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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

B-52s take to skies as Iran tensions rise

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Air Force bomber task force completed its first mission in Central Command on Sunday amid heightened tensions with Iran, where over the weekend officials called for U.S. forces to leave the Persian Gulf region and dubbed the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln a “target.”

The bomber mission was the first for the unit since it was deployed to the region last week in response to what U.S. officials have described as indications of Iranian threats against U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria and at sea.

B-52H Stratofortress aircraft assigned to the 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron from Louisiana’s Barksdale Air Force Base took off from Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, U.S. Air Forces Central Command said in a brief statement Monday. Additional bombers in the task force had been deployed to an unspecified base in the Middle East.

Along with the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group, the bombers were ordered into CENTCOM after what White House national security adviser John Bolton said last week were a “number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings” from Iran.

The show of force is the latest in a series of bilateral actions in recent months. President Donald Trump’s administration has sought to curb Tehran’s nuclear and mis-

sile programs and halt its support of proxy forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen by ratcheting up economic pressure, including reimposed sanctions against the country’s oil, shipping and banking sectors.

Over the weekend, Iranian President Hasan Rouhani called the economic pressure “fully fledged and unprecedented war,” the Iranian ISNA news agency reported.

Iranian military officials sought to downplay America’s recent military movements.

Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami, the newly appointed head of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, told parliament on Sunday that Washington was engaged in a “psychological war” and that the “comings and goings of their military” are a normal matter, ISNA reported.

While an aircraft carrier may have been a “serious threat for us in the past ... now it is a target and the threats have switched to opportunities,” said Amirali Hajizadeh, head of the Guard Corps’ aerospace division, the agency reported.

“If (the Americans) make a move, we will hit them in the head,” he said.

Meanwhile, Rear Adm. Hossein Khanzadi, commander of Iran’s naval forces, called for the Americans to exit the region.

“The presence of the Americans in the Persian Gulf has reached its end and they must leave,” he said, according to ISNA.

In addition to the carrier group and bombers, acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Friday approved the movement of the

amphibious transport dock USS Arlington and a Patriot missile battery to CENTCOM “in response to indications of heightened Iranian readiness to conduct offensive operations” against American troops or interests in the region.

Aboard the Arlington are an unspecified number of Marines, amphibious vehicles, landing craft and aircraft capable of supporting amphibious assault, special operations or expeditionary warfare missions. The Patriot battery is a long-range air defense system capable of countering tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and advanced aircraft, the Pentagon said in a statement.

The recent threat from Iran is to U.S. troops deployed in Iraq and Syria and on the seas in the Persian Gulf region, a senior military official told Stars and Stripes last week. U.S. officials have observed Iran-controlled vessels transporting military hardware including missiles, said the official who was speaking on condition of anonymity.

It’s not uncommon for the U.S. to deploy warships, including a carrier strike group, and several bombers to CENTCOM. B-1 Lancers and the USS John C. Stennis were both in the region earlier this year until a little over a month ago.

The Lincoln had already been slated to enter the region as it transited from Virginia to its new homeport in San Diego, but its timeline was expedited in light of the threats, U.S. officials said.

Officials: Tankers damaged off UAE in ‘sabotage’ attack

Associated Press

FUJAIRAH, United Arab Emirates — Two Saudi oil tankers and a Norwegian-flagged vessel were damaged in what Gulf officials described Monday as a “sabotage” attack off the coast of the United Arab Emirates.

While details of the incident remain unclear, it raised risks for shippers in a region vital to global energy supplies at a time of increasing tensions between the U.S. and Iran over its unraveling nuclear deal with world powers.

The U.S. issued a new warning to sailors as the UAE’s regional allies condemned Sunday’s alleged attack that the UAE says targeted four ships off the coast of its port city of Fujairah. It came just hours after Iranian and Lebanese media outlets aired false reports of explosions at the port.

While Gulf officials declined to say who they suspect may be responsible, the U.S. has warned ships that “Iran or its proxies” could be targeting maritime traffic in the region.

The scale of the alleged sabotage also remains unclear.

A statement from Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said the kingdom’s two oil tankers, including one due to later carry crude to the U.S., sustained “significant damage.” However, a report from Sky News Arabia, a satellite channel owned by an Abu Dhabi ruling family member, showed the allegedly targeted Saudi tanker Al Marzoqah afloat without any apparent damage.

The MT Andrea Victory, another of the allegedly targeted ships, sustained a hole in its hull just above its waterline from “an unknown object,” its owner,

Thome Ship Management, said in a statement.

Emirati officials identified the third ship as the Saudi-flagged oil tanker Amjad. The fourth ship was the A. Michel, a bunkering tanker flagged in Sharjah, one of the UAE’s seven emirates.

The U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet, which patrols the Persian Gulf and wider region from its base in Bahrain, declined to comment on the incident. The Navy runs a small supply operation out of the nearby Emirati naval base in Fujairah.

Navy orders closer monitoring of testing after recruit deaths

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Navy ordered sailors to watch fitness test participants more closely for signs of distress and to allow do-overs for those having a “bad day” following a string of deaths during the past year including two young female recruits who collapsed during the tests.

Four sailors have died in the past year during “seemingly normal physical fitness exercise,” the Navy said in an administrative memo issued late last week.

“One loss is too many and it is critical that every Sailor understands the risk factors for exercise-related death and the strategies to minimize those risks,” the memo stated.

