

Biden affirms US support for Poland

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — President Joe Biden on Saturday marveled at the spirit and resolve of Ukrainian refugees in the aftermath of Russia's deadly invasion as he embraced mothers and children and promised enduring support from Western powers.

Biden, while in Poland's capital, listened intently as children described the perilous flight from neighboring Ukraine with their parents. Smiling broadly, he lifted up a young girl in a pink coat and told her she reminded him of his granddaughters. The president held hands with parents and gave them hugs during the stop at a soccer stadium where refugees go to obtain a Polish identification number that gives them access to social services such as health care and schools.

Some of the women and children told Biden that they fled without their husbands and fathers, men of fighting age who were required to remain behind to aid the resistance against the forces that Russian President

Vladimir Putin — “a butcher,” in Biden's words — sent into Ukraine more than a month ago.

“What I am always surprised by is the depth and strength of the human spirit,” Biden told reporters after his conversations with the refugees at the stadium, which more recently had served as a field hospital for COVID-19 patients. “Each one of those children said something to the effect of, ‘Say a prayer for my dad or grandfather or my brother who is out there fighting.’”

The president, who was set to return to Washington later in the day, tried to use his final hours of his European trip reassuring Poland that the United States would defend against any attacks by Russia as he acknowledged that the NATO ally bore the burden of the refugee crisis from the war.

“Your freedom is ours,” Biden told Poland's president, Andrzej Duda earlier, echoing one of that country's unofficial mottos.

At the Presidential Palace in Warsaw, the two leaders spoke of their mutual respect

and shared goals to end the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“Although times are very difficult, today Polish-American relations are flourishing,” Duda said.

More than 3.7 million people have fled Ukraine since the war began, and more than 2.2 million Ukrainians have crossed into Poland, though it is unclear how many have remained there and how many have left for other countries.

Last week, the U.S. announced it would take in as many as 100,000 refugees, and Biden told Duda that he understood Poland was “taking on a big responsibility, but it should be all of NATO's responsibility.”

Biden called the “collective defense” agreement of NATO a “sacred commitment,” and said the unity of the Western military alliance was of the utmost importance.

“I'm confident that Vladimir Putin was counting on dividing NATO,” Biden said. “But he hasn't been able to do it. We've all stayed together.”

Supreme Court: Vaccine status can halt deployment

The Washington Post

The Supreme Court on Friday allowed the Biden administration to take into account whether members of the military, including elite Navy SEALs, are vaccinated against the coronavirus when making deployment decisions.

Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel A. Alito Jr. and Neil M. Gorsuch dissented from the short, unsigned order.

Writing for himself, Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh said “the President of the United States, not any federal judge, is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.” He added there was “no basis in this case for employing the judicial power in a manner that military commanders believe would impair

the military of the United States as it defends the American people.”

The order put on hold the judgments of a lower court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, which had stopped the administration from making such decisions.

Solicitor General Elizabeth B. Prelogar had asked the Supreme Court to block at least part of the appeals court decision, calling it an “extraordinary and unprecedented intrusion into core military affairs.”

That ruling “not only prohibits the Navy from applying the COVID-19 vaccination requirement to respondents, but also requires the Navy to assign and deploy them without regard to their lack of vaccinations not-

withstanding military leaders' judgment that doing so poses intolerable risks to safety and mission success,” she wrote.

The challengers to the military's policy are 35 Navy service members assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Command, including 26 Navy SEALs.

The dispute arises from the August 2021 announcement by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that all active-duty members of the military must be vaccinated against the coronavirus. All Navy personnel were to receive their first dose of the vaccine or request an exemption by October, and the Navy indicated those who were not vaccinated could be reassigned, even if they had received an exemption.

A district judge blocked the Navy from enforcing the policy, saying the Navy could achieve “herd immunity” even if some members were not vaccinated, and blocked any retaliation against those requesting religious exemptions.

The court denied the Biden administration's request to put on hold the part of the order that said deployment decisions couldn't be made on the basis of vaccination status, and the appeals court turned them down as well.

The service members, represented by the conservative religious law organization First Liberty, said the Navy should not be allowed to discriminate against those who requested a religious exemption.

Chernihiv fears it will be next Mariupol

Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine — Nights are spent huddling underground from Russian strikes pounding their encircled city into rubble. Daylight hours are devoted to hunting down drinkable water and braving the risk of standing in line for the little food available as shells and bombs rain down.

In the second month of Russia's invasion, this is what now passes for life in Chernihiv, a besieged city in northern Ukraine where death is everywhere.

Russia continues to pound cities throughout Ukraine — three powerful explosions Saturday shook the western city of Lviv, which is near the Polish border and has been a refuge for thousands of displaced people.

Chernihiv has been blockaded and pounded from afar by

Russian troops for weeks. And while it has not experienced the intensity of attacks that have inflicted atrocious human suffering on the pulverized southern city of Mariupol, its remaining residents are terrified that each blast, bomb and body that lies uncollected on the streets ensnares them in the same macabre trap of unescapable killings and destruction.

