

## Vaccine holdouts may have new option

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A COVID-19 vaccine that could soon win federal authorization may offer a boost for the U.S. military: an opportunity to get shots into some of the thousands of service members who have refused other coronavirus vaccines for religious reasons.

At least 175 active-duty and reserve service members have already received the Novavax vaccine, some even traveling overseas at their own expense to get it. The vaccine meets Defense Department requirements because it has the World Health Organization's emergency use approval and is used in Europe and other regions. The Food and Drug Administration is considering giving it emergency use authorization in the U.S. The Novavax vaccine may be an acceptable option for some of the 27,000 service members who have sought religious exemptions from the mandatory vaccine. Military officials say many troops who refuse the shots cite certain COVID-19 vaccines' remote connection to abortions.

Laboratory-grown cell lines descended

from fetuses that were aborted decades ago were used in some early-stage testing of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and to grow viruses used to manufacture the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The vaccines do not contain fetal cells. Novavax, however, says that "no human fetal-derived cell lines or tissue" were used in the development, manufacture or production of its vaccine.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory last year, saying the shots were critical to maintaining military readiness and the health of the force. Military leaders have argued that troops for decades have been required to get as many as 17 vaccines, particularly for those who are deploying overseas.

One group involved in lawsuits targeting the military's vaccine requirement said it's possible some shot opponents may see Novavax as an amenable option.

"I definitely think it is for some, but certainly not for all," said Mike Berry, director of military affairs for First Liberty Institute. "There are some for whom abortion is really the ultimate issue, and once that issue is re-

solved for them spiritually, then they're willing."

Berry added, however, that for others, abortion is "just a tangential issue," and they have broader opposition to vaccines as a whole. "A rudimentary way of looking at it is that they've asked for God's will, and they believe that it would be wrong for them to get the vaccine," Berry said. "In other words, they believe that God has told them no."

Novavax also may appeal to people who are uncomfortable with the new genetic-based technology used in Pfizer and Moderna's so-called mRNA vaccines. They deliver genetic instructions for the body to make copies of the coronavirus' outer coating, the spike protein.

The Novavax vaccine is made with a more familiar technology, like those used for years to prevent hepatitis B and shingles. It trains the body to fight the coronavirus by delivering copies of the outer coating that are grown in insect cells, then are purified and packaged into nanoparticles that to the immune system resemble a virus, according to Novavax research chief Dr. Gregory Glenn.

## House subpanel votes for 4.6% pay raise for troops

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A subpanel of the House Armed Services Committee voted Wednesday to raise pay for service members by 4.6%, reduce the size of the military and dedicate more resources for suicide prevention in the Pentagon's next fiscal year budget.

The pay increase backed by House lawmakers on the military personnel subcommittee matches the White House's budget request for 2023 and would go into effect on Jan. 1. It will be debated by the full House Armed Services Committee alongside other recommended measures this month as Congress drafts an annual defense spending authorization bill.

Pay hikes for service members have hovered at about 2.7% during the last few years and the proposed boost for 2023 represents the largest in 20 years. Members of Congress have expressed misgivings, how-

ever, that the 4.6% pay raise pitched by President Joe Biden's administration can adequately compensate service members amid an inflation rate of 8%.

"[It] may not be enough," Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., the subcommittee's chairwoman, admitted during a budget markup Wednesday.

A subcommittee aide who spoke on condition of anonymity said Tuesday that there is interest in possibly raising pay further as Congress continues to weigh the bill. House lawmakers did not move to do so on Wednesday but agreed to require Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to assess the accuracy of military pay tables and military housing allowances for future funding legislation.

In March, the top Republicans on the Senate and House Armed Services Committees implored Pentagon leaders to consider how the rising cost of living will affect the pocketbooks of military families.

"It's ignorant to believe these historically high inflation rates aren't hurting our service members just like they are every other American family," Sen. Jim Inhofe, of Oklahoma, and Rep. Mike Rogers, of Alabama, wrote in a letter to Austin and other military officials.

The two lawmakers issued a statement last month faulting the Defense Department for not having "a good grasp on how inflation is hurting our service members and their families — and how this is in turn impacting recruiting and retention."

Recruitment struggles are plaguing all the service branches, particularly the Army. House lawmakers signed off Wednesday on reducing the Army's end strength from 485,000 soldiers last year to 473,000 next year, marking a reversal from a 2017 plan to grow the service to 500,000 active-duty troops by 2022.

The Pentagon is asking to cut 25,000 total positions from the military services.

# Osprey carrying 5 Marines crashes in Calif.

By **WYATT OLSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey crashed Wednesday afternoon in Southern California about 35 miles from the Mexican border, killing as many as four people on board, according to an area media report.

The Osprey, assigned to a squadron in Marine Aircraft Group 39 at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, went down around 12:25 p.m. near Glamis, Calif., according to a tweet Wednesday afternoon by the Marine Corps.

