

Trump threatens Iranian energy sites

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

The United States will blow up Iran's power plants and oil infrastructure if it does not immediately open the Strait of Hormuz and agree to a peace deal, President Donald Trump said Monday, threatening to escalate the conflict amid ongoing negotiations.

The president, on Truth Social, reported "great progress" in discussions to end military operations in Iran but said that if talks do not continue to go well, the U.S. will take action.

"If for any reason a deal is not shortly reached, which it probably will be, and if the Hormuz Strait is not immediately 'Open for Business,' we will conclude our lovely 'stay' in Iran by blowing up and completely obliterating all of their Electric Generating Plants, Oil Wells and Kharg Island (and possibly all desalination plants!)," Trump said.

Operation Epic Fury has entered its second month and has decimated much of Iran's weapons stockpiles and naval power. But Iran still maintains a chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, sharply restricting traffic and allowing only limited oil shipments through. The waterway's closure has caused oil and gas prices to surge, sparking concerns about wider implications for the global economy.

On Monday, oil prices continued to rise and Asian markets fell, though U.S. stocks were slightly higher in early trading amid fears of the conflict widening.

During the monthlong conflict, Trump has alternated between promising a quick end and vowing to expand it, as the Pentagon surges forces to the region.

The Wall Street Journal reported Friday that the Pentagon is considering sending up to

10,000 more ground troops to the Middle East, adding to the roughly 5,000 Marines and thousands of paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division headed to the region.

The Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and U.S. sailors arrived in the Middle East on Friday aboard the USS Tripoli, U.S. Central Command said on X.

It is not clear how such troops would be used. Early Monday, Trump told the Financial Times that his "favorite thing" would be to seize Iran's oil. He suggested "maybe we take Kharg Island," which exports the majority of Iran's crude oil.

Seizing or destroying the island would give the U.S. major leverage in reopening the strait but would require an extensive operation that could involve ground troops. U.S. forces heavily bombed the island this month, Trump said, destroying much of

its military infrastructure but sparing the oil pipelines.

The island is about 7 square miles and sits roughly 20 miles off the Iranian coast in the Persian Gulf.

Trump has not yet ruled out putting boots on the ground in Iran, a move that would significantly escalate the war and risk more U.S. casualties.

The U.S. leader's comments on Monday came as Israel and Iran exchanged missile strikes with the war continuing into a second month. The conflict is threatening to cause severe economic damage around the world, with the closure of the critical Hormuz waterway choking supplies of energy, fertilizer and other critical commodities.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on Monday issued an appeal to Trump to end the conflict, saying only the U.S. president is capable of doing so.

US fires record number of Tomahawks in Iran mission

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military has fired more Tomahawk missiles during the month-old Operation Epic Fury than in any other military campaign in history, according to a think tank analysis of reported strike data.

"Replenishing inventory after this campaign will take time, and creates near-term risk for the United States," the Center for Strategic and International Studies said in a new analysis.

The findings come after The Washington Post reported that the U.S. Navy has fired more than 850 Tomahawks since the

Feb. 28 start of the military operation against Iran. The report, citing unnamed U.S. officials, noted that some in the Pentagon had raised concerns about the usage rate.

If the 850-strike figure is accurate, that puts Operation Epic Fury ahead of 2003's Operation Iraqi Freedom, which involved 802 Tomahawk strikes during the invasion, according to the CSIS analysis.

Operation Desert Fox, a 70-hour bombing campaign in Iraq in 1998, was next on the list with 325 Tomahawk strikes.

Operation Desert Storm, launched in 1991 against Iraq,

marked the first time the weapon was used in combat.

During that 42-day campaign, the Tomahawk was launched 288 times, CSIS reported.

The Tomahawk, built by Raytheon, is a precision cruise missile launched from ships, submarines and ground launchers and can hit targets that are around 1,000 miles away.

CSIS said 850 missiles would likely account for around half of the currently available launchers that are located in the Middle East region.

"These launchers cannot be reloaded at sea. Ships would need to return to port with req-

uisite infrastructure once they are out of missiles," the CSIS analysis stated.

The think tank said the Navy is set to receive 110 Tomahawks in fiscal year 2026 and that existing stockpiles are estimated to be in the low-3,000s.

White House and Pentagon officials have stressed that the U.S. military has enough munitions to conduct the Iran war.

However, the CSIS report said, the "high expenditure of Tomahawks and other missiles in Operation Epic Fury creates risks for the United States in other theaters — particularly the Western Pacific."

China, Philippines trade blame after near miss

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

China and the Philippines accused each other of dangerous maneuvers in the South China Sea following a near-collision between two warships days before weekend talks on contested territory.

The two naval vessels nearly collided Thursday near Thitu, an island in the Spratly chain administered by the Philippines and also called Pag-asa.

Representatives from Beijing and Manila met Saturday in China for the 11th round of talks on territory in the South China Sea.

The negotiators discussed “strategic, political-security

and law enforcement issues,” the Philippines said Saturday in a news release.

Manila and Beijing described the talks as productive.

The South China Sea, parts of which Manila refers to as the West Philippine Sea, is a flashpoint between the countries, which have competing claims there.

