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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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US, Russia discuss partial Ukraine ceasefire

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — U.S. negotiators worked on a proposed partial ceasefire in the war in Ukraine on Monday, meeting representatives from Russia one day after holding separate talks with a team from Kyiv.

It has been a struggle to reach even a limited, 30-day ceasefire — which Moscow and Kyiv agreed to in principle last week — with both sides continuing to attack each other with drones and missiles.

One major sticking point is what targets would be off-limits to strike, even after President Donald Trump spoke with the countries' leaders, because the parties disagree.

While the White House said "energy and infrastructure" would be covered, the Kremlin declared that the agreement referred more narrowly to "energy infrastructure." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelen-

sky would also like to see infrastructure like railways and ports protected.

Talks Monday in the Saudi capital of Riyadh were expected to address some of those differences, as well as a potential pause in attacks in the Black Sea to ensure the safety of commercial shipping.

U.S. and Russian representatives met in the morning, Russia's state Tass and RIA-Novosti news agencies reported. The U.S. and Ukrainian teams met Sunday.

Serhii Leshchenko, an adviser to the Ukrainian presidency, said the delegation remained in Riyadh on Monday and expected to meet again with the Americans.

Grigory Karasin, head of the foreign affairs committee in the Russian parliament's upper house and a participant in Monday's talks, told the Interfax news agency the negotiations were going on in a "cre-

ative way" and that the U.S. and Russian delegations "understand each other's views."

Meanwhile, both Russia and Ukraine continued to launch attacks across their borders.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Monday a Ukrainian drone attacked an oil pumping station in southern Russia that serves a pipeline carrying Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea oil to the Russian port of Novorossiisk for export. It said the drone was downed before it could reach the pumping station.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday the Russian military has been fulfilling President Vladimir Putin's order to halt attacks on energy facilities for 30 days. He has accused Ukraine of derailing the partial ceasefire with attacks on Russia's energy facilities, including a gas metering station in Sudzha in Russia's Kursk region.

Ukraine's military General

Staff rejected Moscow's accusations and blamed the Russian military for shelling the station, a claim Peskov called "absurd."

Zelenskyy said Sunday evening that "since March 11, a proposal for an unconditional ceasefire has been on the table, and these attacks could have already stopped. But it is Russia that continues all this."

Zelenskyy has emphasized that Ukraine is open to Trump's proposal of a full, 30-day ceasefire. Putin has made a complete ceasefire conditional on a halt of arms supplies to Kyiv and a suspension of Ukraine's military mobilization.

Speaking on "Fox News Sunday," Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said he expected "some real progress" at talks and that a pause in hostilities by both countries in the Black Sea would "naturally gravitate into a full-on shooting ceasefire."

US strikes targeting Yemen's Houthis enter 10th day

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — U.S. airstrikes targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels pounded sites across the country into Monday, with the group saying the one attack in the capital killed at least one person and wounded more than a dozen others.

The American strikes entered their 10th day without a sign of stopping, part of a campaign by President Donald Trump targeting the rebel group that threatens maritime trade and Israel while also trying to pressure Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor.

So far, the U.S. has not of-

fered any specifics on the sites it is striking, though Trump's national security adviser Mike Waltz claimed the attacks have "taken out key Houthi leadership, including their head missileer." That's something so far that's not been acknowledged by the Houthis, though the rebels have downplayed their losses in the past and exaggerated their attacks attempting to target American warships.

"We've hit their headquarters," Waltz told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "We've hit communications nodes, weapons factories and even some of their over-the-water

drone production facilities."

An apparent U.S. strike Sunday hit a building in a western neighborhood of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, killing at least one person and wounding 13 others, the rebel-controlled SABA news agency said, citing health officials. Footage released by the rebels showed the rubble of a collapsed building and pools of blood staining the gray dust covering the ground.

A building next to the collapsed structure still stood, suggesting American forces likely used a lower-yield warhead in the strike.

The Houthis also described American airstrikes targeting

sites around the city of Saada, a Houthi stronghold, the Red Sea port city of Hodeida and Marib province, home to oil and gas fields still under the control of allies to Yemen's exiled central government.

The campaign of airstrikes targeting the rebels, which killed at least 53 people immediately after they began March 15, started after the Houthis threatened to begin targeting "Israeli" ships again over Israel blocking aid entering the Gaza Strip. The rebels in the past have had a loose definition of what constitutes an Israeli ship, meaning other vessels could be targeted as well.

South Korea: North using Ukraine war for weapons testing

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

North Korea is using its support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine to test weapons it could deploy against the South in a future conflict, Ukraine's ambassador to Seoul said in a news report Sunday.

Ukraine and South Korea share a common adversary, Ukrainian Ambassador to South Korea Dmytro Ponomarenko said in remarks published by Yonhap News.

South Korea "should not forget that Pyongyang also uses Ukrainian soil as a testing ground for its weaponry, which could be used in future possible standoff," Ponomarenko said.

Seoul "has no reason to hesitate in the development of full-scale military-technical cooperation" with Kyiv, he said. "It's a matter of interest for both Kyiv and Seoul."

