

## Report: Navy struggling to retain SWOs

BY SARAH CAMMARATA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Navy officers who focus on the safe operation of surface ships are switching jobs or leaving the military at higher rates than other service officers in similar positions, according to a government watchdog report released Thursday.

The Government Accountability Office's report also found only 12% of female surface warfare officers stay in the job, compared with 39% of male SWOs. Overall, 33% of SWOs remain in the position compared with 45% of officers who are in similar Navy jobs.

Though Naval Surface Forces Command tracks separation rates for surface warfare officers by gender, it hasn't developed a plan to improve retention rates, according to the report titled "Navy Readiness: Actions Needed to Evaluate and Improve Surface Warfare Officer Career Path."

The GAO report is part of an ongoing response to two collisions at-sea that killed 17 sailors in 2017. That spring, the guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald collided with a merchant ship off the coast of Japan, resulting in the death of seven U.S. sailors.

Later that year, the guided-missile de-

stroyer USS John S. McCain was struck by a chemical tanker off the coast of Singapore and Malaysia. Ten U.S. sailors died as a result of the crash.

Some changes came after two internal investigations into the root causes of the 2017 collisions found challenges with training, qualifications and assignments as officers progressed throughout their career, according to the GAO report.

The Navy has taken small steps to improve officers' career paths, such as extending training and tours of duty to give more time to earn qualifications, but it has not fundamentally changed career paths for more than a century, the GAO said.

Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., said Thursday during a House Armed Services Committee subpanel hearing that the "lack of leadership" among the surface warfare officers "continues to haunt" him. Thursday was the four-year anniversary of the USS Fitzgerald crash.

During the hearing, Wittman pressed Vice Adm. James Kilby, the Navy's deputy chief of naval operations for warfighting requirements and capabilities, on the results of the GAO report and how the Navy is ad-

ressing ongoing issues with surface warfare officers.

Specifically, Wittman pointed out a statistic from the report that found by a factor of four to one, surface warfare officers believe specialized career paths would better prepare them for their job than the current generalized career path.

"Without periodic evaluations of current approaches, including alternative career paths, and the use of those evaluations, the U.S. Navy may miss an opportunity to develop and retain proficient SWOs," the GAO wrote.

Surface warfare officers are "screaming for change," Wittman said during the hearing of the House subcommittee on seapower and projection forces to discuss the Navy's budget proposal for fiscal year 2022.

Kilby said he could not speak to the specific data from the study released publicly after the hearing ended.

However, he said: "We've done a lot of work, we feel, to professionalize and increase our mariner skill training. Some of those investments are still underway in Norfolk [Va.] and San Diego and will prove to be sufficient."

## Army grapples with systemic fix to AWOL weapons

BY WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Army leaders met Thursday in search of a systemic fix to the problem of lost and stolen weapons in the service as disclosed by an investigation by The Associated Press.

The probe, published Tuesday, found that at least 1,900 guns from the U.S. military were recorded as lost or stolen in the 2010s, most from the Army. Some were later used in violent crimes, the investigation found.

"The Army takes weapons accountability very seriously," Col. Cathy Wilkinson, an Army spokeswoman, said in a statement Thursday.

"While we have stringent physical security measures, we have more work to do to ensure that our property accountability and criminal reporting systems are seamlessly linked together. The Army staff met today

to develop a way forward to fix this problem and we will provide more information as this effort evolves."

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked about missing weapons during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing Thursday.

"I was frankly shocked by the numbers that were in there," he said.

Milley told lawmakers that he had asked leaders of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force to conduct thorough audits of weapons to determine the actual number missing.

Initial data from those audits suggest that the number of missing weapons is "significantly less" than what the AP reported, he said.

The AP received only incomplete data on missing weapons from the military servic-

es, which the news-wire service concluded could mean the tally of missing weapons could be even higher.

The AP examined records provided by the service branches, criminal investigations, lost property forms, data from small-arms registries and internal Defense Department memos in establishing the number of weapons that were missing.

The Pentagon stopped the routine updating of Congress on stolen weapons in the mid-1990s, the AP reported. The Defense Department reports "significant" losses of weapons at its own discretion, the AP reported.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said Thursday he planned to write a "mandatory reporting requirement" into the National Defense Authorization Act, according to the AP.

# Guide released on suing DOD for malpractice

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department released guidelines Thursday on how troops can now sue the military for medical malpractice, which they had been barred from doing for more than 70 years.

The Pentagon will begin paying service members or their estates next month for substantiated claims of less than \$100,000 that were filed within two years of a medical malpractice incident, according to the information published in the Federal Register.

The Treasury Department will cover claims totaling more than \$100,000, according to the register.

As of April 1, there were 227 cases totaling \$2.16 billion awaiting adjudication, according to a Bloomberg report at that time. Updated numbers were not immediately available Thursday from the Pentagon.

Since 1950, service members

have been barred from suing the government for medical malpractice after the Supreme Court that year ruled in the case of *Feres v. United States* that active-duty troops cannot sue the government for personal injuries suffered while in service, according to the register.

