

## US destroyer's D-Day move teaches lesson

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — As Allied forces stormed Nazi-occupied territory in France on D-Day, it became clear that the peril soldiers faced at Omaha Beach threatened the effort to liberate Europe from German control.

That's when the commanding officer of the destroyer USS Frankford made the independent decision to bring the ship within 800 to 1,000 yards of the shore to fire on the enemy.

Other battleships followed, launching a second bombardment that proved decisive, Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Force Command Naples, said Tuesday during a naval history symposium near Sainte-Mere-Eglise,

France, commemorating the 81st anniversary of D-Day.

The symposium and a U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa band concert, featuring a newly commissioned composition memorializing this year's D-Day observance, were led by NAVEUR-AF.

The effort by Frankford's commanding officer, who drew on experience gained during an earlier event at Anzio, Italy, was "a marquee example of adaptive (decision-making) that is most effective" in battle, Munsch said.

It shows the importance of "instilling in your command the ability of lower-level leaders ... to make decisions based on the circumstances they see, understanding the principles of what are to be achieved," he said.

The Allied invasion fleet — led by Adm. Sir Bertram Ramsay of the U.K. navy — consisted of thousands of warships, landing craft and commercial vessels that carried an advance formation of 175,000 soldiers, according to the U.S. Naval Institute.

Those ships also carried 100,000 tons of equipment, including 50,000 vehicles.

Operation Neptune, the naval component of D-Day, was outlined by Ramsay in a more than 1,100-page document with incredible detail and clarity, Munsch said.

That clarity was key in the initial success of landing troops and equipment on the beaches of France and in providing cover, among other tasks.

But the plan also underscored

the importance of following up with support, maintenance and rapid buildup of additional troops, Munsch said.

The Navy's goal wasn't its own glory but rather to serve the Army's needs, said Munsch in quoting Ramsay's guidance in the planning document.

"He set the standard for doing big operations and getting them right," Munsch said later Tuesday.

One of the war's enduring lessons, he added, is that Allied victory was rooted in the earlier development of a military system that prioritized learning and technological innovation.

"That's really what made a huge difference for us in World War II," he said. "It may have been a very different result without that good work."

## D-Day vets return to Normandy to mark 81st anniversary

*Associated Press*

COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, France — Veterans gathered Friday in Normandy to mark the 81st anniversary of the D-Day landings — a pivotal moment of World War II that eventually led to the collapse of Adolf Hitler's regime.

Along the coastline and near the D-Day landing beaches, tens of thousands of onlookers attended the commemorations, which included parachute jumps, flyovers, remembrance ceremonies, parades, and historical reenactments.

Many were there to cheer the ever-dwindling number of surviving veterans in their late 90s and older. All remembered the thousands who died.

Harold Terens, a 101-year-old U.S. veteran who last year mar-

ried his 96-year-old sweetheart near the D-Day beaches, was back in Normandy.

"Freedom is everything," he said. "I pray for freedom for the whole world. For the war to end in Ukraine, and Russia, and Sudan and Gaza. I think war is disgusting. Absolutely disgusting."

Terens enlisted in 1942 and shipped to Great Britain the following year, attached to a four-pilot P-47 Thunderbolt fighter squadron as their radio repair technician. On D-Day, Terens helped repair planes returning from France so they could rejoin the battle.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth commemorated the anniversary of the D-Day landings, in which American soldiers played a leading role, with veterans at the American Ceme-

tary overlooking the shore in the village of Colleville-sur-Mer.

French Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu told Hegseth that France knows what it owes to its American allies and the veterans who helped free Europe from the Nazis.

"We don't forget that our oldest allies were there in this grave moment of our history. I say it with deep respect in front of you, veterans, who incarnate this unique friendship between our two countries," he said.

Hegseth said France and the United States should be prepared to fight if danger arises again, and that "good men are still needed to stand up."

"Today the United States and France again rally together to confront such threats," he said,

without mentioning a specific enemy. "Because we strive for peace, we must prepare for war and hopefully deter it."

The June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion of Nazi-occupied France used the largest-ever armada of ships, troops, planes and vehicles to breach Hitler's defenses in western Europe. A total of 4,414 Allied troops were killed on D-Day itself.

In the ensuing Battle of Normandy, 73,000 Allied forces were killed and 153,000 wounded. The battle killed around 20,000 French civilians between June and August 1944.

The exact number of German casualties is unknown, but historians estimate between 4,000 and 9,000 men were killed, wounded or missing during the D-Day invasion alone.

# Watchdog probes if aides asked to delete Hegseth's Signal chat

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon watchdog is looking into whether any of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's aides were asked to delete Signal messages that may have shared sensitive military information with a reporter, according to two people familiar with the investigation and documents reviewed by The Associated Press.

The inspector general's request focuses on how information about the March 15 airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen was shared on the messaging app.

This comes as Hegseth is scheduled to testify before Congress next week for the first time since his confirmation hearing. He is likely to face questions under oath not only about his handling of sensitive information but also the wider turmoil at the Pentagon following the departures of several senior aides and an internal investigation over information leaks.

