

Defiant Iran names its new leader

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran named the hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as supreme leader on Monday, signaling no letup in the war launched by the United States and Israel.

Oil prices surged as Iran attacked regional energy infrastructure and the U.S. and Israel bombed targets across Iran.

The secretive 56-year-old cleric has close ties to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which has been firing missiles and drones at Israel and Gulf Arab states since Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had ruled Iran for 37 years, was killed during the war's opening salvo.

The appointment marked a new sign of defiance by Iran's embattled leadership after more than a week of heavy U.S. and Israeli bombardment, suggesting Tehran is not close to giving up on what it considers a

fight for the Islamic theocracy's survival.

World markets plummeted and Brent crude oil, the international standard, surged to nearly \$120 a barrel Monday, about 65% higher than when the war started, before retreating.

Iran's attacks in the Strait of Hormuz have all but stopped tankers from using the key shipping lane through which a fifth of the world's oil is carried. Fire broke out at an oil facility that Iran attacked in the United Arab Emirates.

Bahrain's only oil refinery was apparently also hit and Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted several drones attacking its Shaybah oil field.

"There is not an oil shortage," President Donald Trump wrote on Truth Social overnight.

"Prices will drop again soon," he added, suggesting shipments from Venezuela to the U.S. could help offset the price spike.

In Israel, sirens blared multi-

ple times on Monday amid unrelenting Iranian drones and missiles. A man was killed in central Israel in a missile strike, the first such death in Israel in a week, and a woman was wounded.

Israel said it struck the Iranian city of Isfahan, hitting command centers for the Revolutionary Guard and its volunteer Basij force, as well as a rocket engine production facility and missile launch sites. There was no immediate confirmation from Iran.

Turkey meanwhile has said NATO defenses had intercepted a ballistic missile that entered the country's airspace for the second time since the war started.

Later Monday, Israel defense forces said they began "a wide-scale wave of strikes" on Isfahan as well as Iran's capital, Tehran, where witnesses reported seeing new strikes, and in southern Iran.

The younger Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since the war started, was long considered a potential successor — even before the Israeli strike killed his 86-year-old father. His wife, Zahra Haddad Adel, was killed in the same strike.

Political figures within Iran have criticized handing over the supreme leader's title based on heredity, comparing it to the monarchy overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution. But top clerics in the Assembly of Experts apparently voted for continuity.

Khamenei, who is seen as even more hard-line than his late father, will now be in charge of Iran's armed forces and any decision about Tehran's nuclear program.

Israel has already described him as a potential target, while Trump has called him "unacceptable" and dismissed him as a "lightweight."

Soldier dies a week after Iran attacked Saudi Arabian base

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon on Monday announced the identity of a soldier who died Sunday following an Iranian attack at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. He was the seventh U.S. service member to die from combat during Operation Epic Fury.

Sgt. Benjamin N. Pennington, 26, of Glendale, Ky., died of his wounds Sunday from injuries sustained during an enemy attack on March 1. Pennington was assigned to 1st Space Battalion, 1st Space Brigade, at Fort Carson, Colo.

Pennington enlisted in the U.S. Army as a unit supply spe-

cialist in 2017. He was assigned to the 1st Space Battalion, 1st Space Brigade, on June 10, 2025. Pennington will be posthumously promoted to staff sergeant, the Army said in a statement.

"Sgt. Pennington was a dedicated and experienced noncommissioned officer who led with strength, professionalism and sense of duty," Col. Michael F. Dyer, 1st Space Brigade commander, said in a statement.

The U.S. and Israel launched extensive strikes against Iran on Feb. 28 after months of stalled negotiations over the country's nuclear program.

President Donald Trump later that night announced the operation had resulted in the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader.

In addition to the strikes on Iran, Israel has attacked the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon.

Trump on Saturday joined grieving families at Dover Air Force Base, Del., at the dignified transfer for six U.S. soldiers killed in the war in the Middle East.

The soldiers who died in the fight previously include: Capt. Cody A. Khork, 35, of Winter Haven, Fla.; Sgt. 1st Class Noah

L. Tietjens, 42, of Bellevue, Neb.; Sgt. 1st Class Nicole M. Amor, 39, of White Bear Lake, Minn.; Sgt. Declan J. Coady, 20, of West Des Moines, Iowa; Maj. Jeffrey R. O'Brien, 45, of Waukegan, Iowa; and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert M. Marzan, 54, of Sacramento, Calif.

A New York City police officer serving in Kuwait with the Army National Guard died Friday from a medical issue. Maj. Sorffly Davius was deployed to Camp Buehring in Kuwait when the medical incident occurred, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a statement late Saturday.

Analysis says US hit Iranian school in attack

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — New footage shows what an expert investigative group says is likely an American Tomahawk missile hitting a compound in southern Iran, yards from the school where a deadly unclaimed blast killed over 165 people at the start of the war raging in the Mideast.

It comes as mounting evidence points to U.S. culpability for the Feb. 28 strike, which hit a school adjacent to a Revolutionary Guard base in Minab, Iran, in the country's southern Hormozgan Province. Experts interviewed by The Associated Press, citing satellite image analysis, say the school was probably struck amid a quick succession of bombs dropped on the compound.

