

Biden, Putin hold first summit meeting

Associated Press

GENEVA — After their first summit meeting, President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday's talks covered their countries' relations, human rights, cybersecurity and arms negotiations.

In a press conference after nearly four hours of talks, Biden said he stressed human rights including the cases of two Americans who Biden says are "wrongfully imprisoned" in Russia. Biden also said he'll continue to raise concerns about cases like Alexei Navalny, the jailed leader of the Russian opposition to Putin.

Biden added that he'll keep on airing concerns about issues of "fundamental human rights because that's what we are."

As the summit began, Biden had called it a discussion between "two great powers" and said it was "always better to meet face to face."

In his press conference, Biden said the leaders discussed in detail the "next steps our countries should take on arms control measures" to reduce the risk of war. Biden said that means that diplomats and military experts from both countries will meet for what he called a "strategic stability dialogue" to lay the groundwork for future

arms control and risk reduction measures.

He did not say when the talks would begin. The idea is to work out a way to set the stage for negotiations on an arms control deal to succeed the New START treaty that is set to expire in 2026.

Biden said they agreed to further discussions on keeping certain types of critical infrastructure off-limits to cyberattacks. Biden also said they will have additional talks on the pursuit of criminals carrying out ransomware attacks.

In a separate news conference, Putin said he and Biden agreed in a "constructive" summit to return their nations' ambassadors to their posts and begin negotiations to replace the last remaining treaty between the two countries limiting nuclear weapons.

Putin said there was "no hostility" during the talks that wrapped up more quickly than expected.

Putin acknowledged that Biden raised human rights issues with him, including the fate of Navalny. Putin defended Navalny's prison sentence and deflected repeated questions about mistreatment of Russian opposition leaders by highlighting U.S. domestic turmoil, including the Black Lives Matter protests and the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Putin held forth for nearly an hour before international reporters. While showing defiance at queries about Biden pressing him on human rights, he also expressed a significant measure of respect for Biden as an experienced political leader.

"The meeting was actually very efficient," Putin said. "It was substantive, it was specific. It was aimed at achieving results, and one of them was pushing back the frontiers of trust."

Putin said he and Biden agreed to begin negotiations on nuclear talks to potentially replace the New START treaty limiting nuclear weapons after it expires.

Washington broke off talks with Moscow in 2014 in response to Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and its military intervention in support of separatists in eastern Ukraine. Talks resumed in 2017 but gained little traction and failed to produce an agreement on extending the New START treaty during the Trump administration.

The Russian president said there was an agreement between the leaders to return their ambassadors to their respective postings. Both countries had pulled back their top envoys to Washington and Moscow as relations chilled in recent months.

DOD mulls mandating vaccine once it's cleared by FDA

BY CAITLIN DOORBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is considering whether to mandate the coronavirus vaccine for service members after the shot receives full Food and Drug Administration approval, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Harker told the House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday.

Austin's office is "coming up with guidance" on requiring the vaccine for troops, Harker said during a hearing on the Navy's 2022 budget proposal.

"I believe the secretary is considering making that decision to do so, but it's not something that he has announced to us yet," Harker told the committee during a

hearing that included in-person and virtual attendees after more than a year of online-only meetings because of the pandemic.

While the Pentagon can make vaccinations fully cleared by the FDA mandatory for troops, it cannot do so for the coronavirus vaccinations while they are authorized only on an emergency basis, unless the president orders it mandatory. President Joe Biden has not done so.

Though not yet required, the coronavirus vaccine is optional for service members. To date, 840,492 active duty, Reserve and National Guard troops are fully vaccinated and another 291,809 have received at least one dose, according to the latest Defense Department data published Monday.

That means about half of the total force of approximately 2.3 million active duty, Reserve and Guard troops have received the vaccine.

However, a vaccination mandate for troops could come soon as vaccine manufacturers Pfizer and Moderna applied for full FDA approval on May 7 and June 1, respectively. The third vaccine under emergency-use authorization, which was developed by Johnson & Johnson, has not yet applied for full approval.

The FDA requires extensive data and reviews by the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research before issuing full approval. The FDA has not offered a timeline for how long that process will take for the coronavirus vaccines.

Army downplayed extent of firearms loss

Associated Press

The U.S. Army has hidden or downplayed the extent to which its firearms disappear, significantly understating losses and thefts even as some weapons are used in street crimes.

The Army's pattern of secrecy and suppression dates back nearly a decade, when The Associated Press began investigating weapons accountability within the military. Officials fought the release of information for years, then offered misleading answers that contradict internal records.

Military guns aren't just disappearing. Stolen guns have been used in shootings, brandished to rob and threaten people and recovered in the hands of felons. Thieves sold assault rifles to a street gang.

Army officials cited information that suggests only a couple of hundred firearms vanished during the 2010s. Internal Army memos that AP obtained show losses many times higher.

Efforts to suppress information date to 2012, when AP filed a Freedom of Information Act request seeking records from a registry where all four armed services are supposed to report firearms loss or theft.

