

Enduring mysteries trail report on UFOs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The blob, captured on distant, fuzzy video by Navy pilots, seems to skitter just above the ocean waves at improbable speed, with no discernible means of propulsion or lift. “Oh my gosh, man,” one aviator says to another as they laugh at the oddity. “What ... is it?”

Is it a bird? A plane? Super drone? An extraterrestrial something?

The U.S. government has been taking a hard look at unidentified flying objects like this one. A report summarizing what the U.S. knows about “unidentified aerial phenomena” — better known as UFOs — is expected to be made public this month.

There won’t be an alien unmasking. Two officials briefed on the report say it found no extraterrestrial link to the sightings reported and captured on video. The report won’t rule out

a link to another country, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to discuss it.

While the broad conclusions have now been reported, the full report may still present a broader picture of what the government knows. The anticipation surrounding the report shows how a topic normally confined to science fiction and a small, often dismissed group of researchers has hit the mainstream.

Worried about national security threats from adversaries, lawmakers ordered an investigation and public accounting of phenomena that the government has been loath to talk about for generations.

Congress late last year instructed the director of national intelligence to provide “a detailed analysis of unidentified aerial phenomena data” from

multiple agencies and a report in 180 days. That time is about up. The intelligence office wouldn’t say when the full document will be out.

The bill passed by Congress asks the intelligence director for “any incidents or patterns that indicate a potential adversary may have achieved breakthrough aerospace capabilities that could put United States strategic or conventional forces at risk.”

The chief concern is whether hostile countries are fielding aerial technology so advanced and weird that it befuddles and threatens the world’s largest military power. But when lawmakers talk about it, they tend to leave themselves a little wiggle room in case it’s something else — whether more prosaic than a military rival or, you know, more cosmic.

“Right now there are a lot of unanswered questions,” Demo-

cratic Rep. Adam Schiff of California told NBC last week. “If other nations have capabilities that we don’t know of, we want to find out. If there’s some explanation other than that, we want to learn that, too.”

Pilots and sky-watchers have long reported sporadic sightings of UFOs in U.S. airspace, seemingly at unusual speeds or trajectories. In most cases, those mysteries evaporate under examination.

A recent turning point came in December 2017, when The New York Times revealed a five-year Pentagon program to investigate UFOs. The Pentagon subsequently released videos, leaked earlier, of military pilots encountering shadowy objects they couldn’t identify.

More recently, a story on CBS’ “60 Minutes” featured the declassified videos and raised questions about what intelligence the U.S. government has.

Email trove opening for GOP to revive attacks on Fauci

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dr. Anthony Fauci has been a political lightning rod since the early days of the pandemic, lionized by the left as a beacon of truth in an administration that badly mismanaged the pandemic and villainized by the right as a misguided, spotlight-seeking bureaucrat seeking to undermine former President Donald Trump.

But with the recent release of a trove of Fauci’s emails, Republicans’ attacks on the nation’s top government infectious-diseases expert have gone into overdrive. On conservative news channels, Fauci — who now serves as President Joe Biden’s pandemic adviser — has been pilloried as a liar who misled the American people about the origins of COVID-19 to protect the Chinese government. In Congress, Republican calls for his resignation have grown louder, as

have demands for new investigations into the origins of the virus.

The moves by Republicans represent a new effort to find a reliable foil in the first few months of the Biden administration, as they have struggled to turn public sentiment against the new president. So far, Biden has enjoyed widespread job approval, buoyed by the public’s broad backing of his handling of the pandemic, which 71% of Americans support, according to a recent Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll.

Fauci, who has a security detail because of ongoing threats and who did not respond to a request for comment for this story, has repeatedly defended his work, saying he received thousands of emails and has never ruled out any theory.

The doctor’s newly released emails,

which span the early days of the pandemic and were obtained by BuzzFeed News and The Washington Post, show no evidence of any kind of cover-up about the origin of the virus. Indeed, many of the discussions reflect the science at the time. But Republicans, including Trump, have seized on the emails as proof of a conspiracy to obscure the source of the virus.

House Republican Whip Rep. Steve Scalise said on Fox Business Network on Thursday that Fauci “needs to be brought in under oath to answer questions” about the emails, while Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., now the No. 3 Republican in the House, blasted out a fundraising email with the subject line “FIRE FAUCI.”

But the White House has made clear that it is standing with Fauci, despite the onslaught of criticism.

UN: No sign of Taliban violence slowing

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Taliban insurgents show no sign of reducing the level of violence in Afghanistan to facilitate peace negotiations with the government, and appear to be trying to strengthen their military position as leverage, with the “unprecedented violence” of 2020 carrying into 2021, U.N. experts said in a new report circulated Friday.

The panel of experts said the Taliban are reported to be responsible for the great majority of assassinations that have become a feature of the violence in Afghanistan, targeting government officials, women, human rights defenders and journalists among others. These attacks “appear to be undertaken with the objective of weakening the capacity of the government and intimidating civil society,” it said.

