

Israel, Iran trade strikes for a 3rd day

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Israel unleashed air strikes across Iran for a third day on Sunday and threatened even greater force as some Iranian missiles evaded Israeli air defenses to strike buildings in the heart of the country. Planned talks on Iran's rapidly advancing nuclear program, which could provide an off-ramp, were canceled.

The region braced for a protracted conflict after Israel's surprise bombardment of Iran's nuclear and military sites on Friday killed several top generals and nuclear scientists. Neither side showed any sign of backing down.

Israel's strikes have killed at least 406 people in Iran and wounded another 654, according to a human rights group that has long tracked the country, Washington-based Human Rights Activists. Iran's government has not offered overall casualty figures.

Iran said Israel struck two oil refineries, raising the prospect of a broader assault on Iran's heavily sanctioned energy industry that could affect global markets.

The Israeli military, in a social media post, warned Iranians to

evacuate arms factories, signaling a further widening of the campaign.

Israel, the sole though undeclared nuclear-armed state in the Middle East, said it launched the attack to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. The two countries have been adversaries for decades.

Explosions shook Iran's capital, Tehran, at around noon and again around 3:30 p.m. Semiofficial news agencies close to Iran's Revolutionary Guard reported one strike in the area of Vali-e Asr Square downtown and another in a neighborhood named for the air force, which is headquartered there.

Sirens went off across much of Israel again around 4 p.m., warning of what would be Iran's first daytime assault since the fighting began.

President Donald Trump has expressed full support for Israel's actions while warning Iran that it can avoid further destruction only by agreeing to a new nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Sunday that if Israel's strikes on Iran stop, then "our responses will also stop." He said the United States "is a partner in these attacks and must

take responsibility."

Israel said 14 people there have been killed and 390 wounded. Iran has fired over 270 missiles, 22 of which got through the country's sophisticated multi-tiered air defenses to make impact, according to Israeli figures. The country's main international airport and airspace remained closed for a third day.

Israeli strikes targeted Iran's Defense Ministry early Sunday after hitting air defenses, military bases and sites associated with its nuclear program.

The killing of several top generals and nuclear scientists in targeted strikes indicated that Israeli intelligence has penetrated Iran at the highest levels.

Araghchi said Israel targeted an oil refinery near Tehran and another in a province on the Persian Gulf. He said Iran targeted "economic" sites in Israel, without elaborating.

Semiofficial Iranian news agencies reported that an Israeli drone strike caused a "strong explosion" at an Iranian natural gas processing plant. The extent of damage at the South Pars natural gas field was not immediately clear. Such sites have air-defense systems around them, which Israel has been targeting.

In a sign that Iran expects Israeli strikes to continue, state television reported that metro stations and mosques would be made available as bomb shelters beginning Sunday night.

In Israel, at least six people, including a 10-year-old and a 9-year-old, were killed when a missile hit an apartment building in Bat Yam, near Tel Aviv. Daniel Hadad, a local police commander, said 180 people were wounded and seven were missing.

An Associated Press reporter saw streets lined with damaged or destroyed buildings, bombed-out cars and shards of glass. Some people could be seen leaving with suitcases.

Another four people, including a 13-year-old, were killed and 24 wounded when a missile struck a building in the Arab town of Tamra in northern Israel. A strike on the central city of Rehovot wounded 42.

World leaders made urgent calls to deescalate. The attack on nuclear sites set a "dangerous precedent," China's foreign minister said Saturday. The region is already on edge as Israel seeks to annihilate Hamas, an Iranian ally, in the Gaza Strip, where war still rages after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack.

Indo-Pacific Command raises force protection level

Stars and Stripes

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has raised its force protection condition to Bravo and implemented additional Charlie-level security measures, citing potential real-world threats.

In a message distributed Friday to units across the region, the command directed the immediate execution of Charlie Measure 6, which discontinues

the Trusted Traveler program. All personnel and visitors must now undergo full identification checks before entering military installations.

Units have also been instructed to evaluate and strengthen off-installation security.

"Commanders shall increase scrutiny on worldwide travel," the order states, directing units

to closely monitor travel through the Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System, ensure completion of Individual Antiterrorism Plans, require foreign travel briefings, and consultation of the Foreign Clearance Guide prior to authorizing travel.

The message did not elaborate on the nature of the threat. Personnel have been directed

to contact their unit's anti-terrorism representative for further instructions.

The command, headquartered in Hawaii, is responsible for military operations across the Indo-Pacific region, an area covering more than half the globe and including strategic partners such as Australia, Japan, the Philippines and South Korea.

House panel passes Pentagon budget bill

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has yet to submit a detailed budget proposal to Congress, but the House is moving forward with a spending plan for the Pentagon anyway.

The House Appropriations Committee on Thursday approved a \$831.5 billion defense spending bill in a 36-27 vote that keeps the base Pentagon budget flat for fiscal 2026, which begins Oct. 1.

The measure next goes to the House floor.

Democrats on the committee overwhelmingly voted against the legislation, criticizing provisions that target diversity initiatives and abortion access for service members and a lack of funding for a longstanding program that arms Ukraine in its war with Russia.

