

US to send \$1B more in aid to Ukraine

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said Wednesday the U.S. will send an additional \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, the largest single tranche of weapons and equipment since the war began, in an effort to help stall Russia's slow but steady march to conquer the eastern Donbas region.

The aid will include anti-ship missile launchers, howitzers and more rounds for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems that U.S. forces are training Ukrainian troops on now — all key weapons systems that Ukrainian leaders have urgently requested. Biden also said the U.S. will send \$225 million more in humanitarian assistance to provide safe drinking water, medical supplies, food, health care, shelter and money for families to buy essential items.

The U.S. remains committed, Biden said in a statement, “to supporting the Ukrainian people whose lives have been ripped apart by this war.”

The aid comes as U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin convened a meeting in Brussels of more than 45 nations to discuss support for Ukraine. At the start of the meeting, Austin warned that the West must step up weapons deliveries to Ukraine and prove its

commitment to helping the country's military fight along a 600-mile front line in a grinding war of attrition with Russia.

He urged the participating nations to demonstrate “our unwavering determination to get Ukraine the capabilities that it urgently needs to defend itself.” And he warned, “We can't afford to let up and we can't lose steam. The stakes are too high.”

Overall, since the war began in late February, the U.S. has committed about \$5.6 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, including this latest package. Officials said that about one-third of the latest \$1 billion will be from presidential drawdown authority, which means the Pentagon will take weapons and equipment from its own stock and ship them to Ukraine. The remaining two-thirds would be equipment and weapons purchased from industry by the U.S. and then transferred to Ukraine.

Austin's meeting, also attended by Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov, came on the opening day of a two-day gathering of NATO defense ministers at the alliance's headquarters.

Increased arms supplies can't come too soon for the Ukrainian forces battling to keep Russia from taking control of their

country's industrial east after more than 3½ months of war. In his nightly address to the nation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pleaded Tuesday for more and faster deliveries of Western arms, specifically asking for anti-missile defense systems.

“Allies are committed to continue providing the military equipment that Ukraine needs to prevail, including heavy weapons and long-range systems,” said Jens Stoltenberg, NATO secretary-general.

Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar said Tuesday that without help from the West, “we will not be able to win this war.” She said Ukraine uses 5,000 to 6,000 artillery rounds a day, while Russia uses 10 times that many.

The defense ministers also planned to discuss moves to beef up forces along NATO's eastern flank and elsewhere, which have gathered strength since Russia invaded Ukraine.

“This will mean more presence, more capabilities and higher readiness, with more NATO forward deployed combat formations to strengthen our battlegroups in the East, more air, sea and cyber defenses, pre-positioned equipment and weapon stockpiles,” Stoltenberg said.

Navy officer is seventh leader ousted in two weeks

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Navy officer who in the past was recognized for his leadership abilities was relieved of command of a San Diego-based destroyer this week, the seventh leader ousted by the service in two weeks.

Cmdr. Peter Lesaca was removed Tuesday as commanding officer of USS Preble because of a loss of confidence, the Navy said in a statement Tuesday.

The Navy did not give details, but in contrast with the previous announcements, this time the service added language about the conduct demands for commanding officers.

“They are expected to uphold the highest standards of responsibility, reliability and leadership, and the Navy holds them accountable when they fall short of those standards,” the statement read.

Capt. Larry Repass, deputy commodore of Destroyer Squadron 23, will assume command of Preble in the interim, according to the statement. The Navy did not say where Lesaca had been assigned.

Lesaca was the recipient of the 2012 Vice Admiral Kihune Award for Leadership. He also was given the 2013 Navy League of the United States' John Paul Jones Award for Inspirational Leadership, according to his online Navy biography.

Since graduating from the Naval Academy in 2003, he served on several destroyers, including USS Laboon and USS Gonzalez.

He has received numerous awards and commendations, the biography states.

Over the weekend, the Navy announced it had removed three leaders, two from the leadership team of the Norfolk, Va.-based

destroyer USS Bulkeley.

Commanding officer Cmdr. Devine Johnson and Command Master Chief Petty Officer Earl Sanders were relieved of their duties Friday. Capt. Jeffry Sandin was removed as commanding officer of Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill., on Saturday.

On June 8, the Navy removed Cmdr. Matthew McCormick as commanding officer of a Growler squadron deployed to the Mediterranean Sea as part of the USS Harry S. Truman carrier strike group.

And on May 31, Capt. Amy Larson, the commanding officer, and Marine Corps Lt. Col. Bret Swaim, the executive officer, were dismissed from their positions at the Naval Justice School in Newport, R.I. In each case, the Navy cited a loss of confidence but provided no further details.

Russia hits ammo depot in western Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — The Russian military said it used long-range missiles Wednesday to destroy a depot in the western Lviv region of Ukraine where ammunition for NATO-supplied weapons was being stored, and the governor of a key eastern city acknowledged that Russian forces are advancing amid heavy fighting.

