

US fires warning shots at Iranian boats

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Coast Guard cutter fired shots at a group of Iranian fast-attack boats in the Strait of Hormuz as the boats quickly approached several U.S. warships traveling into the Persian Gulf, the chief Pentagon spokesman said Monday.

The USCGC Maui fired about 30 warning shots Monday when 13 vessels of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard Corps came too close to the U.S. ships and "conducted unsafe and unprofessional maneuvers and failed to exercise due regard for the safety of U.S. forces as required under international law," John Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon.

"This is the kind of activity that could lead to somebody getting hurt and can lead to a real miscalculation there in the region and that doesn't serve anybody's interests," he said.

It was the second time in two weeks that U.S. ships fired warning shots at Iranian vessels. On April 26, the Navy patrol ship USS Firebolt fired warning shots at three Iranian fast-attack vessels in the Persian Gulf that came within 68 yards of it and the patrol boat USCGC Baranof.

"Sadly, harassment by the IRGC Navy is not a new phenomenon," Kirby said. "It is something that all our commanding officers and crews of our vessels are trained for when serving in the [U.S.] Central Command area of responsibility, particularly in and around the Gulf."

On Monday, the Maui, patrol ship USCGC Wrangell, guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey and coastal patrol ships USS Thunderbolt, USS Hurricane and USS Squall were escorting the guided-missile submarine USS Georgia, which had surfaced to transit the strait, when the Iranian boats approached the formation at high speeds, the Navy said in a statement.

Two of the boats then broke off and approached the U.S. ships from behind at about 37 mph "with their weapons uncovered and manned," according to the Navy, which described the Iranian vessels as "a type of speedboat armed with machine guns."

With the U.S. ships sandwiched between the two groups of Iranian boats, the Maui and Squall attempted to use "all the appropriate and established procedures," such as horn blasts and bridge-to-bridge radio transmission before resorting to the warning shots,

Kirby said.

Maui fired rounds from a .50-caliber machine gun when the Iranian boats came within 300 yards, and again when they came within 150 yards of the U.S. group, Kirby said.

"After the second round of warning shots, the 13 fast-attack craft from the IRGCN broke contact," he said.

Kirby said it was "not insignificant" that the tense exchange happened in the busy strait that connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The channel is a "vital maritime pathway for crude oil transport," according to the CIA factbook.

"It's an international waterway and of course when you're in the strait, there are certain limits to your ability to maneuver," Kirby said. "I mean, it is a choke point in the region."

Prior to the April encounter, it had been nearly four years since the last time that U.S. ships fired warning shots against Iranian boats when the Thunderbolt did so to warn off a Revolutionary Guard vessel in July 2017 that came within 68 yards of it, according to an Associated Press report.

Pfizer shot expanded to US children as young as 12

Associated Press

U.S. regulators on Monday expanded the use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine to children as young as 12, offering a way to protect the nation's adolescents before they head back to school in the fall and paving the way for them to return to more normal activities.

Shots could begin as soon as Thursday, after a federal vaccine advisory committee issues recommendations for using the two-dose vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds. An announcement is expected Wednesday.

Most COVID-19 vaccines worldwide have been authorized for adults. Pfizer's vaccine is being used in multiple countries for teens as young as 16, and Canada recently became the first to expand use to 12 and up. Parents, school administrators and public health officials elsewhere have eagerly

awaited approval for the shot to be made available to more kids.

"This is a watershed moment in our ability to fight back the COVID-19 pandemic," Dr. Bill Gruber, a Pfizer senior vice president who's also a pediatrician, told The Associated Press.

The Food and Drug Administration declared that the Pfizer vaccine is safe and offers strong protection for younger teens based on testing of more than 2,000 U.S. volunteers ages 12 to 15. The agency noted there were no cases of COVID-19 among fully vaccinated adolescents compared with 16 among kids given dummy shots. More intriguing, researchers found the kids developed higher levels of virus-fighting antibodies than earlier studies measured in young adults.

The younger teens received the same

vaccine dosage as adults and had the same side effects, mostly sore arms and flu-like fever, chills or aches that signal a revved-up immune system, especially after the second dose.

Pfizer's testing in adolescents "met our rigorous standards," FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks said. "Having a vaccine authorized for a younger population is a critical step in continuing to lessen the immense public health burden caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech recently requested similar authorization in the European Union, with other countries to follow.

The latest news is welcome for U.S. families struggling to decide what activities are safe to resume when the youngest family members remain unvaccinated.

DOD rethinks cloud-computing contract

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is reconsidering how to make a massive shift to cloud computing, officials said Monday, suggesting it could scrap the so-called JEDI contract potentially worth \$10 billion that was awarded to Microsoft Corp. but is mired in legal challenges.

“We are going to have to assess where we are in regards to the ongoing litigation and determine what the best path forward is for the department,” deputy Pentagon press secretary Jamal Brown said, citing remarks by Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks at a public forum late last month.

Hicks said then that she could not comment on the legal case or say what course of action the Pentagon will take. But she said a move to cloud computing is essential for a number of reasons, including cybersecurity.