“Either you stand up for liberty where it is being fought for or you don’t — there’s no wavering that can happen,” said Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio, who unsuccessfully tried to add \$300 million to the measure for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.

House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., said lawmakers will work to include Ukraine aid through other means but cannot include it in the bill because it could jeopardize Republican votes needed to pass the legislation.

“I want to get a defense bill done, and I’m not interested in dividing those who will support it,” he said.

The committee also rejected a proposal from Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., to prohibit funding for changing the names of eight Navy ships that are named after American civil rights leaders.

The amendment came as a response to reports that the Navy plans to rename a replenishment oiler named after gay rights leader and Navy veteran Harvey Milk and is considering name changes to other ships. Republicans argued naming authorities rested with the executive branch and the Navy secretary and the proposal would hinder Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s efforts to root out diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in the military.

“This amendment would tie the secretary’s hands, preventing efforts to de-politicize our military and to shift focus away from activism toward the needs of our sailors and the readiness of our fleet,” said Rep. Andrew Clyde, R-Ga., a Navy veteran.

Democrats were able to push through several other amendments, however.

The committee approved a pro-

posal from Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif., to prohibit funding for activities that violate the Posse Comitatus Act, which bars the use of federal troops on domestic soil for policing purposes.

The overall defense bill advanced out of the committee with just one Democratic vote, from Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington.

The legislation provides service members with a 3.8% pay raise, cuts 45,000 civilian jobs, slows permanent change-of-station moves to save more than \$662 million and allocates \$13 billion for Trump’s Golden Dome missile defense system.

Lawmakers expressed frustration with the lack of a full budget proposal from the Defense Department. Hegseth told the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday that Congress would have it “very soon.”

Air Force slashes its request to Congress for F-35s in half

Bloomberg

The Air Force has cut in half its request to Congress for its signature F-35s, dealing a blow to Lockheed Martin, the top U.S. defense contractor.

A Defense Department procurement request document sent to Capitol Hill last week asked for 24 of the planes, down from 48 that was forecast last year.

The proposed cut is significant because the Air Force is the largest customer for the world’s biggest weapons program. The scaling back of the F-35 request may reflect one way the service is revising its funding for fiscal 2026 to comply with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s plan to shift projected U.S. military spending by 8% over the next five years.

The request could undergo substantial changes as it moves through Congress. Lockheed

Martin has many supporters in Congress who may be able to change the outlook for the F-35 program.

Lockheed Martin shares fell as much as 7% on Wednesday, the most since March 21.

Byron Callan, a defense analyst with Capital Alpha Partners LLC, wrote in a note that Lockheed Martin “might be able to offset a sales decline” if it won increments of the new unmanned Air Force fighter drone program and portions of the ‘Golden Dome’ missile and air defense system.

“We are skeptical that major new international customers will emerge, including India and the United Arab Emirates,” he said.

Manned aircraft were not among the 17 areas that Hegseth protected from cuts. One area he did safeguard was the Air Force’s newest drone program.

North Korea relaunched compromised destroyer

By DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

North Korea says it has repaired and relaunched a naval destroyer that capsized during a failed launch attempt last month, but defense experts remain skeptical about the regime’s claim of a quick recovery.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the relaunch of the 5,000-ton warship Thursday at Rajin Shipyard on the country’s northeastern coast, the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported Friday. The event came just three weeks after that vessel capsized and sustained hull damage during a launch attempt at Chongjin Shipyard, about 50 miles south of Rajin.

Despite the setback, KCNA on Friday portrayed the relaunch as a testament to North Korea’s mar-

itime strength. The rapid repairs are proof of the communist regime’s “progress and lead of the warship-building industry,” the report said.

However, defense analysts have questioned that narrative.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, said in a report Thursday that satellite photos show the warship had likely been transferred to Rajin by June 7. The imagery also suggests water was being pumped from the vessel and that key components, were covered with netting, the report said.

It seems “hardly possible” that North Korea was able to complete the repairs in such a short time-frame, said Yang Uk, a research fellow at the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

Anti-Trump protesters march across US

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Masses of demonstrators packed into streets, parks and plazas across the United States on Saturday to protest President Donald Trump, marching through downtowns and small towns, blaring anti-authoritarian chants mixed with support for protecting democracy and immigrant rights.

Organizers of the “No Kings” demonstrations said millions had marched in hundreds of events. Governors across the U.S. had urged calm and vowed no tolerance for violence, while some mobilized the National Guard ahead of marchers gathering.

Confrontations were isolated. But police in Los Angeles, where protests over federal immigration enforcement raids erupted a week earlier and sparked demonstrations across the country, used tear

gas and crowd-control munitions to clear out protesters after the formal event ended. Officers in Portland also fired tear gas and projectiles to disperse a crowd that protested in front of a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building well into the evening.

And in Salt Lake City, Utah, police were investigating a shooting during a march downtown that left one person critically injured. Three people were taken into custody, including a man believed to be the shooter, who also suffered a gunshot wound, according to Police Chief Brian Redd.

Redd said it was too early to tell if the shooting was politically motivated and whether those involved knew each other. The shooter appeared to be walking alongside the group of thousands who were

marching, he added. Video feeds showed demonstrators running for safety as gunshots rang out.

