

US, Israel strike Iranian missile sites, ships

3 service members killed in Operation Epic Fury; bases hit in Tehran retaliation

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Three U.S. service members were killed in action and five seriously wounded in Operation Epic Fury against Iran, U.S. Central Command said Sunday.

Several others sustained minor shrapnel injuries and concussions and are in the process of returning to duty. Major combat operations continue, the command said.

The Pentagon is withholding the names of those killed as officials work to notify next of kin. Identities will be released 24 hours after families have been notified, the command said.

CENTCOM did not provide further details about the circumstances of the deaths or injuries.

The U.S. and Israel launched extensive strikes against Iran on Saturday morning after months of stalling negotiations over the country's nuclear pro-

gram. President Donald Trump later that night announced the operation had resulted in the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. Addressing the nation shortly after strikes began, Trump said the U.S. would never allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon and vowed to raze Iran's missile industry to the ground and annihilate its navy.

He acknowledged U.S. service members may die in the process.

"I do not make this statement lightly: the Iranian regime seeks to kill," the president said in a video posted to social media. "The lives of courageous American heroes may be lost and we may have casualties. That often happens in war. But we're doing this, not for now, we're doing this for the future, and it is a noble mission."

The U.S. military said B-2 stealth bombers have struck

Iran's ballistic missile facilities with 2,000-pound bombs. Trump said on social media Sunday that nine Iranian warships had been "destroyed" and sunk, and that the Iranian navy's headquarters had been "largely destroyed."

Iran has responded to the attacks with hundreds of missiles and drones aimed at U.S. military installations around the region. In Bahrain, a U.S. naval base was struck multiple times on Saturday, damaging U.S. Naval Forces Central Command headquarters and warehouses. Multiple residential buildings were struck elsewhere on the island and attacks continued well into Sunday.

Other U.S. bases in the region have also been targeted. Authorities in Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan and the UAE have reported shooting down missiles and drones since the strikes began.

Trump told *The Atlantic* in an

interview on Sunday that he planned to speak with Iran's new leadership, according to *The Associated Press*.

"They want to talk, and I have agreed to talk, so I will be talking to them," he said, declining comment on the timing.

In a post on X, CENTCOM appeared to confirm that the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln had been targeted by Iranian ballistic missiles but said the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' claims Sunday that the ship had been struck were a lie.

"The Lincoln was not hit," CENTCOM said in the post the same day. "The missiles launched didn't even come close."

The command added that the ship was continuing to launch aircraft in support of the "campaign to defend the American people by eliminating threats from the Iranian regime."

Americans shelter as Iran attacks Navy sites in Bahrain

BY SHANNON RENFROE
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Iranian drones and missiles struck high-rise apartments and hotels in Bahrain this weekend as attacks on the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet headquarters spread into civilian districts, amid Iran's unprecedented attacks on American bases across the Middle East.

Sirens continued into Sunday afternoon in Manama, the capital, with alerts instructing U.S. military personnel to shelter in place in a bunker until further notice.

On Saturday, the Navy base sustained damage to a large building and at least one other

structure. The extent of the damage remains unclear and U.S. Central Command has so far declined to provide details.

The Iranian counterstrikes came as the United States and Israel launched attacks throughout Iran that resulted in the death of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and many senior military leaders.

For U.S. service members and residents of the Bahraini capital, the geopolitical stakes coexist with more immediate concerns: blocked roads, suspended flights, limited base access and preparations for another night of potential attacks. The island nation's air-

space is restricted and commercial flights are suspended, meaning family members authorized by the Defense Department on Saturday to depart the country must take shelter for now. The Crowne Plaza Hotel, a five-star property in central Manama, was struck Sunday morning, resulting in injuries.

In its fifth security update of the day, the U.S. Embassy advised all U.S. citizens to avoid hotels in the capital, warning they could be targets. The nearby Juffair district, home to the U.S. Navy base and many businesses, fell noticeably quiet Sunday, which is a workday in Bahrain.

Base access remained restricted following damage from the attacks, according to official messages distributed to personnel.

In the Seef neighborhood of Manama, about 20 minutes from Naval Support Activity Bahrain, the skyline told the story. The ivory-colored Breaker residential tower now bears vertical scars of blackened glass running along nearly the height of the building following an aerial attack Saturday. Flames spread down the facade while sparks fell toward the street. The smell of burning metal and glass lingered between neighboring towers as smoke drifted toward other buildings.

Counterstrikes target US bases in Mideast

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

U.S. forces across the Middle East have endured hours of air raid sirens and explosions following the joint American-Israeli attack on Iran beginning Saturday.

The counterstrikes came within minutes of the launch of Operation Epic Fury, which has struck targets throughout Iran, killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and crippled the country's leadership. Three U.S. service members have been killed and at least five have been injured, U.S. Central Command officials said.

The strikes have continued into Sunday and airspace remains restricted throughout much of the Middle East.

■ **Bahrain:** Iranian missiles and drones struck the head-

quarters of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, the airport, residential buildings and a hotel on the island.

Military personnel were directed late Saturday to evacuate sections of Manama and leave any high-rise apartments for safer ground below.

At least three other buildings on the island sustained damage, according to Bahraini authorities, including the Breaker residential tower and the Era View residential tower.

