

Trump to decide on action within 2 weeks

Israel, Iran continue to launch strikes as new diplomatic effort takes shape

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel and Iran exchanged strikes a week into their war Friday as President Donald Trump weighed U.S. military involvement and new diplomatic efforts got underway with Iran's foreign minister arriving in Geneva for talks.

Trump has been weighing whether to strike Iran's well-defended Fordo uranium enrichment facility, which is buried under a mountain and widely considered to be out of reach of all but America's "bunker-buster" bombs. He said he'll decide within two weeks whether the U.S. military will get directly involved in the war given the "substantial chance" for renewed negotiations over Tehran's nuclear program.

Britain's foreign secretary said he met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and envoy Steve Witkoff to discuss the potential for a deal that could cool the conflict.

Before flying to Geneva for

meetings with the European Union's top diplomat and counterparts from the United Kingdom, France and Germany, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country was "not seeking negotiations with anyone" as long as Israel's attacks continued. He also accused the U.S. of collaborating with Israel, noting that Trump regularly used "we" when talking about the attacks on Iran.

"It is the Americans who want talks," he said in comments that were broadcast Friday by Iranian state television. "They've sent messages several times — very serious ones — but we made it explicitly clear to them that as long as this aggression and invasion continue, there is absolutely no room for talk or diplomacy. We are engaged in legitimate self-defense, and this defense will not stop under any circumstances."

He added that he expected the talks to focus only on Iran's nuclear program, and that Iran's missile capabilities were

"for defending the country" and not up for discussion.

French President Emmanuel Macron said top European diplomats in Geneva will make a "comprehensive, diplomatic and technical offer of negotiation" to Iran, as a key response to the "threat" represented by Iran's nuclear program.

"No one can seriously believe that this threat can be met with (Israel's) current operations alone," he told reporters on the sidelines of the Paris Air Show, saying some plants are heavily fortified and nobody knows exactly where all uranium enrichment is taking place.

"We need to regain control on (Iran's nuclear) program through technical expertise and negotiation."

Iran had previously agreed to limit its uranium enrichment and allow international inspectors into its nuclear sites under a 2015 deal with the U.S., France, China, Russia, Britain and Germany in exchange for sanctions relief and other provisions. Af-

ter Trump pulled the U.S. unilaterally out of the deal during his last term, however, Iran began enriching uranium to higher levels and limiting access to its facilities.

Israel said it conducted airstrikes into Friday morning in Iran with more than 60 aircraft hitting what it said were industrial sites to manufacture missiles. It did not elaborate on the locations. It also said it hit the headquarters of Iran's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, known by its acronym in Farsi, SPND. The U.S. in the past has linked that agency to alleged Iranian research and testing tied to the possible development of nuclear explosive devices.

It also carried out airstrikes targeting the areas around Kermanshah and Tabriz in western Iran, where the military said 25 fighter jets struck "missile storage and launch infrastructure components" Friday morning. There had been reports of anti-aircraft fire in the areas.

Court lets Trump keep control of Guard troops in LA

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — An appeals court on Thursday allowed President Donald Trump to keep control of National Guard troops he deployed to Los Angeles following protests over immigration raids.

The decision halts a ruling from a lower court judge who found Trump acted illegally when he activated the soldiers over opposition from California Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The deployment was the first by a president of a state National Guard without the governor's permission since 1965.

In its decision, a three-judge panel on the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously concluded it was likely Trump lawfully exercised his authority in federalizing control of the guard. It said that while presidents don't have unfettered power to seize control of a state's guard, the Trump admin-

istration had presented enough evidence to show it had a defensible rationale for doing so, citing violent acts by protesters.

"The undisputed facts demonstrate that before the deployment of the National Guard, protesters 'pinned down' several federal officers and threw 'concrete chunks, bottles of liquid, and other objects' at the officers. Protesters also damaged federal buildings and caused the closure of at least

one federal building. And a federal van was attacked by protesters who smashed in the van's windows," the court wrote. "The federal government's interest in preventing incidents like these is significant."

It also found that even if the federal government failed to notify the governor of California before federalizing the National Guard as required by law, Newsom had no power to veto the president's order.

Russian drones slam into 2 Ukrainian cities

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian drones slammed into two Ukrainian cities, killing at least one person in nighttime attacks, authorities said Friday, as a Kremlin official said he expected an announcement next week on dates for a fresh round of direct peace talks.

Russia's overnight drone assault targeted the southern Ukrainian port city of Odesa and the northeastern city of Kharkiv, hitting apartment blocks, officials said.

The barrage of more than 20 drones injured almost two dozen civilians, including girls aged 17 and 12, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

said.

"Russia continues its tactics of targeted terror against our people," Zelenskyy said on messaging app Telegram, urging the United States and the European Union to crank up economic pressure on Russia.

Russia has shown no signs of relenting in its attacks, more than three years after it invaded its neighbor. It is pressing a summer offensive on parts of the roughly 600-mile front line and has kept up long-range strikes that have hit civilian areas.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday that the date for the next round of peace talks is expected to be agreed upon

next week.

