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Koreas talk again amid diplomatic blitz

BY KIM GAMEL
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Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North and South Korea resumed high-level talks on improving relations Friday, adding another layer to a flurry of diplomacy aimed at salvaging a U.S.-North Korean summit and resolving the crisis over the North's nuclear weapons program.

The meeting in the truce village of Panmunjom happened as senior U.S. and North Korean officials are racing to try to find enough common ground to hold a planned June 12 summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore.

South Korea is eager to maintain the momentum for peace after Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed at a landmark April 27 summit to try to replace an armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War and to achieve the "complete denuclearization" of the divided peninsula.

Friday's delegations, led by South Korean Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon and North Korea's reunification point man Ri Son Gwon, focused on small steps toward improving cooperation.

The two sides agreed to open a liaison office inside the North Korean border city of Kaesong and to discuss holding joint celebrations to mark the 18th anniversary of

N. Koreans arrive to deliver letter from Kim to Trump

WASHINGTON — A top aide to Kim Jong Un visited the Oval Office on Friday, ready to hand off a letter from the North Korean leader to President Donald Trump amid talks between the two sides aimed at reviving an on-again, off-again nuclear summit.

Kim Yong Chol arrived at White House Friday afternoon, where he was greeted by chief of staff John Kelly. Kelly then whisked Kim into the building, where he was poised to meet with Trump.

He is the most senior North Korean to visit the White House in 18 years, a highly symbolic sign of easing tensions after fears of war escalated amid North Korean nuclear and missile tests last year.

The contents of the letter were not immediately known.

From The Associated Press

the first inter-Korean summit.

They also announced plans for military talks on June 14 and a Red Cross meeting on June 22 in North Korea focused on

planned reunions of families separated by the war.

"I believe that there is no problem that we cannot solve together if we deal with it based on trust, respect and understanding of the other side," Cho said at the start of the talks in a building on the South Korean side of Panmunjom.

Moon and Kim set lofty goals during their April 27 summit, which was the third inter-Korean summit after those held by their predecessors in 2007 and 2000. They also agreed to halt all hostile acts against each other and to hold reunions on Aug. 15 for families separated by the war.

The two leaders held a previously unscheduled meeting on May 26 after Trump abruptly canceled plans for his upcoming summit with Kim.

They agreed to send senior officials to Friday's meetings to map out steps toward implementing what is called the Panmunjom declaration.

Their bilateral efforts have been complicated by U.S.-North Korean nuclear talks and sanctions imposed to punish the North for its weapons programs that prevent most economic cooperation.

Trump, meanwhile, has adopted a warmer tone after the North issued a conciliatory letter, and diplomats have held separate meetings in the U.S., Singapore and Panmunjom to try to put the summit back on track.

Despite setback, China urges contacts with US military

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's Defense Ministry on Thursday said it hoped for continued exchanges with the American military despite being disinvited from a major U.S.-sponsored naval exercise this summer.

Defense Ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang also said the sides remain in contact over a possible visit to China by U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis at a date yet to be announced.

"A sound and healthy relationship is in the common in-

terests of the two militaries," Ren said at a monthly news briefing. "We hope the United States, together with China, can make efforts to implement the important consensus ... so as to build a healthy and stable relationship."

The Pentagon last week withdrew its invitation for China to participate in the multinational naval exercise in what it called "an initial response" to China's militarization of the South China Sea.

The Pentagon cited strong evidence that China has de-

ployed anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air missile systems and electronic jammers to contested areas in the Spratly Islands. It called on China to remove these systems.

Despite strong mutual suspicions, the U.S. had included China in the past two versions of the naval exercise known as Rim of the Pacific, or RimPac, in 2014 and 2016.

China is pitted against smaller neighbors in multiple disputes over islands, coral reefs and lagoons in the South China Sea that is crucial for global

commerce and rich in fish and potential oil and gas reserves.

While the U.S. takes no formal position on sovereignty claims in the area, it has strongly criticized China's construction of military installations atop man-made islands and insisted on the Navy's right to sail wherever legal under international law.

On Sunday, China said it dispatched warships to identify and warn off a pair of U.S. Navy vessels sailing near island claims in the Paracel Islands, north of the Spratlys.

Trump meets with Texas shooting survivors, families

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Seeking to comfort grieving families and shaken survivors, President Donald Trump spent more than an hour privately Thursday with some of those impacted by a Texas mass school shooting that killed 10 and wounded more than a dozen on May 18.

The latest spasm of violence in a year marred by assaults on the nation's schools, the shooting at Santa Fe High School was the latest to test the president's role as national comforter-in-chief. Trump met with more than two dozen people affected by the shooting and did not publicly share his message for the grieving families and local leaders during a meeting at a Coast Guard base outside Houston.

Pamela Stanich — whose son, Jared Black, 17, was among the eight students killed — was one of the parents who met with Trump, presenting him with a family statement and a copy of her son's eulogy.

Trump "met with us private-

ly and showed sincerity, compassion and concern on making our schools safer across the nation," she wrote in a Facebook post after the meeting. "He spent time talking to the survivors and asking on what happened and what would have made a difference. Changes are coming for the good. Thank you Mr. Trump."