“So for all of those reasons, moving to a cloud architecture is going to be vital to how

we innovate in this department and we’re going to have to assess where we are with regard to the ongoing litigation around JEDI and determine what the best path forward is for the department,” Hicks said April 30.

The Wall Street Journal was first to report Monday that the Pentagon is considering “pulling the plug” on the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure project, known as JEDI, in light of ongoing legal challenges to the Pentagon’s decision in 2019 to award the contract to Microsoft over Amazon Web Services.

Amazon Web Services, a market leader in providing cloud computing services, had long been considered a leading candidate to run the JEDI project, which would store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the U.S. military to improve communications with soldiers on the battlefield and use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

In its legal challenge, Amazon has asserted that the bidding was improperly influenced by then-President Donald Trump’s dislike of Amazon and its chief executive officer, Jeff Bezos. Bezos owns The Washington Post, a news outlet often criticized by Trump.

In April 2020, a government watchdog concluded that the contracting process was in line with legal and government purchasing standards. The Defense Department inspector general found no evidence of White House interference in the contract award process. But the report said investigators could not fully review that aspect of the matter because the White House would not allow unfettered access to witnesses.

The Pentagon had indicated to Congress months ago that if the legal challenges dragged on too long it might have to move in a different direction. Last month a federal judge rejected a Pentagon move to have key parts of Amazon’s complaint dismissed.

Marines, sailor arrested in separate trespassing events at Japanese homes

BY SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Three U.S. service members were arrested on suspicion of illegally entering Japanese homes in two unrelated incidents over the weekend, one south of Tokyo and the other on Okinawa, according to Japanese police.

A sailor identified by police as Tanner Nicholas Moseley, 20, was taken into custody at 8:12 p.m. Sunday on suspicion of trespassing into a home in the Shiomidai area of Yokosuka city, a Kanagawa prefectural police spokeswoman said Tuesday.

Government spokespeople in Japan traditionally speak to the media on condition they are not identified by name.

Moseley was arrested after the home’s resident called police. No damages or injuries occurred, another police spokesman said.

Moseley told police he is a petty officer third class assigned to the USS Chancellorsville, the spokesman said. The guided-missile cruiser is homeported at Yokosuka Naval Base.

Moseley had been drinking and told police he didn’t remember why he entered the home, according to the spokesman.

Police referred the case to prosecutors Tuesday, the spokeswoman said.

“The Navy is cooperating with the Japanese police,” base spokesman Randall Baucom said in an email Tuesday to Stars and Stripes. “The Navy takes all allegations involving misconduct of our Sailors very seriously.”

Meanwhile, two Marines were arrested on Okinawa on Sunday after allegedly entering a home in the Matsuo area of Naha city early that morning, according to a Naha Police spokesman.

Lance Cpl. Kevin Doffney Jr., 22, who said he was assigned to Camp Hansen, and Cpl. Dante Leopoldo Doffney, 20, who said he was assigned to Camp Foster, were arrested on suspicion of entering a home without justifiable reason, the spokesman said Tuesday. They claimed to be brothers, he added.

The pair, who had been drinking, entered the property after they had fled from police, the spokesman said. The police had stopped the Marines after receiving a report of a suspected accident with loud noise and foreigners changing tires on the street in the Makishi area of the city around 1:49 a.m., he said.

Kevin Doffney told police that the pair ran away in fear, according to the spokesman.

Navy shares photos of enormous Arabian Sea weapons seizure

The Washington Post

The U.S. Navy has shared photographs of an illicit arms shipment that it said it found aboard an intercepted ship in the Arabian Sea.

The images, taken Saturday, showed thousands of weapons laid out across the rear deck of the USS Monterey, part of the Navy’s 5th Fleet, which is headquartered in Bahrain.

In a statement, the 5th Fleet said the weapons included “dozens of advanced Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles” and “thousands of Chinese Type 56 assault rifles,” as well as hundreds of Kalashnikov machine guns, sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. The weapons were found during a routine flag verification check of a stateless dhow traveling in international waters, the Navy said.

The destination for the weapons was not immediately clear. Similar shipments intercepted had been bound for Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, U.S. officials said.

Shahrokh Nazemi, head of the media office at the Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations, said in an email Monday that Iran “categorically denies being in any way involved.”

States push jobless to return to work

Associated Press

STOWE, Vt. — Eduardo Rovetto is hoping the state of Vermont’s reinstated requirement that people who are collecting unemployment benefits must seek work to qualify will help him hire enough staff for his restaurant in the resort town of Stowe.

After more than a year of coronavirus restrictions on his business, Picasso Pizzeria & Lounge, he’s expecting a breakout summer tourism season. But like employers across the country, he’s worried he won’t have enough workers.

“We’ve been getting many excuses as to why not to return,” said Rovetto, who is offering a signing bonus of up to \$600 to try to add 15 to 20 employees who agree to stay through the middle of October. “Obviously, it was a legitimate one with COVID, but, you know, I think that’s getting used less and less now. The vaccines are free; they are out there for anyone.”

