

Titan submersible imploded, killing all 5

Associated Press

A submersible carrying five people to the Titanic imploded near the site of the shipwreck and killed everyone on board, authorities said Thursday, bringing a tragic end to a saga that included an urgent around-the-clock search and a worldwide vigil for the missing vessel.

The sliver of hope that remained for finding the five men alive was wiped away early Thursday, when the submersible's 96-hour supply of oxygen was expected to run out following its Sunday launch and the Coast Guard announced that debris had been found roughly 1,600 feet from the Titanic in North Atlantic waters.

"This was a catastrophic implosion of the vessel," said Rear Adm. John Mauger, of the First Coast Guard District.

After the craft was reported missing, the U.S. Navy went back and analyzed its acoustic data and found an anomaly that was "consistent with an implosion or explosion in the general vicinity of where the Titan submersible was operating when communications were lost," a senior Navy official

told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive acoustic detection system.

The Navy passed on that information to the Coast Guard, which continued its search because the Navy did not consider the data to be definitive.

OceanGate Expeditions, the company that owned and operated the submersible, said in a statement that all five people in the vessel, including CEO and pilot Stockton Rush, "have sadly been lost."

The others on board were two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titan expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

"These men were true explorers who shared a distinct spirit of adventure, and a deep passion for exploring and protecting the world's oceans," OceanGate said in a statement. "We grieve the loss of life and joy they brought to everyone they knew."

OceanGate has been chronicling the Titanic's decay and the underwater ecosys-

tem around it via yearly voyages since 2021. The company has not responded to additional questions about the Titan's voyage this week.

The company's office was "closed indefinitely while the staff copes with the tragic loss of their team member," according to a statement Thursday by the Port of Everett, which is about 30 miles north of downtown Seattle and is home to OceanGate.

The Coast Guard will continue searching for more signs about what happened to the Titan.

While the Navy likely detected the implosion Sunday through its acoustics system, underwater sounds heard Tuesday and Wednesday — which initially gave hope for a possible rescue — were probably unrelated to the submersible. The Navy's possible clue was not known publicly until Thursday, when The Wall Street Journal first reported it.

The White House thanked the U.S. Coast Guard, along with Canadian, British and French partners who helped in the search and rescue efforts.

Zelenskyy urges allies to act before nuke plant hit

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine wants other countries to heed its warning that Russia may be planning to attack an occupied nuclear power plant to cause a radiation disaster, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Members of his government briefed international representatives on Thursday on the possible threat to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. In his nightly address, Zelenskyy said he expected other nations to "give appropriate signals and exert pressure" on Moscow.

"Our principle is simple: The world must know what the occupier is preparing. Everyone who knows must act," Zelenskyy said. "The world has enough

power to prevent any radiation incidents, let alone a radiation catastrophe."

The potential for a life-threatening release of radiation has been a concern since Russian troops invaded Ukraine last year and seized the plant, which is Europe's largest nuclear power station. The head of the U.N.'s atomic energy agency spent months unsuccessfully trying to negotiate for a safety perimeter to protect the facility as nearby areas came under repeated shelling.

The International Atomic Energy Agency noted Thursday that "the military situation has become increasingly tense" while a Ukrainian counteroffensive that got underway this

month unfolds in Zaporizhzhia province, where the namesake plant is located, and in an adjacent part of Donetsk province.

On Friday, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi met with the director of Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom to discuss the conditions at the plant.

Rosatom director Alexey Likhachev and other officials at the meeting in the Kaliningrad exclave "emphasized that they now expect specific steps" from the U.N. agency to prevent Ukrainian attacks on the plant and its adjacent territory, said a statement from the Russian corporation, whose divisions build and operate nuclear power plants.

The governor of Zaporizhzhia, Yuriy Malashko, reported Friday that Russian shelling in the southern province killed two people in the past day. An attack that hit a transportation company in Kherson, the capital of Kherson province, killed two others on Friday, governor Oleksandr Prokudin said.

Russia also fired 13 cruise missiles overnight at a military airfield in the western Khmelnytskyi province but Ukrainian air defenses intercepted them all, according to the air force. The attack came after Russian-appointed officials said that Ukrainian-fired missiles damaged a bridge that serves as key supply link to occupied areas of southern Ukraine.

Navy sensors detected Titan implosion

The Washington Post

U.S. Navy acoustic sensors detected the likely implosion of the Titan submersible hours after the vessel began its fatal voyage on Sunday, U.S. Navy officials said on Thursday, a revelation that means the sprawling search for the vessel came as senior officials already had some indication the Titan was destroyed.

Debris from the submersible, operated by the private firm OceanGate, was discovered Thursday on the seabed of the Atlantic Ocean about 1,600 feet from the Titanic, the doomed ocean liner that the Titan's passengers had set out to explore. Coast Guard Rear Adm. John Mauger said the debris was discovered underwater by a remotely operated vehicle, four days after it set out from Newfoundland.

