

US, Iran reporting progress in negotiations

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

The United States and Iran might have cleared the first hurdle in postwar negotiations, with both sides reporting progress after the opening round of talks.

But neither appears willing to back down from combative rhetoric, suggesting the road to lasting peace could be a long one.

Following 18 hours of talks in Switzerland, U.S. Vice President JD Vance said Monday that it had been a “very, very good day,” citing the establishment of mechanisms to prevent regional military escalation, safeguard commercial shipping and facilitate further technical negotiations.

There were also early signs of implementation. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the U.S. had issued a 60-day license authorizing the production, delivery and sale of Iranian oil as part of the framework reached in Switzerland.

Iranian Foreign Minister

Seyed Abbas Araghchi also described the talks as having achieved “major progress.”

The positive assessments came as leaders in Tehran and Washington continued to trade verbal barbs, highlighting the challenges facing a 60-day ceasefire process meant to produce a longer-term agreement on Iran’s nuclear program and U.S. sanctions.

President Donald Trump, who last week suggested he would resume strikes if Iran did not “behave” during talks, escalated his rhetoric Sunday by warning that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian “better watch his mouth.”

“He better shape up. Or we’ll take over the rest of the country,” Trump told Fox News, without elaborating.

That prompted a response from Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran’s parliamentary speaker, who said on social media that U.S. leaders had “better watch their words” and that Iranian armed forces were ready to respond.

The bilateral memorandum of understanding signed last week was widely celebrated for putting an end to a war that had lasted more than 100 days, killed 13 U.S. service members and disrupted fuel supplies around the world.

Yet the ceasefire has already faced early tests.

The first round of negotiations briefly appeared to be in jeopardy Saturday after Iran said it had re-closed the Strait of Hormuz in protest of Israel’s continued military campaign in Lebanon.

U.S. Central Command quickly refuted that claim, saying that Iran did not control the strait and traffic continued to flow. It’s not clear whether Iran took any action to stop ships.

The U.K. Maritime Trade Operations Centre, a British military-run maritime security monitoring center for commercial shipping, did not report any incidents in the strait over the weekend, though traffic appeared to drop significantly.

Maritime tracker Windward

said only 12 vessels transited the strait Sunday, down from more than 21 the day before. That’s far below the prewar average of more than 100 ships a day.

Trump also issued what appeared to be a threat against Iranian officials involved in any effort to close the strait, telling Fox News: “You close it, you won’t have a country” and “you won’t even make it back to your f---ing country.”

The high-level talks proceeded despite the dispute. Iranian state media reported that Tehran’s negotiators had held 18 hours of “intensive dialogue and consultations.”

Technical talks are set to continue this week, according to mediators.

Vance said Monday that Iran agreed to invite international nuclear inspectors back to the country, a move he said marked a “major milestone (in) ending a nuclear weapons program in Iran.”

Iran has not confirmed the invitation.

US, Japan navies start early on Valiant Shield exercise

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS George Washington and its escorts joined Japanese warships over the weekend in the Philippine Sea, putting allied naval power on display as the United States and Japan opened exercise Valiant Shield.

The exercise, in its 11th iteration since 2006, brings allied forces together with all six arms of the U.S. military for drills in the western Pacific, including in and around Guam, Japan and

the Northern Mariana Islands, according to a Sunday news release from U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The biennial exercise officially began Monday and continues through July 1, but the George Washington Carrier Strike Group and ships of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force were sailing in formation as early as Saturday, according to imagery posted to the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service website.

“Valiant Shield demonstrates our enduring commitment to a

free and open Indo-Pacific,” Adm. Steve Koehler, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in the release. “Exercising advanced multidomain capabilities with our allies ensures we continue to seamlessly innovate and operate together, project combat power together and prevail over any challenge — together.”

Spokespeople for the George Washington and U.S. Pacific Fleet did not respond to Stars and Stripes’ email requests for comments Monday.

The guided-missile destroyers USS Benfold and USS Shoup, guided-missile cruiser USS Robert Smalls and fast-attack submarine USS Virginia joined the George Washington in the formation.

The Japanese ships included the helicopter destroyer JS Kaga, the guided-missile destroyer JS Fuyuzuki and the attack submarine JS Jingei, according to the photos.

Japan made its second appearance in the exercise; it first participated in 2024.

Report: THAADs back at S. Korea home base

By JULIE MASSON
AND YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

All six Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system launchers belonging to U.S. Forces Korea have returned to their home base in the southeastern South Korean county of Seongju, according to a Yonhap News Agency report.

The THAAD launchers were returned to the U.S. military installation in Seongju, roughly 134 miles southeast of Seoul, Yonhap reported Sunday, citing unnamed sources.

The launchers were temporarily relocated in March to Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek amid heightened tensions in the Middle East, the agency reported.

USFK spokesman Choi Min-jung declined to comment on the report by email Monday, saying the command does not comment on “specific force movements, capabilities, or operational matters” for security reasons.

THAAD, a missile defense system designed to intercept ballistic missiles, was deployed in 2017 to Seongju as part of Washington’s efforts to defend South Korea and U.S. forces against North Korean missile threats.