The former Army insider who oversaw this registry described how he pulled an accounting of the Army's lost or stolen weapons, but learned later that his superiors blocked its release.

As AP continued to press for information, including through legal challenges, the Army produced a list of missing weapons that was so clearly incomplete that officials later disavowed it. They then produced a second set of records that also did not give a full count.

Secrecy surrounding a sensitive topic extends beyond the Army. The Air Force wouldn't provide data on missing weapons, saying answers would have to await a federal records request AP filed 18 months ago.

The broader Department of Defense also has not released reports of weapons losses that it receives from the armed services. It would only provide approximate totals for two years of AP's 2010 through 2019 study period.

The Pentagon stopped regularly sharing information about missing weapons with Congress years ago, apparently in the 1990s. Defense Department officials said they would still notify lawmakers if a theft or loss meets the definition of being "significant,"

but no such notification has been made since at least 2017.

On Tuesday, when AP first published its investigation, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., demanded during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that the Pentagon resurrect regular reporting. In a written statement to AP, the Pentagon said it "looks forward to continuing to work with Congress to ensure appropriate oversight."

Blumenthal also challenged Army Secretary Christine Wormuth on her branch's release of information.

"I'd be happy to look into how we've handled this issue," Wormuth replied. She described herself as "open to" a new reporting requirement and said the number of military firearms obtained by civilians is likely small.

Poor record-keeping in the military's vast inventory systems means lost or stolen guns can be listed on property records as safe. Security breakdowns were evident all the way down to individual units, which have destroyed records, falsified inventory checks and ignored procedures.

Brig. Gen. Duane Miller, the No. 2 law enforcement official in the Army, said that when a weapon does vanish, the case is thoroughly investigated. He pointed out that weapons cases are a small fraction of the more than 10,000 felony cases Army investigators open each year.

"I absolutely believe that the procedures we had in place mitigated any weapon from getting lost or stolen," Miller said of his own experience as a commander. "But does it happen? It sure does."

AP began investigating the loss and theft of military firearms by asking a simple question in 2011: How many guns are unaccounted for across the Army, Marines Corps, Navy and Air Force?

AP was told the answer could be found in the Department of Defense Small Arms and Light Weapons Registry. That centralized database, which the Army oversees, tracks the life cycle of rifles, pistols, shotguns, machine guns and more — from supply depots to unit armories, through deployments, until the weapon is destroyed or sold.

Getting data from the registry, however, would require a formal Freedom of Information Act request.

That request, filed in 2012, came to Charles Royal, then the longtime Army civilian employee who was in charge of the registry

at Redstone Arsenal in Alabama.

Royal was accustomed to inquiries. Military and civilian law enforcement agencies would call him thousands of times each year, often because they were looking for a military weapon or had recovered one.

In response to AP's request, Royal pulled and double-checked data on missing weapons. Royal then showed the results to his boss, the deputy commander of his department.

"After he got it, he said, 'We can't be letting this out like this,'" said Royal, who retired in 2014, in an interview last year.

His boss didn't say exactly why, but Royal said the release he prepared on weapons loss was heavily scrutinized within the Army.

"The numbers that we were going to give was going to kind of freak everybody out to a certain extent," Royal said — not just because they were firearms, but also because the military requires strict supervision of them.

AP was unable to reach Royal's supervisor and an Army spokesman had no comment on the handling of the FOIA request.

In 2013, the Army said it would not release any records. AP appealed that decision and, nearly four years later, Army lawyers agreed that registry records should be public.

It wasn't until 2019 that the Army released a small batch of data. The records from the registry showed 288 firearms over six years.

Though years in the making, the response was clearly incomplete.

Standing in the stacks at the public library in Decatur, Ala., last fall, Royal reviewed the seven printed pages of records that Army eventually provided AP.

"This is worthless," he said.

Told that in multiple years, the Army reported just a single missing weapon, Royal was skeptical. "Out of the millions that they handled, that's wrong," he said in a later interview. AP has appealed the FOIA release for a second time.

The data weren't even accurate when compared to Army criminal investigation records. Using the unique serial numbers assigned to every weapon, AP identified 19 missing firearms that were not in the registry data. This included a M240B machine gun that an Army National Guard unit reported missing in Wyoming in 2014.

The Army could not explain the discrepancy.

Report: Military prepping Somalia proposal

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. military officials are preparing a proposal to send a special operations contingent back into Somalia, where security conditions have worsened in the months since nearly 700 troops were pulled out of the country, a news report said Tuesday.

The plan, which would involve several dozen troops, hasn't yet been formally presented to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, The New York Times reported. The newspaper cited unnamed Pentagon policymakers saying they want to

step up counterterrorism efforts against militants aligned with al-Qaida.

In January, President Donald Trump ordered some 700 U.S. troops out of Somalia, where special operations forces had been assisting local units for several years in a long-running battle against the al-Shabab group. There are now concerns that militants are gaining ground in the country, where U.S. airstrikes also have ground to a halt in recent months.