North Korea has supplied Russia with artillery shells, short-range ballistic missiles, conventional arms and troops

since 2023, according to South Korea's National Intelligence Service and the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency.

Photos of debris from a Russian attack in Ukraine on Jan. 2, 2024, indicate that the source of the damage "is almost certainly of a North Korean ballistic missile," the DIA said in a May 29 report.

The evidence "highlights the evolving and strengthening relationship between North Korea and Russia," the report said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met Friday with Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in Pyongyang and pledged "to invariably support Russia in the struggle for defending ... security interests in the future," the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported the next day.

The North has also dispatched between 10,000 and 12,000 troops to fight alongside Russia since October, according to the U.S., South Korean and Ukrainian militaries.

Army in Pacific seeks to overcome watercraft 'gap'

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — U.S. Army Pacific is tackling a watercraft shortage by maintaining and repairing vessels overseas and augmenting its fleet by leasing privately owned boats.

"There is a gap in our ability to conduct intra-theater lift and movement," Maj. Gen. Jeffrey VanAntwerp, deputy chief of staff for the command, said Thursday during a conference call from Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

"We have a lack of Army watercraft and the ability to move everything that we would like to be able to move and have the type of agility we'd like to have, particularly in the first island chain, but in the second island chain as well," he said.

The first island chain, which includes the Japanese archipelago, Taiwan and the northern Philippines, lies closest to China, a potential adversary.

"The major step that we're taking is to be able to repair forward in Japan," he said. "In the future, we'd like to be able to repair forward in Japan, Korea, even out in Australia. So, we're taking steps to be able to do that, rather than have to send them all the way back to the East

Coast to make repairs."

The Army trimmed its watercraft fleet by half over six years ending in May 2024, according to a report issued by the U.S. Government Accountability Office in October. By that point, the fleet had shrunk to 70 from 134 in 2018, the office found.

The Army's fleet moves supplies, equipment and personnel in deep ocean, shallow coastal waters, inland waterways and rivers.

The fleet's vessels are also plagued by maintenance issues, with the "fully mission capable rate" for watercraft steadily declining from 75% in 2020 to less than 40% in 2024, the GAO reported.

Undertaking repairs within the Indo-Pacific, however, is not a cure-all for increasing mission-ready capability in an aging fleet, VanAntwerp said.

"What we're not going to be able to do is instantly make them newer, so repair issues and wear and tear will continue to be an issue," he said. "But I think being able to repair forward will drastically decrease the downtime and increase the overall [readiness] rate. And we're seeing that already as we've begun to repair some of these forward."

China breaks record for presence near disputed islands

BY BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

The Chinese coast guard on Monday set a record for the longest continuous presence inside territorial waters claimed by Japan around the Senkaku Islands, a disputed cluster of islets in the East China Sea.

Two Chinese coast guard vessels remained for 85 hours and four minutes inside the 12-mile

territorial limit, mainly around Minamikojima, an islet in the chain that Japan administers, according to a Japan coast guard news release that day. China and Taiwan also claim the islands.

The two vessels, armed with deck-mounted machine guns, entered the territorial limit just before 2 a.m. Friday while pursuing two Japanese fishing boats, according to the coast

guard that day.

Two more Chinese vessels, also armed, crossed the territorial limit at around 2:30 a.m. and 4 a.m. Saturday, respectively, a subsequent release said.

At least three of the four Chinese vessels remained within the territorial limit at any given time until 8 p.m. Sunday, according to multiple Japan coast guard updates over the weekend.

The record-breaking incursion was set at 10:32 a.m. Monday, a coast guard spokesman said by phone. Two of the four Chinese ships were still inside the claimed waters near Uotsurijima as of 3 p.m., according to a coast guard news release.

The previous record was 80 hours and 36 minutes, set between March 30 and April 2, 2023, according to the Japan coast guard.

Trump asks court to halt rehiring order

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court on Monday to halt a ruling ordering the rehiring of thousands of federal workers let go in mass firings aimed at dramatically downsizing the federal government.

The emergency appeal argues that the judge can't force the executive branch to rehire some 16,000 probationary employees.

It also calls on the conservative-majority court to rein in the growing number of judges who have slowed President Donald

Trump's sweeping agenda, at least for now, by finding his administration hasn't followed federal law.

The order came from U.S. District Judge William Alsup in San Francisco, who found the firings didn't follow federal law and required immediate offers of reinstatement be sent.

The agencies include the departments of Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Defense, Energy, the Interior and the Treasury.

The temporary restraining order came in a lawsuit filed by a coalition of labor unions

and organizations as the Republican administration moves to reduce the federal workforce.

Alsup expressed frustration with what he called the government's attempt to sidestep laws and regulations governing a reduction in its workforce — which it is allowed to do — by firing probationary workers who lack protections and cannot appeal.

The case is among multiple lawsuits challenging the mass firings, and a second judge also ordered the rehiring of thousands of probationary workers the same day.

Judge: DOGE not allowed to access private data

Associated Press

A federal judge on Monday temporarily blocked billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency from accessing people's private data at the Education Department, the Treasury Department and the Office of Personnel Management.