Rhonda Hart, whose daughter, Kimberly Vaughan, 14, also was killed at the school, told The Associated Press that Trump repeatedly used the word 'wacky' to describe the shooter and the trench coat he wore. She said she told Trump, "Maybe if everyone had access to mental health care, we wouldn't be in the situation."

Hart, an Army veteran, said she also suggested employing veterans as sentinels in schools. She said Trump responded, "And arm them?" She replied, "No," but said Trump "kept mentioning" arming classroom teachers. "It was like talking to a toddler," Hart said.

Unemployment rate reaches 18-year low

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. employers extended a streak of solid hiring in May, adding 223,000 jobs and helping lower the unemployment rate to an 18-year low of 3.8 percent from 3.9 percent in April.

Average hourly pay rose 2.7 percent from a year earlier, a slightly faster annual rate than in April, the Labor Department reported Friday. But pay growth remains below levels that are typical when the unemployment rate is this low.

Still, the report shows that the nearly 9-year-old economic expansion — the second longest on record — remains on track. Employers appear to be shrugging off recent concerns about global trade disputes.

Roughly an hour before the employment data was released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time, President Donald Trump appeared

to hint on Twitter that a strong jobs report was coming. "Looking forward to seeing the employment numbers at 8:30 this morning," he tweeted.

The president is normally briefed on the monthly jobs report the day before it is publicly released, and he and other administration officials are not supposed to comment on it beforehand.

Friday's report showed that hiring in the U.S. is benefiting a wider range of Americans: The unemployment rate for high school graduates reached 3.9 percent, a 17-year low. For black Americans, it hit a record low of 5.9 percent.

"The economy and labor market appear to be firing on all cylinders, with all sectors showing strength," said Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics.

Celebrity ties, conservative causes noted in pardons

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has pardoned a conservative commentator he claimed on Twitter "was treated very unfairly by our government!" and announced he's thinking about clemency for Martha Stewart and former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, among "lots" of other people.

"What they did to him was horrible," Trump told reporters, speaking of his decision to clear the name of Dinesh D'Souza, who had pleaded guilty to campaign finance fraud.

It was the latest example of Trump trying to right a perceived wrong with his presidential pardon power, and a move that makes ever clearer that in the Trump administration, the odds of a pardon have heavily favored those with celebrity backers, those who have become a cause celebre among conservatives and those with reality TV connections.

Trump has been particularly drawn to

cases in which he believes there was a political motivation to the prosecutions — a situation that may remind him of his own predicament at the center of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian election meddling, which he insists is nothing but a "witch hunt."

On Thursday, Trump said he was seriously considering commuting the sentence of Blagojevich, the Democratic former Illinois governor serving a 14-year prison sentence on numerous counts of corruption, including trying to sell the U.S. Senate seat that was vacated by Barack Obama. The president also said he was considering a pardon for Stewart, the celebrity lifestyle guru who served a stint in federal prison after being convicted of charges related to a stock sale.

Both had connections to Trump's "Celebrity Apprentice" reality television show: Blagojevich was a contestant in 2010 and Stewart hosted the 2005 spinoff series, "The Apprentice: Martha Stewart."

Trump has issued five pardons as presi-

dent: The first went to former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, a top Trump supporter during the 2016 campaign who was spared the prospect of serving jail time after a conviction stemming from his use of racially targeted immigration patrols. Next came Navy sailor Kristian Saucier, who had taken photos of classified portions of a submarine.

Next came former White House aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby. A former top aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, Libby was convicted of lying to investigators and obstruction of justice following the 2003 leak of the covert identity of a CIA officer.

Trump also has been moved by cases championed by celebrities. Last week, he pardoned Jack Johnson, boxing's first black heavyweight champion, whose case had been brought to his attention by actor Sylvester Stallone. And on Wednesday, he met with reality TV star Kim Kardashian, who urged him to pardon Alice Marie Johnson, a woman serving a life sentence for drug offenses.

Alberto leaves deaths, floods in wake as it fades

Associated Press

Remnants of the first named storm of the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season are pushing into Canada, but Alberto's heavy rains have drenched the Southern Appalachians, claiming lives in raging flash floods, triggering mudslides and washing away bridges.

Since its Memorial Day landfall in the Florida Panhandle, Alberto's heavy rains have been widespread, with flooding reported from Alabama through Tennessee, Kentucky, the Carolinas, West Virginia and Illinois.

In Virginia, flash flooding blamed on Alberto turned a peaceful creek into a roaring death trap as witnesses reported a man and a woman were swept away when their car was washed off a road Wednesday night. Police said searchers found one of the victims Thursday and would resume searching Friday for the other still missing.

"The streams are overflowing right now. Everything's at full capacity, if not more," said Albemarle County Fire Rescue Chief Dan Eggleston on Thursday. He said he feared more rain would make creeks and streams swell again.

Rescue crews are to continue searching Friday in and around Ivy Creek in Virginia's Albemarle County, where a day earlier they found the body of one of two occupants of a Toyota Prius engulfed by floodwaters. Farther north in Madison County, sheriff's officials said rescuers are seeking a female reported missing in high waters.