A U.S. official familiar with internal deliberations on the

matter has told the AP that the strike was likely American.

The official spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to comment publicly on the sensitive matter.

The new footage, first analyzed by the investigative group Bellingcat, was taken the day the school was struck but circulated Sunday by Iran's semi-official Mehr news agency. It shows a missile hitting a building, sending a dark plume of smoke into the air.

The AP was able to geolocate the video and determine it was taken from a site adjacent to the school, while smoke was already rising from the school vicinity.

Satellite imagery of the compound is consistent with visual identifiers found in the video, including a flat-roofed building, power lines and vehicles.

Trevor Ball, a Bellingcat researcher, identified the munition as a Tomahawk cruise missile — which only the U.S. is known to possess in this war.

It's the first evidence of a munition used in the strike.

U.S. Central Command has acknowledged using Tomahawk missiles in this war and even released a photo of the USS Spruance, part of the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier group located within range of the school, firing a Tomahawk missile on Feb. 28.

Bellingcat said the footage "appears to contradict" President Donald Trump's claim that Iran was responsible for the deadly school blast.

Neither CENTCOM nor the Israeli military immediately replied to requests for comment Monday from the AP.

When asked by a reporter

Saturday whether the U.S. was responsible for the blast, which killed mostly children, Trump responded, without providing evidence: "No, in my opinion, based on what I've seen, that was done by Iran."

Trump added that Iran is "very inaccurate" with its munitions.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth quickly chimed in to say the U.S. was investigating.

Several other factors point to a U.S. strike.

One is the launching of an assessment of the incident by the U.S. military.

According to the Pentagon's instructions on processes for mitigating civilian harm, an assessment is launched after a group of investigators make an initial determination that the U.S. military may bear culpability.

NATO defense shoots down second Iranian missile as it neared member Turkey

JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

NATO on Monday shot down an Iranian ballistic missile in Turkish airspace, marking the second time in a week that the alliance's air defenses have been put into action, Turkish officials said.

Air defenses in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea shot down the incoming missile, producing debris that landed in the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep, the Turkish defense ministry said. No injuries or fatalities were caused by the missile fragment, the ministry said.

Turkey is home to Incirlik Air Base, a strategic hub for U.S. forces that sits near the eastern

edge of the Mediterranean.

Last week, NATO increased its ballistic missile defense posture across the alliance in response to threats emanating from Iran.

On Wednesday, NATO's air defense system shot down a ballistic missile approaching Turkish airspace.

NATO's missile defense system incorporates a range of capabilities, bringing together U.S. Aegis Ashore sites in Romania and Poland as well as U.S. Navy destroyers out of Rota, Spain.

A high-powered mountaintop radar in Kurecik, Turkey, also is part of the integrated defense system.

US kills 6 in boat strike in eastern Pacific route

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military said it killed six men Sunday in a strike on an alleged drug-smuggling vessel in the eastern Pacific Ocean as part of the Trump administration's campaign against alleged traffickers.

Sunday's attack brought the death toll to at least 157 people since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in small vessels in early September.

As with most of the military's statements on the more than 40 known strikes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, U.S. Southern Command said it targeted alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. The military did

not provide evidence that the vessel was ferrying drugs. It posted a video on X that showed a small boat being blown up as it floated on the water.

President Donald Trump has said the U.S. is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims.

In a meeting with Latin American leaders on Saturday, Trump encouraged them to join the U.S. in taking military action against drug-trafficking cartels and transnational gangs, which he said pose an "unacceptable threat" to the region's national security.

DOD official details the clash with AI firm

Associated Press

A top Pentagon official said Anthropic's dispute with the government over the use of its artificial intelligence technology in fully autonomous weapons came after a debate over how AI could be used in President Donald Trump's future Golden Dome missile defense program, which aims to put U.S. weapons in space.

Defense Undersecretary Emil Michael, the Pentagon's chief technology officer, said he came to view the AI company's ethical restrictions on the use of its chatbot Claude as an irrational obstacle as the U.S. military pursues giving greater autonomy to swarms of armed drones, underwater vehicles and other machines to compete with rivals like China that could do the same.

"I need a reliable, steady partner that gives me something, that'll work with me on autonomous, because someday it'll be real and we're starting to see ear-

lier versions of that," Michael said in a podcast aired Friday. "I need someone who's not going to wig out in the middle."

The comments came after the Pentagon formally designated San Francisco-based Anthropic a supply chain risk, cutting off its defense work using a rule designed to prevent foreign adversaries from harming national security systems.

Anthropic filed two separate lawsuits Monday, one in California federal court and another in the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., each challenging different aspects of the Pentagon's actions against the company.

The designation affects its business partnerships with other military contractors.

Trump has also ordered federal agencies to immediately stop using Claude, though the Republican president gave the Pentagon six months to phase out a

product that's deeply embedded in classified military systems, including those used in the Iran war.

Anthropic said it only sought to restrict its technology from being used for two high-level usages: mass surveillance of Americans or fully autonomous weapons.