The launchers’ relocation in March fueled speculation that USFK was preparing to transfer THAAD to the Middle East to support the U.S. conflict in Iran, according to the Yonhap report.

On March 6, an unnamed U.S. official told The Wall Street Journal that the Pentagon

was rushing to replace a THAAD radar damaged in an Iranian-backed drone strike in Jordan.

Four days later The Washington Post reported that the Pentagon was moving THAAD system components from South Korea to the Middle East.

However, USFK Commander Gen. Xavier Brunson told the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 21 that no THAAD systems were moved off the Korean Peninsula and that the command was sending munitions forward, according to a YouTube video of his testimony.

Brunson said he was “dynamically moving” the launchers around and acknowledged that “caused a big kerfuffle on the peninsula.”

US airstrikes in Somalia back following brief pause

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A new series of American airstrikes in Somalia ended a brief lull in recent attacks against Islamic militants battling the country’s federal government, U.S. officials said.

The U.S. military carried out airstrikes against al-Shabab on five different days last week in coordination with Somalia’s government, according to statements from U.S. Africa Command.

The strikes occurred in southern Somalia, mostly in the vicinity of Kismayo, a region where the al-Qaida affiliate has been active for many years.

The flurry of attacks comes after a monthlong stretch of no reported airstrikes in Somalia, where AFRICOM’s campaign has been on a record-breaking pace in 2026.

The lull wasn’t related to an operational pause, AFRICOM said in a statement last week.

“Our strike engagements are data driven and results oriented,” the command told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday. “We focus

on maximizing every opportunity we have in our counterterrorism efforts.”

In general, airstrikes are meant to enable Somali forces in their own ongoing military operations, AFRICOM said.

“Somalia continued its efforts against terrorist elements in their country and were able to eliminate senior (al-Shabab) leadership,” the statement said.

AFRICOM has launched 68 strikes in Somalia this year, targeting both al-Shabab and Islamic State militants in the country, U.S. officials said.

In 2025, AFRICOM conducted roughly 125 airstrikes against militants in Somalia, which was well above the command’s previous all-time high of 63 in 2019.

Last year’s surge in strikes coincided with a directive by U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that granted more decision-making authority to AFRICOM commanders on when to launch strikes.

Besides airstrikes, U.S. forces provide training and advisory support to local troops battling the insurgents.

US troops on EOD duty for World War II-era bombs

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

American service members have wrapped up a three-week mission to dispose of unexploded wartime ordnance in Papua New Guinea alongside teammates from six other nations.

Operation Render Safe, which ran from June 1 to June 20, is a longstanding Australian-led operation to remove World War II explosives left behind in Pacific nations.

“The operation occurs annually, or in response to an urgent request from a Pacific Island nation,” the Australian Defence Department states on its website.

Some of the toughest jungle fighting of World War II happened on Papua New Guinea where the Allies, led by Australian and U.S. forces, battled Japanese invaders from 1942 to 1945.

Multinational teams in June removed explosive hazards found during earlier reconnaissance. Over three days they destroyed 330 items, the department posted on Facebook on Thursday.

“This vital work reduces the

ongoing risks that these historic weapons pose to local communities more than 80 years after the Pacific campaign,” the department said.

The mission focused on the Gazelle, Kokopo and Rabaul districts of East New Britain, according to a June 5 unsigned email from the department.

The effort included 160 service members from Papua New Guinea, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, New Zealand, Japan and the U.S., according to the department.

The U.S. contingent included members of Marine Rotational Force — Darwin, which is midway through a six-month rotation to Australia’s Northern Territory, as well as sailors and soldiers, the department said.

More than 1,650 explosive remnants of war were located and identified for disposal on Papua New Guinea, according to the Australian Defence Department. These include Model 1 and Model 3 sea mines, Type 93 Long Lance Torpedo motors and unfused AN-M34 2,000-pound high explosive bombs.

All-male NASA Artemis crew leads to backlash

Bloomberg News

When NASA unveiled the four-person crew of its Artemis III mission this month, it didn't take long for the general public to notice a common feature of the group: all four astronauts were men.

NASA said the selection was not political. But it triggered a wave of disappointment from former NASA officials, space industry insiders and enthusiasts invested in the agency's effort to put U.S. astronauts back on the moon for the first time in more than half a century — and their hope that one of them will be a woman.

"Do I think this was chosen maliciously? Obviously no," Emily Calandrelli, a science author who flew to space with Blue Origin, wrote on Instagram. "Do I think those in the selection process had a bias and ultimately when there were four men selected no one in

the room thought it was a 'big enough' issue to try to correct? Yes."

Whether deliberate or by coincidence, the irony of the omission was immediately glaring.

The Artemis program got its name after the goddess of Greek mythology — the twin of Apollo whose name adorned the history-making U.S. initiative that put the first men on the moon. The name "Artemis" was a nod to the agency's original vow with the program: this time when NASA went back to the moon, it would send the first woman to walk there.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman defended the decision this month in a series of posts on social media.

He said he'd personally been to space twice "with 50 percent female crews" and that his closest advisers "and some of the smartest engineers I know are wom-

en." He said NASA technically assigned only women to the SpaceX Crew-10 mission in 2025, though two men were also on the mission from partnering countries.