Minn. archdiocese to pay \$210M to abuse victims

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis announced a \$210 million settlement Thursday with 450 victims of clergy sexual abuse as part of its plan for bankruptcy reorganization, making this the second-largest payout in the scandal that rocked the nation's Roman Catholic Church.

Victims' attorney Jeff Anderson said the money, a total of \$210,290,724, will go into a pot to pay survivors, with the amount for each survivor to be determined.

Anderson said a formal reorganization plan will be submitted to a bankruptcy judge for approval, and then it will be sent to the victims for a vote. Anderson expected they will readily approve it.

"We changed the playing field," said Jim Keenan, who was sexually abused as a child in the 1980s by a Twin Cities-area priest. "They have to listen to victims now, and that is huge."

Marie Mielke, who was sexually abused from 1997 to 2000 by a St. Paul seminarian who later became a priest, urged fellow survivors to have the courage to stand up.

"Power and healing is just as true as the evil that's out there," she said. "So get up and grab it."

Archbishop Bernard Hebda said he was grateful to victims who came forward.

"I recognize that the abuse stole so much from you, your childhood, your innocence, your safety, your ability to trust, and in

many cases, your faith," he said, adding that he hopes the settlement brings closure to those who were harmed. "We've been working with them very carefully to try to formulate this in a way that benefits them to the maximum."

According to the website BishopAccountability.org, which tracks clergy sex abuse cases, this is the largest total payout among the Roman Catholic archdioceses and dioceses that have filed for bankruptcy protection. But the largest total payout of any kind came in 2007, when the Archdiocese of Los Angeles settled clergy sex abuse cases with 508 victims for \$660 million.

Thomas Abood, chairman of the Archdiocesan Finance Council and Reorganization Task Force, said the settlement will be outlined in greater detail when it is filed in court. But he said most of the funding, roughly \$170 million, will come from insurance carriers. The rest will come from parishes, the archdiocese, a pension fund and real estate sales.

"We will do everything we can to expedite it," Abood said, adding that he hopes the process can be completed in the next few months. "We have gone everywhere we could to raise money for this settlement."

The archdiocese filed for bankruptcy in 2015, two years after the Minnesota Legislature opened a three-year window that allowed people who had been sexually abused to sue for damages. That spurred the filing of hundreds of claims.

White House OKs VA plan to boost mental health care

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The White House approved a plan for three federal agencies to provide more mental health services to servicemembers transitioning from the military, a population at increased risk for suicide, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced Thursday.

In January, President Donald Trump issued an executive order that required the VA, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security to develop a plan by March 9 on how to provide mental health care seamlessly to new veter-

ans and to implement that plan within 180 days.

Former VA Secretary David Shulkin helped develop the plan, but he was fired March 28. The VA sent its final version of its plan to the White House on May 3. Now that it's been approved, the VA plans to follow up with a status report and a cost estimate to the White House in July.

Peter O'Rourke, the new acting VA secretary as of Wednesday, promised the plan would make it easier for servicemembers to transition into civilian life.

"This collaborative effort represents a critical first step for ensuring that servicemem-

bers transitioning from active duty to veteran status understand that VA, DOD and DHS are committed to easing the stress of transition by providing the best mental health care possible," O'Rourke said in a prepared statement.

The plan states the VA and the Defense Department will conduct mental health screenings on all transitioning servicemembers before they separate, and then will intervene with people at risk of suicide. The agencies said they would begin that process this month and fully implement it by December.

One of the agency's goals is to reach out to transition-

ing servicemembers within 90 days of their expected date of separation with information on available resources, and then continue calling them at regular intervals. The VA also wants to allow servicemembers to apply online for VA health care during their transition briefings.

The plan also includes an expansion of the Defense Department's Military OneSource, which provides support to active-duty servicemembers and their families. The program currently offers support to servicemembers for 180 days after they leave the military. The DOD will extend the cutoff date to one year after troops exit.

National Spelling Bee sees surprise ending

Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. — The end of the biggest Scripps National Spelling Bee in history came abruptly, and it wasn't the conclusion that many expected.

Naysa Modi, a poised, charismatic four-time participant whose long spelling career seemed to be building toward triumph, sat next to a newcomer whom she had already beaten this year — at the county level.

But Naysa, 12, blinked immediately, mixing up the single and double “s” in the German-derived word “Bewusstseinslage” — a state of consciousness or a feeling devoid of sensory components — and Karthik Nemmani, 14, seized an opportunity that he wouldn't have had before this year.

“I didn't really think I'd be able to do it,” the soft-spoken winner said. “I had confidence that I could do it, but I honestly didn't realistically think it could happen.”

Karthik's victory Thursday night put the spotlight back onto the story of this bee week — the new wild-card program that Scripps launched to give a chance to spellers like him who have to compete against some of the nation's best spellers at the local level. The field was expanded to 515 spellers to accommodate the wild cards — there had never been more than 300 competitors previously — and four of the 16 prime-time finalists got in through the new program, known as “RSVBee.”

When only three spellers remained, all were from the Dallas area, which has long been a hotbed of spelling talent.

