

Iran says strait shut as nuke talks start

Staff and wire reports

Vice President JD Vance and senior Iranian officials arrived in Switzerland on Sunday to begin talks on Iran's nuclear program and to advance the interim peace deal, even after Iran issued a renewed order to close the Strait of Hormuz and President Donald Trump again threatened strikes if Hezbollah keeps attacking Israel.

As the meetings got underway, Trump said in a social media post Sunday that he would strike Iran again if it doesn't "immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble," Bloomberg News reported.

He also warned Iran that the U.S. might start collecting tolls if there's no deal. Speaking Sunday to Fox News, he said he told Iranian leaders directly that if they close Hormuz, "You won't even make it back" to Iran, using an expletive.

While a hard-won interim deal has signaled a pause in U.S.-Iran hostilities, Sunday's discussions are likely just the start of pro-

tracted wrangling that will span topics including Iran's nuclear capabilities and economic relief for Tehran, according to Bloomberg.

"What today really represents is the beginning of a technical negotiation that's not going to solve every disagreement," Vance told reporters, speaking alongside officials from Pakistan and Qatar, which are acting as mediators.

The meeting "is going to allow us to sit together as teams for the first time really in history to figure out what matters most to the respective parties, to settle those issues, to solve those issues, and get to a better tomorrow," Vance said.

The semi-official Tasmin news agency said the Iranian delegation opposed a joint photo with the U.S. delegation, citing a person familiar with the matter.

Vance and U.S. negotiators met with Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Mediators from Pakistan and Qatar were

also in the room for the direct engagement that, according to Iranian state media, lasted about 80 minutes, The Associated Press reported. The U.S. and Iranian negotiating teams also held separate private talks with Pakistani and Qatari officials.

Iran said Saturday that it has again closed the Strait of Hormuz, but the U.S. military insisted commercial ships were transiting the waterway, adding uncertainty to the status of the U.S.-Iran talks that are meant to achieve a lasting peace agreement.

In a statement via state media, Iran's central military command warned vessels against entering the strait, calling its closure a "first step" in response to what it said were violations of the U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding that paused hostilities last week.

The Iranian statement specifically mentioned Israel's failure to withdraw from areas of southern Lebanon, where the Israeli military and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group have

been exchanging deadly attacks, even days after the MOU was signed.

However, U.S. Central Command, which oversees U.S. military operations in the Middle East, cast doubt on Iran's claim.

"Iran does not control the Strait of Hormuz. Traffic continues to flow, and U.S. forces are monitoring the situation to ensure this remains the case," CENTCOM spokesman Capt. Tim Hawkins said.

Commercial ship traffic through the strait increased on Saturday, CENTCOM said in a statement.

"Safe passage through the international waterway remained intact [Saturday] as 55 merchant ships transited, moving large amounts of cargo and more than 17 million barrels of oil to global markets," the statement said.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright said on Fox News Sunday that the U.S. was still escorting ships and "demonstrating we can transit the strait with or without" Iran, Bloomberg reported.

Army combines 2 units into new 7th Infantry Division

By GARY WARNER

Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — With volleys of cannon fire and a marching brass band, the Army on Thursday signaled a major military merger.

The ceremony at Watkins Field at Lewis-McChord redesignated the 7th Infantry Division as the 7th Infantry Division (Multi-Domain Command-Pacific).

"We took the 7th Infantry Division, which is a traditional

ground force, and we merged it with the 1st Multi-Domain Task Force, which has these new and emerging capabilities like space, electronic warfare, cyber information, sustainment, protection," said Maj. Gen. Bernard J. Harrington, the unit commander.

The move combines the "Bayonet Division," which traces its lineage to World War I, with the formerly separate 1st Multi-Domain Task Force, created in 2020. The command includes about 12,000 soldiers and

will retain its previous headquarters at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Gen. Ronald P. Clark, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, said at Thursday's event that it was important to recognize the past and future of the 7th Infantry Division.

The division, established in 1917, fought in France during World War I, the Aleutian Islands and Okinawa in World War II, the Incheon Landing and Pork Chop Hill in the Korean War, and the invasion of Pana-

ma in 1989. Elements of the division served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This ceremony is not simply symbolic," Clark said. "It honors the sacrifices and achievements of those who came before us. It affirms the readiness of our organizations. It signals to our soldiers, our partners and our adversaries that we're prepared for the challenges ahead, and it marks the beginning of a new chapter in the proud history of the 7th Infantry Division Multi-Domain Command-Pacific."

Senate panel eyes Hegseth travel limits

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate Armed Services Committee is threatening to withhold most of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's travel funds until he provides information on a series of deadly strikes, including one on a girls' school in Iran and alleged drug boats in the waters off South America.

Provisions included in the committee's draft of the National Defense Authorization Act would force Hegseth to give lawmakers details on the bombing as well as full videos of the boat strikes before 75% of his travel budget can be unlocked.

The panel approved the legislation last week, but it would need to be passed by both the full Senate and House to be enacted. The House Armed Services Committee's draft of the legislation did not include similar language.

