

## Marine Corps changes prompt criticism

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Marine Corps is moving forward with a controversial plan that has mothballed tanks in favor of smaller, more mobile fighting formations, despite a backlash from some acclaimed retired generals.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger on Monday released an update to his Force Design 2030 concept, which amounts to some of the most significant changes in the service in a generation.

The Corps is two years into the initiative, which has seen it get rid of hundreds of tanks and cut back on towed cannon artillery and significant numbers of helicopter units. The aim is to set up the service to counter China more effectively in the years to come.

“We are modernizing the Marine Corps using the (People’s Republic of China) as a benchmark,” Berger wrote in the update.

But the speed of the Corps’ transformation has rattled some former Marine brass.

The pushback comes from a group of some 30 retired generals, Politico reported in April, including Jim Mattis and Joe Dunford — two of the biggest names in recent Marine Corps history. Neither Mattis nor Dunford have commented publicly on their views of the force structure changes.

Critics are concerned the Corps could be putting at risk its traditional role of performing global crisis response operations by divesting armor and reducing the size of its battalions.

Retired Lt. Gen. Paul K. Van Riper wrote in a March op-ed in the Marine Corps Times that the Corps is sacrificing its combined arms capability to support maritime denial and control campaigns with anti-ship missiles.

“It will be a force shorn of all its tanks and 76% of its cannon artillery, and with 41% fewer Marines in its infantry battalions,” Van Riper wrote. “To make the situation even worse, there will be 33% fewer aircraft available to support riflemen on the ground.”

In his update to Force Design 2030, Berger notes the criticism from “stakeholders.”

“We have consistently said that a modernized Marine Corps must still be capable of performing global crisis response operations,” Berger wrote, in what appears to be a nod to his critics.

“Regardless, we must do better in explaining to all stakeholders the analytic rigor underpinning our Force Design choices, and how a modernized Marine Corps will perform our traditional roles and functions

in the future.”

Berger’s changes center on his concept of “stand-in forces,” or smaller, more nimble units arranged to help the military in areas such as reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance.

The concept intends to provide the Pentagon with a hard-to-detect force that could help find and sink enemy vessels at sea while maneuvering with greater range on land.

“Infantry will continue to locate, close with and destroy adversaries through fire and maneuver, but the range of options for how to locate, how to close and how to destroy is expanding,” Berger wrote. “These new means give infantry increased lethality and greater range of purpose.”

Advanced long-range weaponry from adversaries such as Russia and China means that Marines need to operate in a more dispersed manner, with a reduced “logistical footprint and low signature,” Berger continued.

Key for small units is that they possess long-range precision fires capability, such as light miniature attack munitions, which “shortens the kill chain dramatically and enables that unit to out cycle the enemy,” the update says.

## Russian forces pound Ukraine’s vital port of Odesa

*Associated Press*

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — Russian troops pounded the vital port of Odesa, Ukrainian officials said Tuesday, an apparent effort to disrupt the supply lines and Western weapons shipments critical to Kyiv’s defense.

Ukraine’s ability to stymie a larger, better-armed Russian military has surprised many who had anticipated a much quicker conflict. With the war now in its 11th week and Kyiv bogging Russian forces down and even staging a counteroffensive, Ukraine’s foreign minister appeared to suggest the country could expand its aims beyond merely pushing Russia back to areas it or its allies held on the day of the Feb. 24 invasion.

One of the most dramatic examples of Ukraine’s ability to deny Moscow easy victories

has been Mariupol, where Ukrainian fighters remained holed up at a steel plant, denying Russia’s full control of the city. The regiment defending the plant said Tuesday that Russian warplanes continued pounding it.

In recent days, the United Nations and Red Cross organized a dramatic rescue of what some officials said were the last civilians trapped at the plant. But on Tuesday, two officials said about 100 were believed to still be in the complex’s underground tunnels. Others said that was impossible to confirm.

In another harrowing example of the grisly toll the war continues to take, the Ukrainians said they found the bodies of 44 civilians in the rubble of a building destroyed weeks ago in the northeastern city of Izyum.

In Washington, a top U.S. intelligence official testified Tuesday that eight to 10 Russian

generals have been killed so far in the war. Lt. Gen. Scott Berrier, who leads the Defense Intelligence Agency, told a Senate committee that because Russia lacks a noncommissioned officer corps, its generals have to go into combat zones and end up in dangerous positions.