Karthik's winning word was “koinonia,” which means Christian fellowship or communion. He knew that one. He also knew the word Modi missed. But he didn't pretend to be infallible, saying there were about eight or nine words in the prime-time finals he didn't know — a rare admission for a champion.

Google: Wikipedia to blame for Calif. GOP-Nazism link

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Google is blaming “vandalism” at Wikipedia for search results that incorrectly said the ideology of the California Republican Party included “Nazism.”

The results appeared in a Google information box screen-captured by Vice News on Thursday. Google quickly removed the section on ideology.

Wikipedia's publicly available change log shows that an anonymous user added the term “Nazism” to the entry for the California GOP on May 24. The change was reversed by another editor a week later. A second, similar change on Thursday afternoon was reverted a minute later.

The California GOP formally has repudiated U.S. Senate candidate Patrick Little, who has praised Adolf Hitler and has advocated for limiting the representation of Jews in the government. While Little calls himself a Republican, the Republican Party says it has not endorsed any Senate candidates in California.

California Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the House Republican leader, tweeted that the Google result was a “disgrace.” California Republican Party executive director Cynthia Bryant called the result “libelous” in a statement and said Google and Wikipedia should “take more ownership of what is published

on their sites.”

Federal law exempts internet companies from liability for user-posted material as long as they promptly remove offensive items once notified. The California GOP situation, however, underscores the risks that companies like Google face when they rely on user-generated sites like Wikipedia.

“We have systems in place that catch vandalism before it impacts search results, but occasionally errors get through, and that's what happened here,” Google said in a Thursday statement. “This would have been fixed systematically once we processed the removal from Wikipedia, but when we noticed the vandalism we worked quickly to accelerate this process to remove the erroneous information.”

Two months ago, YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki told an audience at the SXSW technology conference that YouTube would begin to rely on Wikipedia entries to create a “companion unit” that will be shown beside conspiracy theory videos that continue to spread on the service.

Wojcicki told Wired editor Nicholas Thompson at the time that the goal was to show alternative sources of information so viewers would “be able to research other areas as well.”

Former dean faces 20 years for shooting of student

Associated Press

BOSTON — A former high school dean and anti-violence advocate nicknamed “Rev” for his pastorlike influence faces up to 20 years in prison for shooting and nearly killing a student he had recruited to sell marijuana for him.

Shaun Harrison, 58, was to be sentenced on Friday, a day after a Suffolk Superior Court jury convicted him of armed assault with intent to murder and other charges.

“Shaun Harrison was really a fraud, he was living a lie, and it was clearly exposed in this case,” District Attorney Dan

Conley said Thursday. “Not only was he not a man of God or a role model for young people, he manipulated them in a way that was terribly offensive.”

Harrison, who had worked as a dean at Boston English High School for five years, recruited Luis Rodriguez, 17, to sell marijuana for him at the school and shot him on March 3, 2015, because he believed the student was not generating enough sales and withholding money.

Rodriguez, now 20, testified that he came from a dysfunctional family and trusted Harrison, who students nicknamed “Rev.”

“He was my counselor. I went to him for everything,” Rodriguez said during the two-week trial.

On the day of the shooting, the pair arranged to meet at a gas station where Harrison was supposed to hand over some drugs.

Harrison shot the student in the back of the head and fled on foot, prosecutors said. The bullet entered Rodriguez's head just under his right ear. It just missed his carotid artery, broke his jawbone and caused nerve damage and hearing loss.

Rodriguez said he was saved by occupants of a passing car,

who called 911.

Bruce Carroll, Harrison's attorney, asked why Rodriguez did not immediately identify his client as the shooter even though he was conscious and alert.

Rodriguez had told hospital staff he was shot by one of his marijuana customers during a botched drug deal, Carroll said.

“It took me a while to get all my thoughts back together after being shot in the head, sir,” Rodriguez said during cross-examination. “I was in such denial. I knew who did it. Of course I knew who did it.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Squirrels freed after zip ties, bell removed

IA WATERLOO — Iowa wildlife experts have released two squirrels after a vet removed electrical zip ties from around their necks, including one with a bell attached.

Dreama Bartz, with the Black Hawk Wildlife Rehabilitation Project, said Wednesday that she trapped the animals last month after a Waterloo resident called to report the apparent cruelty.

A vet removed the ties and the bell and determined the squirrels were not hurt before they were released back into the neighborhood where they were found.

Bartz said she thinks a resident captured the squirrels as infants and let them go months later after realizing the frisky pair wouldn't work as pets. She said she thinks the zip ties and bell were intended to keep track of them. Bartz said the squirrels could have been choked by the ties as they grew.

Firefighters save owlets after mother owl killed

MT LIVINGSTON — Firefighters in Livingston rescued two owlets and are offering a \$200 reward for information leading to whoever is responsible for killing their mother.

Students at a Livingston middle school had been watching the great horned owl family, but someone threw rocks at the nest Tuesday night, killing the mother.

The owlets were taken to the Montana Raptor Conservation Center in Bozeman on Wednesday. Director of Operations and Development Jordan Spyke told ABC FOX Montana they'll make sure the owls are in good physical shape and will find a nest in the wild that will

foster them. Spyke said Raptor center staff work with property owners to find nests where orphaned owlets might fit in. He said their goal is to return them to the wild as soon as possible.