The Supreme Court case was named for Army Lt. Rudolph Feres, who died in a 1947 Pine Camp, N.Y., barracks fire. Lawyers argued the Army owed his widow compensation because it was negligent in not fixing a defective heating plant and a fire guard in the area did not maintain adequate fire watch, according to the court opinion.

“We conclude that the government is not liable under the Federal Tort Claims Act for injuries to servicemen where the injuries arise out of or are in the course of activity incident to service,” the Supreme Court wrote in its opinion.

But a provision in the 2020 Na-

tional Defense Authorization Act, which sets policy and spending priorities for the Pentagon, ended the ban on suing for medical malpractice, after Sgt. 1st Class Richard Stayskal and his attorney, Natalie Khawan, petitioned lawmakers to change the law. The *Feres* ruling barred Stayskal from filing suit after military doctors during a routine physical in January 2017 failed to inform him of his lung cancer, which grew to be terminal.

“A few years ago, when Richard came to me and asked for help to find a law, some way that he and his family be made whole after suffering from military medical practice, we went to The Hill and we worked hard to be where we are today,” Khawan said Thursday during a news conference streamed on Facebook.

The Richard Stayskal Military Medical Accountability Act of 2019 was then included and passed in the 2020 NDAA, which former President Donald Trump

signed into law Dec. 20, 2019.

The new regulation will come into effect in 30 days. While it includes the two-year statute of limitations, the regulation is retroactive and will allow filing claims from 2017, two years before the NDAA was signed into law.

To file a claim, service members or their representative must submit a signed, written claim including the facts behind the claim and the dollar amount requested, according to the Federal Register. In some cases, an affidavit affirming the claimant consulted with a health care professional who stated a “DOD health care provider breached the standard of care that caused the alleged harm” must also be included, according to the register.

“It’s been a long time coming but it’s here,” Stayskal said at the news conference. “It’s a great day for the military and for the service members to finally be able to be made whole through unfortunate situations.”

## Senator: DOD justice changes must go beyond sex cases

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand is on the brink of success in her yearslong campaign to get sexual assault cases removed from the military chain of command. But getting over the finish line may depend on whether she can overcome wariness about broader changes she’s seeking to the military justice system.

There is now widespread support for using independent military lawyers to handle sexual misconduct cases, but Gillibrand is promoting legislation that goes beyond that, extending that change to all major crimes. Top Pentagon officials and key lawmakers are open to the sexual assault shift, but they say applying it more broadly requires far more study and debate.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Gillibrand said the

wider change is necessary to combat racial injustice within the military, where studies have found that Black people are more likely to be investigated and arrested for misconduct. She intends to press that point in the coming days.

Asked if she might compromise on her bill, Gillibrand said that time has passed. “We’ve been doing that for eight years. We’ve been getting something through every year, and some things just don’t work. You need this broad-based reform,” the New York Democrat said. “This is a bill whose time has come.”

For years, however, lawmakers have framed their push for change in the military justice system around problems with sexual misconduct cases. Victims — largely women — have long said they are reluctant to file sexual assault or

harassment complaints because they fear they won’t be believed or will face retaliation. They’ve complained that allegations are sometimes dismissed by a good ol’ boys network among unit commanders or that attackers get away with minimal punishments.

Those complaints have resonated, and support has grown on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon, where senior defense leaders acknowledge that, despite years of effort, they’ve made little progress combating sexual misconduct in the ranks. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for the first time said they were open to taking sexual assault and harassment charges out of the chain of command.

But both also said that extending the change to all major crimes

would require more time and review.

Similarly, Sen. Jack Reed, chair of the Armed Services Committee, supports the change for sexual misconduct and said this week that he believes it will get committee approval. But he said he wants a more thorough discussion within the committee for changes that affect the entire Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat, said Pentagon estimates indicate the broader bill would require more senior qualified lawyers than the department has, and will take 180 days to implement. He also has repeatedly objected to Gillibrand’s efforts to get unanimous approval to move her bill separately to the full Senate for a vote, saying it should be included in the overall defense bill.

# Some Black Americans say Juneteenth is 'not enough'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Black Americans rejoiced Thursday after President Joe Biden made Juneteenth a federal holiday, but some said that, while they appreciated the recognition at a time of racial reckoning in America, more is needed to change policies that disadvantage too many of their brethren.

"It's great, but it's not enough," said Gwen Grant, president and CEO of the Urban League of Kansas City. Grant said she was delighted by the quick vote this week by Congress to make Juneteenth a national holiday because "it's been a long time coming."

But she added that "we need Congress to protect voting rights, and that needs to happen right now so we don't regress any further. That is the most important thing Congress can be addressing at this time."

At a jubilant White House bill-signing ceremony, Biden agreed that more than a commemoration of the events of June 19,

1865, is needed. That's when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas — some 2 ½ years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had freed slaves in Southern states.

"This day doesn't just celebrate the past. It calls for action today," Biden said before he established Juneteenth National Independence Day. His audience included scores of members of Congress and Opal Lee, a 94-year-old Texas woman who campaigned for the holiday.