A senior Navy official said in a statement Thursday evening that the service conducted an analysis of acoustic data "and detected an anomaly consistent with an implosion or explosion" in the general vicinity of where the Titan was operating when it stopped communicating.

"While not definitive, this information was immediately shared with the Incident Commander to assist with the ongoing search and rescue mission," the state-

ment said. "This information was considered with the compilation of additional acoustic data provided by other partners and the decision was made to continue our mission as a search and rescue and make every effort to save the lives on board."

Another Navy official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation, said that the service does not typically share such information publicly until the search for survivors ends. The information gathered, this official said, is a "data point."

The story was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

Paul Zukunft, a retired Coast Guard admiral, said until it's "absolutely conclusive" that no one has survived a disaster, the service always will continue searching for survivors.

"We're making every attempt that if there's a surface recovery, we are there," he said. "Nothing would be worse in cold water, and now there's no one on the surface or in the air to locate these folks."

Zukunft, who led the Coast Guard as commandant from 2014 to 2018, drew a parallel with a search the Coast Guard carried out after the 2015 sinking of the

container ship El Faro, which got caught in Hurricane Joaquin while traveling from Florida to Puerto Rico and sunk. Navy acoustic sensors detected an implosion in that sinking, he said, but the U.S. government continued searching for several days in case there were any survivors. Thirty-three people died.

In other cases, Zukunft said, the Coast Guard has launched searches in the Pacific after fishermen in Micronesia do not return home. They have been known to survive weeks lost at sea on small boats, relying on fish they catch and rainwater.

"For one or two people, we will literally spend millions of dollars in attempts to rescue these folks," he said.

The acoustic detection was one significant piece of information, but the search had to continue to exhaust all possibilities, said Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"They suspected what happened but couldn't be sure," he said. "What you're looking at is just lines on a graph. And if you try to convince people you weren't doing a search because the lines on a graph indicated an implosion, that wouldn't be acceptable to many."

US aircraft carrier will make rare Vietnam port call

Associated Press

BANGKOK — An American aircraft carrier is due to make a port call in Vietnam on Sunday — a rare visit by one of the U.S. Navy's biggest ships that comes as Washington and Beijing both step up efforts to bolster ties with Southeast Asian nations.

The USS Ronald Reagan, a nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, is scheduled to arrive in Da Nang on June 25 and stay through June 30, making use of a port that was modernized and expanded by the United States during the war in Vietnam, the country's Foreign Ministry announced.

It will be only the third such visit by an American aircraft

carrier since the end of the hostilities.

The visit comes about a month after a Chinese navy training ship made its own port call in Da Nang as part of what it called a goodwill tour that also took it to Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines.

Japan's largest destroyer, Izumo, made a port call in Vietnam over the past week, following exercises in the South China Sea with the Reagan, among other American ships.

"Recently, Vietnam has received visits from naval vessels from different countries, and this time it will be a visit from the USS Ronald Reagan," Vietnam's VnExpress online news-

paper quoted Foreign Ministry spokesperson Pham Thu Hang as saying. "This is a normal friendly exchange for the sake of peace, stability, cooperation and development in both the region and the world."

China is Vietnam's largest trading partner. But, along with a number of other countries in the region, tensions have been high of late over maritime and territorial disputes with Beijing in the South China Sea.

Washington, meantime, sees Hanoi as a key component of its strategy for the region and has sought to leverage Vietnam's traditional rivalry with its much larger neighbor China to expand U.S. influence in the re-

gion.

During an April visit, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken broke ground on a sprawling new \$1.2 billion U.S. embassy compound in the Vietnamese capital, a project the Biden administration hopes will demonstrate its commitment to further improving ties less than 30 years after diplomatic relations were restored in 1995.

Based in Yokosuka, Japan, the USS Ronald Reagan is the only forward-deployed American aircraft carrier. It is due to be replaced in that role next year by the USS George Washington, also a Nimitz-class carrier.

Biden, Modi tout economic ties as critics cite abuses

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Thursday pronounced the U.S.-India relationship never stronger and rolled out new business deals with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as human rights activists and American lawmakers questioned the administration's decision to honor the leader with a pomp-filled state visit.

In a joint news conference with Modi, Biden called the relationship between the U.S. and India among the most consequential in the world and "more dynamic than at any time in history."

He underscored how two of the world's most powerful democracies were cooperating on issues such as the climate, health care and space, saying that the U.S.-India economic relationship was "booming."

But Modi bristled at a reporter's question about his country's commitment to democratic values as the country has seen an erosion of religious, political and press freedoms under his watch.

"Democracy is our spirit," Modi, who rarely takes questions from journalists, said through an interpreter. "Democracy runs in our veins. We live democracy and our ancestors have actually put words to this concept."

He said India has "proved that democracies can deliver and when I say deliver, this is regardless of class, creed, religion, gender."