Blood donor passes out, hits house with car

MA MELROSE — A man passed out behind the wheel of a vehicle, sending it through the front door of a Massachusetts home.

The unidentified Revere man, 25, said he had just given blood at the hospital down the street in Melrose.

WBZ-TV reported the porch and entryway of Paul Mastronardi's home were damaged badly in the crash Wednesday.

No one was injured, and the man was helped out of the car by witnesses.

Mastronardi had just rebuilt the porch. The driver said he passed out and "woke up in the house."

Mom cited after toddler overdoses on pot candy

OR LA PINE — A mother in La Pine has been cited for child neglect after her 2-year-old son ate homemade marijuana-infused candy police say she left unattended.

Police said Katelynn Joy, 27, on Wednesday discovered a partially eaten piece of candy while at home but waited several hours before calling authorities.

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office said the symptoms of the apparent THC overdose worsened during that time.

The sheriff's office said deputies and paramedics responded to the home and found the child in apparent distress. The sheriff's office said the overdose seemed life-threatening by the time he was taken to a Bend hospital.

Authorities said he since has been released from the hospital and is under Department of Human Services supervision. Joy was also cited for endangering the welfare of a minor.

Girls discover WWI practice bomb in lake

MI ARGENTINE TOWNSHIP — Two girls have found what authorities say is a World War I-era practice bomb while swimming in a lake in Michigan.

The Flint Journal reported that Paige Burnett, 10, and Sage Menzies, 9, were searching for items below the surface of Lobdell Lake on Tuesday when Paige felt something unusual.

The girls and Sage's mother dragged the 3-foot-long mystery find from the murky water. Paige said they were excited at first but then got worried. She said she was "so scared" it might explode.

Township police Sgt. Douglas Fulton said the Michigan State Police's bomb squad came out and drilled a hole in it, but "nothing but mud came out."

Hazardous golf: Couple flee lumbering moose

UT PARK CITY — A Utah couple ran into a different sort of hazard during a round of golf on Memorial Day near Salt Lake City.

A young moose bigger than their golf cart chased them off the links at the Park City Golf Club.

Mark Redican told the Deseret News the moose lumbered after them twice during what otherwise had been a peaceful holiday outing. He said he was getting ready to hit a shot when his wife started yelling. They jumped into the cart and made an escape as the animal headed off to a nearby pond. But he said it wasn't long before it started

chasing them again.

Redican said it wasn't super-aggressive and he's not sure they were ever in any danger, but he said it was "gigantic" so they weren't going to hang around to find out.

Escaped boa found in owner's home

NY BINGHAMTON — A 6-foot-long boa constrictor reported loose in Binghamton has been found — beneath the owner's kitchen sink.

A Facebook post by the Broome County Humane Society on behalf of the owner said the pet snake escaped its enclosure earlier this week and last was seen near the high school.

The county office of emergency services issued a statement Tuesday saying people should "exercise caution and keep small children and small animals away" if they came across the snake. But on Wednesday morning, the reptile's owner told local media that Bella the boa apparently had never left his apartment building and was found safe in his kitchen.

Kittens saved from 'steaming hot' carrier

MA WRENTHAM — A carrier full of kittens has been rescued from the side of a Massachusetts highway.

WCVB-TV reported two drivers called police and animal control Tuesday when they noticed a cat carrier on the side of Interstate 495. Police said the five kittens that were inside the "steaming hot" carrier were brought to King Phillip Animal Rescue in Plainville.

The kittens appear to be fine, but one's condition is unclear. The carrier was under the hot sun for an unknown length of time before being reported.

From wire reports

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Things go Warriors' way in weird Game 1

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The ending was weird.

The postgame was weird.

At least Game 1 of what was supposed to be a lopsided NBA Finals was anything but boring. It had a little of everything: A player stumbled and buckled Klay Thompson's knee to send the Warriors' sharp-shooter limping to the locker room in the opening minutes; let Stephen Curry get loose for a 30-footer at the halftime buzzer; grabbed a rebound in the final seconds of regulation with the score tied and inexplicably ran toward midcourt as if he thought the game was over.

And all that was just J.R. Smith.

The opener of this Cleveland-Golden State series should have been memorable for other reasons — LeBron James scoring a playoff career-high 51 points, the Warriors having three players score at least 24 and Draymond Green nearly getting a triple-double. Instead, this game's legacy is an overturned charge call late in regulation, Smith's gaffes, contradictory explanations from Cleveland and hot tempers in the final seconds.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr's assessment? "Lucky."

Cavaliers coach Tyronn Lue's assessment? "Robbed."

Warriors 124, Cavaliers 114, overtime. That's what the box score says and will forever say, and the defending champions are now one step closer to winning their third title in four years. Golden State left Oracle Arena relieved. Cleveland left angered.

Those emotions will likely remain in place all the way until Game 2 tips off on Sunday night.

James wants the Cavs to put it behind them.

"We've got to move on," James said. "This game is over and done with."