The Stuttgart-based U.S. Africa Command did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the proposal.

Although U.S. troops left the bases in Somalia, AFRICOM continues to send teams into the country on a rotational basis to keep up with efforts to train indigenous troops.

No U.S. airstrikes have been reported since President Joe Biden took office in January. The White House is in the midst of a review into rules regarding how airstrikes are conducted.

In 2020, the U.S. conducted 63 strikes against Islamic militants in Somalia. Before they were halted, AFRICOM frequently emphasized that the aerial attacks were crucial to keeping al-Shabab off balance.

Still, despite years of strikes and U.S. advisers supporting Somali forces, al-Shabab has maintained a fighting force of several thousand guerrillas and was able to mount high-profile attacks against partner and U.S. troops. In January 2020, one U.S. soldier and two defense contractors were killed when the militants stormed a military compound in Kenya that was used for carrying out missions in neighboring Somalia.

On Tuesday, al-Shabab attacked a Somali military training center in Mogadishu, the capital, killing at least 15 and injuring 20 others.

C4 explosives found months after disappearing from base

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Several pounds of C4 explosives have been recovered nearly six months after they went missing from a Marine base in California, investigators said, but no suspects have been arrested.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is continuing the probe that began after the powerful explosives were reported missing from Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., in January, spokesman Jeff Houston said in a

brief statement Tuesday.

"No arrests have been made and no charges have been filed at this time," Houston said. "Out of respect for the investigative process, NCIS will not provide further details while the investigation is ongoing."

Military officials suspected the roughly 10 pounds of plastic explosive might have been stolen during an exercise, San Diego's ABC10News reported earlier this year.

About 3,500 Marines and sailors from the 2nd Marine Division

from Camp Lejeune, N.C., the 1st Marine Division from Camp Pendleton, Calif., and other units from Hawaii and North Carolina were taking part in the Integrated Training Exercise 2-21 at Twentynine Palms at the time.

Located about 150 miles east of Los Angeles in the Mojave Desert, the training installation is the largest Marine base in the world at 932 square miles. More than 11,000 Marines and sailors are stationed at the combat center, a base website says.

C4 is a powerful, pliable explo-

sive that usually comes in thin, 1 1/4-pound blocks or packed in white plastic containers.

Some 1,900 U.S. military firearms were lost or stolen from 2010 to 2019, The Associated Press reported Tuesday in an in-depth investigation that found some of those weapons had turned up later on America's streets. While the report focused on firearms such as machine guns and automatic rifles, explosives had also disappeared, AP reported, including armor-piercing grenades that wound up in an Atlanta backyard.

Marine honored for helping save Japanese eatery worker

Stars and Stripes

An Okinawa-based Marine who rendered lifesaving aid to a Japanese restaurant worker earlier this spring has received a medal for his actions.

Marine Cpl. Dominick Bonner, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense specialist with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Camp Foster, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal on June 8, according to a Marine statement issued after the ceremony.

Bonner, of Parkville, Md., was

celebrating his wife's birthday over breakfast at an off-base eatery on April 4 when he was told that an employee needed medical attention, the statement said.

The man was lying in the kitchen area, motionless and without a pulse, according to the statement. Bonner began chest compressions, taking over for one of the man's fatigued co-workers.

He provided the lifesaving aid for over 10 minutes until paramedics arrived and took him to a nearby hospital, according to the statement.

Information about the man's ailment and current condition was not available Wednesday.

The Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal is awarded to service members below the rank of colonel for meritorious service or achievement in combat or noncombat. The medal can either be used to recognize sustained performance or a specific achievement that does not warrant a higher award.

Bonner is the kind of Marine you want by your side, according to Gunnery Sgt. Joshua Malchow,

the CBRN defense operations coordinator for 1st MAW.

"He is the definition of an outstanding noncommissioned officer, and the fact that he handled this situation the way he did doesn't surprise me," he said in the statement.

Bonner said he did what any Marine would have done.

"It's all about looking out for our fellow brothers and sisters of mankind," he said in the statement. "He needed help, and there was no way I was going to stand back and watch him die."

Biden's pause on new oil, gas leases blocked

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The Biden administration's suspension of new oil and gas leases on federal land and water was blocked Tuesday by a federal judge in Louisiana who ordered that plans continue for lease sales that were delayed for the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska waters "and all eligible on-shore properties."

The decision is a blow to Democratic President Joe Biden's efforts to rapidly transition the nation away from fossil fuels and thereby stave off the worst effects of climate change, including catastrophic droughts, floods and wildfires.

U.S. District Judge Terry Doughty's ruling came in a lawsuit filed in March by Louisiana Republican Attorney General Jeff Landry and officials in 12 other states. Doughty said his ruling applies nationwide. It grants a preliminary injunction — technically a halt to the suspension pending further arguments on the merits of the case.

"The omission of any rational explanation in canceling the lease sales, and in enacting the Pause, results in this Court ruling that Plaintiff States also have a substantial likelihood of success on the merits of this claim," he wrote.

