

Draft suggests Roe could be overturned

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A draft opinion suggests the U.S. Supreme Court could be poised to overturn the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case that legalized abortion nationwide, according to a Politico report.

A decision to overrule *Roe* would lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states and could have huge ramifications for this year's elections. But it's unclear if the draft represents the court's final word on the matter — opinions often change in ways big and small in the drafting process.

President Joe Biden said Tuesday that the “basic fairness and the stability of our law demand” the court not overturn *Roe*. While emphasizing that he couldn't speak to the authenticity of the draft, Biden said his administration is preparing for all eventualities for when the court ultimately rules and that a decision overturning *Roe* would raise the stakes for voters in November's heated midterm elections.

“If the court does overturn *Roe*, it will fall on our nation's elected

officials at all levels of government to protect a woman's right to choose,” Biden said. “And it will fall on voters to elect pro-choice officials this November. At the federal level, we will need more pro-choice Senators and a pro-choice majority in the House to adopt legislation that codifies *Roe*, which I will work to pass and sign into law.”

Whatever the outcome, the Politico report late Monday represented an extremely rare breach of the court's secretive deliberation process, and on a case of surpassing importance.

“*Roe* was egregiously wrong from the start,” the draft opinion states. It was signed by Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the court's 6-3 conservative majority who was appointed by former President George W. Bush.

The document was labeled a “1st Draft” of the “Opinion of the Court” in a case challenging Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks, a case known as *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

The court is expected to rule on

the case before its term ends in late June or early July.

The draft opinion in effect states there is no constitutional right to abortion services and would allow states to more heavily regulate or outright ban the procedure.

“We hold that *Roe* and *Casey* must be overruled,” it states, referencing the 1992 case *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* that affirmed *Roe*'s finding of a constitutional right to abortion services but allowed states to place some constraints on the practice. “It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives.”

Chief Justice John Roberts, confirming the authenticity of the leaked draft opinion, on Tuesday ordered an investigation into the leak. Politico said only that it received “a copy of the draft opinion from a person familiar with the court's proceedings in the Mississippi case along with other details supporting the authenticity of the document.”

The draft opinion strongly sug-

gests that when the justices met in private shortly after arguments in the case on Dec. 1, at least five voted to overrule *Roe* and *Casey*, and Alito was assigned the task of writing the court's majority opinion.

The report comes amid a legislative push to restrict abortion in several Republican-led states — Oklahoma being the most recent — even before the court issues its decision. Critics of those measures have said low-income and minority women will disproportionately bear the burden of the new restrictions.

The leak jumpstarted the intense political reverberations that the high court's ultimate decision was expected to have in the midterm election year. Already, politicians on both sides of the aisle were seizing on the report to fundraise and energize their supporters.

People on both sides of the issue quickly gathered outside the Supreme Court, waving signs and chanting on a balmy spring night, following the release of the Politico report.

Ukrainians report Russian forces storming steel mill

Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — Russian forces Tuesday began storming the steel mill containing the last pocket of resistance in Mariupol, Ukrainian defenders said, just as scores of civilians evacuated from the bombed-out plant over the weekend reached relative safety in Ukrainian-held territory.

Onat Lubrani, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine, said that thanks to the evacuation effort, “101 women, men, children and older persons could finally leave the bunkers below

the Azovstal steelworks and see the daylight after two months.”

One evacuee said she went to sleep there every night afraid she wouldn't wake up.

“You can't imagine how scary it is when you sit in the shelter, in a wet and damp basement which is bouncing, shaking,” Yelena Tsybulchenko said upon arriving in the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia, about 140 miles northwest of Mariupol, in a convoy of buses and ambulances.

She added: “We were praying to God that missiles fly over our shelter, because if it hit the shel-

ter, all of us would be done.”

The news for those left behind was more grim. Ukrainian commanders said Russian forces backed by tanks and other armor began storming the sprawling plant, which includes a maze of tunnels and bunkers spread out over 4 square miles. How many Ukrainian fighters were inside was unclear, but the Russians put the number at about 2,000 in recent weeks, and there were reports that 500 were wounded.

“We'll do everything that's possible to repel the assault, but we're calling for urgent measures

to evacuate the civilians that remain inside the plant and to bring them out safely,” Sviatoslav Palamar, deputy commander of Ukraine's Azov Regiment, said on the messaging app Telegram.

He added that throughout the night, the plant was hit with naval artillery fire and airstrikes. Two civilian women were killed and 10 civilians were wounded, he said.

In other developments in the nearly 10-week conflict, Russian troops shelled a chemical plant in the eastern city of Avdiivka, killing at least 10 people, regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

Chinese flotilla sails through Okinawa strait

By MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Chinese aircraft carrier sailed through the Miyako Strait, between two islands in Japan's Okinawa prefecture, on Monday for the first time this year, according to Japan's Ministry of Defense.

The Liaoning and its five-ship strike group were spotted

around noon Sunday approximately 220 miles west of the uninhabited Danjo islands of Nagasaki prefecture, the Joint Staff announced in a news release Monday.