The Corps said it was waiting for further information on the

five Marines aboard the tiltrotor aircraft. But the Los Angeles Times, citing a “federal source who spoke on condition of anonymity,” reported that four people on board were killed.

Glamis is about 30 miles from the border with Mexico and about 50 miles from Yuma, Ariz. The North Algodones Dunes Wilderness, or the Glamis Dunes, are nearby.

Reports that the Osprey carried nuclear material on board were incorrect, according to the Marine Corps tweet. It did not elaborate.

Emergency personnel with the Imperial County Fire De-

partment and a federal fire department responded shortly after noon to the crash site in the vicinity of Coachella Canal Road and Highway 79, according to a tweet by Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif., about 45 miles southeast of Glamis.

Video footage posted by News 11 Yuma of emergency vehicles by the crash site show a sign that reads, “Danger. Military training in progress. Do not enter.”

The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing also has units at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and in California at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twen-

tynine Palms.

The Osprey is the second military aircraft to fall in Southern California this month.

A Navy pilot was killed June 3 when his F/A-18 Super Hornet came down near Trona. Lt. Richard Bullock was on a routine training mission when the Super Hornet crashed around 2:30 p.m. in a remote section of the Mojave Desert, according to the Navy.

Bullock was assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 113 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, about 40 miles southwest of Fresno, Calif. Trona is about 300 miles northwest of Glamis.

## Biden chooses submariner Munsch for Italy command

By **ALISON BATH**  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — An experienced submariner currently serving at the Pentagon is slated to be the next commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, as well as a joint forces command based in southern Italy.

Vice Adm. Stuart Munsch was nominated by President Joe Biden for promotion to admiral and leadership of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, U.S. Naval Forces Africa and Allied Joint Forces Command, Naples, the Pentagon said in a Wednesday statement.

Munsch is director for Joint Force Development, J7, in Washington, D.C., the Pentagon said. It’s unclear when his appointment would be formalized or when he would assume his new duties.

The Pentagon, however, typically refrains from making such announcements unless the appointment has been approved.

Adm. Robert Burke has served in the threefold leadership role in Naples since July 2020.

A 1985 graduate of the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., Munsch also earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Oxford University in England as a Rhodes scholar.

The North Dakota native subsequently served at sea on the Benjamin Franklin-class ballistic submarine USS Will Rogers and aboard the Los Angeles-class attack submarines USS Jefferson City and USS Tucson, according to his Joint Chiefs of Staff online biography.

Munsch’s assignment isn’t the only change recently announced for U.S. naval operations based in Naples. In April, the Pentagon announced that Vice Adm. Eugene Black III had been nominated by Biden for a post in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington.

## Navy electronic warfare squad leader gets relieved of duties

By **ALISON BATH**  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — The commander of a U.S. Navy Growler squadron assigned to an aircraft carrier strike group deployed to the Mediterranean Sea since December has been relieved of his duties, the service said Wednesday in a statement.

The Navy cited a loss of confidence in Cmdr. Matthew McCormick in removing him from his leadership post in Electronic Attack Squadron, or VAQ, 137, although it did not give details about his dismissal. He had been in his position since September.

The squadron flies Boeing EA-18G Growlers, a variant of the F/A 18 family that is designed for electronic attack warfare while retaining the range of capabilities of the F/A 18E/F Super Hornet, according to the Navy’s website.

Cmdr. Scott Maynes, executive officer of VAQ 137, is serving as acting commanding officer of the squadron until a re-

placement is identified.

McCormick temporarily was reassigned to Electronic Attack Wing Pacific at Naval Station Whidbey Island, Wash., according to the statement.

VAQ 137 is deployed with USS Harry S. Truman, which is currently sailing in the Ionian Sea, according to the USNI fleet tracker.

In December, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered Truman to stay in the Mediterranean as fears grew in the face of mounting Russian aggression in southeastern Europe.

The carrier, which left Norfolk, Va., on Dec. 1, had been slated for deployment to U.S. 5th Fleet in the Middle East. The Mediterranean is part of the area of operations of the Naples-based U.S. 6th Fleet.

Since then, Truman has supported training and patrol flights from the Mediterranean, participated in naval exercises with NATO allies and partners and made port calls in Crete, Croatia and Italy.

# Midshipman who died on leave was Marine vet

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A Naval Academy midshipman who died while on leave was a 24-year-old Marine Corps veteran, the school said Wednesday.

Midshipman 1st Class Taylor Connors, of Pleasant View, Utah, died early Tuesday in Philadelphia “with family at his bedside,” according to an academy statement. The circumstances of his death are under investigation, though foul play is not suspected, the academy said.

Connors entered the academy in 2019 after enlisting in the Marine Corps in 2016. Before that, he attended the Utah Military Academy “where he attained the rank of group commander, responsible for over 250 cadets,” the Naval Academy said.

“Our Naval Academy community is mourning a tragic loss this week of a life taken far too soon,” said Vice Adm. Sean Buck, the superintendent of the academy in Annapolis, Md. “Through the grieving process, I encourage members of the brigade, faculty and staff to reach out and offer support to one another from near and far this summer.”