Those strikes came as fighting raged for the city of Sievierodonec in Ukraine's eastern Donbas area, the focus of Russia's offensive in recent weeks.

Russia-backed separatists accused Ukrainian forces of sabotaging an evacuation of civilians from the city's besieged Azot chemical plant, where about 500 civilians and an unknown number of Ukrainian fighters are believed to be sheltering from missile attacks. It wasn't possible to

verify that claim.

A humanitarian corridor from the Azot plant had been announced a day earlier by Russian officials, who said they would take civilians to areas controlled by Russian forces.

Many previously announced planned evacuations from other areas of fighting in Ukraine have failed, with each side blaming the other. Some Ukrainians have been reluctant to evacuate to Russian-held territory.

The Ukrainian governor of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai, told The Associated Press that "heavy fighting in Sievierodonec continues today as well." The situation in the city is getting worse, Haidai admitted, because Russian forces have more manpower and weapons.

"But our military is holding back the enemy from three sides at once," Haidai said. "The ene-

my is advancing because of significant advantage in artillery and people, but the Ukrainian army is holding on to its positions in the city."

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Russian forces used high-precision Kalibr missiles to destroy the depot near the town of Zolochiv in the Lviv region near the border with NATO member Poland.

Konashenkov said shells for M777 howitzers, a type supplied by the United States, were being stored there. He said four howitzers were destroyed elsewhere in fighting and that Russian airstrikes also destroyed Ukrainian "aviation equipment" at a military aerodrome in the southern Mykolaiv region.

There was no immediate comment on the Zolochiv strike from the Ukrainians.

While focusing most of their attacks on eastern Ukraine, where they are trying to capture large swaths of territory, Russian forces have also been hitting more specific targets elsewhere in the country, using high-precision missiles to disrupt the international supply of weapons and destroy military infrastructure.

Also Wednesday, Russia's Gazprom announced a reduction in natural gas flows through a key European pipeline for the second day in a row, hours after Germany's vice chancellor said its initial move appeared to be political rather than a result of technical problems.

The state-owned energy giant said on Twitter that deliveries through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany would be cut again Thursday, bringing the overall reduction through the undersea pipeline to 60%.

House Dems unveil budget without inflation adjustment

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — House Democrats unveiled a draft defense appropriations bill Tuesday that is in line with the White House's request for Pentagon funding in fiscal 2023 despite calls by Republicans to adjust spending for record inflation.

The proposed \$762 billion bill provides continued security aid for Ukraine, pours resources into the Indo-Pacific region to counter China, invests in clean energy to address climate change, and addresses sexual assault and suicide in the military.

It also notably allocates an additional \$600 million for troops' pay and prohibits the Defense Department from denying service members and civilians leave to obtain an abortion, reflecting

concerns over an upcoming Supreme Court decision that could overturn abortion rights.

Republicans and some centrist Democrats have criticized the White House for presenting a defense budget that accounts for inflation in the 2.3% to 2.6% range instead of meeting inflation rate spikes of 8%. But Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee ignored those complaints in the first version of a bill that will be debated Wednesday and eventually merged with drafts from the House and Senate Armed Services committees.

The proposed legislation cuts \$803 million from the White House's request for military personnel, \$848 million from the request for operations and maintenance and \$960 million from the request for procurement.

Marine Corps orders aviation stand-down after nine deaths

The Orange County (Calif.) Register

After the deaths of nine Marines and the loss of four aircraft in six months, Marine Corps officials announced Tuesday that all of its aviation units will be required to stop flying for a day to review safety procedures, address areas of concern and gather feedback.

The units will need to do their "stand down" between June 21 and July 1. The announcement follows a similar one-day "safety pause" initiated by the Navy for its aviation units worldwide on Monday.

On June 8, an MV-22B Osprey crashed over a training range in California's Imperial Valley while doing aerial target exercises. All five Marines

on board were killed; they were part of a Camp Pendleton squadron known as the Purple Foxes.

The investigation into the crash is ongoing.

Four Marines from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing based in Jacksonville, N.C., were killed in March when an Osprey they were riding in went down during a training exercise in Norway.

Last week, the Navy had a helicopter crash the day after the Osprey went down in the Imperial Valley near Glamis. The Navy helicopter crashed in the same general training area, but had no significant injuries reported.

A Navy F/A-18E Super Hornet crashed June 3 in the desert near Trona, Calif., killing its pilot.

Primary victories setting up hot races

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump notched a significant victory in South Carolina, where his preferred candidate easily ousted five-term Rep. Tom Rice, the first Republican to be booted from office after voting to impeach the former president last year. But another high-profile GOP target of Trump in the state, Rep. Nancy Mace, managed to hold back a challenger.

Meanwhile, in Nevada on Tuesday, Trump's pick, Adam Laxalt, won his U.S. Senate primary, defeating a populist candidate who is arguably more representative of the Trump base.

Rice and Mace have been objects of Trump's anger ever since a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to stop the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election win.