"We are reviewing the judge's

opinion and will comply with the decision," an Interior Department statement emailed by communications director Melissa Schwartz said. "The Interior Department continues to work on an interim report that will include initial findings on the state of the federal conventional energy programs, as well as outline next steps and recommendations for the Department and Congress to improve stewardship of public lands and waters, create jobs, and build a just and equitable energy future."

The moratorium was imposed after Biden on Jan. 27 signed executive orders to fight climate

change. The suit was filed in March. The Interior Department later canceled oil and gas lease sales from public lands through June — affecting Nevada, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and the bureau's eastern region.

But not everyone was supportive of the judge's decision.

"The judge's order turns a blind eye to runaway climate pollution that's devastating our planet," said Randi Spivak, public lands program director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "We'll keep fighting against the fossil-fuel industry and the politicians that are bought by them."

West swelters in record heat, risking wildfires

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Dangerous, record-busting heat spread across the U.S. Southwest on Tuesday and into parts of Utah, Montana and Wyoming as a dome of high pressure hovered over a large swath of the region, pushing temperatures into the triple digits this week and intensifying the risk for wildfires amid a long-running drought.

Some of the highest temperatures were seen in bone-dry Arizona, where the National Weather Service forecast a record high of 117 degrees Fahrenheit in Phoenix. The previous high for the date was 115 de-

grees, which was set in 1974.

"It is kind of early to see temperatures this high, that's for sure," said Marvin Percha, senior forecaster at the weather service's Phoenix office.

Percha said the high pressure dome combined with the land's lack of moisture caused by extreme drought has combined to create blistering heat expected throughout the entire week.

"What is unusual is the strength and the duration" of the high pressure system, he said.

The temperatures in Phoenix also could break records the rest of the week, with highs expected to reach 116 Wednesday and 118

Thursday and Friday.

Stations where people can get water and cool off in the shade opened across the Phoenix metro area at Salvation Army posts, city swimming pools, libraries and community centers. They will operate during the day amid the excessive heat warning declared by the weather service.

People were warned to stay inside, drink plenty of water and not leave children or pets unattended in vehicles.

The excessive heat stretched from southeast California across Arizona and Nevada and into New Mexico, where a high of 103 degrees Monday at Albuquer-

que's airport set a record. It was expected to hit near that Tuesday.

Palmdale, in Southern California's Mojave Desert, hit 107 degrees, breaking a record of 105 set in 1966.

"More records are at risk tomorrow," the National Weather Service for Los Angeles tweeted.

The heat wave smashed daily temperature records in Montana and Wyoming and complicated the fight against several large wildfires. Strong winds with gusts up to 35 mph were expected, threatening to stir up wildfires already burning and make it hard to stamp out new blazes.

Senate approves bill to make Juneteenth a federal holiday

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed a bill Tuesday that would make Juneteenth, or June 19th, a federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

The bill would lead to Juneteenth becoming the 12th federal holiday. It is expected to easily pass the House, which would send it to President Joe Biden for

his signature.

Juneteenth commemorates when the last enslaved African Americans learned they were free. Confederate soldiers surrendered in April 1865, but word didn't reach the last enslaved Black people until June 19, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to Galveston, Texas. That was also about two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation

Proclamation freeing slaves in the Southern states.

"Making Juneteenth a federal holiday is a major step forward to recognize the wrongs of the past," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "But we must continue to work to ensure equal justice and fulfill the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation and our Constitution."

The Senate passed the bill un-

der a unanimous consent agreement that expedites the process for considering legislation. It takes just one senator's objection to block such agreements.

The bill is sponsored by Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., and had 60 co-sponsors.

Under the legislation, the federal holiday would be known as Juneteenth National Independence Day.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Aquarium accepts ticket saved for over 37 years

MA BOSTON — The New England Aquarium in Boston accepted an entrance ticket first purchased in 1983 that allows the holder to return “at anytime in the future.”

Rachel Carle, 26, picked up the ticket from her great aunt, Catherine Cappiello, who came to visit the aquarium more than 37 years ago, the Boston Herald reported.

Cappiello and her partner arrived near closing time in November that year and both got a “late gate ticket,” which was good for a visit at a later time.

Aquarium President and CEO Vikki Spruill told the newspaper the late gate tickets were discontinued about 25 years ago, but that they will see about one a year.

College pitcher fitted with new prosthetic arm

SD SIOUX FALLS — A college baseball player from South Dakota whose prosthetic arm was stolen was fitted with a new replacement limb at a Minneapolis-area hospital.

The Argus Leader reported Augustana’s Parker Hanson also presented the Shriners Children’s Twin Cities hospital with a \$7,000 check from donations he received while his prosthetic was missing.

Hanson, a right-handed pitcher, was born without a left hand. His prosthetic arm and the attachments were in a backpack that was stolen from his unlocked pickup outside his home. His prosthetic was later

recovered at a recycling center in Sioux Falls.