New guidelines call for halting participants’ physical activity when they show unusual distress or fatigue and allowing them to make up the training or test later.

Everyone who takes part in rigorous exercise also should be monitored during a 10-minute cool-down afterward, the policy states.

CPR-trained personnel with defibrillators must be present during a Physical Readiness Test, or PRT, and any training that involves moderate exercise must be conducted within an ambulance’s normal emergency response area, the memo mandated.

“No one should risk their life by pushing through life-threatening conditions during a PRT,” the Navy said in the memo.

Seaman recruits Kelsey Nobles, 18, and Kierra Evans, 20, both collapsed during their final physical fitness tests at Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois — Nobles in April and Evans in February. Both were about a week from graduating.

The Navy is investigating the causes of their deaths.

The Navy pointed to personal risk factors that can cause over-

exertion, including:

- Illness, accumulated fatigue or dehydration.
- Poor conditioning or excessive body fat.
- Underlying heart condition.
- Exercise-induced asthma.
- Sick cell trait.
- Poor performance on a past fitness test.

External factors, including heat, humidity, high altitude and ingesting supplements or energy drinks with stimulants can cause further strain, the Navy said.

Three syndromes that can heighten the chance of a fatal collapse are cardiac arrest, heat stroke and exertional collapse associated with the sickle cell trait, the Navy’s memo said.

Any sailors who fail to pass a fitness test for a second time must be screened by medical professionals for a possible medical waiver or enrollment in a fitness enhancement program, the Navy said.

Postal Service to honor the USS Missouri

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

Seventy-five years after the USS Missouri was commissioned, the battleship on which World War II came to an end is getting its own stamp, the U.S. Postal Service announced Friday.

The Mighty Mo will appear on a “forever” stamp available June 11, exactly 75 years after its commissioning in 1944, according to the Postal Service statement.

The stamp depicts the battleship floating atop a rippling, blue ocean in front of a gold and gray cloudy sky, as seen in an image of the stamp released Friday. “USS Missouri” is printed in white font below the ship’s image.

“The stamp art depicts Missouri from a low vantage point almost at sea level, cutting through the water at a moderate speed commensurate with entering or leaving port,” the Postal Service said in its statement. “Large and imposing in the frame, Missouri is shown in the disruptive camouflage she wore from her commissioning until a refit in early 1945.”

On Sept. 2, 1945, World War II formally ended aboard the USS Missouri when the military leaders of the Allied powers and imperial Japan gathered on the ship in Tokyo Bay for a ceremony and signing of Japan’s unconditional surrender.

The 887-foot-long battleship served another four decades — including in the Korean War and Operation Desert Storm — before it was decommissioned in 1992, according to the Navy.

The Missouri and its crew were also featured in Cher’s 1989 “If I Could Turn Back Time” music video, in which the singer performed aboard the battleship in an infamously skimpy black outfit and leather jacket.

Accused SEAL’s lawyers: Prosecutors spied

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Military prosecutors in the case of a Navy SEAL charged with killing an Islamic State prisoner in Iraq in 2017 installed tracking software in emails sent to defense lawyers and a reporter in an apparent attempt to discover who was leaking information to the media, according to lawyers who told The Associated Press that they received the corrupted messages.

The defense attorneys said the intrusion may have violated constitutional protections against illegal searches, guarantees to the right to a lawyer and freedom of the press.

“I’ve seen some crazy stuff but for a case like this it’s com-

plete insanity,” said attorney Timothy Parlatore. “I was absolutely stunned ... especially given the fact that it’s so clear the government has been the one doing the leaking.”

Parlatore represents Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher, who has pleaded not guilty to a murder count in the death of an injured teenage militant he allegedly stabbed to death in 2017 in Iraq. Gallagher’s platoon commander, Lt. Jacob Portier, is fighting charges of conduct unbecoming an officer for allegedly conducting Gallagher’s reenlistment ceremony next to the corpse.

Attorneys for Portier filed a motion Monday asking a military judge to force prosecutors

to turn over information about what they were seeking and the extent of the intrusion.

“The fact that prosecutors have embedded their emails with devices designed to monitor defense communications at least implicates the Fourth and Sixth Amendment rights of Lt. Portier, and also impacts Air Force defense operations in the entire Western Circuit,” wrote Air Force Lt. Col. Nicholas McCue, one of Portier’s defense lawyers.

“In this case, discovery of the requested items is important to ensuring the prosecution, in this case, did not take any part in arranging or permitting an intrusion into Lt. Portier’s attorney-client relationship.”

Court rules against Apple in App Store suit

The Washington Post

Apple suffered a significant defeat at the Supreme Court on Monday when the justices ruled that consumers could forge ahead with a lawsuit against the iPhone giant over the way it manages its App Store.

The 5-4 decision could spell serious repercussions for one of Apple's most lucrative lines of business and open the door for similar legal action targeting other tech giants in Silicon Valley.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh joined the liberal justices in the majority.

At the heart of the case is Apple's handling of iPhone and iPad apps created by third-party developers and made available on its heavily curated App Store. Apple long has taken a commission on every paid app sold through this portal, rankling some developers that essentially see it as a tax.

The policy led iPhone owners to band together in 2011 with a class-action lawsuit, led by plaintiff Robert Pepper, who argued that consumers ultimately felt the brunt of Apple's policies because developers raised the prices of their apps. Those consumers brought their

case under federal antitrust laws, arguing that Apple's practices made it a monopoly.