Their transgressions? Mace stated on national TV that Trump's "entire legacy was wiped out" by the attack, while Rice became an apostate for joining a small group of Republicans who voted with Democrats in favor of Trump's second impeachment.

"He threw a temper tantrum that culminated with the sacking of the United States Capitol," Rice told NBC News on Monday. "It's a direct attack on the Constitution, and he should be held accountable."

Voters ultimately rendered different judgments on the duo, reflecting a split within the GOP about how to move forward from the Trump era. Rice's largely rural district is representative of Trump's America, where crossing the former president carries a steep cost. Even as Trump railed against both lawmakers, he chose to hold a rally in Rice's district earlier this year.

That's because Mace's district, which centers on Charleston, is full of the type of moder-

ate suburban voters who fled the GOP under Trump. It is one of the few districts in an overall red state where Democrats have been even moderately competitive in congressional races.

The results demonstrate that the Trump factor can't be underestimated in solidly Republican territory, a potential warning sign for other Republicans, including Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, who also voted to impeach Trump and has helped lead the House panel investigating the Jan. 6 attack. She's facing a competitive primary in August from a Trump-backed challenger.

Another notable factor in the Mace contest: It amounted to a proxy battle between Trump, who is contemplating a 2024 White House campaign, and former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who is also considering a run.

Trump backed former state Rep. Katie Arrington in the race, while Haley, a former South Carolina governor, effectively challenged Trump by campaigning with Mace.

In Rice's contest, Trump endorsed state Rep. Russell Fry.

■ **Election deniers advance in Nevada:** Two Republican candidates who ardently pushed Trump's claims about voter fraud costing him the 2020 presidential election won nominations to top offices in Nevada on Tuesday.

Jim Marchant, a former state lawmaker, won the GOP nomination for secretary of state, the office that oversees elections in the perennial presidential battleground that Trump narrowly lost in both 2016 and 2020.

Marchant has made appearances around the country with other Trump allies, including MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, to cast doubt on the election results, despite the fact that courts, election officials from

both parties and his own attorney general have said the vote was legitimate.

Marchant has also been working to persuade local officials to toss out voting equipment that he has baselessly contended is rigged and instead require that all ballots be cast and counted by hand — an arduous and unnecessary task since testing is conducted before elections and audits are held afterward to ensure the votes are recorded accurately.

Marchant will face Democrat Cisco Aguilar in November. Aguilar is a lawyer and former chair of the Nevada Athletic Commission who was unopposed in the Democratic primary.

Adam Laxalt, the state's former attorney general, won the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate in Nevada on Tuesday after promoting Trump's claims about fraud in the state in the 2020 election, including spearheading legal challenges to the vote-counting process.

Laxalt, who was backed by the former president, weaved Trump's false claims of voter fraud throughout his campaign. He has already begun raising fears of voter fraud in this year's midterm elections and has talked about preemptively mounting legal challenges "to try to tighten up the election."

He had insisted in 2020 that ineligible and dead voters cast ballots in the presidential election in Nevada, despite the state's Republican secretary of state, Barbara Cegavske, insisting that the results showing Biden's victory were accurate and reliable. Cegavske was prevented by term limit laws from running again.

Laxalt will face Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto in November in what Republicans see as one of their best chances to flip a seat and to win back control of the chamber.

Trump and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell don't agree on much, but one rare exception is Laxalt.

The two Republican leaders haven't been on speaking terms since December 2020, when McConnell acknowledged that Biden defeated Trump.

But they both endorsed Laxalt, who defeated retired Army Capt. Sam Brown, a West Point graduate and Purple Heart recipient who ran an unexpectedly strong campaign as a conservative outsider.

The mutual support, which brought together the Trump and establishment wings of the party, demonstrates the intense focus Republicans have placed on flipping the seat held by Cortez Masto, who is considered among the most vulnerable senators.

■ **Texas House seat flips:** A once solidly Democratic district in South Texas will now be represented by a Republican after Mayra Flores won a special primary election to finish the term of former Democratic Rep. Filemon Vela, who resigned this year to become a lobbyist.

Flores, a GOP organizer who is the daughter of migrant workers, will only hold the seat for several months before the district is redrawn to be more favorable to Democrats. But her victory in the heavily Hispanic Rio Grande Valley is an ominous sign for Democrats.

They are not only losing ground in a region they long dominated, but Flores' success as a candidate also demonstrates that Republicans are making inroads with Hispanic voters.

Her win also has implications for Democrats' ambitions in Congress, denying House Speaker Nancy Pelosi an opportunity to add to her slim two-vote margin to pass legislation.

Floods leave Yellowstone ‘dramatically changed’

Associated Press

RED LODGE, Mont. — The forces of fire and ice shaped Yellowstone National Park over thousands of years. It took decades longer for humans to tame it enough for tourists to visit, often from the comfort of their cars.

In just days, heavy rain and rapid snowmelt caused a dramatic flood that may forever alter the human footprint on the park’s terrain and the communities that have grown around it.