Kyiv officials have not recently spoken about resuming talks with Russia, last held when delegations met in Istanbul on June 2, though Ukraine continues to offer a ceasefire and support U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to stop the fighting.

The two rounds of brief talks yielded only agreements on the exchange of prisoners and wounded soldiers.

Ukraine and Russia's Defense Ministry announced the latest swap Friday, although they did not specify how many troops were involved. Zelenskyy said most of those returning home had been in captivity for more than two years.

A fire caused by Russia's nighttime strike on Odesa engulfed a four-story residential building, which partly collapsed and injured three emergency workers. A separate fire spread across the upper floors of a 23-story high-rise, leading to the evacuation of around 600 residents.

In Kharkiv, at least eight drones hit civilian infrastructure, injuring four people, including two children, according to Ukraine's Emergency Service.

Russia launched 80 Shahed and decoy drones overnight, Ukraine's air force said, claiming that air defenses shot down or jammed 70 of them.

China sends planes across Taiwan Strait central line

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — China sent 74 warplanes toward Taiwan between late Thursday and early Friday, 61 of which crossed the central line in the Taiwan Strait that unofficially divides the sides, an unusually large number as tensions remained heightened.

It wasn't clear why so many planes were scrambled between late Thursday and early Friday, as tabulated by Taiwan's Defense Ministry. The planes were sent in two separate tranches, it added.

China considers Taiwan its own territory and uses such deployments to advertise its threat to encircle and possibly invade the self-governing island. China also hopes to intimidate Taiwan's 23 million people and wear down its equipment and the morale of its armed forces.

On Thursday, Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs "confirmed and welcomed" the tran-

sit of the British Royal Navy's off-shore patrol craft HMS Spey through the Taiwan Strait a day earlier. The ship's transit, the ministry said, "once again (reaffirmed the Strait's) status as international waters."

"Such transits by the U.K. and other like-minded countries are encouraged to safeguard peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific," the Foreign Ministry said.

Britain's representative office in Taipei said in a statement that the Spey had conducted a navigation of the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law and rights provided under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

China responded angrily, saying the Eastern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army "organized troops to monitor and guard the entire process and effectively responded and dealt with it."

Pro-Palestinian activists claim damage to planes

Associated Press

LONDON — British police are searching for suspects after pro-Palestinian activists claimed to have broken into a Royal Air Force Base and damaged two planes with red paint, officials said Friday.

The group Palestine Action said two members entered RAF Brize Norton on Wednesday and used electric scooters to approach the Voyager jets, which are used for air-to-air refueling.

The duo sprayed red paint into the planes' turbine engines with repurposed fire extinguishers and caused further damage with crowbars, according to the group, which released video footage appearing to show an individual approach a jet and spray paint into the engine.

The activists left the base without being detained, Palestine Action said.

The group said in a statement that "despite publicly condemning the Israeli government, Bri-

tain continues to send military cargo, fly spy planes over Gaza and refuel US/Israeli fighter jets." It called the U.K. "an active participant in the Gaza genocide and war crimes across the Middle East."

Britain's Ministry of Defense confirmed the incident, saying: "We strongly condemn this vandalism of Royal Air Force assets."

Planes from Brize Norton, 70 miles northwest of London, regularly fly to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, Britain's main air base for operations in the Middle East. The U.K. has sent more Typhoon fighter jets and Voyager tankers to Cyprus since the Israel-Iran war started a week ago for what Prime Minister Keir Starmer called "contingency support."

Iran has threatened to attack U.S., French and British bases in the region if those countries help Israel fend off Iranian strikes.

Dodgers tell ICE to leave parking lot

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Dodgers organization said Thursday that it asked federal immigration agents to leave the Dodger Stadium grounds after they arrived at a parking lot near one of the gates.

Dozens of federal agents with their faces covered arrived in SUVs and cargo vans to a lot near the stadium's Gate E entrance. A group of protesters carrying signs against Immigration and Customs Enforcement started amassing shortly after, local media reported.

"This morning, ICE agents came to Dodger Stadium and requested permission to access the parking lots. They were denied entry to the grounds by the organization," the team said in a statement posted on X.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement posted on X that its agents were never there.

Tricia McLaughlin, a spokesperson for the Department of

Homeland Security, said the agents were with Customs and Border Protection and that they were not trying to enter the stadium.

"This had nothing to do with the Dodgers. (Customs and Border Protection) vehicles were in the stadium parking lot very briefly, unrelated to any operation or enforcement," she said in an email.

Television cameras showed that about four agents remained at the lot Thursday afternoon while officers with the Los Angeles Police Department stood between them and dozens of protesters, some carrying signs that read "I Like My Ice Crushed" and chanting "ICE out of LA!"

Council member Eunisses Hernandez arrived at the stadium and said she had been in communication with Dodger officials and the mayor's office.