Easier said than done, particularly with two full off days to now deal with, two full off days to replay everything over and over and over and over and over again.

Let's be clear: The Warriors aren't here because of luck. They have a coach who has won 80 percent of his career games. They have four All-Stars in the same lineup. They have two NBA MVPs.

But they got every break in Game 1. Every break.

Start in the beginning, when Smith slipped and stumbled into Thompson's knee. It had all the makings of some sort of knee structural disaster — the hit came from the side, Thompson twisted awkwardly, went down in a heap and was obviously in immediate, intense pain. Thompson limped away to the Warriors' locker room for evaluation.

He was back in a few minutes. Big break No. 1.

"I'm happy it's just a muscle that got strained," Thompson said.

Then came the final seconds of the first half, Cleveland having a foul to give. Smith would have been best served hugging Curry to make sure no shot got off. Instead, Smith went for a steal — he didn't get it — and Curry turned and coolly buried a 30-footer and sent the teams into intermission tied. Big break No. 2.

"The Finals, man, anything is liable to happen," Curry said.

From his perspective, good things.

From Cleveland's perspective, bad things.

Cleveland led by two in the final minute, poised to steal Game 1, when James stepped up and tried to take a charge against Kevin Durant. Referee Ken Mauer called an offensive foul, but it was overturned after replay review.

Durant tied the game with a couple of free throws awarded on the call reversal. Big break No. 3.

And with about 4 seconds left in the fourth, George Hill went to the line with Cleveland down by one for two shots. Made the first. Missed the second. Smith got the rebound, and ran away from the basket. Overtime. Big break No. 4.

"He thought we were up one," Lue said.

"I knew it was tied," Smith insisted.

The extra session was all Golden State. The home team left happy. The fans that packed Oracle Arena went home happy. James went back to his hotel to deal with blurred vision (courtesy of what appeared to be an unintentional first-half eye poke by Green), and the Cavaliers were further angered by Shaun Livingston following Golden State policy by taking a shot in the final seconds of a decided game instead of just getting charged with a shot-clock turnover.

"Tonight we played as well as we've played all postseason, and we gave ourselves a chance possession after possession after possession," James said. "There were just some plays that were kind of taken away from us. Simple as that."

Replay overturn plays key role in Cavs' loss

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Block or charge?

One of the most difficult calls to make in the split second of fast-paced NBA action helped swing Game 1 of the NBA Finals in Golden State's favor. Officials went to a replay review because they weren't sure if LeBron James' feet were outside the restricted area when Kevin Durant slammed into him in the final minute of regulation in a game Cleveland lost 124-114 in overtime Thursday night.

The play came with about 30 seconds left and the Cavaliers

leading 104-102 after James converted a three-point play as part of a 51-point night.

The initial signal was for a charge, which would have given Cleveland the ball. But the officials then called for a replay, as NBA rules allow for that type of play in the final two minutes of regulation or in overtime.

"We were told they were reviewing if I had my feet outside the line," James said. "And when I knew that, I was like, OK, that's going to be our ball. I knew I was outside the charge line, so that's what the communication was to us. We were over on the sideline, drawing

up a play, you know, to try to execute, try to go up a couple possessions."

During the replay, officials can also look to determine if the defensive player was in a legal guarding position, and they decided James wasn't.

"It was determined he was out of the restricted area, but he was not in a legal guarding position prior to Durant's separate shooting motion," referee Ken Mauer told a pool reporter. "So we had to change it to a blocking foul."

The overturn angered the Cavaliers, who were upset the call even went to review

because they felt James was clearly outside the restricted area.

"It doesn't make sense to go review something if the review is if he's on the line or if he's close to the charge circle, that's the review. He wasn't close," coach Tyronn Lue said. "So what are we reviewing? "

Durant said he had seen that play reviewed before and was confident he would get the call once officials looked at the replay.

"I knew that. I knew he was late on the drive, and I knew I had my man beat and he came over a little late," he said.

Caps ready with or without Kuznetsov

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The sight of Evgeny Kuznetsov clutching his left arm and leaving the ice after a hit from Brayden McNabb isn't as big a threat to the Washington Capitals' title hopes as it might seem.

Not after the Capitals withstood three games without Nicklas Backstrom. Not after they missed Kuznetsov for most of Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final and still beat the Vegas Golden Knights to tie the series.

They'd love to have their leading scorer in the lineup Saturday night in Washington, but with superstar captain Alex Ovechkin and several top players producing and filling the void, the Capitals are built to handle life without Kuznetsov if it comes to that.

"We've had some guys been out here and there these playoffs," Backstrom said. "It's hard to replace Kuznetsov the way he's been playing, but if

that's the case it is what it is and we just have to have other guys step up."

Coach Barry Trotz provided no update on Kuznetsov on Thursday other than to say the Russian center is day to day. The team practiced again Friday.

It didn't look very good for Kuznetsov when he went down the tunnel in the first period Wednesday night and didn't return. But Ovechkin scored his first career Stanley Cup Final goal on the power play, and Lars Eller, bumped up the lineup to fill in for Kuznetsov, had a goal and two assists.

