

## DOD doctors must treat civilians in Pacific

By AARON KIDD  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — Defense Department civilians with chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes can be treated once again — though on a space-available basis — by on-base doctors in the Indo-Pacific region.

The change was directed by the Defense Health Agency in a Friday memo to Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Heck, the region's director. It was signed by Dr. Brian Lein, DHA's assistant director of health care administration.

On Jan. 1, Heck began enforcing a policy that ended easy access to U.S. military hospitals in the region for anyone not covered by Tricare Prime, the military's top-tier health care plan.

Only space-available appointments for acute medical problems were available to many DOD civilians and veterans without Prime.

Friday's memo directed Heck to reverse that decision and spelled out the military hospitals' mission: "to provide health care to Tricare beneficiaries, maintain the medical readiness of the force and contribute to installation support activities.

"Because the civilian component of our total force (civilian employees and contractor personnel) is critical to our mission success, medical treatment facilities overseas will provide medical care on a space-available basis to both them and their authorized accompanying family members," the memo said.

Military treatment facilities, or MTFs, must implement "standard processes" to enhance access to care, according to the memo.

"Standard processes include optimizing appointment capacity to enable safe care and treatment for the greatest number of patients within the capability of the MTF," the memo said. "MTFs are expected to meet access to care standards for active duty service members and active duty family members and make excess appointment capacity available for space-available care in accordance with DOD policy."

Space-available care will be provided within the MTFs scope of services, according to the memo.

"Lastly, we continue to evaluate additional health care solutions for members of our civilian component who are not Tricare beneficiaries," the memo said. "MTFs will continue to provide information about host nation healthcare resources."

The change comes just weeks after thousands of DOD civilians in Japan turned out at a series of town hall meetings to let Pentagon officials hear their dissatisfaction.

Over four days, DOD officials fielded mostly the same questions at six U.S. bases in Japan.

They also heard a catalog of personal anecdotes about the consequences of requiring DOD employees and their families to seek medical care from Japanese providers.

## Report: USS George Washington to return to Japan

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The aircraft carrier USS George Washington is expected in two years to return to Japan, its base of operations until eight years ago when it was replaced by the USS Ronald Reagan, according to a Japanese news agency.

Preparations are underway to replace the Ronald Reagan, which operates from the 7th Fleet homeport at Yokosuka, Nikkei Asia said Wednesday in a report that cited U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman Lt. Brian Cunningham. Additional details are not available until "proper coordination is complete," the report said.

Cunningham acknowledged Stars and Stripes' request for information Friday but did not respond further that day. A 7th

*Preparations are underway to replace the Ronald Reagan, which operates from the 7th Fleet homeport at Yokosuka, Nikkei Asia said in a report that cited U.S. Pacific Fleet's Lt. Brian Cunningham.*

Fleet spokesman had referred questions to Pacific Fleet on Thursday.

The George Washington is expected in Yokosuka by 2025, Nikkei reported.

The aircraft carrier, commissioned in July 1992, is undergoing midlife nuclear refueling and maintenance at the Newport News shipyard in Virginia; it was homeported at Yokosuka from 2008 to 2015.

The carrier's refit began in 2017 and was expected to last four years but has been significantly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other setbacks.

Those improvements will permit the carrier to embark the MQ-25A Stingray, a 50-foot drone that can refuel other aircraft in flight and extend the carrier air wing's range, Nikkei reported.

The Stingray can fly 500 nautical miles and deliver up to 16,000 pounds of fuel midair to F-18 Super Hornets, EA-18G Growlers and F-35C Lightning IIs, according to its manufacturer Boeing's website.

The drone is the world's first "operational, carrier-based unmanned aircraft" and a "critical part of the future" for carrier strike groups and air wings, according to U.S. Naval Air Sys-

tems Command.

The George Washington's 2008 arrival in Yokosuka was preceded several months by more than 240 Navy families.

When the Ronald Reagan arrived to replace the George Washington in 2015, approximately two-thirds of the ships' respective crews transferred between them.

The Ronald Reagan will have spent almost 10 years in Yokosuka by 2025, nearly the Navy limit for ships deployed overseas.

Congress set the 10-year limit in the fiscal 2019 Defense Department budget following the back-to-back collisions in 2017 of the destroyers USS John S. McCain and USS Fitzgerald, both based at Yokosuka more than a decade when they separately collided with commercial vessels.

# Japan complains over Utah senator's comment

BY HANA KUSUMOTO  
AND ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — A U.S. senator's claim that the Japanese reneged on a promise to transfer a Navy officer imprisoned in Japan was false and inappropriate, Japan's Ministry of Foreign affairs said Friday.

Sen. Mike Lee on the Senate floor Wednesday criticized Japan's handling of the conviction and imprisonment of Lt. Ridge Alkonis, who's serving three years for a May 2021 car crash that killed two Japanese citizens.

During his speech, Lee accused Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi of backtracking on a deal for the sailor's release to U.S. custody.

Lee said he met in August with Hayashi in Tokyo, where the foreign minister made an "unequivocal commitment" to transfer Alkonis. However, a "junior member of the Japanese embassy" contacted Lee's staff and denied Hayashi ever made the commitment, the senator said.