Huge, boisterous crowds marched, danced, drummed, and chanted shoulder-to-shoulder in New York, Denver, Chicago, Austin and Los Angeles, some behind “no kings” banners. Atlanta’s 5,000-capacity event quickly reached its limit, with thousands more gathered outside barriers to hear speakers in front of the state Capitol. Officials in Seattle estimated that more than 70,000 people attended the city’s largest rally downtown, the Seattle Times reported.

Trump was in Washington for a military parade marking the Army’s 250th anniversary that coincides with the president’s birthday. About 200 protesters assembled in northwest Washington’s Lo-

gan Circle and chanted “Trump must go now” before erupting in cheers. A larger-than-life puppet of Trump — a caricature of the president wearing a crown and sitting on a golden toilet — was wheeled through the crowd.

In some places, organizers handed out little American flags while others flew their flags upside down, a sign of distress. Mexican flags, which have become a fixture of the Los Angeles protests against immigration raids, also made an appearance at some demonstrations Saturday.

The demonstrations come on the heels of the protests over the federal immigration enforcement raids that began last week and Trump ordering the National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles, where protesters blocked a freeway and set cars on fire.

Suspect in killing, shooting of lawmakers still at large

Associated Press

BROOKLYN PARK, Minn. — A massive search stretched into its second day Sunday for a man who authorities say wore a mask and posed as a police officer while fatally shooting a Democratic state lawmaker in her suburban Minneapolis home, an act Gov. Tim Walz called “a politically motivated assassination.” Authorities said the suspect also shot and wounded a second lawmaker and was trying to flee the area.

Former House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, were killed in their Brooklyn Park home early Saturday. Sen. John Hoffman, also a Democrat, and his wife, Yvette, were injured at their Champlin address, about 9 miles away.

Authorities identified the suspect as 57-year-old Vance Boelter, and the FBI issued a reward of

up to \$50,000 for information leading to his arrest and conviction. They shared a photo taken Saturday of Boelter wearing a tan cowboy hat and asked the public to report sightings.

Authorities had not yet given any details on a possible motive.

A Minnesota official told AP the suspect’s writings also contained information targeting prominent lawmakers who have been outspoken in favor of abortion rights. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing.

Law enforcement agents recovered several AK-style firearms from the suspect’s vehicle, and he was believed to still be armed with a pistol, a person familiar with the matter told AP. The person could not publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Death toll rises in San Antonio flooding as all missing have been found

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The death toll from heavy rains that inundated parts of San Antonio has risen to 13, and all those missing have been found, authorities said Saturday.

More than 7 inches of rain fell over a span of hours on Thursday, causing fast-rising floodwaters to carry more than a dozen cars into a creek.

Some people climbed trees to escape. Firefighters rescued more than 70 people across the nation’s seventh-largest city.

More than a dozen cars got stuck or overturned in Beital Creek. The San Antonio Fire Department said 11 of those

who died were found in the Perrin Beitel search area around the creek. One person was found several miles upstream.

Among those who were missing was Stevie Richards, 42, the San Antonio Express-News reported. His wife, Angel, said she was on the phone with him when his car was swept away shortly before sunrise.

“As I was talking to him, he said, ‘Oh, the car’s floating’... It wasn’t even a whole minute later that I could hear it hitting up against something, him screaming and cussing, and I could hear the water take the phone. It happened really, really fast,” she told newspaper.

Russian offensive pushes into north Ukraine

The Washington Post

KYIV — Russian forces are hammering cities in Ukraine's east and pushing farther into Ukrainian territory in the course of a summer offensive to seize the momentum on the battlefield and carve out buffer zones to secure areas already under its control.

Fighting continues along the 620-mile front line, including the eastern Donetsk region, which Ukrainian officials and analysts say is the main focus of Moscow's efforts. Russian officials also say their troops have moved into the Dnipropetrovsk region — a claim that authorities in Kyiv deny.

Ukrainian officials said Russia's claims of advances in this previously untouched region are an attempt to score propaganda points and convince Western officials that it is winning the war.

The Russian offensive is "not that successful, to put it mildly," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an interview with Germany's *Bild*, published Thursday. Russian President Vladimir Putin "feels that his economy is suffering now, but he wants to buy more time before tough sanctions are imposed because he can hold out for a while."

But the fighting is intensify-

ing in particular in the northern Sumy region, which was the launch point for Ukraine's incursion into Russia's Kursk region last year. The Ukrainians have since been largely forced out of Kursk, and Russian troops are now moving into the Sumy region, seizing villages close to the border.

Russian attacks have mounted on the region's capital, also called Sumy, which lies about 18 miles from the Russian border. Ballistic missiles, glide bombs, drones and multiple-rocket launch systems have been used on the city, local officials said.

Russian troops have advanced to about 12 miles from

Sumy, at their closest point, Ihor Shapoval, head of the Red Cross for the Sumy region, said.

The situation is difficult but not critical," Shapoval said by text message. "There isn't widespread fear, but there is anxiety, especially for children."