The ships sailed south and were joined at 6 p.m. by a Chinese frigate. Another missile destroyer joined them at 6 a.m. the next day.

The eight ships sailed together and passed between Okinawa and Miyako Island, about 155 miles to the southwest, then made their way to the Pacific Ocean, according to the release.

The Miyako Strait, the widest in the Ryukyu island chain, is an international waterway and one of several important passages, or chokepoints, through the "first

island chain" that separates the Pacific Ocean from the East and South China seas.

The Liaoning was last tracked by Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force while passing between Okinawa and Miyako on Dec. 25, according to the Joint Staff's website. The carrier was traveling with four other warships at the time.

Prosecutors won't call 'Fat Leonard' to testify

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Leonard Glenn Francis, the military contractor better known as "Fat Leonard," will not be called by the prosecution to testify against five former naval officers charged with accepting bribes from him, it was revealed in court Monday.

Prosecutors did not address why they are forgoing testimony from Francis, the mastermind of the long-running conspiracy who has already pleaded guilty and been cooperating with the government for years, nor do they have to.

Francis, nicknamed for his immense physique, has billed himself as the prosecution's star witness and has been biding his time under house arrest in San Diego waiting for a moment that is now unlikely to happen.

The five naval officers currently on trial are accused of accepting bribes — including the services of prostitutes, high-end hotel suites and lavish dinners —

from Francis while in Southeast Asian ports. Francis' Singapore-based business serviced visiting Navy ships, and he depended on certain officers' influence and access to military intelligence to continue earning millions of dollars from Navy contracts.

Before the trial began on Feb. 28, Francis' name appeared on the prosecution's list of 63 potential witnesses to call.

On Monday, prosecutors were asked by the judge to provide a list of their remaining witnesses to call — a list that was not disclosed publicly in court. But in unrelated oral legal arguments, the defense asserted that Francis' name was not among the culled list of witnesses.

Francis' attorney could not be immediately reached for comment Monday.

Francis pleaded guilty in 2015, and his sentencing hearing has continued to be delayed, pending the trial. He has been allowed to stay under house arrest while he is treated for cancer.

Francis has always been anticipated to be a bit of a loose cannon on the stand because of his intimate knowledge of events, his ax to grind with the Navy and his braggadocious air. That was on full display late last year, when he recorded a secret podcast with a former Wall Street Journal reporter that had him for the first time publicly speaking freely of the long-running scheme.

Francis dropped several scintillating details in the podcast — including that he still has sex tapes of Navy officers locked away somewhere — which defense attorneys have said they would use to impeach him on the stand if called to testify. Francis' reliability as a witness was hammered in the defense's opening statements to the jury.

Monday's latest witness list disclosure confirmed growing suspicion by defense attorneys that prosecutors were going to drop Francis from the lineup.

In a three-day evidentiary

hearing on a separate issue last week — to determine if prosecutors improperly withheld exculpatory evidence — defense attorneys repeatedly asked prosecutors why there was a last-minute effort in the weeks before trial to track down prostitutes who would be willing to come to San Diego to testify. The implication was that securing prostitutes' testimony was a kind of Plan B to putting Francis on the stand.

Ten prosecution witnesses have already been called during the first 10 weeks of trial. The prosecution estimates it will take another two weeks to present their side of the case. Witnesses coming up include former Navy Cmdrs. Stephen Shedd and Jose Sanchez, who have already pleaded guilty to bribery.

Once the prosecution rests, attorneys for the five defendants anticipate another four weeks roughly of trial, then a few days of closing arguments.

Navy still mum about extent of vandalism on submarine

Associated Press

KITTERY, Maine — The Navy is still mum about the extent of vandalism aboard the USS Texas a month after the incident took place while the submarine was undergoing maintenance at Port-

smouth Naval Shipyard in Maine.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service has offered a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the identification of a suspect.

The Navy declined to provide details beyond an earlier state-

ment indicating "government equipment" on the submarine was damaged around March 29.

A shipyard spokesperson said there was no additional information Monday.

The USS Texas, a Virginia-

class attack submarine, arrived at Portsmouth in September 2020. The shipyard was the site of a fire started by a worker aboard the USS Miami in 2012. The damage was so severe that the submarine was decommissioned.

Push to arm Ukraine strains US stockpile

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The planes take off almost daily from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware — hulking C-17s loaded up with Javelins, Stingers, howitzers and other material being hustled to Eastern Europe to resupply Ukraine's military in its fight against Russia.

The game-changing impact of those arms is exactly what President Joe Biden planned to spotlight at a Lockheed Martin plant in Alabama on Tuesday that builds the portable Javelin anti-tank weapons that have played a crucial role in Ukraine.

But Biden's visit is also drawing attention to a growing concern as the war drags on: Can the United States sustain the cadence of shipping vast amounts of arms to Ukraine while maintaining the healthy stockpile it may need if a new conflict erupts with North Korea, Iran or elsewhere?