The physics major was on the school’s jiu-jitsu team and a member of the 23rd, 2nd and 16th companies. He was also a member of the Semper Fi Society and participated in intramural sports.

Connors was described as a “leader among his peers,” serving as the 2nd Company first sergeant last fall, “working alongside the company commander and executive officer, responsible for ensuring ac-

countability during day-to-day company operations,” according to the statement.

“Last summer, Connors served as a Plebe Summer squad leader, a fundamental leadership role responsible for transitioning newly reported midshipman candidates from civilians to basically trained midshipmen prepared to join the brigade,” the academy said.

Marine Corps Maj. David Emison II, the academy’s training officer and Connors’ mentor, described him as “intensely bright, thoughtful and a man of faith.”

“Taylor Connors was the best of us. He was a true mentor and leader among his peers, but I know he saw himself as a Marine infantryman first and foremost,” Emison said. “There is something to be said about an ethos like the one he exemplified.”

## Policy update defines how HIV-positive troops can stay

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Asymptomatic HIV-positive service members can now remain in the military and deploy on missions if the amount of virus in them is clinically confirmed undetectable, according to an updated Pentagon policy.

The decision, implemented Monday, was made “in view of significant advances in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention” of

HIV, according to a Pentagon memo released this week.

“Personnel ... will have no restrictions applied to their deployability or to their ability to commission while a service member solely on the basis of their HIV-positive status,” the policy states. “Nor will such individuals be discharged or separated solely on the basis of their HIV-positive status.”

Previously, commanders had the authority to involuntarily separate a service mem-

ber who tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus or prevent them from deploying, which can lead to a discharge.

Instead, the new policy calls for HIV-positive military personnel, including military academy cadets and midshipmen, to be “evaluated on a case-by-case basis.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered a Pentagon working group develop standards for case-by-case determinations for such personnel, according to the memo.

## N. Koreans could be vaccinated, fed on missile budget

BY DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The estimated \$650 million spent by North Korea on a record number of missile launches since January would pay for one dose of COVID-19 vaccine for each of its citizens, according to a South Korean defense institute.

North Korea spent between \$400 million and \$650 million on its missile tests, said a report Thursday by the government-funded Korea Institute for Defense Analyses based in Seoul.

The communist regime has fired an estimated 28 to 33 ballistic missiles in 17 rounds of tests so far this year.

Manufacturing the missiles runs between \$208 million and \$325 million, or about 50% to 80% of the total cost, according to the report. Labor accounts for 10% to 30% and miscella-

neous expenses make up the difference.

That total is still less than the \$800 million needed to procure one battery of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, a U.S.-manufactured missile defense system deployed to South Korea since 2017.

With the \$650 million high-end estimate for its launches, North Korea might have obtained 20 million to 33 million doses of coronavirus vaccine, about one for each of its 25 million people, or relieved the nation’s food shortage for the year, according to the institute.

North Korea is believed to be undergoing a COVID-19 outbreak. After denying a problem with the coronavirus respiratory disease since the pandemic began in March 2020, the North’s state-run media starting in May has reported more than 4 million cases of an unspecified fever.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un rebuked

his country’s health officials for allowing the fever to spread, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

The impoverished country, which is believed to have a vaccination rate close to zero, also refused offers of vaccines from COVAX, the World Health Organization program, and from South Korea.

North Korea is also undergoing a food crisis, partly due to its self-imposed isolation from the world, and has a food gap wide enough to keep its people hungry for two to three months, or about 860,000 metric tons, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Meanwhile, the nation’s military has fired more missiles in five months than in any previous full year. The latest round of launches came May 25, when North Korea fired an unprecedented eight short-range ballistic missiles in a single event.

# Jan. 6 panel goes prime time with probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With never-seen video, new audio and a mass of evidence, the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol will attempt to show the “harrowing story” not only of the deadly violence that erupted that day, but also the chilling backstory as the defeated president, Donald Trump, tried to overturn Joe Biden’s election victory.

Thursday’s prime-time hearing will open with eyewitness testimony from the first police officer pummeled in the mob riot and from a documentary filmmaker who recorded the melee, and it will feature the committee’s accounts from Trump’s aides and family members of the deadly siege.

“When you hear and understand the wide-reaching conspiracy and the effort to try to cor-

rupt every lever and agency of government involved in this, you know, the hair on the back of your neck should stand up,” Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a member of the 1/6 committee, said in an interview.

“Putting it all together in one place and one coherent narrative, I think, will help the American people understand better what happened on January 6th — and the threats that that could potentially pose in the future.”

The 1/6 panel’s yearlong investigation into the Capitol attack will begin to show how America’s tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power came close to slipping away. It will reconstruct how Trump refused to concede the 2020 election, spread false claims of voter fraud and orchestrated an unprecedented public and private campaign to overturn Biden’s victory.