Yet Modi has faced criticism over legislation amending the country's citizenship law that fast-tracks naturalization for some migrants but excludes Muslims, a rise in violence against Muslims and other religious minorities by Hindu nationalists and the recent conviction of India's top opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi, for mocking Modi's surname.

A group of more than 70 lawmakers wrote to Biden this week urging him to raise concerns about the erosion of religious, press and political freedoms during the visit. At least six Democratic lawmakers — Democratic Reps. Cori Bush of

Missouri, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Greg Casar of Texas, Jamaal Bowman and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York — boycotted Modi's address to Congress, because of concerns about his human rights record.

Standing alongside Modi, Biden emphasized that press, religious and other fundamental freedoms should be at the core of how both democracies operate. During their Oval Office meeting, Biden said, he and Modi had a "good discussion about democratic values" while Modi said "there's absolutely no space for discrimination" when pressed about his own commitment on human rights.

Among the announcements made Thursday is an agreement that will allow U.S.-based General Electric to partner with India-based Hindustan Aeronautics to produce jet engines for Indian aircraft in India and the sale of U.S.-made armed MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones.

The Biden administration also announced plans to bolster India's semiconductor industry.

Wyoming's abortion pill ban blocked

Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Abortion pills will remain legal in Wyoming for now, after a judge ruled Thursday that the state's first-in-the-nation law to ban them won't take effect July 1 as planned while a lawsuit proceeds.

Attorneys for Wyoming failed to show that the ban wouldn't harm the plaintiffs before their lawsuit is resolved, Teton County Judge Melissa Owens ruled after hearing arguments from both sides. Meanwhile, those plaintiffs "have clearly showed probable success on the merits," Owens said.

While other states have instituted de facto bans on the medication by broadly prohibiting abortion, only Wyoming has specifically banned abortion pills. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in April that access to one of the two pills, mifepristone, may continue while litigants seek to overturn the Food and Drug Administration's approval of it.

Wyoming's pill ban is being challenged by four women, including two obstetricians, and two nonprofit organizations. One of the groups, Wellspring Health Access, opened as the state's first full-service abortion clinic in years in April following an arson attack in 2022.

They're also suing to stop a near-total ban on abortion enacted in Wyoming in March. Owens has suspended that law, too, and combined the two lawsuits.

Because abortion remains legal in Wyoming, banning abortion pills would require women to get more invasive surgical abortions instead, Marci Bramlet, an attorney for the ban opponents said at the hearing.

"It effectively tells people you must have open-heart surgery when a stent would do," Bramlet said.

Biden defends calling Chinese leader 'dictator,' says he still expects meeting

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Thursday defended his harsh public comments on China, including calling President Xi Jinping a dictator, saying his words would have no negative impact on U.S.-China relations and that he still expects to meet with Xi soon.

Biden said his blunt statements regarding China are "just not something I'm going to change very much."

The remarks, which drew a

formal protest from China, opened a new rift just days after Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Beijing in a step toward stabilizing ties and improving communications.

But Biden was undeterred. "I expect to be meeting with President Xi sometime in the future, near-term. And I don't think it's had any real consequence," he said.

His latest rebuff to China came on the same afternoon he welcomed Indian Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi to the White House in an alliance-strengthening move against their shared rival, China.

Just hours earlier, China's embassy in Washington said it had delivered a formal protest, with Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng telling senior White House and State Department officials Wednesday that Washington "should take earnest actions to undo the negative impact" of what Biden said or "bear all the consequences."

3M reaches \$10.3B ‘forever chemicals’ deal

Associated Press

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Chemical manufacturer 3M Co. will pay at least \$10.3 billion to settle lawsuits over contamination of many U.S. public drinking water systems with potentially harmful compounds used in firefighting foam and a host of consumer products, the company said Thursday.

The deal would compensate water providers for pollution with per- and polyfluorinated substances, known collectively as PFAS — a broad class of chemicals used in nonstick, water- and grease-resistant products such as clothing and cookware.

Described as “forever chemicals” because they don’t degrade naturally in the environment, PFAS have been linked to a variety of health problems, including liver and immune-system damage and some can-

cers.

The compounds have been detected at varying levels in drinking water around the nation. The Environmental Protection Agency in March proposed strict limits on two common types, PFOA and PFOS, and said it wanted to regulate four others. Water providers would be responsible for monitoring their systems for the chemicals.

The agreement would settle a case that was scheduled for trial earlier this month involving a claim by Stuart, Fla., one of about 300 communities that have filed similar suits against companies that produced firefighting foam or the PFAS it contained.

3M chairman Mike Roman said the deal was “an important step forward” that builds on the company’s decision in 2020 to phase out PFOA and PFOS and its investments in

“state-of-the-art water filtration technology in our chemical manufacturing operations.” The company, based in St. Paul, Minn., will halt all PFAS production by the end of 2025, he said.