The provisions call for the submission of unredacted civilian harm investigations and all supporting documents for the strike on the school, which killed more than 175

children and teachers on the first day of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran. It also asks for information on several controversial strikes in Yemen last year.

President Donald Trump on Wednesday said "nobody" purposefully attacked the Iranian school and noted that it remains under investigation. Adm. Brad Cooper, the head of U.S. Central Command, told lawmakers last month that the probe is "complex" because the school was located on an active Iranian cruise missile base.

Democrats have urged the Pentagon to publicly take responsibility for the bombing.

Another bill provision requires Hegseth to submit unedited videos of strikes against vessels operated by designated "narcoterrorist" organizations in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean. The ongoing campaign has killed more than 200 people in more than 60 strikes since September.

Congress included the same demand in last year's defense policy bill but withheld 25% of Hegseth's travel budget to force the

video releases rather than 75% as proposed this year. Lawmakers from both parties expressed particular concern last year over a follow-up strike that killed two survivors of an initial attack.

Both Democrats and Republicans have complained about a lack of transparency from the Pentagon on major decisions, including military operations and personnel moves.

A separate provision in the bill requires the Pentagon to notify Congress within five days when a senior officer departs from their position early, either due to removal, reassignment or retirement. Lawmakers in the House included similar language after Hegseth fired several officers without explanation.

Other provisions require notification and justification to Congress when the promotion of an officer is delayed and mandates that the delay does not exceed 30 days. Hegseth has drawn scrutiny in recent months for delaying or blocking dozens of officer promotions.

Another US strike on alleged drug traffickers kills 3

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. strike on suspected drug smugglers on Thursday has killed three people in the eastern Pacific, U.S. Southern Command said.

The attack raises the death toll from the U.S. strikes to at least 211 since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in early September.

"Intelligence confirmed the vessel was transiting along known narcotrafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific and was engaged in narcotrafficking operations," SOUTHCAM said in a news release.

The statement included a 15-second video of the strike. No U.S. military forces were harmed.

President Donald Trump has said the U.S. is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

The Pentagon's internal watchdog announced last

month that it would launch an investigation into whether the U.S. strikes against drug boats have followed targeting guidelines.

The investigation into Operation Southern Spear, the Pentagon's name for the campaign against drug trafficking in Latin America, was self-initiated and not in response to a congressional query.

Coast Guard seizes over 225,000 pounds of cocaine

Stars and Stripes

The Coast Guard's cocaine seizures during Operation Pacific Viper exceeded 225,000 pounds over the weekend after crews interdicted two suspected drug-smuggling vessels in the eastern Pacific.

While on patrol, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bear seized

7,707 pounds of cocaine after an embarked helicopter crew disabled the vessels, U.S. Southern Command said Wednesday. Six suspected narcoterrorists were apprehended.

"We own the sea," said Adm. Kevin Lunday, commandant of the Coast Guard. "Our forces conducting Operation Pacific

Viper continue to defeat the cartels and stop the flow of deadly drugs to the United States."

Operation Pacific Viper has cracked down on drug operations in the eastern Pacific since August 2025. More than 93 million doses of cocaine have been disrupted from flowing into the U.S., according to

SOUTHCAM.

"Operation Pacific Viper stands as a decisive force against narco-terrorists, sending an unmistakable message that we will not allow them to profit off the poisoning of our people," Department of Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said.

Judge returns access to abortion pills in Mo.

The Kansas City Star

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Missouri judge on Thursday cleared a path for residents to access medication abortion, a key decision more than 18 months after voters legalized abortion access.

The 20-page ruling from Jackson County Circuit Court Judge Jerri Zhang marks a major win for abortion rights supporters. But the order comes as voters are gearing up for another fight at the ballot box in November.

In a news release Thursday, Gillian Wilcox, director of litigation for the ACLU of Missouri, said the ruling is a “monumental win for reproductive freedom.”

“Today’s decision is a reminder that politicians are trying to strip us of our right to reproductive freedom, and Missourians must reject Amendment 3 at the ballot box this November, or we could lose the access we gained today,” Wilcox said.

The ruling restores access to medication abortion, the most common form of abortion, across the state as early as this week for the first time since 2018, the ACLU said.

According to the ACLU, Missouri is the first state to reverse a total abortion ban and restore access to procedural and medication abortion.

In Thursday’s ruling, Zhang found that “most of Missouri’s complex web of abortion restrictions violated Missouri’s Right to Reproductive Freedom,” the ACLU said.

Abortion rights advocates, including the ACLU and Planned Parenthood, filed the lawsuit in 2024 after Missourians voted to legalize abortion by enshrining reproductive freedom in the

state constitution.

“Abortion is a basic and essential part of health care, and today that was recognized by a Missouri court. Thanks to November 2024 voters, Missourians have a constitutional right to abortion. This November we will vote to keep it when we vote NO on 3 and stop another abortion ban,” said Maggie Olivia, director of policy and external affairs for Abortion Action Missouri.

Zhang’s decision comes just months ahead of a statewide vote on Amendment 3, a new abortion ban measure.