"In basements at night, everyone is talking about one thing: Chernihiv becoming (the) next Mariupol," said 38-year-old resident Ihar Kazmerchak, a linguistics scholar.

He spoke to The Associated Press by cellphone, amid incessant beeps signaling that his battery was dying. The city is without power, running water and heating. At pharmacies, the lists of medicines no longer available grow longer by the

day.

Kazmerchak starts his day in long lines for drinking water, rationed to 2½ gallons per person. People come with empty bottles and buckets for filling when water-delivery trucks make their rounds.

"Food is running out, and shelling and bombing doesn't stop," he said.

Nestled between the Desna and Dnieper rivers, Chernihiv straddles one of the main roads that Russian troops invading from Belarus used Feb. 24 for what the Kremlin hoped would be a lightning strike onward to the capital, Kyiv, which is just 91 miles away.

The city's peace shattered, more than half of the 280,000 inhabitants fled, according to the mayor, unable to be sure when they'd next see its magnificent gold-domed cathedral and other

cultural treasures, or even if they still would be standing whenever they return. The mayor, Vladyslav Atroshenko, estimates Chernihiv's death toll from the war to be in the hundreds.

On Wednesday, Russian bombs destroyed Chernihiv's main bridge over the Desna River on the road leading to Kyiv; on Friday, artillery shells rendered the remaining pedestrian bridge impassable, cutting off the last possible route for people to get out or for food and medical supplies to get in.

Refugees from Chernihiv who fled the encirclement and reached Poland last week spoke of broad and terrible destruction, with bombs flattening at least two schools in the city center and strikes also hitting the stadium, museums and many homes.

Russian onslaught on hospitals seen as war crime

Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine — For a month now, Russian forces have repeatedly attacked Ukrainian medical facilities, striking at hospitals, ambulances, medics, patients and even newborns — with at least 34 assaults independently documented by The Associated Press.

With every new attack, the public outcry for war crimes prosecutions against Russian President Vladimir Putin, his generals and top Kremlin advisers grows louder.

To convict, prosecutors will need to show that the attacks are not merely accidents or collateral damage. The emerging pattern, tracked day by day by the AP, shows evidence of a consistent and relentless onslaught against the very civilian infrastructure designed to save lives and provide safe haven to Ukraine's most vulnerable.

AP journalists in Ukraine have seen the deadly results of Russian strikes on civilian targets firsthand: the final moments of children whose tiny bodies were shredded by shrapnel or had limbs blown off; dozens of corpses, including those of children, heaped

into mass graves.

"The pattern of attacks will help prosecutors build the case that these are deliberate attacks," said Ryan Goodman, professor of law at New York University and former special counsel at the U.S. Department of Defense. "Prosecutors will draw inferences from how many medical facilities were targeted, how many times individual facilities were repeatedly struck and in what span of time."

Deliberate attacks on hospitals will likely be a top priority for war crimes prosecutors.

This accounting of attacks on medical facilities is part of a larger effort by the AP and the PBS series Frontline to track evidence of potential war crimes committed during one of the largest conflicts in Europe since the end of World War II.

The War Crimes Watch Ukraine project launched by AP and Frontline includes details of apparent targeted attacks as well as indiscriminate destruction of civilian buildings and infrastructure. The AP/Frontline online database will continue to be updated as long as the conflict lasts. The goal is to provide an

independent accounting of events, apart from potentially inflated claims by advocates or misinformation spread by state-backed propaganda.

The AP's own reports include strong visual evidence such as photos and videos, along with witness accounts of alleged atrocities. AP journalists outside Ukraine have confirmed the details of other attacks by interviewing survivors and independently verifying the authenticity of videos and photos from the war zone posted online by local officials and residents.

Still, Russian officials have denied hitting civilian targets, deriding the mounting documentation of atrocities as "Fake News" and claiming without evidence that dead and wounded civilians photographed were "crisis actors."

Speaking at talks in Turkey about a potential cease-fire, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov dismissed concerns about civilian casualties as "pathetic shrieks" from Russia's enemies and denied Ukraine has even been invaded.

Md. judge blocks new congressional map

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A Maryland judge ruled Friday that the state's new congressional map is unconstitutional, the first Democratic-drawn map to be struck down by a court this redistricting cycle in what the judge called a "product of extreme partisan gerrymandering."

So far courts have intervened to block maps they found to be GOP gerrymanders in North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania, infuriating Republicans and leading conservatives to push for the U.S. Supreme Court to limit the power of state courts to overturn maps drawn by state legislatures.

Judge Lynne Battaglia gave state lawmakers until Wednesday to come up with a new congressional map plan.

Battaglia, a retired judge from state's highest court who was assigned the case in Anne Arundel County Circuit Court, issued the ruling after a trial earlier this month in which Republican lawmakers contended that Maryland's congressional map approved by the General Assembly in December violates the constitution by drawing districts that favor Democrats, who control the legislature.

She found that testimony in the case supported the argument that "the voice of Re-

publican voters was diluted and their right to vote and be heard with the efficacy of a Democratic voter was diminished."