Michael, a former Uber executive, revealed his side of months-long talks with Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei in a lengthy conversation with Silicon Valley venture capitalists Jason Calacanis, David Friedberg and Chamath Palihapitiya, co-hosts of the "All-In" podcast. A fourth co-host, former PayPal executive David Sacks, is now Trump's AI czar and was not present for the episode but has been a vocal critic of Anthropic, including for its hiring of former Biden administration officials shortly after Trump returned to the White House.

As talks hit an impasse last week, Michael lashed out at Amodei on social media, saying he

"has a God-complex" and "wants nothing more than to try to personally control" the military. In the podcast, however, he positioned the dispute as part of a broader military shift toward using AI.

Michael said the military is developing procedures for enabling different levels of autonomy in warfare depending on the risk posed.

"This is part of the debate I had with Anthropic, which is we need AI for things like Golden Dome," Michael said, sharing a hypothetical scenario of the U.S. having only 90 seconds to respond to a Chinese hypersonic missile.

A human anti-missile operator "may not be able to discriminate with their own eyes what they're going after," but an autonomous counterattack would be a low risk "because it's in space and you're just trying to hit something that's trying to get you."

Russia is expanding forces near NATO's eastern flank

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Russia continues to add new military units near NATO's eastern flank, according to a new threat assessment that warns against easing Western sanctions on the Kremlin.

More military firepower is how allies can deter potential conflict with Russia, according to the latest annual report by the Lithuanian intelligence service.

New naval infantry units and additional capabilities are being developed in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad and elsewhere, Lithuania's report said.

"According to these plans, brigades along the eastern borders of NATO countries are being expanded into divisions and completely new military units are being formed," the threat assessment stated.

Russia is now setting up a new missile brigade armed with Iskander-M missile complexes in its western military district along with an upgraded radar in Kaliningrad that will increase the Russians' ability to monitor airspace, the report said.

Kaliningrad borders two NATO allies, Lithuania and Poland. On the heels of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Poland established a permanent U.S. Army base in Poznan to supplement rotational American troops at other installations.

However, despite Russia's efforts to enhance its position, its ability to challenge NATO still hinges on developments in Ukraine, the report said. If the war winds down and Western financial pressure on Russia is lifted, Moscow would be in a position to ramp up again, the report said.

Europeans on alert after Belgium, Norway blasts

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Belgian Interior Minister Bernard Quintin said Monday that an explosion near a synagogue in the eastern city of Liege overnight was "a despicable antisemitic act" and that federal prosecutors were investigating, as several countries in Europe tighten security due to the war in the Middle East.

Liege police said that the blast outside the synagogue happened early Monday morning. No one was injured but the windows of a building in front of the synagogue were blown out.

Belgium, France and Germany are among a number of European countries that have said they intend to beef up security in response to the war, and have also insisted that they are playing no active role in the conflict alongside the United States and Israel.

Meanwhile, police in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, said they were analyzing surveillance videos in the hunt for the perpetrator of an explosion early Sunday outside the U.S. Embassy.

Police released an image captured from a surveillance video showing a person wearing dark clothes and a backpack, with their face covered. The suspect has not been identified, the police said.

Oslo police received reports of a "loud bang" or explosion outside the U.S. Embassy around 1 a.m. on Sunday. No injuries were reported but the embassy entrance was damaged, authorities said.

On Monday, the police said their investigation indicated an improvised explosive device had been placed near the entrance area to the embassy.

Some air travelers encounter long waits

Associated Press

Travelers complained of long waits Sunday — lasting hours in some cases — at security checkpoints at airports in Houston and New Orleans, which officials blamed on a government shutdown of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The estimated wait time at the standard security checkpoint at the William P. Hobby Airport in Houston early Sunday evening was at one point three hours, according to the Houston Airports website. The Hobby airport on social media Friday said it expected more travelers than normal due to spring break.

In a series of posts Sunday, the airport on X went from urg-

ing travelers to arrive early to asking them to arrive 3 to 4 hours before their flights to eventually asking them to arrive 4 to 5 hours early to allow extra time for screening, citing the partial government shutdown.

A statement from Houston Airports, which counts Hobby and George Bush Intercontinental Airport as part of its system, said the shutdown “can impact security operations day-to-day and shift-to-shift.” Wait times at checkpoints at George Bush Intercontinental Airport early Sunday evening were as brief as a few minutes.

Posts on X from Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport on Sunday said a

shortage of TSA agents at the security checkpoint was leading to “longer-than-average” lines. The airport urged travelers to arrive at least three hours before their flights and said wait times could last up to two hours.

It’s not immediately clear if the delays in Houston and New Orleans were happening at other airports around the country.

Agents with the U.S. Transportation Security Administration are expected to work without pay during the ongoing shutdown of the department, which began Feb. 14. Democratic lawmakers have said DHS won’t get funded until new restrictions are placed on federal immigration operations following the fa-

tal shootings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis this year.

Chris Sununu, president and CEO of Airlines for America, a trade group for U.S. airlines, in a statement urged Congress and the Trump administration to act.