The historic floodwaters that raged through Yellowstone this week, tearing out bridges and pouring into nearby homes, pushed a popular fishing river off course — possibly permanently — and may force roadways nearly torn away by torrents of water to be rebuilt in new places.

“The landscape literally and figuratively has changed dramatically in the last 36

hours,” said Bill Berg, a commissioner in nearby Park County. “A little bit ironic that this spectacular landscape was created by violent geologic and hydrologic events, and it’s just not very handy when it happens while we’re all here settled on it.”

The unprecedented flooding drove more than 10,000 visitors out of the nation’s oldest national park and damaged hundreds of homes in nearby communities, though remarkably no one was reported hurt or killed. The only visitors left in the massive park straddling three states were a dozen campers still making their way out of the backcountry.

The park could remain closed as long as a week, and northern entrances may not reopen this summer, Superintendent Cam Sholly said.

“I’ve heard this is a 1,000-year event, whatever that means these days. They seem to be happening more and more

frequently,” he said.

Sholly noted some weather forecasts include the possibility of additional flooding this weekend.

Days of rain and rapid snowmelt wrought havoc across parts of southern Montana and northern Wyoming, where it washed away cabins, swamped small towns and knocked out power. It hit the park as a summer tourist season that draws millions of visitors was ramping up during its 150th anniversary year.

Businesses in hard-hit Gardiner had just started really recovering from the tourism contraction brought by the coronavirus pandemic and were hoping for a good year, Berg said.

“It’s a Yellowstone town, and it lives and dies by tourism, and this is going to be a pretty big hit,” he said. “They’re looking to try to figure out how to hold things together.”

Heat wave descends on parts of Midwest, South

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A dangerous heat wave hit much of the Midwest and South on Tuesday, with temperatures hitting triple digits in Chicago and combining with the humidity to make it feel even hotter there and in other sweltering cities.

More than 100 million people were expected to be affected by midweek and authorities warned residents to stay hydrated, remain indoors when

possible and be aware of the health risks of high temperatures.

Strong storms brought heavy rain and damaging wind to many of the affected areas on Monday, and more than 500,000 customers remained without power early Tuesday evening, including more than 350,000 in Ohio, according to www.powerroutage.us.

At one Ohio utility, American Electric Power, heavy storms

and strong winds over the past several days, combined with extreme heat, left some lines stressed and needing to be turned offline to prevent further extensive power line damage, spokesman Scott Blake said.

Excessive heat warnings are in effect for much of Illinois and Indiana along with parts of Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan and Ohio from Tuesday through Wednesday night according to the National Weather Service.

Heat index values — which take into account the temperature and relative humidity and indicate how hot it feels outdoors — approached and topped 105 degrees in some locations, including Chicago, the weather service said.

“Full sun today will make it feel even hotter,” the weather service wrote. “There will not be much relief for those without air conditioning today through Wednesday night.”

US report: Nearly 400 crashes of automated tech vehicles

Associated Press

DETROIT — Automakers reported nearly 400 crashes of vehicles with partially automated driver-assist systems, including 273 involving Teslas, according to statistics released by U.S. safety regulators on Wednesday.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration cautioned against using the numbers to compare automakers, saying it didn’t weight them by the number of vehicles from each manufacturer that use the systems, or how many

miles those vehicles traveled.

Automakers reported crashes from July of last year through May 15 under an order from the agency, which is examining such crashes broadly for the first time.

“As we gather more data, NHTSA will be able to better identify any emerging risks or trends and learn more about how these technologies are performing in the real world,” said Steven Cliff, the agency’s administrator.

Tesla’s crashes happened while veh-

icles were using Autopilot, “Full Self-Driving,” Traffic Aware Cruise Control or other driver-assist systems that have some control over speed and steering. The company has about 830,000 vehicles with the systems on the road.

The next closest of a dozen automakers that reported crashes was Honda, with 90, but Honda said it has about 6 million vehicles on U.S. roads with such systems. Subaru was next with 10, and all other automakers reported five or fewer.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Naked woman takes squad car, strikes officer

IL CHICAGO — A Chicago police officer was injured after a naked woman got into his squad car and struck him while driving away.

The officer had stopped to help the woman, Police Superintendent David Brown told reporters.

“She charged the officer, assaulted the officer, got in the squad car, took the squad car and drove off,” Brown said. “We don’t know why the woman was laying in the street unclothed.”

The woman later crashed the car and was arrested.

Several sailors in Race to Alaska rescued

WA SEATTLE — Four participants in an annual marine race from Washington state to Alaska were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard when some of the contestants’ sailboats capsized.

Event organizers said in a statement that the occupants on seven boats had dropped out of the race because of rough waters across the Strait of Juan de Fuca northwest of Seattle, KOMO-TV reported.

Three contestants were hoisted from the water by the Coast Guard and one was rescued by a boat operated by race organizers. All four people rescued were taken to a hospital after showing signs of hypothermia, KING-5 reported.