The Ukrainian military said Russian forces fired seven missiles Monday at Ukraine’s largest port, Odesa, hitting a shopping center and a warehouse. One person was killed and five wounded, the military said.

Images overnight showed a burning building and debris — including a tennis shoe — in a heap of destruction in the city on the Black Sea. Mayor Gennady Trukhanov later visited the warehouse and said it “had nothing in common with military infrastructure or military objects.”

# Esper: Trump sought withdrawal from S. Korea

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

Former Defense Secretary Mark Esper in his new memoir said former President Donald Trump proposed the “complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea,” according to an excerpt published Tuesday by Politico.

In his book, “A Sacred Oath: Memoirs of a Secretary of Defense During Extraordinary Times,” Esper writes that he had been in the job for a only few weeks when Trump began proposing “outlandish” ideas, including shutting down embassies in Africa.

“None of this was in our nation’s interests, and as I calmly responded with facts, data and arguments, I saw some irritation in him — I was the ‘new guy’ push-

ing back,” Esper wrote, according to Politico.

Esper replaced Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in 2019 and served until he was abruptly fired after Election Day the following year. Esper previously served as Army secretary under Trump and was vice president for government relations at defense contracting firm Raytheon.

Esper’s account corroborates previous reporting that Trump had considered pulling U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula. Former national security adviser John Bolton, in his 2020 memoir “The Room Where It Happened,” wrote that the president had ordered a pullout if South Korea did not pay more to keep U.S. troops in the country.

Trump was outspoken about his displeasure with the Special

Measures Agreement with South Korea, a cost-sharing deal in which Seoul helps pay to station American forces in the country. Trump previously described South Korea’s contribution as “peanuts” and pressured Seoul to pay as much as \$5 billion, according to previous reports.

Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in, whose term ended Tuesday, said that while Trump’s demand was unacceptable, the president took the rejection in stride.

“A good thing about President Trump was that he did not take it personally at all, even though he demanded it while I never accepted it for a long time,” Moon said in an interview with South Korean broadcaster JoongAng Tongyong on April 25.

Under the current six-year

year deal that took effect in 2021, South Korea agreed to spend \$1.02 billion for that year, or about a 13.9% increase from the previous year. The payout varies from year to year and is based on the South’s defense budget.

Roughly 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, the majority at Camp Humphreys, the largest U.S. military base overseas. Their deployment, according to U.S. Forces Korea, is to “deter aggression and if necessary, defend [South Korea] to maintain stability in Northeast Asia.”

Trump also began proceedings to pull 12,000 of the 34,000 U.S. troops stationed in Germany and redeploy some of them elsewhere in Europe, citing Berlin’s inadequate defense spending. The plan was put on hold under President Joe Biden’s administration.

## Guam’s THAAD battery is moving to new USMC base

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army is relocating its THAAD missile defense battery on Guam from Andersen Air Force Base to the nearby Marine Corps base still under construction, according to military officials.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, on the island since 2013, will move to Camp Blaz, Capt. Nicholas Chopp, spokesman for the Hawaii-headquartered 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, said Monday.

Relocating THAAD came as the result of recent evaluations by the Missile Defense Agency of the risks the island faces from hypersonic and ballistic missile threats, the commander of Joint Region Marianas told reporters on Guam earlier Monday.

“They brought some highly

technical gear with them to really assess how things are in the electromagnetic spectrum, where things are best meant to go — these sorts of things,” Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson said, according to The Guam Daily Post.

“We’ve realized that if we move the THAAD battery to another location here on the island, we can actually do a couple of things,” he said. “We can increase the capability that the THAAD provides for the defense of Guam.”

About 5,000 Marines from the III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa will move to Blaz over the next five years.

As the closest U.S. territory to the contested South China Sea, Guam is seen by defense officials as a strategic hub for defense of the region, particularly the so-called first island chain that includes Okinawa, northern Philippines and Taiwan.

## Key NATO decisions expected in Finland, Sweden this week

*Associated Press*

STOCKHOLM—To join or not to join? The NATO question is coming to a head this week in Finland and Sweden, where Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has shattered the long-held belief that remaining outside the military alliance was the best way to avoid trouble with their giant neighbor.

If Finland’s president and the governing Social Democrats in both countries come out in favor of accession in the next few days, NATO could soon add two members right on Russia’s doorstep.

That would be a historic development for the two Nordic countries: Sweden has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, while Finland adopted neutrality after being defeated by the Soviet Union in World War II.

NATO membership was never seriously considered in Stockholm and Helsinki until Russian forces attacked Ukraine on Feb.