Hegseth already has faced questions over the installation of an unsecured internet line in his office that bypassed the Pentagon's security protocols and revelations that he shared details about the military strikes in multiple Signal chats.

One of the chats included his wife and brother, while the other included President Donald Trump's top national security officials and inadvertently included The Atlantic's editor-in-chief, Jeffrey Goldberg.

Neither the Pentagon nor the inspector general's office immediately responded to Friday requests for comment on the investigation.

Besides finding out whether anyone was asked to delete Signal messages, the inspector general also is asking some past and current staffers who were with Hegseth on the day of the strikes who posted the information and who had access to his phone, according to the two people familiar with the investigation and the documents reviewed by the AP. The people were not authorized to discuss the investigation and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Democratic lawmakers and a small number of Republicans have said that the information Hegseth posted to the Signal chats before the military jets had reached their targets could have put those pilots' lives at risk and that for any lower-ranking members of the military, it would have led to their firing.

Hegseth has said none of the information was classified. Multiple current and former military officials have said there is no way details with that specificity, especially before a strike took place, would have been OK to share on an unsecured device.

Hegseth has limited his public engagements with the press since the Signal controversy. He has yet to hold a Pentagon press briefing, and his spokesman has briefed reporters there only once.

The inspector general is investigating Hegseth at the request of the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi, and the committee's top Democrat, Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island.

# N. Korea says it raised capsized destroyer as it continues the repairs

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said Friday it had righted a capsized destroyer and moored it at a pier in the northeastern port of Chongjin as it continues to repair the new warship leader Kim Jong Un has described as a significant asset for his nuclear-armed military.

The report by North Korean state media aligned with South Korean military assessments and recent commercial satellite images.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said experts will closely examine the ship's hull before beginning the next phase of restoration, which will take place at a dry dock at the neighboring port of Rajin and is expected to last seven to 10 days.

Satellite images taken Thursday by Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed the stricken destroyer upright and floating.

It wasn't immediately clear from the image just how much damage had been done to the vessel, which had been in the water for days after the failed launch.

However, the ship did not appear to be noticeably listing, meaning Pyongyang is likely able to send it onward to the other port to inspect the vessel's electronics.

Jo Chun Ryong, a senior official from the ruling Workers' Party, told the agency that the "perfect restoration of the destroyer will be completed without fail" before a major party congress in late June, a deadline set by Kim.

Outside experts say it remains unclear how severely the 5,000-ton-class destroyer was

damaged during a botched launching ceremony in late May, which triggered a furious response from Kim, who called the failure a "criminal act caused by absolute carelessness, irresponsibility, and unscientific empiricism."

North Korean law enforcement authorities have detained at least four officials over the incident, including the vice director of the Workers' Party's munitions industry department, according to state media.

The North's main military committee said those responsible would be held accountable for their "unpardonable criminal act."

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Thursday that the South's military assesses that the North Koreans righted the ship earlier this week and are likely conducting drainage operations while examining the damage.

"The nature and duration of the repair process will vary, depending on internal repairs, additional work or whether the incident affected the keel," Lee said, referring to the ship's structural backbone. "This could also affect how the ship is used going forward."

The damaged warship was North Korea's second known destroyer and seen as a crucial asset toward Kim's goal of modernizing its naval forces. It was in the same class as the country's first destroyer unveiled in April.

Kim lavishly praised that ship, which was launched in the western port of Nampo, saying it advances his goal of expanding the military's operations range and nuclear strike capabilities.

# NATO says it's on cusp of OKing 5% demand

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Most U.S. allies at NATO endorse President Donald Trump's demand that they invest 5% of gross domestic product on their defense needs and are ready to ramp up security spending even more, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Thursday.

"There's broad support," Rutte told reporters after chairing a meeting of NATO defense ministers at the alliance's Brussels headquarters. "We are really close," he said, and added that he has "total confidence that we will get there" by the next NATO summit in three weeks.

European allies and Canada have already been investing heavily in their armed forces, as well as on weapons and ammunition, since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

However, some have balked

at U.S. demands to invest 5% of GDP on defense — 3.5% on core military spending and 1.5% on the roads, bridges, airfields and sea ports needed to deploy armies more quickly.

In 2023, as Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine entered its second year, NATO leaders agreed to spend at least 2% of GDP on national defense budgets. So far, 22 of the 32 member countries have done so, and others still struggle to do so.

Trump and his NATO counterparts appear likely to endorse the new goal at a summit in The Hague on June 24-25. Trump insists that U.S. allies should spend at least 5% so America can focus on security priorities elsewhere, mostly in the Indo-Pacific and its own borders.

He has gained important leverage over the other NATO countries by casting doubt over whether the United States

would defend allies that spend too little.

At the same time, Trump has imposed tariffs on ally and foe alike, citing U.S. security concerns.

The new goal would involve a 1.5% increase over the current 2% goal for defense budgets. It means that all 32 countries would be investing the same percentage.