No one player can make up for the potential loss of Kuznetsov, who has 11 goals and 14 assists in 21 playoff games, though Washington's depth down the middle looks solid with Backstrom, Eller, Jay Beagle and, if need be, Chandler Stephenson. Eller played a key role in two big victories against Tampa Bay in the Eastern Conference final without Backstrom, and

will once again be one of the most important players on the ice if Kuznetsov isn't healthy.

"Nick has gone out or Kuzy has been out, Lars has elevated his game and comes up in a more prominent role," Trotz said. "I think he embraces the challenge. He takes the moments very seriously that he has to step up and try to find a way to produce, and he has. He's a veteran player who has good hockey sense, and he's strong on the puck, and I think his game translates well in the playoffs."

It doesn't hurt that the Capitals can lean on Ovechkin in times of need, and they have received strong performances from top-six wingers Tom Wilson, T.J. Oshie and Jakub Vrana and defenseman John Carlson.

It's the kind of production Vegas is looking for from its top line of Jonathan Marchessault, William Karlsson and Reilly Smith. Going on the road means coach Gerard Gallant can't pick matchups, so he's

counting on his best players to play like it.

"I don't care who they play against," Gallant said. "We're going to play well and work hard and compete hard. (Wednesday) night they didn't have the offensive outburst they usually have. You're not going to be at your best every night. I expect them to be really good for us like they have all season long."

Gallant tipped his hat to the Capitals, saying they deserved to win Game 2 based on how they performed after losing Kuznetsov. It would be more difficult to sustain that effort and adrenaline for an entire game without him, though it's a test they passed without Backstrom earlier in the playoffs.

"It'll be a big loss, but as you saw in the Pittsburgh series when Nick went down, sometimes that kind of energizes some other guys to get in there and be able to make some plays," Oshie said. "So we'll roll with the punches."

Five-set survivor Zverev living up to French Open billing

Associated Press

PARIS — Alexander Zverev is climbing the short-list of players who could thwart Rafael Nadal's quest for a record-extending 11th French Open title.

Despite having never played a five-set match at Roland Garros before this year, the second-seeded German has shown mettle and a cool head to win two of them back-to-back.

He is shifting his 6-foot-6 frame around the red dust with increasing comfort. And he is into the fourth round for the first time.

Zverev saved a match point in a 6-2, 3-6, 4-6, 7-6 (3), 7-5 win over Damir Dzumhur on Friday. The victory was the 21-year-old's first on Court Philippe Chatrier, and he immediately got a taste for it.

"Hopefully many more to come," he said in his post-

match on-court interview.

Also through is Novak Djokovic, shaking off the rust of his enforced absence from the tour with an elbow injury.

The 2016 champion beat 13th-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain 6-4, 6-7 (6), 7-6 (4), 6-2, in a near four-hour match too sluggish for Djokovic's liking. After losing a point during the second-set tiebreaker, the 20th-seeded Djokovic angrily whacked his racket into the clay.

"He plays with a lot of patience," he said of Agut, "too much for me."

Djokovic's fourth-round opponent is Fernando Verdasco. The 30th seed from Spain beat fourth-seeded Grigor Dimitrov, a two-time Grand Slam semifinalist, 7-6 (4), 6-2, 6-4.

In the women's draw, second-seeded Caroline Wozniacki breezed past French wild-card entry Pauline Parmentier 6-0,

6-3 and appears to be brimming with self-confidence after her breakthrough Australian Open title in January.

One of the few lulls in Zverev's high-intensity match came when Dzumhur collided with a ball boy after winning the third set.

The chunky Bosnian and the ball boy were both looking skyward at a ball when they ran into each other. For a few anxious moments, the ball boy seemed hurt, lying on the dirt. But he picked himself up with Dzumhur's help, and play resumed.

After Zverev ran away with the first set, Dzumhur produced an array of deft drop shots to drag the lanky German to the net, where he was less effective.

Zverev, so relaxed early on that he laughed when he completely missed a service return, lost his air of confidence, swap-

ping it for an increasingly grim look of determination. He won just 29 of 67 points he contested at the net and didn't appreciate Dzumhur's use of the short ball.

"The drop shots he was hitting were kind of ridiculous," he said.

Dzumhur had match point on Zverev's serve at 5-4 in the final set.

Zverev broke serve in the next game. This time, the Bosnian player's use of drop shots backfired. Having again forced Zverev to the net, he watched helplessly as his German rival volleyed a forehand past him.

Zverev then held serve to secure his spot in the fourth round, the second time he's gotten that far at a major. The first occasion was at Wimbledon last year.

He was also 0-7 against top 50 players at majors before beating the 29th-ranked Dzumhur.

Correa's HR helps Astros top Red Sox

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Carlos Correa capped a May to forget with a big hit that helped the Houston Astros to a win.

Correa snapped an 0-for-10 slump with a two-run homer in the first, and Tony Kemp and Jake Marisnick each had an RBI in a 4-2 victory over the Boston Red Sox on Thursday night.

Correa's home run ended a month during which he hit just .192 after batting .315 in April.

"May wasn't the best month for me, but it's not like I've never been here before," he said. "I've struggled before for a month and it's a long season. So today was a big stride with that first at-bat. Hopefully I can keep it up and have a great June."