Biden singled out voting rights as an area for action.

Republican-led states have enacted or are considering legislation that activists argue would curtail the right to vote, particularly for people of color. Legislation to address voting rights issues, and institute policing reforms demanded after the killing of George Floyd and other unarmed Black men, remains stalled in the Congress that acted swiftly on the Juneteenth bill.

## Voting bill showdown looms as Republicans reject Manchin plan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate is set for a key vote Tuesday on a sweeping rewrite of voting and election law, setting up a dramatic test of Democratic unity on a top priority that Republicans are vowing to block.

Democrats appeared to be coalescing Thursday around changes to the bill that could win the support of moderate West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, the lone Democratic holdout on the legislation. Yet they still faced lockstep Republican opposition that will likely leave Democrats back where they started: lacking the votes to overcome a Republican filibuster. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called Manchin's proposal "equally unacceptable."

"Republicans are digging in their heels," said Sen. Chris Murphy, of Connecticut. "They've made it pretty clear this week that there's nothing they're willing to support."

The bill, known as the For the People Act, has been touted as Democrats' answer to a

state level-GOP push to enact voting restrictions following the 2020 election. It passed the House in March, but has bogged down in the Senate as Democrats have debated among themselves — with Manchin ultimately declaring he couldn't vote for it because it lacked bipartisan support.

Yet Manchin's position has evolved and compromise appeared to be nearing after he proposed a series of changes this week to narrow its scope. His proposal received a boost Thursday when Stacey Abrams, a former Georgia gubernatorial candidate who is a leading Democratic voice on voting rights, said she "absolutely" supported it.

"What Sen. Manchin is putting forward are some basic building blocks that we need to ensure that democracy is accessible," Abrams told CNN.

What will ultimately come to the floor for a vote Tuesday remains unclear. Also not certain: whether Manchin will vote for it.

"We'll see what bill we have," he told reporters Thursday. "We don't know what bill we're going to have."

## US to spend \$3.2B to fight COVID-19 and other viruses

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States is devoting \$3.2 billion to speed development of antiviral pills to treat COVID-19 and other dangerous viruses that could turn into pandemics.

The new program will invest in "accelerating things that are already in progress" for COVID-19 but also would work to come up with treatments for other viruses, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert. He announced the investment Thursday at a White House briefing.

"There are few treatments that exist for many of the viruses that have pandemic potential," he said, including Ebola, dengue, West Nile and Middle East respiratory syndrome.

But he added, "vaccines clearly remain the centerpiece of our arsenal."

The U.S. has approved one antiviral drug, remdesivir, specifically for COVID-19, and allowed emergency use of three antibody combinations that help the immune system fight the virus. But all the drugs have to be given by IV at hospitals or medical clinics, and demand has been low due to these logistical hurdles.

Health experts have increasingly called for a convenient pill that patients could take themselves when symptoms first appear. Some drugmakers are testing such medications, but initial results aren't expected for several more months. The new funds will speed those tests and support private sector research, development and manufacturing.

Last week, the U.S. said it would purchase 1.7 million doses of an experimental antiviral pill from Merck and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, if it is shown to be safe and effective. Results from a large study of the drug, molnupiravir, are expected this fall. Early research suggests the drug may reduce the risk of hospitalization if used shortly after infection by stopping the coronavirus from quickly reproducing. It did not benefit patients who were already hospitalized with severe disease.

Several other companies, including Pfizer, Roche and AstraZeneca, are also testing antiviral pills.

The currently available drugs have mostly been shown to help patients avoid hospitalization or shorten their recovery time by several days.

# Iranians vote in presidential election

*Associated Press*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iranians voted Friday in a presidential election that a hard-line protege of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei seemed likely to win, leading to low turnout fueled by apathy and calls for a boycott.

Opinion polling by state-linked organizations and analysts indicated that judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi — who is already under U.S. sanctions — was the dominant front-runner in a field of just four candidates. Former Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati is running as the race's moderate candidate but hasn't inspired the same support as outgoing President Hassan Rouhani, who is term limit-

ed from seeking the office again.

By midday, turnout appeared far lower than for Iran's last presidential election in 2017. State television offered tight shots of polling places, several of which seemed to have only a handful of voters in the election's early hours.

Those passing by several polling places in Tehran said they similarly saw few voters. In some images on state TV, poll workers wore gloves and masks due to the coronavirus pandemic, with some wiping down ballot boxes with disinfectants.

If elected, Raisi would be the first serving Iranian president sanctioned by the U.S. government even before entering office over his

involvement in the mass execution of political prisoners in 1988, as well as his time as the head of Iran's internationally criticized judiciary — one of the world's top executioners.

It also would put hard-liners firmly in control across the Iranian government as negotiations in Vienna continue to try to save a tattered deal meant to limit Iran's nuclear program at a time when it is enriching uranium to the closest point yet to weapons-grade levels. Tensions remain high with both the U.S. and Israel, which is believed to have carried out a series of attacks targeting Iranian nuclear sites as well as assassinating the scientist who created its military atomic program decades earlier.