"We've been in communication with the mayor's office,

with the Dodgers, with Dodgers security, about seeing if they can get them moved off their private property," she told KABC-TV. "Public property is different. Private property — businesses and corporations have the power to say, 'Not on my property.' And so we're waiting to see that movement happen here."

Protests began June 6 after federal immigration raids arrested dozens of workers in Los Angeles. Protesters blocked a major freeway and set cars on fire the following days, and police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades.

The team has yet to make a statement regarding the arrests and raids. The Dodgers' heavily Latino fan base has been pushing for the team to make a public statement and ignited a debate online about its stance on the immigration crackdown happening in Los Angeles.

The Dodgers had been expected to issue a statement of support toward Los Angeles-area communities affected by immigration enforcement, but no statement had been released by 5 p.m. Thursday.

"Because of the events earlier today, we continue to work with groups that were involved with our programs," Dodgers President Stan Kasten told a small group of reporters. "But we are going to have to delay today's announcement while we firm up some more details."

The Trump administration has activated more than 4,000 National Guard members and 700 Marines over the objections of city and state leaders. Dozens of troops now guard federal buildings and protect federal agents making arrests.

The demonstrations have been mostly concentrated downtown. Thousands of people have peacefully rallied outside City Hall.

Judge blocks effort to force states to aid enforcement

Associated Press

BOSTON — A federal judge on Thursday blocked the Trump administration from withholding billions of dollars in transportation funds from states that don't agree to participate in some immigration enforcement actions.

Twenty states sued after they said Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy threatened to cut off funding to states that refused to comply with President Donald Trump's immigration agenda.

U.S. District Judge John McConnell Jr. barred federal transportation officials from carrying out that threat before the lawsuit is fully resolved.

On April 24, states received letters from the Department of Transportation stating that they

must cooperate on immigration efforts or risk losing the congressionally appropriated funds. No funding was immediately withheld, but some of the states feared the move was imminent.

The attorneys general filed the lawsuit in May, saying the new so-called "Duffy Directive" put them in an impossible position.

Acting Rhode Island U.S. Attorney Sara Miron Bloom told the judge that Congress has given the Department of Transportation the legal right to set conditions for the grant money it administers to states, and that requiring compliance and cooperation with federal law enforcement is a reasonable exercise of that discretion.

Lawsuits against Palestinians over attacks revived by court

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Friday revived long-running lawsuits against Palestinian authorities from Americans who were killed or wounded in terrorism attacks in the Middle East.

The justices upheld a 2019 law enacted by Congress specifically to allow the victims' lawsuits to go forward against the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority.

The attacks occurred in the early 2000s, killing 33 people and wounding hundreds more, and in 2018, when a U.S.-born settler was stabbed to death by a Palestinian assailant outside a mall in the West Bank.

The victims and their families assert that Palestinian agents

either were involved in the attacks or incited them.

The Palestinians have consistently argued that the cases shouldn't be allowed in American courts.

The federal appeals court in New York has repeatedly ruled in favor of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, despite Congress' efforts to allow the victims' lawsuits to be heard.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals first ruled in 2016 against the victims of the attacks from 20 years ago, tossing out a \$654 million jury verdict in their favor. In that earlier ruling, the appeals court held U.S. courts can't consider lawsuits against foreign-based groups over random attacks that were not aimed at the United States.

Judge to hear \$7B opioid settlement plan

Associated Press

OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma's \$7 billion-plus plan to settle thousands of lawsuits over the toll of opioids will go before a judge Friday, potentially setting up votes on whether to accept it for local governments, people who became addicted to the drug and other groups.

This month, 49 states announced they have signed on to the proposal. Only Oklahoma, which has a separate settlement with the company, is not involved.

U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Sean Lane could decide as soon as Friday whether to advance the nationwide settlement, which was hammered out in negotiations between the company, groups that have sued and representatives of members of the Sackler family who own the company.

If Lane moves the plan forward as it's been presented,

government entities, emergency room doctors, insurers, families of children born into withdrawal from the powerful prescription painkiller, individual victims and their families and others would have until Sept. 30 to vote on whether to accept the deal.

The settlement is a way to avoid trials with claims from states alone that total more than \$2 trillion in damages.

If approved, the settlement would be among the largest in a wave of lawsuits over the past decade as governments and others sought to hold drugmakers, wholesalers and pharmacies accountable for the opioid epidemic that started rising in the years after OxyContin hit the market in 1996. The other settlements together are worth about \$50 billion, and most of the money is to be used to combat the crisis.

In the early 2000s, most

opioid deaths were linked to prescription drugs, including OxyContin.

Since then, heroin and then illicitly produced fentanyl became the biggest killers. In some years, the class of drugs was linked to more than 80,000 deaths, but that number dropped sharply last year.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a version of Purdue's proposed settlement. The court found it was improper to protect members of the Sackler family from lawsuits over opioids, even though they themselves were not filing for bankruptcy protection.