The entire Spratly chain, about 960 miles south of Taiwan, is claimed by China, Vietnam and Taiwan; portions of the chain are claimed by the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

On Thursday the Philippine tank landing ship BRP Benguet and the Chinese guided-missile frigate Jingzhou were operating

near Thitu when the Chinese frigate began “closing in and passing at a dangerously close distance,” the Philippines’ Western Command said news release Thursday. The command also posted a video of the incident.

Beijing made similar accusations against Manila. The Benguet ignored warnings and deliberately turned into the Chinese frigate’s path, “disrupting its navigation,” according to Capt. Zhai Shichen, spokesman for China’s Southern Theater Command.

Zhai’s remarks were posted Saturday on Facebook by China’s Embassy in Manila.

In an incident on March 7, the

Philippine frigate BRP Miguel Malvar was on patrol near Sabina Shoal when the Chinese corvette Guang’an directed its fire control radar toward the ship, the Philippines’ Naval Defense Command said in a March 21 Facebook post.

The two incidents, along with the resumption of talks, point to a broader pattern of direct and indirect pressure by China on the Philippines, according to Renato Cruz De Castro, a professor at De La Salle University’s Department of International Studies in the Philippines.

The Philippines is in “panic mode” and “trying to grab every available hand,” Castro said Monday.

Marine corporal accused of stealing, reselling arms from Camp Pendleton

Los Angeles Times

A Marine formerly stationed at Camp Pendleton is now in federal custody, charged with stealing weapons of war — including a shoulder-fired missile system — with the intent to resell them in Arizona, according to court documents.

Cpl. Andrew Paul Amarillas is accused of using his position as an ammunition technical specialist at the School of Infantry West at the San Diego base to access and steal military property, including at least one Javelin missile system, military-grade ammunition and other weapons-related material, between February 2022 and November 2025.

Investigators say he transported the stolen weapons and ammunition to his home state of Arizona, where he sold them to a network of co-conspirators, who

then resold the equipment to others.

Authorities described the items as strictly controlled and dangerous, posing a threat to civilians and law enforcement. Some but not all of the stolen material has been recovered.

“The objects of the conspiracy were to steal property and ammunition from the U.S. military and sell stolen U.S. military property and ammunition to others to earn money,” read the complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona in March.

Amarillas pleaded not guilty to the charges in a Phoenix federal courthouse Thursday.

The charges include conspiracy to commit theft and embezzlement of government property and possess and sell stolen ammunition, and related offenses.

N. Korea tests rocket engine built for ICBM

By SETH ROBSON
AND YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong Un, watched a ground test of a solid-fuel missile engine and saw new tanks put through their paces recently, the country’s official news agency reported Sunday.

The engine, made with carbon fiber materials, is part of a plan to steadily upgrade the country’s strategic strike capability, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

The report provided no information on where and when the inspections took place.

“The South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities are closely monitoring North Korean military’s weapon development trends,” South Korea’s Ministry of National Defense said by text message Monday.

The engine test is of great sig-

nificance in putting the country’s military muscle on the highest level, Kim said in the KCNA report.

The engine, more powerful than another tested in September, is designed for use in the Hwasong-20 intercontinental ballistic missile North Korea is developing, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported Sunday.

Kim also observed a tank performance test, KCNA reported the same day.

North Korea’s new main battle tank is equipped with an interceptor system capable of destroying almost all anti-tank weapons, he said, according to the agency.

Kim said no tank in the world compares to the new tank, according to the agency.

North Korea has reportedly conducted several missile tests since December.

Panel chair details reconciliation bill

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — House Budget Chairman Jodey C. Arrington offered details on what a budget reconciliation bill could look like Friday, outlining an agenda that includes targeting fraud in the earned income tax credit program and finding savings in other means-tested benefit programs.

Arrington, R-Texas, and Senate Budget Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., have stressed the need to provide additional funding for defense and immigration enforcement through the filibuster-proof reconciliation process, which Republicans used last year to pass their “big, beautiful” tax and spending package.

In an interview on CNBC’s “Squawk Box” on March 27, Arrington said extended funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement is needed to guard against “more shutdowns in the future with Democrats on the

side of stopping deportations and putting our ICE agents at risk.”

Democrats have pushed for new restrictions on ICE agents in the wake of two fatal shootings of U.S. citizens in Minneapolis earlier this year.

Some GOP lawmakers, including Graham, also are looking at reconciliation as a way to pass portions of a voter ID bill that President Donald Trump has made a top priority. That bill calls for requiring proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote, along with photo identification at the polls.

Graham said he would work closely with Trump and his team in writing the plan. After a budget resolution containing reconciliation instructions is adopted by both chambers, the instructed authorizing committees write the reconciliation bill.

Arrington said including the voting provisions is a “trickier one,” echoing widespread skep-

ticism that requirements to prove citizenship in order to register to vote and show identification at the polls would not pass muster with the Senate parliamentarian because they do not have a significant impact on the budget.

“There are ways, I think, that you could creatively put incentive monies attached to voter integrity initiatives, whether it’s cleaning up the rolls or voter ID,” Arrington said. “It’s not as straightforward, again, as cutting waste and fraud or doing something like we did in the tax code” in last year’s reconciliation bill.