24. Virtually overnight, the conversation in both capitals shifted from “Why should we join?” to “How long does it take?” If Finland and Sweden join, Russia would find itself completely surrounded by NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic.

“There is no going back to the status quo before the invasion,” said Heli Hautala, a Finnish diplomat previously posted to Moscow and a research fellow at the Center for a New American Security in Washington.

Finnish President Sauli Niinisto is expected to announce his stance on NATO membership on Thursday. The governing Social Democratic parties in both countries are set to present their positions this weekend. If their answer is “yes,” there would be robust majorities in both parliaments for membership, paving the way for formal application procedures to begin right away.

# Inmate caught after manhunt, ex-jail cop dead

Associated Press

A former Alabama jail official on the run with a murder suspect she was accused of helping escape shot and killed herself Monday as authorities caught up with the pair after more than a week of searching, officials said. The man she fled with surrendered.

The death of Vicky White, 56, only deepened the mystery of why a respected jail official would leave everything to help free Casey White, 38, a hulking inmate with a violent and frightening history.

The two fugitives were caught — following a manhunt through three states — in Evansville, Ind., when U.S. Marshals chasing them crashed

into their vehicle, authorities said. Casey White gave himself up and Vicky White shot herself and was taken to a hospital, authorities said. Vanderburgh County Coroner Steve Lockyear said she died from her injuries.

Before Vicky White's death, authorities celebrated the fugitives' apprehension.

"We got a dangerous man off the street today. He is never going to see the light of day again. That is a good thing, for not just our community. That's a good thing for our country," Lauderdale County Sheriff Rick Singleton of Alabama said.

The manhunt began April 29 when Vicky White, the assistant director of corrections for the

jail in Lauderdale County, allegedly helped engineer the escape of Casey White, who was awaiting trial in a capital murder case. Vicky White had told co-workers she was taking the inmate from the jail for a mental health evaluation at the courthouse, but the two, who are not related, instead fled the area.

The car they took off in was later found abandoned in Tennessee, but there was no trace of the pair until U.S. Marshals received a tip Sunday that surveillance photos from an Evansville car wash showed a man who closely resembled Casey White exiting a 2006 Ford F-150 pickup truck, the Marshals Service said. White stands

6 feet, 9 inches tall and weighs about 260 pounds.

On Monday, officials learned that the pair was spotted near the sheriff's office, said Vanderburgh County Sheriff Dave Wedding in Indiana. As officers arrived, the pair fled in a vehicle and led police on a pursuit, he said. U.S. Marshals collided with them "to try to end the pursuit," he said. Casey White was injured, not too seriously, in the crash and Vicky White then shot herself, causing "very serious" injuries, he said.

"We're lucky that no law enforcement was injured, no innocent civilians were injured, the pursuit was short in nature and we have both people in custody," Wedding said.

## Wind is wild card in fires burning across NM, Ariz.

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS, N.M. — Schoolchildren in a northern New Mexico community that had been threatened by a wildfire were expected to resume in-person classes Tuesday while residents on the fire's northern edges remained under evacuation orders.

The West Las Vegas School District said exceptions would be made for students still displaced by what's the largest wildfire burning in the United States or those whose health has been affected by the smoke.

Meanwhile, firefighters worked in rugged terrain ahead of the massive blaze trying to clear brush and stop the flames from burning

more homes in the Rocky Mountain foothills.

The wildfire — intensified by decades of drought, warmer temperatures and spring winds — has charred 308 square miles of tinder-dry ponderosa forests. Thousands of people have had to flee the flames and some 300 structures, including homes, have been destroyed.

Crews have spent days working to protect ranch homes scattered through the area and stamping out small fires that jumped ahead of the main blaze.

"So far they've had great luck in catching those," said fire information officer Joel Barnett.

Wind will continue to be a factor this week, along with low humidity, but to varying degrees depending on the day. Fire officials predicted part of the massive blaze would push north into rugged terrain that is difficult for firefighters to access.

The region's largest population center — Las Vegas, N.M., home to 13,000 people — remained largely safe from the flames. Some residents were allowed to return over the weekend.

Crews in Arizona were dealing with strong winds Monday as they battled a fire near the U.S.-Mexico border that forced several dozen people from their homes.

## Andy Warhol's iconic 'Marilyn' painting sells for \$195M

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Andy Warhol's "Shot Sage Blue Marilyn" sold for a cool \$195 million on Monday, making the iconic portrait of Marilyn Monroe the most expensive work by a U.S. artist ever sold at auction.