“We are in spring break travel season and expecting record numbers of people to take to the skies. Airlines have done their part to prepare; now Congress and the administration must act with urgency to reach a deal that reopens DHS and ends this shutdown,” he said. “America’s transportation security workforce is too important to be used as political leverage.”

Uber’s new women-only option goes nationwide

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Uber launched a feature Monday to allow both women riders and drivers across the U.S. to be matched with other women for trips, expanding a pilot program aimed at addressing concerns about the safety of its hail-riding platform.

The new feature is being rolled out nationwide despite an ongoing class action lawsuit against the policy in California, filed by Uber drivers who argue that it is discriminatory against men. Rival ride-hailing company Lyft is also facing a discrimination lawsuit over a similar offering that it introduced nationwide in 2024.

The feature, announced in a blog post, allows women to request a female driver through an option on the app called “Women Drivers.” Passengers can opt for another ride if the wait for a woman is too long, and they can also reserve a trip with a woman driver in advance. A third option allows female users to set a preference

for a woman driver in their app settings, which would increase the chances of being matched with a female driver, though it would not guarantee it. Uber is also allowing its teen account users to request women drivers.

Uber’s women drivers can set the app’s preferences to request trips with female riders, and they can turn off that preference at anytime.

Uber, based in San Francisco, says about one-fifth of its drivers in the U.S. are women, though the ratio varies by city.

Two California Uber drivers filed a class-action lawsuit against Uber in November, arguing that its Women Preferences feature violates California’s Unruh Act, which prohibits its sex discrimination by business enterprises.

The lawsuit charges that the feature gives its minority female drivers access to the entire pool of passengers, while leaving its majority male drivers to compete for a smaller pool of passengers.

2 held after NYC protest say they are ISIS-inspired

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Two men who brought explosives to a protest outside New York City’s mayoral mansion said they were inspired by the Islamic State extremist group, a court complaint said.

Emir Balat and Ibrahim Kayumi were awaiting arraignment Monday on charges that include attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization and using a weapon of mass destruction.

Kayumi blurted out, as he was being arrested Saturday, that “ISIS” was the reason for his conduct, the complaint said. Balat, 18, later said he had pledged allegiance to the extremist group, and Kayumi, 19, asserted that he was affiliated with the Islamic State group, the complaint said.

Officers asked Balat whether he was aiming to accomplish something akin to the bombing of the Boston Marathon in 2013, when two pressure-cooker bombs exploded near the finish line, killing three people and wounding hundreds more.

“No, even bigger,” Balat re-

plied, according to the complaint.

The two men both have addresses in Pennsylvania, and Balat carried a Turkish government identification card along with his Pennsylvania driver’s license, according to the complaint.

The homemade devices, which did not explode, were hurled Saturday during raucous counterprotests against an anti-Islamic demonstration led by Jake Lang, a far-right activist and critic of New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a Democrat and the first Muslim to hold the office.

Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said there are no indications that the men’s alleged activities were connected to the ongoing war in Iran.

After the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, Lang was charged with assaulting an officer with a baseball bat, civil disorder and other crimes.

He was later freed from prison as part of President Donald Trump’s sweeping act of clemency.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Copperfield residency to end amid Epstein mention

NV LAS VEGAS — After more than 25 years, magician and illusionist David Copperfield announced his Las Vegas residency is coming to an end after his name again appeared in the latest Jeffrey Epstein evidence dump.

“For 25 years now, I’ve been fortunate to headline at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. My last performance at MGM will be on April 30th, and I’m excited to announce what’s next soon thereafter,” Copperfield wrote in a statement shared online.

Over the next eight weeks, the 69-year-old magician said he is scheduled to perform another 120 shows before his final bow in Vegas. Guests who have purchased tickets for any shows after that date will be automatically refunded.

The announcement comes after Copperfield’s name was again featured in the latest batch of documents released by the U.S. Justice Department in connection with the financier.

NTSB: Plane that crashed held too long after deice

ME PORTLAND — A private jet that crashed in Maine in January, killing all six people aboard, remained on the ground 8 minutes longer than it should have after receiving a deicing treatment in a snowstorm, according to a preliminary report issued Friday by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The plane should have waited no more than 9 minutes from the start of when the deicing treatment began before taking off in those cold and snowy con-

ditions, according to Federal Aviation Administration guidelines. But the NTSB report said 17 minutes passed before take-off. The cockpit voice recorder captured the pilot commenting that it was “standard” to have 14 to 18 minutes and that if the wait was more than 30 minutes, they would return to the ramp to have the plane retreated, and the copilot concurred, the report states.

2 wine schools go to court over trademark

PA PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia’s oldest wine school said a competitor is attempting to erase its existence from the internet through a “cyberbullying” campaign and trademark infringement, according to a federal lawsuit.

In the suit, PhillyWine LLC alleges that Keith Wallace and Alana Zerbe, the husband-and-wife duo behind the Wine School of Philadelphia, took extraordinary steps to confuse customers and piggyback on PhillyWine’s prestige, causing PhillyWine economic and reputational damage. The suit, filed Feb. 26 in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, also accuses Wallace, the founder of the Wine School of Philadelphia, of fabricating his credentials and using aliases to open businesses that promote his school.

