her, handcuffed her, pulled her hair and grabbed her neck, and she struggled.

Panel urges porn maker to lose university post

WI LA CROSSE — A faculty committee has recommended that a former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse be removed from his tenured position over his involvement in adult entertainment.

The Milwaukee Journal-Sen-

inel reported that the committee's unanimous decision over Joe Gow sets up a vote by the University of Wisconsin's Board of Regents to fire him.

Gow is on paid leave because he holds a tenured faculty appointment and wants to return to teaching. The regents fired Gow as chancellor in December for creating pornographic videos posted on adult websites.

At a hearing, the school argued in favor of firing Gow for unethical conduct, refusing to cooperate with an investigation and violating computer policies.

Tuition program limits for military families lifted

VA RICHMOND — Virginia lawmakers gave final approval Thursday to legislation that will repeal new restrictions on a tuition waiver program for military families.

The House of Delegates and state Senate each voted unanimously to fully restore the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program, which offers free college tuition at state schools for families of military veterans who were killed or seriously disabled while on active duty.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin returned to Richmond on Thursday from the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee to sign the legislation into law.

The program's costs have risen from \$12 million to \$65 million in five years. The state budget passed earlier this year restricted eligibility for the program to associate and undergraduate degrees, required participants to apply for other forms of financial aid and tightened residency requirements.

Veterans and their families

vehemently protested the new restrictions, but state lawmakers struggled for weeks to reach an agreement on a solution.

University bans political speech on homepages

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The University of California Board of Regents voted Thursday to ban employees from posting political statements on the homepages of university websites, saying such comments could be interpreted as the university system's official view.

Political statements and personal opinions will be allowed on secondary pages and must include a disclaimer saying they don't represent UC's official views under the new policy. University employees can also post political opinions on their personal university webpages or social media accounts.

Faculty members, students and members of the community have criticized the policy, saying it restricts free speech.

Recently, political opinions have mainly been posted on the homepages of ethnic studies departments and carried pro-Palestinian messages.

Anti-LGBTQ+ hiring ban targeted in appeals court

WA YAKIMA — Lawyers for a Christian homeless shelter were in a federal appeals court Friday to challenge a Washington state anti-discrimination law that would require the charity to hire LGBTQ+ people and others who do not share its religious beliefs, including those on sexuality and marriage.

Union Gospel Mission in Yakima, about 150 miles southeast of

Seattle, is asking the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to revive a lawsuit dismissed by a lower court.

The Alliance Defending Freedom, a global legal organization, is assisting the mission.

Ryan Tucker, senior counsel with the alliance, said the mission faces prosecution for engaging in its "constitutionally protected freedom to hire fellow believers who share the mission's calling to spread the gospel and care for vulnerable people" in the community.

But U.S. District Judge Mary K. Dimke dismissed the case last year, agreeing with attorneys for the state that the lawsuit filed by Yakima's mission was a prohibited appeal of another case decided by the Washington Supreme Court.

Stegosaurus fossil fetches nearly \$45M

NY NEW YORK — The nearly complete fossilized remains of a stegosaurus fetched \$44.6 million at auction last week, Sotheby's said. The buyer's name was not disclosed.

The price for the fossil — dubbed "Apex" — blew past a pre-sale estimate of \$4 million to \$6 million and past a prior auction record for dinosaur fossils — \$31.8 million for the remains of a Tyrannosaurus rex nicknamed Stan, sold in 2020.

Dinosaur fossil sales stir some frustration among academic paleontologists who feel the specimens belong in museums or research centers that can't afford huge auction prices.

Sotheby's said the anonymous buyer is American and intends to look into loaning Apex to an institution in the United States.

— From wire reports

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Marta takes final shot at Olympic gold

Associated Press

Marta can't help but be a bit nostalgic heading into her last big tournament with the Brazilian national team.

But for the 38-year-old, six-time world player of the year, the time has come to finally step away.

"I contributed what I supposed to give to the national team, you know? I'm feeling so comfortable to leave because when I look around me and I see really, really good players, young players, who can keep doing the work and keep representing Brazil so well," Marta said.

Marta will be playing in her sixth Olympics in France before handing the team she captains over to the next generation.