In the 22-page report to the U.N. Security Council, the panel said the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces by Sept. 11, the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, “will challenge Afghan forces by limiting aerial operations with fewer drones and radar and surveillance capabilities, less logistical support and artil-

lery, as well as a disruption in training.”

The Taliban were ousted from power in Afghanistan in 2001 by a U.S.-led coalition for harboring Osama bin Laden, the architect of the Sept. 11 attacks.

A peace deal that Washington brokered with the Taliban and signed in February 2020 was aimed at bringing American troops home and ending more than four decades of relentless wars following the 1979 Afghan invasion by forces from the former Soviet Union.

Negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan representatives began last September in Doha, Qatar and continued earlier this year. But the Taliban announced on April 13 — a day before President Joe Biden’s announcement that all U.S. troops would leave by Sept. 11 — that it would not take part in any conference intended to decide the future of Afghanistan until all foreign troops were gone.

The U.N. experts, who monitor sanctions against the Taliban, predicted more violence in the run-up to their departure.

“Taliban rhetoric and reports of active Taliban preparations for the spring fighting season indicate the group is likely to in-

crease military operations for 2021, whether or not a spring offensive is announced,” they said.

The experts also questioned how Afghan forces would fare without coalition support.

“Afghan forces have successfully reversed many Taliban gains with the assistance of international coalition close air support, but have done so with heavy casualty rates,” they said. “It remains to be seen how Afghan forces will perform without it.”

The panel of experts painted a grim picture of the violence in Afghanistan, which had been expected to decrease in 2020 but instead soared to the highest level ever recorded by the United Nations in the country — more than 25,000 incidents, a 10% increase over 2019.

Violence surged as the Doha talks began, the experts said, and incident rates in the usually calmer winter were higher than those in the spring or summer of 2020.

“Unprecedented violence over the winter carried into 2021, with 7,177 security incidents recorded countrywide between Jan. 1 and March 31, representing a 61 percent increase over the same period in 2020,” they said.

Biden rebuffs Republican infrastructure proposal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden has dismissed a fresh Republican infrastructure proposal that offered modestly more spending but fell short of “his objectives to grow the economy,” the White House said.

His reaction Friday cast further doubt on the two parties’ prospects for striking compromise on one of the administration’s chief legislative priorities as deadlines slip and time runs out to make progress toward a deal.

The White House released the statement after Biden spoke by phone with West Virginia Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, the chief GOP negotiator. Both sides said the two would speak again on Monday, but Biden’s team made clear the president will be casting about for talks with other sen-

ators.

“The President expressed his gratitude for her effort and goodwill, but also indicated that the current offer did not meet his objectives to grow the economy, tackle the climate crisis, and create new jobs,” White House press secretary Jen Psaki said.

A Capito statement provided no detail about their discussion or the new offer.

Making the pitch for Republicans, Capito had suggested around a \$50 billion boost above the previous Republican offer of \$928 billion, the White House said, still leaving the GOP well short of the \$1.7 trillion that Biden is seeking.

In a further sign that a deal with Capito was seeming increasingly less likely, the White House said Biden told Capito that he would

“continue to engage a number of Senators in both parties in the hopes of achieving a more substantial package.”

For weeks, the president has been engaged in talks with GOP senators trying to strike a compromise on Biden’s top legislative priority, the big infrastructure investment package. While the two sides appear to have narrowed the price gap between his initial \$2.3 trillion proposal and the GOP’s \$568 billion opening bid, they remain far apart on the scope of the deal and how to pay for it.

Biden wants to raise corporate taxes to generate revenues for the infrastructure investments, a nonstarter for Republicans. The GOP senators propose tapping unspent COVID-19 relief aid to pay for the roads, bridges and other projects, an idea rejected by

Democrats.

Earlier in the day, after the release of a modest May jobs report, Biden made the case for his robust investment package to push the economy past the COVID-19 crisis and downturn, and into a new era.

“Now is the time to build on the progress we’ve made,” Biden told reporters in Rehoboth Beach, Del. “We need to make those investments today to continue to succeed tomorrow.”

After returning to the White House, Biden spoke with Capito by telephone. The White House had been eyeing a deadline early this week as Congress returns from its Memorial Day break to see progress toward a deal. Meanwhile, Democrats are setting the ground work for a go-it-alone approach.

Calif. ban on assault guns overturned

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A federal judge Friday overturned California's three-decade-old ban on assault weapons, ruling that it violates the constitutional right to bear arms.

U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez of San Diego ruled that the state's definition of illegal military-style rifles unlawfully deprives law-abiding Californians of weapons commonly allowed in most other states and by the

U.S. Supreme Court.

"Under no level of heightened scrutiny can the law survive," Benitez said. He issued a permanent injunction against enforcement of the law but stayed it for 30 days to give state Attorney General Rob Bonta time to appeal.

Gov. Gavin Newsom condemned the decision, calling it "a direct threat to public safety and the lives of innocent Californians, period."

In his 94-page ruling, the judge spoke favorably of modern weapons, said they were overwhelmingly used for legal reasons.