A representative for NASA referred to Isaacman's social media statements.

Either way, there's no lack of potentially suitable candidates. There are 37 active NASA astronauts available for flight assignments at the moment, and 15 of them are women, or roughly 42%. Critics have pointed out that, statistically, one should have been selected.

"To not select a single woman for this mission (when there's a pretty significant number of highly qualified women astronauts right now) feels very intentional in the context of the current political climate," Camille Bergen, the chief marketing officer at

aerospace startup Star Catcher Industries, said in an Instagram post.

While more and more women have joined the ranks of NASA's astronaut corps over the years, roughly 120 of the almost 800 people who have been to space have been women, either as government astronauts or commercial flyers. And NASA has yet to fly a mission with an entirely female crew on board, including astronauts from the agency and other partners.

Isaacman suggested that many of the women in the astronaut corps could not be selected for Artemis III as they were training for other potential assignments, such as going to the International Space Station or perhaps future Artemis missions that actually go to the moon. Artemis III will only go to Earth orbit to test lunar landers.

Greenspan, longtime influential Fed chair, dies at 100

Los Angeles Times

Alan Greenspan, the former Federal Reserve Board chairman who presided over a long period of economic stability and prosperity and was accorded rock-star status in the financial world only to have his reputation tarnished in the wrenching recession and global credit crisis in 2008, has died at the age of 100.

A towering figure in American finance who influenced a generation of central bankers worldwide, Greenspan died Monday from complications of Parkinson's disease, according to his wife, Andrea Mitchell.

"To me he was my husband, who shaped my life from our very first date in 1984," Mitchell said in a statement reported by NBC News where she serves as the network's chief Washington correspondent. "He had 'irrational exuberance' for baseball, the Washington Commanders, tennis, golf, and music, especially jazz. He will be remembered for his brilliance

and his kindness. Being his life partner was the joy of my life."

Greenspan headed the Fed from 1987 to 2006, a span in which the U.S. economy enjoyed relatively steady growth and low inflation. Though he received much of the credit, Greenspan benefited from the tough, inflation-breaking policies of his immediate predecessor, Paul A. Volcker; the rise of the internet age; and the dissolution of the Soviet Union that began in the late 1980s.

After Greenspan's retirement, his performance was reassessed more harshly in light of the turmoil that began to emerge the following year in financial and real estate markets. Critics blamed Fed hubris and its easy-money policies and especially light-handed regulation of banks for helping to create conditions that led to the Great Recession, the longest economic contraction in the U.S. since the Great Depression.

He defended himself vigorous-

ly in writing and in interviews, telling CNBC in April 2008 that he had "no regrets" about his policies.

But in October 2008 at the height of the global economic turmoil fueled by America's home mortgage meltdown, Greenspan appeared on Capitol Hill to a reception entirely different from the adulation he received while chairman. The grim-faced Greenspan could offer only a limited defense of his economic policies and said he was in a state of "shocked disbelief" at the breakdown of the credit markets, which he called a "once-in-a-century credit tsunami."

He conceded that he was wrong in assuming that free-market forces would prevent such a crisis.

"There was just this view that financial markets were going to regulate themselves," said Gary Richardson, a University of California, Irvine economics professor who was the Fed's official his-

torian from 2012 to 2016. "He got in the driver's seat when the deregulation trend was incipient. He was a champion of deregulating the financial industry."

At the same time, Richardson noted that under Greenspan, the Fed's gravitas and influence in the world had reached unparalleled heights. And during his helm at the central bank, the U.S. economy would achieve what then was a record 10 straight years of uninterrupted growth.

Greenspan was born in New York on March 6, 1926. His father, a stockbroker, and his mother, a salesclerk, divorced when Greenspan was 3.

With his high and deeply wrinkled brow and perpetually downturned mouth, Greenspan appeared morose, but he could be quite funny and was popular on the Washington social scene. After dating for several years, in 1997 he married NBC-TV correspondent Andrea Mitchell, who survives him. He had no children.

Starmer quits, sets out plan for new UK PM

Bloomberg News

Keir Starmer said he would step down as Britain's prime minister after suffering a precipitous fall from favor, paving the way for Andy Burnham to succeed him.

On Monday, Burnham, the former mayor of Manchester, said on X that he would "put himself forward." His prospects of taking over were given a boost when the man most likely to oppose him, former Health Secretary Wes Streeting, almost immediately posted a statement endorsing Burnham.

Starmer announced Monday

morning that he would step down first as Labour leader, with nominations for a successor opening July 9 and any contest wrapped up by the end of Parliament's summer break Sept. 1. He said he would remain in office until the process is done and "ensure an orderly handover of power."

But after the interventions from Burnham and Streeting, it looks likely that a contest will be avoided and that Britain will have a new prime minister next month.

Starmer's exit opens the door to Britain's fifth premier since

2022: a jarring milestone for a political system which once prized itself on its stability.

Burnham is Starmer's most likely successor, not least because he demonstrated to his party that he can beat Nigel Farage's poll-leading populists of Reform UK by winning a special election in Macclesfield, near Manchester last week.