Judge gives DOJ a green light to hand over Biden recordings

Bloomberg News

A federal judge in Washington denied former President Joe Biden’s request to block the Justice Department from turning over tapes and transcripts of interviews he privately recorded almost a decade ago to a conservative advocacy group, but will temporarily bar the release while he appeals.

The Justice Department is poised to produce the materials to the Heritage Foundation. U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich on Friday rejected Biden’s request for an indefinite order halting the disclosure while he presses his claims to keep the materials out of the public eye.

Biden’s lawyers immediately alerted the judge that they intend to challenge her decision before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Friedrich agreed to pause her order for three weeks. An attorney for the former president didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

Friedrich wrote that Biden failed to prove at this stage that the Justice Department’s decision to release the materials was an abuse of officials’ discretion

in weighing his privacy against the public’s interest in the contents. Certain portions would be redacted, the judge said, such as information about Biden’s family and health issues.

Spokespeople for the foundation and DOJ didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment on a public holiday Friday.

Biden has been opposing efforts by the Trump administration to release the recordings, which he made in 2016 and 2017 with a memoir-writing partner. The Heritage Foundation and congressional Republicans have been trying to get the recordings and unredacted interview transcripts following a 2024 report that cited them as proof of Biden’s “diminished” mental state.

The judge presiding over the committee’s case hasn’t ruled yet on Biden’s request to immediately stop that disclosure.

The Heritage Foundation sued to compel the Justice Department under the Freedom of Information Act.

The government released redacted pages of transcripts but otherwise opposed Heritage’s case before Donald Trump returned to the White House.

DOJ rejects judge request to certify \$1.8B fund nixed

Bloomberg News

The Justice Department rebuffed a U.S. judge’s invitation for top officials to submit a signed statement under oath that a \$1.8 billion fund for what the administration described as victims of political “weaponization” will not happen.

In a filing on Friday, the Justice Department said that such declarations were “unnecessary” and that compelling statements from high-level officials “implicates serious separation of powers concerns.” A department lawyer wrote that Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche’s congressional testimony and submissions to the court from government attorneys already “were made against the backdrop of serious penalties for falsity.”

U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema ruled this month that a lawsuit challenging the fund can go forward, rejecting the Justice Department’s assurances that past statements from Blanche and other officials that they were dropping the fund plan were sufficient. But the judge indicated that she would be inclined to end

the case if she received a declaration to that effect made under penalty of perjury from Blanche, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward.

Brinkema had said that if the government did not submit the confirmation that she believed was necessary, she would set a full schedule for next steps in the legal fight.

“The judge’s demand for declarations was an attempt to require her to personally sign-off on any and all future settlements, separate from this non-existent Fund, that the department may make,” the Department of Justice said in a statement.

The Virginia judge separately entered an order blocking action on the fund while the litigation is pending, finding that a group of challengers made a strong enough showing at an early phase of the case that the plan was likely unlawful. Democrats and other critics have denounced the proposal as a “slush fund” for President Donald Trump’s allies.

Trump's Iran deal frustrates N. Israel

Bloomberg News

Mayor David Azoulay's office in Metula — Israel's northernmost town — features a portrait of U.S. President Donald Trump and an American flag. It's not an act of praise, but ironic protest.

"Over the past four months, Israel's policy has been driven entirely by Trump," said Azoulay, from his office on the Lebanese border, which has become the central sticking point in U.S.-Iranian negotiations to end the war. "Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu is trapped in a bear hug that is slowly suffocating us Israelis. Case in point: the memorandum of understanding with Iran."

That's especially true in northern Israel, which is at the heart of the fight between Israel and Hezbollah that even on Friday derailed the first round of peace talks between the U.S.

and Iran in Switzerland. It's also become a source of tension in Netanyahu's relationship with Trump, who has spent last week publicly slamming the Israeli premier and what he called Israel's "vicious" approach to Lebanon.

The Galilee Panhandle — a strategic finger of land wedged between the Lebanese and Syrian borders — used to house 50,000 Israeli Jews before three years of Hezbollah rocket attacks left its communities hollowed out.

Miry Menashe, a 41-year-old coffee shop owner who moved to Metula four years ago, reflected the general unease with the MOU, which Trump signed on Wednesday and sets off a 60-day window for peace talks. While the document calls for an immediate ceasefire on all fronts, including Lebanon, resi-

dents can still see and hear fighting across the border.

"If the U.S. wants to be part of the solution rather than enforcing a ceasefire on us, it must compel Lebanon to deploy its army to southern Lebanon. Train them, arm them, and give them the resources they need," said Menashe. "Mr. Trump, if you want to be a friend, be a friend; if you want to be a foe, be a foe. Don't be both."

The shift in Trump's popularity among Israelis is closely entwined with Netanyahu's domestic standing, and 71% of Israelis believe the U.S. president could abandon Israel's interests in a future Iran deal.

Netanyahu's Likud Party and his ruling coalition have been slipping in the polls since reclaiming power in 2022, and any momentum they regained has eroded recently.

On Thursday, in an unprecedented rebuke, U.S. Vice President JD Vance hit back at Israeli politicians who've criticized the interim deal, making veiled reference to how far Israel's international reputation has fallen since its war in Gaza.