"Like the Swiss Army knife, the popular AR-15 rifle is a perfect combination of home defense weapon and homeland defense equipment. Good for both home and battle," the judge said in his ruling's introduction.

That comparison "completely undermines the credibility of

this decision and is a slap in the face to the families who've lost loved ones to this weapon," Newsom said in a statement. "We're not backing down from this fight, and we'll continue pushing for common sense gun laws that will save lives."

Bonta called the ruling flawed and said it will be appealed.

California first restricted assault weapons in 1989, with multiple updates to the law since then.

Biden aims to restore lowered species protections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration says it is canceling or reviewing a host of actions by the Trump administration to roll back protections for endangered or threatened species, with a goal of strengthening a landmark law while addressing climate change.

The reviews by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are aimed at five Endangered Species Act regulations finalized by the Trump administration, including critical habitat designations and rules defining the scope

of federal actions on endangered species. The Fish and Wildlife Service also said Friday it will reinstate the so-called "blanket rule," which mandates additional protections for species that are newly classified as threatened. Under former President Donald Trump, those protections were removed.

Habitat designations for threatened or endangered species can result in limitations on energy development such as mining or oil drilling that could disturb a vulnerable species, while the scoping rule helps de-

termine how far the government may go to protect imperiled species.

Under Trump, officials rolled back protections for the northern spotted owl, gray wolves and other species, actions that President Joe Biden has vowed to review. His administration already has moved to reverse Trump's decision to weaken enforcement of the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which made it harder to prosecute bird deaths caused by the energy industry.

The decision on the bird law was among more than 100 busi-

ness-friendly actions on the environment that Trump took and Biden wants reconsidered and possibly revised or scrapped.

The reviews announced Friday follow through on that executive order and will take months or years to complete. Many rules targeted by Trump originated with former President Barack Obama and took him years to undo, continuing a decades-old, back-and-forth between Democratic and Republican administrations with starkly differing approaches to environmental regulation.

NRA drops countersuit against NY attorney general

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The National Rifle Association has dropped a lawsuit accusing New York's attorney general of suing the gun rights group last year out of political hostility, opting to challenge her through counterclaims in the same court where her case is playing out.

NRA lawyers filed court papers Friday voluntarily dismissing their lawsuit against state Attorney General Letitia James in federal court in Albany.

The NRA's law firm said in a statement that dropping the lawsuit was a "significant and important" procedural step that will ensure the organization's claims against James are heard in the same state court in Manhattan that will hear her lawsuit.

"Today's move will ensure that the NRA's

claims proceed promptly to discovery and a full vindication of its members' rights," NRA lawyer William Brewer said.

James sued the NRA in August 2020, seeking to put it out of business over allegations executives diverted tens of millions of dollars for lavish personal trips, no-show contracts for associates and other questionable expenditures.

NRA chief Wayne LaPierre and three others who've worked for the organization were also named as defendants in the case, filed in New York state court.

The NRA responded by suing James in federal court, alleging her actions were motivated by hostility toward its political advocacy, including her comments in 2018 that the NRA is a "terrorist organization."

The NRA filed a response and counterclaims to James' lawsuit in state court in February, calling the litigation "a blatant and malicious retaliation campaign against the NRA and its constituents based on her disagreement with the content of their speech."

James, whose lawsuit is continuing, said in a statement Friday that the NRA's decision to end its suit against her "is an implicit admission that their strategy would never prevail."

"The truth is that Wayne LaPierre and his lieutenants used the NRA as a breeding ground for personal gain and a lavish lifestyle," James said. "We were victorious against the organization's attempt to declare bankruptcy, and our fight for transparency and accountability will continue because no one is above the law."

US struggles to get handle on cyberwar

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Foreign keyboard criminals with scant fear of repercussions have paralyzed U.S. schools and hospitals, leaked highly sensitive police files, triggered fuel shortages and, most recently, threatened global food supply chains.

The escalating havoc caused by ransomware gangs raises an obvious question: Why has the United States, believed to have the world's greatest cyber capabilities, looked so powerless to protect its citizens from these kind of criminals operating with near impunity out of Russia and allied countries?

The answer is that there are numerous technological, legal and diplomatic hurdles to going after ransomware gangs. Until recently, it just hasn't been a high priority for the U.S. government.

That has changed as the problem has grown well beyond an economic nuisance. President Joe Biden intends to confront Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin, about Moscow's harboring of ransomware criminals when the two men meet in Europe later this

month. The Biden administration has also promised to boost defenses against attacks, improve efforts to prosecute those responsible and build diplomatic alliances to pressure countries that harbor groups.

Calls are growing for the administration to direct U.S. intelligence agencies and the military to attack ransomware gangs' technical infrastructure used for hacking, posting sensitive victim data on the dark web and storing digital currency payouts.

Fighting ransomware requires the nonlethal equivalent of the "global war on terrorism" launched after the Sept. 11 attacks, said John Riggi, a former FBI agent and senior adviser for cybersecurity and risk for the America Hospital Association. Its members have been hard hit by ransomware gangs during the coronavirus pandemic.