On Sunday, a drone hit Bahrain's international airport, causing minor damage.

■ **Qatar:** Two missiles and a drone reached Al Udeid Air Base but caused little damage and no casualties, according to Qatari officials.

Qatar said Sunday that it had

intercepted several waves of Iranian missiles that targeted various areas throughout the country.

Eight people were injured but no deaths were reported, the Qatari government said.

■ **United Arab Emirates:** Dozens of missiles and hundreds of drones targeted parts of the United Arab Emirates, which hosts U.S. Air Force and Army assets at Al Dhafra Air Base.

Some 35 drones fell within the country's territory, the UAE said, resulting in three deaths. The victims were Pakistani, Nepalese and Bangladeshi nationals.

Most of the strikes aimed at the UAE were intercepted, the Defense Ministry said Sunday. A total of 152 of 165 ballistic missiles were destroyed, along with

506 of 541 drones and two cruise missiles.

■ **Jordan:** Jordanian armed forces intercepted two ballistic missiles on Saturday, according to Reuters.

■ **Kuwait:** Ali Al-Salem Air Base, which hosts U.S. and other international forces, came under ballistic missile attack on Saturday, according to the Kuwaiti military.

The missiles were intercepted, but fragments and debris fell near the base, according to a statement on X.

As of Sunday, Kuwait's air defenses had engaged 97 ballistic missiles and 283 drones, with debris causing some minor material damage.

■ **Iraq:** Smoke could be seen rising from a U.S. base near the airport in Irbil Saturday, according to The Associated Press.

US deploys low-cost, 1-way drones in combat for 1st time

Stars and Stripes

The major U.S. and Israeli bombardment of Iran on Saturday featured a U.S. Central Command task force's first ever deployment of low-cost, one-way attack drones in combat, the command said.

They were launched by CENTCOM's Task Force Scorpion Strike, which was specifically formed to develop and deploy one-way attack drones at scale.

The drones deployed for Operation Epic Fury are modeled after Iran's Shahed drones, which have wreaked havoc on the battlefield in Ukraine and have been employed by Iran-backed militias throughout the Middle East.

The task force in December successfully completed its first launch of the LUCAS drone at

sea. LUCAS is an abbreviation for low-cost unmanned combat attack system. The drones have an extensive range and are designed to operate autonomously.

The command did not specify how many of the one-way drones were fired or what they targeted. They were among munitions fired from "air, land and sea," the command said.

Iranian state media, citing the Red Crescent, on Saturday evening said at least 201 people had been killed and more than 700 injured. Various members of Iran's leadership were targeted, and at least 115 people were reported killed when a girls' school was struck in southern Iran, according to a regional governor.

A spokesperson for CENTCOM said the strike on the school was being looked into.

Iran vows revenge and trades strikes with Israel

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Iran vowed revenge Sunday after the killing of its supreme leader and traded strikes with Israel as part of a widening war prompted by a surprise U.S. and Israeli bombardment. The U.S. military said three service members have been killed, the first known American casualties from the conflict.

Blasts in Tehran sent a huge plume of smoke into the sky in an area of government buildings. Iranian authorities say more than 200 people have been killed since the start of the U.S. and Israeli strikes that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior leaders. Earlier, Iran fired missiles at targets in Israel and Gulf Arab states in retaliation while Israel pledged

"non-stop" strikes against Iran's leaders and military.

The streets were largely deserted as people sheltered during heavy airstrikes, witnesses told The Associated Press, speaking anonymously for fear of retribution.

The paramilitary Basij, which has played a central role in crushing protests, has set up checkpoints across the city, they said.

In southern Iran, at least 115 people were reported killed when a girls' school was struck, and dozens more were wounded, the local governor told Iranian state TV.

The Israeli military said it was not aware of any strikes in the area, and the U.S. military said it was looking into the reports.

NATO keeping eye on Iran's response to war

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO's missile defense system is on alert as Iranian attacks aimed at an unprecedented number of U.S. military sites and other locations across the Middle East put American and partner air defenses in the region to the test.

It's still unknown whether Iran will attempt to attack targets farther afield.

The United States has numerous military bases along the Mediterranean Sea and across Europe that enable the military to project power into the Middle East.

A senior NATO military official said Saturday that the alliance has a round-the-clock vigi-

lance to ensure the security of its 32 member nations.

The approach "covers land, air, sea, cyber and space domains," the official said. "This constant high state of alertness is designed to deter adversaries, monitor for threats and provide rapid, coordinated responses to any crisis."

NATO's missile defense system, which involves a U.S. Aegis Ashore site in Romania and U.S. Navy destroyers out of Rota, Spain, was initiated over 15 years ago and developed in phases over time with a missile threat from Iran in mind.

The NATO system includes a missile defense suite in Poland and an early-warning mountain-top radar in Kurecik, Turkey.

Colin P. Clarke, a terrorism expert at the Soufan Center think tank, said Saturday that the U.S. and its allies should be preparing for a wide range of countermeasures from Tehran that could stretch beyond the Middle East.

"For Iran, this war is existential," Clarke said in a statement. "And because it is, I would fully expect Tehran to activate any sleeper cell capacity it has in the West to make this painful for the U.S. and Israel. Hezbollah and other assets could very well seek to conduct attacks in Europe, North America, etc."