The U.S. has already provided about 7,000 Javelins, including some that were delivered during the Trump administration, about one-third of its stockpile, to Ukraine, accord-

ing to an analysis by Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies international security program. The Biden administration said it has committed to sending about 5,500 to Ukraine since the Russian invasion more than two months ago.

Analysts also estimate the U.S. has sent about one-quarter of its stockpile of shoulder-fired Stinger missiles to Ukraine. Raytheon Technologies CEO Greg Hayes told investors last week during a quarterly call that his company, which makes the weapons system, wouldn't be able to ramp up production until next year due to parts shortages.

"Could this be a problem? The short answer is, 'Probably, yes,'" said Cancian, a retired Marine colonel and former government specialist on Pentagon budget strategy, war funding and procurement.

He said Stingers and Javelins were where "we're seeing the most significant inventory issues," and production of both weapons systems has been limited in recent years.

The Russian invasion offers the U.S. and European defense

industry a big opportunity to bolster profits as lawmakers from Washington to Warsaw are primed to increase defense spending in response to Russian aggression. Defense contractors, however, face the same supply chain and labor shortage challenges that other manufacturers are facing, along with some others that are specific to the industry.

The war will mean increased sales for some defense contractors, including Raytheon, which makes the Stinger missiles Ukrainian troops have used to knock out Russian aircraft. The company is also part of a joint venture with Lockheed Martin that makes the Javelins.

Biden will visit Lockheed Martin's facility in Troy, Ala., which has the capacity to manufacture about 2,100 Javelins per year. The trip comes as he presses Congress to quickly approve his request for an additional \$33 billion in security and economic assistance for Kyiv, Western allies and restocking weapons the U.S. has sent to those countries.

A White House official, who was not authorized to comment

publicly and requested anonymity, said the Pentagon is working with defense contractors "to evaluate the health of weapons systems' production lines and examine bottlenecks in every component and step of the manufacturing process." The administration is also considering a range of options, if needed, to boost production of both Javelins and Stingers, the official said.

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said Monday that America's military readiness is not dependent on one system, such as the Javelin. He said that every time the Pentagon develops a package of weapons to send to Ukraine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the department assesses the broader impact.

"It's not about counting say Javelins and being able to say that when you reach a certain level, then all your readiness is gone," Kirby said. "The Javelin is an anti-armor capability, so we judge it all as a conglomerate of what's our ability to meet this particular mission set, realizing that a Javelin isn't the only capability you have against armor."

NYPD veteran convicted of assault in Capitol riot

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal jury on Monday convicted a New York Police Department veteran of assaulting an officer during the U.S. Capitol riot, rejecting his claim that he was defending himself when he tackled the officer and grabbed his gas mask.

Thomas Webster, a 20-year NYPD veteran, was the first Capitol riot defendant to be tried on an assault charge and the first to present a jury with a self-defense argument.

Jurors deliberated for less than three hours before they convicted Webster of all six counts in his indictment, including a charge that he assaulted Metropolitan Police Department officer Noah Rathbun with a dangerous weapon, a metal flagpole. The

assault charge alone is punishable by up to 20 years in prison, although sentencing guidelines will likely recommend a significantly shorter prison term.

Webster, 56, testified he was trying to protect himself from a "rogue cop" who punched him in the face. He also accused Rathbun of instigating the confrontation.

Rathbun testified that he didn't punch or pick a fight with Webster as a violent mob attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, disrupting Congress from certifying Joe Biden's 2020 presidential election victory over then-President Donald Trump.

Two jurors who spoke to reporters after the verdict said videos capturing the officer's assault from multiple angles were crucial evidence in rebutting Webster's self-defense argument.

"I guess we were all surprised that he would even make that defense argument," said a juror who spoke on condition of anonymity. "There was no dissent among us at all. We unanimously agreed that there was no self-defense argument here at all."

Another juror, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said Webster's self-defense claim "just didn't stack up."

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta is scheduled to sentence Webster on Sept. 2.

Webster, who wore a mask in court, showed no obvious reaction to the verdict.

"We're disappointed," defense attorney James Monroe said after the verdict, "but we recognized from the beginning that folks here (in Washington, D.C.) were quite traumatized by what transpired on Jan. 6. And I think we saw some of this expressed today."

New Mexico blaze expected to keep growing

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS, N.M. — The fire burning about 10 miles away from Priscilla Crespin's home was the first blaze that forced the 81-year-old to leave the small northeastern New Mexico community where she has spent nearly all her life.

Crespin left her home in Las Vegas, N.M., because smoke from the fire wasn't good for her asthma, her children were growing concerned and other family members who live nearby were making plans to leave.

When her daughter showed up to take her to Albuquerque on Monday, fire crews were cutting down trees, raking pine needles and spraying water on properties in the area near her home. She grabbed clothes, photos and

essential documents.

"It's awful. It scares you," Crespin said as she was being driven away from her hometown. "You don't know when it's going to get to the houses."

Even though no evacuations were ordered in the town of 13,000, the blaze that has charred 217 square miles in New Mexico's pine-covered mountainsides had prompted some residents to flee the community. It also led to an evacuation of the state's psychiatric hospital.