Houston starter Lance McCullers (7-3) allowed four hits and two runs in six innings to help the Astros to the victory

in this rematch of last year's ALDS, which Houston won in four games.

Ken Giles gave up a single to Sandy Leon with two outs in the ninth before walking Jackie Bradley Jr., but Marisnick grabbed a fly ball hit by Blake Swihart to end it and give Giles his 10th save.

The game was tied at 2 when J.D. Davis singled to start Houston's fourth. Tim Federowicz hit a ground-rule double with one out before Davis barely beat the throw home to score on a single by Kemp to put Houston up 3-2.

The Red Sox challenged the play, but it was upheld. Marisnick followed with a bunt that allowed Federowicz to score and the Astros to push the lead to 4-2.

The victory snapped a three-game winning streak for the Red Sox, who at 39-18 still have baseball's best record.

Boston's Drew Pomeranz

(1-4) allowed six hits and four runs in five innings after failing to pitch longer than four innings in his past three starts.

He recalled that Correa hit a similar home run off him in Game 2 of the ALDS.

"I obviously didn't get the results that I wanted (Thursday), but I just made a couple of bad pitches," Pomeranz said. "I made a dumb pitch to Correa. He did the same thing to me in the playoffs, basically in the same spot."

The Red Sox were without Mookie Betts, who missed his fifth straight game with soreness on his left side, and Dustin Pedroia, who was scratched just before the game with a sore left knee. Pedroia has played just three games this season while recovering from knee surgery in October and manager Alex Cora said he'll likely sit out on Friday as well.

"He's going to have good days and bad days ... hopefully,

he feels better (Friday) and can play over the weekend," Cora said.

Alex Bregman walked with one out before Correa's shot to left field made it 2-0 in the first inning.

McCullers was shaken up in the second inning when he and Rafael Devers had a collision when the pitcher went to cover first base after Devers hit a groundball.

Devers tripped over the foot of McCullers and went tumbling to the ground in a crash that also sent McCullers falling into the dirt.

Both players got up after a couple of minutes and McCullers remained in the game after a couple of warmup pitches.

Bradley got Boston's first hit with a double to start the third inning. Andrew Benintendi walked with one out before the double by Xander Bogaerts scored them both to tie it at 2.

MLB roundup

Nola, Phillies spoil Kershaw's return from injury

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Jorge Alfaro drove in two runs, Aaron Nola pitched seven innings of two-hit ball and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 2-1 Thursday, spoiling Clayton Kershaw's first start in almost a month.

Hitting out of the No. 8 spot in the Phillies' lineup, Alfaro delivered an RBI single in the second inning against Kershaw and had an RBI double off reliever Josh Fields in the seventh.

Nola (7-2) struck out seven, including five of the last seven batters he faced. He walked one and allowed just two runners to reach as far as second base. Seranthony Dominguez held the Dodgers scoreless over the final two innings for his second save.

Kershaw pitched in his first

game since May 1, spending time on the disabled list with left biceps tendinitis. He gave up one run and four hits over five innings, throwing 62 pitches. He had five strikeouts and a walk, but acknowledged after the game that another DL trip might be necessary — this time for a third back injury in three seasons. He is expected to undergo an MRI and will not travel with the team for this weekend's series at Colorado.

Alfaro, who had an RBI single in the second, broke a 1-1 tie in the seventh inning when he doubled to the wall in right-center field off Fields (2-2). He was thrown out at third base trying to extend the hit to a triple.

Braves 4, Nationals 2: Sean Newcomb (6-1) pitched seven strong innings for his sixth straight win, leading host Atlanta back into first place in the NL East.

The Braves snapped Washington's six-game winning streak and reclaimed first place by a half-game over the Nationals. Newcomb was roughed up by the Nationals in his season debut April 2. Since then, he's 6-0 with a sparkling 2.16 ERA in 10 starts.

The Braves went ahead for good in the bottom of the third off Tanner Roark (2-5).

Arodys Vizcaino got the last three outs for his 10th save in 12 chances.

Tigers 6, Angels 2: Victor Reyes hit a three-run triple in the five-run first to lead host Detroit.

Cardinals 10, Pirates 8: Yairo Munoz hit a three-run, game-ending homer to cap host St. Louis' five-run ninth inning.

Indians 9, Twins 8: Francisco Lindor's second home run of

the game snapped an eighth-inning tie after host Minnesota erased an eight-run deficit, and Cleveland held on for the win.

Athletics 7, Rays 3: Daniel Mengden (6-4) allowed three runs over eight innings and host Oakland avoided a four-game sweep.

Cubs 5, Mets 1: Jose Quintana (6-4) pitched six shutout innings, Ben Zobrist hit a two-run homer and visiting Chicago won the opener of a four-game series.

Padres 8, Marlins 3: Christian Villanueva hit his 15th home run, Jordan Lyles (2-1) pitched seven solid innings and host San Diego won its third straight.

Mariners 6, Rangers 1: Nelson Cruz hit a two-run homer to back another effective start by Wade LeBlanc (1-0), and host Seattle beat Texas.