Many employers are telling similar sto-

ries. Fourteen months after COVID-19 put hundreds of thousands of people out of work, the U.S. economy is rebounding and employers are desperate for workers.

To encourage people to return to work, more states are making it harder for people to stay on unemployment. Many blame the easy benefits that followed the pandemic, including what is now a \$300-a-week supplemental federal payment on top of state benefits. The argument is that people make more money staying home than going back to work.

Several states have begun requiring those receiving unemployment benefits to show they are actively searching for work, and a few will stop providing the additional federal supplement.

It’s not just the hospitality sector that is scrambling to fill positions. Alene Candles, based in Milford, N.H., is looking to fill 1,500 positions for its facility there and another in New Albany, Ohio, to meet demand for the holiday season. Company representatives will be participating in a

number of virtual job fairs this month.

On Monday, the state of New Hampshire reopened its job centers for the first time since the pandemic hit to help people looking for work, but only a handful showed up in the first few hours at the largest one in Manchester.

Labor experts have said the shortage is not just about the \$300 payment. Some unemployed people also have been reluctant to look for work because they fear catching the virus. Others have found new occupations rather than return to their old jobs. And many women, especially working mothers, have had to leave the workforce to care for children.

The details and the timing of the state-led efforts to get people back to work differ, but they are coming from states led by both Republicans and Democrats.

In addition to Vermont, states reinstating the work-search requirement include Arizona, Maine, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and South Carolina.

Schools fight to limit number of dropouts

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — U.S. educators are doing everything they can to track down high-school students who stopped showing up to classes and to help them get the credits needed to graduate amid an anticipated surge in the country’s dropout rate during the coronavirus pandemic.

There isn’t data available yet on how the pandemic has affected the nation’s overall dropout rate — 2019 is the last year for which it is available — and many school officials have said it’s too early to know how many students who stopped logging on for distance learning don’t plan to return.

But soaring numbers of students who are failing classes or are chronically absent have experts fearing the worst, and schools have been busy track-

ing down wayward seniors through social media, knocking on their doors, assigning staff to help them make up for lost time and, in some cases, even relaxing graduation requirements.

At one high school in Kansas City, Kan., staff members have made thousands of calls to the families of at-risk students, said Troy Pitsch, who supervises high school principals in the city.

“If we lose a student, it is going to be after kicking and screaming and fighting tooth and nail for them,” Pitsch said.

To keep students on track, some local governments and school systems have waived certain testing requirements for graduation or changed grading policies so that missed assignments aren’t as damaging.

FAA seeks fines against more unruly passengers

Associated Press

Federal officials said Monday that they are pursuing civil penalties against two more passengers for interfering with airline crews, the latest in a surge of such cases in recent months.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it is continuing to take a zero-tolerance stance against unruly passengers.

The newest cases involve a passenger who refused to wear a face mask, which is required by federal regulation, and another who cursed flight attendants and the captain after boarding a plane.

The FAA says it has received 1,300 complaints from airlines about disruptive passengers this year and has announced proposed civil penalties — some topping \$30,000 — against more than a dozen passengers in recent weeks. The

passengers can protest the penalties.

The agency said Monday that it will seek a \$10,500 fine against a passenger on a JetBlue Airways flight from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to Los Angeles in December. The FAA said the man repeatedly ignored orders to wear a mask, then coughed and blew his nose into a blanket.

The FAA proposed a \$9,000 fine against a passenger who boarded a JetBlue flight from Los Angeles to Newark, N.J., in March. The man slammed overhead bins and shouted profanities at flight attendants and the captain before law enforcement escorted him out of the terminal, the FAA said.

The FAA has power to levy civil penalties but is letting law enforcement decide whether to seek criminal charges against passengers.

Attacks between Israel and Hamas escalate

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — A confrontation between Israel and Hamas sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem escalated Tuesday as Israel unleashed new airstrikes on Gaza while militants barraged southern Israel with hundreds of rockets. The exchange killed a number of militants and civilians in Gaza and at least two Israelis.

The barrage of rockets from the Gaza Strip and airstrikes into the territory continued almost nonstop throughout the day, in what appeared to be some of the most intense fighting

between Israel and Hamas since their 2014 war. The fire was so relentless that Israel's Iron Dome rocket-defense system seemed to be overwhelmed. Columns of smoke rose from many places in Gaza.

By Tuesday evening, the violence extended to Tel Aviv, where air raid sirens sounded as volleys of outgoing rocket fire were heard in Gaza.

Since sundown Monday, 28 Palestinians — including 10 children and a woman — were killed in Gaza, most by airstrikes, health officials there said. The Israeli military said at least 16 of the dead were mili-

tants.

Two women were killed by rockets fired from Gaza that hit their homes in the southern city of Ashkelon — the first Israeli deaths in the current violence. At least 10 other Israelis have been wounded since Monday evening.

After those deaths, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said officials decided to “increase both the strength and rate of the strikes” against militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip.