Talking with reporters last week, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said he anticipates reconciliation will be “fairly narrowly focused” on border security.

In the House, Arrington said, “we have a lot” of Republicans who want the cost of a reconciliation bill to be offset. The rec-

onciliation effort should target “widespread fraud, there is a boatload of waste and fraud,” including what he said are \$180 billion in improper payments.

In a report last year, the Government Accountability Office said that 16 federal agencies in fiscal year 2024 reported an estimated \$162 billion in improper payments across 68 programs, adding that this figure “represents a small subset of all federal programs and does not include certain programs that agencies have determined are susceptible to significant improper payments.”

Arrington cited the earned income tax credit, a refundable tax credit that boosts the income of low-income workers, which he said “loses 30 cents on the dollar.”

The GAO said in last year’s report that in fiscal 2024, this tax credit accounted for almost \$16 billion in improper payments.

Space tourism flounders as demand dries up

Bloomberg News

Ron Rosano is one of the world’s most dedicated space tourists.

A 65-year-old property manager from San Francisco, he completed a short trip aboard a Virgin Galactic Holdings Inc. spaceplane in 2023 and until recently was expecting to fly more than 60 miles above the Earth on one of Jeff Bezos-founded Blue Origin LLC’s New Shepard rockets.

Rosano has had to change his plans, though, following a surprise move by Blue Origin in January to halt tourism flights for no less than two years. Rosano is disappointed.

Companies like Virgin Galactic and Scaled Composites LLC envisioned a booming market for space tourism when they said in the early 2000s they

would launch humans into sub-orbital space.

Space tourism will become a “multi-billion-dollar industry,” said Eric Anderson, co-founder of the space exploration company Space Adventures Inc., in a 2003 issue of Space Times.

Now, the industry’s in crisis. In addition to Blue Origin pausing flights, Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic hasn’t flown since June 2024 as it works to develop its new Delta spacecraft.

Virgin Galactic’s share price is down more than 98% since its debut in October 2019 through a merger with a listed entity.

“Tourism hasn’t really materialized as a market. We certainly have had a number of tourist sponsored missions, but those have been limited, and we haven’t seen recurring demand

for them,” said Dana Weigel, NASA’s International Space Station program manager, during a March 24 presentation in Washington.

Issues include limited demand and technology that takes years to scale, even as the addressable market is limited, said Eric Zhu, an aerospace and defense analyst for Bloomberg Intelligence.

“The industry is targeting an extremely narrow slice of ultra-high-net-worth individuals, but even that cohort doesn’t generate repeat business,” he said.

Virgin Galactic has sent 31 passengers to space and Blue Origin has sent 98 (six of whom flew twice), including an all-female crew that flew last year.

Virgin Galactic expects to launch the first test flight for its Delta spacecraft by the end of

2026.

Responding to a request for comment, the company declined to disclose ticket prices or other information before the upcoming results announcement. Previously Virgin Galactic had been charging about \$600,000 for seats on the new spacecraft.

Blue Origin’s prices are not publicly available, but Craig Curran, president of the DePrez Group of Travel Companies in Rochester, N.Y., estimates a ticket price of approximately \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

The industry may yet see a revival if Elon Musk’s SpaceX succeeds with Starship, its huge reusable rocket now under development.

Starship could cut the cost of putting a person in orbit by 90%, according to Fu.

AI data centers coming to Army bases

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Army selected two commercial companies to build AI data centers in Fort Bliss, Texas, and Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, the service announced Thursday.

The Army will enter exclusive negotiations with Carlyle, an investment firm, and CyrusOne, a data center developer, to build “hyperscale data centers” on the Army posts as the service seeks to expand its use of AI in combat and other military applications.

The agreements would allow

the companies to build, operate and maintain the data centers on land leased from the Army, according to a news release from the service.

“AI is a strategic asset for the Army,” Army Secretary Dan Driscoll said in a statement about the agreements. “It is a force multiplier, supports future transformation and requirements, keeps the Army ahead of our adversaries and generates resiliency across the force. These data centers are a critical resource to support that strategic imperative.”

Carlyle and CyrusOne would

be responsible for financing the projects at both bases, and taxpayers would not see an upfront cost to their development, Army officials said.

The Army Corps of Engineers will conduct final lease negotiations and oversee the projects, including conducting environmental reviews, according to the Army.

The agreements come after a 2025 executive order from President Donald Trump that sought to make available underutilized federal land for commercial data center projects.

Carlyle was selected to build on about 1,384 acres at Fort Bliss, according to the Army.

That project is expected to be functional in 2027.

Meanwhile, CyrusOne, a company held by investment giants KKR and BlackRock, was selected to build on about approximately 1,201 acres on Dugway Proving Ground.

That project is expected to be completed around 2029.

Each project is estimated to cost around \$2 billion in total, according to reports from the Financial Times.

Far-right German politician: Remove all US troops

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — The co-chair of Germany’s increasingly popular far-right party has called for the removal of all U.S. forces from the country, adding that Berlin should follow Spain’s lead and deny the use of its bases for the Iran war.