## Gulf Coast expecting heavy rain and flooding

*Associated Press*

MIAMI — Officials ordered a floodgate and locks system closed in southeast Louisiana and readied sandbags in Mississippi and Alabama as a broad, disorganized tropical weather system began spinning bands of rain and brisk wind across the northern Gulf of Mexico coast Friday.

The system had not yet reached tropical storm strength as of mid-morning. But, in anticipation of strengthening, a tropical storm warning was in effect for parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida — extending from Morgan City, La., to the Okaloosa-Walton County line in the Florida Panhandle. Flash flood watches extended along the coast from southeast Loui-

siana into the Florida panhandle and well inland into Mississippi, Alabama and western Georgia.

By midmorning Friday, the system was centered about 220 miles south of Morgan City, La., with maximum sustained winds of 35 mph. It was moving north-northeast at 14 mph.

In Louisiana's vulnerable Plaquemines Parish, the local government warned mariners that locks and a floodgate in the Empire community, near where the Mississippi River meets the Gulf, would close at noon.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards issued a state of emergency late Thursday. The move is an administrative step that autho-

rizes the use of state resources to aid in storm response efforts.

The system is expected to produce up to 8 inches of rain across the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico, and up to 12 inches through the weekend along the central U.S. Gulf Coast.

The combination of storm surge and the tide will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline, the hurricane center said. The water could reach heights of about 1-3 feet.

Flood watches also extended into north Georgia. Up to 6 inches of rain will be possible in parts of west Georgia as the storm moves on its expected path to the northeast, the National Weather Service said.

## Hispanic group sues mayor over memorial

*Associated Press  
Report for America*

SANTA FE, N.M. — A New Mexico Hispanic fraternal order is suing the mayor of Santa Fe over damage to a historical monument by activists last year and the city's proposal to permanently remove it.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday in state district court, the Union Protectora de Santa Fe argues that the 152-year-old stone obelisk is a legally protected historical site under state law and that its removal dishonors Hispanic veterans.

A group of around 40 mostly white activists tore down the stone obelisk last year after other statues and monuments across the U.S. were toppled over concerns about racism.

In Santa Fe, inscriptions at the base of the monument honored Union soldiers who died fighting Indigenous tribes and Confederate soldiers. One inscription that described Indigenous people as "savages" was chiseled out in 1974 and never repaired.

The lawsuit asks a judge to prevent the city from spending any time or money on modifications to the historic downtown park until the stone obelisk is restored.

That would hobble Mayor Alan Webber's plans to have an independent commission determine the statue's fate. Despite calling for the removal of the obelisk, he emphasized that he would respect the final decision of the commission. A proposal for a commission to take

on that task is being considered by the city council next month, with an estimated budget of \$265,000.

In addition to being a 19th century war memorial, the obelisk is a marker of the land grant issued from Spanish colonial royalty to Hispanic families that conquered the area in the 1600s.

It's a reference point that anchors heritage and religious processions for traditional Hispanics and serves as a reminder of genocide for Native Americans.

"We're protecting our history, culture and our traditions, and our religion also," said Virgil Vigil, President of Union Protectora de Santa Fe.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Man dies after jumping in river to retrieve volleyball

**NY** NEW YORK — A man died after jumping in the East River near Brooklyn's Domino Park to retrieve a volleyball, police said.

Police got a 911 call about a man in the water near the park in the Williamsburg neighborhood at around 6:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Harbor unit officers brought the man to shore and tried to revive him, police said. The man, 36, was taken to Brooklyn Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. His name was not immediately released.

The city medical examiner's office will determine the cause of death.

### 700-pound George Floyd statue is unveiled

**NJ** NEWARK — A new statue of George Floyd was unveiled at Newark's City Hall on Wednesday afternoon.

Mayor Ras Baraka along with actor and filmmaker Leon Pickney, who commissioned the statue, and artist Stanley Watts unveiled the 700-pound bronze statue that was donated this week to the City of Newark, according to WABC-TV.

Hopefully when people walk by and they see it, and they participate, hopefully it inspires them to become active in the struggles that are happening right here in Newark and right here in New Jersey," Baraka said.

Floyd's murder at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer last year fueled a global movement for racial justice.

The statue will remain outside City Hall for at least one year.

### Historic Liberty Bell taken to temporary home

**NY** NEW YORK — A bell that rang at some of the most historic moments in American history was taken down and moved Wednesday from a belfry where it survived a blaze last year that gutted a New York City church.

New York's Liberty Bell will be kept temporarily at the New York Historical Society, displayed as part of an exhibition, according to leadership at Middle Collegiate Church.

The church was destroyed in December when a fire started in the building next to it and spread, sending flames shooting through its roof. The survival of the bell was gratifying news to the congregation, which has pledged to rebuild.

New York's Liberty Bell has sounded for many milestone moments, such as marking the country's founding in 1776 as well as presidential inaugurations.