The United States spends by far more than any other ally in dollar terms.

But according to NATO's most recent figures, it was estimated to have spent 3.19% of GDP in 2024, down from 3.68% a decade ago. It's the only ally whose spending has dropped since 2014.

While the two new figures do add up to 5%, factoring in improvements to civilian infrastructure so that armies can deploy more quickly significantly changes the basis on which NA-

TO traditionally calculates defense spending.

The seven-year time frame is also short by the alliance's usual standards. The far more modest 2% target — set after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 — was meant to be reached over a decade.

According to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Trump has done nothing less than save NATO.

He told reporters that European allies around the table on Thursday had said: "We hear you. We all need increased capabilities. We all need to spend more. Thank you, President Trump, for reviving this alliance. It was an alliance that was sleepwalking to irrelevance."

The extra spending will also be needed should the Trump administration announce a force drawdown in Europe.

## Hiring in US slows, though 139,000 jobs added in May

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. employers slowed hiring last month, but still added a solid 139,000 jobs amid uncertainty over President Donald Trump's trade wars.

Hiring fell from a revised 147,000 in April, the Department of Labor said Friday. The job gains last month were above the 130,000 that economists had forecast, but revisions shaved 95,000 jobs from March and April payrolls.

The unemployment rate stayed at a low 4.2%.

Healthcare companies added 62,000 jobs and bars and restaurants 30,000. The government shed 22,000 jobs, however, the most since November 2020, as Trump's job cuts and hiring freeze had an impact. And factories lost 8,000 jobs last month.

Average hourly wages rose 0.4% from April and 3.9% from a year earlier — a bit higher than forecast.

Trump's aggressive and unpredictable policies — especially his sweeping taxes on imports — have muddled the outlook for the economy and the job market and raised fears that the American economy could be headed toward recession. But so far the damage hasn't shown up clearly in government economic data.

The U.S. economy and job market have proven surprisingly resilient in recent years.

Still, the job market has clearly decelerated. So far this year, employers have added an average of less than 124,000 a month. That is down 26% from last year, down almost 43% from 2023, and down a whopping 67% compared with 2022.

## Musk pulls back on threat to withdraw Dragon spacecraft

Associated Press

As President Donald Trump and Elon Musk argued on social media on Thursday, the world's richest man threatened to decommission a space capsule used to take astronauts and supplies to the International Space Station.

A few hours later, Musk said he wouldn't follow through on the threat.

After Trump threatened to cut government contracts given to Musk's SpaceX rocket company and his Starlink internet satellite services, Musk responded via X that SpaceX "will begin decommissioning its Dragon spacecraft immediately."

It was unclear how serious Musk's threat was, but several hours later — in a reply to another X user — he said he

wouldn't do it.

The capsule, developed with the help of government contracts, is an important part of keeping the space station running.

SpaceX is the only U.S. company capable right now of transporting crews to and from the space station, using its four-person Dragon capsules.

Russia's Soyuz capsules are the only other means of getting crews to the space station right now.

With its first crew launch for NASA in 2020 — the first orbital flight of a crew by a private company — SpaceX enabled NASA to reduce its reliance on Russia for crew transport. The Russian flights had been costing the U.S. tens of millions of dollars per seat, for years.



# Israel: Anti-Hamas Palestinian clans 'activated'

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel has “activated” some clans of Palestinians in Gaza that are opposed to Hamas, though it was not immediately clear what role they would play.

His comments on social media were the first public acknowledgment of Israel’s backing of armed Palestinian groups within Gaza, based around powerful clans or extended families.

Such clans often wield some control in corners of Gaza, and some have had clashes or tensions with Hamas in the past. Palestinians and aid workers have accused clans of carrying out criminal attacks and stealing aid from trucks.

Several clans have issued

public statements rejecting cooperation with the Israelis or denouncing looting.

An Israeli official said that one group that Netanyahu was referring to was the so-called Popular Forces, led by Yasser Abu Shabab, a local clan leader in Gaza’s southernmost city, Rafah. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

In recent weeks, the Abu Shabab group announced online that its fighters were helping protect shipments to the new, Israeli-backed food distribution centers run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in the Rafah area. But some Palestinians say the group has also been involved in attacking and looting aid convoys.

Netanyahu did not specify what support Israel was giving to the clans, or what specifically their role would be.

His announcement came hours after a political opponent criticized him for arming unofficial groups of Palestinians in Gaza.

In a video posted to his X account, Netanyahu said the government made the move on the advice of “security officials,” in order to save lives of Israeli soldiers.

Though it was known in southern Gaza throughout the war, the Abu Shabab group emerged publicly the past month, posting pictures of its armed members, with helmets, flak jackets and automatic weapons.

It declared itself a “national-

ist force” protecting aid.

The Abu Shabab family renounced Yasser over his connections with the Israeli military in a recent statement, saying he and anyone who joined his group “are no longer linked” to the family.

The group’s media office said in response to emailed questions from the Associated Press that it operates in Israeli military-controlled areas for a “purely humanitarian” reason.