U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman issued a preliminary injunction in a case filed last month by a coalition of labor unions in federal court in Maryland. Led by the American Federation of Teachers, the plaintiffs allege the Trump administration violated federal privacy laws when it gave DOGE access to systems with personal information on tens of millions of Americans without their consent.

Boardman, who was nominated to the federal bench by former President Joe Biden, had previously issued a temporary restraining order. The preliminary injunction offers longer-term relief blocking DOGE access.

The judge found the Trump administration likely violated the law. She said the government failed to adequately explain why DOGE needed access to "millions of records" to perform its job. She also said the Trump administration can still carry out President Donald Trump's agenda without receiving unfettered access to personal data on federal employees and people with student loans and government benefits. That includes income and asset information, Social Security numbers, birth dates, home addresses and marital and citizenship status.

The lawsuit accused the administration of handing over sensitive data for reasons beyond its intended use, violating the Privacy Act.

Judge declines to vacate previous order barring some deportations

Bloomberg News

A federal judge denied a Trump administration request to throw out a temporary order barring further deportations of accused Venezuelan gang members based solely on the Alien Enemies Act, further escalating a standoff between the courts and the White House.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg in Washington ruled his temporary order will remain in effect, restricting such removals until the men are given an opportunity to challenge whether they are connected to the Tren de Aragua gang.

The ruling came hours before a federal appeals court was to hear arguments on the issue.

"Each vehemently denies being a member of Tren de Aragua," the judge said in a ruling Monday.

"Several in fact claim that they fled Venezuela to escape the predations of the group, and they fear grave consequences if deported solely because of the Government's unchallenged labeling."

The ruling is the latest development in a growing rift between the judiciary and executive branches over the extent of President Donald Trump's power to invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, which applies when the United States is in a state of "declared war" or suffering an "invasion or predatory incursion."

After Boasberg issued his TROs, Trump called for the judge to be impeached, prompting a rare rebuke of the president by Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts.

Boasberg has been critical of the gov-

ernment for allowing some accused gang members to be deported despite his ruling temporarily blocking them, demanding answers about when exactly the planes took off and why they didn't turn around.

In his ruling Monday, the judge said that the "most reasonable inference" is that the government "hustled people onto those planes in the hopes of evading an injunction or perhaps preventing them from requesting the habeas hearing to which the government now acknowledges they are entitled."

Boasberg, however, said the order doesn't prevent the Trump administration from detaining or deporting suspected members of the violent Tren de Aragua gang under the Immigration and Nationality Act as members of a foreign terrorist organization, or FTO.

"The noncitizens comprising the class are already in United States custody, and any actual Tren de Aragua member is already subject to deportation as a member of an FTO, so there is little additional harm to the public by temporarily preventing their removal," the judge wrote.

Lawyers for the U.S. Justice Department have argued that Trump's invocation of the Alien Enemies Act can't be reviewed by the courts, but Boasberg said he doesn't need to resolve that "thorny question" at this stage.

"That is because plaintiffs are likely to succeed on another equally fundamental theory: before they may be deported, they are entitled to individualized hearings to determine whether the Act applies to them at all," the judge said.

Greenland braces for second lady's visit

Associated Press

Greenland's people are bracing for another visit from U.S. President Donald Trump's inner circle, with second lady Usha Vance set to travel to the autonomous Danish territory this week as her husband ratchets up talk about U.S. security and "territorial" interests in the vast Arctic island coveted by the administration.

Greenland's prime minister warned Sunday of "American aggression" and lamented a "mess" caused by the upcoming visit from Vance, who reportedly will be accompanied by Trump's national security adviser. The same day, Vice President JD Vance — her husband

— blasted Denmark for "not doing its job" and "not being a good ally."

"So you have to ask yourself: How are we going to solve that problem, solve our own national security?" JD Vance said on Fox News. "If that means that we need to take more territorial interest in Greenland, that is what President Trump is going to do, because he doesn't care about what the Europeans scream at us."

Denmark is a NATO ally of the United States, and Greenland already houses a U.S. military base.

Danish national police on Sunday sent extra personnel and sniffer dogs to Greenland as

part of regular security measures taken during visits by dignitaries. Citing office procedure, police spokesman René Gyldensten declined to specify the number of extra police flown in. News reports put the number at dozens.

Before the president began his second term in January, a visit by Trump's eldest son heightened concerns in Greenland about possible U.S. ambitions. Donald Trump Jr. told residents of Greenland that "we're going to treat you well" — weeks before elections that had centered on possible independence from Denmark.

Greenlandic news outlet *Sermitsiaq* posted images of two

U.S. Hercules workhorse military aircraft on the tarmac Sunday in Nuuk, adding that the planes later departed. News reports said four bulletproof cars had also been flown in.

On her visit, Vance will attend the Avannaata Qimussersu, Greenland's national dogsled race, featuring about 37 mushers and 444 dogs, her office said. The statement said Vance and the U.S. delegation "are excited to witness this monumental race and celebrate Greenlandic culture and unity."