In the new version, groups that don't opt in to the settlement would still have the right to sue members of the wealthy family whose name once adorned museum galleries around the world and programs at several prestigious U.S. universities.

Under the plan, the Sackler family members would give up ownership of Purdue. They resigned from the company's board and stopped receiving distributions from its funds before the company's initial bankruptcy filing in 2019. The remaining entity would get a new name and its profits would be dedicated to battling the epidemic.

Most of the money would go to state and local governments to address the nation's addiction and overdose crisis, but potentially more than \$850 million would go directly to individual victims. That makes it different from the other major settlements.

The payments would not begin until after a hearing, likely in November, during which Judge Lane would be asked to approve the entire plan if enough of the affected parties agree.

Juneteenth celebrations mark end of slavery in US

Associated Press

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — Juneteenth celebrations unfolded across the U.S. on Thursday, marking the day in 1865 when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Texas and attracting participants who said current events strengthened their resolve to be heard.

The holiday has been celebrated by Black Americans for generations, but became more widely observed after being designated a federal holiday in 2021 by former President Joe Biden, who attended a Juneteenth event at a church in Galveston, Texas, the holiday's birthplace.

Biden said he was proud to sign the law making Juneteenth a federal holiday because "all Americans should know the weight and power of this day."

"Some say to me and you that

this doesn't deserve to be a federal holiday. They don't want to remember what we all remember, the moral stain of slavery," he said.

The celebrations come as President Donald Trump's administration has worked to ban diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, or DEI, in the federal government and remove content about Black American history from federal websites. Trump's travel ban on visitors from select countries has also led to bitter national debate.

In Portsmouth, N.H., Robert Reid waved a large Juneteenth flag at the city's African Burying Ground Memorial Park, where African drummers and dancers led the crowd in song and dance.

Reid, 60, said he attended in part to stand against what he called Trump's "divide and conquer" approach.

"It's time for people to get pulled together instead of separated," he said.

Jordyn Sorapuru, 18, visiting New Hampshire from California, called the large turnout a "beautiful thing."

"It's nice to be celebrated every once in a while, especially in the political climate right now," she said. "With the offensive things going on right now, with brown people in the country and a lot of people being put at risk for just existing, having celebrations like this is really important."

The holiday to mark the end of slavery in the U.S. goes back to an order issued on June 19, 1865, as Union troops arrived in Galveston at the end of the Civil War.

General Order No. 3 declared that all enslaved people in the state were free and had "absolute equality."

In Virginia, a ceremonial groundbreaking was held for rebuilding the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, one of the nation's oldest Black churches.

In Fort Worth, Texas, about 2,500 people participated in Opal Lee's annual Juneteenth walk.

The 98-year-old Lee, known as the "grandmother of Juneteenth" for the years she spent advocating to make the day a federal holiday, was recently hospitalized and didn't participate in public this year.

But her granddaughter, Dione Sims, said Lee was "in good spirits."

"The one thing that she would tell the community and the nation at large is to hold on to your freedoms," Sims said. "Hold on to your freedom and don't let it go, because it's under attack right now."

UK lawmakers OK suicide bill

Associated Press

LONDON — U.K. lawmakers on Friday approved a bill to allow terminally ill adults in England and Wales to choose to end their lives in a historic vote in Parliament that takes it a step nearer to becoming law.

Members of Parliament voted 314-291 to back the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill following an impassioned and respectful debate. The majority of 23 was less than the 55 when they last voted on the issue in November, meaning that some lawmakers changed their minds in the intervening months.

Since November, the bill has been scrutinized, leading to some changes in the proposed legislation, which has been shepherded through Parliament by Labour lawmaker Kim Leadbeater rather than the government.

"I appreciate it's a huge moment for the country," she told Sky News after the vote. "It was a huge sense of relief because this is the right thing to do."

It's not quite law yet as the bill now goes to the unelected House of Lords, which can amend or delay policy, though it can't overrule the lower chamber.

The vote is potentially the biggest change to social policy since abortion was partially legalized in 1967.

The bill would allow terminally ill adults over age 18 in England and Wales, who are deemed to have less than six months to live, to apply for an assisted death.

This particular bill doesn't apply to Northern Ireland and Scotland, the latter of which is holding its own vote on the issue.

Perhaps the most important

change to the bill from last November was the dropping of the requirement that a judge sign off on any decision. Many in the legal profession had objected.

Now any request would be subject to approval by two doctors and a panel featuring a social worker, senior legal figure and psychiatrist.

Changes were also made to ensure the establishment of independent advocates to support people with learning disabilities, autism or mental health conditions and the creation of a disability advisory board.

Having received the go-ahead from doctors and the panel, the terminally ill person would have to be capable of taking the fatal drugs themselves.

Another big change made was that "no person," including doctors, social care workers and pharmacists, will be obliged to take part.

All from BTS finish their military duty

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Suga, a rapper and songwriter in the global K-pop sensation BTS, has been discharged from South Korea's mandatory military service, marking the official return of all seven members from their enlistment duties.