### Boat lands big marlin, big check in tournament

**NC** MOREHEAD CITY — One big marlin meant one big check for a boat entered in an annual tournament on the North Carolina coast.

Natural, which is based in Beaufort, had to wait out a thunderstorm on Tuesday before learning Jonathan Fulcher had landed a 521.6-pound marlin, which was good for nearly \$829,000 in prize money at the

Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament, The Virginian-Pilot of Norfolk reported. The victory was earned in the tournament's Fabulous Fisherman's prize.

Of the 270 participants in the 63rd annual tournament, only 159 boats went offshore on Tuesday, the second day of the competition. Among the boats entered in the tournament was Catch 23, which belongs to basketball legend Michael Jordan, who led briefly in the heaviest dolphin category before finishing in fifth.

### DC man gets nearly 5 years for gun store theft

**MD** BALTIMORE — A Washington, D.C., man has been sentenced to nearly five years in prison for stealing firearms from a Maryland gun store.

The Justice Department announced Wednesday that Xyavion Lawrence, 20, was sentenced for theft of firearms from a federal firearms licensee's inventory. Lawrence and another suspect broke into an Essex gun shop in Baltimore County in August 2019, officials said.

Surveillance footage showed Lawrence repeatedly backing a car into the store's front door before going inside and taking the guns and then fleeing in the car. Later, Lawrence showed several of the stolen firearms in a social media video while wearing the same clothes, mask and gloves used in the burglary, officials said. Investigators identified his forearm tattoo from the surveillance footage.

Lawrence's plea agreement states that the ankle monitor he was also wearing placed him at

the gun store at the time of the burglary, officials said.

Lawrence was carrying one of the stolen weapons from the burglary two days later when he was arrested, officials said. He told investigators that he stole six firearms from the store. Lawrence was sentenced to 57 months in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release.

### Counties join ban on fireworks due to drought

**ND** BISMARCK — Burleigh and Morton counties have joined the city of Mandan in banning the private use of fireworks during the July Fourth holiday season due to the widespread drought in North Dakota.

Rural fire chiefs in both counties recommended the bans because of extremely dry conditions. North Dakota has experienced some of the driest winter and spring months this year. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows more than two-thirds of the state is in extreme and exceptional drought.

Morton County officials said setting off fireworks could cause fires "that could threaten the health, well-being and safety of citizens, and the cost of response may be far in excess of current resources."

If the county receives a significant amount of rain in the coming weeks, it might reassess the ban, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

Public or commercial fireworks displays that have received permits from the appropriate agencies are still allowed.

— From wire reports

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# Oosthuizen, Henley in lead at US Open

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Louis Oosthuizen capped off an impeccable start to the U.S. Open with two tough par putts to finish off a 4-under 67 and join Russell Henley in a share of the lead at Torrey Pines.

The first round was not completed until Friday morning because of a 90-minute fog delay at the start of the championship Thursday. Oosthuizen was among 36 players who had to finish the round before a quick turnaround to start the next one.

The South African, coming off a runner-up finish to Phil Mickelson in the PGA Championship last month at Kiawah Island, rolled a bending 25-footer down the hill at

the par-3 eighth that rolled out some 8 feet by the hole. He made that for par and then had to make a 4-footer on the par-5 ninth.

“I’m glad I didn’t have to do that last night with greens being a lot bumpier in the afternoon,” Oosthuizen said. “That was one of the reasons I didn’t want to hit that long putt yesterday, but it was probably a bit faster this morning than it would have been last night, but I couldn’t see anything last night.”

When the round ended, 40 players were at par or better and 10 shot in the 60s. That included Rikuya Hoshino, the 25-year-old with two Japan Golf Tour victories in the last two months. He birdied his last two holes for a 69.

The South course played to an average of 73.7, and only two players — Rafa Cabrera Bello (68) and Patrick Cantlay (70) made it around without a bogey.

With a marine layer covering the course in the morning, and sunshine expected in the afternoon, the attention first shifted to who makes it to the weekend. The top 60 and ties make the cut, and among those on the ropes was Mickelson. He opened with a 75 in his bid to finally win the U.S. Open and complete the career Grand Slam.

Brooks Koepka was among those playing in the afternoon. He opened with a 69, extending his amazing U.S. Open record with a sixth consecutive sub-70 round.

## Swim stunner: Dressel wins, but Manuel fails to advance

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Caeleb Dressel locked up his spot for Tokyo, where he’s expected to be one of the biggest stars in the Olympic pool.

Simone Manuel got left behind.

In the biggest surprise yet at the U.S. swimming trials, the defending Olympic women’s champion in the 100-meter freestyle failed to advance from the semifinals Thursday night.

Manuel, who tied for the gold at the Rio Olympics to become the first Black female ever to win an individual swimming event, finished fourth in the first semifinal heat at 54.17 seconds.

She just missed a spot in Friday night’s final when five swimmers went faster in the second semifinal heat, with Erika Brown taking the eighth spot in 54.15 — two-hundredths faster than Manuel.