Communities close to the fighting are being told to evacuate. About 100 to 150 people relocate every day to safer areas from the communities surrounding Sumy, Shapoval said.

City authorities have not given an order for Sumy to be evacuated. Still, locals say that there are noticeably fewer people — especially children — on the street.

G7 leaders gather for summit overshadowed by crisis

Associated Press

BANFF, Alberta — Leaders of some of the world's biggest economic powers arrive in the Canadian Rockies on Sunday for a Group of Seven summit, overshadowed by an escalating conflict between Israel and Iran and President Donald Trump's unresolved trade war with allies and rivals alike.

Israel's strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliation is the latest sign of a more volatile world as Trump seeks to withdraw the

U.S. from its role as world policeman.

Speaking on a flight to Canada to attend the summit, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he had discussed efforts to de-escalate the crisis with Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as other world leaders.

As summit host, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has decided to abandon the annual practice of issuing a joint statement, or communique, at

the end of the meeting.

With other leaders wanting to talk to Trump in an effort to talk him out of imposing tariffs, the summit risks being a series of bilateral conversations rather than a show of unity.

Trump is the summit wild card. Looming over the meeting are his inflammatory threats to make Canada the 51st state and take over Greenland.

Trump is scheduled to arrive late Sunday in Kananaskis, Alberta.

Bilateral meetings between other leaders are possible Sunday, but the summit program does not get underway until Monday.

The war in Ukraine will be on the agenda. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is due to attend the summit and is expected to meet with Trump, a reunion coming just months after their bruising Oval Office encounter which laid bare the risks of having a meeting with the U.S. president.

Long confirmed to lead the IRS he once sought to abolish

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former U.S. Rep. Billy Long of Missouri was confirmed on Thursday to lead the Internal Revenue Service, giving the beleaguered agency he once sought to abolish a permanent commissioner after months of acting leaders and massive staffing cuts that have threatened to derail next year's tax filing season.

The Senate confirmed Long on a 53-44 vote despite Democrats' concerns about the Repu-

blican's past work for a firm that pitched a fraud-ridden coronavirus pandemic-era tax break and about contributions he received after President Donald Trump nominated him to serve as IRS commissioner.

While in Congress, where he served from 2011 to 2023, Long sponsored legislation to get rid of the IRS, the agency he is now leading. Long has no background in tax administration.

Long will take over an IRS undergoing massive change, in-

cluding layoffs and voluntary retirements of tens of thousands of workers and accusations that the Department of Government Efficiency mishandled sensitive taxpayer data. Unions and advocacy organizations have sued to block DOGE's access to the information.

The IRS was one of the highest-profile agencies still without a Senate-confirmed leader. Before Long's confirmation, the IRS shuffled through four acting leaders, including one who

resigned over a deal between the IRS and the Department of Homeland Security to share immigrants' data with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

After leaving Congress to mount an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate, Long worked with a firm that distributed the pandemic-era employee retention tax credit. That tax credit program was eventually shut down after then-IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel determined that it was fraudulent.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Burglary suspect nabbed after not-so-hot pursuit

SC NORTH CHARLESTON — Police in South Carolina engaged in a not-so-hot pursuit as they chased a tractor excavator down a main highway for more than an hour at the speed an average adult walks.

The June 8 chase reached speeds of 3 mph in North Charleston, police said.

Officers on a different call saw the construction equipment with treads and a shovel in front go across U.S. Highway 78 around 3:30 a.m., North Charleston Police wrote in their report. A few minutes later, they got a burglary call from a business that was damaged and saw the excavator slowly heading away, police said.

Several cars immediately joined in the very slow speed pursuit. The excavator was going so slow that the cruisers would have to briefly stop several times a minute to not pass the construction equipment.

The chase went on for an hour and 12 minutes before the excavator drove on to the Charleston County Fairgrounds property, where it got stuck.

The 53-year-old driver of the excavator was charged with failure to stop for a blue light and two counts of malicious injury to real property.

Ten Commandments law challenged by families

AR LITTLE ROCK — Seven Arkansas families filed a lawsuit challenging an upcoming state requirement that public school classrooms have posted copies of the Ten Commandments,

saying the new law will violate their constitutional rights.

The federal lawsuit challenges a measure Republican Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed into law earlier this year.

The Arkansas law takes effect in August and requires the Ten Commandments to be prominently displayed in public school classrooms and libraries.

“Permanently posting the Ten Commandments in every classroom and library — rendering them unavoidable — unconstitutionally pressures students into religious observance, veneration, and adoption of the state’s favored religious scripture,” the lawsuit said.

Senator urges sale of 2M acres of US land

UT SALT LAKE CITY — More than 2 million acres of federal lands would be sold to states or other entities under a budget proposal from Utah Republican Sen. Mike Lee, reviving a longtime ambition of Western conservatives to cede lands to local control after a similar proposal failed in the House.

Lee, who chairs the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, included a mandate for the sales in a draft provision of the GOP’s sweeping tax cut package released Wednesday.

Sharp disagreement over such sales has laid bare a split among Republicans who support wholesale transfers of federal property to spur development and generate revenue, and other lawmakers who are staunchly opposed.