It described its ties with the Israel military as “humanitarian communication to facilitate the introduction of aid and ensure that it is not intercepted.”

“We are not proxies for anyone,” it said. “We have not received any military or logistical support from any foreign party.”

## Russia bombards Ukraine with missile, drone attacks

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia bombarded six regions of Ukraine in one of its largest aerial attacks of the three-year war, Ukrainian officials said Friday. The nighttime assault lasted for hours and killed three emergency responders in the capital Kyiv as well as another person in a northwestern city, according to authorities.

The barrage included 407 drones and 44 ballistic and cruise missiles, Ukrainian air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said. Ukrainian forces said they shot down about 30 of the cruise missiles and up to 200 of the drones. Some 50 Ukrainian civilians were injured across the country, emergency services said.

The latest Russian attack came hours after President Donald Trump said it might be better to let Ukraine and Russia “fight for a while” before pulling them apart and pursuing

peace. Trump’s comments were a remarkable detour from his often-stated appeals to stop the war and signaled he may be giving up on recent peace efforts.

Ukrainian cities have come under regular bombardment since Russia invaded its neighbor in February 2022. The attacks have killed more than 12,000 civilians, according to the United Nations.

“Russia doesn’t change its stripes,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Zelenskyy, as well as the Ukrainian Interior Ministry and the general prosecutor’s office, said three emergency workers were killed in Kyiv while responding to the Russian strikes. “They were working under fire to help people,” the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The war has continued unabated even as a U.S.-led diplomatic push for a settlement has brought two rounds of direct peace talks.

## Private lunar lander from Japan crashes into moon

Associated Press

A private lunar lander from Japan crashed while attempting a touchdown Friday, the latest casualty in the commercial rush to the moon.

The Tokyo-based company ispace declared the mission a failure several hours after communication was lost with the lander. Flight controllers scrambled to gain contact, but were met with only silence and said they were concluding the mission.

Communications ceased less than two minutes before the spacecraft’s scheduled landing on the moon with a mini rover. Until then, the descent from lunar orbit seemed to be going well.

CEO and founder Takeshi Hakamada apologized to everyone who contributed to the mission, the second lunar strikeout for ispace.

Two years ago, the company’s first moonshot ended in a crash

landing, giving rise to the name “Resilience” for its successor lander. Resilience carried a rover with a shovel to gather lunar dirt as well as a Swedish artist’s toy-size red house for placement on the moon’s dusty surface.

Company officials said it was too soon to know whether the same problem doomed both missions.

“This is the second time that we were not able to land. So we really have to take it very seriously,” Hakamada told reporters. He stressed that the company would press ahead with more lunar missions.

A preliminary analysis indicates the laser system for measuring the altitude did not work as planned, and the lander descended too fast, officials said. “Based on these circumstances, it is currently assumed that the lander likely performed a hard landing on the lunar surface,” the company said.

# Alcaraz advances to French Open final

Associated Press

PARIS — Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz reached the French Open final on Friday after Lorenzo Musetti retired from their semifinal early in the fourth set.

Alcaraz was leading 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-0, 2-0 when the eighth-seeded Italian had to stop playing on Court Philippe-Chatrier.

“It’s not great to win a match like this. Lorenzo is a great player,” Alcaraz said. “I wish him all the best, and wish him a quick recovery and hope to see him soon on the court.”

Musetti had treatment on the inside of his left thigh late in the third set and then again before the start of the fourth.

Musetti, 23, was 5-0 down after 16 minutes of the third set

when he called for a trainer. Alcaraz broke Musetti in the next game to clinch the set in 21 minutes, winning 24 of 29 points.

Musetti was clearly hindered in his movements and called for the trainer again. After Alcaraz broke his serve to lead 2-0, Musetti walked slowly to the net and got a hug from Alcaraz.

Alcaraz made 16 unforced errors in the first set, which Musetti clinched when the Spaniard sent a forehand wide.

“The first two sets were really tough,” Alcaraz said. “When I won the second set I was relieved. Then in the third set I knew what I had to do. I knew I could push him to the limit by just keep being aggressive. I managed to be myself, be more calm, I could see much clearer

and play great tennis.”

Alcaraz, 22, who is seeded second, goes for his second French Open title and fifth major overall against top-ranked Jannik Sinner of Italy or 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic of Serbia in the final.

They were playing their semifinal later Friday.

Actor Dustin Hoffman and former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry were in the crowd as Musetti — whose one-handed backhand is among the best in tennis — showed his stroke-making ability early on. Musetti fans with clown wigs in the colors of the Italian flag cheered him on.

Frustration got to Alcaraz, who aimed a side-footed kick at his changeover seat during the

second set. The relief was evident when he broke Musetti’s serve in the 11th game and then raised his right fist triumphantly. Musetti broke back to force a tiebreaker, which Alcaraz then dominated. The Spaniard clinched the set when Musetti meekly patted his drop shot into the net when a winner down the line was on offer.