"The limitation of the undue extension of power by any branch of government must be exercised to ensure that the will of the people is heard, no matter under which political placard those governing reside. The 2021 Congressional Plan is unconstitutional, and subverts that will of those governed," Battaglia wrote.

An appeal by the state is almost certain. Raquel Coombs, a spokeswoman for the attorney general, said the office is reviewing the decision.

New Orleans rescinds school jazz ban

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — With its president saying it had racist origins, the New Orleans school board has unanimously reversed a little known but century-old ban on jazz in schools in a city which played a huge role in developing jazz and where it is still played nightly at various venues.

"I'm very glad that we can rescind this policy. I want to acknowledge it. It was rooted in racism," Orleans Parish School Board President Olin Parker said during the meeting Thursday night. "And I also want to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of our students and especially of our band directors, whose legacy continues from 1922 through present day."

The board's resolution said it wanted "to correct the previous action of the School

Board and to encourage jazz music and jazz dance in schools."

Board minutes from March 24, 1922, said "it was decided that jazz music and jazz dancing would be abolished in the public schools." One member — who walked out on a special meeting called at the end of the session because reporters were not allowed to cover it — abstained from voting on jazz.

Officials told The Times Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate that the 1922 board members were trying to distance students from a genre with African American origins.

A copy of a news clipping from 1922, posted on the newspaper's website, did not mention race. It quoted the resolution's sponsor, "Mrs. A. Baumgartner," as saying she had seen "a lot of rough dancing" at after-school

events. "This cheek-to-cheek dancing is terrible," she said.

Ken Ducote, executive director of the Greater New Orleans Collaborative of Charter Schools, brought the policy to the board's attention after reading about it in Al Kennedy's book "Chord Changes on the Chalkboard: How Public School Teachers Shaped Jazz and the Music of New Orleans."

"It was just one of those things that was buried in the books," board member Carlos Zervigon said Friday. "Obviously it was ridiculous and never really applied. But what an opportunity to be able to go back and reverse it on the 100th anniversary of its passage and acknowledge what our schools played in the formation and development of music in our classrooms."

Utah bans trans athletes in girls sports despite veto

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — GOP lawmakers in Utah pushed through a ban on transgender youth athletes playing on girls teams Friday, overriding a veto and joining 11 other states with similar laws amid a nationwide culture war.

A veto letter from Gov. Spencer Cox drew national attention with a poignant argument that such laws target vulnerable transgender kids already at high suicide risk.

Business leaders also sounded

the alarm that the ban could have a multimillion-dollar economic impact on Utah, including the possible loss of the NBA All-Star Game next year. The Utah Jazz called the ban "discriminatory legislation" and opposed it.

Before the veto, the ban received support from a majority of Utah lawmakers, but fell short of the two-thirds needed to override it. Its sponsors on Friday flipped 10 Republicans in the House and five in the Senate who had previously voted against the proposal.

Cox was the second GOP gov-

ernor last week to overrule lawmakers on a sports-participation ban, but the proposal won support from a vocal conservative base that has particular sway in Utah's state primary season. Even with those contests looming, however, some Republicans stood with Cox to reject the ban.

"I cannot support this bill. I cannot support the veto override and if it costs me my seat so be it. I will do the right thing, as I always do," said Republican Sen. Daniel Thatcher.

With the override of Cox's veto,

a dozen states have some sort of ban on transgender kids in school sports. Utah's law takes effect July 1.

Leaders in the deeply conservative Utah say they need the law to protect women's sports. The lawmakers argue that more transgender athletes with possible physical advantages could eventually dominate the field and change the nature of women's sports without legal intervention.

Utah has only one transgender girl playing in K-12 sports who would be affected by the ban.

US seeks tighter N. Korea sanctions

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States called Friday for tougher U.N. sanctions after North Korea said it test-fired its biggest intercontinental ballistic missile to date, with Kim Jong Un vowing to expand his country's "nuclear war deterrent" while preparing for a "long-standing confrontation" with the United States.

North Korean state media reported the North's first long-range test since 2017, and South Korea and Japan said they detected it. Thursday's launch extended a barrage of weapons demonstrations this year that analysts say are aimed at forcing the United States to accept the idea of North Korea as a nuclear

power and remove crippling sanctions against its broken economy.

At a U.N. Security Council meeting Friday, U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the U.S. would propose a resolution "to update and strengthen" Security Council sanctions. She declined to specify what those new measures might be.

"It is clear that remaining silent, in the hope that the DPRK would similarly show restraint, is a failed strategy," she said. DPRK is an acronym for the country's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea.

The council originally imposed sanctions after the North's first nuclear test explosion in

2006 and tightened them over the years. But last fall, veto-wielding China and Russia called for lifting various sanctions against their neighbor.

Russian Deputy Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva said Friday that further sanctions would only harm North Korea's people, while Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun urged the council "to consider how to accommodate the DPRK's justified security concerns."