In response, Apple pointed to decades-old Supreme Court precedent that found only the "direct purchasers" of a service are eligible to bring such an antitrust lawsuit in the first place. The iPhone giant said it only acted as the intermediary, providing a storefront where consumers found and purchased the apps they later installed on their phones.

An organization representing other tech giants, including Amazon, Facebook and Google, filed legal briefs in Apple's

defense, telling the Supreme Court that a decision allowing the lawsuit to proceed would put "these platform services ... under threat."

Some of the justices initially seemed skeptical of Apple's claims. During oral arguments last year, conservative Justice Samuel Alito questioned if the precedent that Apple cited currently "stands up" in the digital ecosystem.

"From my perspective, I've just engaged in a one-step transaction with Apple," said liberal Justice Elena Kagan at one point during the proceedings.

Colo. inmate charged with plotting murder of prosecutor

Associated Press

GREELEY, Colo. — A Colorado jail inmate who allegedly belongs to a notorious prison gang was charged with trying to arrange the murder of a prosecutor.

Billie Allen, 32, of Canon City is charged with solicitation of first-degree murder, the Greeley Tribune reported Saturday.

Allen is accused of trying to arrange the death of Weld County District Attorney Michael Rourke, who filed drug and weapons charges against Allen last year.

Allen is in the Weld County jail awaiting trial in the drugs and weapons case. Online jail records didn't indicate whether he has

a lawyer who could speak on his behalf.

Authorities said Allen is a member of the 211 Crew, a white supremacist prison gang.

In 2013, a 211 Crew member who had recently been paroled from prison, Evan Ebel, was suspected of posing as a pizza delivery man to shoot and kill Colorado prisons director Tom Clements. Ebel was later killed in a shootout with police in Texas.

Court documents say a Weld County jail deputy overheard Allen tell another inmate in December that he was working with another inmate to stage a "pizza party" for Rourke at 2:11 a.m. one day be-

fore Christmas.

"I'm going to make sure I have a pizza delivered to him," Allen told the inmate, according to court records. "He's going to get that (expletive) pizza."

The deputy said Allen complained in the same conversation that Rourke had filed excessive charges against him. At one point, Allen faced 17 counts. Some of them were dropped, but he still faced more than 50 years in prison if convicted.

If the plan fell through, Allen vowed to take a bite out of Rourke's face at the beginning of his trial, according to the court document.

Stress at airport as pilot arrested in triple homicide case

The Washington Post

Travelers who made the trek to Louisville International Airport in Kentucky to board their flight said the scene resembled one from a movie.

Passengers told Fox affiliate WDRB that when they heard their pilot had been arrested at the airport early Saturday morning, they assumed he'd been drinking alcohol on the job.

"It was very tense," Frances Wise, a passenger, told the station. "You could tell the employees knew something was going on."

More than three years after a triple homicide in a small Kentucky town, Christian Richard Martin, a pilot for a subsidiary of American Airlines, was arrested in connection with the deaths, authorities said.

Kentucky Attorney General Andy Beshear announced Saturday that Martin, 51, was indicted in the murders of Calvin and Pamela Phillips and Edward Dansereau, who were found dead in 2015 in Pembroke, Ky. Martin, a pilot for PSA Airlines, was taken into custody at the airport on three counts of murder, as well as

counts of arson, burglary and tampering with evidence.

American Airlines said in a statement that it was "deeply saddened" to learn about the allegations against Martin, who has been a pilot for PSA Airlines since January 2018. The airline said that he underwent a background check and "recurrent vetting" but that there was no "criminal history that would disqualify him from being a commercial pilot."

After the indictment, American Airlines said Martin has been placed on administrative suspension pending the outcome of the case.

In November 2015, Calvin Phillips was found dead of an apparent gunshot wound in his cellar in Pembroke, which is not far from the Tennessee border, police said. His wife, Pamela, and a neighbor, Dansereau, were discovered dead in a nearby field inside Pamela's car, which had been burned, according to The Associated Press.

Authorities have not released a motive, but the radio station WKDZ-FM reported last year that Calvin Phillips was a potential witness in a previous case against Martin.

China: Will 'never surrender' in the trade war with the US

Los Angeles Times

BEIJING — China on Monday announced tit-for-tat tariffs on \$60 billion in U.S. goods as brinkmanship between the world's two largest economies undermined hopes for an end to a trade war that threatens the global economy.

Saying it would "never surrender" to outside pressure, China published a list of U.S. goods that would be hit by tariffs starting June 1. The list on the Ministry of Finance website includes more than 5,000 items with tariffs of 5% to 25%.

"We have said many times that adding tariffs won't resolve any problem. China will never surrender to external pressure. We have the confidence and the ability to protect our lawful and legitimate rights," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang at a regular briefing earlier.

Chinese state media blamed Washington for the crisis and argued that China's economy and political system were strong enough to outlast the U.S. in a battle of wills.

The editor of the Communist Party-owned Global Times, Hu Xijin, earlier tweeted that China's countermeasures would be carefully designed to ensure that its plan "hits the U.S. while minimizing damage to itself."

Hopes for an end to the trade war plummeted Friday after the Trump administration raised tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods from 10% to 25%, a step that could threaten some Chinese companies heavily reliant on American exports.