Media outlets in Greenland and Denmark reported that Vance would be accompanied by Trump's national security adviser, Mike Waltz.

Veteran accused of faking deployments to airline

The Charlotte Observer

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran faked deployments to take 130 free and discounted flights to the Caribbean, Europe and more at the expense of a major airline, prosecutors said.

Dior Jay-Jarrett, 29, of Queens, N.Y., was arrested Thursday on a federal wire fraud charge in connection with the scheme that defrauded the airline of nearly \$70,000, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

Jay-Jarrett was on active military duty when he joined the airline as a baggage handler in October 2021, according to court documents. He was stationed on Long Island, N.Y., at the time.

After one week of baggage handling training, Jay-Jarrett lied to the airline, saying the Marine Corps ordered his deployment to Kuwait, a criminal complaint says.

The airline, which was identified only as "Airline-1," granted Jay-Jarrett military leave after

he is accused of falsifying and providing military deployment documents, according to the criminal complaint.

While he was purportedly on military leave, Jay-Jarrett became a federal air marshal with DHS in October 2022, according to the criminal complaint. He retired as a staff sergeant from the Marines the next month.

Jay-Jarrett never notified the airline of his retirement but provided the company with additional documents in June 2023

to support a longer military leave, according to prosecutors, who said he lied about being ordered on a deployment for two and a half years.

From November 2021 through September 2024, while pretending to be deployed, Jay-Jarrett took at least 130 flights because he "remained entitled to travel benefits including the ability to take unlimited, free flights on Airline-1, alongside ticketed family members or travel companions," prosecutors said.

Man drives car into protesters outside Tesla dealership

AP/Report for America

A man drove his car into protesters outside a Tesla dealership in Palm Beach County, Fla., but did not injure any of those who had gathered to demonstrate against billionaire Elon Musk and President Donald Trump over the weekend, according to law enforcement.

The planned protest was one of a slew across the U.S. at businesses associated with Tesla,

the company led by Musk, in response to the billionaire's work with the Trump administration in cutting federal funding and the workforce.

Attacks on property carrying the logo of Musk's electric-car company are cropping up across the U.S. and overseas. Several more violent incidents include Cybertrucks being set on fire in Seattle and shots fired at a Tesla dealership in Oregon.

The protest on Saturday was interrupted when Andrew Dutil drove his vehicle onto the sidewalk full of protesters at a slow speed, forcing people to scramble out of the way to avoid being hit, according to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

Dutil was arrested and faces an assault charge, according to court records. An attorney who could speak on Dutil's behalf wasn't immediately listed in

court records.

Palm Beach County is also home to Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort, which the president has called the "Center of the Universe" on social media. Trump and Musk — through the Department of Government Efficiency — have begun dismantling government agencies and programs and laying off staff in the name of cutting government waste, fraud and abuse.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Regulators recall nearly all Tesla's Cybertrucks

TX AUSTIN—U.S. safety regulators recalled virtually all Cybertrucks on the road, the eighth recall of the Tesla-made vehicles since deliveries to customers began just over a year ago.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's recall, which covers more than 46,000 Cybertrucks, warned that an exterior panel that runs along the left and right side of the windshield can detach while driving, creating a dangerous road hazard for other drivers, increasing the risk of a crash.

The stainless steel strip, called a cant rail assembly, between the windshield and the roof on both sides, is bound to the truck's assembly with a structural adhesive, the NHTSA report said. The remedy uses an adhesive that's not been found to be vulnerable to "environmental embrittlement," the NHTSA said, and includes additional reinforcements.

Tesla will replace the panel free of charge. Owner notification letters are expected to be mailed on May 19.

Ex-sheriff sentenced in badges-for-dollars scheme

VA CULPEPER—A former rural Virginia sheriff was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for accepting more than \$75,000 in bribes in exchange for appointing several businessmen as auxiliary deputy sheriffs.

Scott Jenkins, who served as the top law enforcement official in Culpeper County for 12 years

before he was indicted and voted out of office, was convicted of federal bribery and fraud charges by a jury in December.

In a weeklong trial, prosecutors laid out an elaborate scheme in which they said Jenkins enriched himself and his campaigns by swearing-in rich business owners from the D.C. area as unpaid auxiliary deputies. Auxiliary deputies volunteer to assist law enforcement.

The FBI found an informant in Jenkins' longtime friend, Kevin Rychlik, who became an auxiliary deputy in 2012 but blew the whistle in 2022, hoping to minimize his own prison term in an unrelated criminal case.

New Golden Gate safety nets reducing suicides

CA SAN FRANCISCO—Newly installed safety nets along San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge reduced suicides there by 73%, a new analysis suggested.

The study looks at recent suicide deaths along the iconic bridge. Officials said there have been an average of 30 confirmed suicide deaths per year for the past 20 years. In 2024, officials finished erecting a continuous stainless-steel barrier on both sides of the bridge after years of pushback from those who opposed modifying the bridge's art deco style.