Lee's remarks were "contrary to the facts and cannot be accepted," and the ministry lodged an official complaint through the U.S. government over the matter, a ministry spokesperson told Stars and Stripes by email Friday.

Lee made a courtesy call on Hayashi on Aug. 31, the spokesperson said, but Hayashi stressed that he could make no commitments on a prisoner transfer. The two governments were discussing the issue prior to Lee and Hayashi's meeting.

"Minister Hayashi made remarks that he cannot make any commitments at that time on whether it's possible or not to transfer Lt. Alkonis," the spokesperson said. "This case should be handled appropriately under the law between the law-enforcing authorities."

"Hayashi can quibble over nuanced language and whether he \*officially\* agreed, or rely on customary disclaimers voiced in the meeting," Lee tweeted Friday. "But at the end of it, it was unmistakably clear that if I convinced Alkonis to submit the application, Japan would process it without delay."

# Soldier sentenced for ambush plot with neo-Nazi group on his unit

BY ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

A former Army paratrooper was sentenced to 45 years in prison Friday for plotting with a violent extremist group to ambush and kill members of his own Italy-based unit, federal law enforcement officials said.

Ethan Phelan Melzer, a 24-year-old from Louisville, Ky., pleaded guilty in June in a federal courtroom in New York to charges of attempting to murder U.S. service members, providing and attempting to provide material support to terrorists, and illegally transmitting national defense information, according to the Justice Department. Melzer, who was a private assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy, planned a jihadist attack on his Army unit in the days

leading up to a deployment to Turkey and sent sensitive details about the unit — including information about its location, movements and security — to members of the extremist organization Order of the Nine Angles, according to court documents. The group is a white supremacist, neo-Nazi and pro-jihadist organization.

"Ethan Melzer infiltrated the U.S. Army in service of a neo-Nazi, white supremacist and jihadist group," said U.S. Attorney Damian Williams for the Southern District of New York. "Today's sentence makes clear that Melzer's brazen actions backfired and that this office — along with our partners in law enforcement and the military — will work tirelessly to bring traitors like Melzer to justice and to protect the safety and integrity of our armed services."

# GOP challenges new Pentagon abortion policies

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans are demanding answers from the Defense Department about new policies that support service members seeking abortions, describing them as a "purely political action" taken without consulting Congress.

The Defense Department issued the policies last month in response to the Supreme Court's controversial decision last year to abolish the constitutional right to an abortion. The new policies, which will go into effect later this month, guarantee privacy protections for pregnancies, provide administrative leave for abortion care and reimbursement for service members who need to travel to obtain the procedure.

Republican members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, led by Roger Wicker of Mississippi, have described the rules as "heavy-handed, far-left social policy." In a letter sent to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday, the 12 lawmakers challenged assertions by Pentagon officials that abortion access had an impact on readiness, recruitment and retention.

"The Department of Defense provided no support for this specious claim," the senators wrote. "The Department of Defense's actions tell our service members pregnancy is a liability to the force. They also imply our military's success hinges on access to abortion. The former is a mistake; the latter is false."

Gil Cisneros, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told lawmakers last year that the Defense Department was concerned women would "think twice" before joining the military due to the Supreme Court's decision and said women provide diversity that is "essential for the survivability of our force."

Republican senators have rebuked that argument and asked Austin to provide data on the number of women who refused to be stationed in Germany, South Korea or any other country due to local abortion laws. South Korea decriminalized abortion in 2021 and the procedure is illegal but not punishable in Germany during the first 12 weeks and more advanced pregnancies that threaten the life of the mother.

# Biden's Selma visit spotlights rights

*Associated Press*

SELMA, Ala. — President Joe Biden planned to pay tribute to the heroes of “Bloody Sunday,” joining thousands for the annual commemoration of the seminal moment in the civil rights movement that led to passage of landmark voting rights legislation nearly 60 years ago.

His visit to Selma, Ala., on Sunday was also an opportunity for Biden to speak directly to the current generation of civil rights activists. Many feel dejected because Biden has been unable to make good on a campaign pledge to bolster voting rights and are eager to see his administration keep the issue in the spotlight.

Biden intended to use his remarks to underscore the importance of commemorating

Bloody Sunday so that history can't be erased, while making the case that the fight for voting rights remains integral to delivering economic justice and civil rights for Black Americans, according to White House officials.

This year's commemoration also comes as the historic city of roughly 18,000 is still digging out from the aftermath of a January EF-2 tornado that destroyed or damaged thousands of properties in and around Selma. The scars of that storm are still evident. Blocks from the stage where Biden was to speak were houses that sat crumbled or without roofs. Orange spray paint marked buildings beyond salvage with instructions to “tear down.”

Before Biden's visit, the Rev.

William Barber II, a co-chair of Poor People's Campaign, along with six other activists wrote to Biden and members of Congress to express their frustration with the lack of progress on voting rights legislation. They also urged Washington politicians visiting Selma not to sully the memories of the late civil rights activists John Lewis, Hosea Williams and others with empty platitudes.

Few moments have had as lasting importance to the civil rights movement as what happened on March 7, 1965, in Selma and in the weeks that followed.