Reform swept all council seats available in local elections on the same turf just six weeks earlier.

Under Starmer's timeline, nominations for the leadership contest would close July 16. If

only one candidate has met the nominations criteria, they could become prime minister as soon as July 17 or 18, according to a person familiar with the matter.

In laying out a timetable for his departure, Starmer was responding to the demands of scores of his own backbenchers and also Cabinet ministers including Energy Secretary Ed Miliband, who even before the damaging round of local elections last month had privately urged the premier to set out plans for an "orderly transition."

Poland Prime Minister calls spat with Ukraine 'strategic mistake'

Bloomberg News

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk warned that Poland and Ukraine were committing a "strategic mistake" as a political conflict over the commemoration of controversial World War II fighters continued to escalate.

Tusk said it wasn't an easy task to "minimize the losses and reduce the tension" from the dispute that took a new turn when President Karol Nawrocki stripped his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Poland's highest state honor, which Zelenskyy then returned to Warsaw.

"Getting entangled in the political conflict between politicians in Poland and Ukraine is a strategic mistake that will cost both sides: in business, geopolitically and reputationally," Tusk wrote on X on Sunday. "And in politics, as is well known, a mistake is worse than a crime."

The dispute has driven already tense relations between the allies to a low and is likely to overshadow the Ukraine Recovery Conference that Poland

is hosting this week in the Baltic port city of Gdansk.

Zelenskyy was expected to attend the gathering, where companies, donors and officials are set to discuss his country's postwar reconstruction.

Nawrocki's decision Friday came after Zelenskyy named a military unit after World War II-era Ukrainian nationalist fighters whom Poland holds responsible for massacres of its people.

Zelenskyy immediately sent his decoration — the Order of the White Eagle — back to Poland.

Three former Ukrainian presidents and several of the country's top officials also said they would return awards they previously received.

Tusk, who is a political opponent of Nawrocki, has called on both presidents to deescalate the conflict to little avail.

The sentiment toward Ukraine has soured since Poland became the first port of call for millions of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the immediate aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The country continues to serve as the main hub for western military assistance for Ukraine.

Tusk has been more restrained than Nawrocki in his criticism of Zelenskyy, although he also blamed Ukraine for the crisis.

Speaking earlier in June, the prime minister said he hoped Kyiv will eventually accept Polish arguments that renaming the military unit after the Ukrainian Insurgent Army was inappropriate.

The UPA remains a longstanding source of tension with Poland for its 1943-45 killings in the Volhynia region, which the parliament in Warsaw has described as genocide. An estimated 100,000 Poles were killed, including women and children.

Meanwhile, The Associated Press reported Monday that a Russian drone strike on the city of Sumy in northeastern Ukraine killed three members of the same family, including a 13-year-old boy and his father, and wounded another two, a regional official said.

Confirmed Ebola deaths exceed 250

MassLive.com

Over 250 deaths have been reported between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda since a rare variant of Ebola began to sweep through the two countries.

Confirmed cases in the Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo have reached 1,003, including 254 deaths, The Associated Press reported Monday.

Congo's Ministry of Health said Sunday that at least 365 patients are currently in hospitals or in isolation.

On Thursday, the World Health Organization reported at least 915 confirmed cases of Bundibugyo virus, a variant of the Ebola disease, with 896 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 19 in Uganda.

They also reported 151 suspected cases with one probable death, as well as 88 recoveries.

The virus has spread to its second continent, as a United States citizen that was treating Ebola patients tested positive May 17 and was transported to Germany to begin treatment.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Union suspends carriage horse rides after death

NY NEW YORK — Carriage horse rides in Central Park were suspended until at least Tuesday following the death of an 18-year-old passenger last week, the union representing carriage drivers announced.

During that time, the roughly 200 carriage horse owners and drivers will undergo “refresher training” on safety rules and protocols, a representative of the Transport Workers Union, which represents city carriage horse drivers, said.

Romanch Mahajan died Wednesday after he hit his head while falling from an out-of-control horse carriage in the park.

“Our hearts go out to the family of Romanch Mahajan. Words can’t express the enormity of this tragedy,” Alexander Kemp, a vice president with TWU Local 100, said in a statement. “We are taking the first steps towards addressing safety issues.”

Mahajan and his family were visiting New York from India and were in the carriage while its driver stepped out to take their picture. While the driver was out of the carriage, the horse bolted.

Feds probe districts over Title IX controversies

MI DETROIT — Three Michigan school districts are under investigation by the U.S. Department of Education for possible Title IX violations involving gender-identity controversies.

On Thursday, the U.S. De-

partment of Education’s Office for Civil Rights announced it opened new investigations into Ann Arbor Public Schools, Monroe Public Schools and the Chippewa Valley School District.

Investigators will determine whether the districts violated Title IX by allowing athletes to participate on boys’ and girls’ athletic teams and use locker rooms based on their self-professed “gender identities,” according to the news release.

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The federal education department alleges that Ann Arbor Public Schools maintains policies allowing males to compete on women’s sports teams.