The 1964 silkscreen image shows Monroe in vibrant close-up — hair yellow, eye shadow blue and lips red — on a rich blue background. It's also the most

expensive piece from the 20th century ever auctioned, according to Christie's auction house in New York, where the sale took place.

The Warhol sale unseated the previous record holder and another modern master, Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose 1982 painting "Untitled" of a skull-like face sold for a record \$110.5 million at Sotheby's in 2017.

Christie's said an unnamed

buyer made the purchase Monday night. When the auction was announced earlier this year, they estimated it could go for as much as \$200 million.

"It's an amazing price," said Alex Rotter, chairman of Christie's 20th and 21st century art department. "Let it sink in, it's quite something."

"This is where we wanted to be, clearly," said Guillaume Cerutti, CEO of Christie's. "It

proves we are in a very resilient art market."

The proceeds of the sale will go to the Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation Zurich, which put the painting up for auction. The foundation aims to help children with health care and educational programs.

Warhol created more than one image of Monroe; this particular painting has been exhibited in museums around the world.



# Philippine election hurts effort to counter China

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s apparent landslide victory in the Philippine presidential election is giving rise to immediate concerns about a further erosion of democracy in the region, and could complicate American efforts to blunt growing Chinese influence and power in the Pacific.

Marcos, the son and namesake of longtime dictator Ferdinand Marcos, captured more than 30.8 million votes in Monday's election according to an unofficial count, more than double those of his closest challenger.

If the results stand, he will take office at the end of June for a six-year term with Sara Duterte, the daughter of outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, as his vice president.

Duterte — who leaves office with a 67% approval rating — nurtured closer ties with China

and Russia, while at times railing against the United States.

He has walked back on many of his threats against Washington, however, including a move to repeal a defense pact between the two countries, and the luster of China's promise of infrastructure investment has dulled, with much failing to materialize.

Whether the recent trend in relations with the U.S. will continue has a lot to do with how President Joe Biden's administration responds to the return of a Marcos to power in the Philippines, said Manila-based political scientist Andrea Chloe Wong, a former researcher in the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs.

"On the one hand you have Biden regarding the geostrategic interests in the Philippines, and on the other hand he has to balance promoting American democratic ideals and human rights," she said.

"If he chooses to do that, he

might have to isolate the Marcos administration, so this will definitely be a delicate balancing act for the Philippines, and Marcos' approach to the U.S. will highly depend on how Biden will engage with him."

His election comes at a time when the U.S. has been increasingly focused on the region, embarking on a strategy unveiled in February to considerably broaden U.S. engagement by strengthening a web of security alliances and partnerships, with an emphasis on addressing China's growing influence and ambitions.

Thousands of American and Filipino forces recently wrapped up one of their largest combat exercises in years, which showcased U.S. firepower in the northern Philippines near its sea border with Taiwan.

Marcos has been short on specifics about foreign policy, but in interviews he said he wanted to pursue closer ties with China,

including possibly setting aside a 2016 ruling by a tribunal in The Hague that invalidated almost all of China's historical claims to the South China Sea.

China has refused to recognize the ruling, and Marcos was quoted as saying "that arbitration is no longer an arbitration if there's only one party."

Marcos has also said he would maintain his nation's alliance with the U.S., but the relationship is complicated by American backing of the administrations that took power after his father was deposed, and a 2011 U.S. District Court ruling in Hawaii finding him and his mother in contempt of an order to furnish information on assets in connection with a 1995 human rights class action suit against Marcos Sr.

The court fined them \$353.6 million, which has never been paid and could complicate the possibility of him visiting the U.S. in the future.

# Bodies found in Lake Mead renew Vegas mob lore

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas is being flooded with lore about organized crime after a second set of human remains emerged within a week from the depths of a drought-stricken Colorado River reservoir just a 30-minute drive from the notoriously mob-founded Strip.

"There's no telling what we'll find in Lake Mead," former Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman said Monday. "It's not a bad place to dump a body."

Goodman, as a lawyer, represented mob figures including the ill-fated Anthony "Tony the Ant" Spilotro before serving three terms as a martini-toting mayor making public appearances with a showgirl on each arm.

He declined to name names about who might turn up in the vast reservoir formed by Hoover Dam between Nevada and Arizona.

"I'm relatively sure it was not Jimmy Hoffa," he laughed. But he added that a lot of his former clients seemed particularly interested in "climate control" — mob speak for keeping the lake level up and bodies down in

their watery graves.