Some 600 peaceful demonstrators led by Lewis and Williams had gathered that day, just weeks after the fatal shooting of a young Black man, Jim-

mie Lee Jackson, by an Alabama trooper.

Lewis, who would later serve in the U.S. House representing Georgia, and the others were brutally beaten by Alabama troopers and sheriff's deputies as they tried to cross Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge at the start of what was supposed to be a 54-mile walk to the state capital in Montgomery, part of a larger effort to register Black voters in the South

The images of the police violence sparked outrage across the country. Days later, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. led what became known as the “Turnaround Tuesday” march, in which marchers approached a wall of police at the bridge and prayed before turning back.

## Murdaugh's fall ends in life sentence

*Associated Press*

WALTERBORO, S.C. — One of the last pieces of a legal dynasty that doled out justice in rural South Carolina for decades crumbled Friday as lawyer Alex Murdaugh was sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison for the murder of his wife and son at their sprawling estate.

In the quiet Lowcountry that Murdaugh's family had dominated since the days of Jim Crow, a judge talked to Murdaugh in a way that few probably have — not in his days playing college football, making millions as a high-powered attorney or gaining favor because of his name — and reminded Murdaugh that he had to remove the portrait of the defendant's grandfather from its place of honor in that same courtroom to ensure a fair trial.

At sentencing, Murdaugh maintained his innocence, just as he did when he testified in his own defense during the six-

week trial. But Circuit Court Judge Clifton Newman wanted to know if he saw the mangled bodies of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh as he tried to sleep or thought about how he disgraced his family's three-generation reputation for justice through lying, stealing and — eventually — murder.

“As I tell you again, I respect this court. But I am innocent. I would never under any circumstances hurt my wife Maggie and I would never under any circumstances hurt my son Paul-Paul,” Murdaugh responded.

“And it might not have been you. It might have been the monster you become,” Newman said.

Murdaugh faced the judge in the Colleton County courtroom on the circuit where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather tried cases as the elected prosecutor for more than 80 years. Murdaugh's family founded the area's most power-

ful law firm a century ago in neighboring Hampton County.

For decades, that meant that practically anyone who ended up in court — whatever side of the law they found themselves on — would have a Murdaugh either watching their back or staring them down. Prosecutor Creighton Waters noted that stare each day in court.

“I looked in his eyes. He liked to stare me down as he would walk by me during this trial. And I could see the real Alex Murdaugh when he looked at me,” Waters said.

Prosecutors decided not to seek the death penalty in this case, and Newman handed down the harshest possible sentence he could — consecutive life sentences without parole.

“Over the past century, your family — including you — have been prosecuting people here in this courtroom, and many have received the death penalty, probably for lesser conduct,” the judge said.

## Train cars derail in west Ohio

*Associated Press*

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio — About 20 cars of a Norfolk Southern cargo train derailed near Springfield Saturday evening, the second derailment of the company's trains in Ohio in a month, officials said.

But unlike the Feb. 3 derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, a company spokesperson said there were no hazardous materials aboard the train, The Columbus Dispatch reported. The train, which did not have passengers, derailed around 5 p.m. Saturday by State Route 41, near the Clark County Fairgrounds, the Dispatch reported.

Springfield is about 46 miles west of the state capital of Columbus, Ohio. The 20 cars of the 212-car train derailed while traveling south, the Norfolk Southern spokesperson said.

# Northeast snowed in amid US storm cleanup

Associated Press

Cleanup began in battered parts of the South and Midwest after a sprawling storm system produced ferocious winds and heavy snow that caused widespread damage and multiple deaths before racing through the Northeast on Saturday.

More than a foot of snow fell in parts of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine before the late-winter storm started to ebb late in the day. Driving conditions were hazardous, as dozens of cars, trucks and tractor-trailers slid off roads, police said. In New York's capital region of Albany, crews worked to restore power to nearly 20,000 customers as heavy, damp snow snapped tree branches.

The storm's death toll rose with additional fatalities reported in Indiana and Michigan, while Kentucky's governor said at least

five people died in that state as the system spawned straight-line winds, possible tornadoes and powerful thunderstorms in the South on Friday.

The system previously slammed California with as much as 10 feet of snow. Search crews have rescued several Californians stranded in the state's mountain communities, and some residents in the mountains east of Los Angeles will likely remain trapped in their homes for at least another week after the snowfall proved too much to handle for most plows.

In Indiana, a state trooper was struck by a vehicle and killed Friday afternoon while assisting with traffic backups following weather-related crashes.

Master Trooper James R. Bailey, 50, was hit while deploying stop sticks on Interstate 69 near Auburn to stop a speeding vehicle

fleeing Fort Wayne police, state police said. A 42-year-old Marion, Ind., man was arrested and faces a charge of resisting law enforcement causing death to a law enforcement officer.

In Michigan, an 80-year-old man was struck and killed Friday evening by a snowplow that was backing up while clearing snow from a driveway in Ann Arbor, MLive.com reported. The snowplow driver said he didn't know he had struck the man until a bystander got his attention, police said.

At least five deaths were reported in hard-hit Kentucky, Gov. Andy Beshear said Saturday. The storm, with wind gusts surpassing 70 mph, downed trees and power lines and damaged homes and other buildings.