County’s early voting falls 20% from 2022 primary

MD BALTIMORE — In-person early voting turnout in Carroll County declined in the 2026 primary, but the drop was uneven across the county’s three polling sites, with the most dramatic decrease at the relocated northern voting center.

Countywide, 5,097 voters cast ballots during the eight-day early voting period that ended Thursday, down about 20% from the 6,394 who participated in the 2022 gubernatorial primary.

Westminster Senior Activities Center recorded 3,222 voters, a marginal decline from 3,287 in 2022. The South Carroll Senior & Community Center saw 1,593 voters, down 18% from 1,947 in 2022.

The Charles Carroll Community Center, which replaced

the former North Carroll site this cycle, recorded just 282 voters, a 76% drop from the 1,160 who voted early at North Carroll in 2022. Daily turnout at the site ranged from a low of 13 voters to a high of 65 voters, according to election data.

New southern resident orca calf spotted in pods

WA SEATTLE — Biologists spotted a new calf among the endangered southern resident orca pods, a hopeful sign tempered by the apparent disappearance of another calf born earlier this year.

Calf L130 was seen for the first time Sunday traveling with the female L91 near East Sooke, British Columbia, by Center for Whale Research biologists, who estimated the young whale was between 1 and 3 months old. Michael Weiss, research director for the center, described L130 as appearing well-fed, with visible fat reserves, and behaving energetically and socially with other whales, all good signs.

“It’s always exciting to find a new calf,” said Weiss. “In such a small population, having a new calf is a significant boost to the overall population size, but there’s always also a feeling of cautious optimism.”

The encouraging discovery was paired with a troubling absence, underscoring the challenges these whales face. Biologists could not locate L129, an L pod calf that was first spotted in February.

Man fatally shot by deputies after stabbing

CA LOS ANGELES — A man stabbed a Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputy, then was fatally shot by dep-

uties Saturday afternoon in Lancaster, according to the Sheriff’s Department.

Deputies responded to a complaint about a person wielding a knife about 2 p.m. at Lancaster Boulevard and Sierra Highway in an unincorporated area of Lancaster.

The man stabbed one of the deputies, who was taken to the hospital with noncritical injuries, according to the department. After being struck by gunfire, the man was pronounced dead at a hospital.

The Sheriff’s Department did not make clear whether the deputy who was stabbed also shot the suspect. Neither the wounded deputy nor the dead suspect was publicly identified.

Owners could face fines for leaving pets outside

KY LEXINGTON — The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council on Thursday approved changes to city ordinances that allows animal control to fine pet owners who leave animals outside and unattended in temperatures above 95 degrees Fahrenheit and below 32 degrees.

Fines range from \$100 to \$500.

Cattle, horses and fowl are excluded from the ordinance.

The move comes after the city and council received complaints, particularly during last summer’s extreme heat, about animals left outside, said Council member Emma Curtis.

The ordinance also updates multiple ordinances related to animal care and control, including clarifying when owners accused of abuse and neglect can reclaim their animals.

— From wire reports

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and Military News

Clark holds on to win 2nd career US Open

Associated Press

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. — Wyndham Clark couldn't remember being in a darker place. He was publicly reviled for a moment of petulance when he smashed a locker at Oakmont after missing the cut in the U.S. Open last year. His game, his reputation, he felt it all was slipping away.

Sunday at Shinnecock Hills wasn't much better. The New York crowd behind Scottie Scheffler in his bid for a career Grand Slam turned on Clark, cheering his misses and wishing for the worst.

That's what made this U.S. Open title so much sweeter.

On the edge of the greatest collapse in U.S. Open history, Clark held his nerve against a charge by Sam Burns and a Shinnecock Hills crowd that never gave him much love until he showed his mettle with his second U.S. Open title in four years.

"The first one was kind of just

the breakthrough of knowing I can do it," Clark said after a two-putt par from 50 feet for a 3-over 73 and a one-shot victory. "And then this one was a lot of redemption. Last year was so tough, a terrible year. I left this place in shambles, and it's amazing what a year can do. I'm leaving here this Sunday as a champion, and I'm just so blessed."

Clark, who won the 2023 U.S. Open at Los Angeles Country Club, became the first wire-to-wire winner of the U.S. Open since Martin Kaymer at Pinehurst No. 2 in 2014.

This sure didn't feel like a stroll through the Hamptons.

He had the largest 54-hole lead in the U.S. Open in 15 years. It was down to a single shot in just five holes, and stress followed him the rest of the way.

The clincher for Clark was on the par-5 16th, where he made the only eagle of the week Saturday. This time it was his worst drive, well left into the gnarly fescue. He gouged that out and

narrowly cleared a bunker. His 8-iron barely stayed on the back of the green. He rolled in a 30-foot birdie putt for a two-shot lead with two holes to play.

It was a signature moment with muted applause. The gallery rooted against him all day, putting all their support behind Scheffler, who made his own share of mistakes and never got closer than three shots of Clark all day.

Clark had the highest final round of a U.S. Open champion since Graeme McDowell closed with a 74 to win at Pebble Beach. No matter. The 32-year-old American has two U.S. Open titles, and two wins in the last month.