"It's been so much of my life, since I was 14, I left home and then I just live soccer every single day," she added. "I just feel like maybe it's time to just take a little bit away from that and let the young players shine."

A tournament championship would be the perfect way to cap an international career that has spanned more than 20 years, and her teammates know it.

"I feel like every time you step on the field, playing with Marta by your side, it's such a great responsibility. She's a great player and we have to play for her now," said defender Rafaella. "She was like my

biggest idol since I was growing up. So playing with her now is such a dream for me."

Better known just by her first name, Marta Vieira da Silva has scored a record 118 goals in 183 international appearances with Brazil. In addition to her six Olympics, she has also played in six women's World Cups.

She has the record for most World Cup goals with 17, and she has 13 Olympic goals, one away from matching fellow Brazilian Cristiane's record.

Marta grew up playing street soccer with the boys in Dois Riachos, a town in eastern Brazil some 1,250 miles north of Rio de Janeiro. She was just 17 when she appeared at the 2003 World Cup, held in the United States.

Over time, her role has changed with Brazil. In recent years she's been more of a player coach, guiding the team's up-and-coming stars.

"Of course I bring all of the experience that I achieved in my career, like playing in big tournaments like the Olympics and the World Cup, playing against good teams, against good players," she said. "So I try to share the best of me and the best of what I live in soccer with the players to make them feel comfortable, or make them feel proud to be there. Like, we expect the best of you. That's why you are here, so this is the goal and then do your best."

Marta is still a valuable asset on the field, and she's proven it this season with the Orlando Pride, her club team in the National Women's Soccer League. She's got five goals in 12 games this year with the Pride, who are undefeated and sit atop the league standings. Marta has played with Orlando since 2017.

"I still can read the game, like, really well," she said. "And I try to put myself in a good situation to give my best to the team. So I'm not going to compete all the time with a player that's 10, 11 years younger than me. But I may be able to put my brain to work a little faster and then read the situation and try to do my best."

With the many accolades Marta's earned throughout her career, one thing has eluded her: A championship trophy in a major international tournament.

Brazil's best finish at the World Cup was runner-up in 2007. Brazil won silver medals at both the 2004 and 2008 Olympics, but a gold medal has remained out of reach.

"With her saying it's her last Olympics, it just brings more responsibility to her and to us to end this tournament on a good note with this title that the national team doesn't have and she doesn't have, either," Brazilian teammate Adriana said. "So it's more motivation for us to help her with this and to hopefully win."

Horschel survives wild day, leads British Open by one

Associated Press

TROON, Scotland — The British Open brought a final two hours of the worst weather to the world's best players, and Billy Horschel was up for the fight.

Horschel flipped his cap around to keep rain from dripping off the bill. He played in short sleeves in a biting chill to swing more freely. He embraced everything about Saturday at Royal Troon on a day the course gave most players a royal beating.

He survived with a marvelous short game from pot bunkers and the rough, and he managed a 2-under 69 that gave him a one-shot lead going into a final round and his best shot at winning his first major.

"I'm excited to be here. I've wanted to be here my entire life," he said. "I'm finally here."

It was getting there Saturday that was so difficult, a third round that got turned upside down and every other possible way.

Shane Lowry went from a three-shot lead to ninth place. Thruston Lawrence of South Africa and Sam Burns started the day 10 shots behind. Now they are among those one back.

PGA champion Xander Schauffele did his scoring in the rain and battled in the wind and shot 69 to be among those one back. Justin Rose made 11 straight pars, and finished with one that prompted a big fist pump. He shot 73 and was one behind.

"I kind of felt like it was going to be the type of day where you could go out and post a score, and it turned into an absolute survival test out there," Rose said.

Masters champion Scottie Scheffler was two behind, one of only two players yet to post a round over par this week.

"That's the hardest nine holes I think you could ever play in golf right now," said Dustin Johnson, a former world No. 1 with two majors. He shot 72 and was five behind.

There was rain at the start for the leading players, and then a tough wind into their faces on the brute of a back nine at Royal Troon.

Players couldn't reach par 4s in two shots with a fairway metal. Some of them hit driver into the par-3 17th. Everyone was holding on by the seat of their pants. Scheffler, who missed his share of short putts, drilled a 3-wood into the 238-yard 17th to 2 feet for birdie, among the purest shots of the day.