The settlement will be paid over 13 years and could reach as high as \$12.5 billion, depending on how many public water systems detect PFAS during testing that the EPA has required in the next three years, said Dallas-based attorney Scott Summy, one of the lead attorneys for those suing 3M and other manufacturers.

The payment will help cover costs of filtering PFAS from systems where it’s been detected and testing others, he said.

“The result is that millions of Americans will have healthier lives without PFAS in their drinking water,” Summy said.

FDA warns stores to stop selling Elf Bar, top e-cigs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday said it has sent warning letters to dozens of retailers selling fruit- and candy-flavored disposable e-cigarettes, including the current bestselling brand, Elf Bar.

It’s the latest attempt by regulators to crack down on illegal disposable vapes that have poured into U.S. stores in recent years.

Last month, the FDA issued orders allowing customs officials to seize shipments of Elf Bar, Esco Bar and two other brands at U.S. ports. None of the products have received FDA authorization and they come in flavors like cotton candy, which regulators say can appeal to teenagers.

In the latest action, the FDA said it issued warnings to 189 convenience stores, vape shops and other retailers.

“We’re not going to stand by as bad actors are profiting off the sale of illegal products that are addicting our nation’s youth,” Brian King, the FDA’s

tobacco center director, said in an interview. “Today’s action is just part of our long-standing efforts to address those products, particularly flavored disposable products.”

The FDA has tried for years to regulate the multibillion-dollar vaping industry, but separate data released by government researchers Thursday shows unauthorized e-cigarettes continue to launch.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis showed the number of e-cigarette brands in the U.S. grew from 184 in early 2020 to 269 by late 2022.

The rise coincided with the growing popularity of disposable e-cigarettes. The analysis showed disposables’ share of vaping sales more than doubled from 24.7% in early 2020 to nearly 52% by late last year.

Elf Bar was the bestselling disposable in the U.S. and the third bestselling e-cigarette by late last year. Only the reusable e-cigarettes Vuse, from Reynolds American, and Juul had higher sales.

Santos’ aunt, dad signed bail bond to keep him out of jail

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The two people who bailed Rep. George Santos out of federal custody have been revealed to be his father and his aunt, a detail the Republican fought to keep secret as he faces criminal charges and swirling questions about his finances.

Gercino dos Santos Jr. and Elma Preven were named in a court filing on Thursday as the co-signers of Santos’ \$500,000 bond, which enabled his release as he awaits trial on federal charges of fraud, money laundering and theft of public funds.

Santos, R-N.Y., had fought to keep their names secret. They were revealed after media organizations, including The Associated Press, petitioned the court for the records to be unsealed, citing the right of public access to court proceedings.

In a court filing earlier this month, his attorney, Joseph Murray, said Santos would rather go to jail than subject his guarantors to the “great harm” that could come from public disclosure. Under the bond agreement, the co-signers did not have to pay any money upfront,

but would be held financially liable if Santos did not return to court.

While the identities of signatories are normally made public, Murray pointed to the “media frenzy and hateful attacks” faced by Santos as a reason to make an exception. Santos told reporters after his initial court appearance they would “never get” information about the source of his bail funds, claiming the media would “harass them and make their life miserable.”

But after news organizations pushed for the filings to be made public, a federal judge denied Santos’ request to keep the information secret. Santos appealed the decision, with his lawyer arguing that the co-signers should be given the opportunity to withdraw their support before the names are released. The appeal was denied on Tuesday.

On Thursday, Santos said on Twitter that he and his family had “made peace” with the decision to unseal the filing. “Now I pray that the judge is correct and no harm comes to them,” he added.

As expected, Wembanyama is No. 1 pick in NBA draft

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Victor Wembanyama was the presumed No. 1 pick for months, the rare certainty in an NBA draft process that's often a guessing game.

Yet as the clock above the stage he was facing ticked all the way down to zero, butterflies set in.

"Longest five minutes of my life," Wembanyama said.

The San Antonio Spurs are confident he will be worth the wait.

The Spurs took the 19-year-old from France who arrives with enormous expectations to become basketball's newest sensation on Thursday night, triggering chants of "Wemby! Wemby!" from a group of Spurs fans waving signs from the first row of seats in Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

Wembanyama comes with far more height and hype than most No. 1 picks. Listed at 7-foot-4, he dominated his French league in his final season there, leading all players in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots.

Now he makes the move to the NBA, perhaps as the best prospect since LeBron James came out of high school in 2003. Wembanyama brings a package of skills that seem perfect for the modern NBA and too vast for one player, with the size of a center and the shooting and ballhandling ability of a guard.

He teared up as he left the stage with his Spurs cap on and hugged his siblings, then joked afterward about how quickly he

was handed a white-and-black No. 1 jersey with his name already on the back.

Wembanyama was the center of attention throughout the draft process and sat in the middle of the green room — for the short time he was there, anyway. He smiled for young fans who screamed "Victor!" as he walked around the arena, even encouraging one to throw him a basketball that he signed and tossed back up into the stands.