"It should include a combination of diplomatic, financial, law enforcement, intelligence operations, of course, and military operations," Riggi said.

A public-private task force including Microsoft and Amazon made similar suggesti-

ons in an 81-page report that called for intelligence agencies and the Pentagon's U.S. Cyber Command to work with other agencies to "prioritize ransomware disruption operations."

But the difficulties of taking down ransomware gangs and other cybercriminals have long been clear. The FBI's list of most-wanted cyber fugitives has grown at a rapid clip and now has more than 100 entries, many of whom are not exactly hiding. Evgeniy Bogachev, indicted nearly a decade ago for what prosecutors say was a wave of cyber bank thefts, lives in a Russian resort town and "is known to enjoy boating" on the Black Sea, according to the FBI's wanted listing.

Ransomware gangs can move around, do not need much infrastructure to operate and can shield their identities. They also operate in a decentralized network. For instance, DarkSide, the group responsible for the Colonial Pipeline attack, rents out its ransomware software to partners to carry out attacks.

Judge approves delay in Floyd civil rights case

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A magistrate judge has delayed until September the arraignment of four former Minneapolis police officers charged with federal civil rights violations in George Floyd's death, ruling Friday that the case is complex and not subject to time restraints under the Speedy Trial Act.

Prosecutors had asked for more time to prepare for the case, due in part to the sheer volume of evidence. Defense attorneys did not oppose the delay.

A federal grand jury indicted Derek Chauvin, Thomas Lane, J. Kueng and Tou Thao last month, alleging they violated Floyd's rights while acting under government authority as Floyd was restrained face-down, handcuffed and not resisting. Chauvin is also charged in a separate indictment alleging he violated the rights of a 14-year-old boy in 2017.

Magistrate Judge Tony Leung said the four men would be arraigned Sept. 14, subject to any further orders from the court. A date for trial has not been set.

Latvian woman charged in US for role in cybercrime group

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Latvian woman has been charged with developing malicious software used by a cybercrime organization that infected computers worldwide and looted bank accounts of millions of dollars, the Justice Department said Friday.

Alla Witte is charged as part of a 47-count indictment with participating in an organization known as the Trickbot Group, which authorities say operated in Russia and several other countries. The group is accused of infecting millions of computers worldwide with malware that targeted hospitals, schools, governments, businesses and other entities.

Witte, who authorities say previously lived in Suriname, was arrested in Miami in February. She was arraigned Friday in federal court in Cleveland, according to the Justice Department.

The prosecution, which the Justice Department says is part of its newly developed ransomware task force, comes as the Biden administration confronts a growing scourge of ransomware attacks that have

targeted crucial supply chains including meat and fuel. The White House, which has also been contending with cyberespionage campaigns aimed at U.S. government agencies, issued a memo last week underscoring that the fight against ransomware is a top priority.

"These charges serve as a warning to would-be cybercriminals that the Department of Justice, through the Ransomware and Digital Extortion Task Force and alongside our partners, will use all the tools at our disposal to disrupt the cybercriminal ecosystem," Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said in a statement.

The indictment accuses Witte of participating in a scheme to steal millions of dollars from entities across the world by infecting computers with malware that captured personal information — such as credit card numbers and passwords — and gave TrickBot members access to the victims' networks.

Among the targets identified in the indictment are real estate and law firms, country clubs, public school districts and other companies.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge rejects ‘stand your ground’ in iguana killing

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A judge rejected the “stand your ground” defense of a Florida man who said he beat an iguana to death only after it attacked him, biting him on the arm.

PJ Nilaja Patterson, 43, must stand trial on a felony animal cruelty charge, Palm Beach County Circuit Judge Jeffrey Dana Gillen ruled in denying the unusual defense, the South Florida SunSentinel reported.

The “stand your ground” law has been used in several high-profile cases since it was adopted 16 years ago, but this might be the first time the recipient of deadly force was an animal.

Under state law, people are allowed to kill iguanas, an invasive species, in a quick and humane manner.

Coaches let go after player says he had to eat pork

OH CANTON — The head football coach at an Ohio high school and six other coaches there were ousted after a football player said he was forced to eat pork in violation of his religious beliefs for missing a voluntary workout.

The Canton City Board of Education voted unanimously to not renew the coaching contracts of Canton McKinley head football coach Marcus Wattle, two of his assistants and an assistant baseball coach, The Canton Repository reported. With the same vote, the board also deemed three other assistant football coaches as ineligible for future coaching positions.

The district had suspended the coaches after the 17-year-

old player reported what happened to him on May 24.

The player and his family are members of the Hebrew Israelite religious faith and do not eat pork.

3 ailing mountaineers rescued off glacier

AK ANCHORAGE — Two mountaineers experiencing high-altitude sickness were taken to a hospital in Anchorage after spending days in the wild, officials said. Another was treated for minor frostbite injuries.

The three were part of a group of eight clients and four guides in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. All 12 were removed from Klutan Glacier, southeast of Mt. Bona.