"I probably don't hit a 3-wood on a par 3 very often," Scheffler said. "I probably don't hit driver and a 3-wood really solid on a par 4 and don't get there in two, either."

Horschel was up to the task, saving par on five straight holes on the back nine when he couldn't reach the green, two of them from deep bunkers. He missed a chance at a sixth straight par save on the 18th and was at 4-under 209.

US escapes upset on winner by James

Associated Press

LeBron James saved the United States from what would have been a stunning loss.

James' layup with 8 seconds left was the go-ahead basket Saturday, and the U.S. Olympic team that'll soon head to the Paris Games escaped with a 101-100 win over South Sudan in London, rallying from a 16-point deficit to avoid perhaps the biggest upset in the program's history.

South Sudan, the African nation that gained its independence just 13 years ago and is about to play in the Olympics for the first time, led for more than half the game and had a chance to win at the end. But Carlik Jones' runner off the glass missed with about 4 seconds left, and the Americans survived.

"I'm going to be honest: I like those better than the blowouts," James said as he walked off the court. "At least we got tested."

Oh, they got tested — by a team that came into the game as 43.5-point underdogs, according to BetMGM Sportsbook.

"A good reminder that when

we play against teams, it's the biggest game of their lives," U.S. coach Steve Kerr said. "We have to expect everyone to play like that."

Down by 16 at one point, the Americans dug out of that hole with an 18-0 run in the second half — then needed heroics at the end anyway. JT Thor's 3-pointer with 20 seconds left gave South Sudan a 100-99 lead, then the Americans called timeout and put the ball in James' hands.

He made it look easy: He waited, waited, waited, then drove and laid it in with ease to put the U.S. back on top, and the Americans got the stop they needed at the end.

James finished with a game-high 25 points, six rebounds and seven assists for the U.S., which improved to 4-0 with one game left — Monday vs. World Cup champion Germany — on its pre-Olympic exhibition tour. Anthony Davis added 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Americans.

Marial Shayok had 24 points for South Sudan and Jones had a triple-double — 15 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists.

The teams will meet in group play in the Paris Olympics on July 31.

"It's basketball. It happens," U.S. guard Stephen Curry said. "You want to play perfect every game; it doesn't happen. But can you dig deep and do the little things that help you win? Offense can come and go, but defense is the thing that helps you win championships, medals, all that stuff."

It should have been a mismatch, and for the first half, it was — just not in the way anyone expected.

The U.S. roster has 12 players, all of them All-Stars or NBA champions or both, with a total of 189,038 points in their regular-season careers, with 7,832 combined starts. South Sudan has four players who have appeared in an NBA game. They've scored a combined 1,228 points and started 19 games.

Didn't matter. It was 8-0 U.S. after 2½ minutes. The rest of the half: South Sudan 58, U.S. 34. The Americans allowed South Sudan to shoot 61% in the first half and got outscored 21-3 from 3-point

range in the first 20 minutes.

"I did not do a great job preparing our team," Kerr said. "We did not focus enough on what they're capable of, and that's on me. I think that really allowed South Sudan to gain confidence early. ... They were great. They played a wonderful game and the ending was good for us, just to feel that, to feel what it's going to be like in Paris and Lille."

An 18-0 run in the second half — James involved in most of it — was what really saved the U.S., turning a 76-65 deficit into an 83-76 lead.

But the 18-0 run was key. James had four assists during the spurt and Curry, from about 35 feet, connected on a 3-pointer late in the third that gave the U.S. its first lead since the first quarter at 79-76.

Wenyen Gabriel banked in a 3-pointer to get South Sudan within 85-84, but James — his former teammate with the Los Angeles Lakers — connected on a 3 on the ensuing U.S. possession, and the Americans eventually pulled through by the slimmest of margins.

Ogunbowale, Clark lead WNBA All-Stars over Olympic team

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Arike Ogunbowale was the dominant scorer on the floor. Caitlin Clark was the best passer. Angel Reese was her usual double-double machine.

The U.S. may still have the best team at the Olympics, but at the All-Star Game, they didn't have all the best players on Saturday night.

Ogunbowale set the All-Star scoring record with 34 points and Clark fell just short of the assist mark in her All-Star debut as the WNBA team beat the U.S. Olympic team 117-109.