He suggested that the U.S. didn't do enough to respond to the North's 2018 self-imposed pause on long-range missile and nuclear tests and needed to "show its goodwill" and "work harder to stabilize the situation" and resume dialogue.

Saudi airstrikes hit Houthis in retaliation

Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — A Saudi-led coalition fighting Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen unleashed a barrage of airstrikes on the capital and a strategic Red Sea city, officials said Saturday. At least seven people were killed.

The overnight airstrikes on Sanaa and Hodeida — both held by the Houthis — came a day after the rebels attacked an oil depot in the Saudi city of Jiddah, their highest-profile assault yet on the kingdom.

Brig. Gen. Turki al-Malki, a spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition, said the strikes targeted "sources of threat" to Saudi Arabia, according to the state-run Saudi Press Agency.

He said the coalition intercepted and destroyed two explosives-laden drones early Saturday. He said the drones were launched from Houthi-held civilian oil facilities in Hodeida, urging civilians to stay away from oil facilities in the city.

Footage circulated online showed flames and plumes of smoke over Sanaa and Hodeida. Associated Press journalists in the Yemeni capital heard loud explosions that rattled residential buildings there.

The Houthis said the coalition airstrikes hit a power plant, a fuel supply station and the state-run social insurance office in the capital.

A Houthi media office claimed an airstrike

hit houses for guards of the social insurance office, killing at least seven people and wounding three others, including women and children.

The office shared images it said showed the aftermath of the airstrike. It showed wreckage in the courtyard of a social insurance office with the shattered windows of a nearby multiple-story building.

In Hodeida, the Houthi media office said the coalition hit oil facilities in violation of a 2018 cease-fire deal that ended months of fighting in Hodeida, which handles about 70% of Yemen's commercial and humanitarian imports. The strikes also hit the nearby Port Salif, also on the Red Sea.

Scientists learn why vampire bats survive on blood

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Scientists have figured out why vampire bats are the only mammals that can survive on a diet of just blood.

They compared the genome of common vampire bats to 26 other bat species and identified 13 genes that are missing or no longer work in vampire bats. Over the years, those gene tweaks helped them adapt to a blood diet rich in iron and protein but with minimal fats or carbohydrates, the researchers reported Friday in the journal *Science Advances*.

The bats live in South and Central America and are basically "living Draculas," said co-author Michael Hiller of Germany's

Max Planck Institute. About 3 inches long with a wingspan of 7 inches, the bats bite and then lap up blood from livestock or other animals at night.

Most mammals couldn't survive on a low-calorie liquid diet of blood. Only three vampire species of the 1,400 kinds of bats can do that — the others eat mostly insects, fruit, nectar, pollen or meat, such as small frogs and fish.

"Blood is a terrible food source," said Hannah Kim Frank, a bat researcher at Tulane University, who was not involved in the study. "It's totally bizarre and amazing that vampire bats can survive on blood — they are really weird, even among bats."

The latest work expands upon research

by another team that pinpointed three of the 13 gene losses.

"The new paper shows how different vampire bats are from even other closely related bats, which eat nectar and fruit," said Kate Langwig, a bat researcher at Virginia Tech, who had no role in the study.

With such a low-calorie diet, vampire bats can't go long without a meal. In a pinch, well-fed ones will regurgitate their food to share with a starving neighbor. They seem to keep track of who has helped them in the past, said Hiller, noting that vampire bats have complex social relationships.

"It's not a kin thing," said Tulane's Frank. "They just notice and remember: You're a good sharer; I will reward you."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man dies parachuting from high-rise building

CA SAN DIEGO — A man was killed after attempting to parachute from the top of a high-rise apartment building in San Diego as his 16-year-old daughter watched, police said.

The 48-year-old man was attempting to BASE jump from the 23-story Palisade UTC luxury apartment complex in the University City neighborhood, police said.

"We're unclear as to whether the parachute malfunctioned or if it just didn't have enough time to open up properly and deploy," Capt. Scott Wahl said.

BASE is an acronym for the categories of objects people parachute from: buildings, antennae, spans and earth, such as cliffs. BASE jumping is illegal.

Man sees unicycle as answer to gas prices

MA FALL RIVER — A Massachusetts man says he has the answer for those singing the blues about stratospheric gas prices.

Rick Madeira, of Fall River, has taken to riding his electric unicycle to work, saving on gas and cutting his commute time in the process.

"It's just more convenient and it's obviously more fun," he told The Herald News.

Madeira's Gotway Nikola Plus, with no seat or handlebars, just places for his feet, can go 70 or 80 miles on one charge and reaches speeds of up to 40 mph, although he rarely goes that fast.

He's allowed to ride on the sidewalk, but usually sticks to

the road, keeping to the shoulder when possible. He can also move to the front of the line at red lights, like cyclists, he said.

Teens invited to game after halting bus

ME TOPSHAM — Two teenagers who helped bring a runaway school bus to a stop and called for help have been invited to the New England Patriots season opener.

Team owner Robert Kraft delivered the invitation himself during a Zoom call with Connor and Seamus Collins, who stepped in when the bus driver suffered a fatal medical event on March 14 in Topsham, Maine.