There were no such concerns for Dressel, who romped to victory in the men’s 100 free in 47.39.

He finally got a chance to shine on Day 5 of the trials after a long week of waiting. When Dressel saw a “1” beside his name, he hopped on the lane rope, splashed the water and pumped his arms to whip up the crowd.

“It’s a huge weight off my shoulders,” Dressel said. “I’m

excited to get the job done and move forward.”

In the wake of Michael Phelps’ retirement, Dressel has emerged as the next big thing in men’s swimming. After winning two gold medals at the 2016 Rio Games, he really shined at the last two world championships.

In 2017, Dressel captured seven gold medals in Budapest — joining Phelps and Mark Spitz as the only swimmers to win that many races at a major international meet.

Dressel followed up with six golds and two silvers at the 2019 championships in Gwangju, becoming only the second swimmer to take as many as eight medals after Phelps.

A giant picture of Dressel adorns the outside of the downtown Omaha arena where the trials are being held.

“All the fluff that comes with it, your name on the building, is cool,” he said. “But it adds a little bit different pressure to it.”

While Dressel isn’t expected to swim enough events in Tokyo to challenge Phelps’ record of eight golds from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, he could be in the mix for as many seven medals if he’s included on all the relays.

Dressel isn’t thinking that far ahead. He’s still got two more individual events at the trials, and he’s heavily favored in both.

“You can’t win five, six or sev-

en medals if you don’t qualify for the events,” he said. “I’m focused on qualifying right now.”

A fading star of the American team is still in the mix for Tokyo.

Thirty-six-year-old Ryan Lochte advanced to the final of the 200 individual medley, his only realistic chance to qualify for his fifth Olympics and redeem himself for the embarrassment of Rio, where he lied about being robbed at gunpoint during a boisterous night on the town.

But Lochte has his work cut out for him. Michael Andrew dominated the semifinals with a time of 1:55.26 — fastest in the world this year. Lochte was the sixth-fastest qualifier at 1:58.65, nearly 3½ seconds behind Andrew.

Only the top two will make the Olympic team Friday.

At least Lochte made it to the final.

Manuel’s failure to advance in the 100 free means she won’t be in the mix for the relays, either. She still has a chance to qualify for the team in the 50 free — an event she took silver in at Rio as part of a four-medal haul.

Natalie Hinds and Olivia Smoliga were the top qualifiers in 53.55. Allison Schmitt, who already made the team in the 200 free, advanced to the final with the sixth-best time (54.08).

In the men’s 200 breaststroke, Nic Fink made the Olympics for

the first time at age 27, winning with a time of 2:07.55 in a 1-2 finish with club teammate Andrew Wilson.

Fink failed to finish in the top two at either the 2012 or 2016 trials, and he had another heartbreak with a third-place showing in the 100 breast this year.

Now, finally, he’s got his long-sought spot on the Olympic team.

“It’s something I can’t really describe,” Fink said. “Relief is only the beginning of what I’m feeling right now. It’s a long journey to come here. I’ve had so much support and help. I’m so grateful for this opportunity and to come back after getting third in the 100.”

Wilson, who swims with Fink on the Athens Bulldog Swim Club in Georgia, earned a likely second individual event at the Tokyo Games with a runner-up finish in 2:08.32. Wilson also finished second in the 100 breast.

“It’s really fun to see it pay off for Andrew and I,” Fink said.

Kevin Cordes, who made the 2016 Olympic team in both breaststroke events, came up short this time. He was a distant fourth, nearly 2 seconds behind Wilson.

Hali Flickinger won the 200 butterfly to expand her program for Tokyo. She already had a runner-up finish in the 400 individual medley.

# Bucks bounce back to force Game 7

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Khris Middleton and the Milwaukee Bucks refused to fold under pressure and wouldn't allow Kevin Durant to produce one more remarkable comeback that could end their second-round playoff series.

Middleton set a career playoff high with 38 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo added 30 and the Milwaukee Bucks never trailed in a 104-89 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Thursday night to force a decisive seventh game.

Game 7 will be Saturday night in Brooklyn. The home team has won each of the first six games in this series.

"We don't think about any type of pressure at all," Middleton said. "It's a basketball game. It's as simple as that. I know it's lose-or-go-home, but at the same time, it's just basketball. You've got to have fun with it. Those moments are fun,

you know, when the game's on the line."

Milwaukee bounced back two nights after blowing a 17-point lead in a 114-108 Game 5 loss at Brooklyn that featured an epic 49-point, 17-rebound, 10-assist performance from Durant.

The Bucks shot just 7-for-33 from three-point range but made up for it by outscoring the Nets 26-4 in fast-break points.

"It definitely hurt us," Nets coach Steve Nash said of the fast-break points. "That's where they're really strong. I thought we had some problems getting back in transition."

Durant occasionally seemed on the verge of leading the Nets back once again Thursday.

He scored 10 straight quarter points during one third-quarter stretch as Brooklyn narrowed a 14-point deficit to five. He sparked a 10-0 run early in the fourth quarter that got the margin down to five again.