It was the second consecutive win for the WNBA All-Star team over the Olympians. The All-

Stars also won in 2021 led by Ogunbowale, who was MVP of both that game and this one.

"This is going to help us tremendously. We don't get that many game opportunities," said Breanna Stewart, who had 31 points to lead the U.S. "We can go back and watch the film and focus on how we can continue to be better. It was like a little bit of deja vu feeling but just locking in."

The loss didn't slow down the Americans in 2021 as they went on to winning their seventh consecutive Olympic gold medal. The U.S. hopes for the same result in Paris later this month. No team in the world could match the depth or talent that the

WNBA All-Stars had.

"Is Arike playing for any of these teams we are going to play?" U.S. coach Cheryl Reeve deadpanned.

Saturday's loss came hours after the U.S. men's Olympic team rallied to beat South Sudan by one point in an exhibition game in London.

The U.S. women's team will next play Germany in London on Tuesday before going to France for the Olympics. The Americans are in a pool with Belgium, Japan and Germany.

"We have work to do and we know that," Reeve said. "Sometimes it's good, adversity, etc. I don't think we needed a game like this to have our attention.

We know how hard it is to do what we're trying to do and we have work to do to get there."

Ogunbowale once again was a thorn in the side of the U.S. team, scoring all of her points in the second half. The 2021 All-Star MVP took over the game in the third quarter, scoring 21 points, hitting six of her 10 shots, including five 3-pointers. The U.S. team threw everything at the Dallas Wings star, but they just couldn't stop her.

Ogunbowale said that WNBA team coach Cheryl Miller said something to her at the half about being more aggressive.

"Told me to take a deep breath and go out and play my game," she said.

Arozarena helps Rays wallop Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Taj Bradley pitched one-hit ball over seven innings to remain unbeaten in seven straight starts, Randy Arozarena hit two of Tampa Bay's four home runs and the Rays routed the New York Yankees 9-1 on Saturday.

Alex Jackson, Isaac Paredes and Arozarena homered off Nestor Cortes, and Arozarena added another against Josh Maciejewski for his seventh multihomer game. Arozarena tied a career high with four hits and Curtis Mead, back in the majors for the first time since May 3, had three hits including a go-ahead double in the third.

Bradley (5-4) allowed his only hit when Ben Rice doubled leading off the first, and the 23-year-old right-hander has a 0.92 ERA in his last eight starts. He leads the major leagues in ERA since June 8 among pitchers with at least 30 innings, bettering the 1.14 of Pittsburgh's Paul Skenes.

Since allowing nine runs at Baltimore on June 1, Bradley has lowered his season ERA from 5.81 to 2.63. With his fastball reaching 100.1 mph, Bradley pitched shutout ball for the third time in four outings, striking out five and walking two in his Yankee Stadium debut.

Braves 3-5, Cardinals 2-9: Nolan Gorman hit a two-run homer in a four-run second inning and visiting St. Louis overcame two homers by Marcell Ozuna to beat Atlanta and avoid being swept in Saturday's split doubleheader.

The Braves won the first game when Ozzie Albies hit a sacrifice fly with one out in the 10th inning.

Sonny Gray (10-6) gave up five runs and a career-high four homers, including two by Ozuna, in the second game. Gray had 10 strikeouts.

Ozuna hit his 28th in the sixth, when Austin Riley and Eddie Rosario also homered. Rosario hit a two-run shot in the first game.

Brewers 8, Twins 4 (12): Joey Ortiz hit the go-ahead sacrifice fly in the 12th inning after hustling home for the go-ahead run in the 11th, giving visiting Milwaukee a spark out of the All-Star break in a victory over Minnesota.

Jackson Chourio had two RBIs on three singles and Brice Turang padded the lead in the five-run 12th with a two-run single for the Brewers.

Carlos Santana crushed a tying two-run homer for the Twins in the 11th.

Astros 4, Mariners 2: Jake Meyers hit a go-ahead two-run homer off former Hous-

ton reliever Ryne Stanek in the seventh inning, and his team beat host Seattle to take sole possession of the AL West lead for the first time this year.

Stuck playing catchup through the first 3½ months of the season, Houston has won six of eight to climb into first place all alone.