The result of the coming weeks of public hearings may not change hearts or minds in politically polarized America. But the committee’s investigation with 1,000 interviews is intended to stand as a public record for history. A final report aims to provide an accounting of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the British set fire to it in 1814 and to ensure such an attack never happens again.

Emotions are still raw at the Capitol, and security will be tight for the hearings. Against this backdrop, the committee will try to speak to a divided America, ahead of the fall midterm elections, when voters decide which party controls Congress.

The committee chairman, civil rights leader Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and vice chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., the daughter of former Vice Pres-

ident Dick Cheney, will set the tone with opening remarks.

The two congressional leaders will outline what the committee has learned about the events leading up to that brisk January day in 2021 when Trump sent his supporters to Congress to “fight like hell” for his presidency as lawmakers undertook the typically routine job of certifying the previous November’s results.

“People are going to have to follow two intersecting streams of events — one will be the attempt to overturn the presidential election, that’s a harrowing story in itself,” Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the committee, told the AP.

“The other will be the sequence of events leading up to a violent mob attack on the Capitol to stop the counting of Electoral College votes and block the peaceful balance of power,” he said.

## House passes gun control bill after recent shootings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House passed a wide-ranging gun control bill Wednesday in response to recent mass shootings in Buffalo, N.Y., and Uvalde, Texas, that would raise the age limit for purchasing a semi-automatic rifle and prohibit the sale of ammunition magazines with a capacity of more than 15 rounds.

The legislation passed by a mostly party-line vote of 223-204. It has almost no chance of becoming law as the Senate pursues negotiations focused on improving mental health programs, bolstering school security and enhancing background checks. But the bill does allow Democratic lawmakers a chance to frame for voters where they stand on policies that polls show are supported.

“We can’t save every life, but my God, shouldn’t we try? America we hear you, and today in the House we are taking the action

you are demanding,” said Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-Texas. “Take note of who is with you and who is not.”

The push comes after a House committee heard wrenching testimony from recent shooting victims and family members, including from Miah Cerrillo, 11, who covered herself with a dead classmate’s blood to avoid being shot at the Uvalde elementary school.

The seemingly never-ending cycle of U.S. mass shootings has rarely stirred Congress to act. But the shooting of 19 children and two teachers in Uvalde has revived efforts in a way that has lawmakers from both parties talking about the need to respond.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said the House vote would “make history by making progress.” But it’s unclear where the House measure will go, given that Republicans were adamant in their opposition.

## 3 sentenced to death for fighting on Ukraine’s side

Associated Press

BAKHMUT, Ukraine — Two British citizens and a Moroccan were sentenced to death Thursday for fighting on Ukraine’s side, in a punishment handed down by the country’s pro-Moscow rebels.

A court in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic found the three men guilty of working toward a violent overthrow of power, an offense punishable by death in the unrecognized eastern republic. They were also convicted of mercenary activities and terrorism.

Russia’s state news agency RIA Novosti reported that the three — Aiden Aslin, Shaun Pinner and Saadun Brahim — are set to face a firing squad. They have a month to appeal.

The separatists argued that the three fighters were “mercenaries” not entitled to the usual protections afforded prisoners of war. They are the first foreign

fighters to be sentenced by Ukraine’s Russian-backed separatists.

Aslin’s and Pinner’s families had contended that the men, who are both said to have lived in Ukraine since 2018, were “long-serving” members of the Ukrainian military.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s spokesman Jamie Davies said that under the Geneva Conventions, POWs are entitled to immunity as combatants.

The three men fought alongside Ukrainian troops. Pinner and Aslin surrendered to pro-Russian forces in the southern port of Mariupol in mid-April, while Brahim did so in mid-March in the eastern city of Volnovakha.

The Russian military has argued that foreign mercenaries fighting on Ukraine’s side are not combatants and should expect a long prison term, at best, if captured.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Cockroaches released during court hearing

**NY** ALBANY — A courthouse in upstate New York was closed for fumigation Tuesday after hundreds of cockroaches were released during an altercation that broke out at an arraignment, according to court officials.

The clash broke out during proceedings in Albany City Court for four people for an arrest at the state Capitol. A defendant who started to film the courtroom proceedings was told to stop. In the altercation that followed, hundreds of cockroaches brought into the courthouse in plastic containers were released, according to the state court system.

The bug release was being investigated while the courthouse was closed for the rest of the day for fumigation.

Court officers arrested a 34-year-old woman in the audience for charges related to the altercation, including disorderly conduct, obstructing governmental administration and tampering with physical evidence.

### Confederate monuments moved, rededicated

**VA** ABINGDON — A southwest Virginia county recently rededicated two Confederate monuments after relocating them from a downtown courthouse lawn to make way for construction.

A ceremony was held at a new park in Abingdon that was paid for by community donations, the Bristol Herald-Courier reported.

One marker honors local Civil War generals. The other is a

statue of a soldier holding a rifle.