"This is very significant, widespread damage throughout Kentucky," Beshear said.

In central Tennessee, where the severe weather took down power lines and damaged homes, at least two deaths were blamed on the storm. In both cases, the victims were struck by falling trees, authorities told news outlets.

About 728,000 customers in Kentucky, Michigan and Tennessee were without power, according to PowerOutage.us. More than 330,000 of those customers were in Kentucky, and Beshear warned it would take days for crews to fully restore service.

In Alabama, a 70-year-old man sitting in his truck in Talledega County was killed when a tree fell onto his vehicle. A 43-year-old man in Lauderdale County and a man in Huntsville also were killed by falling trees Friday, local authorities said. Heavy rain caused flooding in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas.

## Trump rallies CPAC crowd, shies from attacking rivals

Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. — Former President Donald Trump cast himself Saturday as the only Republican candidate who can build on his White House legacy but shied away from directly critiquing his potential rivals, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Trump, giving the headlining address at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, told a cheering crowd that he was engaged in his "final battle" as he tries to return to the White House.

"We are going to finish what we started," he said. "We're going to complete the mission. We're going to see this battle through to ultimate victory."

Though DeSantis, seen as Trump's biggest potential rival, is frequently a subject of name-calling and other attacks in Trump's social media posts and in interviews, he wasn't mentioned directly in Trump's address before

conservative activists, who earlier in the day applauded when an old video clip of the Florida governor was shown in a montage.

While CPAC was once a must-stop for candidates mulling Republican presidential runs, DeSantis and other major likely contenders skipped this year's gathering amid scandal and as the group has increasingly become aligned with Trump.

The former president's enduring popularity with this segment of voters was on display throughout the conference this week. Some attendees wore Trump-themed outfits, with "MAGA" hats and sequined jackets. Members of his family and his administration were swarmed like celebrities in the hallways and dominated the list of speakers.

The handful of other potential and declared candidates not named Trump who spoke received only tepid applause.

## Shells hit northern Ukraine; battle rages in eastern town

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian shelling destroyed homes and killed one person in northern Ukraine's Kharkiv province, the region's governor said Sunday, while fighting raged in the eastern city of Bakhmut.

The town of Kupiansk is about 18 miles from the Russian border; the region has come under frequent attacks even though Russian ground forces withdrew from the area nearly six months ago. Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said at least five homes were razed in the latest attack that left a man dead.

Two civilians were killed over the past day in Bakhmut, Donetsk province Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said. Russian forces have spent months trying to capture the city as part of their offensive in eastern Ukraine, and the area has seen some of the bloodiest ground fighting of the war.

In recent days, Ukrainian units

destroyed two key bridges just outside Bakhmut, including one along the last remaining Ukrainian resupply route, according to U.K. military intelligence officials and other Western analysts.

Associated Press journalists near Bakhmut on Saturday saw a pontoon bridge set up by Ukrainian soldiers to help the few remaining residents reach the nearby village of Khromove. Later, the AP team saw at least five houses on fire as a result of attacks in Khromove, a nearby settlement.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, assessed last week that Kyiv's actions may point to a looming pullout from parts of the city. It said Ukrainian troops may "conduct a limited and controlled withdrawal from particularly difficult sections of eastern Bakhmut," while seeking to inhibit Russian movement there and limit exit routes to the west.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Half of state freed from drought due to rain, snow

**CA** LOS ANGELES — Tremendous rains and snowfall since late last year have freed half of California from drought, but low groundwater levels remain a persistent problem, U.S. Drought Monitor data showed.

The latest survey found that moderate or severe drought covers about 49% of the state, nearly 17% of the state is free of drought or a condition described as abnormally dry. The remainder is still abnormally dry.

Just three months ago virtually all of California was in drought, including at extreme and exceptional levels. Water agencies serving millions of people, agriculture and industry were told to expect only a fraction of requested allocations.

The turnabout began with a series of atmospheric rivers that pounded the state from late December through mid-January, building a huge Sierra Nevada snowpack. After a few largely dry weeks, powerful storms returned in February. Water authorities began boosting allocations.

### Firm won't sell abortion pill by mail in 20 states

**IL** DEERFIELD — Walgreens said it won't sell an abortion pill by mail in 20 conservative-led states.

The statement comes after attorneys general in 20 states last month warned Walgreens and CVS that they could face legal consequences if they sell abortion pills by mail in those states.

Walgreens spokesperson Fraser Engerman confirmed that the company sent a response to each of the attorneys general saying that it will not dispense mifepristone in their states.

Nineteen U.S. states have imposed restrictions on abortion pills, but there's a court battle over whether they have the power to do so in defiance of U.S. Food and Drug Administration policy. A physician and a company that makes the pill mifepristone filed separate lawsuits earlier this year seeking to strike down bans in North Carolina and West Virginia.

### Man busted for illegal hare trafficking

**ME** PORTLAND — A federal judge has sentenced a Massachusetts man to probation for running an illegal trapping operation that captured wild hares in Maine for the purpose of training dogs.

Jon Rioux, 36, of Attleboro, solicited Maine residents to trap snowshoe hares, court documents show. Undercover investigators offered to trap the hares for money, and Rioux obliged, despite the fact he did not have a license or permit that would have allowed him to possess or transport the animals, prosecutors said.