To assess the new nets' performance, researchers analyzed suicide data from monthly incident reports produced by the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District, which operates and maintains the bridge. Their results were published in the journal Injury Prevention.

Before the installation, there were 2.48 suicide deaths per month at the bridge. The number dropped to 1.83 suicides per month during the installation period and 0.67 suicides per month after installation, the researchers found—a 73% reduction from preinstallation.

1 of 2 who escaped from immigration center found

CO AURORA—One of two men who escaped from a Colorado immigration detention center was arrested after being found by a sheriff's deputy about 12 miles away.

An Adams County Sheriff's Office deputy approached Joel Gonzalez-Gonzalez, 32, because he seemed suspicious, sheriff's spokesperson Sgt. Adam Sherman said.

When it was determined he was one of the two men who escaped from the detention center in Aurora, Colo., he was taken into temporary custody until U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrived, Sherman said.

The other person who escaped remained at large. They both apparently walked out of doors that opened during a power outage at the detention center in the Denver suburb, which is operated by The GEO Group under a contract with ICE.

Police hunt for 2 suspects after nightclub shooting

TX HOUSTON—Houston police are looking for two suspects after six men were shot and wounded early Sunday at an after-hours nightclub.

Four of the wounded are in

critical condition, said Assistant Chief James Skelton during a news conference. He provided no information on the conditions of the two other victims.

Dispatchers were called around 3 a.m. to the packed nightclub, which was still serving drinks after the city's bars are supposed to be closed, Skelton said.

He said police are reviewing video and talking to witnesses, but the preliminary investigation suggests that the people involved knew each other. He described it as an "isolated attack" that illustrates the problems of after-hours clubs.

Volunteers use Ramadan as opportunity to give

MI DEARBORN—After a nightly iftar meal with family members breaking fast together during Ramadan, Nadine Daoud noticed full pots and trays of untouched leftover food lining the shelves of her grandmother's refrigerator. Too often, she felt the food was quickly forgotten and then wasted.

The observations inspired her 2017 creation of The Helping Handzz Foundation that brings volunteers together each year during the Islamic holy month. They round up spare food from families in Dearborn — where nearly half the 110,000 residents are of Arab descent — and bring it to people without homes in neighboring Detroit.

Daoud said the group's efforts are emblematic of Islam's emphasis on respecting and valuing resources such as food and matches Ramadan's focus on "self-discipline and empathy toward those less fortunate."

—From wire reports

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Florida ends UConn's bid for 3rd straight title

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — For 30 minutes, UConn showed the mettle and toughness that delivered back-to-back national championships for Dan Hurley, outplaying top-seeded Florida in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

And then Walter Clayton Jr. took over.

The Gators' first-team All-America guard scored 13 of his 23 points in the final eight minutes on Sunday, including two crucial 3-pointers down the stretch, and Florida rallied to a scintillating 77-75 victory over the Huskies, ending UConn's pursuit of a third straight title.

The Gators (32-4) advanced to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2017 and will play Maryland in the West Region semifinals in San Francisco.

"This is a great win for our program," coach Todd Golden said. "The time was now for us to take that next step. Again, Florida basketball, back where it belongs. Being in the Sweet 16 is a

great step in the right direction. ... We made winning play after winning play down the stretch in the last six minutes."

There's little doubt about that.

But they also had help from UConn, which made some uncharacteristic mistakes, including twice allowing the Gators to corral offensive rebounds off missed free throws, resulting in four second-chance points.

The Huskies (24-11) came in with modest outside expectations as a No. 8 seed but led for most of the second half. During his postgame news conference, Hurley struggled several times to hold back tears.

"This was just a historic run that these guys have been on and the guys that have worn the uniform the past couple years," Hurley said. "If it's going to come to an end for us, I wouldn't have wanted it to be in a game where we lost to a lower seed."

"There's some honor, I guess, in the way that this went down."

UConn was seeking to become the first team to three-peat since

UCLA's run of seven straight titles from 1967-73.

The Huskies won the 2023 title in Houston and last year in Glendale, Ariz., joining Duke (1991-92) and Florida (2006-07) as the only schools to win back-to-back since the Bruins' run under John Wooden.

Florida entered the game as a 9½-point favorite and ranked No. 1 in KenPom's adjusted offensive efficiency by scoring 128.9 points per 100 possessions, and the Gators of the powerful Southeastern Conference joined fellow 1-seed Duke as the only teams to rank in the top 10 on both sides of the ball, making them a popular pick to cut down the nets.

But UConn's defense stymied Clayton and company for most of the game, holding the Gators to 35% shooting through the first 30 minutes to build a 52-46 lead.

Florida chipped away, and then Clayton showed why he's one of the best players in the country.

Clayton made a 3 from the

right wing with 2:54 left to put the Gators ahead 62-61, and teammate Will Richard followed with a steal and dunk. Clayton's 3 from the same spot with 1:06 left made it 70-64 — part of a 14-3 run that gave Florida an eight-point advantage with 40 seconds left.

Even when the Gators seemed to have the game in hand, UConn kept fighting. Thomas Haugh's two free throws with 5.9 seconds left pushed Florida's lead to five to seal the win.