"Donald J. Trump is the only head of state in the entire world who is sympathetic to the nation of Israel at this moment in time," Vance said at the White House. "If I was in the Cabinet of the Israeli government, I might not be attacking the only powerful ally that I have anywhere left in the entire world."

Vance suggested Israel needs to address its security needs via diplomacy as well as military operations, saying "you can't just kill your way out of solving every single national security problem," echoing some of Israel's harshest critics.

Meloni escalates spat with Trump after G7

Bloomberg News

Donald Trump has sparred with most of his fellow Group of Seven leaders at some point. But Italy's Giorgia Meloni last week did something none of them dared: She escalated.

Unlike Spanish Socialist Pedro Sanchez, one of the few leaders in Europe who has made political capital of being berated by Trump, the Italian prime minister had stood out as one of the few Europeans he actually liked: an outspoken conservative at ease talking MAGA. But Meloni has also transitioned from a populist politician to a practical one.

When last year Trump repeatedly praised her looks — saying, "You don't mind being called beautiful, right? You are" — and others objected to the objectification, she let it slide. Which is why her decision to respond in kind to his provocations with some of her

own is out of step with how most of her cohort have chosen to handle Trump's broadsides.

In a span of 24 hours, the person who Trump once praised for taking "Europe by storm" did three things that some U.S. allies may have thought privately, but never said publicly. She said he lies and panders to enemies while turning on his friends. She also poked him by telling him to look at his own polling as the November midterms approach, no doubt aware that his popularity has hit new lows.

The schism came, somewhat unprompted, on the heels of an otherwise jolly G7 gathering where many leaders set aside their reservations about the peace deal Trump was about to sign with Iran. Trump left the G7, a group he's been critical of in the past, describing it as "one of the most successful."

There had been a previous Trump altercation with Meloni — over her defense of Pope Leo XIV in the face of his criticism of the war in Iran — but that seemed to dissipate quickly.

The 49-year-old Meloni, who joked about coming into the G7 after quitting smoking and wearing a tie, is the first one to really test the theory that challenging Trump can win points with voters.

She is going to be tested electorally next year, and when it comes to her brand, being seen as "Trump's puppet in Europe" isn't a good look, according to Lorenzo Castellani, a researcher at Luiss University in Rome.

In response to Trump's tirades, Italy's foreign ministry late Friday scrapped a U.S.-Italy business forum in Miami, which Secretary of State Marco Rubio was also set to attend.

Australia finds H5 bird flu case

Bloomberg News

Australia reported its first mainland case of H5 bird flu, marking the spread of the deadly virus to every continent on the planet.

The strain was found in a dead migratory seabird in remote Western Australia, Julie Collins, the country's agriculture minister, said at a press conference in Canberra on Saturday.

There's no evidence of any infections among poultry, she said.

H5 bird flu is spreading globally in birds and spilling into mammals including cattle, elephant seals and sea lions.

Human cases remain uncommon and are largely tied to close contact with infected poultry and other farm animals.

A Washington state resident became the first human to contract the H5N1 strain of bird flu in November.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Teacher fired after girls forced to kiss in class

CO DENVER — Denver Public Schools fired a teacher accused of making female students kiss each other in class and of exhibiting other inappropriate behavior.

The district ended Jennifer Honka's employment at North-east Early College last month after an outside review found sufficient evidence to terminate the former French teacher for cause.

Honka, who taught at the school for eight years, faced numerous allegations from students and staff at the high school, including that she had students participate in skits that frequently called for the teenagers to kiss one another, according to an order issued by an administrative law judge who conducted the review.

A student told investigators that Honka "always picked girls to act in the skits," then "convinced" them to kiss each other, according to the review.

The skits forced students "to express their preferences and consent about a very personal and sexualized activity on the spot in front of their peers," Judge Keith J. Kirchubel wrote. "... Multiple students manifested extreme discomfort about these skits in their reports to other teachers and to (the principal)."

Teen tourist dies in horse carriage crash

NY NEW YORK — The NYPD is investigating the Central Park carriage horse crash that killed an 18-year-old tourist, officials confirmed Thursday.

Police from the Central Park Precinct are looking into the crash and have interviewed the carriage horse driver, who had stepped away from the carriage to take a photo of victim Romanch Mahajan and his family before the horse got spooked and raced off, a police source said.

No charges have been filed.

The teen was visiting the U.S. from India with his family.

They were celebrating Romanch's high school graduation with the trip when the carriage horse mishap occurred about 2:45 p.m. Wednesday.

The family clutched onto one another as the carriage tipped over at Cherry Hill near Bethesda Fountain, but the boy's mother fell out.

Romanch reached out to help his mother and fell out of the carriage, his family told The New York Times.

"My son, just to save his mother, he fell off," the 44-year-old father told The Times. "He was screaming, 'Mom!'"

The teen hit his head and was knocked unconscious. He was taken to an area hospital, where he died, police said.

Mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus

IL CHICAGO — The first detected presence of West Nile virus has been reported in Wilmette this year, after a mosquito sample pool tested positive on June 16, officials say.