Land in 11 Western states from Alaska to New Mexico would be eligible for sale. Montana was carved out of the pro-

posal after lawmakers there objected.

Victims livestreamed Vegas shooting, cops say

NV LAS VEGAS — The two people killed in a shooting on the Las Vegas Strip captured it on video while livestreaming to their shared YouTube channel, according to a police report.

The married victims were identified by the Clark County coroner’s office as Tanisha Finley, 43, and Rodney Finley, 44. Both died of multiple gunshot wounds.

Las Vegas police said the shooting June 8 near the landmark Bellagio fountains was an isolated incident between the victims and the suspect, who had been feuding on social media since at least 2023. The suspect, identified by police as Manuel D. Ruiz, surrendered to authorities June 9.

US pulls out of pact to help restore salmon

WA SEATTLE — President Donald Trump on Thursday pulled the U.S. out of an agreement with Washington, Oregon and four American Indian tribes to work together to restore salmon populations and boost tribal clean energy development in the Pacific Northwest, deriding the plan as “radical environmentalism” that could have resulted in the breaching of four controversial dams on the Snake River.

The deal, known as the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement, was reached in late 2023 and heralded by the Biden administration, tribes and conservationists. It allowed for a pause in decades of litigation over the

harm the federal government’s operation of dams in the Northwest has done to the fish. Under it, the federal government said it planned to spend more than \$1 billion over a decade to help recover depleted salmon runs. The government also said that it would build enough new clean energy projects in the Pacific Northwest to replace the hydropower generated by the Lower Snake River dams — the Ice Harbor, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Lower Granite — should Congress ever agree to remove them.

In a statement, the White House said former President Joe Biden’s decision to sign the agreement “placed concerns about climate change above the Nation’s interests in reliable energy sources.”

Lawmaker charged with sending child porn

SC COLUMBIA — A Republican member of the South Carolina House who prosecutors say used the screen name “joebiden69” has been arrested and charged with 10 counts of distributing sexual abuse material involving children.

RJ May was arrested at his Lexington County home after a lengthy investigation and was ordered Thursday by a federal judge to remain jailed until his trial. The three-term Republican is accused of using “joebiden69” to exchange 220 different files of toddlers and young children involved in sex acts on the Kik social media network for about five days in spring 2024, according to court documents that graphically detailed the videos.

— From wire reports

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Panthers top Oilers, move 1 win from repeat

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Brad Marchand is making more highlights for his new team, Sam Bennett is piling up the goals again and Florida is on the verge of hoisting the Stanley Cup for the second year in a row.

Marchand scored twice, Bennett had his playoff-leading 15th goal and the Panthers beat the Edmonton Oilers 5-2 in Game 5 of the final on Saturday night to take a 3-2 series lead.

Florida improved to 10-3 on the road during this run, matching the NHL record for victories away from home in a single playoffs. The Panthers can hoist the Cup again as soon as Tuesday night if they win Game 6 on home ice in Sunrise.

"It was very solid game, definitely," goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky said. "But the series continues and we are excited

about the next game. It's going to be a big game."

Florida this time built a multi-goal lead and built on it, unlike a couple of previous games in the final. Bobrovsky stopped 19 of the 21 shots he faced, making some important saves when needed, and was aided by lockdown defense that took ice away from the Oilers.

Marchand, Bennett and Sam Reinhart provided the offense. Marchand joined Mario Lemieux as the only players in the past half-century to score five-plus goals in a final multiple times, and his 13 career goals in the final are the most among active players.

"I'm just enjoying every moment," said Marchand, who is in his fourth final and third since winning the Cup with Boston in 2011. "It's such a special group of guys, and I'm having so much

fun here right now. I honestly feel like a young guy in the league again, just excited to be part of the group."

Connor McDavid scored his first goal of the series after the Oilers fell behind 3-0. Reinhart's came 46 seconds later to restore the Panthers' three-goal lead, and by the time Corey Perry scored with 3:13 left, it was too late.

Eetu Luostarinen sealed it with an empty-netter with 1:19 left, silencing the once fired-up crowd for a final time.

"We just got to play our game earlier," Edmonton defenseman Darnell Nurse said. "We can all agree in our room that we can be better."

The Oilers' power play went 0 for 3, a product of Florida's aggressive penalty kill knocking McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and the rest of the top unit out of

their usual rhythm.

Calvin Pickard lost for the first time in eight starts this spring, allowing four goals on 18 shots. He got the nod over Stuart Skinner after entering in relief and winning Game 4 to improve to 7-0, a record that is now 7-1.

Skinner could be back in for Game 6, with the Panthers aiming to close things out following another cross-continental trip back to the other corner of North America. They are in this spot after bouncing back from blowing a three-goal lead and falling in overtime in Game 4, taking advantage of their depth to send Edmonton to the brink again.

"We've been pretty good at bouncing back all playoffs," Marchand said. "We learned a pretty good lesson there last game, and thought we did a much better job in this one."

Thunder's embrace of tough moments paid off in Game 4

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The book is called "The Obstacle Is the Way." It's a gift that Thunder coach Mark Daigneault gave to Oklahoma City center Isaiah Hartenstein during a trying time this season, knowing the voracious reader would figure out the meaning.