The Coast Guard said the remaining participants on Monday took shelter near Protection Island, Dungeness Spit or returned to land. A Coast Guard patrol boat remained in the area

and was ready to respond.

The event is in its sixth year and draws contestants from across the country with a goal of being first to get from Port Townsend, Wash., to Ketchikan, Alaska, on a non-motorized vessel that is completely self-supported.

Alligator recovered after high-speed car chase

MI WEBBER TOWNSHIP — Authorities recovered a small alligator following a high-speed car chase in northwestern Michigan.

The vehicle’s driver refused to stop when a sergeant attempted to pull him over for speeding along U.S. 10, the Lake County sheriff’s office said.

Other sheriff’s deputies and officers with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources joined the pursuit, which ended when the vehicle they were chasing got stuck between two trees in Webber Township.

Deputies caught the alligator outside the vehicle. A 40-year-old man from suburban Detroit was arrested and faces charges related to the chase.

Graffiti found on dozens of national park sites

CA YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — Vandals last month used spray paint to draw on more than 30 sites at California’s Yosemite National Park, officials said.

Park officials are asking anyone who was on the trail to the top of Yosemite Falls on May 20 and who saw people carrying cans of spray paint and tagging the area to contact the National Park Service.

Vandals used white and blue

spray paint to draw on boulders and other sites along the Yosemite Falls Trail, park officials said in a Facebook post.

When park rangers assessed the damage, they found more than two dozen places where graffiti had been spray-painted, officials said.

Police department breaks gun seizure record in May

NC CHARLOTTE — Police in North Carolina’s largest city said they broke a 7-year-old record for the number of guns seized by officers in a month in May.

A news release from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department said 413 firearms related to criminal investigations were seized last month, including a number of guns connected to a person apprehended with the help of a tracking device.

The suspect had broken into 14 cars, the news release said. One of the victims told police he had a GPS device attached to his stolen backpack, which officers traced to a home on the north side of the city.

The suspect ran from officers and sped away in a car, but using the tracking device, officers caught him and took him into custody. The suspect faces multiple charges, including felony larceny and possession of a stolen firearm.

Mountain that honored massacre leader renamed

WY YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — A government panel renamed a Yellowstone National Park mountain that had been named for a U.S. Army officer who helped lead a massacre of Na-

tive Americans.

Mount Doane will now be called First Peoples Mountain after the unanimous vote by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, the National Park Service announced.

The 10,551-foot peak in southeastern Yellowstone in Wyoming had been named for Lt. Gustavus Doane, who in 1870 helped lead an attack on a band of Piegan Blackfeet in northern Montana.

Doane bragged for the rest of his life about what become known as the Marias Massacre.

The attack in response to the alleged slaying of a white fur trader killed at least 173 American Indians, including many women, elders and children suffering from smallpox, Yellowstone officials said in a statement.

Dozens of malnourished rabbits abandoned

NY NIAGARA FALLS — A woman evicted from a house in upstate New York left her landlord a parting gift: nearly 60 malnourished rabbits hopping from room to room and in the basement.

The woman now faces six misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty charges, according to the Niagara Gazette.

Authorities said they chased down 57 rabbits from the home near Niagara Falls.

Police were summoned to the house after the homeowner paid a visit.

In a social media post, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it previously removed some of the animals from the same home in April.

— From wire reports

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Top golfers try to focus on US Open

Associated Press

BROOKLINE, Mass. — Phil Mickelson lumbered his way down the first fairway and flashed a thumbs-up almost by habit, even if he wasn't responding to an occasional encouraging word from behind the ropes or in the grandstands. In that respect, Tuesday felt like a typical U.S. Open.

This is his 31st appearance, and any degree of normalcy — for Mickelson and so many other big names in golf — is hard to find.

LIV Golf and Saudi riches get as much attention as thick rough and firm greens. Greg Norman is mentioned about as often as Francis Ouimet.

Brooks Koepka had heard enough.

"I'm trying to focus on the U.S. Open, man," Koepka, a two-time U.S. Open champion, said testily. "I legitimately don't get it. I'm tired of the conversations. I'm tired of all this stuff. Y'all are throwing a black cloud on the U.S. Open. I think that sucks."

Mickelson is at the heart of the Saudi-funded rival league that Norman is running, returning from his four-month hiatus last week outside London to play the inaugural LIV event with 13 other players who are now at The Country Club for the U.S. Open.

He played with Jon Rahm and Kevin Na. Approaching the first tee, the applause was warm, though somewhat muted compared with other years, still with the odd shout, "This is your year, Phil!" or "We love you, Phil!"

One fan recognized Rahm and gave him a shout, a nice gesture for the defending champion.

Brookline is nothing like Torrey Pines, where last year Rahm became the first player in U.S. Open history to birdie the last two holes and win by one shot. The scenery is classic New England, not California coast. The test, however, looks familiar.

"It's a U.S. Open. You need everything," Rahm said. "You

need to drive well, hit your irons well, chip well and putt well and be mentally sane for four days. You can't hide, period. You are going to have a lot of holes where things are going to go wrong, but I just have to know going into it and accept certain things that happen.