West Nile positive mosquitoes were also discovered in two sample pools collected from nearby Evanston and Northbrook.

The samples are the first to test positive of the 217 total pools tested from several North

Shore municipalities this season, according to Mark Clifton, executive director of the North Shore Mosquito Abatement District.

Roughly 50 mosquitoes are tested within a pool, Clifton clarified.

According to health officials, symptoms for West Nile virus may include fever and chills, headache and body aches, fatigue, joint pain, nausea and vomiting and a skin rash.

The majority of infected people, however, will show no symptoms at all, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Confederate monuments are back in Baltimore

MD BALTIMORE — Baltimore's four controversial Confederate monuments, which were removed in the dead of night nearly nine years ago by former Mayor Catherine Pugh, have reentered Charm City as quietly as they left.

But no one is saying exactly where they are being held or what the plan for them is going forward.

"The Confederate monuments are back in Baltimore," Lauren Schiszik, executive director of the city Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, told commissioners during a June 9 briefing session.

She added that Mayor Brandon Scott is "preparing a statement" about the return of the monuments, which most recently were on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles as part of its "Monuments" exhibit.

Because the monuments are a

flash point for strong feelings among some Baltimore residents, city officials seemed to prefer that their return go unnoticed. Since May 3, when the "Monuments" exhibit wrapped up, Baltimore officials have provided minimal information in response to reporters' inquiries.

Investigators: Camp did not meet requirements

TX AUSTIN — Investigators into the deadly flood that killed 27 children and counselors at Camp Mystic concluded the Christian youth camp failed to meet state emergency requirements or prepare for the July 4, 2025, flood.

State investigators for a joint investigative committee further found that Camp Mystic officials had ample time to evacuate and that reunification efforts and incident management were "chaotic, with traumatic effects for families," a summary of the investigators' findings said.

A joint committee of state Senate and House members was reviewing the investigators' findings Thursday during a meeting at the Capitol attended by several family members of the children killed in the flood. More than 100 people died in the flood. Kerr County was the worst hit, where the flooded Guadalupe River toppled trees, swept away structures and ravaged the shorelines of an idyllic Hill Country destination.

Twenty-five youth campers and two teenage counselors at the all-girls Christian camp died.

Camp Mystic owner Richard Eastland also died in the flood while trying to rescue campers.

— From wire reports

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Clark looks to be running away with US Open

Associated Press

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. — Wyndham Clark proved to be even tougher than Shinnecock Hills in the U.S. Open with four pivotal par saves in a five-hole stretch and a majestic 3-wood to 4 feet that set up the only eagle all week on the par-5 16th hole. Each shot stretched his lead over Scottie Scheffler and everyone else.

All the while, Clark couldn't help but notice thousands of fans leaving the course Saturday evening and the grandstands no longer full.

Perhaps they were trying to catch the train. Or maybe they sensed this U.S. Open was over.

Even with a bogey on the final hole that gave Clark an even-par 70, he left Shinnecock Hills with a six-shot lead going into Sunday.

Riding shotgun with him will be Scheffler, who finally got on track by making three straight birdies, shooting 32 on the back nine and at least keeping alive hope of a career Grand Slam.

No one has ever lost more than a five-shot lead in 125 previous editions of the U.S. Open. Greg Norman in the 1996 Masters is the only player to lose a six-shot lead

in any major.

"It's all in Wyndham's hands, really," said Xander Schauffele, who faded with a pair of double bogeys on the back nine. "If he plays a really solid round of golf [Sunday] — if he shoots even par or 1 over or 2 over — he's going to win the golf tournament. That's how I think it's going to pan out."

It was an astonishing performance, starting with three par saves around the turn as Scheffler was sending the gallery into a frenzy with his timely run that led to a 69. It was one of only two rounds under par as Shinnecock — even without the raging wind from the morning — showed some bite.

But it was subdued at the end.

He was at 7-under 203, the lowest 54-hole score ever at Shinnecock Hills.

Clark had one more round to add another U.S. Open title to the one he captured at Los Angeles Country Club in 2023. At his side was Scheffler, the No. 1 player in the world, trying to turn Sunday into a most magical day.

At stake for Scheffler is a chance — a long shot at that — to get the final leg of the career

Grand Slam — on Father's Day, which also happens to be his 30th birthday.

"I think it's appropriate to understand what's at stake," Scheffler said, aware as anyone of what's in front of him. "We want to be in these positions. This is why we practice and play, to have the opportunity to win golf tournaments, and that's what [Sunday] is."

Scheffler has won all four of his majors from in front. Now he's chasing on a course that demands precision and a lot of patience. And the player he's chasing has expanded his lead each day — two shots Thursday, four shots Friday and six shots going into Sunday.

Clark, in position to be the first wire-to-wire U.S. Open champion in 12 years, still didn't think he had played his best golf.

From thick rough right of the 18th fairway, his wedge went right and some 60 feet away from the pin. "Gosh, I've hit some terrible shots today. This is ridiculous," Clark said to his caddie.