Musetti was playing in only his second major semifinal after reaching the same stage at Wimbledon last year, where he lost to Djokovic in straight sets.

Alcaraz said he feels in top shape physically for the final.

“Really good. It’s been three intense weeks, but I’m feeling great,” he said. “I have a lot of confidence right now. I’m going to give everything on Sunday.”

# Stars fire DeBoer after losing another West final

Associated Press

DALLAS — Dallas Stars coach Pete DeBoer was fired Friday after three seasons with the team, getting to the Western Conference final each time but never advancing past that for a shot at the Stanley Cup.

The move came a week since the Stars ended their season in a 6-3 loss at home to Edmonton in Game 5 of the West final.

DeBoer made the curious and much-discussed decision to bench Jake Oettinger after his star goalie gave up two goals on two shots in the first 7:09. Two days later, the coach acknowledged he still hadn’t talked to Oettinger about that decision.

“After careful consideration, we believe that a new voice is

needed in our locker room to push us closer to our goal of winning the Stanley Cup,” longtime general manager Jim Nill said.

The Oilers won four consecutive games in the series after the Stars had a five-goal outburst in the third period of Game 1 to win by that same 6-3 score.

Dallas became the first team to reach the conference finals three seasons in a row without winning at least one Cup title under the playoff format that began in 1994. The Stars didn’t even give themselves a chance to play for one.

DeBoer, who turns 57 this month, had a 149-68-29 record in regular-season games and 29-27 in the playoffs with the Stars, whose 113 points during

the 2023-24 season were one off the franchise record set by their only Stanley Cup-winning team in 1998-99. He is 662-447-152 overall in 17 seasons with Dallas, New Jersey, Florida, Vegas and San Jose, plus 97-82 in 10 postseason appearances.

Stars owner Tom Gaglardi said the day after the season finale that DeBoer was a seasoned coach, top three to top five in the league, and that he didn’t see firing DeBoer being on anyone’s agenda.

Something certainly changed since then with DeBoer, who had one season remaining on his contract.

This was the sixth time in seven seasons, with three different teams, that DeBoer took a team

to the brink of the Stanley Cup Final. That included the NHL semifinals during the 2021 season with Vegas when there were no conference-based playoffs because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Stars last went to the Stanley Cup Final in 2020, the playoff held in the bubble in Canada because of the pandemic. They won the West final that year in five games over DeBoer-coached Vegas. Dallas was led by Rick Bowness, who replaced the fired Jim Montgomery during the season. DeBoer was hired after the Stars moved on from Bowness.

In their 18 playoff games this season, the Stars gave up the first goal 15 times.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# Haliburton delivers again for Pacers

TIM REYNOLDS

*Associated Press*

OKLAHOMA CITY — You are Tyrese Haliburton.

You went to the Eastern Conference finals last year and got swept. You went to the Olympics last summer and didn't play much. You came into this season with high expectations and your Indiana Pacers got off to a 10-15 start. On top of that, some of your NBA peers evidently think you are overrated.

You got angry.

"I think as a group, we take everything personal," Haliburton said. "It's not just me. It's everybody. I feel like that's the DNA of this group and that's not just me."

The anger fueled focus, the focus became confidence, and the confidence delivered a 1-0 series lead in the NBA Finals. Haliburton's penchant for last-second heroics — one of the stories of these playoffs — showed up again Thursday night, his jumper with 0.3 seconds left going into finals lore and giving the Pacers a 111-110 victory over the heavily favored Oklahoma City Thunder.

The Pacers led for 0.0001% of that game. It was enough.

"When it comes to the moments, he wants the ball," Pacers teammate Myles Turner said. "He wants to be the one to hit that shot. He doesn't shy away from the moment and it's very important this time of the year to have a go-to guy. He just keeps finding a way and we keep putting the ball in the right positions and the rest is history."

Haliburton is 4 for 4 in the final 2 seconds of fourth quarters and overtimes in these playoffs, all of those shots either giving the Pacers a win or sending a game into OT before they won it there.

The rest of the NBA, in those situations this spring: 4 for 26, combined.

If Haliburton takes one of

## Thunder collapse late, lose Game 1 of Finals

*Associated Press*

OKLAHOMA CITY — Things were going as expected for the heavily favored Oklahoma City Thunder in Game 1 of the NBA Finals.

They forced the normally efficient Indiana Pacers into 19 turnovers in the first half to lead by 12 at the break. The advantage swelled to 15 early in the fourth quarter, and it looked like the Thunder were off to one of their usual blowout victories.

They fell apart late, then Tyrese Haliburton hit a mid-range dagger in the final second that gave Indiana a 111-110 victory on Thursday night.

"I thought we were pretty good," Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We had control of the game for the most part of it. It is a

48-minute game. They (Pacers) teach you that lesson more than anyone else in the league, the hard way."

The homecourt advantage Oklahoma City fought all season to gain vanished in a game it dominated for three quarters. The collapse wasted a 38-point effort by league MVP Gilgeous-Alexander. Now, the Thunder will be under pressure heading into Game 2 on Sunday.