Wallace and Zerbe “have made it their mission to destroy” PhillyWine “by attempting to erase its existence and take over its name,” the suit said. The two schools have coexisted since the early 2000s — “although not always peacefully,” the suit notes — but tensions escalated at the end of 2025, when Wallace secured what the

suit calls a “fraudulently obtained trademark” for the name “Philly Wine School.”

Obamas announce June dedication, center opening

IL CHICAGO — Following years of delays, the date is finally set for the public opening of the long-awaited Obama Presidential Center on June 19, with tickets for the museum going on sale in May.

On the heels of his speech at funeral services for the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., former President Barack Obama on Saturday announced on social media plans for him and former first lady Michelle Obama to host a dedication ceremony for the center on June 18.

“When visitors look up at the Obama Presidential Center’s museum building, they’ll see three simple powerful words: You are America,” Obama said in a video shared on X, using the words from his speech during the 50th anniversary of the civil rights marches in Selma, Ala., on March 7, 2015.

Spanning 19 acres, the \$850 million center in Jackson Park, which was first slated to open in 2021, will feature a newly-minted main building and museum; a forum building that includes an auditorium, media suite and other programming rooms; and a Chicago Public Library branch.

State Farm reaches deal to keep 17% rate hikes

CA LOS ANGELES — A brokered deal with regulators and consumer advocates will allow State Farm General to keep controversial increases in home insurance rates that took effect last year in the

wake of the devastating Los Angeles wildfires.

The agreement sent to a judge Friday cements a \$530-million emergency hike in home insurance rates Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara negotiated with the insurer last summer.

“The agreement will provide financial relief to many policyholders while ensuring continued coverage for State Farm policyholders while California’s insurance market stabilizes,” the insurance department said in a news release.

State Farm argued the emergency hike was necessary because catastrophic fire losses jeopardized its financial ratings.

State ‘millionaires tax’ headed for passage

WA SEATTLE — Washington’s proposed new income tax for people earning more than \$1 million a year appears headed for passage, with Gov. Bob Ferguson saying he’ll sign the latest version of the measure proposed by legislative Democrats.

Ferguson and Democratic leaders had been haggling over details of the proposal, with disagreements over how much of the tax should be given back to people in tax breaks.

In a statement Friday, Ferguson praised changes in the proposal — which supporters have dubbed a “millionaires tax” — that would expand tax breaks for some families and businesses. The 9.9% tax on individual earnings would affect roughly 30,000 taxpayers, with collections beginning in 2028. It would not apply to home values or retirement savings.

— From wire reports

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Michigan earns 15th straight Big Ten win

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Yaxel Lendeborg scored 19 of his 27 points in the first half and Morez Johnson Jr. finished with 18 points, leading No. 3 Michigan in a 90-80 win over No. 8 Michigan State on Sunday to give the Big Ten champions a 15th straight conference win.

The Wolverines (29-2, 19-1 Big Ten) head to the conference tournament, hoping to earn a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament before shooting for the school's second national championship and first since 1989.

The Spartans (25-6, 15-5) were swept by their rivals in the regular season, but might get a third shot against them in a week at the Big Ten Tournament final.

Lendeborg, a preseason All-America selection, was the best player on the court for the second time in the series.

The UAB transfer was 8-for-12 from the field, matched a career high with five 3-pointers, had three assists and also made winning plays at the other end of the court.

After Jeremy Fears Jr. made a jumper to pull Michigan State within three points with 3:47 left, Lendeborg made a 3-point-

er on the ensuing possession to start a 10-2 run that sealed the victory.

No. 9 Nebraska 84, Iowa 75 (OT): Cale Jacobsen came off the bench to score 13 of his 15 points after halftime and hit the tiebreaking 3-pointer in overtime, and Nebraska matched its program record for wins in a season with a home victory over Iowa.

Sam Hoiberg, who scored 15 points and had five steals on his senior day, hugged teammate Pryce Sandfort near halfcourt as time ran out and then heaved the ball high into the stands.

Nebraska (26-5, 15-5 Big Ten) led by 10 points with five minutes left in regulation but missed five of its next seven shots and a couple of late free throws to let the Hawkeyes back in it. Kael Combs scored Iowa's last eight points of regulation, including a second-chance 3-pointer that tied it 70-all with 2.7 seconds left.

After Cooper Koch tied it at 75-all in overtime, Jacobsen made a 3 from the corner and the Huskers went on to score the final nine points.

No. 11 Illinois 78, Maryland 72: David Mirkovic had 22 points and 11 rebounds as visit-

ing Illinois held off Maryland.

The Terrapins (11-20, 4-16 Big Ten) gave the Illini (24-7, 15-5) a battle, trailing just 63-62 before Ben Humrichous made a 3-pointer that started a 7-0 Illinois run.

The win gave Illinois a bye into Friday's quarterfinals in the Big Ten Tournament.

Boston University 73, Navy 72: Chance Gladden buried a 3-pointer at the buzzer, scoring 24 of his 26 points in the second half to help the visiting Terriers stun the top-seeded Midshipmen in the semifinals of the Patriot League Championship, ending their 14-game winning streak.