Each time, Middleton responded by making a basket or getting to the free-throw line.

"You know in those moments, he's going to make the right play," Antetokounmpo said. "We know that when he feels good, we've got to give him the ball."

Middleton shot 11-for-16 from the floor and 11-for-12 on free-throw attempts and had 10 rebounds, five assists and five steals. Antetokounmpo shot 12-for-20 and had 17 rebounds. Jrue Holiday added 21 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

Durant had 32 points and 11 rebounds. He is one of only two players to score at least 30 points against the Bucks at least seven times in a season (regular season and playoffs combined). Michael Jordan had seven games of at least 30 points against Milwaukee in 1989-90.

James Harden added 16 points for Brooklyn but still

looked as though he was at far less than full strength in his second game since returning from a hamstring injury.

Harden had left Game 1 in the opening minute with right hamstring tightness and returned in Game 5 but shot 1-for-10 and scored just five points.

"I'm out there to do whatever it takes to win," Harden said. "I've got to be better on both ends of the ball, which I will be in Game 7."

As the Bucks and Nets headed into their respective locker rooms after the final buzzer sounded, a jubilant Fiserv Forum crowd celebrated while the Beastie Boys' "No Sleep Till Brooklyn" played over the loudspeaker.

"As I've said all year long, we're built for this moment, simple as that," Antetokounmpo said. "Nobody says it's going to be easy. It might be hard. But we're capable of doing it."

## Point lifts Lightning past Islanders in Game 3

Associated Press

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — After keeping up his scoring touch to help Tampa Bay get a big road victory in its Stanley Cup semifinal series, Brayden Point was especially proud of the Lightning's defensive effort.

Point got the tiebreaking goal late in the second period, Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 27 shots and the Lightning beat the New York Islanders 2-1 on Thursday night to take a 2-1 series lead.

The Islanders outshot the Lightning 8-5 in a tight third period, but couldn't tie it. They pulled goalie Semyon Varlamov for an extra skater with about 1:48 remaining but couldn't manage a shot on goal.

"They had some control late, something to look at," Point said. "We still had guys sacrificing, blocking shots and all that good stuff. We'll take the win for sure."

Yanni Gourde also scored to help Tampa Bay improve to 6-1 on the road in the playoffs.

"We kept the game really simple," Gourde said. "We managed the game for most part of the game and that was the key, especially in

the third period. We closed the ice pretty well and we got the puck deep whenever we got the chance. I think that was very important for us."

Cal Clutterbuck scored for the Islanders, and Varlamov finished with 23 saves.

Game 4 is Saturday night at Nassau Coliseum, with Game 5 back in Tampa on Monday night.

"Tampa's good all around," the Islanders' Matt Martin said. "They're the defending Stanley Cup champions and they know what it takes to win ... They know what they have to do in their D zone."

Both teams had chances in a fast-paced second period. The Islanders had some sustained pressure in the offensive zone midway through, but couldn't beat Vasilevskiy. The goalie denied a shot by Adam Pelech with 6 minutes to go and Mathew Barzal hit a goal-post seconds later. Vasilevskiy then denied Barzal's tip try.

"We have to get more pucks, we have to get inside," Islanders coach Barry Trotz said. "We had some chances. Vasilevskiy made a

couple of key saves. They didn't have a lot to-night, I thought we were pretty good defensively as well."

The Islanders tied it late in the second. Off a scramble for the puck in front of Vasilevskiy, Lightning defenseman Eric Cernak attempted to push the puck into the goalie. Clutterbuck and several players whacked at the puck and it went through Vasilevskiy's feet and in with 2:22 left.

The Lightning regained the lead just four seconds after their power play expired in the final minute of the second. Point got the rebound of a point shot by Victor Hedman and whipped it in past Varlamov as he was falling to the ice with 18 seconds remaining. It was Point's 11th of the postseason and extended his goals streak to six games. He has eight goals in the last nine games.

"I didn't really take a look at it on the replay, but I think I just kind of got knocked down and the puck just kind of got on my stick and I slammed it into the net," Point said. "I'm not sure how it went in. One of those lucky ones we needed tonight."

# Arizona suffers 23rd straight road loss

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The Arizona Diamondbacks set a major league record with their 23rd straight road loss, making dubious history in getting trounced by the San Francisco Giants 10-3 Thursday.

The dejected D-backs trudged off the field after breaking a tie with the 1963 Mets and '43 Philadelphia Athletics for road futility.

Held to just a lone single by pitcher Zac Gallen through six innings, Arizona fell behind 6-0.

The Diamondbacks don't play again on the road until June 25 at San Diego.

Gallen (1-2) allowed four earned runs in 2⅓ innings in his first start back from a sprained pitching elbow.

Giants starter Kevin Gausman (8-1) limited the D-backs

to two runs on four hits in eight innings. The right-hander struck out six and walked one.