"You guys are unbelievable," Kraft said. "My team told me what you did, there. You guys really called an audible on that bus."

The bus had 14 middle and high school students aboard. Connor, a 16-year-old student at Mount Ararat High School, is credited with steering the bus to a stop on an embankment.

His 14-year-old brother, Seamus, a student at Mount Ararat Middle School, dialed 911.

Others helped by rendering aid and flagging down passing vehicles.

Woman charged with homicide after crashes

DE NEW CASTLE — A Delaware woman is facing charges that include vehicular homicide after two carjackings left one pedestrian dead and four other people injured, Delaware State Police said.

Brittalia Semaan, 30, was arrested in New Castle after police said she carjacked two vehicles and caused multiple car crashes in that city.

Semaan fatally struck one man with a stolen vehicle before striking and injuring two women that morning, police said.

Occupants of vehicles involved in the crashes also suffered injuries, which police said were non-life-threatening.

2 teenage girls accused of abducting baby

WI MILWAUKEE — Two girls are under arrest in the abduction of a baby in Milwaukee that prompted an Amber Alert, police said.

The Milwaukee Police Department said in a statement that a 14-year-old girl and a 16-year-old girl are suspected of taking 3-month-old Anthony Crudup Jr.

The child's mother called police to report the child's disappearance.

She said a number of people were at her home when she fell asleep and when she woke up they and the baby were gone.

Police searched the neighborhood and an investigation led them to a residence blocks away where the baby was found unharmed.

Robbery suspect shot after firing at cops

OH NORTH OLMSTED — A man who authorities said opened fire on police after he tried to rob a coffee shop was shot and wounded by officers following a vehicle pursuit.

The attempted robbery oc-

curred in North Olmsted, a western suburb of Cleveland. The man fled the shop and shot at officers before he jumped into a vehicle and sped away, with police in pursuit, authorities said.

The man eventually stopped behind a residence and again shot at officers, who returned fire and shot the man at least once, authorities said.

He was being treated at a hospital and further details on his condition were not disclosed.

No officers were injured in the pursuit or the shootings.

Man charged for aiming handgun at bus driver

GA NORCROSS — A man has been charged with aggravated assault after pointing a handgun at a Greyhound bus driver outside Atlanta and sparking a standoff with a SWAT team that shut down Interstate 85 for hours, police said.

The 23-year-old Conyers, Ga., man had gotten into an argument with a passenger on the bus bound for New York from Atlanta.

He then pointed a gun at the driver after he had pulled over because of the commotion, Gwinnett County police said. A police SWAT team then surrounded the bus.

Interstate 85 northeast of Atlanta was closed in both directions for more than four hours as officers negotiated with the man and finally apprehended him.

Police say the suspect didn't point the gun at any passengers and they were able to exit the bus safely.

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Cinderella Saint Peter's makes Elite Eight

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Doug Edert hopped on the press table and punched his fist in the air toward a delirious section of Saint Peter's fans — aren't they all? — as his teammates thumped their chests and flashed eight fingers as the mayhem became a perfect Peacock party.

Edert's giant leap toward the roaring crowd might have been his only mistake of the night.

"You jumped on a table?" coach Shaheen Holloway asked later, then paused for some serious side-eye for comedic effect.

C'mon, Coach. Let the Peacocks strut their stuff.

The upsets aren't over yet and the tiny commuter college in Jersey City, N.J., is still outperforming all March expectations. Next stop: the Elite Eight, a first-time destination for a No. 15 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

"We're making history," Edert said. "We're looking for-

ward to making more history."

Daryl Banks III scored the tying and go-ahead baskets that pushed Saint Peter's to the brink of the Final Four, the suddenly popular Peacocks thriving off a home-court edge to beat third-seeded Purdue 67-64 on Friday night.

The Peacocks (22-11) added the Boilermakers to their string of upsets and will face North Carolina in the East Region final on Sunday.

Saint Peter's had the fans inside the packed Wells Fargo Center on its side from the opening tip and the arena erupted when Banks tied the game 57-all on a turnaround jumper. He hit a driving layup with 2:17 left that made it 59-57.

The Peacocks kept their composure — hey, they're used to these wins by now after knocking off No. 2 seed Kentucky and seventh-seeded Murray State — and held off a Purdue team that gamely tried to bully them inside.

"What they going to say

now?" Holloway said about his team's doubters, a group whose numbers are dwindling.

The Boilermakers (29-8), 12 ½-point favorites according to FanDuel Sportsbook, never led by more than six.

Almost 30 years to the day that Duke's Christian Laettner stunned Kentucky with an overtime buzzer-beater to win a regional final at the since-raised Spectrum, Purdue and Saint Peter's pulled off their own Philly classic.

Saint Peter's fans made the 93-mile ride south to help pack the arena and give the Peacocks more of an edge than they usually have at their bandbox known as Run Baby Run Arena. Consider, just 434 fans were listed as the total attendance for Saint Peter's home opener this season against LIU.