The dedication included an honor guard and a gun salute, according to TV station WCYB, with some attendees dressed in period attire.

Many communities across Virginia have been removing Confederate monuments since the General Assembly gave them the ability to do so in 2020.

### 'Bewitched' statue vandalized with red paint

**MA** SALEM — In the wiggle of a nose, a man covered the "Bewitched" statue in Salem, Mass., with red paint, police said.

Witnesses called police at about 5 p.m. Monday to report someone spray-painting the bronze statue, Capt. John Burke said Tuesday. The statue depicts actor Elizabeth Montgomery — as lead character Samantha Stephens in the 1960s sitcom — sitting on a broomstick in front of a crescent moon.

An officer in the area spotted a man fitting witness descriptions of the vandal and after a brief chase arrested a 32-year-old city resident on charges of defacing property, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct, Burke said.

His motivation remains unclear.

The statue was erected in the city famous for the 1692 witch trials in 2005, despite protests from some who said it trivializes the tragedy of the trials.

### Reward offered after fire burned 3 historic homes

**GA** MORROW — State arson investigators are helping in the probe of a sus-

picious fire that destroyed three historic homes in Georgia over the weekend, a state official announced Monday.

Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King said that investigators examined the remains of the three historic Morrow homes.

"At this point, the fires are considered suspicious and are being investigated as such," King said in a statement.

He said a reward of up to \$10,000 is being offered for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the arson.

He urged anyone with information to call the Georgia Arson Control Hotline at 1-800-252-5804.

Only columns remained where one of the historic buildings stood, WXIA reported. The three homes included one building on the National Register of Historic Places, City Manager Jeff Baker told WXIA.

### Coast Guard rescues 2 after plane crashes

**AK** JUNEAU — The U.S. Coast Guard rescued two people from an island in Juneau, Alaska, on Tuesday after their plane crashed in the water.

The two survivors were the only passengers aboard the privately owned aircraft, the Coast Guard said. They were in stable condition.

The two swam to Douglas Island when their plane crashed 100 feet from shore. An Alaska Seaplanes aircraft spotted them, landed on the water nearby and provided first aid.

The Coast Guard Cutter Swordfish arrived with a small boat crew who transferred the

two to an Alaska Wildlife Troopers boat for transport to paramedics.

The plane remains in the water and is slowly sinking. Coast Guard responders are working on a salvage plan with the plane's owners. The cause of the incident is being investigated.

### Officials euthanize grizzly bear, release another

**MT** BONNER — Montana wildlife officials captured two young female sibling grizzly bears, releasing one back into the wild and euthanizing the other due to an infection stemming from losing a front left paw.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks said it captured the 2-year-old females on May 29 after they remained close to homes in the Blackfoot Valley about 10 miles from the town of Bonner in western Montana.

The agency said the healthy sibling weighed about 130 pounds and the other about 90 pounds. The healthy grizzly was fitted with a radio collar and released into an undisclosed location.

It's not clear how the injured grizzly lost its paw, but a bicyclist found a grizzly bear paw on April 11 on a road where, last fall, a sow grizzly and three yearling cubs had been seen.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bear Manager Jamie Jonkel told The Missoulian that the agency is waiting on DNA results to see if the captured bears were part of the family group that included a male sibling.

The mother grizzly had been known to raid sheds and garages north of Missoula.

— From wire reports

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# Defense fuels Celtics' Game 3 victory

*Associated Press*

BOSTON — Throughout the postseason, the Boston Celtics had played their best basketball away from home.

Not anymore.

Jaylen Brown scored 27 points, Jayson Tatum added 26 and the Celtics rode the energy of a raucous TD Garden crowd to beat back another third-quarter onslaught by Golden State in a 116-100 victory Wednesday night that gave them a 2-1 lead in the NBA Finals.

Marcus Smart added 24 points and helped fuel a defensive effort that held the Warriors to 11 points in the fourth quarter — third-fewest in a Finals game in the shot clock era.

“Game 2, they brought the heat to us,” Smart said. “For us, that left a bad taste in our mouth because what we hang our hat on is effort on the defensive end and being a physical team. It definitely woke us up a little bit.”

Tatum said the fact the Celtics didn't hang their heads af-

ter the Warriors' third-quarter flourish is something they didn't always do in the regular season.

“I think that's when we are at our best when we respond to tough situations. We respond to teams going on runs and things like that,” he said. “I think we did that several times tonight.”

Boston improved to 6-4 at home, compared to 8-3 on the road this postseason. The Celtics haven't lost two straight games since the end of March.

Stephen Curry led Golden State with 31 points and six three-pointers. He had 15 points in a 33-25 third quarter by the Warriors but was hurt late in the fourth after Al Horford rolled into his leg on a loose ball. Curry said it was similar to a play during the regular season in which Smart dove into Curry's legs while chasing a loose ball but “not as bad.”

“I got caught — obviously in some pain, but I'll be all right,” Curry said. “See how it feels tomorrow and get ready for Friday.”