Hurley watched, arms folded, standing on the sideline as Liam McNeely's 3-pointer at the buzzer sailed skyward and dropped through the net as the horn sounded.

Afterward, Clayton thanked his teammates for believing in him after his rough start.

"We knew this game wasn't going to be easy," Clayton said. "(UConn) has got a championship pedigree, back-to-back champions. That's a great team. They had that experience. We knew it wasn't going to be easy. We kept our composure."

Queen's buzzer-beater gives Maryland win over Colorado St.

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Derik Queen demanded the ball.

With Maryland trailing 71-70 and only 3.6 seconds left against Colorado State in the second round of the NCAA Tournament, Terrapins coach Kevin Willard gave each of his players a chance to say they wanted to take the last shot. Queen spoke up, using an expletive for emphasis.

The 6-foot-10 freshman from Baltimore banked in a fadeaway jumper at the buzzer, and Maryland won a 72-71 thriller on Sunday to reach the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2016.

"Sometimes, you can draw something up for a guy that maybe doesn't want the basketball," Willard said. "So once he said that, it was a pretty simple decision, and I could see everyone's body language kind of perk up a little bit, because he was so confident that he wanted the basketball."

"It was just a simple zipper: Give him the basketball and let him go to work."

Queen took the ball at the top of the key,

drove to his left, elevated over two defenders and kissed it high off the glass as the horn sounded.

"When Coach drew up the play, he trusted me and my teammates trusted me," Queen said. "I was a little bit nervous, but I was due for one, and I had to, had to make this."

Jalen Lake drilled a rainbow 3-pointer over Queen with 6 seconds left to give 12th-seeded Colorado State, which was seeking its first Sweet 16 appearance since 1969, a 71-70 lead.

It was a familiar feeling for Maryland, which had its last four losses this season all come on the final possession.

"In the huddle, I said, 'Guys, for the first time, we have time left. It's our time to make our moment happen,'" Queen said.

Colorado State was seeking to become the lowest-seeded team to reach a regional semifinal in this edition of March Madness, which had been light on upsets and buzzer-beaters.

Queen took care of the last-second he-

roics — even though his team was the favored one — and Maryland advanced to face the region's No. 1 seed, Florida.

"I thought we defended that last play pretty well. It's about all we could ask for, and he made a freaking unbelievable shot," Colorado State coach Niko Medved said. "That's what happens in March Madness and sometimes you're on their side of it and sometimes you're on ours."

Queen led fourth-seeded Maryland (27-8) with 17 points, Rodney Rice scored 16 and Julian Reese had 15 points and 11 rebounds as each of the Terps' starters known as the "Crab Five" scored in double figures.

Nique Clifford had 21 points, seven rebounds and six assists for Colorado State (26-10) and Lake scored 13 points.

Willard, Maryland's third-year coach who before the first round spoke candidly about his frustrations with the program as he seeks a contract extension, took a team to the Sweet 16 for the first time in seven March Madness appearances, five with Seton Hall and one with the Terrapins.

Love lifts Arizona, earns shot at Duke

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Caleb Love had 29 points and nine rebounds, and fourth-seeded Arizona advanced to the Sweet 16, surviving a ragged finish to beat former Pac-12 rival Oregon 87-83 on Sunday night in the NCAA Tournament.

The Wildcats (24-12) will face top-seeded Duke in the East Regional semifinals in Newark, N.J. Three years ago, Love starred for North Carolina in a Final Four victory over the Blue Devils that sent Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski into retirement.

Tobe Awaka added 12 points and 14 rebounds for Arizona, which had never faced Oregon in the tournament. The Wildcats also made the Sweet 16 last year, losing to Clemson.

Jackson Shelstad had 25 points for the fifth-seeded Ducks (25-10), who led by 15 points just over five minutes into the game. TJ Bamba had 17.

"Us going down early, we never panicked, we never altered anything," Love said. "I just think we were so poised throughout the whole game. Nobody was worried about anything but finishing up the game and winning the game."

Love's emphatic dunk with 2:37 left put Arizona in front 77-70. Oregon narrowed the gap on Keeshawn Barthelemy's 3-pointer before Nate Bittle's hook shot got the Ducks within 80-78 with 49.2 seconds left.

Oregon pressured, and Shelstad's driving layup got the Ducks within 81-80 with 10 seconds left. Anthony Dell'Orso and Shelstad traded free throws, keeping Oregon within a point. Dell'Orso hit another pair, but Shelstad missed one of his in the waning seconds and the Wildcats held on.

Duke 89, Baylor 66: Tyrese Proctor made seven 3-pointers and scored 25 points to continue his recent tear, helping the No. 1 seed Blue Devils beat the Bears.

Freshman star Cooper Flagg had 18 points, nine rebounds and six assists for Duke (33-3), the headliner in the East Regional and one of the favorites to win it all.

Proctor, a junior, made 7 of 8 3-pointers — his third straight game with at least six 3s.

Alabama 80, Saint Mary's 66: The Crimson Tide thundered past the Gaels, using a steady

stream of alley-oop dunks to reach the Sweet 16 for a third consecutive year.