Gladden's game winner for the fourth-seeded Terriers (17-16) came after Austin Benigni drove for a go-ahead layup for the Midshipmen (26-7) with three seconds remaining.

Boston University will play No. 2 seed Lehigh in the championship game on Wednesday.

Queens University 98, Central Arkansas 93: Chris Ashby made 10 3-pointers and scored 34 points to lead Queens University to an NCAA berth in its first year of eligibility with a 98-93 win over Central Arkansas in the Atlantic Sun Tournament in

Jacksonville, Fla., despite 49 points by Camren Hunter.

The third-seeded Royals (21-13) of Charlotte, N.C., survived a late second-half collapse and Hunter's heroics to reach the NCAA Tournament in its fourth season of Division I play.

High Point 91, Winthrop 76: Rob Martin scored 24 points, Cam'Ron Fletcher added 17 with 19 rebounds, and top-seeded High Point beat No. 2 seed Winthrop 91-76 on Sunday in Johnson City, Tenn., for the Panthers' second straight Big South Conference Championship title.

Martin shot 6-for-19 from the floor and 11-for-13 from the free-throw line to go with seven assists. Fletcher made two 3s and matched a tournament record for most rebounds in a game.

North Dakota State 70, North Dakota 62: Damari Wheeler-Thomas scored 19 points to lead the top-seeded Bison to the Summit League championship and an automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament.

Wheeler-Thomas made 8 of 16 shots with two 3-pointers for North Dakota State (27-7), which has made four previous trips to the NCAA Tournament, most recently in 2019.

Dolphins to release QB Tagovailoa, take huge cap hit

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The Miami Dolphins are moving on from Tua Tagovailoa and starting over at quarterback.

Tagovailoa — the team's primary starter for the last 5½ seasons — will be released, the Dolphins said Monday, a move that comes less than two years after he signed a \$212 million extension with the club.

It will result in a \$99 million dead cap hit, the largest in NFL history, yet the Dolphins evidently saw that as the best path forward.

"I recently informed Tua and

his representation that we are going to move in a new direction at the quarterback position and will be releasing him after the start of the new league year," Dolphins general manager Jon-Eric Sullivan said in remarks released through the team.

The league year starts Wednesday afternoon. If the move is designated as a post-June 1 release, the \$99 million is split over two years, with about two-thirds on this year's cap and the remaining third in 2027.

"As I shared with Tua, I have great respect for the person and player he is," Sullivan said. "On

behalf of the Miami Dolphins, I expressed our gratitude for his many contributions, both on the field and in the community, during his six seasons in Miami."

Tagovailoa went 44-32 as Miami's starter, dealt with concussions on multiple occasions and at times was a lightning rod for critics. Over the last five seasons — not counting his first year when he wasn't the full-time starter yet — Tagovailoa completed 68.6% of his passes, second only to Joe Burrow over that span, while ranking 11th leaguewide in passing yards and passing touchdowns.

At times, it was good. In the end, it just wasn't always good enough. Tagovailoa reacted to Monday's announcement on social media, thanking the Dolphins "for six unbelievable years."

Another move came Monday when the Dolphins agreed to trade safety Minkah Fitzpatrick to the New York Jets for a seventh-round pick, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because neither team announced the move.

Blaney ends Reddick's winning streak

Associated Press

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Ryan Blaney completed a Team Penske sweep at Phoenix Raceway by winning the Cup Series race Sunday — a victory that denied Tyler Reddick a fourth consecutive win to start the NASCAR season.

Blaney was the race favorite after winning last November in the season-finale on the mile oval but he had to overcome at least three tire problems that cost him track position. He chased down Ty Gibbs — the 49th car he passed Sunday — to take the lead with 10 laps remaining and seal his 18th career victory.

“Just perseverance,” Blaney said. “We had a couple mistakes that we learned from, got better, had to come from the back a couple times. It’s cool to win, especially after a day like that. Can’t say enough about the (team) for keeping their head down and doing what they do.”

As he celebrated on the frontstretch, his parked Ford began to roll away and Blaney had to

chase after it to ensure it was in park.

The victory came during a weekend celebration of Team Penske’s 60th season of competition and during a “desert double-header” that bundled IndyCar and NASCAR together at Phoenix. David Malukas won the IndyCar pole for Roger Penske and then Josef Newgarden won Saturday’s race; Joey Logano won the pole for the Cup race and then Blaney completed the sweep.

The win was the first this season for Ford after Reddick — in a Michael Jordan-owned Toyota for 23XI Racing — set a NASCAR record by winning the first three races of the season.

Christopher Bell finished second in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing, reigning Cup champion Kyle Larson was third in a Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports and Gibbs dropped to fourth.

Denny Hamlin, who lost the championship last November at this track, was fifth as JGR drivers took three of the top five positions.

Bell dominated the race the same way Hamlin did in November and, just like Hamlin, lost because of the wrong pit strategy.

Hamlin in November took four tires on the final stop and was beaten for the championship by Larson, who took two tires. On Sunday, Blaney took two tires while Bell and Hamlin each took four.

Bubba Wallace was sixth for 23XI, William Byron was seventh for Hendrick, and Reddick was eighth. Toyota drivers took six of the top 10 spots.