Klay Thompson broke out of a Finals slump and finished with 25 points and five threes. But the Warriors' shooting couldn't save them on a night the more athletic Celtics out-muscled them for a 47-31 rebounding advantage.

“When you allow a team to get comfortable, especially in their home — in front of the home crowd, then it's tough,” Warriors forward Draymond Green said.

Robert Williams III, who has been working his way back from knee surgery, finished with eight points, 10 rebounds and four blocks.

“We talked about it quite a bit, our group being resilient and being able to fight through a lot of things and at times when it's most needed being able to lock down on defense,” Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. “We did in the fourth quarter,”

Game 4 is Friday in Boston.

Despite Curry's noticeable limp after the play with Horford, Warriors coach Steve Kerr said it was not why he

pulled him from the game in the closing minutes.

“The injury didn't force him out of the game, but I took him out down 14 with two minutes left because we weren't going to catch up,” Kerr said.

The previous 39 times teams have split the first two games of the Finals, the winner of Game 3 went on to win the series 82% of the time.

Feeding off the energy of a Garden crowd that jeered Green throughout his miserable night in the first NBA Finals game in Boston since 2010, the Celtics started fast and led by as many as 18 points in the first half.

Coming off a Game 2 loss in which Boston turned the ball over 19 times, the Celtics' ball movement was much crisper in the half court, which led to open perimeter shots, favorable 1-on-1 matchups and driving lanes.

It left the Warriors scrambling at times, which contributed to three foul calls on Curry in the opening 24 minutes.

# Saudi-paid players not eligible for PGA Tour

*Associated Press*

Dustin Johnson, Phil Mickelson and other PGA Tour members who teed off in the Saudi-funded golf league Thursday are no longer eligible for PGA Tour events under penalties Commissioner Jay Monahan shared soon after the first tee shot was struck.

Still to be determined is whether those players are ever welcome back.

The ban includes participation in the Presidents Cup, which for the International team is determined by the world ranking.

The USGA already has said eligible players can still compete in the U.S. Open next week. The PGA Tour does not run the majors.

In a memo sent to tour members, Monahan said that even if players resigned from the tour ahead of the first LIV Golf Invitational outside London, they will not be allowed to play PGA Tour events as a non-member by getting a sponsor exemption.

Ten players have resigned from the PGA Tour, a list that includes Johnson and Sergio Garcia. Mickelson, who earned lifetime membership with his 45 PGA Tour titles, has not.

“These players have made their choice for their own financial-based reasons,” Monahan wrote. “But they can't demand the same PGA Tour membership benefits, considerations, opportunities and platform as you. The expectation disrespects you, our fans and our partners.”

LIV Golf, run by Greg Norman and funded by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, responded to the tour's decision by calling it vindictive and divisive.

“It's troubling that the tour, an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for golfers to play the game, is the entity blocking golfers from playing,” LIV Golf said. “This certainly is not the last word on this topic. The era of free agency is beginning as

we are proud to have a full field of players joining us in London, and beyond.”

At issue is players competing without a conflicting event release from the PGA Tour.

Players typically receive three such releases a year for tournaments overseas, but Monahan denied releases for the LIV Golf Invitational because it is an eight-tournament series that has five events in the United States.

The tour does not allow releases for events in North America.

“We have followed the tournament regulations from start to finish in responding to those players who have decided to turn their backs on the PGA Tour by willfully violating a regulation,” he wrote.

Monahan said the players who resigned will have their names removed from the PGA Tour standings — FedEx Cup and Presidents Cup — after this week.

# Gritty Landeskog leads Avs back to final

Associated Press

DENVER — Gabriel Landeskog kept his patience even as everyone scattered in every direction at practice. Not exactly paying attention, the players were acting like a bunch of 2- and 3-year-olds — because they were.

Coach Gabe kept things calm while he was in charge of his young daughter's soccer team this spring. Captain Gabe radiates cool as the longtime leader of a Colorado Avalanche team headed to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time since 2001.

He's grown up with the "C" emblazoned on his jersey, taking over the responsibility at just 19 years, 286 days old. He's learned all about leadership in the decade he's been captain, most notably this: Just be himself, because his work ethic carries a lot of clout.

It's a style that served another longtime captain well in Joe Sakic, who led the Avalanche to a pair of Stanley Cup titles (1996, '01) and is now the team's general manager.

"If you're going to start faking things and trying to pretend to be something you're not, people will see right through that," said the 29-year-old Landeskog, whose team is waiting to face either two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay or the

New York Rangers. "Be yourself and things will follow."

Even strong leaders, though, seek advice on complicated issues. Like this: About to be presented the Clarence S. Campbell Bowl for winning the Western Conference after a sweep of Edmonton, Landeskog turned to Sakic for guidance. Should players put their hands on this piece of hardware or steer clear in keeping with hockey superstition that it's bad luck when a more important trophy is still possible.