Tino Chrupalla, who leads the Alternative for Germany party alongside Alice Weidel, used a political gathering in Saxony over the weekend to push for the removal of the roughly 37,000 U.S. troops based in the country.

“Let’s start implementing

this,” said Chrupalla, as quoted Saturday by Germany’s Bild newspaper.

Chrupalla also said Germany should avoid being drawn into international conflicts. He cited Spain, which has come under fire from the Trump administration for refusing access to its bases for the Iran campaign, as an example to follow.

The comments carry no practical effect on current German policy, since AfD is not part of Berlin’s coalition government.

But AfD over the years has grown from a fringe movement in Germany to a major political

force. Recent polls show it is among the most popular parties in Germany.

The AfD has long called for a more independent German foreign policy, including an end to hosting U.S. troops and a loosening of ties with NATO.

The remarks come at a time of high tension inside NATO amid disagreements over the Iran war.

On Monday, Spain announced it had closed its airspace to U.S. military planes involved in operations against Iran, an escalation from an earlier decision to block U.S. use of

bases in the country for such missions. It wasn’t clear if the decision would have any notable effect on operations, such as forcing military planes to re-route.

President Donald Trump on Friday ratcheted up his criticism of the alliance, saying that the refusal of NATO members to help open the Strait of Hormuz amounted to a loyalty test. Trump suggested that the lack of allied involvement in the effort could mean the United States doesn’t need to defend allies in Europe if they were to come under attack.

Truck loaded with KitKat bars disappears in Europe

Miami Herald

A truck loaded with more than 12 tons of KitKat candy bars has vanished somewhere between Italy and Poland, and neither the vehicle nor its sweet cargo has been found.

The shipment — about 413,793 individual KitKat units — disappeared during transit after leaving a production site in Italy, according to a statement from Nestlé. The bars were headed to Poland for distribution across European markets.

“The vehicle and its load are still nowhere to be found,” Nestlé said.

No injuries were reported during the incident, according to a company spokesperson. The exact location where the theft occurred has not been specified.

Here’s what makes this heist even stranger: the stolen bars weren’t your standard grocery store KitKats. They were part of the KitKat Formula One line, themed after race cars. That de-

tail turns an already unusual crime into something almost cinematic — someone, somewhere, is sitting on a small mountain of racing-themed chocolate.

Nestlé has expressed concern that the stolen products could enter unofficial sales channels across European markets. But the company said the bars can be traced. Each package carries unique batch codes, and Nestlé said consumers, retailers and wholesalers can

scan on-pack batch numbers to identify whether they’ve come across stolen goods. The company has provided instructions for what to do if a match is found.

The candy giant couldn’t resist the obvious wordplay.

“We’ve always encouraged people to have a break with KitKat,” Nestlé said. “But it seems thieves have taken the message too literally and made a break with more than 12 tons of our chocolate.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Tiger Woods charged with DUI after rollover

FL JUPITER ISLAND — Tiger Woods was arrested on a DUI charge following a rollover crash in Jupiter Island that did not cause any significant injuries.

According to the Martin County Sheriff's Office, Woods showed signs of impairment at the crash scene. He was negative for alcohol impairment on a breathalyzer test but refused a urinalysis test and was charged with DUI with property damage and refusal to submit to a lawful test, according to a sheriff's representative.

Woods, 50, was involved in a one-car crash in Southern California in February of 2021 that caused multiple leg fractures.

Sheriff in governor run seizes November ballots

CA LOS ANGELES — The Riverside County sheriff, who is a leading Republican candidate for governor, seized even more ballots from last November's election, part of an escalating crusade to look into unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.

According to the new court filings, Sheriff Chad Bianco seized an additional 426 boxes of ballot materials from county elections officials expanding the cache of election materials the sheriff plans to review in what he called a "fact-finding mission" to determine if votes were fraudulently counted. His department seized more than 650,000 ballots cast in Riverside County in the November election for Proposition 50, which temporarily redrew the state's

congressional districts to favor Democrats.

The move pits Bianco at further odds with Attorney General Rob Bonta, who has called on the sheriff to halt the investigation, citing legal and ethical concerns, including how the probe "sets a dangerous precedent and will only sow distrust in our elections."

Man pleads guilty of plotting to kill Bessent

MA BOSTON — A Massachusetts man has pleaded guilty of plotting to assassinate U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. He planned to do it with Molotov cocktails made out of vodka.

"This is terrible but I cant do nothing while nazis kill my sisters. ... (Expletive) them for pushing us so far. you dont deserve this. Im so sorry for lying and plotting and lying. Please survive," Ryan Michael English had written on the back of a receipt found in his pants pocket when Capitol Police arrested him on Jan. 27, 2025.

English, 24, of Deerfield, pleaded guilty in federal court in Washington D.C. to one count of unlawful receipt, possession and/or transfer of a firearm and one count of carrying a firearm, dangerous weapon, or incendiary device on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol.

Attorney: \$22M stolen by school district worker

CA LOS ANGELES — "I broke all law for you already lol," an L.A. Unified employee allegedly texted to a co-conspirator amid what prosecutors say is the largest money-

laundering scheme in the school district's history.