Curt Casali homered and drove in four runs for San Francisco, finishing a double shy of the cycle. Steven Duggar went 3-for-3 with an RBI double and Mauricio Dubón and Mike Yastrzemski drove in two runs each as the Giants improved the best record in the majors to 44-25.

**Indians 10, Orioles 3:** José Ramírez and Bobby Bradley homered during a three-run first inning and Cleveland dealt Baltimore its 19th straight road loss.

**Angels 7, Tigers 5:** Shohei Ohtani (3-1) yielded five hits and a run over six strong innings, and Taylor Ward hit his first career grand slam as host Los Angeles beat Detroit.

**Cubs 2, Mets 0:** Kyle Hendricks (9-4) flummoxed New York for six innings to win his career-best seventh straight start, Javier Báez hit a two-run homer in the first off Marcus Stroman and visiting Chicago avoided a four-game series sweep.

**Braves 4, Cardinals 0:** Charlie Morton (6-3) didn't allow a hit until the seventh inning and took a shutout into the eighth, lifting host Atlanta over St. Louis.

**Yankees 8, Blue Jays 4:** At Buffalo, N.Y., Giancarlo Stanton hit a go-ahead homer in a four-run seventh inning and New York pulled off a triple play in a win over struggling Toronto.

**Padres 6, Reds 4:** Victor Caratini hit a two-run, game-ending homer two batters after

Eric Hosmer hit a tying, two-run homer for San Diego in a win over visiting Cincinnati before the first sellout crowd at Petco Park since 2019.

**Astros 10, White Sox 2:** Jose Altuve homered for the fourth time in three games, Michael Brantley and Abraham Toro also connected, and host Houston defeated Chicago.

**Rockies 7, Brewers 3:** Germán Márquez (5-6) allowed one hit over six scoreless innings, C.J. Cron ignited a five-run first with a grand slam and host Colorado beat Milwaukee for its fourth consecutive victory.

**Mariners 6, Rays 5:** Shed Long Jr. hit a tying double in the bottom of the ninth inning and pinch-hitter Kyle Seager singled home the winning run to rally host Seattle past Tampa Bay.

## College teams hard-pressed to homer in Omaha

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Homeruns — lots and lots of them — have defined the NCAA baseball tournament so far.

A total of 381 have been hit in 123 games, the highest total through super regionals since at least 2005.

History suggests it is unlikely homers will come at the same rate when the stage moves to TD Ameritrade Park for the College World Series beginning Saturday.

When the ballpark opened in 2011, it quickly earned a reputation for being the place where home runs go to die. While the number of CWS homers has increased since the NCAA went to the less air-resistant, flat-seam ball, teams that are most successful find gaps in the expansive outfield for extra-base hits and advancing runners. And, of course, strong pitching and defense help.

After watching Tennessee and LSU combine for 10 home runs in the game's first 17 hits in a super regional loss to the Volunteers on Sunday, retiring Tigers coach Paul Mainieri said of the CWS: "There might not be 10 home runs hit the entire tournament up there."

Home runs have been up all season. The rate of 0.87 per team per game through May 30 already was on track to be the highest since 2010. That figure is 1.55 in tournament games.

Teams combined for five or more homers in 33 regional and super regional games, according to Associated Press research. The high was 11 in a Mississippi-Southern Mississippi regional game.

There were 38 instances of a player hitting multiple homers in a game, and there were 13 grand slams.

No team enters the CWS on a bigger home run surge than Tennessee, which hit 16 in five tournament games. The Volunteers have homered at least once in 26 of their past 30 games, including 15 with multiple homers and seven with at least four.

How will that homer-heavy offense carry over to Omaha?

"The easy answer would be as much as they've leaned on the home run down the stretch, it has potential for them to not be nearly as effective because it's so much more difficult to get the ball out of TD Ameritrade than most ballparks," said ESPN analyst Chris Burke, a three-time All-American for Tennessee from 1999-2001.

"However, I do think the ball is carrying much better this year, and we've seen in the last few years in Omaha that while it's certainly not an easy place to get the ball out of, it's traveling out of that ballpark much more regularly since they switched to the current ball,"

he said "I would expect the home run to still very much be in play in Omaha this year but I think Tennessee is going to have to find some other ways to score."

TD Ameritrade's dimensions are 335 feet down the lines, 375 to the alleys and 408 to center. The cavernous downtown stadium sits on low ground a few blocks from the Missouri River, and ball flight is suppressed because games this time of year typically are played in high humidity and batters often hit into a south wind.

There were a total of 25 homers hit in 59 CWS games from 2011-14 (0.21 per team per game). With the flat-seam ball, there have been 88 homers in 80 CWS games (0.55) since 2015.

Coach Elliott Avent brought North Carolina State to the CWS in 2013, the first of two straight years when only three balls left the park. This week, he recalled watching his star player, Trea Turner, raise a fist in premature celebration after he drove a ball deep to left late in a game against UCLA. What he thought was a three-run homer turned out to be just a long out.

"I jumped out of the dugout, which I never do, and that ball didn't get out and so we lost to UCLA," Avent said. "I remember it's tough to get the ball out of there."