With the U.S. threatening steps to impose tariffs on another \$325 billion in goods, Hu earlier tweeted that such a step would end a stalemate that China would not lose, because

of its political system.

Other state media took a similar line. An opinion piece in the People's Daily condemned Washington's "reckless leap into the dark" and said China would never compromise on matters of principle.

A Global Times editorial said Washington's "fierce offensive" would hurt America more than China.

"Washington obviously hopes that the fierce tariff war, which is unprecedented in trade history, will crush China's will in one fell swoop and force China to accept an unequal deal in a short term.

"However, once the country is strategically coerced, nothing is unbearable for China in order to safeguard its sovereignty and dignity as well as the long-term development rights of the Chinese people."

US official barbecues to sell Japan on US beef

Associated Press

TOKYO — U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue has picked up his barbecue tongs to convey his message to Japan: Buy more American beef.

Perdue said Monday that as a top consumer of U.S. beef, Japan should treat the U.S. fairly. He said he hoped President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will strike a trade deal during his boss' visit to Japan later this month but acknowledged more time might be needed.

"We're saying treat us as a prime customer the way we treated Japanese products for many years," Perdue told reporters after cooking some beef and pork on a Tokyo shopping mall rooftop, using his family's barbecue sauce recipe.

Perdue also expressed impatience with the progress of trade talks that have been going on for more than two years.

"From my perspective and our farmers in America, I'd have preferred it done yesterday, but the reality is these things take time," he said.

Japan's limits on imports of meat and other farm products have been a recurring issue with the U.S.

The Trump administration is worried that Japan will buy more from other nations that have signed trade deals with Japan in recent years, such as Australia and European countries.

Japan, a country of 126 million, is the fourth-largest market for U.S. agricultural products.

Perdue, who visited Japan for a weekend meeting of farm officials of the Group of 20 industrial nations, did not give specifics on timing, proposed tariff reductions or product sectors, saying those were up to trade negotiators.

"We should be treated as fairly as any other country with whom Japan has an agreement," he said.

2 dead at home of victim of crossbow case

Associated Press

BERLIN — The bodies of two women have been found at the apartment in Germany of one of three people who died at a hotel several hundred kilometers away in a mysterious case involving crossbows, police said Monday.

Police said they didn't immediately have details of the identities of the women found in a search of the apartment in Wittingen, in northern Germany, and what happened to them.

They said in a statement that they are investigating possible links to the three people found dead in Passau, near the Austrian border, on Saturday.

The discovery added a new level of mystery to that case. Investigators were still trying Monday to determine the relationship between the three people whose bodies shot with

crossbow bolts were found in Passau.

Bavarian police spokesman Stefan Gaisbauer said earlier Monday there are no indications that anyone other than those found dead were involved but that it is not yet clear what happened.

"We assume that no other people were involved in the deaths of the three," he said, adding that autopsy results were expected Tuesday.

The dead, a 53-year-old man and two women, ages 33 and 30, are all German citizens. The man and the older woman are from the village of Berod in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate in southwestern Germany, while the younger woman was last registered as living in Wittingen.

Police didn't release further details on the identities of the three.

The bodies were found at the hotel in Passau on Saturday morning by an employee who opened the door to their three-bedroom when they didn't respond to repeated knocking.

The man and the older woman were lying together in bed, while the younger woman was lying on the floor.

Passau prosecutor Walter Feiler told the German news agency dpa later Monday that the couple on the bed had several bolts in them and were found holding hands. The woman on the floor had one bolt in her body.

Two crossbows were found Saturday.

Police said Monday they had found a third, unused crossbow inside a bag.

Crossbows can be purchased legally in Germany by all people age 18 or older.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man shoos raccoon off boat, is probed

FL TAMPA — A Florida agency is investigating potential animal cruelty charges after a lawyer posted video of himself shoos a raccoon off his boat into the Gulf of Mexico.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that Clearwater attorney Thomas Cope posted the video to Facebook, later issuing an apology for his actions and saying he wished he could have returned the animal to shore. Cope said the boat was about 20 miles out in the Gulf when the raccoon appeared growling and hissing.

The video also includes a man's voice yelling at the raccoon and saying, "So long, sucker."

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said in a statement it learned of the video Wednesday and began an investigation.

Quick-thinking officers save baby

RI WARWICK — Two Rhode Island police officers are being praised for their quick actions that saved the life of a choking baby.

Warwick police Officers Brian Holleran and Anthony D'Abrosca were responding to another call in the Kohl's parking lot on Friday when they heard a woman calling for help.

Police said the two officers rushed into the store and saw that the 16-month-old baby was choking. Holleran told WJAR that he gave her a couple of blows to the back and performed CPR.

After the officer's actions, the baby was able to breathe again. Police said the baby was taken

to the hospital and has made a full recovery.

Suspect in machete attacks in custody

VA WYTHEVILLE — A Virginia sheriff said a person is in custody after two people were assaulted on the Appalachian Trail.

Wythe County Sheriff Keith Dunagan told media outlets that a man was assaulted overnight Saturday in Wythe County and a woman was assaulted in Smyth County.

WSLS reported that deputies do not yet know if the victims were together or whether those were separate incidents.

The sheriff told WJHL that crews were able to locate a victim and a suspect from a phone ping.