"He was like, 'Do whatever you want. Touch it. Don't touch it. It doesn't matter,'" recounted Landeskog, whose team posed with the trophy — and did touch it, for the record — but didn't bring it into the locker room. "It's important to enjoy the journey and important to enjoy the moment."

His responsibilities include providing grit on a line that features Nathan MacKinnon and Valeri Nichushkin. The left winger hangs out in the tough places, often in front of goaltenders, and he sticks up for his teammates on the ice and off.

"Probably the best captain I've played for," said defenseman Cale Makar, who filmed a comical commercial with the captain. "He's able to sneak in those right mo-

ments when we need his voice but at the same time he's consistent for us every night playing with that same physical force."

When Landeskog was appointed captain on Sept. 4, 2012, he was no more than a kid himself. At the time, the forward from Sweden was the youngest in the NHL to assume the role. That distinction was eclipsed in 2016 by Edmonton's promotion of Connor McDavid (19 years, 266 days).

No doubt, this season has been Landeskog's finest work. He was leading the team in goals (30) in the regular season when he underwent knee surgery on March 14. He wanted to be closer to full strength for a long postseason run. Back in time for the playoffs, he's scored eight goals, picked up nine assists and is third on the team in hits.

"Very in tune with what we're trying to accomplish as a team," Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said of the player taken second overall by Colorado in 2011. "He understands all of the personalities and their tendencies in our locker room, attitudinally.

"He's in a position to help guys out and comfort them when they need it — and give them a kick in the (rear) when they need it, and give them a pat on the back when they need it."

## Gregory ready to host full NASCAR weekend at Sonoma

Associated Press

Kyle Larson took a swig of the winner's wine, tilted his head back and spit it in the air. He couldn't have predicted the wind catching hold of the vino and blowing it all over new track general manager Jill Gregory.

Some homecoming, eh?

Gregory, a Modesto native and graduate of California Polytechnic State, returned home in early 2021 to run Sonoma Raceway as executive vice president and general manager of the picturesque road course in wine country. She'd had a longtime career with NASCAR but couldn't pass up the opportunity to go home and run Sonoma when the job opened.

The track was mostly shuttered in 2020 because of the pandemic and Gregory was tasked with welcoming NASCAR back just four months after she picked up her keys to the track. Ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions in both California and Sonoma County meant Gregory was constantly having to adapt — from crowd restrictions to even holding the race at all — in the lead-up to her

first NASCAR weekend.

In the end, the only true hiccup was Larson's mouthful of wine that landed all over Gregory on the victory podium.

"I think I tried to jump out of the way, but then I was like, 'Gosh, Kyle, I'm wearing my nice suit, you just got wine all over me!'" Gregory said in an interview with The Associated Press. "People asked me if I was offended, and I know Kyle, he was mortified. It was in victory lane, that's the wrap of the whole weekend, and at that moment, you are basically exhaling and things are over and fans are leaving, and the spray was quite impressive. But what actually landed on me was quite limited, so I just went about my day."

Gregory never got the red pantsuit cleaned — she joked she hopes it someday lands in the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame — and Larson sent her a bottle of wine from Abreu Vineyards as an apology. She's saving it for a special occasion.

That occasion could come Sunday night after Gregory concludes her second NASCAR race weekend as head of Sonoma. Un-

like last year, the track is wide open to spectators and Gregory has a full slate of action: NASCAR's truck series will race Saturday afternoon, giving Sonoma added on-track activity to what has typically been a stand-alone weekend for the premiere Cup Series.

The preparation hit a speedbump last week when a grass fire burned over 15 acres on Sonoma's rolling property.

"In the whole scheme of things, it was not a large fire, and it was contained within an hour of the 911 call," Gregory said. "My thought was 'I'd rather it happen a week before the race than the week of the race.'"

Gregory still has challenges ahead. Sonoma was once the destination race on the NASCAR schedule because of its location, casual schedule and its hold as one of only two road courses in a series packed with ovals.

But since the pandemic, when Sonoma went a year without a race, NASCAR has made major changes to its schedule and this year has six road courses on the calendar. Fans now have multiple choices where to go to see right and left turns.

# Twins tag Cortes, halt Yanks' streak

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Ryan Jeffers unleashed a long swing on a cutter from New York's Nestor Cortes low in the strike zone, then stood at the plate for a second to admire its flight into the third deck.

Two batters later, Byron Buxton sent a down-the-middle slider sailing over the wall and celebrated it by fiercely pounding his chest as he sprinted around first base.

The Minnesota Twins can't help but enjoy beating the Yankees, especially when it comes against one of the best pitchers in baseball.

Jeffers and Buxton each hit home runs in the fifth inning to force an early exit for Cortes, and the Twins cruised to an 8-1 victory Wednesday that stopped the Yankees' seven-game winning streak.

The Twins scored one more run than the Yankees allowed combined over the last seven games, handing their longtime nemesis their most lopsided of 16 losses this season.