"Obviously, as every U.S. Open, par is a good score."

His biggest concern was finding space on a practice green packed with major champions, PGA Tour winners, amateur and local qualifiers. Again, this is what a U.S. Open brings.

Still, the outside noise is hard to turn off.

Rory McIlroy had said in February, when the top players aligned themselves with the PGA Tour, that the Saudi venture was "dead in the water." He was asked Tuesday about that comment.

"I thought we were at the U.S. Open," McIlroy said.

He wasn't as miffed as Koepka, mainly because McIlroy has emerged as a strong

voice against the rival league. He is on the PGA Tour's policy board and makes no apologies for being so outspoken "because in my opinion it's the right thing to do."

"The PGA Tour was created by people and tour players that came before us, the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer," he said. "They created something and worked hard for something, and I hate to see all the players that came before us and all the hard work that they've put in just come out to be nothing."

At some point, McIlroy will remove his cap as spokesman and try to end eight years without winning a major. He hopes he is helped by a victory last week at the Canadian Open. He has had a few runner-up finishes and more top 10s at the majors in the last eight years than his first six years as a pro.

But he has come to the 18th hole only once with a chance to win since his last major title in the 2014 PGA Championship.

Curry, Green, Thompson trying to add 4th NBA title

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — When Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and emotional, do-everything teammate Draymond Green began Golden State's climb nearly a decade ago, they were still relatively young and each establishing themselves in their careers.

At far different stages of their respective basketball journeys and lives now all these years later, they are again closing in on another championship together as the cornerstones of what many consider a Warriors dynasty they helped make. Their chance to win a fourth title comes Thursday night in Boston, where the Warriors take a

3-2 NBA Finals lead into Game 6 against the Celtics.

The Splash Brothers and Green now have 20 wins together in the Finals, the second-most for any NBA trio since 1970. They are approaching the company of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Magic Johnson and Michael Cooper, who won 22 Finals games together with the Lakers.

With Monday's 104-94 Game 5 win, the Golden State stars topped the 19 victories accomplished by Tim Duncan, Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili with the Spurs.

"We want to have one more to show for it and one more win, and really embrace what we've accomplished to be back

on this stage," Curry said after the game, when he went 0-for-9 on three-pointers to snap a record 233-game streak of at least one.

"Obviously making six Finals, you have a lot of opportunities. You enjoy every single one of them. So this series is no different. And one more win, just got to figure out a way to get it done."

Coach Steve Kerr has been here for the six NBA Finals appearances over eight years, including five straight from 2015-19.

They all have gone through so much in recent seasons — most notably two devastating injuries for Thompson — that this opportunity is being espe-

cially cherished.

"It's so exciting to be part of the Finals again. I think this whole season has kind of led to this, a lot of individual stories, guys getting better, guys getting healthy," Kerr said. "Here we are, we have a chance. We have two cracks at getting one win, but we also know how difficult it's going to be."

It seems so long ago, yet all three Warriors leaders have pointed to that early time bringing respectability back to the franchise as significant in building the necessary experience that helps them on the big postseason stage now. Perspective has been gained through winning three championships and in losing twice, too.

Bednar longs to swap spots with Cooper

Associated Press

DENVER — Jared Bednar is four victories shy of becoming hockey's first head coach to win the Kelly Cup, the Calder Cup and the Stanley Cup.

"Yeah, well, I mean, my focus is on this cup. I want to add it, I want our team to finish the job," Bednar said as he primed the Colorado Avalanche to face the two-time defending champion Tampa Bay Lightning in a star-studded Stanley Cup Final.

Bednar isn't necessarily one to go down memory lane, not when there's a wide-open highway to hockey heaven ahead.

He does allow, however, that the philosophies that propelled him to titles in the East Coast Hockey League and American Hockey League are the same ones he has used to navigate his way from a 48-point season in 2016-17 to the cusp of Colorado's first championship in 21 years.

"What's been consistent? Just my approach to the game and focus on the process of what I feel we need to do to be successful," he said.

That includes deep dives into the pain of coming up short like they have the past three years with second-round playoff exits "and just trying to find ways to get incrementally better in all situations," Bednar said.

"The heartbreak over the last couple of years in the playoffs has led our whole team sort of into that same mentality," Bednar said.

After winning just 22 games his first year, taking over after Patrick Roy stepped down abruptly in August 2016, Bednar has led the Avalanche to the playoffs the last six seasons.

They finally began to fulfill their promise this year with sweeps of Nashville and Edmonton sandwiched around a six-game series win over St. Louis.

"He's done an awesome job," Avalanche superstar Nathan MacKinnon said. "He's super even keeled. He's an easygoing guy, but has that switch when he needs it. So obviously, we're very lucky to have a guy like that."