Burns closed with a 67, his second chance in as many years to win the U.S. Open. He bounced back from a three-putt bogey on the 15th with a an 18-foot birdie to stay within one shot. He made a weak pass at a 10-foot birdie putt to tie for the lead on the 17th. What haunts

him is a 17-foot birdie chance on the 18th that grazed the right edge of the cup, causing him to drop to his knees.

Clark finished at 4-under 276 and got a surprise at the end when his father, Randall, took an overnight flight from Denver to watch his son win for the first time.

He noticed fans leaving early Saturday and hoped for a big crowd and big energy for the final round. He got every bit of that, and it was uncomfortable at times. One was ejected when he shouted, "Don't choke, Wyndham." The grandstand behind the seventh green broke into cheers when his shot rolled off the green and into the bunker.

"I get it — they were rooting for Scottie," Clark said. "Grand Slams only happen a few times. He's going to get it. He's the best player in the world. But today it's my day."

It almost wasn't.

But Burns never caught him. No one did.

Serena Williams will make return to singles at Wimbledon

Associated Press

It's been talked about ever since Serena Williams announced nearly three weeks ago that she was returning to professional tennis after almost four years away from the sport.

But seeing the single-sentence announcement from The All England Club that the 23-time Grand Slam champion will play singles at Wimbledon was stunning nonetheless.

"Serena Williams (USA) receives the final ladies' singles wild card," read the key line in Sunday's announcement, which was issued eight days before the grass-court Grand Slam begins.

At age 44, Williams will actually play both singles and doubles at Wimbledon after already accepting a wild card for the doubles competition with older sister Venus.

"This is not a drill," Wimbledon said on its social media accounts Sunday.

Commented the WTA Tour, "Name a more iconic return...we'll wait."

Wimbledon held open the eighth and final women's singles wild card spot until Williams made up her mind. As recently as earlier this week after losing a doubles match in Berlin, she appeared to be waffling over the decision.

"Oh my gosh, there are some left?" she replied when she was told there was still a wild card spot open. Wild cards are special invitations handed out by tournament organizers, which allow former champions and others access to the main draw without the necessary entry qualifications.

But then she mused about her readiness for it.

"Do you think I'm ready for singles?" she asked a reporter and then turned to doubles partner Karolina Muchova to ask what she thought.

"I think I would be interested in it," the Czech player responded.

Well, now that Williams has made up her mind, the big remaining question is how she can physically handle singles play after so long.

Serena's most recent singles match was a loss to Ajla Tomljanovic in the third round of the 2022 U.S. Open. At the time, she said she didn't want to use the word "retiring" and instead declared that she was "evolving" away from tennis. Her second daughter was born in 2023.

Of Williams' 23 Grand Slam titles in singles, seven have come at Wimbledon: in 2002, 2003, 2009,

2010, 2012, 2015 and 2016. She's also won 14 Grand Slams in doubles, all with Venus, and six of them at Wimbledon.

At her last Wimbledon appearance in 2022, Serena was beaten in the opening round by 115th-ranked Harmony Tan in her first match since having to stop less than a set into her opening contest at the All England Club because of an injury the year before.

As of Sunday, Serena had not entered the singles draws of any grass-court tuneup tournaments before Wimbledon.

She will learn who her first-round opponent is Friday when the singles draws for Wimbledon are held. Serena currently has no singles ranking after being away for so long.

Iga Swiatek is the defending Wimbledon champion, while Aryna Sabalenka is ranked No. 1.

Tkachuks team up after Panthers get Brady

Associated Press

Matthew Tkachuk and Brady Tkachuk are about to team up in Florida after the Panthers pulled off another summertime blockbuster.

Florida and Ottawa finalized a deal Sunday night, with the Panthers sending four draft picks to the Senators for Brady Tkachuk — the brother of Florida star Matthew Tkachuk.

The picks were the No. 9 pick in this year's draft, Tampa Bay's first-round pick this year (acquired earlier Sunday in a trade the Panthers made sending Mackie Samoskevich to Seattle), Florida's second-round pick in 2027 and their top 10-protected first-round pick in 2029. And that means the Panthers add an elite player to their forward corps without losing any of their top seven scorers from this past season.

"Brady is a dynamic competitor and one of the most phys-

ical and relentless forwards in the league," Florida hockey operations president and general manager Bill Zito said. "A proven leader and exactly the type of player we want in our locker room, he strives to make everyone around him better both on and off the ice. We're thrilled to welcome Brady to South Florida to join our group as we continue our pursuit of championship hockey."

Brady Tkachuk has spent the entirety of his eight-year NHL career in Ottawa, and now he joins his brother, Olympic teammate and podcast co-host in Florida — the place where Matthew Tkachuk has spent the last four seasons, winning two Stanley Cups and getting to the final three times.

The Athletic was first to report the pending trade.

Brady Tkachuk has two seasons left on the seven-year, \$57.56 million contract he

signed in October 2021 when he also became the Senators' captain. As recently as late April, he bristled at conversation about his name being in trade rumors following a first-round playoff exit.