While Iran's retaliatory strikes have thus far covered a wide range of territory in the Middle East, analysts have said

they could be holding large numbers of missiles in reserve.

"We have not yet seen saturation attacks intended to overwhelm layered air defenses," said Alex Plitsas, an expert on Iran at the Atlantic Council think tank. "It is unclear if that is due to U.S. and Israeli strikes on missile stocks, Iran holding missiles in reserve, Iran testing defenses, or a combination thereof."

Besides Bahrain, Iran's strikes have also been directed mostly at U.S. military targets in places such as Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

"Iran's response thus far has been measured and rational," Plitsas said.

World leaders urge talks after US, Israeli strikes

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — World leaders urged peace and a return to talks as the military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran raised concerns about whether the violence could spread across the region and tensions rose with Iran vowing devastating blows after the killing of their Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

A massive explosion rocked the Iranian capital Sunday morning as the Israeli military said it was targeting the "heart" of the city after stating it cleared the path to Tehran the day before. Meanwhile, Iran pressed on with its retaliation campaign: Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain said they intercepted a barrage of missiles.

Oman, which served as an interlocutor between Tehran and Washington in recent nuclear talks, said an oil tanker in the strategic Strait of Hormuz came under attack and its port at Duqm, used by the U.S. Navy as a logistical hub and capable of

hosting aircraft carriers, was targeted in a drone attack.

Fears about the conflict spreading were amplified Sunday, when British Defense Minister John Healey said Iranian missile and drone strikes came within a few hundred yards of a group of 300 British military personnel in Bahrain and that two missiles were even fired in the direction of Cyprus, where the United Kingdom has bases.

Top diplomats from the 27 European Union nations are holding an emergency meeting Sunday to discuss the situation around Iran and the next steps for the bloc.

"The Iranian regime's indiscriminate attacks against its neighbours carry the risk of dragging the region into a broader war and we condemn this," said EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas as she announced the bloc's meeting Sunday. "It is essential that the war does not spread any further. The Iranian regime has choices to make."

Reactions from Congress to strikes split on party lines

Stars and Stripes

Congressional leaders split mostly across party lines in reaction to President Donald Trump's decision to join Israel in launching a major attack on Iran on Saturday.

Republicans expressed broad support. Democrats were mostly critical, saying the strikes happened without congressional authorization.

"Today, our commander-in-chief took decisive action against the threat posed by the world's leading proliferator of terrorism, the Iranian regime," Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said. "This is a pivotal and necessary operation to protect Americans and American interests."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota applauded the president.

Democrats criticized the president for not being transparent enough on goals and, most specifically, the endgame.

"The administration has not

provided Congress and the American people with critical details about the scope and immediacy of the threat," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said. "Confronting Iran's malign regional activities, nuclear ambitions and harsh oppression of the Iranian people demands American strength, resolve, regional coordination and strategic clarity."

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, praised the U.S. troops carrying out the operations, and he said he prayed for their safety, but condemned the attack.

Not all Republicans stood with the president. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., a frequent critic of interventionist foreign policy, expressed opposition.

"This is not 'America First,'" he said in a statement on X. Massie said that when Congress reconvenes, he would work with Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., to force a congressional vote on war with Iran.

DOD to upgrade surveillance of China

Bloomberg News

The Pentagon plans to spend an additional \$12.6 billion to improve surveillance of China's military maneuvers, submarines and satellites as the U.S. tries to counter the "unprecedented Chinese military buildup" in Asia, according to a budget document sent to Congress.

The funds, approved by Congress outside of the normal budget process, are designed to improve U.S. military readiness, offensive cyber capabilities and surveillance efforts across the Indo-Pacific. It will also help expand operations of a classified Boeing Co. spacecraft.

The China-focused expenditures are detailed in a new 85-page document sent to Congress earlier this month that spells out how the Department of Defense plans to allocate almost \$152 billion passed in last year's massive tax-and-spending package. That's separate from the formal \$893 billion fiscal 2026 defense spending measure Congress passed in January.

The document says the new funds "are dedicated to improving critical DoD efforts in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility to counter the unprecedented Chinese military buildup and the growing

threats to U.S. security interests and economic prosperity in the region."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning criticized the funding plan at a regular press briefing in Beijing on Friday.

"Using the so-called China threat as a pretext to strengthen military deployments in the Asia-Pacific does not contribute to peace and stability in the region and does not serve the regional countries' interests," she said.

The new spending and hawkish tone contrast with January's U.S. National Defense Strategy,

which took a softer line on China than in years past, in keeping with President Donald Trump's calls for closer trade ties with Beijing. The new strategy calls for deterring China "through strength, not confrontation" and is more focused on threats posed by migration and narcotics in the Western Hemisphere than on traditional U.S. foes like Russia and North Korea.

Still, the spending document obtained by Bloomberg Government features a variety of intelligence and surveillance improvements aimed mostly at keeping a close eye on China's increasingly sophisticated military buildup.

Trump raises possibility of 'friendly takeover of Cuba'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Friday that the U.S. is in talks with Havana and raised the possibility of a "friendly takeover of Cuba" without offering any details on what he meant.

Speaking to reporters outside the White House as he left for a trip to Texas, Trump said Secretary of State Marco Rubio was in discussions with Cuban leaders "at a very high level."