The judge in U.S. District Court in Portland sentenced Rioux to one year of probation and fined him \$10,000. He was also ordered to pay \$1,843 in restitution to the state of Maine.

Rioux wanted the hares to use for beagle training and field trials in Massachusetts, prosecutors said. An investigator trapped hares on an island and

sold them to Rioux on four separate occasions in 2021, prosecutors said. He was arrested in March 2022.

### Mayor faces child porn counts in college town

**MD** BALTIMORE — The mayor of a Maryland college town was arrested on dozens of child pornography counts hours after he resigned from office.

Patrick Wojahn, 47, faces 56 counts of possession and distribution of child porn, the Prince George's County Police Department said in a statement. Police searched his College Park home last week and seized cellphones as well as a storage device, tablet and computer.

County officials said the department started investigating after the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children notified them on Feb. 17 that a social media account had distributed suspected child pornography. Detectives traced the account to Wojahn, authorities said.

### Deferred sentence for woman who shot puppy

**MT** KALISPELL — A northwestern Montana woman has been given a six-month deferred imposition of sentence after pleading no contest to a charge alleging she shot a 6-month-old husky puppy believing it was a wolf.

The misdemeanor animal cruelty case drew international attention because the woman posted an image of the puppy, which she had skinned, on social media and bragged that she'd shot a young wolf.

As part of the plea agreement,

Justice of the Peace Eric Hummel ordered the woman to complete an online hunter safety course and surrender the rifle she used to kill the puppy for six months, the Daily Inter Lake reported.

The husky was among a group of dogs and puppies that had been abandoned on national forest land in northwestern Montana in mid-September 2022, the Flathead County Sheriff's Office has said.

### Explosives found in bag at airport, man arrested

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — A Pennsylvania man admitted packing explosive materials, fuses and a lighter in a suitcase he checked for a commercial flight to Florida and fled the Lehigh Valley airport when he feared arrest, federal authorities said.

Marc Muffley, 40, of Lansford, called his girlfriend for a ride when he heard his name being paged at the airport, and soon switched his phone number to avoid being tracked, prosecutors said.

A defense lawyer suggested that Muffley only wanted to set off fireworks on a Florida beach, where he said the one-time construction worker sometimes cares for an ailing grandfather.

However, U.S. Magistrate Pamela A. Carlos agreed to detain him without bail, finding that Muffley was both a flight risk and a danger to the community. Authorities said the fact the explosive powder was packed in the same checked bag with the other items increased the risk of an explosion.

— From wire reports

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# Jones returns to win UFC heavyweight title

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Jon Jones ended a three-year sabbatical from the UFC, moved up to its highest weight class and then left no doubt Saturday night about his place in the sport's history.

Already widely considered the greatest UFC fighter, the 35-year-old Jones took Ciryl Gane to the mat just a little more than a minute into the first round and won with a guillotine choke at 2:04 in UFC 285.

"I'm so excited," Jones said. "I've been working for this for a long time. A lot of people thought I wasn't coming back. I've been faithful to my goal, faithful to my mission."

As short as the fight was, Jones made sure to take his time entering the octagon, playing up to the sold-out crowd of 19,471.

UFC President Dana White

said the gate was \$12.5 million, the highest for a heavyweight match and the fourth-highest ever.

This was Jones' first fight in three years and his first in the heavyweight division. The former light heavyweight champion said it was important to cement in his own mind that he deserved the honor as the greatest ever.

With another GOAT, Tom Brady, sitting nearby, Jones did just that. Brady flew in the day of the fight from Florida and spent time with Jones' brother, Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Chandler Jones.

"(Jones is) a total freak of nature," White said, "and he's the best ever."

There were questions whether so much time off would affect Jones' effectiveness, and he spent time at his home in Albu-

querque, N.M., to prepare for this night. His last fight was Feb. 8, 2020, a unanimous decision over Dominick Reyes.

Jones didn't look the same as he did before taking the time off, and he acknowledged the extra weight he put on took away his muscle tone. All along, though, Jones insisted looks were deceiving.

He backed up his words.

"Ciryl Gane is a monster," White said. "Jon Jones showed up and treated him like a kid."

Jones believed the time away preparing for this night would show the step up in weight was worth it. He hired a team in Albuquerque to get him into optimal shape.

"I had to show up and get (Gane) down to the ground," Jones said. "I been wrestling since I was 12 years old. I feel

stronger than ever. Once I got him in my hands, I know I could take control."

The victory extended Jones' record unbeaten streak to 19 in a row, and he improved to 27-1 with one no-contest. He won a record 14 title fights at light heavyweight.

Jones said he next wants Stipe Miocic, who is the second-ranked contender and who Jones called the greatest heavyweight ever. White said that fight will take place, but didn't know when it would occur.

France's Gane, 32, was the top-ranked heavyweight contender. He dropped to 11-2.

"This one is so painful," Gane said. "This one is a win lost. So now this is past, and most of all for what I see is in the future. I'm going to go straight back to the gym."