Instead, the world now has climate change, and the surface of Lake Mead has dropped more than 170 feet since 1983.

The lake that slakes the thirst of 40 million people in cities, farms and tribes across seven Southwestern states is down to about 30% of capacity.

"If the lake goes down much farther, it's very possible we're going to have some very interesting things surface," observed Michael Green, a University of Nevada, Las Vegas history professor whose father dealt blackjack for decades at casinos including the Stardust and the Showboat.

"I wouldn't bet the mortgage that we're going to solve who killed Bugsy Siegel," Green said, referring to the infamous gangster who opened the Flamingo in 1946 on what would become the Strip. Siegel was shot dead in 1947 in Beverly Hills, Calif. His assassin has never been identified.

"But I would be willing to bet there are going to be a few more bodies," Green said.

First, the dropping lake level exposed Las Vegas' uppermost drinking water intake on

April 25, forcing the regional water authority to switch to a deep-lake intake it completed in 2020 to continue to supply casinos, suburbs and 2.4 million residents and 40 million tourists per year.

The following weekend, boaters spotted the decomposed body of a man in a rusted barrel stuck in the mud of newly exposed shoreline.

The corpse has not been identified, but Las Vegas police said he had been shot, probably between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, according to the shoes found with him. The death is being investigated as a homicide.

On Saturday, two sisters from suburban Henderson who were paddle boarding on the lake near a former marina resort noticed bones on a newly surfaced sand bar more than 9 miles from the barrels.

Lindsey Melvin, who took photos of their find, said they thought at first it was the skeleton of a bighorn sheep native to the region. A closer look revealed a human jaw with teeth. They called park rangers, and the National Park Service confirmed in a statement that the bones were human.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Sheriff candidate gets ticket for going 107 mph**

**NE** OMAHA — A candidate for sheriff in eastern Nebraska was ticketed for speeding after an officer spotted him driving over 100 mph on his way to campaign at a Cinco de Mayo parade in Omaha.

An Omaha police report said George Merithew was wearing a Merithew for Douglas County sheriff shirt when he was ticketed for driving 107 mph in a 65 mph zone along Interstate 80 in Omaha.

The report said Merithew provided his license and registration when the officer asked, and then showed his retired Omaha police ID badge. He worked for the Omaha department for 25 years before retiring.

Merithew's campaign said later that he showed his retired police ID badge as part of notifying the officer he was armed. The campaign acknowledged in a statement that Merithew was speeding, but said he complied with the officer before he received a \$300 ticket and "will now exercise the same rights every other citizen has to deal with the citation."

**State Bar notifies 1.3K people ID'd in data rift**

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — The State Bar of California has begun notifying individuals whose names appeared in more than 322,000 confidential attorney discipline records published online in a massive data breach.

The State Bar said it will contact 1,300 complainants, wit-

nesses or respondents whose names appeared in more than a thousand confidential case records that appeared online.

The documents, published by public records aggregator Judyrecords, erroneously remained online from Oct. 15, 2021, to Feb. 26, 2022.

The breach, first reported by the Southern California News Group, was not a hack, but rather a security vulnerability in the State Bar's case management system. As a result, the confidential records were unintentionally swept up and published by Judyrecords.

**Coast Guard rescues 5 from sailboat in gulf**

**AL** MOBILE — Five people were rescued from a disabled sailboat in the Gulf of Mexico, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

News outlets reported the 36-foot sailboat put out a distress call because of a broken mast. The vessel was located about 200 miles southeast of Mobile. No one was injured and the sailboat was towed to shore.

Scott Talbot, a search and rescue mission coordinator for the Coast Guard's District Eight, said the sailboat's GPS and distress signaling gear allowed the boat to be located and for those aboard to be rescued.

**Stadium demolition plan has \$200K to boot bats**

**LA** SHREVEPORT — Officials said it will cost about \$580,000 to demolish a minor-league baseball stadium in northwest Louisiana, with about one-third of that for bat control — flying mammal evic-

tion, that is.

The 36-year-old stadium called Fair Grounds Field was last used in 2011, and the Shreveport City Council is scheduled to consider an ordinance to declare it surplus and allow demolition.

It was built in 1986 for a minor league team that moved to Texas in 2003 as the Frisco Rough Riders.

Evicting bats that roost there will cost \$200,000, with demolition afterward costing \$380,000, news outlets have reported.