Hong "Grace" Peng, 56, of Pasadena, is accused of using her role as an IT employee at the Los Angeles Unified School District to ensure that more than \$22 million in contracts were awarded to a technology company owned by Gautham Sampath, 56, of Flower Mound, Texas. He is accused of then funneling more than \$3 million in taxpayer funds back to Peng.

Peng and Sampath are each charged with one felony count of money laundering and one felony count of having a financial interest in a contract or purchase made in an official capacity.

Judge drops final charges in Breonna Taylor case

KY LEXINGTON — A federal judge has dismissed the remaining charges against two Louisville Metro Police Department officers in the Breonna Taylor case.

Senior District Judge Charles Simpson on Friday issued an order dismissing the case against former Louisville Officers Joshua Jaynes and Kyle Meany.

The officers were accused of providing false information in order to get a search warrant for Taylor's apartment.

Taylor died after being shot by police who were attempting to execute the no-knock warrant on March 13, 2020.

Agent hurt in accidental self-inflicted shooting

PA PHILADELPHIA — A Secret Service agent has been hospitalized after accidentally shooting himself at Philadelphia International

al Airport.

The agent was injured while traveling in an unmarked Chevrolet SUV near an access point at the airport, the Philadelphia Police Department said. It was not immediately clear what caused the agent's firearm to accidentally discharge.

The agent was on duty at the airport on a protective assignment covering former first lady Jill Biden, according to an Associated Press report. Biden was not present at the time of the incident.

Secret Service spokesperson Nate Herring said the Secret Service's Office of Professional Responsibility would "review the facts and circumstances" of the incident.

University mum about criminal history survey

VA NORFOLK — Old Dominion University officials declined to say Friday how many students answered a questionnaire disseminated by the university asking them to disclose their criminal histories.

The university sent the two-question form to its roughly 24,000 students, a few days after a fatal shooting on campus. When asked how many had responded and how many had said they had been convicted of a crime, vice president for university communications and chief marketing officer Kimberly Osborne said all responses, on both a collective and individual level, were confidential.

"No other information will be made available regarding the student questionnaire," she said.

-From wire reports



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Mullins' 3 gives UConn close win vs. Duke

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Braylon Mullins retrieved a loose ball near midcourt and suddenly, improbably, UConn had a chance to win.

As the frantic final seconds unfolded, Dan Hurley figured a timeout would do little good.

"It just felt like the window where you've just got to let March Madness take over," Hurley said. "March magic."

The Huskies have enjoyed plenty of that through the years, and this may have been their most astonishing win yet. Mullins sank a desperation 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left to give UConn a 73-72 victory over top-seeded Duke on Sunday, earning the Huskies a spot in the Final Four after they rallied from a 19-point first-half deficit.

The Blue Devils (35-3) led by three before UConn's Silas Demary Jr. made one of two free throws with 10 seconds left. With Duke playing keep-away to prevent the Huskies from fouling,

Cayden Boozer's pass near midcourt was deflected by Demary, and after UConn came up with the ball, Mullins swished a 3 from 35 feet away.

"We were trying to foul the worst free-throw shooter on the floor, and Silas ended up deflecting the pass," Mullins said. "I knew I had to put one up. Man, I'm just happy that was the one that went down tonight."

The Huskies (33-5) went just 5 of 23 from 3-point range. The fifth will be remembered in Connecticut for generations.

It's the second straight season to end in a huge collapse for the Blue Devils, who were the top overall seed in this year's tournament. Duke led by six with 1:14 remaining before falling to Houston in last year's national semifinals.

"I could not be more disappointed and feeling for our guys, at the same time of just trying to process what happened," Blue Devils coach Jon Scheyer said. "I don't have the words. I don't

have the words."

Michigan 95, Tennessee 62: It was Yaxel Lendeborg, Elliot Cadeau and Aday Mara. Morez Johnson Jr., Trey McKenney and Nimari Burnett, too. The list goes on and on.

The Wolverines got it done together, just like they have all seasons long.

"The biggest focus is playing team basketball," Lendeborg said. "We thrive off of that."

Lendeborg scored 27 points, Cadeau had 10 assists and deep, unselfish Michigan rolled into the Final Four, overwhelming Tennessee for a 95-62 victory in the NCAA Tournament on Sunday.

Johnson added 12 points for the Wolverines, who have 11 victories this season by at least 30 points. Mara had 11 points and blocked two shots in the Midwest Region final.

Making the most of its size and athleticism on both sides of the court, Michigan (35-3) advanced to its first Final Four since 2018

and ninth overall. Next up is a showdown with fellow No. 1 seed Arizona in Saturday's national semifinals.

"We always wanted to play against them, that team," Lendeborg said. "They're a really, really good team, so it's going to be a super fun matchup."

Under second-year coach Dusty May — who took Florida Atlantic to the Final Four in 2023 — the Wolverines became the first school to win at least four games in an NCAA tourney by double digits while scoring at least 90 points in each.

"Our guys have been up to the challenge, to deliver in the biggest moments all year, and nothing changed tonight," May said.

Ja'Kobi Gillespie scored 21 points on 8-of-22 shooting for Tennessee (25-12), which lost in the Elite Eight for the third straight year under Rick Barnes. The 71-year-old coach reached his only Final Four in 2003 with Texas.