Fire crews battled on several fronts to keep the fire, the largest wildfire burning in the United States, from pushing into more populated areas as it fed on the state's drought-parched landscape. Authorities were en-

couraged by a forecast for Tuesday of improving humidity and shifting winds. Still the blaze is expected to keep growing, putting it on track to possibly be one of the largest and most destructive in the state's recorded history.

The fire in northeastern New Mexico ballooned in size Sunday, prompting authorities to issue new evacuation orders for the small town of Mora and other villages.

Residents in some outlying neighborhoods of the town of Las Vegas were told to be ready to leave their homes as smoke choked the economic hub for the farming and ranching families who have lived for generations in the rural region. No evacuations had been ordered within the city as of Monday evening.

California reports population down 2nd year in row

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The nation's most populous state is shrinking.

California's population declined again in 2021 for the second consecutive year, state officials said Monday, the result of a slowdown in births and immigration coupled with an increase in deaths and people leaving the state.

With an estimated 39,185,605 residents, California is still the United States' most populous state, putting it far ahead of second-place Texas and its 29.5 million residents. But after years of strong growth brought California tantalizingly close to the 40 million milestone, the state's population is now roughly back to where it was in 2016 after declining by 117,552 people this year.

California's population growth had been

slowing even before the pandemic as baby boomers aged, younger generations were having fewer children and more people were moving to other states. But the state's natural growth—more births than deaths—and its robust international immigration had been more than enough to offset those losses.

That changed in 2020, when the pandemic killed tens of thousands of people above what would be expected from natural causes, a category demographers refer to as "excess deaths." And it prompted a sharp decline in international immigration because of travel restrictions and limited visas from the federal government.

California's population fell for the first time that year. At the time, state officials thought it was an outlier, the result of a pandemic that turned the world upside down.

But the new estimate released Monday by the California Department of Finance showed the trend continued in 2021, although the decline was less than it had been in 2020.

State officials pointed specifically to losses in international immigration. California gained 43,300 residents from other countries in 2021. But that was well below the annual average of 140,000 that was common before the pandemic.

Walter Schwarm, California's chief demographer, said he wasn't surprised by the decline because "It takes awhile for the machinery of government and others to get back to normal."

"I think we will be looking at positive growth when we talk about the year 2022," he said.

Human remains found in barrel as Lake Mead recedes

Los Angeles Times

A barrel containing human remains was discovered in Nevada's Lake Mead over the weekend as a historic drought grips the West.

Las Vegas Metro Police fear they will find more bodies, officials told a local news station.

The receding waters at Lake Mead, the country's largest human-made reservoir, have dropped to historic lows. The levels are so shallow that a barrel containing skeletal remains was found Sunday immersed in mud, reports KLAS-TV in Las Vegas.

Based on personal items found in the bar-

rel, police think it has been at the bottom of the lake since the 1980s.

Lt. Ray Spencer with the Las Vegas Metro Police told the news station the person was likely killed four decades ago and was found around 3 p.m. Sunday by boaters. He did not give further details about the person's identity or how the remains ended up in a barrel at the bottom of Lake Mead.

"It's going to take an extensive amount of work," Spencer said of trying to identify the person. "I would say there is a very good chance as the water level drops that we are going to find additional human remains."

The lake — a lifeline for 25 million people

and millions of acres of farmland in California, Arizona, Nevada and Mexico — has been tipping toward crisis amid record temperatures and lower snowpack melt. The lake's growing "bathtub ring," formed by mineral deposits, marks the rocky desert slopes more than 150 feet above the retreating shoreline.

"I think anybody can understand there are probably more bodies that have been dumped in Lake Mead, it's just a matter of, are we able to recover those?" Spencer said.

The water level has receded hundreds of feet over the years, Spencer told The Times; 40 years ago, the current shoreline would have been under 100 feet of water.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman surrenders after standoff at McDonald's

FL ORLANDO — A Florida woman exchanged shots with sheriff's deputies during a suspected armed robbery at a McDonald's restaurant that led to an hourslong standoff, authorities said.

The Orange County Sheriff's Office said in a news release that the unidentified woman in her 30s had fired a shot inside the Orlando-area restaurant and made "threatening statements."

The woman then allegedly fired shots from inside the McDonald's at deputies when they arrived. They returned fire, but no one was injured and all employees and customers got out safely, the sheriff's office said.

Investigators spent hours negotiating for the woman to surrender, which she finally did. The news release did not mention any immediate charges filed against her.

Woman convicted of scamming elderly person

WV CLARKSBURG — A Nevada woman has been convicted of scamming an elderly person in West Virginia by claiming the person had won \$1 million.

The U.S. attorney's office for the Northern District of West Virginia said Shelly Anne Leipham, 66, of Las Vegas, called the person in Harrison County, said the person won the prize and directed that nearly \$25,000 be sent to her by mail and wire during a two-year period.