The Charlotte Hornets took Alabama freshman forward Brandon Miller with the No. 2 pick.

Scout Henderson of the G League Ignite, whose bling-filled jacket stood in sharp contrast to Wembanyama's solid green look, was the No. 3 pick by the Portland Trail Blazers.

It was during a two-game series between teams featuring Wembanyama and Henderson last October in Las Vegas that Wembanyama solidified himself as the main man in this draft, scoring 37 and 36 points in front of scouts and some future opponents. His highlights, such as a follow dunk of his own missed 3-pointer, became can't-miss content for basketball fans during the past season.

Wembanyama is the Spurs' third No. 1 pick and the first since Tim Duncan in 1997, which led to a stretch of five NBA championships through 2014 before they struggled in recent seasons.

He became the first interna-

tional player drafted No. 1 without playing any college basketball since Andrea Bargnani in 2006 and ended a run of 13 straight years where a college freshman went first. Blake Griffin, a sophomore in 2010, was the last No. 1 who wasn't a one-and-done.

Henderson was originally considered the likely No. 2 pick before Miller passed him after his outstanding season for the Crimson Tide. But the 19-year-old believes the two years he played in the NBA's minor league has him more ready for NBA success.

"I'm the most prepared player in the draft. That's what I say," Henderson said. "The fact that I went there for two years just taught me so much. On the court, as well, but a lot of things off the court."

Draft history was made with the Nos. 4 and 5 picks. Twins Amen and Ausar Thompson of Overtime Elite became the first brothers to be selected in the top 10 of the same draft, with Amen going to the Houston Rockets and Ausar following to the Detroit Pistons.

"Means a lot to my family," Amen Thompson said. "We were going to be happy whoever went first. For us to go back-to-back, be the first twins to go back-to-back in the top five, means a lot."

Anthony Black of Arkansas was taken sixth by Orlando, ending the run of three straight players who hadn't gone to college.

Chris Paul traded to Warriors

Associated Press

Chris Paul's pursuit of an NBA championship is taking him to the Golden State Warriors, after they agreed to the framework of a trade Thursday that will send Jordan Poole to the Washington Wizards, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

The trade also includes a package of draft capital, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the trade has not been finalized and approved by the NBA.

ESPN first reported the agreement was struck by the teams.

"I'm excited," Paul, who is on a book tour, told The Charlotte Observer on Thursday. "I'm really excited."

Paul, who turned 38 last month, said that he's already talked to Warriors star Stephen Curry. "It was good," Paul said.

The Wizards agreed to acquire Paul from Phoenix last week, in the deal that sent Bradley Beal from Washington to the Suns.

Paul had two of his title-hope seasons thwarted by the Warriors. In 2018, Paul and the Houston Rockets had a 3-2 series lead in the Western Conference finals before he got hurt, missed the final two games and Golden State prevailed — on the way to the NBA title.

And in 2019, the Warriors beat Paul and the Rockets again, that time in the West semifinals before ultimately falling to Toronto in the NBA Finals.

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McCarthy shoots 60, McIlroy gets ace

Associated Press

CROMWELL, Conn. — Deny McCarthy came inches from shooting a 59, settling for a 10-under 60 on Thursday for the lowest round of his PGA Tour career, and Rory McIlroy made his first ace on tour on a day of low numbers at the Travelers Championship.

Keegan Bradley and Adam Scott also made runs at golf's magic number — on a course where Jim Furyk set the PGA Tour record with a 58 in 2016 — but faltered late. Each shot 62.

Scottie Scheffler, the No. 1 player in the world, finished with a 7-under 63.

The 30-year-old McCarthy, who started on the back nine, had five birdies on his first six holes and five more coming in.

The Maryland native's last

birdie came on the 403-yard ninth hole after his 169-yard approach shot skirted just left of the cup, eliciting a gasp from the crowd. He holed a 5-footer for birdie.

"I felt positive from the second I woke up this morning," said McCarthy, who is winless on tour despite several close calls, including at the Memorial this year. "So, everything just kind of clicked today. It was obviously just a great day."

Adam Scott was at 9 under when his second shot at No. 17 found the lake. He made double bogey, then finished with a 20-footer for birdie on No. 18.

"It's a shame, but it's hard to be disappointed with a 62," the 42-year-old Australian said.

Shane Lowry, Eric Cole and 2019 champion Chez Reavie

each finished with bogey-free 64s.

Eight players shot 65, and 91 players broke par on a day where the expected rain and wind held off and the sun broke through in the afternoon.

Bradley got things started in the morning with birdies on his first five holes. Those included a 75-foot downhill putt from just off the green on the 17th hole, which kept gaining speed, but hit the flagstick and dropped.

The TPC River Highlands is known for low scoring. In addition to Furyk's 58, Patrick Cantlay shot 60 as an amateur in 2011 and Mackenzie Hughes matched it in 2000. Hughes withdrew with an illness Thursday after shooting 76.