"We've just got to focus on being better," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "The series isn't first to one, it's first to four. We have four more games to get, they have three. That's just where we are. We've got to understand that and we've got to get to four before they get to three (more) if we want to win the NBA championship."

those beat-the-clock shots in the first three quarters of games in these playoffs, he's a mere mortal, just 1 for 7 in those situations. But with the game on the line, he's perfect.

"You don't want to live and die with the best player on the other team taking a game winner with a couple seconds left," Thunder guard Alex Caruso said.

No, especially when that best player on the other team is Haliburton. Just ask Milwaukee. Or Cleveland. Or New York. They could have all told Oklahoma City who was going to take the big shot and what was probably going to happen.

Against the Bucks on April 29, it was a layup with 1.4 seconds left that capped a rally from seven points down in the final 34.6

seconds of overtime. Final score: Pacers 119, Bucks 118, and that series ended there.

In Cleveland on May 6, it was a 3-pointer with 1.1 seconds left for a 120-119 win — capping a rally from seven points down in the final 48 seconds. At Madison Square Garden against the Knicks on May 21, a game the Pacers trailed 121-112 with 51.1 seconds left, he hit a jumper with no time left to force OT and Indiana would win again.

All those plays came with a little something extra. His father, John Haliburton, got a little too exuberant with Giannis Antetokounmpo after the Bucks game and wasn't allowed to come to the next few games; the ban has since been lifted. Haliburton did a certain dance that the NBA doesn't like much after

the shot against the Cavs. He made a choke signal, a la what Pacers legend Reggie Miller did against New York a generation earlier, after hitting the shot against the Knicks.

But on Thursday, all business. These finals are a long way from over, and he knows it. Game 2 is Sunday night in Oklahoma City.

"Again, another big comeback but there's a lot more work to do," Haliburton said. "That's just one game. And this is the best team in the NBA, and they don't lose often. So, we expect them to respond. We've got to be prepared for that. We got a couple days to watch film, see where we can get better."

Haliburton is in his first year of a supermax contract that will pay him about \$245 million along the way. He has the Olympic gold medal from last summer and surely will be a serious candidate to play for USA Basketball again at the Los Angeles Games in 2028. He's now a two-time All-NBA selection. And he's officially a certified post-season, late-game hero.

Three more wins, and he'll be an NBA champion as well. The anger is gone. Haliburton was all smiles after Game 1, for obvious reasons.

"Ultimate, ultimate confidence in himself," Turner said. "Some players will say they have it but there's other players that show it, and he's going to let you know about it, too. That's one of the things I respect about him. He's a baller and a hooper and really just a gamer."

And in his NBA Finals debut, Haliburton reminded the world that's the case.

"This group never gives up," Haliburton said.

"We never believe that the game is over until it hits zero, and that's just God's honest truth. That's just the confidence that we have as a group, and I think that's a big reason why this is going on."



# Rodgers, Steelers agree to 1-year deal

**WILL GRAVES**

*Associated Press*

PITTSBURGH — Aaron Rodgers and Mike Tomlin are taking their long-simmering bromance to the next level.

The four-time NFL MVP ended months of “Will he? Or won’t he?” speculation by agreeing to a one-year deal with the Pittsburgh Steelers, pending the 41-year-old passing a physical. Financial terms of the deal were not announced.

The Steelers and Rodgers had been circling each other for months. Rodgers even visited the team’s facility in late March, driving in undercover in a nondescript sedan wearing a hat and sunglasses.

While there were plenty of nice words from both sides in the aftermath, Rodgers didn’t rush to put pen to paper, telling “The Pat McAfee Show” in April that his attention was focused on helping people in his inner circle who were “battling some difficult stuff” and that he didn’t want to decide until he knew he could fully commit.

With mandatory minicamp coming next week, Rodgers apparently finds himself in a place where he can give the Steelers his full attention.

Rodgers joins a team that has been stuck in a transitional period at quarterback since Ben Roethlisberger retired after the 2021 season. Either Rodgers or

Mason Rudolph — who returned to Pittsburgh on a two-year deal in March — will likely be Pittsburgh’s fifth Week 1 quarterback in five seasons.

The Steelers have stayed competitive, up to a point anyway, amid the constant churn at the most important position on the field. Pittsburgh has reached the playoffs four times in the past five seasons, only to be quickly escorted out of the postseason in lopsided fashion each time.

Justin Fields and Russell Wilson — who combined to lead the Steelers to a 10-7 record and a playoff berth last season — ended up in New York. Fields will replace Rodgers with the Jets after agreeing to a two-year deal. Wilson is heading to the Giants on a one-year contract.

Those deals left Rodgers and the Steelers without any other reasonable options. Both sides have their reasons for consummating what is essentially a marriage of convenience.

Rodgers hopes to author a happier ending to his Hall of Fame career after two eventful, if underwhelming, seasons with the Jets. While Rodgers is hardly a long-term solution in Pittsburgh, he is the best option left after the Steelers chose not to use one of their higher picks in April’s draft on a quarterback, instead taking a late-round flyer on former Ohio State star Will

Howard.