The prosthetic was “pretty banged up” and Hanson said it was no longer usable. He was fundraising both for a new prosthetic and to raise money for charity.

Police: Man with health issue stole ambulance

MD BALTIMORE — A man having a medical crisis stole an ambulance in Baltimore and told officers he was driving himself to the hospital, police said.

When a fire department medical unit responded to a call on Seagull Avenue, police said in a news release that a 38-year-old man jumped into the running ambulance and took off.

Officers stopped the ambulance about a mile away. He told the police he was having a heart attack and took the ambulance so he could drive himself to the hospital, police said.

He was taken to a hospital for an emergency evaluation, police spokeswoman Detective Chakia Fennoy said.

Family: Teen stomped by bull at rodeo recovering

ID POCATELLO — A Utah teen who was stomped by a bull at the Idaho High School Rodeo Association State Finals recently is recovering well, family members said.

Brock Hansen, 17, of Hyrum, Utah, was hired to be a “cowboy protector” for the competition in Pocatello, the Idaho State Journal reported. Cowboy protectors are tasked with grabbing bulls by the head and directing them to run away from fallen cowboys.

Hansen lost his footing while grappling with a bull. He could not roll away before the bull stomped with full force on his back.

The blow broke the wing of a vertebrae in Hansen’s lower back. Hansen’s strong back muscles held his spine in place, and doctors expect he will make a full recovery.

Tagged juvenile great white a first for state

RI SOUTH KINGSTOWN — An acoustic tracking tag has been attached to a great white shark in Rhode Island waters for the first time, shark researchers said.

The tag was placed on a 7-foot, juvenile female inside the Point Judith Harbor of Refuge, the South Kingstown-based Atlantic Shark Institute posted on its Facebook page.

Whenever the shark passes within 500 to 800 yards of an acoustic receiver, the time and location are recorded. The tag should last 10 years.

Teenager shot after allegedly stealing tip jar

MO ST. LOUIS — A 16-year-old boy was hospitalized in stable condition after being shot soon after allegedly stealing the tip jar at a St. Louis restaurant and being confronted by a customer.

Police said the teenager and an acquaintance were causing a disturbance and were asked to leave the restaurant. The teen allegedly grabbed the tip jar on the way out.

A 56-year-old customer confronted him outside the restaurant. Police said the teen shoved the man to the ground and be-

gan beating him.

Police said a 52-year-old man saw the assault and shot the teenager in the abdomen. The gunman was arrested. Jail records show he has been released from jail.

8 hurt as vehicle crash hits crowd at race track

TX FABENS — Eight people were injured after a vehicle plowed into a crowd at a mud racing event in Texas.

The El Paso County Sheriff’s Department said in a statement that a vehicle left the mud track and crashed through a guard-rail and into spectators.

Three spectators were taken to a hospital in critical condition and five others were transported with non-life-threatening injuries. None of the injured were identified by police.

Fireworks aborted after piping plover sighting

NH HAMPTON — The sighting of endangered piping plovers nesting at Hampton Beach prompted officials to cancel the first two fireworks shows of the summer season.

Hampton Beach Village District Commissioner Chuck Rage said there are two pairs of plovers nested where fireworks are set off, the Portsmouth Herald reported.

Piping plovers are endangered in New Hampshire and threatened nationally.

Rage said that they expect the first pair to abandon their nest in the next two weeks and expect shows to resume starting June 30.

— From wire reports



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US Open returns to 'tough' Torrey Pines

Associated Press

The strongest memory from the last U.S. Open at Torrey Pines was accompanied by three words that explain what golf was like then and now.

The scene was the 18th hole in the final round of 2008. The consequences were as clear as the late afternoon sky over San Diego in June.

Tiger Woods, who had limped his way around the South Course on torn ligaments and a double stress fracture in his left leg, faced a 12-foot birdie putt. Make it and he would force a playoff against Rocco Mediate. Miss it and he would lose.

When the putt somehow curled in the right side of the cup and Woods triple-clutched his arms in raw celebration, Dan Hicks of NBC said, "Expect anything different?"

Back then? No. Woods went on to win the event.

Woods was the singular force in golf even on one leg, even in the toughest test golf offers.

Now? Expect pretty much anything.

The 121st U.S. Open returns June 17-20 to Torrey Pines, the city-owned course along the Pacific bluffs, and there's no telling what might happen.

The two best players in the world, Dustin Johnson and Justin Thomas, went into the final week having not so much registered a top 10 in the last three months. Jon Rahm is No. 3 in the world and a past winner at Torrey Pines. His 10 days of self-isolation from a positive COVID-19 test ends two days before the opening round.

The defending champion is Bryson DeChambeau, the most out-of-the-box golfer in decades whose road map to victory last September at Winged Foot was to hit driver as far as he could without regard to whether it found the fairway.

The sentimental favorite is Phil Mickelson, who turns 51 on the eve of the U.S. Open. He accepted a special exemption from having fallen out of the top 100 in the world for the first time in nearly 30 years. And then he won the PGA Championship a week later to become the oldest major cham-

pion in history.