More than that turned out to give the team a Sweet 16 sendoff from campus this week.

"Everybody wanted tickets. I can't get tickets for everybody," Holloway said. "I'll tell you

what, man, I can't believe the support that we're having. This is unbelievable. Jersey City has been unbelievable for us."

Even more basketball fans — yes, even those whose brackets the Peacocks helped bust — were suddenly rooting for Saint Peter's, an unassuming campus just across the Hudson River from Lower Manhattan.

Jaden Ivey buried an NBA-distance three with 8 seconds left that pulled Purdue within 65-64 and momentarily shushed the crowd.

No worries. Edert, whose wispy mustache and goofy persona earned him a fast-food chicken endorsement deal, sank two free throws to seal the win.

Edert then led the madness on the court and took it to the table. He saluted fans in the first few rows as the rest of the Peacocks mobbed each other and hugged before they gathered at the basket to celebrate — one more time — the biggest win in program history.

No. 1 seed Kansas fights off late Providence rally

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Kansas' Jalen Wilson noticed the excitement on the other side.

The top-seeded Jayhawks went from leading by 13 in the second half to trailing Providence by a point with their season in danger of slipping away.

But the only No. 1 seed left in the NCAA Tournament responded to that brief challenge, stood firm and closed out a 66-61 victory on Friday night to reach the Elite Eight.

"I saw how excited they were getting, they started talking a little bit," Wilson said. "I'm still confident in my team. We would never get rattled. We've seen every type of game, every type of situation. I'm just always confident in whatever comes our way."

Remy Martin scored a season-high 23 points, and Kansas held Providence to 17 points in the first half.

The Jayhawks (31-6) made it farther than fellow No. 1 seeds Gonzaga and Arizona, both ousted in the Sweet 16, and Baylor, whose title defense ended in the second round. They will face Miami — a 70-56 winner over Iowa State — in the Midwest Region final on Sunday.

Wilson added 16 points and 11 rebounds as the Jayhawks advanced to a regional final for the first time since 2018, when they reached their 15th Final Four. Coach Bill Self is seeking his fourth trip there since he arrived in 2003.

Kansas also moved ahead of Kentucky for the most wins in

Division I history with 2,354.

"I don't know that I totally buy in 100 percent that we don't ever get rattled," Self said. "But I do think, as Jalen said, our league (the Big 12) has prepared us in the way you play so many close games. Every game is a fistfight. I think our guys have enough confidence that when things don't go well as a team, they think that they can go make an individual play."

After fourth-seeded Providence (27-6) took its one-point lead, Kansas responded with a 7-0 run. Big 12 Player of the Year Ochai Agbaji scored a season-low five points. But with Martin and Wilson leading the way, the Jayhawks won their eighth straight.

"All the practices, every-

thing that we've done leading up to this point, we revert back to that," Martin said. "We work really hard in practice, we do what needs to be done, we listen to Coach."

And in situations like this?

"Stay calm, let each other know that they're gonna go through their runs, but as long as we stick together, as we've been doing all season, we're gonna get through this," Martin said.

Providence finished with its highest win total since the 1973-74 team went 28-4. It was the Friars' deepest NCAA Tournament run since reaching the regional finals in 1997 under Pete Gillen.

Al Durham scored 21 points. But the Friars shot 33.8% and made 4 of 23 three-pointers.

Love, North Carolina overtake UCLA

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Turns out, the best explanation for the shooting spree Caleb Love put on for North Carolina was also the simplest.

It's gotta be the shoes.

Reinvigorated by a change of sneakers at halftime, Love went crazy for the Tar Heels on Friday night. He made the game-tying and go-ahead three-pointers 37 seconds apart to lift Carolina to a 73-66 victory over UCLA in a March Madness matchup of power programs.

Love scored 27 of his career-high 30 points in the second half, part of a barrage that included NBA-range threes and no-look layups. His go-ahead three came with 1:03 left. He also hit a pair of free throws with 7.8 seconds remaining that put away the fourth-seeded Bruins for good.

The idea to change shoes came from the team's director

of operations, Eric Hoots, after Love shot 1-for-8 in the first half. He shot 10-for-16 in the second.

"I'm going to give him a raise," coach Hubert Davis said of his right-hand man.

North Carolina is one win away from its 21st Final Four, which would improve on the record it already holds. Its next game is Sunday against Saint Peter's in a first-of-its-kind 8-vs.-15 matchup in the Elite Eight. The 15th-seeded Peacocks topped Purdue 67-64 earlier in the evening.

Every bit as tantalizing, the Tar Heels and their archrival Duke, which played Arkansas on Saturday, are each one win away from a matchup at the Final Four in New Orleans next weekend. The teams have never played each other in the NCAA Tournament.

As great as the Saint Peter's run has been, and as great as

both games in Philly were Friday night, nobody stood out more over the five hours of hoops at the Wells Fargo Center — the same place Carolina punched its ticket for the 2016 Final Four — than Love.

The sophomore was held to five points in last week's win over Baylor, but managed one point more than that during the decisive 37 seconds. His go-ahead three marked the last of 14 lead changes in a game that was also tied eight times.