"The Cuban government is talking with us," the president

said. "They have no money. They have no anything right now. But they're talking to us, and maybe we'll have a friendly takeover of Cuba."

He added: "We could very well end up having a friendly takeover of Cuba."

Trump didn't clarify his comments but seemed to indicate that the situation with Cuba, a communist-run island that has been among Washington's bitterest adversaries for decades, was coming to a critical point. The White House did not re-

spond to requests for more information Friday.

The president also said that Cuba "is, to put it mildly, a failed nation" and "they want our help."

His remarks came two days after the Cuban government reported that a Florida-registered speedboat carrying 10 armed Cubans from the U.S. opened fire on soldiers off the island's north coast. Four of the armed Cubans were killed, and six were injured in responding gunfire, according to Cuba's government. One Cu-

ban official also was injured.

Cuba has been on Trump's mind since at least early January, after U.S. forces ousted one of Havana's closest allies, Venezuela's socialist President Nicolás Maduro. Trump suggested in the aftermath of that raid that military action in Cuba might not be necessary because the island's economy was weak enough — particularly in the absence of oil shipments from Venezuela that stopped after Maduro was taken into custody — to soon collapse on its own.

FEMA quietly dismantles a division for disaster prep

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump says he wants to shift the responsibility of handling disasters from the federal government to cities and states. But his administration quietly dismantled a division working toward that goal by making the public more prepared for snow, flooding and hurricanes.

In a bid to cut costs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency closed the Individual and Community Preparedness Divi-

sion, or ICPD, and many of its programs last year, according to an internal document seen by Bloomberg News and people familiar with the unit.

Victoria Barton, a spokesperson for FEMA, confirmed the agency shut down the division in September as part of an effort to root out "ineffective programs that waste taxpayer money and create bureaucratic red tape."

A small, low-budget FEMA program, ICPD reached millions of Americans through education-

al materials and training sessions on how to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. It provided guidance ranging from checklists to identify key personal documents to keep safe during a crisis to formal training on how to locate and rescue people in certain situations before help arrives.

"The true first responders are the neighbors — it's neighbors helping neighbors," said Deanne Criswell, President Joe Biden's FEMA chief. "They get the tools

and resources and the knowledge from programs that are funded through [ICPD]."

This latest retreat from disaster preparation by FEMA, which Bloomberg News is reporting for the first time, comes after the agency stopped approving certain funding to boost local defenses against future hazards. FEMA also ended another grant program funding billions in resiliency upgrades to big infrastructure projects, though a federal court ruled this move was unlawful.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Cop on disability faces high-flying fraud case

CA LOS ANGELES — A Los Angeles police officer who said he was too injured to complete any work was not too injured to jump out of airplanes, prosecutors allege.

Christopher Brandon Carnahan, 43, of Norwalk, has been charged with two counts of felony insurance fraud after going skydiving multiple times in Lake Elsinore and working out at a fitness center while also collecting disability benefits by exaggerating an on-duty work injury, according to the LA County district attorney's office.

Carnahan claimed that he injured his left elbow while at work in May 2023 and was subsequently placed on total temporary disability status, prosecutors said. Police officers with this status are entitled to receive 100% of their base salary tax-free for up to a year and then two-thirds afterward if the injury persists.

He was arrested Wednesday.

Judge scolds LaBeouf, orders him to rehab

LA NEW ORLEANS — A New Orleans judge ordered actor Shia LaBeouf to return to drug and alcohol rehabilitation and set a \$100,000 bond on Thursday after the film star was charged with two counts of battery over an alleged assault outside a bar during Mardi Gras.

LaBeouf was also admonished by the judge for allegedly yelling homophobic slurs while hitting multiple people near the French Quarter. The police report said LaBeouf dislocated one victim's nose.

The judge ordered LaBeouf, 39, to submit to weekly drug tests, including one on the spot in the courthouse. LaBeouf agreed and his attorney said the test did not show illegal substances in his system.

LaBeouf has not yet formally entered a plea to the charges.

Man admits torturing wolf, escapes jail time

WY DANIEL — A Wyoming man who allegedly hit a wolf with a snowmobile, taped the wounded animal's mouth shut and showed it off in a rural bar before killing it has agreed to a plea deal that would spare him from going to trial and potentially prison.

Cody Roberts would instead pay a \$1,000 fine and serve 18 months of probation under the deal reached with Sublette County prosecutors last week and filed in court Wednesday, according to court documents.

The alleged animal abuse happened at a bar in February 2024 in Daniel, a town of about 150 people. Condemnation of the alleged abuse and scrutiny of Wyoming's laws followed wide circulation of photos showing the wolf with its mouth bound with tape.

Video clips showed the same animal lying on a floor, alive but barely moving.

The proposed plea agreement would prohibit Roberts from drinking alcohol, going into a bar or liquor store, and hunting or fishing while on probation.

Corrections issued for Bible-infused curriculum

TX AUSTIN — A Bible-infused curriculum that Texas approved for public schools over pushback in 2024

will undergo corrections to fix hundreds of errors caught by teachers and education officials after the material was introduced to classrooms.