Message delivered.

"I read it and remembered that everything happens for a reason," Hartenstein said. "And after that, everything worked out great."

Such has been the story of the Thunder's season. Such was the story of Game 4 of the NBA Finals. Faced with the biggest challenge of the season — a 10-point deficit in the second half, staring at a very real chance of the Indiana Pacers grabbing the almost-insurmountable 3-1 lead in the title round — OKC, once again, came away saying everything worked out great.

Led by a dazzling and frantic finish from the reigning MVP and scoring champion Shai Gilgeous-Alexander — who had 15 of his 35 points in the final five minutes or so — the Thunder rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Indiana 111-104 on Friday night. The series is now tied 2-2, heading back to Oklahoma City for Game 5 on Monday night, and it's the Thunder who have home-court advantage again.

"That was an uphill game against a great

team," Daigneault said after Game 4 in Indianapolis, simultaneously lauding his team while also raving about the Pacers. "This is one of the best teams in the league in the last couple months, since All-Star break. They're a hard team to beat here. They're a hard team to beat, period. I thought we gutted it out on a night when we didn't have a lot going, especially offensively."

It was a night when the Thunder made only three 3-pointers and were shooting 45% with about five minutes left before Gilgeous-Alexander got going. He took 11 shots in the final 4:40 — three field-goal attempts, one of them a 3-point try, and eight free throws — and made them all. A perfect finish, on a night when little had gone to plan.

"It's unbelievable," Daigneault said. "He really didn't have it going a lot of the night. He was laboring. We had a hard time shaking him free. For him to be able to flip the switch like that and get the rhythm he got just speaks to how great of a player he is."

It might not have seemed so to the outside world — those who fixated on things like OKC's 68-14 franchise-best record, its 16-game lead over its nearest challenger in the Western Conference standings, a record number of double-digit wins and how all of it was

led by the MVP and scoring champion in Gilgeous-Alexander. But the Thunder did, in fact, face some adversity this season.

They played without Chet Holmgren and Hartenstein for a while during the year. There was some flux to the lineup at times. Everybody probably had some sort of mini-slump along the way. There was a Game 1 loss in the second round to Denver. And Daigneault embraced every bit of that pain, knowing that for Oklahoma City to get to where it wants to go, adversity was going to present itself.

Like the being-down-10, late-third-quarter sort of adversity that came up in Game 4.

Just like Hartenstein was led to believe by the book, everything worked out great.

"We haven't really had to show it a lot this year, with the success we had in the regular season," guard Jalen Williams said shortly before the team left for the flight back home, where a huge crowd showed up in the middle of the night to greet the team at the airport — as they often do. "We've had a lot of ups and downs during the playoffs. We've just learned from those experiences. That is something Mark is really big on; every game you should be able to learn, then the next game you should be able to apply something and get better at it. That's what we're trying to do every time."

Burns holds steady for slim US Open lead

Associated Press

OAKMONT, Pa. — The closest Sam Burns has come to a major championship is sharing a house with a close friend who already has three of them. He has been inspired by Scottie Scheffler the last few years. The next step is to join him as a major champion.

Burns held steady after missing a short par putt late Saturday in the U.S. Open, responding with a beautiful pitch for a tap-in birdie and two scary putts down the hill from inside 60 feet to save par on the 18th hole at rain-soaked Oakmont for a 1-under 69.

That gave him a one-shot lead over major-tested Adam Scott and J.J. Spaun, with Viktor Hovland not far behind as the only four players to survive par.

Burns was at 4-under 206. He has five PGA Tour titles, the last one more than two years ago, and is coming off a playoff loss last week in the Canadian Open.

At stake for Burns is a chance for the 28-year-old from Louisiana to become the sixth American at 30 or under to capture his first major since 2020. Scheffler has won 19 times worldwide the last three years, including three majors, most recently last month at the PGA Championship.

“Scottie’s obviously an incredible player. I don’t think I need to say that,” Burns said with a laugh. “We obviously spend a lot of time together and being able to talk to him and just kind of learn from him and ask him questions, it’s been really cool.”

Scheffler has won his three majors in what turned out to be blowouts. Sunday at Oakmont was shaping up to be anything but that.

Scott, who only climbed back into the top 50 in the world less than a year ago and hasn’t seriously challenge in a major in nearly seven years, became only the third player at par or better for the opening three rounds

in a U.S. Open at Oakmont.

Scott birdied three of his last six holes for a 67, getting into the final group when J.J. Spaun made bogey from the bunker on the 18th hole and shot 69. Scott is the only player among the top 10 who has won a major. That was 12 years ago at the Masters. No one has ever gone more than 11 years between their first and second major titles.

He knows this will be a test. Everyone around him on that leaderboard is younger, and most hit the ball farther. Nobody over 40 has won a major since Phil Mickelson took the PGA at age 50 in 2021. Nobody over 40 has won a U.S. Open since Payne Stewart in 1999.

“I started hitting it better off the tee in the last month, and usually over my career, I’ve seen that bleed through the rest of the game,” Scott said.