Leipham faces up to 20 years in prison on each of three counts of wire fraud, five counts of mail

fraud and three counts of money laundering, the prosecutor's office said. She also faces fines of \$250,000 to \$500,000 on each count, and the government is seeking a money judgment of more than \$336,000, U.S. Attorney William Ihlenfeld said.

School driver accused of driving under influence

VA CHESTERFIELD — A school bus driver for a central Virginia school district was charged with driving under the influence following what police call a hit-and-run crash and a brief chase.

Richmond police said the driver of a Chesterfield County Public Schools bus struck a light pole, breaking it into two pieces, and drove off, according to media outlets.

Witnesses also had called authorities to report the bus was driving recklessly, Chesterfield police Lt. F. Kevin Lee said. Officers located the bus and tried to stop it, but the driver didn't pull over and a brief pursuit occurred, Lee said. The driver was later found to be driving under the influence of alcohol, he added.

The driver is no longer a school division employee, Chesterfield County Public Schools said.

Truck crash spills hot 'asphalt binder' in woods

CA GASQUET — A truck that crashed on a remote highway spilled 2,000 gallons of hot asphalt binder in a Northern California forest and the driver was arrested on suspicion of DUI, authorities said.

The semi-truck had a dam-

aged tire as it traveled on State Route 199 in Del Norte County, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The truck drifted off the road and struck a power pole, which fell into lanes near Gasquet, just south of the Oregon border, the highway patrol said.

The driver continued for another mile until the trailer overturned, spilling hot asphalt binder, which began seeping into the Smith River, SFGate reported.

"Asphalt binder turns into a solid substance once the temperature of the binder reaches about 100-125 degrees — which means when the material hit the cold river, it turned into a solid," Six Rivers National Forest said in a statement. "Although we are still concerned with possible harm done to natural resources, knowing more about the substance re-assures us the spread of liquid material in the river is minimal."

Researchers to assess last slave ship in US

AL MOBILE — Researchers are returning to the Alabama coast near Mobile to assess the sunken remains of the last slave ship to bring captive Africans to the United States more than 160 years ago.

The Alabama Historical Commission said a team will begin a 10-day evaluation of the remnants of the Clotilda. Experts have described the wreck as the most complete slave ship ever discovered.

The agency has hired Resolve Marine, a salvage and services company, for work involving the Clotilda. The ship was scuttled in the muddy Mobile River after

illegally dropping off 110 West Africans on the Alabama coast in 1860, decades after Congress outlawed the international slave trade.

Man accused of posing as policeman faces DWI

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A man accused of impersonating an Albuquerque police officer is also facing a DWI charge, according to authorities.

Albuquerque TV station KOB reported that two different videos showed Raul Martinez announcing himself as a city police officer at a gas station and a neighborhood.

Police said that according to a criminal complaint, three women at the gas station said Martinez appeared to be drunk and was slurring his words.

City cancels its massive New Year's Eve party

SC COLUMBIA — A New Year's Eve street party in South Carolina's capital city won't be held again, organizers said.

Columbia's Famously Hot New Year started ambitiously in 2011 to give the city a way to party and celebrate.

The party took place virtually in 2020 and was canceled in 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizers recently decided it was time to end the event, with the festival's board saying in a statement that they encourage people to "create new traditions around the holiday that include enjoying all that our vibrant region has to offer."

— From wire reports

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Herro scores 25, Heat take Game 1

Associated Press

MIAMI — Tyler Herro had spent the last few days dealing with an upper-respiratory bug that disrupted his routine. So he arrived at Miami's arena early Monday morning, 10 hours before gametime, to get some shots up and restore his rhythm. It worked.

And the Heat struck first against the shorthanded Philadelphia 76ers.

Herro scored 25 points — the second-most he'd ever had in a playoff game — while Bam Adebayo finished with 24 points and 12 rebounds, and top-seeded Miami ran away in the second half to beat the fourth-seeded 76ers 106-92 in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference semifinal matchup.

Herro was 4-for-6 from three-point range; everyone else in the game shot a combined 11-for-64 from deep.

"He's a worker," Heat coach

Erik Spoelstra said. "He's relentless."

Philadelphia was without Joel Embiid, the MVP finalist who isn't even in Miami while recovering from an orbital fracture and concussion — injuries suffered in the 76ers' first-round-clinching win at Toronto. He's not expected to play in Game 2.

And as would be expected, he was missed. Except by Adebayo, who barely missed anything. He was 8-for-10 from the floor, 8-for-8 from the line.

"I feel like I was just making plays," Adebayo said.

Jimmy Butler added 15 points for the top-seeded Heat, who got 10 from Gabe Vincent and P.J. Tucker.

Tobias Harris scored 27 points for Philadelphia, which got 19 from Tyrese Maxey and 16 points, nine rebounds and five assists from James Harden.

Game 2 is Wednesday in Miami.

"I didn't like how we moved the ball," 76ers coach Doc Rivers said. "I thought we passed late tonight. I thought the physicality affected us tonight and that had an impact. There were too many times, we'd take the extra dribble and by the time we passed it, they got there."