The curriculum in what is known as the "Bluebonnet" textbook is among Republican-led efforts to incorporate more religious teaching into classrooms. Designed by the state's public education agency, it is optional for schools to adopt, though they receive additional funding if they do so. Bluebonnet was approved over concerns from religious scholars that the reading lessons favored Christianity over other faith traditions and pushback from advocacy groups that the materials inappropriately prioritized preaching over teaching.

The State Board of Education voted 8-6 Wednesday to approve the changes — which include correcting factual errors, fixing punctuation and replacing images due to licensing or copyright issues — after some members questioned the high number of errors.

Ban on 'sanctuary' votes ruled unconstitutional

TN NASHVILLE — A Tennessee law that threatens local officials with felony charges and possible imprisonment if they vote for so-called "sanctuary policies" on immigration has been ruled unconstitutional after the state declined to defend it in court.

Nashville Chancellor Russell Perkins signed an agreed order involving the Tennessee attorney general's office, the local district attorney and the seven Nashville-Davidson County metro council members who are plaintiffs in a lawsuit chal-

lenging the policy.

For months, Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti's office has made it clear that it would not defend the provision. Skrmetti, a Republican, said in September that the Constitution has "absolute immunity for all legislative votes, whether at the federal, state, or local levels" even though it is illegal for Tennessee cities and counties to enact sanctuary laws.

Dam operations ordered to help salmon population

OR PORTLAND — A federal judge in Oregon has ordered narrow changes to hydropower dam operations on the Columbia and Snake rivers in the Pacific Northwest in order to help salmon, saying the Trump administration's plans for the massive structures would harm salmon runs that are "disappearing from the landscape."

The ruling came in a decades-long legal effort by the states of Oregon and Washington, Native American tribes, and conservation and fishing groups to ensure better protections for migrating salmon, which are killed in large numbers by the dams.

In a landmark 2023 deal that paused the litigation in favor of finding long-term solutions, the Biden administration promised to spend \$1 billion over a decade to help restore salmon while also boosting tribal clean energy projects. But the Trump administration torpedoed that agreement last year, calling it "radical environmentalism" that could have resulted in the breaching of four controversial dams on the Snake River, and the plaintiffs went back to court.

— From wire reports

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Texas Tech hands Iowa St. first home loss

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Donovan Atwell scored 18 points to lead No. 16 Texas Tech to an 82-73 victory over No. 4 Iowa State on Saturday that sent the Cyclones to their first home loss of the season.

Iowa State (24-5, 11-5 Big 12) was 15-0 at Hilton Coliseum before the Red Raiders (22-7, 12-4) came in and ended the streak, building a 20-point first-half run and fighting off a second-half surge by the Cyclones.

Texas Tech, playing the rest of the season without JT Toppin, the reigning Big 12 player of the year, stayed in a second-place tie with Houston, two games behind leader Arizona, heading into the final week of the regular season. Iowa State dropped into a tie for fourth with Kansas.

Atwell was one of six Red Raiders who scored in double figures. Christian Anderson had 14 points, Luke Bamgboye had 13 points, Jaylen Petty had 12 and Tyeree Bryan and Josiah Moseley each had 10.

No. 1 Duke 77, No. 11 Virginia 51: Isaiah Evans scored 19 points to help the host Blue Devils beat the Cavaliers, clinching the top seed for the upcoming Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament.

The sophomore hit five 3-pointers, three coming in the opening 4-plus minutes as Duke quickly found its long-distance range. The Blue Devils made 8 of 13 3s in the opening half and finished 12-for-24 — seven Duke players made at least one 3 — while shooting 49.1% overall.

No. 2 Arizona 84, No. 14 Kansas 61: Brayden Burries had 20 points and 12 rebounds, Motiejus Krivas added 13 points and the host Wildcats clinched a share of the Big 12 regular-season title with a win over the Jayhawks.

Arizona (27-2, 14-2 Big 12) used a 19-0 run to build an 18-point lead, allowed Kansas to whittle it to two midway through

the second half, then pulled away with another big run to earn a share of the Big 12 title in its second season in the league.

No. 5 Houston 102, Colorado 62: Milos Uzan had 26 points and six assists, Joseph Tugler scored 14 and the host Cougars snapped their three-game losing streak with a win over the Buffaloes.

Uzan had 16 points on 5-for-7 shooting in the first half as Houston (24-5, 12-4 Big 12) built a 55-29 lead at the break. The Cougars shot 56%, including 6-for-11 on 3-pointers, in the first half.

No. 6 UConn 71, Seton Hall 67: Alex Karaban scored 23 points after being added to the Huskies of Honor before his final home game, and host UConn rallied for a victory over the Pirates.

Solo Ball had 12 of his 14 points in the second half for the Huskies (27-3, 17-2 Big East). Karaban and Ball combined to go 7-for-8 from the foul line in the final minute.

No. 7 Florida 111, No. 20 Arkansas 77: Thomas Haugh scored 22 points, Rueben Chinyelu had his 17th double-double of the season and the host Gators earned at least a share of the Southeastern Conference title with a win over the Razorbacks.

Florida (23-6, 14-2 SEC) closed out an unbeaten February with its ninth consecutive win and locked up its first regular-season championship since 2014. The Gators remained two games ahead of No. 17 Alabama with two to play and can wrap up the outright title Tuesday night at home.