Bradley, a 37-year-old Vermont native, said he could not

help but think about matching Furyk's record.

"When I made that really long putt on 17, and it could have gone in the water, I don't know, it crossed my mind," he said. "I wasn't thinking about it a lot, but I certainly was going to try and do it."

The shot of the day came from McIlroy, whose tee shot on the 214-yard eighth landed just below the hole and rolled into the cup. McIlroy, the runner-up at last week's U.S. Open, finished with a 2-under 68.

It was McIlroy's second ace in competition. He made one in Abu Dhabi on the European tour in 2015.

"That was the best shot of the day that I hit," he said. "It's obviously a bonus for it to go in the hole, but it was really cool."

NHL teams won't wear theme-night jerseys after refusals

Associated Press

NHL teams won't wear special jerseys for pregame warmups during themed nights next season, the result of a handful of players refusing to use rainbow-colored Pride jerseys this past season and causing unwelcome distractions.

The league's Board of Governors agreed Thursday with Commissioner Gary Bettman's view that the refusals overshadowed teams' efforts in hosting Pride nights that in some cases included auctioning off the warmup jerseys. All 32 teams held Pride or Hockey is for Everyone night.

Bettman, in an interview with Sportsnet following the Board of Governors meeting in New York, said he suggested teams stop having special warmup jerseys because themed nights were being undermined by chatter over certain players declining to participate.

"That's just become more of a distraction from really the es-

sence of what the purpose of these nights are," Bettman said. "We're keeping the focus on the game. And on these specialty nights, we're going to be focused on the cause."

Teams will still celebrate Pride and other theme nights, including military appreciation and Hockey Fights Cancer. They're also expected to still design and produce jerseys to be autographed and sold to raise money, even though players won't skate around with them on during warmups.

You Can Play, which has worked with sports and leagues — including the NHL — to help them grow more inclusive for members of the LGBTQ+ community, said it was "concerned and disappointed" by the decision.

"Today's decision means that the over 95% of players who chose to wear a Pride jersey to support the community will now not get an opportunity to do so," the organization said in a

statement. "The work to make locker rooms, board rooms and arenas safer, more diverse and more inclusive needs to be ongoing and purposeful, and we will continue to work with our partners at the NHL, including individual teams, players, agents and the NHLPA to ensure this critical work continues."

Bettman defended the league and teams' handling of the situations at NHL All-Star Weekend in February, saying tolerance of varying viewpoints was part of being "open, welcoming and inclusive."

"You know what our goals, our values and our intentions are across the league, whether it's at the league level or at the club level," Bettman said at the time. "But we also have to respect some individual choice, and some people are more comfortable embracing themselves in causes than others."

"And part of being diverse and welcoming is understand-

ing those differences."

Seven players, citing various reasons, decided not to take part in pregame warmups when their teams donned Pride jerseys before games. A few teams also decided not to have players wear them after planning to do so.

Ivan Provorov, a Russian defenseman then with Philadelphia, was the first in January. Provorov cited his Russian Orthodox religion and was defended by coach John Tortorella.

James Reimer, a goaltender for San Jose, and brothers Eric and Marc Staal of Florida, who are Canadian, also cited religious beliefs. Russian players Ilya Lyubushkin of Buffalo, Denis Gurianov of Montreal and Andrei Kuzmenko of Vancouver also opted out of their teams' Pride night warmups.

Lyubushkin cited an anti-gay Kremlin law as his reason, which was also why the Chicago Blackhawks decided against Pride night jerseys.

MLB-leading Rays fall to lowly Royals

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The major league-leading Tampa Bay Rays lost ace Shane Bieber to mid-back tightness in a 6-5 loss to the lowly Kansas City Royals on Thursday night.

McClanahan, looking to become the majors' first 12-game winner of the season, left with two outs in the fourth. The left-hander, 11-1 this season, gave up two runs, four hits and two walks in a 66-pitch outing.

Maikel Garcia drew a walk from Pete Fairbanks (0-2) to start the ninth, then stole second and third. After Fairbanks got a pair of strikeouts, Garcia scored on MJ Melendez's infield single to put the Royals ahead 6-5. The Royals stole seven bases overall.

Aroldis Chapman (3-2) picked up the win and Scott Barlow earned his ninth save.

Drew Waters hit a solo homer and drove in two runs with a single in the eighth for Kansas City, which has the second-worst record in the majors at 21-54.

Francisco Mejía homered and Randy Arozarena had a two-run single for Tampa Bay, which slipped to 52-26 overall and 32-9 at home.

Braves 5, Phillies 1: Marcell Ozuna hit a two-run homer to cap a five-run 10th inning, and NL East-leading Atlanta beat Philadelphia for its eighth straight win.

Ozuna's 14th homer of the season followed a two-run single by Austin Riley after Philadelphia left fielder Kyle Schwarber misplayed a ball that would have been the third out of the inning. Michael Harris II knocked in the other Atlanta run of the inning, scoring automatic runner Sam Hilliard on a single up the middle.