The Heat came out as aggressively as could be, putting Tucker on Harden and having him guard him the entire 94 feet of the floor in a similar approach to what the team utilized against Atlanta's Trae Young in the first-round series.

"Doing my job," Tucker said.

It worked — for a while. Miami led by as many as 12 in the opening quarter, then a 10-2 run fueled by eight points from Herro gave the Heat a 13-point edge at 37-24 to mark their biggest of the half. The margin was still 46-36 midway through the

second after another Herro basket.

The rest of the half was all Philly. And that was the 76ers' takeaway from the night.

"It's doable. It is doable," Maxey said. "It's not totally out of reach."

Miami went 1-for-9 from the field over the final 6 minutes of the half, with four turnovers in there as well, and Philadelphia went on a 15-4 spurt. Harden's shot in the lane with 28 seconds left put the 76ers up 51-50, their first lead of the night and the score that they took into the locker room.

The 76ers scored the first four points of the second half, going up by five. That was as good as it got for Philadelphia.

"I liked how we fought back," Rivers said. "I liked how we came out at the beginning of the third quarter ... and then I didn't like the rest of the game from that point on."

Ayton, Booker lead Suns past Mavericks in opener

Associated Press

PHOENIX — After a brief hiatus, the Phoenix Suns that bulldozed through the regular-season schedule made an appearance on Monday night.

Deandre Ayton scored 25 points, Devin Booker added 23 and the top-seeded Suns rolled to a 121-114 win over the Dallas Mavericks in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals.

The Suns never trailed, jumping to a 9-0 lead in the opening minutes and staying on the gas until the final minutes. They shot 50.5% from the field, won the rebounding edge 51-36 and beat the Mavericks for the 10th straight time, counting regular-season games.

Phoenix had a few hiccups late — making the final score a little closer than it should have been — but the Suns looked much more like the team that set a franchise

record with 64 wins during the season.

"We'll take the win," point guard Chris Paul said. "It's not always going to be pretty. We played well most of the game. We'll look at the film tomorrow and see what we need to do differently for Game 2."

Luka Doncic led Dallas with 45 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists. It's the first time the Mavs have advanced to the postseason's second round in Doncic's four-year NBA career.

Doncic and Maxi Kleber looked ready for the challenge but the rest of Dallas didn't do much until it was too late. Kleber finished with 19 points.

"I thought Maxi and Luka in that first half kept us afloat," Mavericks coach Jason Kidd said. "We could have easily been down 39 at halftime but Maxi and L.D. were good. L.D. was good in

the second half, too.

"We've just got to get someone to join the party."

Game 2 is on Wednesday in Phoenix.

Booker missed three games during the Suns' tougher-than-expected first-round series win over the New Orleans Pelicans because of a strained right hamstring. He returned for the closeout Game 6 and scored 13 points, but looked a little more cautious than usual in his effort to stay healthy. That hesitancy was gone in the first quarter on Monday: Booker scored 13 points on 4-for-8 shooting and added six rebounds and four assists.

Ayton dominated in the paint and mid-range, hitting his usual array of turnaround jumpers, runners and dunks. The 6-foot-11 center shot 12-for-20 from the field. Paul added 19 points and Cam Johnson had 17 off the

bench.

"I liked the fact that we weren't settling for 3s tonight," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "A lot of guys were attacking the paint, we were getting floaters and rim shots."

All five Suns starters scored in double figures.

The Suns' opening salvo was highlighted by a Jae Crowder three-pointer and Booker's lob pass to Mikal Bridges for a dunk. Phoenix extended its lead to 18-6 midway through the first quarter before a discombobulated Dallas called timeout.

The Mavericks stayed in the game for a while thanks to Doncic and Kleber, who hit his first four three-pointers. The pair helped Dallas pull within 51-47 midway through the second but the Suns finished the half with another run, going into the break with a 69-56 lead.

Perron's hat trick lifts Blues past Wild

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — David Perron was quarantined in his basement last year, listening to his kids run around upstairs and watching the St. Louis Blues get swept out of the first round.

The 15-year veteran right wing sure showed his appreciation for being back in the playoffs.

Perron had a hat trick and an assist to lead the Blues past the Minnesota Wild 4-0 on Monday night in Game 1 of their first-round series, one year after COVID-19 kept him out of the postseason.

"It's been a long way coming," said Perron, who's on his third stint with St. Louis and posted the 14th three-goal game in franchise history. "I have a lot of pride wearing the Blue note."

Ryan O'Reilly had a goal and an assist, Torey Krug added three assists and Ville Husso made 37 saves for the shutout in his postseason debut for the Blues, who seized home-ice advantage from a Wild team they've had their way with in recent years.

By blocking 17 shots, clogging the passing lanes and dominating on both special teams, confident St. Louis quieted Xcel Energy Center quickly with a 2-0 first-period lead and never let the crowd — that Minnesota pushed so hard to play in front of to start the postseason — become a factor.

"It's part of the game and it's important, but we've been a good road team for quite some time here," Blues coach Craig Berube said.