He was leading by seven shots at the time, though he did put himself in some tough spots — 75 feet away on the downwind ninth,

over the back of the green and down the slope on the 10th, a bunker on the scary par-3 11th.

He took them all on, particularly behind the 10th green when he made the bold play to bump it into the hill to let it trickle down to 5 feet, instead of a safer flop to avoid the ball rolling back to him.

And when he got in trouble on the 13th after trying to drive the green, he made a 15-foot putt for par. It was like that all day. And the lead kept growing, even with that short miss at the end.

Clark went from scrambling to soaring with one shot. He was 275 yards away on the 604-yard 16th hole, with helping wind that made it a perfect 5-wood — except he didn't have one in his bag. His caddie suggested taking a little off a 3-wood, and he played a high cut to perfection, getting a nice bounce short of the green as the ball rolled out to 4 feet.

Scheffler, who fell nine shots behind with a pair of bogeys at the start, shot 32 on the back nine by chipping in from 65 feet on the 14th for the start of his three straight birdies. His one big lament was missing a 4-foot birdie putt on the final hole.

Oklahoma defeats UNC, moves to one win from CWS title

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — His team one win away from the national championship, Oklahoma coach Skip Johnson won't mess with success.

The Sooners' offense is producing at a level higher than any team to play in the College World Series since the event moved to Charles Schwab Field 15 years ago.

When it looked as though OU's pitching could implode after being nothing short of magnificent the last week, Cord Rager settled in after a rocky first inning and combined with two relievers to shut down North Carolina the rest of the way in a 9-3 victory in Game 1 of the CWS finals Saturday.

"I'm just going to stay out of their way," Johnson said. "I don't

know any other way to do it. You think we're going to go out and hit tonight and take 100 groundballs somewhere? We're not going to do that. I can promise you that. Just stay out of their way."

Deiten Lachance homered twice off Tar Heels ace Jason DeCaro early and the Sooners (42-22) used a four-run fourth inning to pull away for their ninth straight win. Rager, Gavyn Jones and LJ Mercurius allowed only two runners to reach second base after UNC (53-12-1) struck for three runs in the first.

Oklahoma won national titles in baseball in 1951 and 1994 and went for its third Sunday. The Tar Heels, looking for their first, tried to force a deciding Game 3 on

Monday.

The Sooners ended DeCaro's uncharacteristic bad day in the fourth inning.

Oklahoma scored all four runs that inning with two outs, starting when Kyle Branch broke a 3-all tie with a two-run single. Branch came home on Jason Walk's base hit and Camden Johnson singled off Walker McDuffie to make it 7-3.

DeCaro (11-3), who came in with a 2.31 ERA, was charged with all seven runs after having not allowed more than three in any of his previous starts.

"I think they just really punished the mistakes," DeCaro said. "I feel like for the most part I made some pitches, and then

whenever I did leave a ball over the plate, especially with two strikes, they capitalized."

Lachance homered for a 2-0 lead in the first inning and again in the third to tie it at 3. The 6-foot-5, 231-pound Canadian known as "Big Maple" has hit all 18 of his homers in the last 32 games, including six in the last eight.

Oklahoma has hit 45 of its 93 home runs in the last 17 games. The Sooners have connected 28 times in 11 NCAA Tournament games, and their 10 homers in four CWS games are the most by a team since the event moved to Charles Schwab Field in 2011. They are batting .331 and averaging better than eight runs per game in the CWS.

Strong early wins raise hope for US team

Associated Press

The early results are in: This U.S. men's national team is for real in this World Cup.

With a quick and creative offensive attack producing goals in front of stadium-shaking home crowds, the Americans have already won their group and booked their place in the knockout round. A final group stage match against Turkey in Los Angeles awaits before the pressure ramps up again.

The question now is just how far can they go? The optimism and expectations of a deep run in the tournament are rising quickly.

The American players seem eager to embrace what might have seemed inconceivable for a big nation with a relatively shallow pedigree in international soccer.

"I don't think it's ridiculous to say that we want to win it," U.S. defender Chris Richards said after Friday's 2-0 win over Australia. "We want to lift a trophy by the end of this."

Few would have predicted this kind of quick success, said striker

er Folarin Balogun, who scored twice in the opener against Paraguay.

"You know, (if) someone said before the tournament 'Two games and you're through to the knockouts,' I think we all would have took it," Balogun said. "We're delighted."

Argentina leads revival

The first two matches saw the United States attack Paraguay and Australia with an energy, skill and creativity on offense rarely seen by the Americans in the World Cup.

The U.S. has won consecutive World Cup matches for the first time since 1930. And the six goals in the first two matches are one short of the team record for a World Cup.

The architect is coach Mauricio Pochettino, an Argentine who was best known for his European club stints with Tottenham, Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain. He had never coached a national team until he was hired by the U.S. in 2024 with an eye on this year's World Cup.

As a co-host, the U.S. was an

automatic qualifier for the tournament, allowing Pochettino more time to experiment and craft the lineup he wanted. He was blunt earlier this month when he said the U.S. does not have any players that rank among the top 100 in the world.