The group were at the 14,000 feet level when they contacted park officials for help for the three ailing mountaineers, Alaska National Guard spokesperson Maj. Chelsea Aspelund said.

Jury to decide liability in Tastykake grocery crash

DE DOVER — A jury must decide whether a grocery store should be held liable for a collision between a vendor’s Tastykake snack foodcart and a shopper riding an electric scooter, a judge ruled.

Superior Court Judge Jan Jurden refused to grant summary judgment in favor of Acme Markets Inc. in a lawsuit stemming from the 2016 accident.

Jurden said the case is similar to one involving a different grocery company, an employee of an ice cream company who was stocking product and a shopper

who slipped and fell in the frozen food aisle.

“Both allegedly unsafe conditions resulted from the activity of a third party. And both third parties performed their activities without the supermarket’s oversight,” Jurden wrote.

Woman recovers wallet she lost 46 years ago

CA VENTURA — A woman from Ventura was reunited with a wallet she lost 46 years ago after an employee working on remodeling Southern California’s historic Majestic Ventura Theater discovered it inside a crawl space.

Tom Stevens told the Ventura County Star he went on social media to try to locate the owner based on clues in the wallet, including a California driver’s license for Colleen Distin that expired in 1976. There was no money in the wallet.

Distin said it must have fallen through a hole in her purse, which she had placed on the theater floor while watching a movie in 1975.

18-year-old dies after being electrocuted in lake

TX CLYDE — A recent high school graduate died after he was electrocuted in a West Texas lake, police said.

Trevor Cate, 18, was shocked and sank into the Clyde Lake waters, Clyde police said in a Facebook posting. A sailboat being pulled to shore struck a power line, sending a charge into the lake waters, police said.

Lake staff cut power to the line, found Cate, pulled him to shore and began resuscitation

efforts, but Cate died in an Abilene hospital, police said.

Man accused of killing roommate’s rabbit

AZ TEMPE — A Tempe man is accused of killing his roommate’s domesticated pet rabbit while the roommate was in the process of moving out.

Antonio O’Connor was arrested on suspicion of animal cruelty after the roommate returned to the residence to retrieve the rabbit and other belongings and found the rabbit’s carcass on the kitchen counter and O’Connor holding a kitchen knife, police said in court documents.

O’Connor said the roommate was gone for several weeks and hadn’t cared for the rabbit during that time, police said.

State picks site for 1st veterans cemetery

NY ROMULUS — A cemetery built on the grounds of a former military site in western New York has been chosen to become the state’s first official veterans’ cemetery, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced.

Designating the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery as the state’s official resting place for veterans means New York can apply for federal funds for its development and other costs. New York is one of the few states in the country that does not have an official state veterans cemetery.

The cemetery, in Romulus, is on the grounds of what was the Sampson Naval Training Station and Sampson Air Force Base, which closed in 2000.

— From wire reports



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Clippers, Mavs headed for Game 7

Associated Press

DALLAS — Kawhi Leonard and the Los Angeles Clippers made it an NBA-record six consecutive victories for the road team in a playoff series.

Now they have to figure out how to beat Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks at home in a Game 7 to avoid another bitter postseason disappointment.

Leonard tied his playoff career high with 45 points and the Clippers beat the Mavericks 104-97 on Friday night, winning for the third time in front of a raucous Dallas crowd more than three times bigger than any during the regular season.

This time it was a tense finish keyed by the two-time NBA Finals MVP after double-digit LA victories in the first two games in Dallas, and coming off the Clippers' third straight loss at home.

"Great players perform in big moments," Clippers coach Tyrone Lue said. "It just shows you who Kawhi Leonard is."

Only one other seven-game series had

started with five straight victories by the road team. Now Leonard and Paul George get their first chance to eliminate the team they beat in six games in the first round in the Florida playoff bubble last August. Game 7 is Sunday in Los Angeles.

"Just another basketball game," Leonard said. "Like we say, if we don't want to go home, pay attention to details, have faith, shooting the ball with confidence. If you do that, you can live with the results."

Luka Doncic scored 29 points but was just 2-for-9 from three-point range as the LA defense turned up the pressure in key moments and held Dallas to 29% shooting in the fourth quarter.

Tim Hardaway Jr. had 23 points but missed a three-pointer and a layup in the closing minutes.

After coming home with a 2-0 series lead and losing twice, the Mavericks lost a close-out game for just the second time in seven games under coach Rick Carlisle.

Now Dallas has to bounce back from the

disappointment of another missed opportunity on the home court, still looking for the first playoff series victory since the franchise's only championship 10 years ago.

"We've done it before already in this series," said Kristaps Porzingis, the European sidekick to Doncic who was relegated to a secondary role on offense and finished with just seven points on seven shots in 31 minutes. "We feel like we can beat them, and we'll see who's right and who's wrong."

The Mavericks were down 90-88 when Maxi Kleber missed an open corner three. Leonard scored the next eight LA points, including back-to-back three-pointers for a 98-90 lead with 1:41 remaining.