The label confirmed that Suga completed his alternative service duties on Wednesday after using up his remaining leave. His official discharge date is Saturday.

BTS' management agency, Big Hit Entertainment, had said earlier that no events were planned for Suga's release out of concern for overcrowding.

It is a momentous occasion for fans of the K-pop group BTS. The seven singers of the popular K-pop band plan to reunite as a group sometime in 2025 now that they've finished their service.

Last week, BTS superstars RM and V were discharged from South Korea's military after fulfilling their mandatory service. Jimin and Jung Kook were discharged a day later. All four were enlisted in December 2023.

Six of the group's seven members served in the army, while Suga fulfilled his duty as a social service agent, an alternative form of military service.

Jin, the oldest BTS member, was discharged in June 2024. J-Hope was discharged in October.

In South Korea, all able-bodied men aged 18 to 28 are required by law to perform 18-21 months of military service.

Health officials issue warnings as UK bakes in the first heat wave of 2025

Associated Press

LONDON — British health officials are warning people across the country to take precautions when out in the sun as the U.K. bakes under its first heat wave of the year.

Temperatures are expected to peak at 93 degrees Fahrenheit in some parts of eastern England on Saturday following a week of unusually warm weather, according to the national weather agency the Met Office. That's about 22 degrees higher than normal for this time of year.

The U.K. Health Security Agency has issued an amber heat health alert covering all of England because of increased health risks for people over 65 and those with heart and lung problems.

Saturday is expected to be the hottest day of the heat wave, with temperatures falling slightly on Sunday and dropping back into the more normal temperatures next week, the Met Office said. The heat alert is currently scheduled to remain in effect until Monday morning.

Unusually, temperatures in

London this week have been higher than in many parts of Western Europe.

That's because the high temperatures are not the result of hot air moving north from the Iberian Peninsula or North Africa as is often the case, the Met Office said. Instead, this weather system originated in air high over the Atlantic Ocean south of Greenland.

As it approaches the U.K., it descends toward ground level, causing it to warm rapidly, Chief Meteorologist Matthew Lenhart said.

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Pacers defeat Thunder to set up Game 7

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Season on the line, the Indiana Pacers did what they've done time and time again. They bucked the odds.

And the NBA Finals are going to an ultimate game.

Obi Toppin scored 20 points, Andrew Nembhard added 17 and the Pacers forced a winner-take-all Game 7 by rolling past the Oklahoma City Thunder 108-91 on Thursday night.

The first Game 7 in the NBA Finals since 2016 is Sunday night in Oklahoma City.

"The ultimate game," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said.

Pascal Siakam had 16 points and 13 rebounds for Indiana, while Tyrese Haliburton — playing through a strained calf — scored 14 points. The Pacers started slowly and then turned things into a blowout.

Game 6 was a microcosm of Indiana's season in a way. The Pacers started the regular sea-

son with 15 losses in 25 games, have had five comebacks from 15 or more down to win games in these playoffs, and they're one win from a title.

"We just wanted to protect home court," Haliburton said. "We didn't want to see these guys celebrate a championship on our home floor. Backs against the wall and we just responded. ... Total team effort."

TJ McConnell, the spark off the bench again, finished with 12 points, nine rebounds and six assists for Indiana.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 21 points for the Thunder, who pulled their starters after getting down by 30 going into the fourth. Jalen Williams added 16.

"Credit Indiana," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "They earned the win. They outplayed us for most of the 48 minutes. They went out there and attacked the game."

Good news for the Thunder:

home teams are 15-4 in finals Game 7s. Bad news for the Thunder: Cleveland won at Golden State in the most recent of those and one of the three other home-team losses was in 1978 — by Seattle, the franchise that would move to Oklahoma City three decades later.

Indiana missed its first eight shots and got down 10-2. The arena, roaring just a few minutes before at the start, quieted quickly.

Hall of Famer Reggie Miller, sitting courtside in a Jalen Rose Pacers jersey, was pacing, kneeling, generally acting more nervous than he ever seemed as a player.

No need.

After the slow start, the Pacers outscored the Thunder 68-32 over the next 24 minutes. An Indiana team that hadn't led by more than 10 points at any time in the first five games — and that double-digit lead was brief — led by 28 early in the third

quarter. The margin eventually got to 31, which was Oklahoma City's second-biggest deficit of the season.

The worst also came in these playoffs: a 45-point hole against Minnesota in the Western Conference finals. The Thunder came back to win that series, obviously, and now will need that bounce-back ability one more time.

"Obviously, it was a very poor performance by us," Daigneault said.

The Thunder, desperate for a spark, put Alex Caruso in the starting lineup in place of Isaiah Hartenstein to open the second half.

There was no spark. In fact, there was nothing whatsoever — neither team scored in the first 3:53 after halftime, the sides combining to miss their first 13 shots of the third quarter.

And the outcome was never in doubt.