But nobody among this group of top contenders has memories of what it’s like to close on one of golf’s biggest stages. If Scott pulls it off Sunday, he’ll become the second-oldest winner of America’s national championship, behind Hale Irwin, who was 45 when he won at Medinah in 1990.

“Putting ourselves in these positions doesn’t just happen by fluke,” Scott said. “I really haven’t been in this kind of position for five or six years, or feeling like I’m that player. But that’s what I’m always working towards. It’s not that easy to figure it all out.

“But if I were to come away with it tomorrow, it would be a hell of a round of golf and an exclamation point on my career.”

Spaun, who lost in a playoff at The Players Championship in March, kept pace with Burns throughout the back nine until the end. He looked comfortable under the pressure, making only two bogeys while matching pars with Burns over seven straight holes.

“It seemed like we were kind of back and forth,” Spaun said.

“He would take the lead, I would take the lead, I would fall back, whatever. But it was fun. You can’t really play against your opponent; you got to play this course. There’s just so much on demand with every shot.”

The other survivor to par was Hovland, who has been smiling as much as anyone on a course that has been exasperating to so many all week. Hovland salvaged a bogey from an opening tee shot into the bushes and an exquisite shot off the muddied cart path.

But Hovland hit the pin on the uphill ninth hole for birdie and hit an amazing wedge from the cabbage left of the 17th green for a tap-in birdie. He closed with a bogey from the rain-soaked rough on the 18th for a 70 and was three behind.

“I’m well aware that I’ve got a chance tomorrow, and if I shoot a low round of golf tomorrow then anything can happen,” Hovland said. “But there’s a lot of good players around me. Adam Scott played a brilliant round today, just didn’t really miss a shot. That forces me to play some really good golf tomorrow.”

Carlos Ortiz turned in one of the most remarkable performances by going bogey-free for 30 consecutive holes. The streak ended on the 18th, but the Mexican still had a 67 and was very much in range at even-par 210.

Missing from the mix was Scheffler, the world’s No. 1 player who had won three of his last four tournaments coming into the U.S. Open. He never found any momentum, with one critical stretch coming right before the turn.

After holing a 20-foot birdie putt on the sixth, Scheffler saved par after driving into the rough on No. 7 and hitting wedge to 3 feet. But then what looked like a tap-in par on the long par-3 eighth turned into a shocking miss.

Scheffler wound up with a 70, moving him from a tie for 23rd to just outside the top 10. But he was eight shots behind Burns.

“I put myself in this position,” Scheffler said. “It’s not the position I want to be in, but I’ve done a good job of hanging in there and staying in the tournament.”

The best news for this U.S. Open was that it finished the third round without weather getting in the way. Oakmont received an inch of rain from when played ended on Friday evening. The USGA offered to refund tickets to spectators who didn’t want to traipse through the muck.

Divots taken from the fairways looked like pelts, and the greens were noticeable softer and more receptive. There was one spell midway through the round when umbrellas were out and the sun was shining.

Burns picked up birdies with a wedge from the fairway to a back pin on No. 5 and a tee shot to 7 feet on the accessible par-3 13th. Equally important were the three times he saved par from the fairway after getting out of position off the tee.

“I didn’t drive the ball as well as I would have liked to. But when I got out of position I feel like I did a good job of getting myself back in the fairway, having a wedge or short iron in my hand and giving myself a chance for par,” he said. “I was able to convert some of those and kind of kept the momentum going.”

After the round, it was a night back at the house with Scheffler, where the conversation is more about kids than about golf.

“The conversation in the morning, we just hang out,” Scheffler said. “There will be two little kids running around. There’s nothing crazy, there’s not much to say. Sam’s been preparing for moments like this for a long time, and he’s put himself in position to win the golf tournament.”

Ohtani, Kershaw lead Dodgers over Giants

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—Shohei Ohtani hit two homers and Clayton Kershaw pitched seven scoreless innings of three-hit ball in the Los Angeles Dodgers' 11-5 victory over the San Francisco Giants on Saturday night.

Ohtani led off with his 24th homer, ending a 10-game homer drought—his longest since joining the Dodgers last season. The three-time MVP added another solo shot in the sixth for his third multi-homer game of the season and the 22nd of his career.

"It did feel like I hadn't hit a homer in a while," Ohtani said through his interpreter. "In terms of the context of the two homers, I think the first homer was more significant, just being able to score early in the game."

The 37-year-old Kershaw (2-0) gave a vintage performance in the sixth and best start of his 18th major league season. The lefty needed just 81 pitches to finish seven innings.

Casey Schmitt hit a grand slam in his second straight game for San Francisco, connecting off Dodgers utilityman Kiké Hernández during the Giants' five-run ninth inning.

Diamondbacks 8, Padres 7: Geraldo Perdomo's bases-loaded triple tied the game and Josh Naylor's infield hit scored Perdomo with the winning run as host Arizona scored five times in the ninth to shock San Diego.

It was 7-3 going to the ninth. Pavin Smith, Gabriel Moreno and Alek Thomas singled against Padres closer Robert Suárez (1-2), working in a non-save situation.