Egyptian officials said they were trying to broker a ceasefire, but the cycle of violence

was gaining momentum. Even before the two Israeli deaths, the Israeli military said it was sending troop reinforcements to the Gaza border, and the defense minister ordered the mobilization of 5,000 reserve soldiers.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, a military spokesman, told reporters that Israel was beefing up defensive forces on the border to prevent possible infiltrations and increasing its offensive forces as well, primarily in the air.

He said the objective was to send a “clear message” to Hamas.

Suspect arrested in deadly school shooting in Russia

Associated Press

MOSCOW — A gunman launched an attack on a school in the Russian city of Kazan that left at least nine people dead Tuesday and sent students running out of the building as smoke poured from one of the windows.

At least 21 others were hospitalized, six in extremely grave condition, authorities said.

The attacker, identified only as a 19-year-old, was arrested, officials said. They gave no immediate details on a motive.

But Russian media said the gunman was a former student at the school who called himself “a god” on his account on the messaging app Telegram and promised to “kill a large amount of biomass” on the morning of the shooting.

Attacks on schools are rare in Russia, and President Vladimir Putin reacted by ordering the head of the country's National Guard to revise regulations on the types of weapons allowed for civilian use.

Four boys and three girls, all eighth-graders, died, as well as a teacher and another school employee, said Rustam Minnikhanov, governor of the Tatarstan republic, where Kazan is the capital.

Footage released by Russian media showed students dressed in black and white running out of the building.

Another video showed shattered win-

dows, a stream of smoke coming out of one, and the sound of gunfire. Dozens of ambulances lined up at the entrance.

Russian media said while some students escaped, others were trapped inside during the ordeal.

“The terrorist has been arrested, 19 years old. A firearm is registered in his name. Other accomplices haven't been established. An investigation is underway,” Minnikhanov said.

Authorities said the 21 hospitalized included 18 children.

Authorities announced a day of mourning on Wednesday and canceled all classes in Kazan schools. Authorities tightened security at all schools in the city of about 1.2 million people, 430 miles east of Moscow.

Russian lawmaker Alexander Khinshtein said on Telegram that the suspect in the Kazan attack received a permit for a shotgun less than two weeks ago and that the school had no security aside from a panic button.

Authorities in Tatarstan ordered checks on all gun owners in the region.

Putin extended condolences to the families of the victims and ordered the government to give them all necessary assistance. Russian officials promised to pay families 1 million rubles (roughly \$13,500) each and give 200,000 to 400,000 rubles (\$2,700-\$5,400) to the wounded.

Capitol Police failed to monitor threats adequately, IG says

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Capitol Police force was hobbled by inadequate intelligence gathering ahead of the Jan. 6 siege, the department's watchdog told Congress on Monday, alarming lawmakers who are concerned for their own safety amid rising threats against members of Congress.

Capitol Police Inspector General Michael Bolton testified in the first of three House hearings this week on what went wrong during the Jan. 6 insurrection. Lawmakers are investigating the riots as they contemplate overhauling security, and Bolton has recommended that the Capitol Police create a new stand-alone division that would gather intelligence about threats and protect members similar to the way the U.S. Secret Service protects the president.

In a statement Friday, the Capitol Police said that there has been a 107% increase in threats against members of Congress this year compared to 2020 and “provided the unique threat environment we currently live in, the Department is confident the number of cases will continue to increase.”

A new inspector general report, one of several Bolton is preparing in response to the insurrection, said the department “has experienced issues” because of the increase in threats over the last five years and recommended the force hire more agents who are dedicated to assessing threats.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 rescued from boat made of buckets, kiddie pools

CA SANTA BARBARA — Two students were rescued after their homemade boat constructed from buckets and kiddie pools drifted too far from the Southern California coast, authorities said.

The men in their early 20s set out from Isla Vista in the vessel of questionable seaworthiness, said Santa Barbara County Fire Department spokesman Mike Eliason.

The makeshift boat was strung together with 20 Home Depot buckets, two plastic kiddie pools, plywood and duct tape, the San Luis Obispo Tribune reported.

Firefighters said alcohol was not a factor in the bad boating decisions, the newspaper reported.

Mayor resigns after third DWI arrest

TX GRANBURY — A North Texas mayor has submitted his resignation following his third driving while intoxicated arrest.

Granbury Mayor Nin Hulett had been arrested on a DWI charge, which had initially been a class B misdemeanor. The charge was upgraded to a felony after Granbury police confirmed Hulett had been convicted twice for DWI, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported.

In his resignation letter, Hulett did not mention his arrest but wrote he was “truly thankful for the opportunity to serve my city these past ten years.”

Doughnut shops feud over rights of name

MA NEW BEDFORD — A beloved doughnut shop in Massachusetts said it’s being forced to reopen under a

new name after a Rhode Island company snagged a trademark for its decades-old moniker.

The family behind Ma’s Donuts in New Bedford was planning to reboot the shop this year after it closed in 2016 following more than 60 years slinging doughnuts and coffee. But before the doors opened, the shop says it was notified that Ma’s Donuts and More in Middletown, R.I., had obtained a trademark for the name while the shop was closed.