Neither the identities of the victims nor their conditions have been released, nor has the suspect's name.

Dog shot at school while being walked

OR PORTLAND — Portland police said a dog was shot at a southeast Portland high school.

KGW-TV reported that at about 10:30 p.m. Friday police responded to a report of a dog shot at Grant High School at Marshall Campus.

The caller said he was a custodian who said the dog's owner reported the shooting to him and then left with the dog.

Officers found the dog and the owner at a nearby animal shelter. The dog had been injured by gunshot wounds.

During an investigation, officers learned the dog's owner had been exercising the dog on school property when an unknown suspect fired at the dog.

Driver blames spider after vehicle flips

NY BATAVIA — Blame the spider.

That's what a driver did after his car landed upside down off a road in upstate Batavia.

According to the Genesee County Sheriff's Office, no one was injured Friday when Richard Amico Jr. hit an embankment with his Buick, flipping over and ending up in a driveway.

Amico told the sheriff's office that a spider had jumped on his leg and startled him. He said he lost control of the car while trying to get the creature off.

Driver tells officers he was too drunk to drive

NM LOS CRUCES — A New Mexico man is facing charges after police said he caused a multiple-vehicle crash, then told an officer he was too drunk to complete field sobriety tests.

The Las Cruces Sun-News reported that court documents show Gregory Trevor Jackson De Rouen, 31, was arrested April 20 after the crashes.

According to Las Cruces police, De Rouen plowed his four-door Toyota van into a parked pickup truck, which then collided with another parked vehicle.

Police said De Rouen failed multiple field sobriety tests, then admitted to an officer he was too drunk to pass one.

Police: Stolen SUV crashed into house

WA RICHLAND — An SUV allegedly taken from Leslie Groves Park by two juvenile girls crashed into a Richland home shortly after the vehicle went missing.

The Tri-City Herald said the red Subaru was reported missing from the park at about 10:30 a.m. Friday. Police said that at about the same time, officers received a report that a house had been struck by the vehicle.

Police said the driver lost control on Catskill Street, drove onto the lawn and crashed into a house.

Tall grass fines lead to home foreclosure

FL DUNEDIN — A Florida man says his grass grew a little too tall. But he doesn't think he should lose his house over it.

The city of Dunedin moved to foreclose on the home of Jim Ficken, 69, over \$30,000 in unpaid code violation fines. The Tampa Bay Times reported that Ficken was fined \$500 a day last summer because his grass was taller than 10 inches.

Last summer, Ficken said, he was away for lengthy periods managing the estate of his deceased mother in South Carolina. Ficken said the man paid to mow his lawn then died unexpectedly.

Bus driver refuses to allow student to board

DE WILMINGTON — A 14-year-old Delaware student is back on his school bus after the driver refused to let him board it one day.

The Delaware News Journal reported that the driver wouldn't let Kyle Manley board the bus to Stanton Middle School on May 7 after checking the bus roster. Sutton Bus Co. told his parents later that Kyle had been riding the wrong bus the entire school year.

Kyle has since been reassigned to the bus he has ridden all year.

From wire reports

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Leonard's buzzer-beater lifts Raptors

Associated Press

TORONTO — Kawhi Leonard bounced, bounced, bounced, bounced the Philadelphia 76ers out of the playoffs.

Leonard hit a shot from the corner over Joel Embiid at the buzzer that bounced off the rim four times before falling to give the Toronto Raptors a 92-90 victory over the 76ers on Sunday night in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference semifinal series. It was the first winning buzzer-beater in a Game 7 in NBA history.

"It was great," Leonard said. "That's something I never experienced before, Game 7, a game-winning shot. It was a blessing to be able to get to that point and make that shot and feel that moment."

After Philadelphia's Jimmy Butler tied it with a driving layup with 4.2 seconds left, Toronto used its final timeout to draw up a play for Leonard,

who dribbled toward the right corner and launched the high-arching shot.

It bounced to the top of the backboard, hit the near side of the rim again, then the other side twice before going through, setting off a wild celebration as the Raptors advanced to the conference finals for the second time in four seasons. They will open the conference finals Wednesday night at Milwaukee.

"It's tough," Butler said. "Nobody likes to lose, not that way."

Leonard scored 41 points on 16-of-39 shooting.

"He was awesome at both ends," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "That's his uniqueness. Not only can he get you 30 and anywhere upwards from that, but there's moments when he can just decide you're not scoring, either."

The Raptors ran a similar play for Leonard during the first round against Orlando.

That time, he caught the ball and shot without dribbling.

"Remembering that moment, I knew I had some time to try to get some space, rather than just catch and shoot the ball," Leonard said. "I ended up finding a spot that I like, that I work on. I just knew I had to shoot it high."

Serge Ibaka added 17 points, and Pascal Siakam had 11 points and 11 rebounds for Toronto.

Embiid, in tears as he left the court, led the 76ers with 21 points and 11 rebounds. JJ Redick had 17 points, Butler added 16, and Tobias Harris had 15 points and 10 rebounds.

"I give Toronto credit for a tenacious, switching defense," 76ers coach Brett Brown said. "We had a hard time turning the corner once they did switch."

Redick tied it at 85 with a three-point play with 3:29 left. Nearly two minutes passed

before the next basket, Leonard's long jumper with 1:41 to go that was initially ruled a 3, but changed to a 2 after video review.