Chris Youngblood led second-seeded Alabama (27-8) with 13 points. Six players finished in double figures, including forward Grant Nelson, who had 12 points and eight rebounds after sitting out the majority of a first-round game against Robert Morris due to a knee injury.

All-American guard Mark Sears had 12 points and three assists, including a pretty lob that Clifford Omoruyi slammed through for a reverse dunk that put the Tide up 14 with just under 8 minutes to play.

Omoruyi had 10 points and 10 rebounds for Alabama, which built a double-digit lead late in the first half and never let Saint Mary's (29-6) get closer than eight the rest of the way.

Midwest Regional

Kentucky 84, Illinois 75: Koby Brea matched a career high with 23 points and the Wildcats beat the Illini to advance beyond the tournament's opening weekend for the first time since they reached the Elite Eight in 2019.

Kentucky (24-11), the No. 3 seed, faces No. 2 seed and Southeastern Conference rival Tennessee on Friday in Indianapolis. The Wildcats have already beaten the Volunteers twice this season.

South Regional

Mississippi 91, Iowa State 78: Sean Pedulla scored 20 points, Jaemyn Brakefield had 19 and the Rebels beat the Cyclones to reach the Sweet 16 for just the second time in school history.

Mississippi (24-11) is one of seven Southeastern Conference schools still standing, the most teams any conference has sent to the Sweet 16 in one season. Rebels fans started chanting "SEC!" with more than 5½ minutes left and the game well out of reach.

Michigan State 71, New Mexico 63: Jaden Akins scored 16 points, including a 3-pointer that put the Spartans ahead to stay, and coach Tom Izzo is in the Sweet 16 for the 16th time with a victory over the Lobos.

Tre Holloman added 14 points for second-seeded Michigan State (29-6).

Larson wins at Homestead for near triple-header sweep

Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — Kyle Larson passed Alex Bowman with six laps remaining in NASCAR's Cup Series race at Homestead-Miami Speedway on Sunday, giving the Hendrick Motorsports driver the 30th win of his career at one of his best tracks.

Larson, driving the No. 5 Chevrolet, sped by as Bowman scraped the wall on Turn 4 with the lead. Larson extended his edge to more than a second over his Hendrick Motorsports teammate, then held on to beat Bowman by 1.205 seconds for his second career Cup Series win at Homestead, and his second victory of the weekend.

Larson fell one race short of sweeping the triple-header weekend. He won the Craftsman Truck race Friday and finished fourth in the Xfinity Series on Saturday despite leading 132 of 201 laps. He was hoping to join Kyle Busch as the only drivers to sweep a triple-header weekend — Busch did it at Bristol Motor Speedway in 2010 and 2017. Larson will take another shot at a sweep in Bristol next month.

Larson said he was motivated by Saturday's result, when a late caution essentially cost him a race he had dominated. It was an all-to-familiar feeling of disappointment at Homestead despite historically driving very well there.

"Proud of myself. Proud of the team. Just a lot of gritty hard work there today," Larson said. "Super pumped. One of the coolest wins I think in my Cup career just because of all the heartbreak I've had here, the heartbreak yesterday. To just keep my head down and keep digging feels really good."

He was far from dominant Sunday. Larson led just 19 of 267 laps, had to climb from 14th-place starting position and overcame pit road mishaps and bad restarts to pull off his first victory of the season and first in the Cup Series at Homestead since 2022.

"Given past history, I just wanted to take the green flag and

kick everybody's ass today," Larson said. "I wanted to get to the lead early and just dominate like I was yesterday. Then the green flag flew, and it was like the opposite. I was going backwards, and getting (mad) in the helmet."

"After 10 laps or so, I forgot about the wanting to kick everybody's ass all race long. It was like, 'All right, let's try to and work hard at this and get a win.'"

Bowman, who was Saturday's pole winner, finished second in the No. 48 Chevrolet. Bubba Wallace was third for 23XI Racing after leading 56 laps — the most laps he's led in a race since September 2023.

Cavaliers top Jazz to snap 4-game slide

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Jarrett Allen scored 18 points and Donovan Mitchell added 16, helping Cleveland snap a four-game losing streak with a 120-91 win over the Utah Jazz on Sunday.

Evan Mobley had 11 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks to help the Cavaliers get back in the win column. Six players scored in double figures for Cleveland.

Kyle Filipowski led the Jazz with 18 points and 13 rebounds. Walker Kessler added 13 rebounds and three blocks.

Utah rallied from an early 12-point deficit and took a 36-34 lead on Collin Sexton's layup midway through the second quarter. The Cavs went ahead for good after taking a 44-43 lead on Mitchell's pull-up jumper with 2:04 left before halftime.

Thunder 103, Clippers 101: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 26 points and eight assists, Aaron Wiggins scored 19 points and NBA-leading Oklahoma City extended its winning streak to six games by holding on to beat host Los Angeles.