Richards' 2nd-half goal lifts US over Saudi Arabia

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Defender Chris Richards scored with a flick of the ball off a second-half free kick to lift the United States to a 1-0 win over Saudi Arabia on Thursday night, sending the Americans on to the CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinals.

Richards tracked the ball as it flew into the box on a curving free kick from Sebastian Berhalter in the 62nd minute to tap the ball with his left foot past Saudi Arabia goalkeeper Nawaf Al Aquidi.

The win, and the 1-1 draw between Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti in Group D's other match Thursday in Houston, clinched a knockout berth for the Americans, who improved to 42 wins, one loss and five draws in group play. The U.S. has won its group

in 16 of 17 Gold Cups, and closes Group D play on Sunday against Haiti at Arlington, Texas.

U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino stuck with the same lineup that produced a 5-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago on Sunday, the first time he made no changes in consecutive matches since taking over the program last October. But playing against No. 58 Saudi Arabia, the 16th-ranked Americans showed little of the attack firepower they displayed against the No. 100 Soca Warriors.

The match saw few real chances on goal by either team. The Americans had just one shot in the first half. Richards' speed to track back to cover for Alex Freeman's mistake and block a shot kept Saudi Arabia from a 1-0 lead.

Scheffler hits perfect shot, plenty of great ones for 62

Associated Press

CROMWELL, Conn. — Scottie Scheffler had one of those rare rounds where he hit a shot so pure it makes his confidence soar. So many other shots were pretty good, too, and they added to an 8-under 62 to share the lead Thursday with Austin Eckroat in the Travelers Championship.

The week after a rough-and-tumble U.S. Open was a welcome break for so many at the TPC River Highlands, even with the rough just as long (but not quite as thick) as soaked Oakmont.

Rory McIlroy played bogey-free for a 66 and didn't look to break too much of a sweat.

"This is a nice tonic compared to last week in terms of it's a slightly more benign golf course

and the penalty for missing isn't quite as severe," McIlroy said.

Scheffler faced the hot afternoon when a refreshing breeze turned into a strong wind, and he wasted no time getting in the mix with four birdies in six holes and a 30 on the front nine.

And then came the par-5 13th, 236 yards away into the wind, over a pond to a pin on the right.

It was perfect — that's coming from golf's No. 1 player — and settled 10 feet away for birdie.

"That 3-iron I hit in there was really nice," Scheffler said. "It was pretty much exactly what I was trying to do. It was kind of one where I had to hit it really solid in order to get it there with the water short, and I just did pretty much exactly what I wanted to and it felt nice."

Twins stomp Reds 12-5 to end 6-game slide

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Byron Buxton hit two home runs, including the second of back-to-back shots with Kody Clemens, and Ryan Jeffers had a homer and four RBIs as the Minnesota Twins beat the Cincinnati Reds 12-5 on Thursday to end a six-game losing streak.

Buxton, who went deep in all three games of the series, drove a 1-2 pitch from Nick Martinez out to left field to give him lead-off homers in consecutive games. Buxton then launched his 15th homer in the second inning for a 4-2 lead following a two-run shot by Clemens.

Jeffers walked ahead of Clemens' seventh homer, which gave Minnesota the lead for good. Ty France had an RBI double, and Jeffers delivered a two-run double to chase Martinez and give the Twins a 7-2 advantage with two outs in the third.

Jeffers added his fifth homer in the eighth, with Carlos Correa aboard.

Trevor Larnach doubled in a run against reliever Lyon Richardson and Correa — who had three hits — singled for a 9-4 lead in the fourth.

Buxton also doubled in the fifth, and Willi Castro scored three runs for Minnesota.

TJ Friedl went 3 for 4 with a double and scored twice for Cincinnati. He has reached base 121 times from the leadoff spot — second only to Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani. Gavin Lux hit his third homer, a two-run shot, and Tyler Stephenson and Spencer Steer each had an RBI double.

Nationals 4, Rockies 3, 11 innings: James Wood hit a pair of two-run homers, including a game-winning shot in the 11th inning, as Washington snapped their 11-game losing streak with a victory over Colorado.

With one out and automatic runner Riley Adams on third, Wood drove a 1-0 pitch from Seth Halvorsen (1-2) to center

field for his 20th home run — giving the Nationals only their third win in 17 games this month.

It was the fourth multihomer game for the second-year outfielder. He did it twice last September and finished with nine homers as a rookie.

Yankees 7, Angels 3: Trent Grisham and Paul Goldschmidt hit consecutive homers in the second inning, and New York beat Los Angeles to halt their six-game skid.

Carlos Rodón (9-5) allowed a season-high three homers but held the Angels to four hits in six innings to bounce back from two rocky outings against the Red Sox. The left-hander struck out seven and walked one on an 89-degree afternoon.

The AL East-leading Yankees stopped their longest losing streak since a nine-game slide in August 2023. New York also avoided its second four-game sweep at the current Yankee Stadium and first since September 2021 against Toronto.