Six times a runner-up in the U.S. Open, it's the only major keeping Mickelson from the career Grand Slam.

"I know that I'm playing well and this could very well be my last really good opportunity to win a U.S. Open," Mickelson said. "So I'm going to put everything I have into it."

What should be expected is Torrey Pines being the kind of test that defines an old-fashioned U.S. Open. It's one of the strongest courses on the PGA Tour in January when the turf is soft and there is less regard for the winning score.

Throw in the USGA, narrow fairways, the dry air of June, and 7,652 yards on a South Course that plays every bit that length at sea level. It should be all the players want.

"I don't think the USGA has to do a hell of a lot to make it very difficult," Louis Oosthuizen said "It's already a tough golf course."

That much was said about Winged Foot last year, the New York course that in five previous U.S. Opens had yielded on-

ly two 72-hole scores under par among 750 players who had tried. And then DeChambeau won by six shots at 6-under 274, the lowest score ever at Winged Foot.

Whether that's a template for any U.S. Open remains to be seen.

"If it plays the same way, where you can bomb it into certain places and play to a better angle, I'm going to do it," DeChambeau said. "If they make it the same way, I'll continue to play the same way."

Only two players in the last 50 years have won the U.S. Open in consecutive years — Curtis Strange (1988-89) and Brooks Koepka (2017-18). DeChambeau would love nothing more than to join them, and that might be the final word in his social media riff with Koepka.

It's rare for players to be so public with a dispute. DeChambeau said it was "flattering" that Koepka seemed to be so obsessed with him, while Koepka offered no apologies and even suggested their spat was creating interest in golf.

Athlete warning: Follow the rules in Tokyo or else

Associated Press

TOKYO — If athletes coming to Japan for the Tokyo Olympics needed a warning, they got it Tuesday as officials rolled out the third and final rendition of so-called Playbooks — the rulebooks governing behavior for these pandemic-tainted games.

The message: Follow the rules when the Olympics open in just over five weeks, or else expect a warning or a fine — or anything in between.

"Respect the Playbook, respect the rules," said Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi, speaking on a remote hook-up with Tokyo organizers.

The Playbooks rolled out Tuesday were for athletes. But updates for others like media, broadcasters, sponsors, and so forth will come within the next few days, and all the Playbook rules are quite similar.

Officials say 15,400 athletes are expected

for the Olympics and Paralympics. The Olympics open on July 23 followed by the Paralympic on Aug. 24.

Including athletes, the total number expected for both events, factoring in media, broadcasters, Olympic Family, sponsors and others is about about 93,000.

All those entering Japan for the Olympics will be required to follow complex testing rules — before leaving home and after arriving.

They must also agree to have their location monitored by GPS, download several apps, sign a pledge to follow the rules, maintain social distancing, stay off public transportation for the first 14 days and keep organizers informed of your whereabouts.

"We expect everybody to follow the rules. But we also have to be aware there could be infractions," said Olympic Games Operations Director Pierre Ducrey, also speak-

ing remotely.

"Yes, we expect you to play by the rules, but if you don't there will be sanctions that could be coming your way."

Ducrey said the range of punishments could go from a warning, to temporary or permanent expulsion from the Olympics, to withdrawal of accreditation or a fine. Officials also suggested the Japanese government has the power of deportation, and individual sports federations and national Olympic committees may have their own penalties.

Dubi declined to offer specifics about possible financial penalties. He said that would be determined by a disciplinary commission. But he said rules would apply "before, during and after" athletes compete.

"It is to reinforce the message, which is: The Playbooks are there to be followed. No transgressions," Dubi said.

Altuve slams Astros past Rangers

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Jose Altuve belted a grand slam in the 10th inning and the Houston Astros, saved by Carlos Correa's tying homer in the ninth, beat the Texas Rangers 6-3 on Tuesday night to give manager Dusty Baker quite an exciting birthday gift.

After Texas drove in the automatic runner in the top of the 10th for a 3-2 lead, Rangers rookie reliever Demarcus Evans (0-2) walked Myles Straw and pinch-hitter Jason Castro to load the bases with no outs in the bottom half.

Altuve then launched his soaring shot into left field to put the Astros on top and start the party.

Altuve was doused with water at home plate before sharing a hug with Baker, who celebrated his 72nd birthday.

Nate Lowe's RBI single off Ryan Pressly (3-1) with two outs in the 10th put Texas up.

Giants 9, Diamondbacks 8: Arizona blew a seven-run lead and lost its 21st straight road game, one short of the major league record, when Mike Yastrzemski hit a grand slam in the eighth inning for San Francisco.

The Diamondbacks were ahead 7-0 in the second, but couldn't hold it and lost their 12th straight overall.

Jimmie Sherfy (1-0) got the win and Tyler Rogers pitched the ninth for his ninth save.

Christian Walker had three RBIs for Arizona.