Alex Caruso scored 14 points,

including the go-ahead 3-pointer with 1:54 remaining after the Thunder squandered a nine-point lead in the fourth quarter. Isaiah Hartenstein added 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Jaylin Williams scored 12 points.

OKC won despite missing Jalen Williams (hip) and Chet Holmgren (hip), its second- and third-leading scorers, respectively.

Nuggets 116, Rockets 111: Jamal Murray had 39 points, Michael Porter Jr. added 17 points and nine rebounds and visiting Denver beat Houston to snap the Rockets' nine-game win streak.

Murray, who scored 17 in the first half, had 17 in the third quarter as the Nuggets outscored Houston 39-22 in the quarter to take a 96-79 lead.

Russell Westbrook had 14 points off the bench, Aaron Gordon scored 13 points with eight assists and DeAndre Jordan had 11 points and 15 rebounds for Denver, which shot 51% and was 10-for-21 on 3-pointers.

Celtics 129, Trail Blazers 116: Jayson Tatum had 30 points, nine assists and nine re-

bounds and visiting Boston extended its winning streak to five games with a win over Portland.

Sam Hauser shot 8 for 10 from long distance and scored 24 points, and Derrick White added 17 points and eight assists for the Celtics, who were without Jaylen Brown, Jrue Holiday and Kristaps Porzingis.

Shaedon Sharpe scored 23 points for the Trail Blazers (32-40), who are 2½ games behind Phoenix and Dallas in the race for 10th place in the Western Conference.

Spurs 123, Raptors 89: Devin Vassell scored 25 points, Julian Champagnie had 20 and visiting San Antonio won its third straight game by routing Toronto.

Stephon Castle scored 15 points and Sandro Mamukelashvili added 13 for the Spurs. San Antonio led by as many as 38 points and won for the fifth time in seven.

Scottie Barnes scored 22 points, RJ Barrett had 18 and Jamal Shead added 17 as the Raptors lost their fourth straight.

Hawks 132, 76ers 119: Trae Young scored 28 points with 12

assists, Zaccharie Risacher scored 22 points and host Atlanta beat Philadelphia.

Georges Niang added 20 points, including five 3-pointers, and Dominick Barlow finished with 13 points and 10 rebounds. Onyeka Okongwu scored 14 points and grabbed nine rebounds.

Pistons 136, Pelicans 130: Ron Holland II scored 14 of his season-high 26 points in the fourth quarter as host Detroit beat New Orleans.

McCollum had 40 points and seven assists, but Holland helped the Pistons outscore the Pelicans 43-39 in the fourth quarter to win for the third time in four games.

Heat 122, Hornets 105: Andrew Wiggins scored 42 points for the second-highest scoring game of his career, Tyler Herro added 29 and host Miami beat Charlotte to snap a 10-game losing streak.

Wiggins had the most points by a Heat player this season — Herro had 40 three times — and finished five shy of his career high of 47, done Nov. 13, 2016, for Minnesota against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Hertl stays hot as Golden Knights defeat Lightning

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Tomas Hertl scored again and the Vegas Golden Knights beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-2 on Sunday.

Hertl continued his hot streak one night after netting his second hat trick this season, as he scored his team-high 31st goal midway through the first period to give Vegas a 2-0 lead.

Nic Roy opened the scoring with his 11th goal of the season midway through the first while Jack Eichel scored his 24th to give the Golden Knights a 3-0 lead.

Nic Hague added an empty-netter for Vegas while Ilya Samsonov made 35 saves in his 199th

career game.

Nick Paul and Nikita Kucherov scored for Tampa Bay while Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 26 shots.

Kings 7, Bruins 2: Quinton Byfield scored in a seventh straight home game as Los Angeles beat Boston to set a franchise record with its 14th straight home game without a regulation loss.

Anze Kopitar, Warren Foegele, Andrei Kuzmenko, Drew Doughty, Tanner Jeannot and Samuel Helenius also scored, and the Kings have won six in a row on home ice. Darcy Kuemper made 11 saves as he improved to 13-0-1 in his past 14

home starts.

Hurricanes 5, Anaheim 2: Taylor Hall scored three goals in the third period for his sixth career hat trick, and visiting Carolina rebounded from its first loss in three weeks with a win over Anaheim.

One night after their lengthy eight-game winning streak emphatically ended in Los Angeles, the Hurricanes rebounded to finish 3-1-0 on their California road trip. Mark Jankowski scored his sixth goal in seven games with Carolina, and Jordan Martinook also scored.

Panthers 4, Penguins 3 (SO): Aleksander Barkov scored in the shootout round while Sergei

Bobrovsky stopped all three attempts as host Florida beat Pittsburgh.

Blues 4, Predators 1: Jordan Kyrou scored his 30th goal of the season, and Robert Thomas had three assists to help host St. Louis beat Nashville for its sixth straight victory.

Blackhawks 7, Flyers 4: Ryan Donato scored twice, and Connor Bedard had a goal and an assist as host Chicago beat Philadelphia.

Sabres 5, Jets 3: Ryan McLeod had a goal and three assists and James Reimer made 33 saves to lead visiting Buffalo to a victory over Western Conference-leading Winnipeg.