Brewers 8, Cubs 7: Isaac Collins hit a three-run homer, rookie Caleb Durbin added a two-run drive and Milwaukee held off Chicago.

Rhys Hoskins lofted a solo shot, and Christian Yelich, Jackson Chourio and Joey Ortiz had two hits apiece to help the Brewers close within 5½ games of first-place Chicago in the NL Central.

Pete Crow-Armstrong lined his 20th home run, and Dansby Swanson and Ian Happ also went deep for the Cubs before a season-high crowd of 41,078 on a breezy afternoon at Wrigley Field.

Royals 4, Rangers 1: Jacob Caglianone went deep twice for his first two homers in the big leagues as Kansas City beat Texas.

The 22-year-old prospect won lefty-lefty matchups both times a day after sitting out in the majors for the first time in part because of a left-handed starter

for Texas.

Both of Caglianone's homers led off innings. He pulled a 95.5 mph fastball from Jacob Latz into the Texas Rangers bullpen in right-center field, the 387-foot shot giving the Royals a 3-0 lead in the second. The second was on the first pitch from Robert Garcia in the ninth, a 439-footer over that same bullpen.

Diamondbacks 9, Blue Jays 5: Eugenio Suárez homered and drove in four runs, Ryne Nelson pitched 5½ innings for his second straight win and Arizona beat Toronto to avoid a three-game sweep.

Pavin Smith also homered and drove in three runs for the Diamondbacks. Arizona had gone two games without homering after connecting in a season-high 10 straight.

Smith extended the lead with a two-run blast in the fifth, his sixth.

Both homers came off Blue Jays right-hander Kevin Gausman, who lost his second consecutive outing.

Giants 2, Guardians 1: Logan Webb pitched seven splendid innings, pinch-hitter Wilmer Flores delivered a go-ahead double and San Francisco beat Cleveland to stop a four-game losing streak.

Webb (7-5) gave up seven hits but struck out nine. The right-hander did not issue a walk as he lowered his ERA to 2.49.

Cleveland starter Gavin Williams held the Giants scoreless through six innings, but San Francisco got to the Guardians' bullpen in the seventh. Casey Schmitt greeted Matt Festa (1-1) with a single to open the inning. Festa walked Jung Hoo Lee before Patrick Bailey laid down a sacrifice bunt.

Nic Enright replaced Festa and then Flores, batting for Christian Koss, drilled a double down the left-field line to score Schmitt and Lee. The Giants had been 1 for 23 with runners in scoring position during the series before Flores came

through.

Camilo Doval worked a 1-2-3 ninth to earn his 11th save.

Phillies 2, Marlins 1: Kyle Schwarber hit a tiebreaking solo home run in the eighth, Christopher Sánchez pitched eight sharp innings and Philadelphia beat Miami.

Sánchez (6-2) allowed five hits, one run and struck out four. Philadelphia took three of four in the series.

Schwarber put the Phillies ahead in the eighth when he connected on a 1-0 sinker from reliever Anthony Bender (1-5), crushing it 428 feet to right-center. Schwarber has 23 homers on the season, only trailing Shohei Ohtani (25) for most in the National League.

Marlins right-hander Edward Cabrera had his best start of the year, limiting the Phillies to one run and two hits while striking out five in a season-high 6½ innings. Cabrera received applause from Marlins fans when he walked off the mound in the seventh after throwing his 82nd pitch.

Braves 7, Mets 1: Matt Olson hit a three-run double, Spencer Strider struck out eight in six innings and Atlanta beat the Mets to complete a series sweep that extended New York's season-worst losing streak to six games.

New York's latest sloppy defeat, paired with Philadelphia's 2-1 win over Miami, left the Mets and Phillies tied for first place in the NL East heading into their upcoming weekend series.

Mets pitchers issued nine walks, including a career-high six in 4½ innings by starter Clay Holmes (7-4), who allowed three runs. Huascar Brazobán walked three while giving up four runs in relief.

Strider (2-5) yielded one run and five hits with one walk. Olson added another double and two walks, and scored three runs.

SEE MLB ON PAGE 8

MLB: Cowser's 3-run homer powers Orioles over Rays

FROM PAGE 7

Orioles 4, Rays 1: Colton Cowser hit a three-run homer and Charlie Morton allowed one run over six innings in his 400th major league game as Baltimore beat Tampa Bay at Steinbrenner Field.

With two outs in the sixth, Cowser's drive off Edwin Uceta broke a 1-all tie. Cowser, who also doubled, has homered in three straight games.

Ryan O'Hearn drove in the other Baltimore run, and Gunnar Henderson scored twice for the Orioles.

Morton (4-7) started in his 36th career ballpark, most among active pitchers. He allowed six hits with no walks and seven strikeouts.

Four relievers blanked the Rays over the final three innings. Félix Bautista retired the side in the ninth to earn his 15th save.