Dodgers 5, Phillies 3: Mookie Betts hit a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning and Los Angeles beat Philadelphia at Dodger Stadium before the largest crowd to attend a professional sports league game in the United States since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Betts led off the seventh by driving an 0-2 changeup from Ranger Suárez (2-1) over the left-center wall to give the Dodgers a 4-3 lead. Betts, who had three hits, added an

RBI single in the eighth.

Mets 3, Cubs 2: Taijuan Walker struck out a career-high 12, Pete Alonso drove in three runs and surging New York threw out the potential tying run at the plate in the ninth inning to beat visiting Chicago.

Walker (6-2) allowed two runs and five hits in seven innings, and he walked none for the third time.

Cardinals 2, Marlins 1: Paul Goldschmidt hit a game-ending homer in the ninth inning and drove in both runs as host St. Louis beat Miami.

The Cardinals have won two in a row against the Marlins after dropping nine of 10 overall. Miami lost its third straight.

Reds 2, Brewers 1 (10): Cincinnati broke open a scoreless game in the 10th inning without the benefit of a hit and held on to win at Milwaukee.

Brett Anderson worked seven innings of one-hit ball for the Brewers and combined with three relievers on a two-hitter, but it all fell apart for Brad Boxberger (2-2) in the 10th.

White Sox 3, Rays 0: Dallas Keuchel pitched seven innings of crisp four-hit ball to win his fifth straight decision, leading host Chicago past Tampa Bay.

Adam Engel hit a solo home run and Tim Anderson had three hits for the White Sox.

Chicago won for the fifth time in six games and ended the Rays' four-game winning streak.

Rockies 8, Padres 4: Ryan McMahon homered, tripled and drove in four runs as host Colorado rallied from an early deficit to beat skidding San Diego.

Fernando Tatis Jr. hit his NL-leading 20th home run of the season for the Padres, who have lost 11 of 15.

Yankees 6, Blue Jays 5: Clint Frazier snapped an eighth-inning tie with a pinch-hit double and visiting New York hit three

solo homers to beat Toronto.

Frazier hit a grounder inside the third-base line to score pinch-runner Tyler Wade from second as the Yankees completed a comeback from a 5-2 deficit and won for just the third time in 10 games.

Red Sox 10, Braves 8: Alex Verdugo hit a tiebreaking, three-run homer off Chris Martin in the eighth inning, Rafael Devers added a three-run homer and drove in four runs, and Boston won at Atlanta.

Verdugo's ninth homer came with two outs and made it 10-7. Martin (0-3) gave up three hits and three runs.

Nationals 8, Pirates 1: Yan Gomes connected for a grand slam and Trea Turner got four hits, leading Patrick Corbin and host Washington past Pittsburgh.

The Nationals won their third in a row and sent the Pirates to their ninth straight loss.

Indians 7, Orioles 2: Eddie Rosario hit a two-run double and Bobby Bradley homered for Cleveland, and Baltimore lost its 17th straight on the road.

The Orioles made four errors and moved closed to the major league record of 22 consecutive road losses, shared by the 1943 Philadelphia Athletics and 1963 New York Mets.

Tigers 4, Royals 2: Casey Mize turned in his eighth quality start in his last nine games, Miguel Cabrera got two more hits and Detroit sent host Kansas City to its fifth straight loss.

Athletics 6, Angels 4: Sean Murphy homered for the second consecutive night, Elvis Andrus hit a two-run double and Frankie Montas pitched host Oakland past Los Angeles for its fifth straight win.

Mariners 10, Twins 0: J.P. Crawford homered on J.A. Happ's first pitch, Shed Long Jr. hit a three-run triple an inning later and host Seattle thumped Minnesota.

Outspoken King advances at U.S. swim trials

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Lilly King always seems to back up her big talk.

King is headed back to the Olympics after a victory in the 100-meter breaststroke at the U.S. swimming trials Tuesday night, ensuring she will have another huge platform in Tokyo to

rip into drug cheats and muse on pretty much anything else that pops into her mind.

"It's kind of what I expected," King said.

The entire night went largely as expected. Defending Olympic champion Ryan Murphy and former world record-holder Regan Smith claimed the 100 back-

stroke events.

National team newcomer Kieran Smith added a second race to his Tokyo program with a victory in the 200 freestyle, two days after his triumph in the 400 free.

Katie Ledecky cruised through her busiest day of the trials as the top qualifier in a pair of events.

A world record-holder and another of the biggest trials favorites, King powered to the finish of the 100 breast, her head furiously bobbing up and down as she drove to the wall in 1 minute, 4.79 seconds.

The 24-year-old from Evansville, Ind., got a from Lydia Jacoby, who finished next in 1:05:28.

Dominant Durant leads Nets to 3-2 lead

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kevin Durant has always been one of the NBA's most unstoppable scorers.

The Brooklyn Nets needed much more than points Tuesday night, so Durant gave them one of the most spectacular performances in postseason history.

Durant had 49 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists, sending the Nets back into the lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals with a 114-108 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks in Game 5.