"One hot player can send you home," UCLA guard Jules Bernard said.

Last year, that hot player was Jalen Suggs, the Gonzaga guard who banked one in from near half court to end UCLA's season at the national semifinal. This time, it was Love, who scored one fewer point than what Bernard (16) and Tyger Campbell (15) put up, combined.

Miami 70, Iowa State 56: At Chicago, Kameron McGusty scored 27 points and the Hurricanes advanced to the Elite Eight for the first time, using their swarming defense to beat the Cyclones.

Jordan Miller added 16 points on 6-for-6 shooting as No. 10 seed Miami more than held its own in a matchup of two of the tourney's most suffocating defenses. The 11th-seeded Cyclones shot 32% from the field in the second half and finished with 18 turnovers.

With Charlie Moore directing the attack in his hometown, the Hurricanes (26-10) got their first win in the school's fourth appearance in the Sweet 16.

Gabe Kalschauer scored 13 points for Iowa State (22-13), and freshman Tyrese Hunter had 13 points and seven assists. Izaiah Brockington finished with 11 points and seven rebounds.

Creighton, Texas, Stanford, S. Carolina women move on

Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Aliyah Boston's dominance in the NCAA Tournament has reached levels not seen in a half-century.

Boston had 28 points, including all 13 for top-seeded South Carolina in the fourth quarter, and 22 rebounds to send the Gamecocks to the Elite Eight with a 69-61 victory over North Carolina on Friday.

Along with her first-ever 20-20 game in three college seasons, Boston was the first player — male or female — to have 25 or more points, 20 or more boards and shoot better than 90% at the foul line since UCLA's Bill Walton did it in the 1972 Final Four against Louisville, according to Stats Perform.

"Just keeping dominance on my mind," said Boston, who was

12-for-13 from the foul line and had her 27th straight game with a double-double.

The Gamecocks (32-2) will take on 10th-seeded Creighton in the Greensboro Region for a spot in the Final Four on Sunday.

Deja Kelly led North Carolina (25-7) with 23 points.

Creighton 76, Iowa State 68: Morgan Maly scored a career-high 21 points to help the 10th-seeded Bluejays beat the Cyclones, becoming one of the lowest seeds to ever reach a women's NCAA Tournament regional final.

Tatum Rembao added 19 for Creighton (23-9), which entered the Greensboro Region semifinals savoring the program's first run to the Sweet 16. The Bluejays joined Lamar in 1991 and Oregon in 2017 as 10-seeds that pushed to the Elite Eight.

Gonzaga in 2011 was the lowest-seeded at No. 11 to reach the Elite Eight.

Creighton shot 55% after halftime with six three-pointers.

Emily Ryan had 22 points, eight rebounds and six assists to lead Iowa State (28-7).

Spokane Region

Stanford 72, Maryland 66: Lexie Hull scored 19 points in her hometown, Haley Jones added 17 points and 10 rebounds, and the top-seeded Cardinal rolled into the women's NCAA Tournament regional final with a win over the No. 4 seed Terrapins.

Meeting in the NAAs for the first time since the schools played in the same building in the 2008 Elite Eight, defending national champion Stanford (31-3) dominated Maryland for the first three quarters. The

Terrapins (23-9) trimmed the deficit to 68-59 with 1:41 left, but couldn't get much closer.

Stanford faces No. 2 seed Texas in the regional final on Sunday.

Angel Reese led Maryland (23-9) with 25 points.

Texas 66, Ohio State 63: Joanne Allen-Taylor scored 17 points, and the Longhorns beat the Buckeyes to advance to the Elite Eight.

Aliyah Matharu added 10 points for Texas (29-6), which will make its second straight appearance in the Elite Eight.

The second-seeded Longhorns have won 14 straight games since their last loss on Feb. 6 — the second-longest active streak behind Stanford.

Taylor Mikesell scored 19 points and Jacy Sheldon had 17 for sixth-seeded Ohio State (25-7).

Rangers ride fast start, cruise past Pens

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chris Kreider scored twice, Mika Zibanejad had three assists and Igor Shesterkin made 20 saves as the New York Rangers beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 5-1 on Friday night.

Alexis Lafreniere, Frank Vatrano and newcomer Andrew Copp also had goals for the Rangers, who scored three times in the first four-plus minutes of the game against Tristian Jarry, who entered with a five-game winning streak and a 7-1-0 mark in his last eight appearances.

Jeff Carter scored Pittsburgh's lone goal six minutes into the third.

The Rangers recovered from Tuesday's 7-4 road loss to the Devils with a convincing performance against the Penguins, a potential first-round playoff opponent making their first visit to Madison Square Garden this season. The Rangers have won five of their last seven games and eight of 12.

Capitals 4, Sabres 3 (SO): Alex Ovechkin scored the tying goal and then had the decisive

shootout goal, helping visiting Washington snap a two-game skid.

Anthony Mantha and Nick Jensen also scored for the Capitals. Ilya Samsonov stopped 20 shots through regulation and allowed one goal on three shootout attempts.