The race was slowed by a record-tying 12 cautions, most caused by a rash of tire failures.

Ty Gibbs has chosen not to comment on the federal lawsuit his grandfather’s race team filed against its former competition director, even after court declarations from Chris Gabehart claimed he left Joe Gibbs Racing in part because of the young driver.

Ty Gibbs said ahead of the race Sunday he’d let his performance on track speak for him

and then delivered with his second consecutive fourth-place finish.

Ty Gibbs was successful in NASCAR’s second-level series, where he won 12 races and the 2022 championship by winning the finale at Phoenix. His father, Coy, was found dead in his Phoenix hotel room the morning after the championship. Ty Gibbs moved to the Cup Series in 2023 and is winless in 127 starts. The 23-year-old finished a career-best 15th in the 2024 Cup standings.

Contact between Joey Logano and Ross Chastain caused a multi-car crash with under 100 laps remaining that ruined Anthony Alfredo’s season debut.

Alfredo got the call this week from Hendrick Motorsports to drive the No. 48 Chevrolet after Alex Bowman was ruled out with vertigo. Alfredo has spent hundreds of hours over the past four years inside a racing simulator doing test work for Hendrick and Sunday’s start was the best opportunity of his career.

Novak scores OT goal, lifting Penguins past Bruins

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Tommy Novak scored 17 seconds into overtime to complete a wild comeback in the Pittsburgh Penguins’ 5-4 victory over the Boston Bruins on Sunday.

Anthony Mantha scored two third-period goals to help Pittsburgh — playing without franchise cornerstones Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin — snap a three-game losing streak. Second in the Metropolitan Division, Pittsburgh has points in 16 of its last 19 games.

Crosby is out a minimum of four weeks because of a lower-body injury and Malkin served the second of a five-game suspension for slashing Buffalo’s Rasmus Dahlin in the head.

Egor Chinakhov added a pow-

er-play goal, Connor Dewar also scored and Arturs Silovs stopped 22 shots. Chinakhov has 14 goals this season and 11 goals in 25 games with Pittsburgh.

Pavel Zacha had his second career hat trick, and David Pastrnak also scored for Boston. The Bruins have lost five of their last eight. They have a three-point lead for the final wild-card spot in the East.

Stars 4, Blackhawks 3 (OT): Defenseman Miro Heiskanen scored 22 seconds into overtime to give Dallas a home victory over Chicago.

Second in the Western Conference, the Stars are 11-0-1 in their last 12.

Oilers 4, Golden Knights 2: Vasily Podkolzin, Leon Draisaitl and Kasper Kapalanen scored in

the third period and visiting Edmonton beat Vegas to tighten the Pacific Division race.

Trent Frederic also scored for the Oilers, and Connor Ingram made 24 saves.

Avalanche 3, Wild 2 (SO): Nathan MacKinnon scored his NHL-leading 43rd goal and scored the winning goal in a shootout, lifting Colorado to a home victory over Minnesota in a matchup between two of the NHL’s top four teams in points.

MacKinnon has 70 points in 55 career games against Minnesota, his most against any opponent.

Sabres 8, Lightning 7: Josh Doan opened and closed the scoring with power-play goals and host Buffalo outlasted Tampa Bay in a wild and feisty showdown for the Atlantic Division

lead.

The teams combined for 100 penalty minutes in a game that included five fights and a post-game scum. They’ll meet one more time in the regular season on April 6 in Buffalo.

Red Wings 3, Devils 0: John Gibson and Cam Talbot combined to make 31 saves, Dominik Shine scored his first NHL goal and visiting Detroit beat New Jersey.

Opening a four-game trip, Detroit ended a two-game losing streak and stopped the Devils’ winning streak at four.

Blues 4, Ducks 0: Joel Hofer made 22 saves for his fifth shutout of the season, Jonathan Drouin scored in his Blues debut and visiting St. Louis beat Anaheim to sweep a four-game trip.

Celtics' Brown, Tatum hold off Cavs

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jaylen Brown scored 23 points and Jayson Tatum had 20 in his second game back from a torn right Achilles, lifting Boston to a 109-98 win over Cleveland in a battle of Eastern Conference contenders.

Brown also had nine rebounds and eight assists as the Celtics built an 81-55 lead in the third quarter, sweeping their three-game season series with Cleveland. Tatum scored six points in the fourth, finishing 6-for-16 from the field in 27 minutes.

Payton Pritchard added 18 points and Baylor Scheierman had 16 points and 10 rebounds as Boston moved within three games of East-leading Detroit. Neemias Queta grabbed 11 boards.

Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and Evan Mobley had 24 points and eight rebounds for the fourth-place Cavaliers, who had won a season-high seven straight at home. James Harden had 19 points and 10 assists.

Cleveland, which is 22-9 since Dec. 29, pulled within 94-86 midway through the fourth on Jaylon Tyson's 3-pointer. Pritchard answered with a 3-pointer and tacked on back-to-back hoops to restore the Celtics' double-digit lead.