"This was not a decision we took lightly, but ultimately we did what we felt was best for the long-term future of our hockey club," Ottawa general manager Steve Staios said Sunday. "We now possess cap space and draft capital and will be actively working to improve our roster."

It's a move that makes sense for so many reasons and has seemed almost inevitable.

The Tkachuk brothers revelled in the chance to play alongside one another for USA Hockey at the 4 Nations Face-Off in 2025 and the Olympics this year, winning gold.

Their parents — their dad is NHL legend Keith Tkachuk —

have a home in Florida and are regular attendees at Panthers games, and the USA Hockey ties means Brady Tkachuk already has relationships with many in the Florida organization. Zito had a role within USA Hockey during this past Olympic cycle.

Brady Tkachuk was the Senators' captain for the last five seasons, and he was — by far in some cases — their leader in countless categories over his eight years with the team. No player had more goals (213), points (463), power-play goals (62), shots (2,202), hits (1,921), winning goals (28), multigoal games (30) and penalty minutes (821) in his tenure with the club, which acquired him with the No. 4 pick in the 2018 draft.

And now, four years after landing Matthew Tkachuk, the Panthers have tapped into the Tkachuk family well of talent again.

Heim claims first NASCAR Cup win at Coronado race

Associated Press

CORONADO, Calif. — Corey Heim slammed into the wall twice while destroying his tires during the first few runs Sunday in the inaugural NASCAR race at Naval Base Coronado.

It was no problem for Heim, whose No. 67 Toyota inexplicably kept getting faster on the way to his first career Cup Series victory in only his 13th start.

The 23-year-old part-time driver from Marietta, Ga., took a deep breath before the second half of the race and reminded himself that he had as much experience as the veterans on the 16-turn, 3.4-mile street course on Coronado Island, just south of downtown San Diego.

"I'm speechless," Heim said. "Maybe I knocked some good into the car. I have no idea. I had high expectations coming into this race. I just reset and went after it."

Heim, the 2024 truck series champion who will move full time into Cup next season with 23XI Racing, led the final three laps after snatching first from teammate Tyler Reddick.

"I was able to stick with him, and five to go

came, and it was time to put some pressure on him and see if I could get him to make a mistake," Heim said. "Sure enough, he did."

Bubba Wallace finished second to deliver a 1-2 finish for 23XI Racing, the team co-owned by Denny Hamlin and NBA great Michael Jordan.

Reddick suffered a flat tire in the closing laps and fell to 25th, cutting his lead in the standings to eight points over Hamlin.

"To even have a shot at it at the end was really nice," said Reddick, who started from the rear after unapproved adjustments to his car. "First and foremost, congratulations to Corey. I thought I was going to be able to hold him off there. It definitely stings. Really needed a good points day. Had another really bad one, so we'll try and scrape together."

It's the second time in three years that an inaugural street race has produced a first-time Cup Series winner. Shane van Gisbergen won his Cup debut in the 2023 Chicago Street Race.

Heim became the third first-time winner in Cup this season, joining Ty Gibbs (Bristol) and Carson Hocevar (Talladega).

His peers already think Heim's for real.

"Awesome job by Corey Heim," two-time Cup champion Kyle Larson said after finishing third. "That's really cool. He's a super talented race car driver, and it's neat to see somebody get their first win, especially at a challenging track like this."

Zane Smith and AJ Allmendinger rounded out the top five.

Hamlin, the driver-owner who had won the past three races for Joe Gibbs Racing, finished 14th.

Van Gisbergen finished 38th in his bid for an eighth road or street course victory, which will make him the active leader among Cup drivers.

After starting from the pole position, van Gisbergen was caught in a crash that started when Trackhouse Racing teammate Connor Zilisch and Austin Hill collided while battling for the lead on a Lap 32 restart.

The nine-car incident caused a nine-minute red flag for wall repairs.

"I felt like I was giving Austin space, and the next thing, I was in the wall," said Zilisch, who led the first eight laps of his Cup career in the highlight of a miserable rookie season.

Mavs lure May from Michigan to be coach

Associated Press

DALLAS—The Dallas Mavericks and Dusty May of national champion Michigan are finalizing a deal for the coach to make the jump from college to the NBA, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal wasn't completed.

May and the Wolverines won their first NCAA championship since 1989 with a 69-63 victory over UConn in April to wrap up a 34-3

season. They opened the NCAA Tournament by becoming the first team ever to score at least 90 points in five consecutive games.

That came three years after May led Florida Atlantic to its only Final Four appearance. The Owls returned to the NCAA Tournament in 2024 before May was hired by Michigan.

The 49-year-old May replaces Jason Kidd, who was let go two weeks after Masai Ujiri was hired as president of basketball operations and alternate governor for Dallas.

May comes to the NBA with a chance to mold 2025 No. 1 overall draft pick and reigning Rookie of the Year Cooper Flagg. Veteran star Kyrie Irving is also on the roster for now after missing the entire 2025-26 season following an ACL tear in March of last year.

"I was a fan of Dusty's when he was at FAU," said Yaxel Lendeborg, who played for May at Michigan and is expected to be a lottery pick in the first round of the NBA draft Tuesday night. "And now, after playing for him, I'm a bigger fan. I have so much

respect for Dusty May, I can't even tell you."