# Shiffrin's quest for win 86 shifting to Sweden

Associated Press

KVITFJELL, Norway — Mikaela Shiffrin's quest to tie Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark's record of 86 career World Cup victories now moves to his home country.

Shiffrin's next race is a giant slalom in Are on Friday, as the American skier seeks one victory to match Stenmark's total on the all-time overall winners list — between men and women. The Swede competed in the 1970s and '80s.

Are was also the venue of Shiffrin's first career win, in December 2012.

Shiffrin rounded off a three-race weekend in Norway Sunday by finishing in seventh position at a super-G affected by changing weather conditions. The American was fourth in a super-G Friday and fifth in a downhill the following day to lock up her fifth World Cup overall title.

On Sunday, Shiffrin was among the early starters when low clouds caused flat light and snowfall slowed most racers before later starters benefited from improved conditions when skies cleared.

Wearing bib 31, Nina Ortlieb led an Austrian sweep of the podium ahead of Stephanie Venier, who started 29th, and Franziska Gritsch, who started 26th.

"It's slow with the snow on the flat part,"

Shiffrin said. "But I also felt very strong down there pushing the limits, so I'm super happy with my run."

Shiffrin broke a tie on the all-time women's list with former American teammate Lindsey Vonn in January. Vonn had 82 wins when she retired in 2019.

Shiffrin has been stuck on 85 World Cup wins for four events now, and the American didn't get a real chance Sunday to end the wait.

"The conditions are changing so much, it's not one of those days where I can really compare myself to what's going on with the results," Shiffrin said.

"But my skiing was good, I was aggressive, so I'm actually really happy with that. In this group of women going around me, to be kind of this fast, that was a really, really good sign."

Sofia Goggia was the first racer from the top 20-ranked skiers in fourth position, trailing Ortlieb by 0.69 seconds.

The Italian, who locked up the downhill season title Saturday, looked set for victory when sitting in the leader seat after all other pre-race favorites were down.

"I'm happy with my ski performance, but the race has changed too much," Goggia said. "We came down with criminal conditions and now there's the sun and everything's really

fast."

Ortlieb acknowledged the conditions gave her an advantage.

"Unbelievable. I knew at the start the conditions were getting better and better," the Austrian said. "I was lucky. I'm sure that it was not fair for everyone, but I got the opportunity and I think I skied well."

Right after finishing, Ortlieb looked around in apparent disbelief, then shook her head a few times.

"A little crazy to see the green light in the finish. I was a little bit confused, but it's amazing," said Ortlieb, who was only 29th in Friday's super-G on the same course.

"I got a big improvement from two days ago, when I was skiing without confidence," the Austrian said after her second career win.

Ortlieb's win marked only the second victory for the Austrian women's team this season after Cornelia Huetter triumphed in Friday's super-G.

It was the first Austrian sweep in a women's super-G since Alexandra Meissnitzer, Andrea Fischbacher and Michaela Dorfmeister finished on the podium in Lake Louise, Alberta, in December 2005.

Ortlieb became the seventh different winner in seven World Cup super-G races this season.

# 76ers rally to end Bucks' win streak at 16

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Nothing could faze the Philadelphia 76ers.

Not the loss of two starters. Not an 18-point deficit late in the third quarter. Not even the fact they were facing the NBA's hottest team on the road.

Joel Embiid made a go-ahead three-pointer with 41.4 seconds left and the 76ers rallied to beat Milwaukee 133-130 on Saturday night, snapping the Bucks' 16-game winning streak.

"You find something that works and you try to stick with it," said James Harden, who had 38 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds. "We found something late, in that fourth quarter, and we just stuck with it. We got some stops and things changed for us."

Milwaukee had the longest winning streak by any NBA team since the Phoenix Suns had 18 straight victories early last season. The streak ended because the Bucks got outscored 48-31 during a fourth quarter in which the 76ers shot 12-for-21 overall, 7-for-11 from three-

point range and 17-for-19 from the line.

"They went wherever they wanted to go, scoring from the paint, floaters, isos, offensive rebounds, free throws, threes," said Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, who had 34 points and 13 rebounds. "You name it. They were able to get everything. We've got to be able to play 48 minutes of good basketball, defend for 48 minutes. This is a good lesson for us."

**Cavaliers 114, Pistons 90:** Darius Garland had 21 points and seven assists, Donovan Mitchell scored 20 points and host Cleveland routed Detroit.

Evan Mobley had 16 points, 11 rebounds, six assists and four blocked shots, Jarrett Allen scored 15 points and Caris LeVert had 11. The Cavaliers are fourth in the Eastern Conference with 16 games left.

All-Star starter Mitchell, who sprained a finger on his left hand in the third quarter, and Garland only played 24 minutes apiece as the Cavaliers swept the four-game season series with Detroit. The Pistons were held below 95

points in each.

Cleveland is 40-26 and leads surging New York by 1½ games for home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

**Rockets 122, Spurs 110:** Tari Eason matched his season high with 20 points and visiting Houston ended an 11-game losing streak, beating San Antonio.

Alperen Sengun had 16 points and K.J. Martin and Josh Christopher each added 14 points for the Rockets in the opener of a home-and-home series. Last in the NBA at 14-49, they hadn't won since Feb. 1.