Cardinals 5, White Sox 4, 1st game

Cardinals 8, White Sox 6, 10 Innings, 2nd game: Nolan Arenado hit his 350th homer in the third inning and drove in the go-ahead run in the 10th to help St. Louis beat Chicago to sweep a doubleheader and hand the White Sox their eighth straight loss.

Rookie Andre Granillo, who

got the final out in the seventh for his first career victory in the first game, pitched a scoreless 10th for his first save in his fourth appearance. JoJo Romero (3-3) worked a scoreless ninth for the victory.

Arenado hit the milestone homer following a three-run shot by Alec Burleson in the third and finished 3 for 5. He's the seventh player with 350 homers and 10-plus Gold Gloves.

Willson Contreras, who homered and drove in three runs to help St. Louis rally for a 5-4 win in the opener, had a two-out two-run double in the fourth for a 6-1 lead.

Andrew Benintendi hit his third career grand slam with two outs in the seventh to cap a five-run inning as Chicago tied it at 6.

Tigers 9, Pirates 2, 1st game
Pirates 8, Tigers 4, 10 Innings, 2nd game: Isiah Kiner-Falefa hit a two-run single in a four-run 10th inning, and Pittsburgh beat Detroit for a split of a doubleheader Thursday.

The Tigers won the first game 9-2 behind four RBIs from Riley Greene.

Pinch-hitter Ke'Bryan Hayes led off the 10th with a single to right, scoring pinch-runner Tommy Pham from second. The Tigers challenged the call, and

A.J. Hinch was ejected for arguing after the call was upheld.

Nick Gonzales singled, and a sacrifice bunt put runners on second and third.

An intentional walk to Jared Triolo loaded the bases, and pinch-hitter Joey Bart had an RBI single to make it 6-4. One out later, Kiner-Falefa hit a single to left to bring home two more runs.

A group of fans was ejected during the 10th inning after a verbal confrontation with Pham.

Pirates ace Paul Skenes allowed two runs and three hits in six innings, walking five and striking out nine.

Athletics 6, Astros 4: Nick Kurtz hit a two-run homer off closer Josh Hader in the 10th inning to give the Athletics a victory over Houston.

Willie McIver launched his first major league homer and drove in two runs for the Athletics. Lawrence Butler and Jacob Wilson also connected on solo shots as the A's won their fifth in seven games.

The A's regrouped after blowing a 4-1 lead in the eighth when Victor Caratini hit a three-run homer with two outs on the first pitch from closer Mason Miller.

Tyler Soderstrom began the bottom of the 10th as the automatic runner at second base and

moved to third on a wild pitch. Hader (4-1) struck out Max Muncy before Kurtz smashed a 2-1 sinker to center field for his second game-ending homer against Houston in four days.

Padres 5, Dodgers 3: Xander Bogaerts homered among his four hits and scored three runs, and San Diego beat Los Angeles to avoid a four-game sweep.

Rookie Ryan Bergert gave up three hits in 4⅓ scoreless innings in his fourth career start, and Adrian Morejon (4-3) followed with four consecutive outs. Jake Cronenworth had three hits.

After Dodgers right-hander Jack Little — making his major league debut — hit Fernando Tatis Jr. with a pitch in the ninth inning, both benches emptied behind home plate but no punches were thrown.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts and Padres manager Mike Shildt were ejected.

Padres reliever Robert Suarez hit Shohei Ohtani with a pitch in the bottom of the ninth and was ejected. Tatis and Ohtani were each hit by pitches twice in the series.

Right-hander Yoshinobu Yamamoto (6-6) gave up three runs and seven hits over 6⅓ innings as Los Angeles snapped a five-game winning streak.

Santana: Fan 'crossed a line' prior to confrontation

Associated Press

DETROIT — Pittsburgh Pirates reliever Dennis Santana was involved in an altercation with a fan he said "crossed the line" during the second game of Thursday's doubleheader with the Detroit Tigers and at one point was seen leaping and swiping at the person.

"You guys know me — I'm a calm demeanor type of person," Santana said after the game through an interpreter.

"I've never had any issues for any of the teams I've played for. This guy crossed the line a few times."

Santana declined to disclose what the fan said.

"He crossed the line, and I'd like to leave it at that. I've never had anything like this happen in my eight years in baseball," he said.

In videos posted to social media, Santana can be seen pointing out the fan to a police officer before jumping and

swinging at the person who is in the front row above the Pittsburgh bullpen at Comerica Park.

He did not have any complaints about how security officers handled the situation.

"My job is as a pitcher, not as security, so I can't discuss their job," he said. "I respect them and what they do."

The fan appeared to be wearing a Tigers hat and a shirt honoring Pirates Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente.

After jumping at the fan, Santana was escorted away by Pirates bullpen personnel and held back by a teammate.

He entered the game in the ninth inning, pitching to one batter before the game was delayed by rain.

The Pirates won, 8-4. Santana said he discussed the incident with manager Don Kelly.

"He knows I regret what I did," Santana said. "You know I'm a professional."