The dispute has ignited a feud between the two shops, which sit about 40 minutes apart. Loyal supporters of each bakery have taken to social media to argue which Ma’s is best.

Fans of the Massachusetts store have rallied for a fight, saying the Lemieux family should challenge the trademark. But on Facebook, the family said it’s focused on reviving the spirit of the original shop.

Firm pays \$12.5M in tire-inspection lawsuit

WA SEATTLE — Meineke Car Care Centers paid \$12.5 million to settle a lawsuit brought by an Everett woman who alleged a safety inspection missed a malfunctioning tire that caused a crash and nearly killed her two days later, according to her attorney.

The Meineke franchise told Janyce “Fi” MacKenzie that the tires of her Ford Explorer were checked when she visited the shop for maintenance, said her attorney, Lawrence Kahn.

MacKenzie, 56, was driving when the tire suddenly tore apart and she lost control of the SUV, Kahn said, the Everett Herald reported.

She was thrown from the vehicle as it rolled over, sustaining a traumatic brain injury that put

her in a coma for about a week and a leg injury that resulted in her needing to permanently use a wheelchair.

Biologists find bats with disease-causing fungus

NM ROSWELL — Federal land managers have confirmed that a disease-causing fungus has been found on hibernating bats in two eastern New Mexico caves.

The Bureau of Land Management reported the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome also was found on the walls of the caves during routine surveillance conducted in De Baca and Lincoln counties.

A team of biologists observed a white powdery growth consistent with the fungus on numerous bats in the caves. Laboratory testing confirmed their suspicions.

White-nose syndrome has been confirmed in 36 states, including neighboring Texas and Oklahoma, and several Canadian provinces.

Thousands of fish die in residential ponds

FL MIAMI — Wildlife and environmental officials are trying to determine what killed thousands of koi and other exotic fish in several residential ponds in a South Florida neighborhood.

An inspector first responded to the Coconut Grove area of Miami after fish kills were reported to the Miami-Dade County Division of Environmental Resources Management, spokeswoman Tere Florin said.

“We will be sampling for a wide variety of parameters to try to identify any possible connections between the well water and the death of the fish,” Florin said.

“However, at this time, we are still unsure of the cause.”

Fire destroys historic M&M Cigar Store building

MT BUTTE — A fire gutted a historic Montana landmark.

The fire at the M&M Cigar Store building, home to a bar and cafe, took out its roof and charred and gutted the rest of the building, the Montana Standard reported.

Jim Merrifield, a battalion chief with the Butte-Silver Bow Fire Department, said the building is a “total loss.”

The building’s name comes from the initials of the two men, Sam Martin and William Mosby, who opened the first bar there in 1890. The bar, which had a string of owners, was famous for staying open around the clock, catering to miners getting off work and serving large breakfasts at any hour, according to a description on a National Register plaque outside the building.

Female wrestlers to get own state tournament

MI EAST LANSING — High school girls who wrestle will have their own state tournament starting next year.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association is adding a girls division to the individual wrestling tournament. There will be 14 champions based on weight classes. Girls will continue to compete on boys teams during the regular season and still can choose to wrestle in the boys individual and team tournaments.

The number of girls who wrestle at MHSAA schools rose to 401 in the 2019-20 season from 250 in 2017-18.

— From wire reports

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Lightning start rare all-Black forward line

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Daniel Walcott was already excited to be in his first NHL game. He got even more excited when he got to see how his debut would happen.

The Tampa Bay Lightning started three Black forwards in their regular-season finale against the Florida Panthers on Monday night, a rarity in NHL history — if not an absolute first. Walcott, Mathieu Joseph and Gemel Smith were out together for the opening face-off and didn't know they would be starting together until just minutes before game time.

"First of all, they're all in the NHL for a reason," Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said. "They deserve to be here and have worked their tails off. To have them all together, they had a little chemistry. Moving forward in the league, you hope it isn't a story anymore and will be the

norm. It was a pretty cool moment for all those guys."

Florida won the game, 4-0. The teams will meet in the first round of the NHL playoffs that start this weekend.

Roughly 3% of NHL players are Black, even though hockey and its teams have increased efforts in recent years to add to diversity within the sport through various feeder programs, some of them funded by the league.

The starting lineup was even applauded by the Panthers. Florida forward Anthony Duclair, who is Black, said he noticed it in the Panthers' locker room pregame and was moved.

"That's great to see," Duclair said. "The way that the NHL is moving forward, it's great to see for those guys and I'm sure it was a special night for them."

It's unclear how many times such a trio of Black forwards have been on the ice together in

any pro league before, but it has happened — at least in the minor leagues.

Earlier this season in the American Hockey League, the Los Angeles' Kings top affiliate in Ontario, Calif., dressed an all-Black line of Akil Thomas, Quinton Byfield and Devante Smith-Pelly. Thomas is one of the Kings' top prospects, Byfield as the No. 2 pick in the 2020 draft was the highest Black player selected in NHL history and Smith-Pelly was a playoff hero for the Washington Capitals when they won the Stanley Cup in 2018.