The union brings Rodgers and Tomlin — the longest-tenured head coach in major professional North American sports — together after years of what is the football equivalent of flirting.

They’ve long held each other in high esteem and have enjoyed a handful of memorable on-field interactions that went viral. Last fall, they playfully nodded at each other as a sign of respect after Tomlin was forced to burn a timeout when Rodgers tried a quick snap that would have ended with the Steelers being penalized for having too many men on the field.

Pittsburgh is hoping Rodgers has enough left physically to go with a football IQ that remains elite. He was solid if not spectacular last season in New York, throwing for 28 touchdowns against 11 interceptions.

Yet his play on the field often took a back seat to the drama off it as the Jets cycled through coaches and limped to a 5-12 record, with Rodgers spending much of his time in New York defending comments he made on platforms like “The Pat McAfee Show.”

The Steelers are no strangers to drama. If there’s been one constant since the team’s last Super Bowl appearance — a loss to Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers in February 2011

— it’s the ability to employ talented, if mercurial, players.

The list runs the gamut, from Roethlisberger to Antonio Brown to Le’Veon Bell to JuJu Smith-Schuster to George Pickens, traded to Dallas last month.

Pittsburgh has retooled a bit in the offseason, including acquiring two-time Pro Bowl wide receiver DK Metcalf from Seattle. The Steelers quickly signed him to a new five-year deal to bring some stability (and hopefully maturity) to a wide receiver room that’s lacked both.

The one thing Pittsburgh hadn’t done was do the same at quarterback. Tomlin and team president Art Rooney II both kept the door open for Fields and Wilson to return, only to stand by idly when Fields bolted for the Jets and make no serious attempt to retain Wilson.

While the Steelers did bring back Rudolph, a season removed from leading them on an improbable run to the playoffs, he is considered a backup.

The field of experienced players available eventually winnowed down to Rodgers.

His arrival is a stopgap, one that Pittsburgh hopes will keep it competitive until a long-term solution arrives, most likely in the 2026 draft. Until then, Rodgers and the Steelers will try to make the best of a marriage of convenience of their own making.

## Canady, Texas Tech bounce back in women’s CWS

*Associated Press*

OKLAHOMA CITY — NiJaree Canady has achieved almost everything since transferring to Texas Tech from Stanford and signing an NIL deal worth just over \$1 million.

She has led the Red Raiders to three firsts — the Big 12 regular season and tournament titles and a berth in the Women’s College World Series. She was the

National Fastpitch Coaches Association’s Pitcher of the Year for the second consecutive year and leads the nation in wins (34) and ERA (0.97).

The only thing missing is a national championship. After her gritty performance in Game 2 of the best-of-three the championship series with Texas, that goal also is in reach.

Canady gave up a late lead in

a 2-1 loss in Game 1 on Wednesday. She led the Red Raiders to a 4-3 win over the Longhorns on Thursday to force a decisive Game 3 on Friday.

Canady, who threw 88 pitches in Game 1, is battling a soft tissue injury on her left leg suffered in the preseason that has severely limited her practice time. Still, she bounced back and went the distance in Game

2, throwing 107 pitches and working her way out of a jam in the seventh to get the win.

Now comes a deciding Game 3. Canady has been on the hot seat before. She led Stanford to the national semifinals the previous two seasons and was the winning pitcher on Monday when Tech knocked out four-time defending national champion Oklahoma.

# D-backs sweep Braves with 7-run 9th

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Eugenio Suárez hit a go-ahead, two-run double off Raisel Iglesias to cap a seven-run ninth inning as the Arizona Diamondbacks stunned the Atlanta Braves 11-10 on Thursday to sweep a three-game series.

Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit a one-out homer in the ninth and Alek Thomas followed with a two-run shot, both off Scott Blewett, to get the Diamondbacks within 10-7. After Blewett walked the next batter, the Braves brought in closer Iglesias (3-5), who allowed hits to four of the next five to blow a save for the fourth time this season.

Ketel Marte homered for Arizona in the eighth and had an RBI infield single in the ninth that made it 10-8. After Iglesias got a pop for the second out, Ildemaro Vargas hit an RBI single and Suárez completed the rally with his line drive to left.

**Cardinals 6-5, Royals 5-7:** Maikel Garcia homered, doubled and scored three times, and Kansas City beat host St. Louis in the second game of a day-night doubleheader.

Royals starter Cole Ragans pitched three innings in his return from the 15-day injured list with a groin strain. He allowed five runs on five hits, struck out four and walked three.

The Cardinals rallied to take game one of the doubleheader 6-5 on Willson Contreras' RBI single in the 10th inning.

**White Sox 3, Tigers 2 (10):** Tim Elko singled and scored pinch runner Korey Lee in the 10th inning to give host Chicago a walk-off victory over AL-leading Detroit.

The teams split the four-game series. The Tigers swept the White Sox in April in the first of four series between the teams this season.