Devonte' Graham had 28 points to lead San Antonio.

**Timberwolves 138, Kings 134:** Anthony Edwards scored 27 points and visiting Minnesota beat Sacramento to snap the Kings' winning streak at five games.

Edwards added eight assists to help Minnesota win its third straight. Mike Conley scored 24 points and made two free throws with 15.7 seconds left to extend the lead to four. Jaden McDaniels added 19 points, and Kyle Anderson nearly had a triple-

double with 18 points, nine assists and seven rebounds.

Kevin Huerter scored 29 points for Sacramento (37-26). De'Aaron Fox had 25 points and seven assists, and Domantas Sabonis had 24 points, 14 rebounds and five assists.

**Heat 117, Hawks 109:** Bam Adebayo scored 30 points and host Miami held Trae Young to a season-low eight points in a victory over Atlanta.

Tyler Herro added 20 points, and Jimmy Butler and Caleb Martin finished with 15 apiece for the Heat. They extended their lead over the Hawks to 1½ games for seventh in the Eastern Conference.

**Raptors 116, Wizards 109 (OT):** Fred VanVleet made two three-pointers in overtime and had 25 points to help visiting Toronto beat Washington for a two-game split.

Gary Trent Jr. scored 26 points for the Raptors, and VanVleet had 10 assists. Toronto rebounded from a 119-108 loss Thursday night to move back ahead of the Wizards into ninth place in the Eastern Conference.

## Young's height, Richardson's workout all rage at NFL combine

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Bryce Young provided one answer Saturday at the NFL's annual scouting combine: He stands 5-foot-10 1/8 inches and weighs 204 pounds.

Next question: Will his small frame hurt his draft stock?

On a day Anthony Richardson put on an impressive show at Lucas Oil Stadium, Young's numbers will create debate among scouts and team decision-makers about whether Young should be the first player — or even the first quarterback — selected on April 27.

Richardson certainly made his case with a 4.43-second 40-yard dash, the fourth-fastest by a quarterback since 2003. The former Florida quarterback also broke the modern combine position record with a 40½-inch vertical jump, and his 10-foot, 9-inch broad jump tied Matt Jones of Arkansas for the best mark by a quarterback since 2003.

Young's numbers, meanwhile, could have

the opposite effect.

Typically, teams want franchise quarterbacks to be a little sturdier to remain healthy. Young's measurements would make him one of the league's smallest quarterbacks.

He doesn't believe it's a big deal, though he was listed at 6-0, 194 in college.

"I've been this size my whole life. I know who I am, I know what I can do," Young said Friday when asked about the size issue.

The 2021 Heisman Trophy winner from Alabama has all the other prototypical tools that franchises seek — strong arm, quick release, good accuracy, mobility and a knack for making big plays, even on the move.

The closest comparisons might be to Kyler Murray, whom Arizona took with the top overall pick in 2019, and Russell Wilson, a third-round pick in 2012 who led Seattle to its only Super Bowl title before landing in Denver last season.

And while the quarterbacks, tight ends

and receivers were scheduled to do their on-field drills Saturday in Indianapolis, Young had said he wouldn't join them. The next time scouts will see Young will be at Alabama's scheduled pro day.

Many draft analysts believe Young, former Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud, former Georgia defensive tackle Jalen Carter and linebacker Will Anderson Jr. of Alabama are the four players vying to be selected No. 1 overall.

Stroud performed well in the passing drills and another highly regarded quarterback, Will Levis, showed his arm strength. But Anderson is sticking with his ex-teammate.

"I would say Bryce played in the SEC, one of the best conferences in college football," he said. "Big defensive tackles, big defensive linemen, big pass rushers and took a lot of hits during his years there. I have all confidence in Bryce Young. If I was in the position to take him, I'm taking him."

# No. 24 Texas A&M upsets No. 2 Tide

Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Wade Taylor took a minute to reflect on his team's journey after No. 24 Texas A&M knocked off No. 2 Alabama on Saturday to wrap up the regular season.

"We've had a bunch of ups and downs," Taylor said. "On Dec. 20, we were 6-5 and nobody would have thought we'd be in this position we're in today. This team is very resilient."

Taylor scored 28 points and the Aggies beat Alabama 67-61, making their late free throws after Crimson Tide star Brandon Miller fouled out.

"In the figurative fights they've learned not to flinch," Aggies coach Buzz Williams said. "Our team has improved with each passing game and I think today was another example."

The loss snapped a four-game winning streak for the Crimson Tide (26-5, 16-2 Southeastern Conference). Alabama played the last two minutes minus Miller, who fouled out after scoring a team-leading 19 points.

"We just didn't quite have enough," Alabama coach Nate Oats said. "They were ready to go and we weren't. We can't keep coming out and getting behind double digits early."

**No. 9 Texas 75, No. 3 Kansas 59:** Sir Jabari Rice scored 23 points and a smothering defensive effort carried host Texas to a win over Kansas that earned the Longhorns a second-place finish in the Big 12.

Kansas, which had already secured the league championship, had its seven-game winning streak snapped.

Texas entered the day in a three-way tie for second, but the win and losses by Kansas State and Baylor left the Longhorns (23-8, 12-6) alone in the spot.