Four Braves pitchers didn't give up an earned run in 10 innings, allowing just four hits and two walks while striking out 10. Philadelphia's only run came on Alec Bohm's sacrifice fly, scoring automatic runner J.T. Realmuto in the 10th.

Padres 10, Giants 0: Manny Machado and Gary Sánchez hit three-run homers and San Diego ended San Francisco's 10-game winning streak.

Blake Snell (4-6) won his third straight decision, striking out 11 and allowing three singles in six innings. Snell, García and Ray Kerr combined to retire San Diego's last 13 batters in the Padres' eighth shutout this season.

Ha-Seong Kim added a homer for the Padres, who went 5 for 10 with runners in scoring position. Juan Soto had his fourth straight multi-hit game, going 2 for 3 with a walk and two runs.

San Francisco batters struck out 14 times in the Giants' seventh shutout loss.

Mariners 10, Yankees 2: Teoscar Hernández hit one of four

early homers and Seattle teed off against Domingo Germán in routing New York and avoiding a three-game sweep.

Touted rookie Bryan Woo (1-1) breezed into the sixth inning with a no-hit bid to earn his first major league victory. Kolten Wong hit his first home run for the Mariners before Ty France and Cal Raleigh also went deep against Germán (4-5).

New York committed three errors in an embarrassing third inning. Germán gave up a career-high 10 runs — eight earned — and eight hits. He threw 93 pitches in 3 1/3 innings as his ERA soared to 5.10.

Twins 6, Red Sox 0: Joe Ryan pitched a three-hitter for Minnesota's first complete-game shutout in five years and Byron Buxton became the first player in at least nine seasons to hit a pair of 460-foot home runs in a game in a win over Boston.

Ryan (8-4) pitched his first complete game in 47 big league starts, striking out nine, walking none.

Buxton hit a 466-foot home run in the first inning and a 465-foot drive in the third, his ninth multi-homer game as AL Central-leading Minnesota got back to .500 at 38-38.

Diamondbacks 5, Nationals 3: Ketel Marte hit a three-run homer, leading Arizona past Washington after Nationals manager Dave Martinez was

ejected for complaining about umpire Doug Eddings' strike zone.

Tommy Henry (4-1) earned his first victory since May 31 for the NL West-leading Diamondbacks, who have won five of seven and moved 16 games over .500 at 46-30. Henry gave up one run in 6 2/3 innings with five strikeouts and one walk. Scott McGough earned his fifth save.

Guardians 6, Athletics 1: Josh Bell homered and Myles Straw hit an RBI triple, leading Cleveland to a three-game sweep of Oakland, which dropped its eighth straight.

Bell's 430-foot shot tied it and Straw put Cleveland ahead in the inning with his two-out shot to left.

The A's were still down just 2-1 in the eighth before reliever Yacksel Rios allowed four runs on two wild pitches and two bases-loaded walks.

Marlins 6, Pirates 4: Garrett Cooper doubled, singled and hit a go-ahead three-run homer in the eighth inning as Miami dealt Pittsburgh its 10th consecutive loss.

Trailing 4-1, the Marlins rallied in the eighth. Jonathan Davis doubled and Luis Arraez and Jorge Soler walked. Carmen Mlodzinski (0-1) gave up a two-run single by Bryan De La Cruz. Jesús Sánchez reached on a fielder's choice before Garrett drove Mlodzinski's first pitch over the wall in right-center.

Time for Ja Morant to change his behavior, GM says

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Memphis Grizzlies general manager Zach Kleiman said the 25-game suspension the NBA slapped guard Ja Morant with "was appropriate," and it is up to Morant to change the behavior that led to two bans in four months.

The Grizzlies' vice president of basketball operations made the comments after Thursday

night's NBA draft. Kleiman is the first team official to publicly discuss Morant's situation and the NBA's punishment of the two-time All-Star for flashing a gun on social media after the season.

Kleiman said the latest incident is part of a pattern of "problematic behavior" for Morant, the No. 2 overall pick in 2019 and the 2020 Rookie of the

Year.

"At this point, it doesn't matter until he follows through," Kleiman said. "I couldn't care less about words. Ja has to prove it."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver announced the latest suspension June 16, and Silver made clear the guard must stop his "alarming" habit of flashing guns on social media.

The suspension for the upcoming season comes a month after a second video of Morant flashing a handgun was streamed online.

The video of Morant showing a gun while sitting in the passenger seat of a car was posted after his eight-game suspension in March for a video in which he flashed a handgun in a Denver-area strip club.

Overtured outs stir confusion over MLB plate-blocking rule

Associated Press

As former big league catchers, Bob Melvin and Bruce Bochy certainly had their share of plays at the plate, and the current managers played in an era when big collisions with runners trying to score were just part of the game.