**Red Sox 1, Angels 0:** Los Angeles' losing streak reached a franchise-record 14 games

when Bobby Dalbec drove in the only run with a double in the sixth inning for visiting Boston.

Nathan Eovaldi (4-2) pitched five innings of six-hit ball with five strikeouts in Boston's season-high seventh consecutive victory.

**Dodgers 4, White Sox 1:** Tony Gonsolin improved to 7-0, tossing three-hit ball over six innings, and Will Smith and Cody Bellinger homered early to lead visiting Los Angeles over Chicago.

Smith hit a two-run drive in the first inning and Bellinger made it 3-0 when he connected leading off the second.

**Rays 11, Cardinals 3:** Randy Arozarena had three hits and four RBIs against his original team to help host Tampa Bay beat St. Louis.

Arozarena, the 2021 AL Rookie of the Year, was a St. Louis prospect with 19 games of major league experience when he was obtained from the Cardinals in a January 2020 trade. He had an RBI double in the first inning and a two-run single in the seventh to pace an 18-hit outburst for the Rays.

**Braves 13, Athletics 2:** Mi-

chael Harris gave his team the lead with a two-run triple in the fifth inning that spoiled Jared Koenig's major league debut, and surging host Atlanta beat skidding Oakland.

**Phillies 10, Brewers 0:** Aaron Nola pitched eight sharp innings and surging Philadelphia hit four home runs to rout scuffling host Milwaukee.

The Phillies won their season-high sixth in a row, five of them since interim manager Rob Thomson took over when Joe Girardi was fired Friday.

**Mariners 6, Astros 3:** Cal Raleigh and Ty France homered early, and Seattle finally won a series in Houston.

The Mariners took two of three from their AL West rivals to win their fourth consecutive series overall and first in Houston since September 2018.

**Tigers 3, Pirates 1:** Miguel Cabrera hit a go-ahead single in the eighth inning, and visiting Detroit completed a two-game sweep of Pittsburgh.

**Royals 8, Blue Jays 4:** MJ Melendez and Emmanuel Rivera drove in two runs apiece, leading Brady Singer and host Kansas City over Toronto to

end a three-game losing streak.

**Marlins 2, Nationals 1 (10):** Sandy Alcántara pitched nine scoreless innings, Jesús Aguilar hit a game-ending single in the 10th and host Miami beat Washington.

**Guardians 4, Rangers 0:** José Ramírez hit a run-scoring double to tie for the major league lead in RBIs, Shane Bieber pitched neatly into the fifth inning before a long rain delay and host Cleveland blanked Texas.

**Diamondbacks 7, Reds 0:** Merrill Kelly allowed one hit in six innings and visiting Arizona hit three homers against Cincinnati, snapping a four-game skid.

**Padres 13, Mets 2:** Jake Cronenworth homered, doubled, singled and had five RBIs, and Sean Manaea pitched seven strong innings to beat former teammate Chris Bassitt in host San Diego's rout of New York.

**Giants 2, Rockies 1 (10):** Donovan Walton scored on an error by right fielder Charlie Blackmon in the 10th inning, lifting host San Francisco over Colorado.

## Oklahoma whips Texas in Game 1 of WCWS title series

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Jocelyn Alo and Tiare Jennings fueled Oklahoma's record-setting offensive burst to help the Sooners move a victory away from successfully defending their Women's College World Series title.

Each hit two home runs and top-seeded Oklahoma rolled past unseeded Texas 16-1 on Wednesday night in Game 1 of the best-of-three championship series.

"It was like an avalanche," Texas coach Mike White said. "Once it starts going, it starts gathering steam and it's harder to get it to stop."

With former Oklahoma basketball star Trae Young and Sooners football coach Brent Venables present, Oklahoma (58-3) set a World Series record with six home runs and

matched records for runs and victory margin.

A championship series-record crowd of 12,234 watched the show.

"People want to watch us play," Alo said. "They love to watch us play. They love to watch us dominate. I think it's super cool. It's only going to get better from here."

Alo set a single-game World Series mark with five runs and now has set the single-series record for runs scored with 11. She went 3-for-3 and increased her batting average to a nation-leading .527.

Alo and Jennings each have five home runs in the World Series, surpassing the single-series record of four set by several players, including Alo last year. Alo increased her career Division I homer record to 122, and Jennings drove in five runs to set a record for RBIs in a series with 14.

They had plenty of help—Oklahoma had 16 hits.

"They're really frickin' good," Texas catcher Mary Iakopo said. "Hats off to their one through nine."

Alo's second homer was her 34th of the season, matching the Oklahoma school record she set last season. Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso said she now expects homers when Alo steps to the plate.

"It's ridiculous that I'm thinking that way," she said. "But I see her at practice every day. I see what she's capable of. It's just so tough to beat her. She's so strong."

Oklahoma escaped a bit of difficulty in the first and controlled the game from there. Hope Trautwein (22-1) gave up just two hits and a run in five innings, and Nicole May allowed just one hit in two shutout innings.