UConn tops Notre Dame for 25th Final Four appearance

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — All-America forward Sarah Strong and her UConn teammates got quite a compliment from Geno Auriemma, their coach who donned a cowboy hat and did a little dance on the court after the undefeated Huskies made their 25th Final Four in the women's NCAA Tournament.

The 12-time championship coach who has more wins than any men's or women's NCAA coach said he has never been more proud of a group that he has taken to the final weekend of March Madness.

"This group, they don't have that kind of swagger, trash-talking kind of mentality," Auriemma said after his 1,288th victory. "It's not the kind of team that I've had in the past that has gone this far undefeated. It's not. They don't have that kind of mentality off the court, on the court. They're just a bunch of really nice kids that play hard for each other."

And they are headed to Phoenix after Strong scored 21 points, Blanca Quiñonez added 20 points off the bench and defending national champion UConn beat Notre

Dame 70-52 on Sunday.

While this is a younger group for Auriemma after Paige Bueckers, the No. 1 WNBA draft pick, and Kaitlyn Chen were seniors on last year's championship team, the Huskies (38-0) have won 54 games in a row and clinched the first spot for this year's Final Four.

"Seeing him excited and kind of goofy is really good for us. ... He's usually all serious or like anxious, grumpy. Just seeing him let loose and be his true self was really good," Strong said.

UCLA 70, Duke 58: Lauren Betts and her fellow Bruins seniors wouldn't allow their season to end short of the Final Four.

Betts had 23 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks to help UCLA rally from a rare half-time deficit and beat the Blue Devils, advancing to the national semifinals for the second straight season.

"I was pretty mad, didn't like how that first half happened," Betts said. "I could have been a lot more effective. A game like this you got to take yourself out of your head. This is the Elite Eight and my senior season is on

the line, so got to wake up a little bit."

The 6-foot-7 Betts and her teammates did just that.

Top-seeded UCLA will play either Texas or Michigan in Phoenix on Friday, with unbeaten UConn on the other side of the Final Four bracket. The Bruins are now two wins away from the program's first NCAA title.

"We just have the mentality of this being a business trip. I can't emphasize that enough," said UCLA's Angela Dugalic.

As the team was cutting down the nets in celebration, Betts, Gabriela Jaquez and Charlisse Leger-Walker brought back out the choreographed dance routine they performed with the school's Spirit Squad during a men's basketball game.

Third-seeded Duke tested the Bruins (35-1) like few teams had this season. UCLA struggled to get going offensively or contain the Blue Devils (27-9), who reached their second straight Elite Eight thanks to a buzzer-beating 3-pointer by Ashlon Jackson against LSU.

Taina Mair scored 21 points to lead Duke, which also lost in a regional final last year.

Nets hold off Kings to snap losing streak

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ochai Agbaji scored 18 points in 25 minutes off the bench and the Brooklyn Nets snapped a 10-game losing streak with a 116-99 win over the Sacramento Kings on Sunday night.

Agbaji led five Nets in double-figure scoring as Nolan Traore had 17, Drake Powell 16, Noah Clowney 15 and Nic Claxton 10 for Brooklyn.

Sacramento fell to 19-57 with its fourth straight loss.

Devin Carter scored 20 points for the Kings, who lost their fourth straight. Nique Clifford added 17, Precious Achiuwa had 16 and DaQuan Jeffries 14.

The second matchup in six days of franchises building for the future saw Nets coach Jordi Fernandez and Kings coach Doug Christie get extended looks at their young players.

There were 10 Nets who played at least 10 minutes, led by Traore's 30, while the Kings had nine get playing time. Clifford led Sacramento with 37 minutes.

Pacers 135, Heat 118: Pascal Siakam scored 30 points and Micah Potter added 21 and tied a career high with five 3-pointers to help host Indiana get past Miami for a rare victory.

Siakam also had 11 rebounds and six assists for the short-handed Pacers. Potter scored 19 points and made all of his 3s as part of a flurry of 13 first half 3-pointers for Indiana.

Trail Blazers 123, Wizards 88: Toumani Camara scored 23 points and host Portland routed Washington.

Scout Henderson added 21 points and Deni Avdija had 20 for the Trail Blazers, who have won six of their last eight games. Portland led by as many as 39 points in the second half.

Thunder 111, Knicks 98: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 30 points, including 10 in the fourth quarter, and host Oklahoma City defeated New York.

Gilgeous-Alexander was 5 of 15 from the floor in the first three quarters, but drained all three of his shots in the fourth.

He made 13 of 16 free throws overall to help him extend his NBA record for consecutive games with at least 20 points to 135.

Celtics 114, Hornets 99: Jayson Tatum scored 32 points, Payton Pritchard added 28 points and visiting Boston defeated cold-shooting Charlotte for its third straight victory.

Pritchard, who continued to be a terrific replacement for Brown, was able to get to the basket at will, finishing 10 of 18 from the field and 6 of 6 from the foul line. Pritchard entered the game averaging 25.1 points, 4.9 rebounds and 7.3 assists in the previous eight games Brown missed this season.