The rules have changed over the years to protect catchers, but runners are now sometimes safe even after being tagged out, and without any collision. That happened this week to Melvin's San Diego Padres and Bochy's Texas Rangers.

San Francisco's Blake Sabol was originally called out in the fifth inning Wednesday night against the Padres.

The call was changed after a lengthy replay review and Sabol was ruled safe when catcher Gary Sánchez was cited for blocking the plate.

Melvin called it "one of the worst calls I've seen this year."

Bochy did Melvin one better, calling a similar play in the Rangers' 7-6 loss to the Chicago White Sox the previous night "absolutely one of the worst calls I've ever seen and it was done by replay."

Like Sánchez, Texas catcher Jonah Heim was standing when he made a sweeping tag.

Elvis Andrus was initially called out, which would have ended the eighth inning with the game still tied, but the White Sox challenged the tag and that Heim was blocking the plate.

■ Why does MLB have a rule that prevents catchers from blocking the plate?

To prevent injuries that can result from collisions between base runners and catchers.

In 2014, MLB put in a rule intended to eliminate avoidable collisions at home plate.

Rule 6.01(i) is officially listed as "Collisions at Home Plate," but is informally referred to by many as the "Buster Posey Rule."

That rule not only prohibits catchers from blocking the plate without possession of the ball or in the act of fielding the ball, but says runners can't deviate from their direct pathway to the plate to initiate contact with the catcher or engage in an avoidable collision.

Posey suffered a fractured fibula and torn ligaments in his ankle after Scott Cousins of the Marlins put his shoulder down and slammed into the San Francisco catcher to score in 2011. That was a season after Posey was the NL Rookie of the Year while the Giants won the World Series.

Detroit Tigers catcher Alex Avila was injured in Game 5 of 2013 American League Championship Series after a collision with Boston's David Ross. Avila did return to play Game 6 two days later.

Bone-jarring collisions at the plate used to be common in the game.

Among the most well-known ones was Pete Rose plowing through Ray Fosse to score the winning run in the bottom of the 12th inning of the 1970 All-Star Game, a play that left Fosse with a fractured shoulder.

■ Why has there been a sudden uptick in violations?

MLB sent out a memo to teams late last season about how the rule was being enforced after several disputed plays at the plate.

Minnesota manager Rocco Baldelli was irate after umpires ruled Sánchez, then with the Twins, blocked the plate on what appeared to be an out in the 10th inning of a game

against Toronto last season.

The enforcement of the rule also was discussed in spring training before this season.

In both cases this week, the runners were called out by umpires on the field before replay officials ruled otherwise.

Among the things Bochy said MLB officials told him was about the setup of his catcher. Heim was to the side of the plate, with one foot on it, but already had the ball in his mitt even before Andrus slid head-first to the open other half of the plate.

MLB said Heim's "initial positioning was illegal, and his subsequent actions while not in possession of the ball hindered and impeded the runner's path to home plate."

■ Why are teams so confused about the blocking the plate rule?

The rule encourages runners to slide into home, which has become pretty common.

At the same time, catchers sometimes move to alter the runner's anticipated path to the plate.

Catchers can legally stand in fair territory in front of the plate without possession of the ball. But they can be called for a violation if they don't have the ball and set up in foul territory, straddle the foul line or home plate, or have a foot on the plate or the foul line.

There are also exemptions to where catchers are positioned if they have to move to take an incoming throw or are unable to establish themselves in front of the plate on a quickly developing play, such as a wild pitch or hard-hit ball to a drawn-in infielder.

But those exemptions are judgment calls by the umpire or replay officials.

LSU downs Wake Forest, now heads to CWS finals

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Jay Johnson has coached in the College World Series finals before, and he's won his share of big games.

To him, nothing compared with Thursday night.

"That is one of the greatest moments in my entire life, what happened on the field tonight," LSU's second-year coach said after his team's 2-0, 11-inning victory over No. 1 national seed Wake Forest clinched a spot in the CWS finals.

Tommy White hit Camden Minacci's first pitch into the left-field seats to set up an All-SEC best-of-three finals matchup with Florida starting Saturday night. It will be a rematch of the 2017 final that the Gators won for their first national title.

"Now that we're here, it's not a surprise," Johnson said. "This is the first team I've coached that I think can win a national championship. Hands down."

That's saying something. Johnson nearly won one in 2016 when he was at Arizona, which lost a three-game finals to Coastal Carolina.

LSU (52-16) became the first team to hand Wake Forest (54-12) consecutive losses. The Tigers had won 5-2 on Wednesday to set up a second bracket final.

"We just slayed a giant tonight," Johnson said.

Dylan Crews singled to left leading off the bottom of the 11th against Michael Massey (3-1), prompting Deacons coach Tom Walter to call on his star closer. Minacci's first pitch to LSU's home run leader was a 90 mph slider, and White sent it out for his 23rd homer of the year.

"I thought a heater was coming," White said. "But I was very amped up and I saw a slider that was up. I put my bat head to it. That was about it."