But the lineup he has put on the field the first two matches has been rock solid, and maybe even better than expected. The players have credited him with instilling a tougher, more resilient mindset.

Pochettino said after the win over Australia that he could feel the fan support reverberating throughout the stadium in Seattle.

"Today, even if I'm not American, after the game I was emotional," Pochettino said. "It was an amazing and perfect connection between the energy from the stands and the team. This makes us feel very proud."

Questions about Pulisic

Because the U.S. has already won its group, Pochettino could experiment with his lineup for the match with Turkey on June

25. And it could provide extra rest for star midfielder Christian Pulisic, who missed the match with Australia because of a calf injury.

Pulisic, who plays for AC Milan, is considered the Americans' best player, but his absence also allowed the U.S. to show off some depth in the lineup.

With Pulisic out, Pochettino started striker Ricardo Pepi, and Pepi combined with Balogun on the run that created the first goal of the match in the 11th minute.

"We know how vital Christian is to the team and how much he can contribute in the game," said Alex Freeman, who scored the second goal against Australia. "For us it was, we have Ricardo Pepi, who came in and had an amazing game. I think that just shows how (good) our roster is."

Still, the U.S. will want Pulisic's steady hand and creative playmaking as they get deeper in the tournament.

He has scored 33 goals in 87 international appearances, including the game winner against Iran in the 2022 World Cup that sent the U.S. to the round of 16.

Undav scores winner as Germany edges Ivory Coast

Associated Press

TORONTO — An hour into the game, Germany was getting outplayed by Ivory Coast and trailed by a goal.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann needed a spark and substituted in three fresh players, one of whom was Deniz Undav. That decision paid off big time.

Undav scored twice as Germany defeated Ivory Coast 2-1 on Saturday and clinched a spot in the knockout phase at the World Cup.

"It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games," said Undav, who also scored in Germany's 7-1 opening match rout of Curacao.

"Now we have a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."

Four minutes into stoppage time, Undav received a pass from Felix Nmecha in front of the net and rifled it past Ivory Coast goalkeeper Yahia Fofana to give the Germans a

comeback win. It was the German national team's 11th straight win, a streak dating to September 2025.

Undav's first goal of the match came after Nadiem Amiri sent in a long ball — that striker Kai Havertz let pass him by — onto the boot of Undav, who slammed it into the back of the net in the 68th minute. Both Amiri and Undav had subbed on eight minutes earlier.

"Deniz is nobody who needs to be prepared," Nagelsmann said. "He can jump in right away."

Four-time champion Germany has come back from disappointing group stage exits in 2018 and 2022, while Ivory Coast is still searching for its first knockout stage appearance and could still qualify. The last time Germany got past the group stage, it won the tournament in 2014.

"Think we showed great character today," Undav said. "We want to achieve the most."

Ivory Coast captain Franck Kessie opened the scoring in the 30th minute after midfielder Yan Diomande sent in a cross to forward Amad Diallo. His shot was blocked by Germany's Nathaniel Brown, but the ball bounced back to Kessie, who slotted it in the wide-open left corner of the net.

Germany had two goals waved off in a frustrating first half.

The first was in the 21st minute when Fofana batted the ball into his own net, but Germany midfielder Aleksander Pavlovic made illegal contact with Fofana on the play.

The second came in the 38th minute on a foul, as Jamal Musiala was called for contact on the build-up to what would've been a Havertz goal.

After a court fight to get into Canada, Elye Wahi, the Ivory Coast striker under investigation for alleged betting-related offenses while playing in France for Nice, did not play.

Phillies power their way to rout of Mets

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Kyle Schwarber homered three times, including twice in Philadelphia's eight-run third inning, and Bryce Harper hit for the cycle as the Phillies routed the New York Mets 15-3 on Saturday night.

Schwarber led off the third inning with a 456-foot home run to the second deck in right field off New York starter Freddy Peralta (5-6). He capped Philadelphia's big inning with a 457-foot drive to almost the same spot off Cionel Perez.

Schwarber added a two-run homer in the seventh, his major league-leading 28th of the season, off Tobias Myers. It was the fifth career three-homer game for Schwarber, who was 4 for 5 with six RBIs and four runs scored in a season-high offensive output for the Phillies.

Harper hit a solo home run in the first inning, his 16th of the year. He doubled and singled in the third, then hit a two-run triple to the gap in left-center field in the fifth for his first career cycle and the 11th in Phillies history.

"I got close a couple of times," Harper said. "But being able to do that and having that moment was really, really cool."

Twins 16, Diamondbacks 8: Byron Buxton hit a grand slam in a 10-run fifth inning and visiting Minnesota clobbered Arizona.

Buxton has 24 homers to tie Houston's Yordan Alvarez for the American League lead. He has three career grand slams.

The Nos. 6-9 batters combined for 13 of the Twins' 20 hits, with Brooks Lee having four and missing a cycle by a home run. Victor Caratini, Luke Keaschall and Ryan Kreider each had three hits.

Padres 6, Rangers 4 (10): Manny Machado hit a three-run homer, his 13th this season, in the 10th inning and tied his season high of five RBIs, helping San Diego rally for a victory over

host Texas.