A night after the other Los Angeles team was eliminated when LeBron James and the Lakers lost to Phoenix, the Clippers trailed for long stretches before going in front for good with six minutes left on a jumper by George, who had 20 points and 13 rebounds.

Red Sox defeat Yankees in rivals' 1st of 19 meetings

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rafael Devers hit a three-run homer in the first inning off Michael King, Marwin González added a two-run double and the Boston Red Sox beat the New York Yankees 5-2 Friday night in the first of the rivals' 19 meetings this season.

Former Yankee Nathan Eovaldi (7-2) won his third straight start, and the Red Sox stopped their 11-game losing streak in the Bronx, winning at Yankee Stadium for the first time since June 2, 2019.

New York lost for the eighth time in 11 games. Yankees hitters struck out 15 times.

Brewers 5, Diamondbacks 1: Freddy Peralta carried a no-hitter into the eighth inning on his 25th birthday as host Milwaukee defeated Arizona.

Peralta, Brad Boxberger and Trevor Richards combined on a one-hitter. Peralta (6-1) struck out nine, walked three and allowed one run in 7½ innings.

Padres 2, Mets 0: Blake

Snell took a no-hitter into the seventh inning and Manny Machado hit an early homer as San Diego beat visiting New York.

Snell (2-2) struck out 10 and pitched into the seventh inning for the first time this season. Francisco Lindor ended his no-hit bid with a single leading off the seventh — a ball left fielder Tommy Pham misplayed for a two-base error.

Orioles 3, Indians 1: Ryan Mountcastle hit a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning that was upheld by video review as host Baltimore kept up its June winning streak. The Orioles have won their first three games this month after dropping 14 in a row to end May. **Nationals 2, Phillies 1:** Max Scherzer outpitched Zack Wheeler, Juan Soto hit a tie-breaking solo homer and visiting Washington beat Philadelphia.

Astros 13, Blue Jays 1: At Buffalo, N.Y., Zack Greinke pitched his first complete game since 2017, Carlos Correa home-

red twice and Martin Maldonado hit a grand slam, leading Houston over host Toronto.

Pirates 9, Marlins 2: Rookie Ke'Bryan Hayes homered for the second game in a row since being activated from the injured list and drove in three runs to lead host Pittsburgh.

Rangers 5, Rays 4: Kyle Gibson returned from the injured list to pitch 5½ scoreless innings, and Texas ended a nine-game losing streak with a win over visiting Tampa Bay.

Dodgers 9, Braves 5: Chris Taylor hit a bases-loaded double in the eight-run fifth inning as Los Angeles beat host Atlanta in a rematch of last year's NL Championship Series.

Royals 14, Twins 5: Whit Merrifield capped a nine-run first inning with a three-run homer as host Kansas City beat Minnesota for its fifth straight victory.

Reds 6, Cardinals 4: Luis Castillo earned his first victory since early April, rookies Tyler Stephenson and Jonathan India

homered and visiting Cincinnati beat St. Louis.

White Sox 9, Tigers 8: Rookie Yermín Mercedes hit a game-ending RBI single, Yasmani Grandal homered twice and Chicago beat visiting Detroit to put Hall of Fame manager Tony La Russa in a tie with John McGraw for second place on baseball's career wins list with 2,763.

Angels 3, Mariners 2: Shohei Ohtani pitched six innings of four-hit ball with a season high-tying 10 strikeouts, and José Rojas hit the go-ahead homer in host Los Angeles' victory over Seattle.

Athletics 9, Rockies 5: Sean Murphy and Matt Canha homered off Jon Gray before the Rockies right-hander left with elbow soreness, and Oakland beat host Colorado.

Giants 8, Cubs 5: Steven Duggar and Alex Dickerson homered off Jake Arrieta as part of a six-run second inning as host San Francisco beat Chicago.

Defending champs cruise into 4th round

Associated Press

PARIS — Iga Swiatek closed out her latest French Open victory and raised a triumphant right fist. Rafael Nadal won less than half an hour later and celebrated with a left uppercut.

The two defending champions make for a potent one-two combination at Roland Garros, where both won going away Saturday to reach the fourth round.

Swiatek rallied from a break down in the opening set to beat Anett Kontaveit 7-6 (4), 6-0. Nadal was unfazed at losing serve twice in a row in the second set and eliminated Cameron Norrie 6-3, 6-3, 6-3.

Nadal, 35, advanced to the round of 16 at a Grand Slam for the 50th time. He's trying to add to his record 13 French Open crowns and seeks his 21st major title, which would break the men's record he shares with Roger Federer.

As Nadal spoke to the crowd

after the match, fans reminded the Spaniard of his title total by shouting "treize!" — 13 in French.

"Can you repeat that?" he responded in English with a smile.

Nadal will next play 19-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner, who is seeded 18th.

"He's young, he's improving every week, he has big shots," Nadal said. "I need to be solid. I need to be aggressive, too. I need to make him play from tough positions. It's the fourth round — you can't expect an easy opponent."