Thomas told reporters in March that his father, Khalil Thomas, once played on a team that started five Black players — everyone but the goalie — in the minors.

"Hopefully one of these days we'll see that happen," Akil Thomas said.

Smith was in his fifth game of

the season and Joseph has been in the lineup for all 56 Tampa Bay games in 2020-21.

"It was great, man," Joseph said. "A step in the right direction. It was fun to have some progress and it was great to see and I was glad I was part of it. ... Any players of color in this league want to showcase to our families or other people of color. I thank the coaching staff for doing this."

Walcott said he hopes young Black kids with an interest in hockey look at something like Monday night and find hope. He said he got the word from Cooper on Sunday night that he was likely to make his debut, but wasn't told who his linemates would be.

"A whirlwind of emotion, a long time coming," Walcott said. "To get into that starting lineup was great. ... Coop did something really special here to promote this for young kids."

Hall, Bruins win in OT, clinch third place in East

Associated Press

BOSTON — Taylor Hall scored his second goal of the game 2:53 into overtime and the Boston Bruins beat the New York Islanders 3-2 in their home finale on Monday night to clinch third place in the East Division.

Brad Marchand also scored for Boston, which will face second-place Washington in the first round of the playoffs. Tuukka Rask had 16 saves.

Marchand and the Bruins will face former captain Zdeno Chara, who signed as a free agent with the Capitals during the offseason after playing 14 seasons with the Bruins.

"I think if you look back at the start of the season, you probably could have guessed it was going to play out this way," Marchand said. "Obviously, it adds another story line."

Mathew Barzal and Oliver Wahlstrom scored for New York. Semyon Varlamov made 25 saves before he was replaced to start the third period by Ilya Sorokin, who stopped 10 shots. The Islanders will face East champion Pittsburgh in the first round.

Oilers 4, Canadiens 3 (OT): Connor McDavid scored 2:42 into overtime for his league-leading 102nd point of the season and Edmon-

ton won on the road but didn't prevent Montreal from clinching the last playoff spot in the North Division.

Montreal, which has one game left, moved nine points ahead of fifth-place Calgary, which has four remaining. Jake Allen finished with 31 saves.

Stars 5, Blackhawks 4 (OT): Jason Robertson scored 4:30 into overtime, and Dallas rallied to win at Chicago.

Miro Heiskanen had a goal and an assist for the Stars, who had dropped six of seven. Joe Pavelski, Jason Dickinson and Joel Kiviranta also scored, and Jake Oettinger made 19 saves.

Predators 5, Hurricanes 0: Pekka Rinne made 30 saves for his second shutout of the season as host Nashville blanked Carolina to finish the regular season.

Rinne tied Tom Barrasso for No. 19 in NHL history with his 369th victory in his first start since April 10. Now 38 and in the final year of his contract, Rinne notched his 60th career shutout in what might have been his final start for Nashville as fans chanted his name.

Panthers 4, Lightning 0: Chris Driedger stopped 30 shots to record his third shutout of

the season, Juho Lammikko scored a short-handed goal, and host Florida secured home-ice advantage for the opening round of the playoffs. Keith Yandle had an assist and recorded his 600th NHL point.

Andrei Vasilevskiy made 26 stops for Tampa Bay.

Flyers 4, Devils 2: Joel Farabee scored two goals and James van Riemsdyk added one on the power play to lead Philadelphia to the win at home.

The Flyers finished another season without a Stanley Cup — they haven't won one since consecutive championships in 1974 and 1975.

Canucks 3, Jets 1: Nils Hoglander scored twice and Vancouver won at Winnipeg.

Bo Horvat also scored and Thatcher Demko stopped 39 shots for his 14th win of the season for the Canucks.

Avalanche 2, Golden Knights 1: J.T. Compher scored a go-ahead goal in the third period, Philipp Grubauer made 36 saves, and Colorado won at Vegas to preserve its chance to finish in first place in the West Division.

Blues 2, Kings 1 (OT): Justin Faulk scored 46 seconds into overtime and St. Louis won at Los Angeles.

Westbrook breaks triple-double mark

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Oscar Robertson's NBA record of 181 triple-doubles had stood since 1974 and was once thought to be untouchable — until Russell Westbrook surpassing it became inevitable.

Westbrook got it done Monday night, hardly a surprise given that he's averaging a triple-double this season and this was his 36th, including seven in his last eight games.

"I normally don't like to pat myself on the back but tonight I will just because I'm so grateful for the ones before me and so blessed to the man above to allow me to go out and do it," Westbrook said. "I take this job very seriously and I'm super grateful for my teammates and coaches on my journey so far."

The 32-year-old Westbrook, in his 13th season overall and his first with the Washington Wizards, completed his 182nd triple-double when he grabbed his 10th rebound with 8:29 remaining in the game against the Atlanta Hawks. He finished with 28 points, 13 rebounds and 21 assists and missed a potential game-winning three-pointer as the

Wizards lost 125-124.