Lakers 110, Knicks 97: Luka Dončić had 35 points and eight rebounds, Austin Reaves added 25 points and host Los Angeles overcame LeBron James' injury absence to grind out a 110-97 victory over New York.

Rui Hachimura scored 13 points for the Lakers, who never trailed the surging Knicks in their fourth consecutive victory even while James missed his second straight game with a bruised left elbow and a left foot injury.

The Lakers slumped in the fourth quarter, managing just one basket in a 6½-minute span down the stretch while New

York cut its 23-point deficit to 10. But the Knicks couldn't hit enough shots to capitalize and committed eight turnovers in the fourth.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points and 16 rebounds for the Knicks, who lost for just the second time in six games.

Spurs 145, Rockets 120: Victor Wembanyama had 29 points, De'Aaron Fox had 20 points and 10 assists and San Antonio won their fourth straight, rolling to a home victory over Houston.

Stephon Castle added 23 points for San Antonio, which has won 15 of 16.

Kevin Durant and Amen Thompson had 23 points each for Houston, which allowed a season high in points.

The Spurs (47-17) won the season series against the Rockets 3-1 and strengthened their hold on the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference.

Houston (39-24) dropped into fourth in the West, a half-game behind Minnesota (40-24) and seven games behind San Antonio in the loss column.

Trail Blazers 131, Indiana 111: Scoot Henderson scored a season-high 28 points on 10-for-15 shooting and host Portland beat skidding Indiana.

Jerami Grant and Jrue Holiday added 21 points apiece for the Blazers, who handed Indiana its ninth straight defeat. Henderson also had six assists with no turnovers.

Indiana has dropped its past six games by an average of 20 points. This marks the team's third losing streak of at least eight games this season.

Pascal Siakam led the Pacers with 22 points and Jay Huff had 16 points and five blocks. Andrew Nembhard added 14 points and nine assists, and Jarace Walker also scored 14.

Heat 121, Pistons 110: Tyler Herro scored 25 points, Bam Adebayo had 24 to go over the 10,000-point mark for his ca-

reer, and host Miami beat Detroit to extend the Pistons' season-worst losing streak to four games.

Adebayo — who added nine rebounds and six assists — entered the night 23 points away from the scoring milestone. He and Dwyane Wade are the only players with 10,000 points in a Heat uniform.

The Heat are still without Norman Powell (groin) and Nikola Jovic (back), and Andrew Wiggins (toe) was also sidelined.

Cade Cunningham finished with 26 points and 10 assists and Jalen Duren scored 24 for the Pistons, whose lead in the Eastern Conference is down to 2½ games over Boston.

Suns 111, Hornets 99: Devin Booker had 30 points and 10 assists as Phoenix stopped Charlotte's road winning streak at 10 games with a home victory.

Collin Gillespie and Jalen Green each scored 24 points for the Suns, who have won four of five.

LaMelo Ball led the Hornets with 22 points. Their road winning streak was the NBA's longest since the Los Angeles Lakers won 11 straight away from home in 2019-20. Charlotte hadn't lost on the road since Jan. 17 at Golden State.

The longest road winning streak in NBA history is 16 games, by the 1971-72 Lakers during their league-record 33-game run overall.

Raptors 122, Mavericks 92: RJ Barrett scored a season-high 31 points, Scottie Barnes added 17 and host Toronto beat struggling Dallas.

Jakob Poeltl had 16 points and 10 rebounds and Sandro Mamukelashvili scored 13 points as the Raptors snapped a four-game losing streak against Dallas.

Daniel Gafford had a season-high 21 points and 11 rebounds, Cooper Flagg scored 17 points and Brandon Williams added 16

but the slumping Mavericks lost their seventh straight and 17th of 19.

Pelicans 138, Wizards 118: Trey Murphy III scored 24 points, Saddiq Bey added 23 against his former team and host New Orleans defeated the reeling Wizards to extend Washington's losing streak to eight games.

Zion Williamson had 20 points and Dejounte Murray provided 19 for the Pelicans, who outscored Washington 72-44 in the paint.

Wizards rookie Tre Johnson scored 20 points. Will Riley added 19.

Magic 130, Bucks 91: Paolo Banchero scored 33 points and Orlando cruised to a road win over Milwaukee, who rested Giannis Antetokounmpo in the second game of a back-to-back.

The Magic won their fourth straight to remain sixth in the Eastern Conference, one game behind fifth-place Toronto and percentage points ahead of Miami.

Orlando never trailed and led 67-55 at halftime. Early in the fourth quarter, Jalen Suggs hit a 3-pointer to start a 12-0 run that extended the Magic's lead to 26 points. Banchero headed to the bench for good late in the third with Orlando ahead by 31.

Kings 126, Bulls 110: Russell Westbrook had 23 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds for his NBA-record 208th career triple-double, and host Sacramento beat Chicago.

Westbrook shot 7-for-17 with three 3-pointers in 35 minutes. It's the fourth triple-double of the season for the 37-year-old, who moved within one assist of passing Mark Jackson for sixth on the NBA's career list.

Westbrook's triple-doubles are an ongoing record for the nine-time All-Star and came six days after he ripped into the Sacramento media for the narrative around the Kings this season.