Particularly on the power play, having led the league with a 29.4% scoring rate in

41 road games this season. Perron scored on each of the first two power plays for St. Louis, which went 6-for-6 on the penalty kill.

That was the greatest source of frustration for the Wild on a night marked by up-close misfires and clanged posts. They had a 55-28 edge on the Blues in shots attempted over the first two periods, but 14 of them went wide of the net.

"Our view from the eye view is that we were pretty good," Minnesota coach Dean Evason said. "We had pretty good opportunities, and we didn't give much on the other end. That'll give us a lot of positivity going forward."

Game 2 is here Wednesday night, before the series shifts south to St. Louis.

Marc-Andre Fleury got the nod in goal for the Wild over All-Star Cam Talbot. Fleury, the reigning Vezina Trophy winner and three-time Stanley Cup champion, was acquired in a trade with Chicago on March 21.

The Wild were insistent there was no bad decision to make and that both goalies would be needed throughout the postseason, but if they don't get their special teams on track this might be a short run. The Wild set franchise records for wins (53) and points (113) to nudge past the Blues for second place in the Central Division, despite a power play that ranked 18th in the NHL and a penalty kill that was 25th in the league.

Fleury started strong with a pad save on a penalty shot by Ivan Barbashev, but Perron put the Blues on the board less than

three minutes later. After Brayden Schenn checked Wild defenseman Matt Dumba to the head and knocked him over, Jordan Greenway was called for roughing to give the Blues their first power play. Perron scored on a rebound, flinging his body forward to land on his knees after his stick connected with the puck just before the extra-skater time expired.

Fleury stopped 27 shots.

Husso was picked over Jordan Binnington, who backstopped the Blues all the way to the Stanley Cup title as a rookie in 2019. For the first game, at least, the inexperience once again didn't matter in the St. Louis net.

"It's really nice for a first playoff game," Husso said. "We were ready right away."

Perron has plenty of time on ice when the moments are the most tense, with 92 career playoff games coming into the series. None last year, though, because he had to sit out with the virus while the Blues were swept by Colorado.

"The worst part is not being a part of the team, just helping out however you could," Perron said. "I was literally going crazy."

Perron bounced back in a big way against his friend — and fellow Quebecois — Fleury, who played with him on the Vegas team that reached the Stanley Cup finals in 2018 and also with Pittsburgh in 2015.

"We know each other very well. He's a good shooter. He's always a threat around the net, I know," Fleury said. "It seems like every puck on the power play just ended up on his stick."

Leafs blank 2-time champion Lightning in opener

Associated Press

TORONTO — Auston Matthews had two goals and an assist and Jack Campbell made 23 saves in the second playoff shutout of his career as the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning 5-0 Monday night in Game 1 of their first-round playoffs series.

Mitch Marner had a goal and two assists. Jake Muzzin scored and David Kampf added a goal on a short-handed breakaway for Toronto, which killed off five Lightning power plays, includ-

ing an early five-minute major.

Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 28 shots for the Lightning.

The second game of the best-of-seven series is Wednesday in Toronto.

Kings 4, Oilers 3: Phillip Danault scored at 14:46 of the third period, leading Los Angeles to a win at Edmonton in Game 1 of the teams' first-round playoff series.

Trevor Moore and Alex Iafallo each had a goal and assist for the Kings. Brandon Lemieux also scored.

Connor McDavid and Kailier

Yamamoto each had a goal and assist for the Oilers. Leon Draisaitl rounded out the scoring with a power-play goal.

Kings goalie Jonathan Quick made 35 saves. Mike Smith stopped 31 of 35 shots for Edmonton.

Game 2 is Wednesday in Edmonton. The series shifts to Los Angeles for Game 3 on Friday.

Hurricanes 5, Bruins 1: Seth Jarvis and Nino Niederreiter scored second-period goals and Antti Raanta had 35 saves in his playoff debut as host Carolina beat Boston in Game 1 of

their first-round playoff series.

Jarvis and Niederreiter scored roughly two minutes apart in the second period to break a scoreless tie. Teuvo Teravainen and Vincent Trocheck added third-period goals. Andrei Svechnikov punctuated the win with an empty-net goal at 17:59.

Taylor Hall scored for the Bruins early in the third. Linus Ullmark finished with 20 saves for Boston, which has lost all four matchups with the Hurricanes this year by a combined score of 21-2.

Yankees' winning streak hits 10 games

Associated Press

TORONTO — New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone saw Gleyber Torres coming to the plate with the go-ahead run in scoring position, and had one thought.

"I was thinking, 'No one better right now,' and he put a great swing on it," Boone said.

Torres homered early, then hit a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning as the Yankees won their 10th straight game, beating the Toronto Blue Jays 3-2 Monday night.

"That's a good win against a really good team," Boone said.

It's the longest winning streak in the majors this season, and New York's longest since a 13-game run last Aug. 14-27.

"We're playing really good

baseball," Yankees starter Jordan Montgomery said. "We're doing what it takes to win, just playing good defense, situational hitting. It's nice to win close games."

The Yankees have won at least 17 of their first 23 games for the eighth time, and the first since 2003. New York's 17-6 record is the best in the majors.