Although triple-doubles happen more frequently than in Robertson's era thanks to the pace of the contemporary NBA game, Westbrook has no peer for how routinely he fills the stat sheet. Magic Johnson is third all-time with 138 triple-doubles. Jason Kidd finished his career with 107, and LeBron James is the closest among active players with 99.

Westbrook began the night averaging 11.5 assists, tops in the NBA and the only player in double digits. He ranked sixth in rebounds with 11.6 per game and was averaging 22 points. He has triple-doubles in five straight games, three of them before the start of the fourth quarter.

Westbrook, the 2016-17 MVP and a nine-time All-Star, praised Robertson after he tied the record in Saturday's overtime win at Indiana. He had 33 points, 19 rebounds and 15 assists, closing out the game with a blocked shot.

"It's just a blessing," Westbrook said Monday night. "You put so much into the game. You put in so much time. You sacrifice so much and to be able to mentioned

with guys like Oscar and Magic and Jason Kidd and those guys, it's just something I never dreamt about when I was a young kid growing up in LA. I'm truly grateful for moments like this."

Washington acquired Westbrook in a trade with Houston for John Wall before the season, reuniting Westbrook with coach Scott Brooks, who guided him to that MVP season with Oklahoma City.

The Wizards, who are trying to secure a spot in the postseason play-in tournament, were playing the first of at least two games without Bradley Beal, the NBA's No. 2 scorer who has a strained left hamstring.

That was nothing new for Westbrook, who has seven triple-doubles in nine games that Beal has missed. Westbrook also has at least 15 assists in five straight games, the longest streak in the league since Steve Nash in 2007-08.

The crowd at State Farm Arena cheered when Westbrook broke the record and the video board offered congratulations.

"They're witnessing a guy who competes every single possession," Brooks said.

Curry's late 3 lifts Warriors past Jazz

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Stephen Curry needed every bit from his supporting cast for the Golden State Warriors to secure a play-in berth, then found his shooting touch right when it mattered most.

Curry made a go-ahead three-pointer with 14 seconds left moments after missing from deep, and finished with 36 points to lead the Warriors past the Western Conference-leading Utah Jazz 119-116 on Monday night to keep hold of the eighth seed in the playoff race.

"It's huge when we can get a number of players to score, because Steph draws so much attention guys are going to be open," coach Steve Kerr said, praising the balance. "... That's what we need. We can't expect Steph to carry us every night offensively."

Jordan Poole's Curry-like 52-footer at the third-quarter buzzer went to replay review and stood, giving Golden State an 89-75 lead and serious momentum going into the final 12 minutes before Utah's furious comeback effort in the closing minutes.

"We've been trying to get JP to shoot that shot all year," Warriors swingman Kent Bazemore said.

Curry, coming off a 49-point performance with 11 three-pointers in 29 minutes in Saturday's 136-97 thumping of the Thunder, wasn't nearly as sharp — but everybody else did plenty to take the pressure off.

"I thought the half-court defense did a really good job containing Steph and these guys," said Utah's Rudy Gobert, who grabbed 16 rebounds. "It comes down to the details. I think it was a good test for us. We came up

short. We might see them again."

Grizzlies 115, Pelicans 110: Dillon Brooks scored 23 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 20 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks, and host Memphis secured a spot the postseason play-in tournament by beating New Orleans.

Kyle Anderson had 14 points and four blocks, while Ja Morant had 12 points and 12 assists.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker led the short-handed Pelicans with 18 points.

Spurs 146, Bucks 125: DeMar DeRozan had 23 points and host San Antonio set a franchise record for points in the first half while rolling past Milwaukee.

The Spurs had 87 points in the first half, the second-most the club has scored in any half. They tied their mark for any half with 12 three-pointers in the first and finished 17-for-29 from long range.

Pacers 111, Cavaliers 102: Domantas Sabonis had 21 points, 20 rebounds and nine assists as Indiana won at Cleveland and strengthened its hold on a play-in tournament spot.

Kelan Martin scored a career-high 25 points and Caris LeVert had 20 points and 10 assists for the Pacers, who moved one-half game ahead of Washington into ninth place in the Eastern Conference.

Trail Blazers 140, Rockets 129: Damian Lillard had 34 points and nine rebounds, and Portland raced past Houston.

The Blazers scored 50 points in the first quarter, setting a franchise record for scoring in a period, and tied an NBA record for three-pointers made in a quarter with 12. CJ McCollum finished with 28 points and Norman Powell also scored 28 for the Blazers.

Mancini, O's top Red Sox, avoid sweep

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Trey Mancini hit a go-ahead solo homer and later knocked in an insurance run, Jorge López and four relievers combined on a four-hitter and the Baltimore Orioles beat the Boston Red Sox 4-1 on Monday night.

The Orioles had dropped their first six games at Camden Yards this season against the Red Sox and avoided a four-game sweep. It was the first time the home team won in 10 games between the teams this season.

Boston still has the best record (22-14) and the best road record (12-5) in baseball.