Nadal knows that from experience. Federer and Novak Djokovic are the only other men to reach the fourth round at 50 major events.

Swiatek, 20, has won 20 consecutive sets at Roland Garros and that streak was in jeopardy when she trailed Kontaveit 4-2. The title holder dominated from there and lost only 12

points in the second set.

"It's good to have matches like that, because it keeps you down to earth, and you have to be careful on every point," Swiatek said. "I'm just happy that I'm able to play really solid in really important moments."

The eighth-seeded pride of Poland next faces 18-year-old Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk, who has reached the round of 16 at a major event for the first time.

Sofia Kenin advanced to the fourth round for the third consecutive year by winning a seesaw all-American match against Jessica Pegula, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4. Kenin is the highest-seeded player left in the women's draw at No. 4, and she has shaken a slump with her return to Roland Garros, where she was the runner-up to Swiatek in October.

The top-seeded Djokovic didn't face a break point en route to a 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 victory over unseeded Ricardas Berankis.

Sinner beat Mikael Ymer 6-1, 7-5, 6-3 and was joined in the round of 16 by another Italian 19-year-old, Lorenzo Musetti, who outlasted Marco Cecchinato — also from Italy — 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Kenin blew a 3-0 lead in the opening set against the No. 28-seeded Pegula, but then began stepping into the court to take charge of rallies, especially with a backhand that produced two dozen winners. She hit 48 winners overall to 18 for Pegula.

Kenin had 10 double faults and was broken five times but held her final four service games to close out the win. The 2020 Australian Open champion, who was sidelined by an appendectomy in February, improved to 10-8 this year.

American Sloane Stephens, who is ranked 59th and out of the top 50 for the first time since 2017, advanced by beating 18th-seeded Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-5.

Marchessault, Pacioretty score late to lift Knights

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Vegas Golden Knights coach Peter DeBoer said Thursday one goal could get a raucous home crowd involved and make the difference in a playoff game.

His words rang true Friday night.

Jonathan Marchessault and Max Pacioretty scored 45 seconds apart late in the third period to lift Vegas to a 3-2 victory over the Colorado Avalanche in Game 3 of their second-round playoff series.

Marchessault's goal ignited an announced sold-out crowd of 17,504, which helped breathe life into the Golden Knights, who lost the first two games in Denver. Vegas cut Colorado's series lead in half to 2-1. Game 4 is scheduled for Sunday in Las Vegas.

"The crowd was so awesome, the full building was so great, it was so nice to be back in that type of atmosphere again," DeBoer said. "They were huge in the third period for us, sticking with us and keeping the energy levels up. It was awesome. It was nice to be back at home with a full house."

William Karlsson also scored for Vegas

and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 18 shots, including two point-blank saves inside the final two minutes to preserve the win.

With Vegas trailing 2-1, Marchessault whiffed on a shot but stayed with the puck and, from behind his own net, banked the puck off the back of Colorado goaltender Philipp Grubauer to tie it with 5:18 left in the game.

Less than a minute later, Pacioretty deflected defenseman Nick Holden's shot from the point past Grubauer for the go-ahead goal.

"It's tough to believe when you miss so many chances, but with Marchy breaking the ice, it really got us going," Pacioretty said. "So when that floater comes in from Holdy, you just have a little more confidence that you're going to tip it and that's how it played out."

Carl Soderberg and Mikko Rantanen scored for Colorado. Grubauer, who dropped to 6-1 this postseason, made 39 saves. He had won his previous 10 playoff decisions.

"Maybe we stepped back too much in the

third," Soderberg said. "We gave them a lot of opportunities. We were almost there."

Vegas fed off the crowd's energy early on and dominated the first period by outshooting the Avalanche 15-3 and had a 6-0 edge with high-danger chances. It was a major turnaround for a Vegas team that was outscored 10-3 in the first two games.

Canadiens 1, Jets 0: Carey Price made 30 saves for his eighth career playoff shut-out and Montreal beat host Winnipeg to take a 2-0 series lead.

Tyler Toffoli scored a short-handed goal 1:41 into the second period.

Connor Hellebuyck made 23 saves for Winnipeg. The Jets were without suspended scoring leader Mark Scheifele, who was suspended for four games for charging into Canadiens forward Jake Evans in the final minute of Montreal's 5-3 victory Wednesday.

Pierre-Luc Dubois centered Winnipeg's top line with Kyle Connor on the left and captain Blake Wheeler on the other side. Jets center Paul Stastny missed his second game of the series because of an injury.

Fouts' perfect game lifts Bama women

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Montana Fouts threw a perfect game with 14 strikeouts on her 21st birthday, and Alabama defeated UCLA 6-0 on Friday night to advance to the semifinals of the Women's College World Series.

There had been four individual perfect games and one combined in World Series history before Fouts' gem. The most recent was by Courtney Blades of Southern Mississippi in 2000.

As the game progressed, Fouts tried not to focus on the situation.