On Philadelphia's next possession, Kyle Lowry forced a steal near midcourt and fed Siakam for a fast-break layup, giving Toronto an 89-85 lead with 1:14 left.

Butler made one of two at the line and Leonard missed a pair of jump shots, giving the 76ers the ball down 89-86 with 24.1 seconds remaining. Embiid was fouled and made both, cutting it to 89-88 with 12 seconds left.

Leonard was fouled with 10.8 seconds left. He made the first, but missed the second, setting up Butler's tying layup.

"We did a lot of things that we could have done better but we found a way to win the game," Lowry said. "That's all that matters."

Blazers top Nuggets, advance to West finals

Associated Press

DENVER — Damian Lillard's shots kept banging off the backboard, rattling off the rim, going everywhere but through the hoop.

The Portland Trail Blazers are going to the Western Conference Finals anyway because CJ McCollum had his back.

McCollum scored 37 points and added a crucial chase-down block in the closing minutes that helped the Blazers beat the Denver Nuggets 100-96 in Game 7 on Sunday to advance to their first conference championship since 2000.

They'll open Tuesday night at Golden State against the two-time defending NBA champion Warriors in a series pitting Portland's Seth Curry against his big brother, Golden State star Steph Curry.

Lillard scored 13 points and made just 3 of 17 shots from the field, but two of them were critical three-pointers in the fourth quarter that put Portland ahead 81-76 and 92-85.

"It's a luxury to have two guys like that who can find different ways to score in different ways," Blazers coach Terry Stotts said. "CJ does it one way, Dame does it in another. On a night when Dame struggled

shooting the ball CJ came up big."

"CJ McCollum showed why they have one of the best backcourts in the NBA," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "He put his team on his back and made big play after big play."

None bigger than when his crucial chase-down block with 4:44 left and the Trail Blazers leading 87-83.

McCollum raced to stop a breakaway layup by Jamal Murray, who had a miserable night shooting, missing 14 of 18 shots.

"Seth did a good job of cutting off his lane and making him have to go over his head," McCollum said. "He put it right there for me and I went and got it 'Bron style. Shout out to my guy 'Bron. It was a mini-version of 'Bron's block on Iggy some years ago. Definitely didn't get up as high but it was a cool play. I might get a picture of that."

Lillard said it was just the spark the Blazers needed to complete the comeback from a 17-point first-half hole.

"Those are the plays that get teams going, coming off a turnover and they get an easy one," he said. "At that point of the game you want to make them work for everything."

The Nuggets were down 96-95 coming out of a timeout when McCollum hit a pull-up jumper over Torrey Craig with 12.4 sec-

onds left.

"All summer long I'm going to probably be second-guessing myself at the timeout," Malone said. "That's a shot he makes consistently. Torrey played good defense, as good a defense you can play 1-on-1. And I was saying after we should have sent someone at him. He's having a great game and make somebody else make a play or make a shot."

The mismanagement continued. Denver's Nikola Jokic was fouled inside shooting a 2-pointer with 11.4 seconds left and missed the first free throw. Instead of missing the second on purpose, he made it for a 98-96 deficit.

Eric Turner then hit two free throws with eight seconds left for the final margin, and Jokic missed a long three-pointer, with five seconds remaining, Turner grabbed the rebounds and dribbled out the clock.

The Nuggets raced to a 39-22 lead and Game 7 was beginning to look a lot like Game 5, when Denver blew out Portland by 26 points in this building. But Stotts called a timeout with 7:26 left in the second quarter and his team began chipping away.

"There wasn't going to be any quit," Stotts said. "I didn't think they ever stopped believing. ... It was just about regrouping."

Briefly

Cavs hire Michigan head coach Beilein

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The Cavaliers went back to college to get a coach.

John Beilein has left Michigan following a successful 12-year run and will take his shot in the NBA, signing a five-year contract with Cleveland on Monday.

Beilein, 66, wasn't thought to be on the team's radar, but the Cavs are confident he's the right choice to continue their rebuild and get them back to relevance following a 19-63 season.

"John is one of the most accomplished and innovative basketball minds and leaders in the entire game," Cavs general manager Koby Altman said in a statement. "He has a unique ability to create an outstanding culture that will promote the development of young players and provide a solid structure to the entire program; not to mention the fact that John Beilein wins everywhere he goes."

"We are excited coach Beilein is joining our organization as we continue to build the foundation that any enterprise needs to be successful and competitive year in and year out."

The deal with Beilein came together quickly in the past 24 hours and was finalized Sunday after the Cavs had spent the weekend in Denver interviewing several NBA assistants.

While Beilein lacks pro experience, he's long been regarded as one of college hoops' best minds and has shown an ability to develop young players. His hiring is a bit of a surprise since it was expected the Cavs would hire a younger coach for their growing team. Cleveland is expected to surround Beilein with an experienced staff.

The Cavs were able to lure Beilein away from Michigan, where he was the winningest coach in school history with a 278-150 record in 12 seasons.

Beilein called Cleveland's job "the perfect fit for me."

Jockey suspended in Derby disqualification

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Jockey Luis Saez was suspended for 15 days for failing to control Maximum Security and causing interference that resulted in the horse's historic disqualification as the Kentucky Derby winner.

The decision by the Kentucky stewards was announced by the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission.