**No. 4 UCLA 81, No. 8 Arizona 73:** Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 22 points and 10 rebounds, and UCLA beat Arizona to complete a 17-0 record at home in the

teams' regular-season finale.

Tyger Campbell added 21 points and David Singleton had 17, making a season-best five three-pointers for the Bruins (27-4, 18-2 Pac-12), who went undefeated at home for the first time since 2006-07. They've won 25 in a row at Pauley Pavilion in the nation's longest active home winning streak.

Azuolas Tubelis (25-6, 14-6) scored 16 of his 24 points in the first half for the Wildcats and had 10 rebounds before fouling out in the closing seconds. Also fouling out were Pelle Larsson (10 points) and Kerr Kriisa (13 points).

**No. 6 Marquette 96, St. John's 94:** Kam Jones scored 23 points, and host Marquette earned its sixth consecutive victory.

St. John's erased nearly all of a 10-point deficit in the final 21 seconds of regulation and had a chance to tie the game before O'Mar Stanley missed the second of two free throws with 2.4 seconds remaining. Jones got the rebound and hit one of two free throws to complete the scoring in the regular-season finale for each school.

Marquette (25-6, 17-3) already had clinched its first Big East outright championship Tuesday by winning 72-56 at Butler.

**Iowa State 73, No. 7 Baylor 58:** Jaren Holmes had 16 points and visiting Iowa State ended a four-game losing streak.

The Cyclones (18-12, 9-9 Big 12) played their first game since the dismissal of veteran guard Caleb Grill from the team earlier in the week.

Iowa State built as much as a 14-point lead before halftime. Tre King finished with 13 points and Gabe Kalscheur had 12.

**West Virginia 89, No. 11 Kansas State 81:** Erik Stevenson scored 27 points, Kedrian Johnson added 23 and host West Virginia gave its NCAA Tournament hopes a big boost.

Emmitt Matthews added 20 points for West Virginia (18-13, 7-11 Big 12), which has won three of four heading into the conference tournament.

**Auburn 79, No. 12 Tennessee 70:** Wendell Green Jr. scored 24 points, and host Auburn strengthened its bid for a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

The Tigers (20-11, 10-8 Southeastern Conference) had lost eight of their last 11 games. They rebounded from an overtime loss at No. 2 Alabama with their biggest win of the season.

Playing their first full game without SEC assist leader Zakai Zeigler, out for the season with a torn left ACL, the Volunteers (23-8, 12-6) lost their fifth straight road game.

**No. 13 Virginia 75, Louisville 60:** Jayden Gardner and Armaan Franklin scored 16 points apiece, and host Virginia clinched a share of the regular-season title in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Virginia (23-6, 15-5) will be the No. 2 seed for the ACC Tournament.

The Cavaliers used a 13-2 run in the first half to open a 26-10 lead.

**No. 14 Connecticut 71, Villanova 59:** Jordan Hawkins scored 24 points and Alex Karaban had 16 to lead streaking Connecticut past host Villanova.

The Huskies (24-7, 13-7 Big East) head into the conference tournament at Madison Square Garden winners of five straight and eight of nine.

**No. 16 Miami 78, No. 25 Pittsburgh 76:** Wooga Poplar made a career-best six three-pointers for 18 points, and host Miami captured the No. 1 seed for the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament.

Miami (24-6, 15-5) shares the regular-season title with Virginia.

Blake Hinson had 24 points for Pitt (21-10, 14-6), which would have been the No. 1 seed

with a win.

**No. 18 San Diego State 67, Wyoming 50:** Jaedon LeDee scored 21 points and Adam Seiko 14 for host San Diego State, which celebrated the outright regular-season Mountain West Conference title with a victory against Wyoming.

Matt Bradley added 11 points for the Aztecs (24-6, 15-3 MWC), who clinched the conference championship at halftime, thanks to Boise State's 86-73 loss at Utah State.

**No. 19 Xavier 78, Butler 66:** Colby Jones scored 20 points, Adam Kunkel had 18 and host Xavier avenged an earlier loss to Butler.

Xavier (23-8, 15-5 Big East) played its ninth straight game without leading rebounder and second-leading scorer Zach Freemantle, who is out with an injured foot.

**Seton Hall 82, No. 20 Providence 58:** Dre Davis scored 24 points to lead Seton Hall to the road win.

Femi Odokale had 19 points while KC Ndefo scored 15 for the Pirates (17-14, 10-10 Big East), who had dropped three in a row. Al-Amir Dawes finished with 11 points.

**Oklahoma 74, No. 22 TCU 60:** Tanner Groves scored a season-high 23 points, and host Oklahoma rode a hot start all the way to the victory in the regular-season finale for both teams.

Grant Sherfield added 20 points for Oklahoma (15-16, 5-13 Big 12), which made its first six shots.

The Sooners dominated TCU on the boards, outrebounding the Horned Frogs 40-26.

**No. 23 Kentucky 88, Arkansas 79:** Antonio Reeves scored a career-high 37 points, and visiting Kentucky handed Arkansas its third straight loss.

Oscar Tshiebwe had 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Wildcats (21-10, 12-6 Southeastern Conference). Jacob Toppin scored 21 points.