Clippers 127, Bucks 113: Benedict Mathurin scored 28 points, John Collins had 22 and Kawhi Leonard added 20 as visiting Los Angeles got past short-handed Milwaukee on Sunday for its fifth consecutive win.

Darius Garland added 15 points and 11 assists and Derrick Jones Jr. 13 points for the

Clippers, who made 45 of 77 shots (58.4%).

Rockets 134, Pelicans 102: Alperen Sengun had 36 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists, Houston dominated the second quarter and the visiting Rockets beat New Orleans.

Houston (45-29) moved into a tie for fifth place in the Western Conference with idle Minnesota, 1½ games behind Denver.

Nuggets 116, Warriors 93: Nikola Jokic had 25 points and 15 rebounds, Jamal Murray had 20 points and surging Denver beat short-handed Golden State.

The Warriors continued without Stephen Curry, who missed his 25th game in a row with a balky right knee. Golden State (36-39) has lost 16 of 25 games with Curry sidelined.

Raptors 139, Magic 87: RJ Barrett scored 24 points, Scottie Barnes had 23 points and a career-high 15 assists, and host Toronto used a 31-point run to rout Orlando, handing the slumping Magic their seventh loss in eight games.

Perry breaks 3rd-period tie, lifts Lightning past Predators

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Jake Guentzel had a goal and two assists while Corey Perry broke a third-period tie to give the Tampa Bay Lightning a 3-2 victory against the Nashville Predators on Sunday to move into first place in the Atlantic Division.

Brandon Hagel also scored for Tampa Bay, which improved to 6-0-2 in the past eight games. Guentzel has scored in four consecutive games.

Joakim Kemell and Filip Forsberg scored for Nashville, which holds the second wild-card spot in the Western Conference despite three consecutive losses. Justus Annunen finished with 25 saves.

Perry scored the winning goal at 6:52 of the third period. A pass

by Emil Lilleberg was tipped by Guentzel, but the rebound popped right to Perry at the side of the net for his fourth goal since being acquired from Los Angeles at the trade deadline.

Guentzel pulled the Lightning even at 13:32 of the second period as a shot from Darren Raddysh hit the glove of Roman Josi and came to Guentzel at the left circle with an open net.

Hagel put Tampa Bay in front at 4:33, but the Predators answered 20 seconds later on a tip from Forsberg that deflected off Yannick Gourde and then in off the skate of Charle-Edouard D'As-tous.

Bruins 4, Blue Jackets 3 (SO): Viktor Arvidsson scored the decisive goal in the shootout and had three assists in the third peri-

od as visiting Boston rallied from a three-goal, third-period deficit to defeat Columbus.

The victory also kept the Bruins in the first wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference with 92 points.

Rangers 3, Panthers 1: Adam Sykora broke a scoreless tie early in the third period and Igor Shesterkin made 26 saves as host New York defeated Florida.

Sykora, a rookie who was a second-round pick in 2022, scored his second goal of the season at 5:10, tipping Adam Fox's shot past Panthers goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky.

Flyers 2, Stars 1 (OT): Trevor Zegras wristed a sharp-angle shot past Casey DeSmith with 1:33 remaining in overtime, leading hard-charging Philadelphia

over slumping Dallas.

Travis Konecny scored in regulation for the host Flyers, who are 8-1-1 in their last 10 games. With 86 points, they pulled within two of both Columbus and Pittsburgh.

Canadiens 3, Hurricanes 1: Nick Suzuki scored two goals and had an assist to lead visiting Montreal over Carolina.

Suzuki fueled a three-goal second period for the Canadiens, who have won five straight and won all three regular-season games against the Eastern Conference-leading Hurricanes.

Devils 5, Blackhawks 3: Dougie Hamilton and Jack Hughes scored 19 seconds apart late in the third period and Jake Allen made 28 saves as host New Jersey rallied to defeat Chicago.

Mariners win on Hancock's 6 no-hit innings

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Emerson Hancock threw six hitless innings and Brendan Donovan hit a three-run homer as the Seattle Mariners beat the Cleveland Guardians 8-0 on Sunday night to earn a four-game split in their season-opening series.

Hancock (1-0), who won a spot in Seattle's rotation in large part because of an injury to Bryce Miller, set a career high with nine strikeouts. The only baserunners the 26-year-old right-hander allowed came when he walked José Ramírez in the first inning and hit CJ Kayfus with a fastball in the sixth.

It was a stark contrast to Hancock's first start of 2025, when he gave up six runs in just ⅓ of an inning in a loss to the Detroit Tigers.

"A year ago, right now, we're having a completely different conversation. Things went completely different," Hancock said with a laugh. "But I think that's just part of this game. And you're going to struggle, there's going to be ups, there's going to be downs."

It wasn't until Cleveland rookie Chase DeLauter lined a clean single to right field leading off the seventh against reliever Cooper Criswell that the Mariners' bid for a no-hitter ended. Daniel Schneemann also singled for the Guardians in the eighth.

Blue Jays 5, Athletics 2: George Springer hit the 64th leadoff home run of his career, Kazuma Okamoto went deep for the first time in the majors and host Toronto beat the Athletics to complete a three-game sweep.