"I honestly wasn't really thinking about it," she said. "I don't think you can think like that as a pitcher, as a player or even in the stands really, because I feel like I'm a supersti-

tious person. But I don't know — I was just locked in each pitch because I know that one swing away, they have momentum."

The Alabama section of the crowd, and even a fair number of UCLA fans, stood as Fouts took the circle in the bottom of the seventh. She opened the inning by striking out U.S. Olympians Bubba Nickles and Rachel Garcia swinging. The Bruins' final batter, Aaliyah Jordan, flied out deep to left field.

Fouts threw 65 of her 95 pitches for strikes against a team that came in with a .319 batting average.

"She's a great pitcher," UCLA shortstop Briana Perez said. "We went in with a game plan; we let her get ahead in a lot of

counts and didn't make an adjustment throughout the game, and so here we are."

Third-seeded Alabama (52-7) ran its winning streak to 20 games. The Crimson Tide need one more win to reach the best-of-three championship series.

Garcia, a two-time USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year, was pulled in the sixth. She gave up five earned runs on seven hits and struck out three. She threw 105 pitches, one day after throwing 112 in a victory over Florida State.

The Bruins (47-6) were to play Oklahoma or Georgia in an elimination game Saturday night.

Fouts gave up one run and struck out 16 without a walk against Arizona on Thursday.

She has two complete games with 30 strikeouts and no walks in World Series play this year.

James Madison 2, Oklahoma State 1: A day after stunning top-seeded Oklahoma, the Dukes beat the No. 5 Cowgirls.

After claiming the two wins against Big 12 teams within an hour of their campuses, the unseeded Dukes — champions of the Colonial Athletic Association — are one victory from reaching the best-of-three championship series.

Odicci Alexander pitched complete-game victories in both contests. She threw 129 pitches against Oklahoma, then 95 more against the Cowgirls.

Oklahoma State (48-11) was to play Arizona or Florida State in an elimination game Saturday night.

USF upsets Florida; grand slam saves Tennessee

Associated Press

South Florida posted the biggest upset and Tennessee's Drew Gilbert came through with the biggest hit on the first day of the NCAA baseball tournament.

The USF Bulls were the only No. 4 regional seed to win Friday, knocking off Florida 5-3 in the Gainesville Regional in a game that portended surprises sure to come in a year when fallout from COVID-19 made evaluating teams and setting up the bracket arduous tasks for the Division I Baseball Committee.

Florida, at No. 15, was the only team among the 16 national seeds to lose an opener in the double-elimination regionals. Some of the top seeds got pushed, though.

No. 1 Arkansas was challenged early before hitting five home runs and erasing a three-run deficit in a 13-8 win over the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

No. 3 Tennessee escaped Wright State when Gilbert hit a walk-off grand slam to right field in the ninth inning to beat the Raiders 9-8.

No. 5 Arizona, down four runs early, broke open a close game in the eighth to beat tournament newcomer Grand Canyon 12-6.

USF ended the regular season 24-26 after being picked last in the American Athletic Conference, and it had to win its league tour-

namment to get into the NCAAs.

Florida had won 19 of 21 meetings with the Bulls in Gainesville, and had beaten them in the national tournament in 1996, 2015 and 2017. But the Gators (39-20), who also lost their regional opener in 2019, couldn't sustain any offense against four USF pitchers. The Bulls (29-27) have won seven of their past eight.

"We're definitely playing well at the right time," catcher Jake Sullivan said. "What we're doing more than anything is playing for each other. We're not worried about who's on the other side of the field, who's in the stands, where we're playing."

It was the second straight NCAA Tournament that opened with a No. 4 regional seed from the AAC winning its opener. Cincinnati beat Oregon State in 2019. There was no tournament in 2020 because of the pandemic.

No. 3 regional seeds Liberty, Dallas Baptist, Florida State, UC Santa Barbara and North Carolina also won.

Fairfield, the 3 seed in Austin, had a one-run lead over Arizona State in the ninth. The Stags lost 7-6 on Sean McLain's one-out, walk-off single.

Cone head

East Carolina's Thomas Francisco was

front and center for one of the nation's most creative home run celebrations after his three-run shot gave his team the lead over Norfolk State in an 8-5 win.

As has been the practice for all East Carolina home run hitters all season, teammates put an orange traffic cone over Francisco's head upon his return to the dugout. The cone, found in a mudroom in the team's baseball facility, has a hole cut into it so the wearer can see. It's known as the "Birdhouse," perhaps because of its triangular shape.

Corbin's 900th

Vanderbilt's Tim Corbin beat the school that gave him his start as a head coach for career win No. 900. Kumar Rocker allowed two hits and struck out nine in seven innings in a 10-0 victory over Presbyterian, where Corbin was coach from 1988-93.

Glove and bat

Christian Franklin righted Arkansas after a rocky start against NJIT.

With his team down 3-2 in the fourth and runners on first and second with two outs, the center fielder made a long run to take away a gapper that would have produced at least one run. Franklin led off the seven-run fifth with the first of the Razorbacks' three homers in the inning.