Machado had an RBI double in the third, and his run-scoring groundout got the Padres within 3-2 in the eighth before Jackson Merrill's tying single.

Adrian Morejon (6-1) struck out five in two scoreless innings, and Mason Miller earned his 20th save in 20 chances despite Langford's RBI infield single in the 10th. Miller struck out two as the Rangers fanned a season-high 17 times.

Tigers 4, White Sox 1: Troy Melton allowed one hit in six innings and host Detroit's offense came alive late in a victory over Chicago.

Dillon Dingler had two hits, including a home run, and drove in two runs as the Tigers won their second straight game after losing four of five.

Melton (4-0) gave up a homer to Sam Antonacci on his second pitch of the game but allowed only four more baserunners — on three walks and a hit batter. He struck out five while allowing two or fewer runs for the fourth time in five starts this season.

Braves 4, Brewers 3: Ozzie Albies hit two homers, including a walk-off, two-run blast in the ninth inning to give host Atlanta a come-from-behind win over Milwaukee.

After Matt Olson singled off Aaron Ashby (10-1) with one out, Albies delivered the decisive shot over the right field wall for his 12th of the season.

Ashby was denied his first save of the season as he failed to protect a 3-2 lead and was instead handed his first loss following an MLB-leading 10 wins.

Orioles 3, Dodgers 2: Trevor Rogers (4-7) allowed one hit and struck out six over seven scoreless innings and visiting Baltimore beat Los Angeles.

Blaze Alexander had a two-run double for the Orioles, while Samuel Basallo and Leody Taveras each had two hits. Baltimore improved to 2-3 on a nine-game West Coast road trip.

Shohei Ohtani hit a home run

in the ninth inning for the Dodgers after missing Friday's game for the birth of his second child.

Reds 10, Yankees 2: Sal Stewart tied a career high with six RBIs and visiting Cincinnati pulled away for a rout of New York.

Spencer Steer hit a three-run homer in the fifth as the Reds won for the sixth time in 17 games without Elly De La Cruz, who began a minor league rehab assignment Friday. Rookie Edwin Arroyo had four hits and reached base five times as Cincinnati finished with 15 hits.

Reds starter Andrew Abbott (4-5) allowed one run and five hits in five-plus innings.

Blue Jays 8, Cubs 6: Kazuma Okamoto hit a three-run home run to cap a five-run eighth inning and visiting Toronto rallied from a five-run deficit to beat Chicago.

The Cubs' Jacob Webb (1-2) came on with two on in the eighth and gave up consecutive RBI singles to Alejandro Kirk and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. to tie the game at 5-all before Okamoto stepped up.

Matt Shaw and Pete Crow-Armstrong homered for Chicago, which wasted a 5-0 lead in the late innings and missed a chance to win its third straight.

Nationals 4, Rays 3: Dylan Crews homered in the ninth inning, C.J. Abrams also hit a solo homer and visiting Washington beat Tampa Bay.

The Nationals looked to win a franchise record-tying sixth consecutive road series when the teams finished off the three-game set Sunday.

Mitchell Parker (3-3) worked 2½ innings of scoreless relief, and Brad Lord threw three shutout innings. Clayton Beeter finished for his fifth save, striking out Ben Williamson with the tying run on second base to end it.

Marlins 6, Giants 3: Max Meyer (8-0) allowed two runs in five innings to win his eighth consecutive decision to start the

season, Heriberto Hernández homered and Miami beat San Francisco for its seventh straight victory at home.

Jakob Marsee doubled and singled for the Marlins, who are 13-4 in June and improved to 39-38 to move above .500 for the first time since April 13, when they were 9-8.

Guardians 8, Astros 1: Rookie Travis Bazzana set career highs with four hits, two homers, five RBIs and three runs scored as visiting Cleveland beat Houston.

Kyle Manzardo hit a two-run homer in the third inning to break a 1-1 tie, and tacked on an RBI single in the seventh.

Rockies 2, Pirates 1: Jake McCarthy hit a leadoff inside-the-park home run off Paul Skenes and host Colorado survived a tense ninth inning to beat Pittsburgh.

The Pirates had the tying run on third with less than two outs in the ninth. Hill came on and hit Nick Gonzalez to load the bases before striking out Tyler Callihan. Jake Mangum then hit a grounder to third baseman Kyle Karros, and the game ended when umpires determined Karros was interfered with by Billy Cook.

Red Sox 5, Mariners 1: Willy Abreu hit a two-run homer, Connelly Early gave up two hits and a run in six innings and visiting Boston beat Seattle.

Early (6-5) struggled in the first inning, giving up a run on two hits, but didn't allow another hit through the rest of his six innings, although he did hit three Mariners with pitches. He had seven strikeouts and two walks.

Angels 7, Athletics 0: Walbert Ureña (5-5) and three relievers combined on a five-hitter and visiting Los Angeles beat the Athletics.

Denzer Guzman hit his second home run of the season, Zach Neto and Nolan Schanuel each drove in two runs and the Angels improved to 2-4 on their road trip.