Ketel Marte beat out an infield hit to score a run and set the stage for Perdomo, who lined one into the right-field corner to score all three runs. Adrian Morejon relieved and Naylor, on the first pitch, hit a grounder to first but Perdomo beat the throw home.

Cubs 2, Pirates 1: Dansby Swanson homered, Matthew Boyd pitched six sharp innings

and host Chicago beat Pittsburgh.

Swanson connected against Ryan Borucki (1-3) with two out in the sixth inning, giving the Cubs a 2-1 lead with a solo drive into the bleachers in left-center. It was his 13th homer of the season.

Andrew McCutchen went deep for the last-place Pirates, who had won six of eight. It was McCutchen's 18th homer at Wrigley Field, tops for a visitor to the iconic ballpark among active players.

Braves 4, Rockies 1: Spencer Strider (1-5) recorded 13 strikeouts in his first win of the season, Ronald Acuña Jr. stayed hot with two hits, including a two-run homer, and host Atlanta beat Colorado.

The loss left the Rockies with the worst record through 70 games in the modern era. Colorado (13-57) surpassed the 1932 Boston Red Sox, who were 14-56 in 1901. The Rockies set another team record for a nine-inning game with 19 strikeouts, also a nine-inning record for Braves pitchers.

Resurgent Atlanta has won consecutive series after falling 10 games under .500 while losing six straight series.

Reds 11, Tigers 1: Tyler Stephenson hit a grand slam in a six-run fifth inning and visiting Cincinnati beat Detroit.

Elly De La Cruz, Spencer Steer and Matt McLain also homered for the Reds, who had been outscored 22-7 in the last two games.

The American League-leading Tigers are 4-2 in their last six games but have given up double-digit runs in each loss.

Marlins 4, Nationals 3: Jesús Sánchez homered in the seventh inning, and visiting Miami held off Washington.

The Marlins clinched their sixth series victory of the season and first since taking two of three from the Los Angeles Angels on May 23-25.

Athletics 4, Royals 0: Jacob

Lopez became the latest pitcher to shut down Kansas City with six innings of three-hit ball, Max Muncy and Lawrence Butler hit homers, and the visiting Athletics won.

Lopez (1-4) walked one and struck out nine while winning for the second time in his big league career. His other victory came on Oct. 1, 2023, when he allowed five runs while pitching for Tampa Bay in a game against Toronto.

Astros 3, Twins 2: Rookie Cam Smith hit a tiebreaking RBI single off closer Jhoan Duran with two outs in the ninth inning to give host Houston a victory over Minnesota.

Duran (4-2) walked Christian Walker with one out in the ninth and he moved to third on a two-out single by Jake Meyers. Smith then singled on a grounder to center to score Walker for his first career walkoff hit and the Astros' fourth straight victory.

Phillies 3, Blue Jays 2: Max Kepler hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning to lift host Philadelphia to a victory over Toronto.

Cristopher Sánchez pitched seven strong innings for the Phillies, who managed just four hits while winning their fourth in the last five games.

Orioles 6, Angels 5: Cedric Mullins and Gary Sánchez hit back-to-back home runs to give host Baltimore the lead and Félix Bautista finished off the victory over Los Angeles with his second straight save.

Mullins hit his 11th home run, a two-run shot off Angels starter Tyler Anderson in the sixth, and Sánchez followed with his first homer with the Orioles for a 6-4 lead.

Cardinals 8, Brewers 5: Nolan Gorman hit a three-run homer, Willson Contreras added a solo shot in the ninth inning and visiting St. Louis beat Milwaukee to snap a six-game losing streak.

William Contreras hit a lead-

off homer for Milwaukee that capped the scoring as the brothers both homered in the ninth inning. They became the first pair of brothers to homer in the same inning as opponents since Rick and Wes Ferrell of Boston and Cleveland, respectively, on July 19, 1933.

Rays 8, Mets 4: Taylor Walls and Yandy Díaz had two hits and two RBIs apiece and visiting Tampa Bay remained hot with a win over New York.

Junior Caminero homered to lead off a five-run fourth inning for the Rays, who have won eight of their last 11 games and lead the majors with a 17-6 record and 134 runs scored since May 20.

Rangers 5, White Sox 4 (11): Adolis García delivered his sixth career walk-off hit with an RBI single with two out in the 11th to give Texas a win over Chicago.

García hit a line drive to the wall in center field on the first pitch from reliever Tyler Alexander (3-7), scoring automatic runner Evan Carter. It was the only hit allowed by Alexander in three innings.

Red Sox 4, Yankees 3: Hunter Dobbins pitched six shutout innings to beat New York for the second time in a week, and host Boston won its fourth straight game.

A week after saying he'd rather retire than pitch for the Yankees since his father was drafted by New York twice before being traded—and then having to defend his dad's story midweek—Dobbins (4-1) struck out five and gave up two singles.

Mariners 4, Guardians 3: Jorge Polanco hit a walk-off RBI single in the ninth inning and Seattle beat Cleveland.

With one out and the bases loaded, Polanco smacked a single up the middle off Guardians closer Emmanuel Clase (4-1), who blew a save opportunity earlier in the frame when he threw a wild pitch that allowed Dylan Moore to score and tie the game at 3-all.