Saint Mary's 70, No. 9 Gonzaga 59: Mikey Lewis made seven 3-pointers and scored 31 points to help the host Gaels beat the Bulldogs, giving St. Mary's a share of the West Coast Conference regular-season title.

Joshua Dent scored 14 points and Mantas Juenaz added 12 as

the Gaels (27-4, 16-2 WCC) rallied to their seventh consecutive win and 26th straight at home. It's the fourth straight year Saint Mary's has won at least a share of the conference title.

No. 12 Nebraska 84, Southern Cal 67: Pryce Sandfort scored 32 points — one off his career high — and the visiting Cornhuskers pulled away in the second half to beat the Trojans for their school-record 14th Big Ten victory and third straight overall.

Nebraska (25-4, 14-4) improved to 7-2 on the road in league play with one away game remaining. The Huskers began the season 20-0 and are 5-4 since then.

No. 15 St. John's 89, Villanova 57: Zuby Ejiiofor had 16 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for his first career triple-double, and the host Red Storm bounced back from an embarrassing loss by blitzing the Wildcats at Madison Square Garden.

Ian Jackson added 19 points and a career-high five steals off the bench for St. John's (23-6, 16-2 Big East), which sprinted out to a 30-point lead in the first half and remained a half-game behind No. 6 UConn atop the conference standings.

No. 17 Alabama 71, No. 22 Tennessee 69: Labaron Philon Jr. hit a jumper with 22.8 seconds left to lead the visiting Crimson Tide over the Volunteers.

Latrell Wrightsell scored 25 points to lead Alabama (22-7, 12-4 Southeastern Conference), and Philon came off the bench to score 15 of his 23 points in the second half. Aden Holloway added 12.

No. 18 North Carolina 89, Virginia Tech 82: Henri Veesaar matched a season-high with 26 points, Seth Trimble scored 20 points and the host Tar Heels pulled away in the second half to beat the Hokies.

North Carolina (23-6, 11-5 Atlantic Coast Conference) opened its first double-digit lead

at 73-63 with 6:59 left on a hook shot by Veesaar, who added seven rebounds and was 11 of 20 from the floor. It was his third time with 26 points this season, most recently in a 95-90 loss to Stanford on Jan. 14.

West Virginia 79, No. 19 BYU 71: Honor Huff scored 19 points, Brenen Lorient added 18 and the host Mountaineers led the entire second half to beat the Cougars.

DJ Thomas added 13 points and Jasper Floyd and Chance Moore had 11 apiece for West Virginia (17-12, 8-8 Big 12).

No. 23 Saint Louis 91, Duquesne 76: Robbie Avila scored 21 of his 23 points in the second half, Quentin Jones added 17 and the host Billikens beat the Dukes.

Trey Green had 14 points, and Paul Otieno added 13 points off the bench to help Saint Louis (26-3, 14-2 Atlantic 10) win its 21st consecutive home game.

Clemson 80, No. 24 Louisville 75: Jestin Porter scored all 16 of his points in the second half as the host Tigers snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over the Cardinals.

Clemson, once comfortably in the NCAA Tournament field with 10 wins in its first 11 Atlantic Coast Conference games, had raised questions the past two weeks with its late-season slide. But the Tigers (21-8, 11-5 ACC) held off Louisville (20-9, 9-7) with defense and Porter's timely baskets.

Kentucky 91, No. 25 Vanderbilt 77: Collin Chandler scored a career-high 23 points to lead the host Wildcats over the Commodores.

Otega Oweh also had 23 points for Kentucky (19-10, 10-6 Southeastern Conference), which split the regular-season series after losing to Vanderbilt 80-55 on Jan. 27 in Nashville. The Wildcats notched their second straight victory after dropping three straight to Florida, Georgia and Auburn earlier this month.

Lakers defeat short-handed Warriors

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Luka Doncic had 26 points, eight assists and six rebounds, LeBron James added 22 points, nine assists and seven rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers ran away from the short-handed Golden State Warriors for a 129-101 win Saturday night.

The Warriors struggled to produce enough offensive power as Stephen Curry missed his 10th straight game for Golden State still nursing a right knee injury and newly acquired center Kristaps Porzingis sat out with an illness.

Gui Santos scored 14 points to lead the Warriors in his fifth straight double-digit game and 12th in the last 13 — and this one came after he received a multi-year contract extension earlier in the day.

Gary Payton II contributed 12 points for Golden State, his seventh game out of the last nine in double digits.

James went 7-for-13 from the floor with four 3-pointers after he shot around with 11-year-old daughter Zhuri before the game

after completing his own warm-up in a sweet moment.

The Lakers snapped a three-game losing streak overall and a three-game skid on the road with just their third win in the last eight — and also third in eight on the road against the Pacific Division this season.

Austin Reaves scored 18 points on 7-of-11 shooting for Los Angeles, Luke Kennard had 16 points with four 3s off the bench and Deandre Ayton grabbed 10 rebounds.

Raptors 134, Wizards 125: Immanuel Quickley had 27 points and 11 assists to lift Toronto to a road victory over Washington.

Brandon Ingram added 24 points for the Raptors, who rebounded from back-to-back home losses to Western Conference contenders Oklahoma and San Antonio earlier in the week. Toronto is in fifth place in the East, now three games clear of the play-in group.