Saez was cited for failing to "make the proper effort to maintain a straight course" in the May 4 race at Churchill Downs. Country House, a 65-1 shot was elevated and declared the winner. It was the first time the horse finishing first at the Derby was disqualified for interference. Maximum Security was placed 17th of 19 horses.

Saez's suspension is May 23 through June 14 and covers racing dates. Messages left with the jockey's lawyer and agent were not immediately returned.

The stewards' ruling comes a week after the racing commission denied an appeal of Maximum Security's disqualification by co-owner Gary West. The commission's swift denial came hours after West announced that Maximum Security would not run in this weekend's Preakness at Pimlico in Baltimore.

The commission said that stewards' decisions are not subject to appeal. It also denied a request to stay the disqualification ruling pending appeal.

Maximum Security led a muddy Derby from wire to wire, holding off Country House down the stretch in a trip that initially appeared to improve the 9-2 second betting choice to 5-0 lifetime.

Stewards instead took the colt down after determining Maximum Security impeded the path of several horses between the far and final turns of the 1¼-mile race.

Bruins thump 'Canes, take 2-0 series lead

Associated Press

BOSTON — With a five-goal, third-period lead and the Bruins still not done scoring, the crowd in the new Boston Garden began a throaty chant of "We want the Cup!"

The next time they see their team, the NHL's championship trophy might be on the line for real.

Matt Grzelcyk scored twice — his first career multigoal game — and Tuukka Rask made 21 saves to lead the Bruins to a 6-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes on Sunday and give Boston a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Connor Clifton had his first career NHL goal — the 19th Bruins player to score this postseason, tying a franchise record. Jake DeBrusk, David Backes and Danton Heinen also connected, and Torey Krug and Charlie Coyle had three assists apiece.

"It does feel contagious," said Boston coach Bruce Cassidy, whose team won its fifth straight game and needs two more victories to reach the Stanley Cup Final for the third time in nine seasons. "Everybody's contributing."

The series moves to Carolina for Games 3 and 4 on Tuesday and Thursday nights. The Hurricanes need to win at least one to force a fifth game back in Boston on Saturday night.

"Sometimes you've got to eat a poop sandwich. It doesn't taste good and you have to chew on it for a little bit," Hurricanes captain Justin Williams said. "We'll have to do it for a couple days and get the taste out of our mouth next game."

The Bruins won 5-2 in Game 1, but the Hurricanes led early in the third period and it was still 3-2 with 4 minutes to play.

This one wasn't ever close.

Petr Mrazek stopped just 19 shots, and Boston led 6-0 before Williams and Teuvo Teravainen scored in the last nine minutes to deprive Rask

of a seventh career postseason shutout.

"The other night wasn't as bad. We were right in the game," said Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour, whose team also fell behind 0-2 against the Washington Capitals in the first round before eliminating the defending champions in seven. "They're playing their game; we haven't gotten to ours."

Nearly a half century after Bobby Orr soared through the air on Mother's Day to finish off the 1970 Stanley Cup, the Hall of Famer was in the building as a pregame hype man known as the banner captain. The crowd gave him a standing ovation, and the team responded as well.

Grzelcyk and DeBrusk scored late in the first, and Clifton made it 3-0 early in the second. With two minutes left in the middle period and Boston back on the power play, Heinen took a long pass out of the Boston zone from Marcus Johansson and drew two defenders with him before sliding it into the slot.

Grzelcyk slipped the puck over to his backhand and beat Mrazek to make it 4-0.

"That was the cooker," Brind'Amour said. "We needed an answer and we didn't have one."

Backes scored 1:10 into the third period, leaving Mrazek looking over to the bench to see if he would be replaced. Brind'Amour said Mrazek, who returned from an injury for Game 1 after Curtis McElhinney started the last two games of the East semifinals, had earned the right to stay in if that's what he wanted to do.

"We talked about it, but he doesn't want to come out. He's a battler," Brind'Amour said. "A lot of other guys on the bench deserve to come out, if that's how we're doing it."

Heinen finished on a feed from Patrice Bergeron to give Boston a six-goal lead with 15 minutes left.

Dodgers dominate Nationals

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Hyun-Jin Ryu has been dominant for the Dodgers since the start of last season. His latest gem nearly topped them all.

The left-hander took a no-hitter into the eighth inning and Corey Seager hit a grand slam as Los Angeles blanked the Washington Nationals 6-0 on Sunday to split a four-game series that featured three shutouts. Gerardo Parra doubled with one out in the eighth for Washington's only hit.

"The past couple games I have been in a good rhythm," Ryu said through a translator. "I just try to use their weakness, be aggressive and attack the zone. I don't think about having no-hit stuff. It was about executing the game plan."

Ryu (5-1) struck out nine in eight innings and threw a career-high 116 pitches, 79 for strikes. He fired a four-hit shutout in his previous start Tuesday against Atlanta.

It was the second time Ryu carried a no-hitter into the eighth at Dodger Stadium. He held Cincinnati hitless in 2014 until Todd Frazier led off the eighth with a double.

"To watch him work as a technician, it was masterful. He wasn't stressed at all," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

Ryu has tossed 25 straight scoreless innings and is 12-4 with a major league-leading 1.71 ERA since April 10, 2018. Opponents are batting .205 against him during that span.

As stingy as those numbers are, Ryu is even better at Dodger Stadium — going 7-0 with a 0.90 ERA in his last seven home starts.