Lendeborg said at last month's draft combine that he believed May ran the Wolverines' program like an NBA program in many ways.

"A lot of schemes, a lot of switching and stuff. And his offense was very much a pro-style offense," Lendeborg said. "We played fast-paced, physical, all of that. ... I've gained so much knowledge from him as far as those actions and just those little communication keys."

Dingler, Vierling lead Tigers' rally in 10 to sweep White Sox

Associated Press

DETROIT — Dillon Dingler homered and drove in the tying run in the ninth before Matt Vierling's bloop single finished off Detroit's comeback in the 10th as the Tigers beat the Chicago White Sox 5-4 on Sunday.

Detroit trailed 3-1 after seven innings, but Dingler hit a homer in the eighth and the game-tying single in the ninth.

Tristan Peters put Chicago up 4-3 with a sacrifice fly in the 10th off Will Vest (3-4). Riley Greene led off the bottom of the inning with a single off Brandon Eisert (1-1) to put runners on the corners. Spencer Torkelson's base hit tied the game.

Colt Keith hit a grounder to first, and Jacob Gonzalez threw to the plate when Greene was holding third. That loaded the bases and brought Jordan Hicks out of the White Sox bullpen. Vierling hit a flare into shallow right field and Braden Montgomery couldn't make the diving catch.

Angels 9, Athletics 7: Zach Neto hit a two-run shot in the ninth inning that gave visiting Los Angeles its first lead, Denzer Guzman added a three-run home run in the eighth and the Angels beat the Athletics.

Donovan Walton also homered and had three RBIs while Nolan Schanuel and Jose Siri each added two hits to help LA win the series after being shut out on Saturday.

Reds 4, Yankees 1: Chase Burns (9-1) pitched five innings of one-run ball with seven strikeouts and survived six stolen bases for his eighth straight win, and visiting Cincinnati beat New York.

Tyler Stephenson hit a three-run homer in the fourth off Yankees rookie Elmer Rodriguez (0-2) as the Reds withstood allowing six steals for the second time this season.

Marlins 2, Giants 1: Kyle Stowers homered and scored on Otto Lopez's go-ahead double to lead Miami to a win against San Francisco.

Ryan Gusto and four relievers limited the Giants to four hits as the Marlins won their eighth straight at home. Miami is a major league best 14-4 in June.

Orioles 12, Dodgers 1: Colton Cowser tied his career-high with four RBIs, Pete Alonso added a three-run homer and visiting Baltimore routed Los Angeles.

Cowser had three hits including a home run as he notched four RBIs for the fifth time in four seasons in the majors, helping the Orioles take the series win over the Dodgers.

Brewers 9, Braves 4: William Contreras had four hits, including a three-run homer in visiting Milwaukee's eight-run second inning, and the Brewers beat Atlanta to snap a three-game skid.

Sal Frelick added a two-run double off Bryce Elder (5-5) as Milwaukee matched its season high for most runs in an inning to salvage a win in the three-game series between NL division leaders.

Cardinals 12, Royals 10: JJ Wetherholt hit two home runs and had three RBIs as visiting St. Louis avoided a series sweep with a win over Kansas City.

Masyn Winn hit a three-run homer in the Cardinals' five-run first inning and Ivan Herrera hit a three-run home run in the fifth for a 12-7 lead. Lars Nootbaar and Alec Burleson hit RBI singles as St. Louis had a season-high 16 hits.

Pirates 8, Rockies 6: Nick Gonzalez and Bryan Reynolds homered to help visiting Pittsburgh beat Colorado.

Gonzalez and Reynolds finished with two

hits each to help the Pirates salvage the finale of the three-game series in what could have been a sweep. They lost the first two games despite having the tying and winning runs on second and third with one out in the ninth in both games.

Mariners 3, Red Sox 1: Dominic Canzone homered, Logan Gilbert (6-4) allowed one run and struck out eight in 6⅓ innings and host Seattle beat Boston.

Cole Young delivered a key RBI single in the fifth to take a 2-1 lead. Weston Wilson lined a two-out single to left field, stole second base and scored on Young's ground ball that got through the infield into center.

Phillies 6, Mets 2: Kyle Schwarber and Bryce Harper each homered for the second straight game and host Philadelphia defeated New York.

Zack Wheeler (7-1) pitched 5⅓ innings and allowed two runs and four hits with seven strikeouts as the Phillies won the weekend series from the Mets.

Rays 4, Nationals 3: Jonny DeLuca hit a two-run home run in the seventh inning, Ryan Vilade also went deep and host Tampa Bay beat Washington.

Astros 2, Guardians 1: Yordan Alvarez hit his American League-leading 25th home run, Kai-Wei Teng (4-6) threw six innings of one-run ball and host Houston beat Cleveland.

Rangers 4, Padres 3: Wyatt Langford hit a three-run homer, Josh Jung had a go-ahead RBI single and host Texas beat San Diego to end a six-series losing streak against the Padres.

Twins 4, Diamondbacks 2: Alex Jackson's single tied the game in the seventh and the go-ahead run scored on an error, leading Minnesota over host Arizona.