Will Riley scored 19 points for Washington, which lost its fourth straight game after beating Indiana twice in a row coming out of

the All-Star break.

The Wizards remain without newly acquired Anthony Davis (finger) and Trae Young (knee, quad), and 7-footer Alex Sarr (hamstring) didn't play either. Collin Murray-Boyles (thumb) did not play for Toronto.

Washington led by three in the middle of the third quarter before an 11-2 Toronto run capped by Ingram's 3-pointer. The Raptors were up 98-92 after three and pushed the lead into double digits early in the fourth.

Hornets 109, Trail Blazers 93: Brandon Miller had 26 points and eight rebounds, and host Charlotte beat Portland for their fourth consecutive victory.

Miller made six 3-pointers and the Hornets finished 16 for 42 behind the arc after totaling 72 in the previous three victories, equaling the NBA record for most in a three-game span.

Coby White added 20 points off the bench and LaMelo Ball had 15 points and eight assists. Moussa Diabate finished with 13 points, 11 rebounds and five assists as Charlotte pulled within a game of .500 at 30-31.

Jrue Holiday scored 25 points and Jerami Grant had 21 for the Trail Blazers, who played without All-Star Deni Avdija for a third straight game because of a back injury.

Pelicans 115, Jazz 105: Sadiq Bey scored 24 points as visiting New Orleans won to complete a two-game sweep in Utah after Pelicans star Zion Williamson left the game with an ankle injury.

Williamson left early in the second quarter with a right ankle injury and didn't return. He had four points, two assists and a rebound in 11 minutes.

Pelicans interim coach James Borrego said only that Williams "tweaked" his ankle.

Heat 115, Rockets 105: Bam Adebayo had 24 points and 11 rebounds, Pelle Larsson scored 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter and host Miami beat Houston.

Tyler Herro scored 18, Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 14 and Kel'el Ware had a 13-point, 15-rebound game for the Heat.

Andrew Wiggins — who needed eight stitches to close a laceration inside his mouth — had 12 points for Miami.

Nuggets, Thunder scuffle after Dort hip checks Jokic

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Thunder guard Lu Dort was ejected as tempers flared in the fourth quarter of Oklahoma City's 127-121 overtime victory over Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets on Friday night.

Dort fouled Jokic, and the Denver star got in Dort's face. A scrum ensued and Jokic and Oklahoma City's Jaylin Williams were called for offsetting technical fouls. Dort was issued a Flagrant 2 and ejected.

The situation was brewing from the start. The Thunder beat Denver 4-3 in the Western Conference semifinals last season, and the Nuggets — especially Jokic — were committed

to matching Oklahoma City's aggressive style.

Dort was a first-team All-Defensive selection last season with a reputation for pushing the boundaries of acceptable physical play. Crew chief James Williams said after the game that Dort's hip check/trip combination was dangerous.

"Lu Dort was assessed a flagrant foul penalty 2 because we deemed his contact on Jokic to be unnecessary and excessive with a high potential for injury, and also because the contact led to an altercation that did not dissolve," James Williams said. "So, by rule, a flagrant foul penalty 2 carries an automatic ejection."

Jokic, who had initiated contact with Thunder players throughout the game rather than letting it come to him, finally had enough.

"It's an unnecessary move and a necessary reaction," Jokic said. "I think there are not supposed to be those things on the basketball floor, so it was just an unnecessary move and a necessary reaction by me."

Nuggets coach David Adelman said he understood why Jokic finally snapped. He feels Jokic gets beat up when he's away from the basket and doesn't get the calls because of his 7-foot, 284-pound frame.

Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said he's fine with the

ejection, as long as the call is consistent.

"If J. Will (Jaylin Williams) is running off the floor and gets tripped, we expect a flagrant 2 from this point forward," Daigneault said. "That's all. If that's the precedent, if it becomes a malicious play, and flagrant 2 is the line in the sand on that, we would expect that if it's J. Will, we'd expect that it's anybody. And if that is the case, we're good."

Denver's bench was called for a technical in the third quarter, and there was plenty of trash talking and shoving throughout.

The teams meet next on March 9 in Oklahoma City.

East-leading Canes win 5th straight

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Shayne Gostisbehere had a goal and two assists to lead the Carolina Hurricanes to their fifth straight win, 5-2 over the Detroit Red Wings on Saturday night.

Jackson Blake, Taylor Hall, Sebastian Aho and Eric Robinson also scored for the Hurricanes, who have used a 12-game point streak (10-0-2) to surge to the top of the Eastern Conference with 82 points.

Carolina goalie Frederik Andersen made 27 saves to improve to 14-1-2 in his career against the Red Wings.

Simon Edvinsson and Patrick Kane scored and Cam Talbot stopped 31 shots for the Red Wings, who lost for the fifth time in seven games (2-4-1).

The Hurricanes built a 3-0 lead to continue their recent hot play at home. They lost their first two home games in January but have gone 10-0-1 at home since a 5-3 loss to Colorado on Jan. 3.

Gostisbehere scored at 2:18 in the third period to give the Hurricanes some breathing room after Detroit cut the margin to 3-2 at the end of the second period.

Blake, with assists from Gostisbehere and Hall, extended the Hurricanes' margin to 5-2 with a goal at 5:30 in the third.