Seager, who drove in five runs, said he tried not to think about Ryu closing in on a no-hitter, but it started to creep into his mind in the latter innings.

"Regardless, he was really special. Command, speed changes — he mixed it up and those guys were off balance," Seager said.

Roundup

BoSox, Martinez pound Mariners

Associated Press

BOSTON — J.D. Martinez made hitting look easy even in the lousy weather conditions by belting his first two home runs of the season at soggy Fenway Park.

Martinez sent a pair of shots over the Green Monster, rookie Michael Chavis drove in five runs and the surging Boston Red Sox beat the stumbling Seattle Mariners 11-2 to complete a three-game sweep Sunday.

"Is that right?" Martinez said when informed they were his first long balls at home this year. "I didn't even know that. Definitely weird. I've always liked hitting here and always enjoyed playing in this ballpark. For that, definitely weird."

It was the fifth straight win and 16th in 22 games following a slow start for the defending World Series champions. Martinez, who has seven homers, finished with three RBIs and scored three runs. Chavis hit three singles.

"We knew we could get to this point," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "It was just a bad stretch."

Omar Narvaez homered for Seattle (20-23), which has lost four in a row and 15 of 19 after opening 13-2. The Mariners were outscored 34-8 in the series, completing a 2-8 road trip.

Playing in steady light-to-moderate rain the entire time with temperatures in the mid-40s, the Mariners made five fielding blunders in the first three innings. Boston even had a few baserunners that appeared somewhat cautious in the conditions.

"It was tough," Martinez said. "It definitely wasn't baseball weather if you ask me, but we found a way to get it done."

Spotstarter Hector Velazquez (1-2) gave up two runs in five innings for Boston.

Yankees 7, Rays 1: Masahiro Tanaka (3-3) matched his season high of seven innings, allowing one run and five hits with seven strikeouts and no walks to outpitch reigning Cy

Young Award winner Blake Snell. Visiting New York closed back within one-half game of AL East-leading Tampa Bay.

Thairo Estrada homered just after play resumed following a ninth-inning power outage that caused a 43-minute delay.

Astros 15, Rangers 5: George Springer was 5-for-5 with four RBIs and a pair of home runs that increased total to an AL-high 15 as host Houston completed a four-game sweep of Texas and extended its winning streak to five.

Alex Bregman also homered twice and tied his career high with five RBIs as the Astros set season highs for runs and hits (18).

Cubs 4, Brewers 1: Jon Lester pitched 6²/₃ gutsy innings, Kris Bryant hit a two-run homer and host Chicago beat Milwaukee to take a weekend series between the top teams in the NL Central.

Lester (3-1) gave Chicago exactly what it needed a day after it used seven relievers during a 2-1 victory in 15 innings. Taking the mound on a rainy, cold night at Wrigley Field, the ace left-hander allowed an unearned run and nine hits while throwing a season-high 116 pitches.

White Sox 5, Blue Jays 1: Lucas Giolito (4-1) allowed one run and four hits in seven innings to win his second straight start, matching his season high with eight strikeouts as Chicago beat host Toronto.

Tim Anderson and Yonder Alonso homered for Chicago.

Tigers 5, Twins 3: Nicholas Castellanos was a triple short of the cycle, hitting a two-run homer to lead Detroit past host Minnesota.

Daniel Norris (2-1) gave up two runs and six hits in 6¹/₃ innings, his longest start since May 24, 2017.

Phillies 6, Royals 1: Cole Irvin (1-0) threw seven innings of one-run ball, allowing five hits with one walk and five strikeouts in his major league debut, and Philadelphia beat

Kansas City.

Pirates 10, Cardinals 6: Josh Bell hit a tying three-run homer off John Brebbia (1-2) in the seventh and drove in a career-high five runs, and Adam Frazier hit a tiebreaking, pinch-hit double. Pittsburgh scored five times in the seventh inning and twice in the eighth to rally from a 6-3 deficit and beat host St. Louis.

Rockies 10, Padres 7: Charlie Blackmon homered twice, Antonio Senzatela pitched effectively into the seventh inning and host Colorado held on.

Raimel Tapia had three hits, including a two-run homer, and pinch-hitter Daniel Murphy hit a three-run double for the Rockies, who took two of three from San Diego.

Orioles 5, Angels 1: Chris Davis homered in his return to the cleanup spot in Baltimore's batting order, going deep for the second time in three games, and the Orioles beat Los Angeles to avoid a three-game sweep.

Giants 6, Reds 5: Pablo Sandoval homered and doubled in his second three-hit game this season, scoring the go-ahead run on Kevin Pillar's two-out single in the eighth inning to lift host San Francisco over Cincinnati.

Sandoval hit a two-run, opposite-field homer to left in the first off Tyler Mahle that tied the score 2-2, his fourth home run this season. He singled in the sixth.

Indians 5, Athletics 3: Roberto Perez hit a three-run homer in the sixth inning and Cleveland beat host Oakland.

Jefry Rodriguez (1-2) allowed three runs in six innings for his first win. The right-hander gave up six hits and three walks with three strikeouts.

Braves 5, Diamondbacks 3: Max Fried (1-2) pitched five effective innings after leaving his last start early, Johan Camargo hit an early two-run inling and Atlanta beat host Arizona.

Tyler Flowers had two RBIs, including a run-scoring triple in the eighth inning.