Giancarlo Stanton singled off Yimi Garcia (0-2) to begin the Yankees' ninth, ending a streak of four perfect innings by Blue Jays relievers. Pinch-runner Tim Lincecum stole second, but Josh Donaldson grounded out and Aaron Hicks struck out before Torres lined a single to center field.

"It's special," Torres said. "Every time when I do little

things and help my team get a win, that's great to me."

Twins 2, Orioles 1: Chris Paddock (1-2) pitched effectively into the sixth, and Carlos Correa hit a tiebreaking single that same inning to lift visiting Minnesota to its 10th win in 11 games.

Astros 3, Mariners 0: Yordan Alvarez hit a solo homer and rookie Jeremy Peña added a two-run shot to back up another solid start from Jake Odorizzi (2-2) and help host Houston top Seattle.

White Sox 3, Angels 0: Dylan Cease (3-1) struck out 11 to match a career best and gave up just one hit in seven sparkling innings, propelling host Chicago past Los Angeles.

Braves 5, Mets 2: Austin Riley homered, Max Fried

(3-2) won his third straight outing and visiting Atlanta cooled New York in the first of 19 meetings between the NL East rivals this season.

Cardinals 1, Royals 0: Paul Goldschmidt hit an early home run and Steven Matz (3-1) and the bullpen made it stand up, leading host St. Louis over Kansas City.

Diamondbacks 5, Marlins 4: Zac Gallen (1-0) outpitched Pablo López (3-1) as visiting Arizona built a lead and held on to beat Miami.

Rays 6, Athletics 1: Yandy Díaz led off the game with a home run to back right-hander Drew Rasmussen's (2-1) second straight winning start, and visiting Tampa Bay used a balanced offense to beat Oakland.

Elliott halts 26-race skid with victory at Dover

Associated Press

DOVER, Del. — Chase Elliott had a front-row seat for the Hendrick Motorsports trophy celebrations and photo shoots and all the kitschy social media posts created as one by one — and as his three teammates won, and won and won again — they all brought home checkered flags.

Elliott rarely needs a motivational nudge to park his Chevy in victory lane, so while he felt happy for the drivers, he didn't necessarily use their successes as a means to create artificial fire to try to match them.

"My drive to win and my job to do my job to the best of my ability doesn't change whether we are struggling, whether are we doing very good, whether I'm in a contract year or not, whether my teammates have won and I haven't," Elliott said.

He drove to the best of his ability again Monday at Dover Motor Speedway and earned his first victory of the season, making Hendrick Motorsports drivers 4-for-4 in the win column this season. It's barely May and Elliott, Kyle Larson, William Byron and Alex Bowman already are locked into the playoffs.

The summer run will be a tuneup for the 10-race shootout.

There's a new car this season in NASCAR — and the same old results for Hendrick at Dover.

er.

Elliott snapped a 26-race winless streak when the 2020 NASCAR champion led the final 53 laps to win his 14th career Cup race. He gave team owner Rick Hendrick another triumph on the mile concrete track. Elliott followed Bowman's checkered flag a year ago as a Hendrick driver won for the 22nd time at Dover. Hendrick swept the top four spots last season; this one clinched the four playoff spots.

Elliott, who leads the points standings, hopped on the window ledge of his No. 9 Chevrolet and pointed in appreciation toward a solid crowd for a weekday race. The finish was delayed a day because of rain.

"We just had some good circumstances, finally," Elliott said. "We've had some tough races over the last four, five months. This one means a lot in so many different ways. Hope to see this big crowd here next year."

His last win was July 4 at Road America.

Even without a win, Elliott had been building toward this moment. The 2020 NASCAR champion and reigning most popular driver, Elliott took a steady pace while his teammates burst out of the gate with early season wins; Byron already has two wins. Elliott has only one finish worse than 14th this season and rolled into Dover with three straight top-10 finishes at Martinsville, Bristol dirt and Talladega.

ishes at Martinsville, Bristol dirt and Talladega.

"If you just look at the box score, you don't see it," crew chief Alan Gustafson said. "But I think we've been pretty close."

Elliott snatched the lead from Ross Chastain, last week's watermelon-smashing winner at Talladega Superspeedway, and pulled away on the concrete. Chastain led 86 laps and Kyle Busch, who finished seventh, led a race-high 103.

"I feel like we've had a lot of pace at different times throughout the year," Elliott said. "We just hadn't put an entire race together until today."

A Hendrick car in the top spot looked familiar at Dover, but that was just the tip of four different teams in the top four spots. Ricky Stenhouse Jr. was second and had his first top-five finish of the season for JTG Daugherty Racing. Chastain was third for Trackhouse Racing and Joe Gibbs Racing driver Christopher Bell finished fourth.

Martin Truex Jr. spun himself out on the last lap while racing for a top-five finish when he appeared to get boxed out by Chastain. Truex confronted Chastain on pit road.

"We were talking about where we were going to go fishing next week," Chastain cracked. "I'm racing with champions and I got beat."