Added center J.T. Compher: "He's definitely a really good hockey mind and makes sure we're prepared for any opponent that we face: video and in practice. He just keeps it level-headed, and I think that's what our room has tried to be. Whether it's going good or going bad, we're staying in a good spot that we're just focused on what's coming next."

If the Avalanche can dethrone the Lightning, Bednar will swap places with Jon Cooper, who's aiming to lead Tampa Bay to

a third consecutive title, something that hasn't happened in the NHL since the New York Islanders won four titles in a row in the 1980s.

Cooper and Bednar had similarly successful careers in the lower tiers of hockey with Cooper winning the United States Hockey League's Clark Cup as well as the Calder Cup before joining the Lightning in 2013.

Cooper led the Lightning to the Stanley Cup Final in his third season, losing to the Blackhawks in six games in 2015. In 2019, the Lightning set a league record for points, won the Presidents' Trophy and promptly got swept by Columbus in the first round.

Just like Colorado GM Joe Sakic has stuck with Bednar after early playoff punch-outs, Lightning GM Julien BriseBois said he never considered changing coaches after that debacle.

"It never crossed my mind to make any drastic changes," BriseBois said. "The whole 2019 thing, it was a really, really bad seven, eight days. It was out of character for our group. Our group had gone far to the playoffs before with Jon as the head coach with this core. ... So, there was never any doubt in my mind that we had what it took to win. It just it didn't happen for us that year."

Serena Williams gets wild-card entry to Wimbledon

Associated Press

Serena Williams is going to play at Wimbledon, after all. The All England Club announced Tuesday that Williams was awarded a wild-card entry for singles, marking her return to Grand Slam action after a year away.

The owner of a professional era-record 23 Grand Slam singles trophies, and as big a star as tennis ever has seen, is going to tune up by playing doubles at a smaller grass-court event first, teaming with Ons Jabeur at Eastbourne, England, next week.

Main-draw play at Wimbledon begins June 27.

Williams has not competed anywhere since getting injured during the first set of her first-round match at the All England Club in 2021. And her name did not appear on the women's singles entry list released by the grass-court Grand Slam tournament earlier this month.

But Williams was among a half-dozen women given a spot in the singles draw

Tuesday, along with five British players: Katie Boulter, Jodie Burrage, Sonay Kartal, Yuriko Miyazaki and Katie Swan.

Two other women will get invitations "in due course," the All England Club said.

Seven of the eight men's wild-card berths were also announced, including one for three-time major champion Stan Wawrinka.

Earlier in the day, Williams posted a photo of her white shoes on what appears to be a grass court and the message: "SW and SW19. It's a date. 2022. See you there. Let's Go."

"SW" are her initials, of course, and "SW19" is the postal code for Wimbledon.

The 40-year-old American has won seven of her singles trophies at Wimbledon, the first in 2002 and most recently in 2016. Williams was the runner-up there in 2018 and 2019 (the tournament was canceled in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic).

In 2021, Williams lost her footing on the slick grass and then her right leg buckled,

leading to just the second mid-match retirement at any Grand Slam tournament of her career and first since 1998.

With the lack of activity since then, Williams — who first reached No. 1 in July 2002 — is 1,208th in the WTA rankings this week. That is why she was not automatically placed in the Wimbledon field. While Williams has been sidelined, first Ash Barty and then Iga Swiatek stepped into the opening left by her extended absence. Barty won Wimbledon last year and the Australian Open this January to solidify her hold on the No. 1 ranking, but then abruptly retired at age 25 in March.

That allowed Swiatek to rise to No. 1, and she has backed up that new status with an ongoing 35-match winning streak that included claiming a second French Open trophy this month.

That unbeaten stretch exceeds by one a 34-match run Williams put together in 2013 and equals one by Williams' older sister, Venus, for the longest since 2000.

Cardinals' Mikolas just misses no-hitter

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS—It's been 21 years since the St. Louis Cardinals pitched a no-hitter.

Miles Mikolas needed one more strike.

The right-hander didn't give up a hit until Cal Mitchell doubled with two outs in the ninth inning Tuesday night. The Cardinals still routed the Pittsburgh Pirates 9-1 to sweep a doubleheader.

"I'm a little over it. I mean it stinks, to get that close and then kind of come up empty-handed," said Mikolas, 33. "That's a great outing. I'll be real proud that I gave the bullpen kind of another night off. I know we need it with the doubleheader. I'm happy — but deep down it kind of stinks."

Mitchell drove a 2-2 curveball over the head of Gold Glove center fielder Harrison Bader and just beyond his outstretched mitt as the speedy Bader tried to make a running catch with his back to home plate.

"If he can't get it, nobody can — except maybe one of those guys in the stands when they have that like 3-foot glove, maybe that guy," Mikolas said. "We're playing shallow so they don't kind of doink one in. I think that's what you're always guarding against is you don't want to lose it cheap. The guy hit a ball to the track, I'll give it to him. And it was a good pitch. I'm more OK with that than if the dude bloop a broken-bat bleeder in there somewhere."