"I know the perception of me is that I can score the basketball well, but any team that I've played on, I've been asked to do pretty much everything from rebounding to defending to initiating to scoring," Durant said. "I might not do it all the time but I do a little bit of everything."

In Game 5, it was a whole lot of everything.

The two-time NBA Finals MVP became the first player to have at least 45 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists in a play-off game.

"Historic, historic performance," Brooklyn coach Steve Nash said.

With James Harden returning but delivering little offense and Kyrie Irving out, Durant played all 48 minutes and shot 16-for-23 from the field. The four-time scoring champion had 20 points in the fourth quarter, perhaps the biggest shot a three-pointer with 50 seconds left and the Nets protecting a one-point lead.

"The injuries that he's been through, to come back even from the Achilles to the hamstring to get back in this position, the world is witnessing, once again, who is the best player in the world," Brooklyn forward Jeff Green said.

No argument from the Bucks.

"He's the best player in the world right now and we've got to beat him as a team," Giannis Antetokounmpo said. "We've got to guard him as a team. We've got to make him make tough shots like tonight. We've just got to keep doing our job and hopefully he's going to miss."

Harden played for the first time since leaving 43 seconds into the series opener with right hamstring tightness. He shot just 1-for-10 and missed all eight three-pointers, but had eight assists and six rebounds while playing 46 minutes.

"I woke up and was like, 'You know what? Let's go,'" Harden said. "I tried to go out there and do the best I can. Hopefully I gave my teammates some encouragement and some life."

Green made seven three-pointers and scored 27 points for the Nets, who fell into a 17-point hole in this one after two

losses in Milwaukee before Durant carried them back. Blake Griffin added 17 points.

Game 6 is Thursday in Milwaukee, where the Bucks are 4-0 against the Nets this season.

Antetokounmpo had 34 points and 12 rebounds, while Khris Middleton added 25 points.

The Bucks had all the momentum after winning the two games in Milwaukee, with Irving spraining his ankle in the second quarter of Game 4. It appeared Durant would be the only one of the three superstars to play Tuesday — which given the way he played, may have been enough anyway.

The Nets originally ruled Harden out on Monday, then upgraded him Tuesday first to doubtful and then questionable. He worked out before the game and seemed to be moving well, jogging off the court into the tunnel after his warmup before being cleared to play.

Kucherov shines, Lightning even series with Islanders

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Lightning are running out of superlatives to describe the playmaking ability of NHL playoff scoring leader Nikita Kucherov.

"He's remarkably gifted ... does everything with grace," coach Jon Cooper said Tuesday night after one of the league's most creative scorers had three more assists to help the defending Stanley Cup champions even their semifinals with a 4-2 win over the New York Islanders in Game 2.

"He's just so smooth in the plays he makes, his vision and how he can see and make plays," Cooper added. "It almost looks effortless. ... I know it's not. He works at doing what he does extremely well. But he sure can make plays out of what looks like nothing. ... And, he is fun to watch."

Kucherov had his fourth game with three or more points this postseason, assisting on goals by Brayden Point, Ondrej Palat and Victor Hedman as the defending champions improved to 12-0 in games following a playoff loss since start of last year's title run.

Point scored a goal for the fifth straight game, hiking his league-leading playoff total to 10. Palat put Tampa Bay ahead for good with a second-period goal that replays showed was scored with the Lightning having too many men on the ice.

"It was missed, that's hockey," New York winger Matt Martin said. "It happens, and there's nothing we can do about it. Move on to the next game at home and focus on that."

Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 24 of 26 shots for Tampa Bay, which entered Tuesday night facing a series deficit for the

first time since dropping Game 1 of last year's Stanley Cup final against the Dallas Stars.

"We knew they were going to come with a good response," Islanders conter Brock Nelson said. "I thought we did a pretty good job out of the gates. But they were able to get a couple and get the lead and we weren't able to get it back."

Hedman and Jan Rutta scored in the third period against New York goalie Semyon Varlamov, who missed a portion of the opening period after a collision with Point a little over 13 minutes into the game.

Nelson and Mathew Barzal scored unassisted goals for the Islanders, who — despite the loss — will return home feeling good about themselves heading into Game 3 Thursday night.

"We can be a lot better and we will be," coach Barry Trotz said. "I thought the first two peri-

ods we were pretty good for the most part. We knew a very good hockey team was going to have a desperate push," Trotz added. "Obviously the second goal hurt quite a bit because now if they get the third one there's a little bit more separation. And ... there were too many men on the ice. Seven guys. That was disappointing."

Point, pushed from behind by New York's Adam Pelech, barreled into Varlamov at 6:50 of the first period. The Lightning star drew a penalty for interference on the goalie, and the Islanders wasted no time taking advantage of what Tampa Bay felt was a questionable call.

Nelson's goal from in front of the net tied it 1-1 just 20 seconds into the power play.

Ilya Sorokin replaced Varlamov for the remainder of the first period. He stopped all six shots he faced.