Jesús Sánchez added a two-run homer, his first with the Blue Jays. The defending American League champions swept 11 series last season, one fewer than Milwaukee and Seattle, which led the majors.

Max Muncy hit a two-run home run for the A's, one of five

hits for the visitors.

Royals 4, Braves 1: Seth Lugo (1-0) pitched 6⅓ scoreless innings and Carter Jensen homered to lead visiting Kansas City over Atlanta.

Bobby Witt Jr. and Vinnie Pasquantino had RBI singles for the Royals, who avoided a season-opening sweep. Witt had five hits in the series.

Drake Baldwin hit a solo home run to right field with the Braves trailing 4-0 in the eighth inning.

Orioles 8, Twins 6: Pete Alonso singled home the go-ahead run in the seventh inning, Tyler O'Neill hit a three-run homer and host Baltimore beat Minnesota.

After the Twins bolted to a 4-0 lead against Orioles newcomer Shane Baz, Baltimore bounced back to win the deciding matchup of the season-opening, three-game series.

Alonso snapped a 5-all tie in the seventh with a soft single to center field off Mick Abel (0-1). It was Alonso's first RBI with the Orioles since leaving the Mets in December as a free agent.

Rangers 8, Phillies 3: MacKenzie Gore struck out seven in his Texas debut, and Brandon Nimmo and Andrew McCutchen both homered to lead the visiting Rangers to a series win over Philadelphia.

Gore made his first start for Texas after he was acquired from Washington in an offseason trade. He tossed five hitless innings before his bid for the Rangers' first no-hitter since Kenny Rogers' perfect game in 1994 was broken up by a leadoff infield single from Phillies center fielder Justin Crawford in the sixth.

Nimmo, a former New York Mets outfielder who was booed all weekend, took Philadelphia starter Jesús Luzardo (0-1) deep for a two-run shot in the second. McCutchen, a former Phillie also in his first season with the Rangers, hit a three-

run homer in the fourth for a 5-0 lead.

Reds 3, Red Sox 2: Eugenio Suarez hit a three-run home run and host Cincinnati beat Boston to win its season-opening series.

Suarez's homer, his first since rejoining the Reds this offseason, came on an 0-2 pitch from Greg Weissert with two runners on base in the sixth to put the Reds up 3-2.

Connelly Early, 23, was the youngest pitcher to start one of the Red Sox's first three games in a season since Jeff Sellers in 1987 and the youngest left-hander to do so since Billy Rohr in 1967. Early pitched 5⅓ innings, allowing one earned run on five hits with two walks and five strikeouts.

Pirates 4, Mets 3 (10): Ryan O'Hearn had three hits and two RBIs, including a go-ahead single in the 10th inning, and visiting Pittsburgh threw out the potential tying run at the plate to hold off New York for its first victory this season.

Henry Davis added a critical RBI single off Mets reliever Richard Lovelady (1-1) with two outs in the 10th, and the Pirates got another home run from Brandon Lowe as they salvaged the series finale to avoid their first 0-3 start since 2015.

With New York trailing 4-2 and two runners aboard in the bottom of the 10th, Juan Soto drove an RBI double to deep left-center. Francisco Lindor tried to score the tying run from first base, but was cut down on a relay from center fielder Oneil Cruz to shortstop Jared Triolo to Davis at the plate for the first out of the inning.

Astros 9, Angels 7: Isaac Paredes hit a tiebreaking two-RBI double with two outs in the eighth inning to help host Houston over Los Angeles despite a disappointing major league debut from starter Tatsuya Imai.

Imai allowed three hits and four runs with four walks and

four strikeouts in 2⅓ innings.

There were two outs in the eighth when the Angels intentionally walked Yordan Alvarez to give the Astros runners at first and third. Alvarez stole second before Paredes hit a line drive off Drew Pomeranz (0-1) to put Houston on top 8-6.

Marlins 4, Rockies 3: Owen Caissie hit a walk-off, two-run homer to give host Miami a win over Colorado and a sweep of its season-opening series.

Javier Sanoja doubled with two outs in the ninth inning against Rockies reliever Victor Vodnik (0-1) before Caissie drilled a change-up from Vodnik over the wall in right field.

Brewers 9, White Sox 7: Christian Yelich hit a three-run homer off Seranthony Domínguez to cap a six-run rally in the eighth inning as host Milwaukee completed a season-opening sweep by beating Chicago.

The Brewers fell behind 7-2 in the first three innings before coming all the way back. Yelich put them in front with his first career pinch-hit homer, a two-out shot on a 2-2 pitch.

Rays 11, Cardinals 7: Yandy Díaz singled four times, doubled and drove in four runs, and Steven Matz notched the victory against his former team as visiting Tampa Bay beat St. Louis to avoid a season-opening sweep.

Jonathan Aranda added three hits and two RBIs, and Cedric Mullins also drove in two as the top three in the Rays' lineup combined for nine hits and eight RBIs.

Nationals 6, Cubs 3: Joey Wiemer and Keibert Ruiz homered as visiting Washington earned a season-opening series win with a victory over Chicago.

Jake Irvin (1-0) allowed two runs and three hits with seven strikeouts and a walk in five innings and Clayton Beeter, the last of four Nationals relievers, worked a clean ninth for his first save.