Baltimore's bullpen combined for 3½ scoreless innings, retiring all 10 batters it faced. Tanner Scott (2-2) struck out his only hitter to complete the sixth, Travis Lakins Sr. and Paul Fry both completed perfect innings, and César Valdez worked the ninth for his eighth save.

Mancini put the Orioles ahead 2-1 with a blast to center off reliever Matt Andriese (1-2) to lead off the sixth.

Angels 5, Astros 4: Jared Walsh homered and matched a career high with four hits, Justin Upton also connected and Los Angeles rallied in the sixth inning to win at Houston.

The Angels trailed by three and Astros starter Luis Garcia had retired seven in a row before Walsh cracked his homer to the corner of right field with one out in the sixth. Upton followed with his shot, which hit on the wall above the seats in left field, to cut the lead to 4-3 and end Garcia's night.

Brandon Bielak (1-2) walked Jose Rojas before a double by Taylor Ward. The Angels tied it when Rojas scored on Phil Gosselin's single on a groundball that shortstop Carlos Correa didn't field cleanly. They went on top 5-4 when Ward scored on a sacrifice bunt by Drew Butera.

Giants 3, Rangers 1: Mauricio Dubon broke a seventh-inning tie with a two-out, pinch-hit single, Alex Wood won for the fourth time in five starts and host San Francisco beat Texas.

Brandon Belt hit his eighth home run and Mike Yastrzemski doubled for the Giants (21-14), who are tied with idle St. Louis for the best record in the National League.

Wood (4-0) had seven strikeouts and allowed one run in seven innings, lowering his ERA to 1.80. The lefty got double plays in the fifth and seventh innings and fanned Adolis Garcia and Joey Gallo with two on and one out in the sixth.

Diamondbacks 5, Marlins 2: Luke Weaver pitched scoreless ball into the seventh inning for his best outing in nearly a month, which helped host Arizona snap a six-game losing streak.

Weaver (2-3) cruised through 6½ innings, giving up four hits, striking out six and dominating

a team that beat him a week ago in Miami.

The Marlins scored their only runs in the eighth when Jesús Aguilar smacked a two-run homer off Joakim Soria into the left-center seats. Jordan Holloway (1-1) took the loss in his first career start, giving up four runs in 3⅓ innings.

Reds 14, Pirates 1: Tyler Naquin homered and drove in four runs, Tucker Barnhart keyed a six-run fourth inning with a two-run double and Cincinnati rolled to a win at Pittsburgh.

Naquin's three-run shot bounced off the right-field foul pole and made it 11-1 in the seventh. He also doubled home a run in the fourth.

Nick Senzel had a two-run single, Eugenio Suarez broke an 0-for-15 slump with a solo homer and Nick Castellanos added a two-run double for the Reds (16-16). Tyler Mahle (2-1) allowed one run in 5⅓ innings, striking out seven.

Baffert: Antifungal meds had steroid

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit was treated with an antifungal ointment containing the steroid betamethasone that may have caused the horse to fail a post-race drug test, trainer Bob Baffert said Tuesday.

In a statement issued by his lawyer, Baffert said Medina Spirit was treated for dermatitis with the ointment once a day leading up to the May 1 race and that equine pharmacology experts have told him this could explain the test results. Baffert said the horse tested positive for 21 picograms of the substance, which is typically given to horses therapeutically to help their joints and is a violation even at a trace amount on race day in Kentucky.

Regardless of the reason, Me-

dina Spirit would be disqualified from the Derby and Mandaloun named the winner if a second round of testing shows the presence of betamethasone.

"My investigation is continuing, and we do not know for sure if this ointment was the cause of the test results, or if the test results are even accurate, as they have yet to be confirmed by the split sample," Baffert said. "I have been told that a finding of a small amount, such as 21 picograms, could be consistent with application of this type of ointment."

Baffert said at a news conference Sunday at Churchill Downs that he did not know how the substance made its way into the colt's system.

Lawyer Craig Robertson said the plan is still for Medina Spirit

to run in the Preakness on Saturday. The horse and stablemate Concert Tour arrived at Pimlico Race Course on Monday and jogged on the track Tuesday morning, though Baffert does not plan to be in Baltimore for the race and put assistant Jimmy Barnes in charge.

The Preakness post position draw for the anticipated field of 10 was scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

Preakness officials said they were reviewing the facts before deciding on Medina Spirit's entry. Robertson told The Associated Press he planned to file a restraining order to prevent the Preakness from barring Medina Spirit if that was the decision that was made.

"Medina Spirit earned his Kentucky Derby win, and my

pharmacologists have told me that 21 picograms of betamethasone would have had no effect on the outcome of the race," Baffert said. "Medina Spirit is a deserved champion, and I will continue to fight for him."

Medina Spirit's failed drug test is the fifth medication violation in the past 13 months for Baffert, a two-time Triple Crown-winning trainer and the face of the sport. Winning the Preakness with either Medina Spirit or Concert Tour would give Baffert a record eighth victory in that race, breaking a tie with 19th-century trainer R.W. Walden.

Except for 2020, when the Triple Crown races were run out of order, Baffert is undefeated with the Derby winner in the Preakness.