Jeff Skinner scored twice and Victor Olofsson added a goal for Buffalo, which had a three-game winning streak snapped. Buffalo squandered a chance to win four straight for the first time since a 10-game winning streak in November 2018.

Dustin Tokarski stopped 37 shots through overtime, including foiling John Carlson on bang-bang chances off a two-on-one break before the overtime buzzer.

Avalanche 6, Flyers 3: Cale Makar scored twice to set the single-season franchise goal record for a defenseman and host Colorado beat Philadelphia.

Makar's goal on a wrist shot in the third period was his 24th of the season, surpassing the mark Sandis Ozolinsh set in 1996-97.

Nazem Kadri had a goal and

two assists as part of a four-goal first period to set the early tone for the Avalanche. J.T. Compher, Mikko Rantanen and Kurtis MacDermid — on his 28th birthday — added goals for Colorado. Pavel Francouz stopped 29 shots for the NHL-leading Avalanche, who are trying to capture their second straight Presidents' Trophy for the best mark in the league.

James van Riemsdyk, Zack MacEwen and Max Willman scored for a Flyers team playing the second game of a back-to-back following a win in St. Louis.

Jets 4, Blue Jackets 3 (OT): Nikolaj Ehlers scored on a breakaway just 21 seconds into overtime, giving host Winnipeg the win over Columbus.

Oliver Bjorkstrand forced the extra period with a tying power-play goal for Columbus with 14 seconds left after Winnipeg's Josh Morrissey was assessed a slashing penalty.

Morrissey, Kyle Connor and Dominic Toninato scored in regulation for the Jets. Connor extended his points streak to 10 games. Eric Comrie stopped 32

shots.

Brendan Gaunce and Adam Boqvist had the other goals for the Blue Jackets in regulation. Elvis Merzlikins made 28 saves.

Flames 4, Coyotes 2: Johnny Gaudreau scored his 30th goal and added two assists to lead host Calgary over Arizona.

Matthew Tkachuk also scored his 30th, and Elias Lindholm and Rasmus Andersson added goals for Calgary, which improved to 16-2-2 in its last 20 home games.

Tkachuk, Gaudreau, Lindholm (32), and Mangiapane (30) give the Flames four 30-goal scorers for the first time since 1993-94, when Gary Roberts (41), Theoren Fleury (40), Robert Reichel (40) and Joe Nieuwendyk (36) accomplished the feat.

Jacob Markstrom made 16 stops in the win and improved to 30-12-7, becoming the first Flames goalie to win 30 games in a season since Miikka Kiprusoff won 35 games in 2011-12.

Michael Carcone and Vladislav Kolyachonok scored their first NHL goals for Arizona, which lost its fourth straight.

Young leads Hawks past slumping Warriors

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Trae Young scored 33 points, Danilo Gallinari added 25 and the Atlanta Hawks held on to beat the Golden State Warriors 121-110 on Friday night.

Klay Thompson finished with 37 points, hitting a season-high nine three-pointers, and Jordan Poole had 24 for the Warriors, playing without Stephen Curry because of sprained left foot. They have dropped four of five.

Golden State, third in the Western Conference, was coming off a rousing win at Miami on Wednesday night before faltering against the Hawks. Atlanta, the No. 10 team in the East, had dropped two of three.

Knicks 111, Heat 103: Emmanuel Quickley scored 20 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter, leading a huge comeback that carried visiting New York past reeling Miami.

Jimmy Butler led Miami with 30 points. The Eastern Conference-leading Heat have a half-game lead over defending NBA champion Milwaukee.

76ers 122, Clippers 97: James Harden had 29 points and a season-high 15 rebounds, Joel Embiid added 27 points and 10 boards and visiting Philadelphia rolled past Los Angeles.

It is the first time since Harden was acquired from the Brooklyn Nets in a blockbuster

trade on Feb. 10 that the two All-Stars have had a double-double in the same game for the Sixers.

Timberwolves 116, Mavericks 95: Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points and nine rebounds and host Minnesota made up for a narrow loss at Dallas four days earlier.

The Timberwolves moved a half-game behind idle Denver for the sixth spot that they badly want in the Western Conference to avoid the play-in tournament.

Hornets 107, Jazz 101: Miles Bridges had 26 points and 11 rebounds, Terry Rozier added 25 points and host Charlotte beat Utah.

Charlotte wrapped up a five-

game homestand with a 4-1 record and pulled within a half-game of Brooklyn for the eighth spot in the Eastern Conference.

Wizards 100, Pistons 97: Kristaps Porzingis had 30 points and 10 rebounds and visiting Washington held on to beat Detroit.

Marvin Bagley III led Detroit with 25 points, and Cade Cunningham added 22 points, nine rebounds and seven assists.

Rockets 125, Trail Blazers 106: Jalen Green hit five three-pointers and scored 23 points and NBA-worst Houston beat host Portland to snap an 11-game road losing streak.

The Trail Blazers have lost 12 of 14.