Seattle lost its fifth straight and fell out of first place for the first time since May 11.

Tigers 7, Blue Jays 3: Jake Rogers hit his third career grand slam during a six-run sixth inning, and visiting Detroit beat Toronto for its 10th win in 12 games.

Andy Ibáñez had two hits and two RBIs for the Tigers.

Toronto slugger Vladimir Guerrero Jr. went 3-for-4 with a two-run homer, his 16th, but the slumping Blue Jays lost for the fourth time in five and matched a season-worst mark by falling 10 games below .500.

Mets 1, Marlins 0: Luis Severino and three relievers combined on a four-hitter as visiting New York beat Miami.

Pete Alonso doubled with one out in the fourth inning and scored when Francisco Alvarez grounded into a fielder's choice with the bases loaded.

José Iglesias had two hits for the Mets (50-47), who are 26-12 since falling a season-low 11 games under .500 on June 2.

Royals 6, White Sox 1: Brady Singer threw seven shutout innings to lead host Kansas City to a victory over Chicago.

Singer (6-6) allowed five singles with two walks and seven strikeouts.

The Royals built a 3-0 lead in the first inning with five straight hits, highlighted by Michael Massey's RBI triple.

Athletics 8, Angels 2: Brent Rooker hit a three-run homer, Lawrence Butler had a bases-clearing double and host Oakland beat Los Angeles for its fifth win in seven games.

Athletics starter Mitch Spence (6-6) pitched into the sixth and held the Angels to two runs.

Pirates 4, Phillies 1: Luis Ortiz pitched seven shutout innings, Oneil Cruz had a home run and three RBIs, and host Pittsburgh stretched its winning streak to six games with a victory over Philadelphia.

Ortiz (5-2), who had not gone more than six innings this season, gave up three hits and two walks with two strikeouts to lower his ERA to 2.57.

Nationals 5, Reds 4: Jacob Young hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the eighth inning, Lane Thomas bolstered his trade stock with a run-scoring double and host Washington

rallied past Cincinnati.

Derek Law (6-2) pitched two scoreless innings on an outstanding night for the Nationals' bullpen after MacKenzie Gore's shortest start of the season. Washington has taken two straight from Cincinnati, damaging the Reds' hopes of remaining relevant in the NL playoff race.

Diamondbacks 3, Cubs 0: Corbin Carroll hit a two-run homer and Alek Thomas had a solo shot in a three-run fifth inning to help visiting Arizona beat Chicago for its sixth win in seven games.

Zac Gallen gave up three hits in five scoreless innings as defending National League champion Arizona moved three games over .500 for the first time this season.

Padres 7, Guardians 0: Dylan Cease allowed one hit and struck out 10 in seven innings, Jake Cronenworth homered and drove in three runs, and visiting San Diego beat Cleveland and moved back above .500 at 51-50.

Cease (9-8) only allowed two baserunners — Tyler Freeman tripled in the third and Andrés Giménez walked in the fifth — in extending his scoreless inning streak to 13. The right-hander's 10 strikeouts raised his major league-best total to 159.

Orioles 8, Rangers 4: Grayson Rodriguez struck out eight over six innings for his AL-best 12th win, and Cedric Mullins became his team's eighth batter with 10 home runs this season as visiting Baltimore beat Texas.

Jordan Westburg and Ryan O'Hearn also went deep to increase Baltimore's major league-best total to 156 home runs, 16 more than the New York Yankees.

Rockies 4, Giants 3: Ezequiel Tovar homered for a third straight game, hitting a tie-breaking two-run drive in the fifth inning, and host Colorado beat San Francisco.

Kyle Freeland (2-3) went six innings and allowed three runs — two earned — on five hits in a fifth consecutive quality start since being reinstated from the injured list June 23 after missing two months due to a left elbow strain.

Dodgers 7, Red Sox 6 (11): Will Smith singled with the bases loaded and one out in the 11th inning to drive in Kiké Hernández as host Los Angeles rallied for a win over Boston.

Hernández kept the Dodgers alive twice. He tied it at 4 in the ninth with a solo homer to left-center off former Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen and then evened it 6-all in the 10th with a base hit up the middle to drive in Andy Pages.