Rangers 3, Penguins 2 (SO): Vincent Trocheck scored the shootout winner and Igor Shesterkin made 31 saves and host New York rallied to defeat Pittsburgh.

After an overtime in which each team had several good scoring chances, Trocheck beat Penguins goaltender Stuart Skinner with the only goal of the shootout as the Rangers snapped a five-game losing streak. Shesterkin made five saves in overtime.

Mika Zibanejad and Taylor Raddysh also scored for the Rangers. The last-place Rangers are 7-15-5 at home this sea-

son.

Anthony Mantha and defenseman Ryan Shea scored for the Penguins, who had their two-game winning streak stopped. Pittsburgh is 8-1-2 since Jan. 17.

Flyers 3, Bruins 1: Travis Konecny opened the scoring in the third period and set up Jaime Drysdale's goal, Dan Vladar made 26 saves and host Philadelphia beat Boston.

Konecny scored his team-leading 23rd goal of the season, sliding the puck past Jeremy Swayman off a drop pass from Christian Dvorak at 3:41 of the third. Konecny then set up Drysdale for a wrist shot that made it 2-0 with 8:05 left.

Philadelphia won back-to-back games for the first time since Jan. 3-6 to move within six points of Boston for the final wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. The Bruins are 5-1-3 in their last nine.

Sharks 5, Oilers 4: Shakir Mukhamadullin broke a tie midway through the third period and host San Jose snapped a five-game winless streak by beating Edmonton.

Olympic star Macklin Celebrini opened the scoring for San Jose as he got the best of his matchup against his linemate from Canada in the Olympics, Connor McDavid.

Mukhamadullin beat Connor Ingram with a slap shot from the point with 10:39 to play to give the Sharks their first victory since Jan. 27 at Vancouver. San Jose had been 0-4-1 since then, starting when the Sharks blew a 3-0 lead in the third period to Edmonton before losing in overtime.

Devils 3, Blues 1: Jacob Markstrom made 25 saves, Timo Meier and Dougie Hamilton had second-period goals and visiting New Jersey beat St. Louis to end a five-game losing streak.

Markstrom lost his shutout bid with 1:18 left when Pavel Buchnevich scored with goalie

Jordan Binnington off for an extra attacker.

Meier scored his 16th goal of the season at 5:37 of the second, firing in a wrist shot from the right circle. He has three goals in his last six NHL games. For Switzerland in the Olympics, Meier had three goals and four assists in five games.

Avalanche 3, Blackhawks 1: Cale Makar scored two goals, Gavin Brindley had the go-ahead score early in the third period and host Colorado beat Chicago.

Mackenzie Blackwood made 14 saves for Colorado, which killed off two penalties early in the third period to bounce back from a disappointing loss to Minnesota on Thursday night.

Colorado has an NHL-best 87 points and leads Dallas in the Western Conference by six points and Minnesota by seven. The Stars have played one more game than the Avalanche and the Wild have played two more.

Islanders 4, Blue Jackets 3 (OT): Simon Holmstrom scored 1:50 into overtime as visiting New York beat Columbus for its fourth straight win.

Holmstrom got the feed from Tony DeAngelo and had a clear path up the right side of the ice before cutting toward the net with a wrist shot to beat Columbus' Jet Greaves.

Kings 2, Flames 0: Anton Forsberg made 29 saves, Alex Laferrriere scored in the second period and host Los Angeles beat Calgary to end a five-game losing streak.

Forsberg had his second shutout of the season and 10th of his NHL career, two nights after coming on in relief of Darcy Kuemper in the second period of an 8-1 home loss to Edmonton.

Sabres 6, Lightning 2: Josh Norris scored twice, Rasmus Dahlin had a goal and two assists and visiting Buffalo beat Tampa Bay for its third straight victory.

Zach Metsa had a goal and an assist, Alex Tuch and Tage Thompson also scored and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 36 saves to help Buffalo move within four points of the Atlantic Division-leading Lightning.

Senators 5, Maple Leafs 2: Drake Batherson and Dylan Cozens each scored twice and visiting Ottawa beat Toronto.

Thomas Chabot also scored, Cozens added an assist and Linus Ullmark made 21 saves.

Canadiens 6, Capitals 2: Cole Caufield scored two first-period goals to help propel Montreal to a home win over Washington.

Mike Matheson and Kirby Dach scored goals in the second period for Montreal, which has recorded at least a point in seven consecutive games (5-0-2).

Stars 3, Predators 2: Jason Robertson scored 1:47 into overtime, lifting Dallas to a comeback home victory over Nashville for its eighth straight win.

Nathan Bastian and Wyatt Johnston scored in regulation for the Stars, who trailed 2-0 after one period. Dallas has rallied from deficits to win each of its three games against Nashville this season — two after trailing 2-0.

Jake Oettinger stopped 25 shots in his first start since returning from the Olympics, where he was the backup for the gold medal-winning U.S. team. He's 7-0 in his past seven starts.

The Stars have won their last six home games and improved to 20-4-9 in one-goal games this season.

Kraken 5, Canucks 1: Jordan Eberle scored twice and added an assist as host Seattle beat Vancouver.

Vince Dunn, Chandler Stephenson and Matty Beniers also scored for the Kraken, who snapped a two-game skid during which they were outscored 9-2 following the Olympic break. Joey Daccord made 27 saves.