**Blue Jays 9, Phillies 1:** Bo Bichette hit a two-run homer, Myles Straw and Tyler Heineman each had two hits and three

RBI, and host Toronto handed slumping Philadelphia its sixth loss in seven games.

Alejandro Kirk had three hits, scored once and drove in a run as the Blue Jays took two of three from the Phillies.

**Giants 3, Padres 2:** Robbie Ray struck out nine in seven innings and became the NL's first eight-game winner as San Francisco beat visiting San Diego.

Ray (8-1) allowed two runs and four hits with a walk. The 33-year-old left-hander retired the side in order four times and didn't allow a runner past first base in his final four innings.

The 2021 AL Cy Young Award winner struck out four of the first five hitters he faced and retired 11 in a row after Manny Machado's homer in the third.

**Athletics 14, Twins 3:** Tyler Soderstrom hit a grand slam and a two-run homer, Max Muncy hit a three-run shot in the first inning, and the host Athletics beat Minnesota to snap a nine-game losing streak.

Brent Rooker had three hits, three RBIs and scored three runs for the Athletics.

**Orioles 4, Mariners 3:** Adley Rutschman and Gunnar Henderson hit back-to-back homers in the sixth inning, and Baltimore won at Seattle to complete a three-game sweep and extend its season-best winning streak to six games.

Cal Raleigh hit his major league-leading 24th homer of the season for the Mariners, a two-run shot in the fifth that made it 3-1.

**Dodgers 6, Mets 5:** Michael Conforto drove in the tiebreaking run in a three-run eighth inning as Los Angeles rallied for a victory over visiting New York and a split of the NL powers' four-game series.

Conforto has struggled in his first season with the Dodgers, but he drove a two-out single to left off Reed Garrett (1-2) for the Dodgers' third unearned run of the eighth.

Will Smith delivered an RBI double moments earlier, and he scored the tying run when the Mets misplayed Andy Pages' grounder to Brett Baty at third.

Mookie Betts had an RBI double and reached base four times for the Dodgers, who went 4-3 on their homestand against New York's two teams.

Alex Vesia (2-0) got one out in the eighth. Tanner Scott earned his 11th save with his second straight solid performance during a rough season.

Pete Alonso, Brandon Nimmo and Starling Marte hit early homers and David Peterson pitched seven effective innings of three-run ball for the Mets, who lost for only the third time in 12 games.

**Cubs 7, Nationals 1:** Ian Happ homered and drove in four runs on three hits, Pete Crow-Armstrong added his team-leading 16th home run and Chicago won at Washington to earn its seventh consecutive series victory.

Happ connected for his two-run, 405-foot drive off the facade of the third deck in right field against Jackson Rutledge in the sixth. In the ninth, he followed Reese McGuire's run-scoring infield single with his own RBI single to center off Eduardo Salazar.

**Yankees 4, Guardians 0:** Max Fried allowed only an infield single to José Ramírez three batters into the game in six innings to bounce back from his first loss, and New York beat visiting Cleveland.

Cody Bellinger hit a two-run homer and added an RBI single as the Yankees headed into their first meeting against rival Boston with their 16th win in 22 games. Jazz Chisholm Jr. added a late run-scoring single.

Aaron Judge had a hit in his only at-bat, reached three times and was intentionally walked twice for the second time this season. Judge ended the night with a .392 average.

Six days after allowing six runs and eight hits at Dodger Stadium, Fried (8-1) had his fourth scoreless outing this season and allowed one hit for the second time this season. He also allowed one hit against Tampa Bay on May 2.

**Rays 4, Rangers 3:** Taylor Walls hit a two-run single to second baseman Marcus Semien in the ninth inning and Tampa Bay rallied to beat visiting Texas.

Junior Caminero, who homered off Jack Leiter in the second inning, had an RBI single against Robert Garcia (1-3) to pull the Rays to 3-2 in the ninth. After Jake Mangum flied out for the second out, Christopher Morel singled to load the bases. Walls then hit a grounder to Semien, but no one was covering first base and Caminero came around to score from second for the winning run.

It marked the second straight night the Rays won on a defensive miscue. On Wednesday night, Tampa Bay took advantage of Rangers pitcher Kumar Rocker forgetting to cover first base to score a run and then scored another when Rocker then held the ball as Jonathan Aranda scored from second.

**Astros 8, Pirates 2:** Framber Valdez pitched seven strong innings, Isaac Paredes homered twice, and Houston won at Pittsburgh after a lengthy rain delay.

Valdez (6-4) won his fifth straight decision by limiting the Pirates to two runs on five hits with three walks and a season-high 11 strikeouts after the delay pushed the start of the game back 3 hours and 22 minutes. The left-hander is 5-0 with a 1.72 ERA in his last six starts.

Paredes hit his 13th homer of the season leading off the fourth against Mitch Keller (1-8). His 14th, a two-run shot in the ninth, put the game away. Jeremy Peña added three hits and drove in a run for the Astros. The shortstop is batting .361 since moving to the leadoff spot on April 27.