The ball bounced on the warning track 383 feet from the plate and over the wall in straightaway center for a ground-rule double.

"It went to the left of my glove, kind of curled back," Bader said. "I was working really hard to try to make up some ground. So yeah, just sucks. But it is what it is."

The hit came on the 129th pitch from Mikolas — most in the majors this season and 14 more than his previous career high set May 29

against Milwaukee. He was lifted for Packy Naughton, who got the final out to hand the Pirates their ninth straight loss.

Mikolas (5-4) bent over at the waist for a moment when Mitchell's drive dropped. He struck out six, walked one and left to a standing ovation.

Mitchell entered in the seventh to play right field and got Pittsburgh's lone hit in his only at-bat.

The most recent Cardinals no-hitter was thrown by rookie Bud Smith in a 4-0 win at San Diego on Sept. 3, 2001. The last one at home came from Bob Forsch in 1983.

Pittsburgh got an unearned run in the fourth to make it 7-1 when Bryan Reynolds scored on Daniel Vogelbach's groundout.

Paul Goldschmidt was 4-for-4 with two homers and five RBIs for the Cardinals.

Bryse Wilson (0-4) gave up seven runs in five innings for the Pirates.

Braves hit 5 homers, beat Nationals for 13th straight

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Michael Harris II and Travis d'Arnaud each had three hits and homered for the second straight game, and the Atlanta Braves connected five times in their 13th straight win, 10-4 over the Washington Nationals on Tuesday night.

Atlanta hit back-to-back homers for the third straight game, this time doing it twice. D'Arnaud and Marcell Ozuna went deep in the third inning, and Orlando Arcia and Harris followed in the sixth.

Dansby Swanson also homered for the Braves, who have clubbed 10 home runs in two games and 32 during the winning streak, the longest in the majors this season.

It's Atlanta's best stretch since it won 14 consecutive games from July 26 to Aug. 9, 2013.

Braves starter Max Fried (7-2) struck out the first five Washington batters. He went 5½ innings, allowing four runs on six hits while striking out six and walking one.

Harris extended his hitting

streak to seven games and raised his average to .317 while finishing a triple shy of the cycle.

Earlier in the day, Atlanta placed second baseman Ozzie Albies (fractured left foot) on the 60-day injured list and Washington placed right-hander Stephen Strasburg (stress reaction of the ribs) on the 15-day injured list.

Dodgers 2, Angels 0: Tony Gonsolin tossed 6½ strong innings, Mookie Betts hit his 17th home run and host Los Angeles won the Freeway Series opener.

Gonsolin (8-0), who leads the National League in wins, lowered his ERA to 1.42. He struck out six and walked two. The right-hander has allowed two runs or fewer in all 12 starts this season.

Mets 4, Brewers 0: Chris Bassitt pitched eight sharp innings, Pete Alonso drove in two runs and host New York beat struggling Milwaukee. The Brewers have dropped nine of 10, getting shut out four times during that span.

Marlins 11, Phillies 9: Jesús Aguilar homered, drove in four

runs and hit a go-ahead double in the ninth inning to lead Miami to a wild win over host Philadelphia.

Jazz Chisholm Jr., Avisail Garcia and Jacob Stallings also went deep for Miami, which has won six of eight. Rhys Hoskins hit two homers and drove in six runs for the Phillies, who lost for the second time in their last 12 games.

Yankees 2, Rays 0: Gerrit Cole (6-1) put a career-worst pummeling behind him with six sharp innings as host New York won its fifth straight.

Astros 4, Rangers 3: Kyle Tucker extended his career-best hitting streak to 13 games with a go-ahead homer in the eighth inning, and AL West-leading Houston rallied past host Texas.

Padres 12, Cubs 5: Luke Voit hit a two-run homer and a three-run double as San Diego rallied from a five-run deficit to hand host Chicago its eighth straight loss.

Orioles 6, Blue Jays 5: Ryan Mountcastle hit a two-run home run, Austin Hays had a solo shot and Baltimore held on to win at

Toronto.

Red Sox 6, Athletics 1: Rafael Devers hit a three-run homer, Nick Pivetta pitched eight strong innings and host Boston beat slumping Oakland.

White Sox 5, Tigers 1: Chicago's Dylan Cease allowed one run in five innings to remain unbeaten in 10 decisions against host Detroit.

Guardians 4, Rockies 3 (10): José Ramírez doubled home the go-ahead run in the 10th inning to lift visiting Cleveland over Colorado.

Mariners 5, Twins 0: Eugenio Suárez and Ty France each clubbed a two-run homer, Logan Gilbert and three relievers combined on a four-hitter and Seattle blanked Minnesota.

Giants 4, Royals 2: Logan Webb (6-2) allowed five hits in seven scoreless innings to win for the first time in a month as host San Francisco beat Kansas City.

Reds 5, Diamondbacks 3 (12): Albert Almora Jr. tripled home the go-ahead run in the 12th after Tyler Mahle pitched nine brilliant innings, and Cincinnati outlasted host Arizona.