**Multiple ducks shot to death at park**

**CA** COSTA MESA — Police are investigating after several ducks were shot to death at a Southern California park.

Four ducks were found dead last month at TeWinkle Park in Costa Mesa, ABC 7 reported.

Since then, at least three more ducks were killed and a goose was wounded and later euthanized.

The Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center is treating a duck from the park that was shot with pellets, executive director Debbie McGuire said.

Park rangers and police are stepping up patrols at the park, Costa Mesa Police Lt. Ed Everett said.

**Troopers save man from burning car after crash**

**MD** BELTSVILLE — Troopers rescued a driver from his burning car early Monday after it hit a patrol car, which then struck a trooper, sending him airborne, Maryland State Police said.

Troopers were investigating a crash on northbound U.S. Route 1 in Beltsville around 2 a.m., with emergency lights flashing when a car crashed into one of them, state police said in a news release. A trooper standing near the patrol car was hit and thrown 10 to 15 feet, police said.

The car caught fire and troopers pulled the driver, who was unconscious, from the car, police said.

The driver regained consciousness and was taken to a hospital. He was charged with driving under the influence, police said.

The trooper who was hit was taken to a hospital and later released.

**Anonymous donor pays tab for college grads**

**TX** MARSHALL — Students graduating from a historically Black college in East Texas were told at their commencement ceremony that an anonymous donor had paid their balances, officials said.

Wiley College said in a news release that over 100 students were gathered for graduation when the school's president made the announcement.

"We are constantly communicating with donors to assist students in these ways so that they can begin their after-college experience with less debt," Herman J. Felton Jr., Wiley's president and CEO, said in a news release.

The college said in the news release that the estimated total for the balances owed to the college by the graduating class of 2022 was about \$300,000.

— From wire reports



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# Avalanche complete sweep of Predators

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Colorado Avalanche are the first NHL team to advance to the second round this postseason, and the top-seeded team in the Western Conference is coming off simply a dominating performance.

The Avalanche swept Nashville, something that hadn't happened in the Predators' first 14 playoff appearances. Colorado scored the first goal in all four games — twice scoring on their first shot of the game. The Avs finished the best-of-seven series with a 5-3 win Monday night and an overall 21-9 scoring edge.

"They're a really good team," Nashville captain Roman Josi said. "They make you pay for every little mistake. They got some unbelievable players over there."

Better yet?

Colorado trailed for a grand total of 4 minutes, 57 seconds in the entire series. That happened in the third period Monday night, and the high-powered Avs answered with three straight goals over the next 11:05 to seal not only the victory, but the series.

"You can't always win when you have your best, you have to find ways when you're not," Colorado forward Nathan MacKinnon said. "(Monday) was one of

those cases. We just know with all the skill and talent we have that we were going to get one. A lot of good looks and eventually we got a few, so it was nice."

This puts the Avs in the Western Conference semifinals for a fourth straight season and second consecutive after sweeping their first-round opponent. Since the franchise relocated to Denver, the team improved to 6-0 in best-of-seven series after winning the first three games, with its fourth sweep in that span.

It now gets to wait for either St. Louis or Minnesota.

"The big thing is now we can take a breath, get a couple days off for our guys, give them some rest and we'll still get some real good practice time before we get ready for our next opponent," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said.

That includes rest for goalie Darcy Kuemper, who sat out the series clincher still dealing with swelling around his right eye. He took an inadvertent stick to the face late in the first period of Game 3, and Pavel Francouz finished off the series in net.

"Obviously, we don't know who our opponent is yet, but it's going to be a familiar team," defenseman Cale Makar said. "For us, it's already to that next step. We're

where we want it to be, but we have to make sure that we can stay tight throughout this little break that we have."

The Avalanche lead all teams this postseason averaging 5.25 goals per game and a league-high 43.8% on the man advantage. Only Pittsburgh (50.5) has taken more shots per game than Colorado with 44.

Makar, named a Norris Trophy finalist for a second straight season, had a goal and two assists in the series clincher, and he now has 10 points to lead all skaters in the playoffs. He is the first defenseman in NHL history with 10 points in a four-game series. The last forward to post double-digit points in a four-game series was Johan Franzen of the Detroit Red Wings, who had 10 points against Colorado in the 2008 Western semifinals.

MacKinnon said Makar might be the NHL's best player right now with how he dominates from the back end.

"This playoff season, he's taken another step with his leadership in the room being more vocal," MacKinnon said. "And obviously on the ice, he's so dominant. He might be one of the best D to ever play by the end of his career at this rate. Really excited to have him on our team, obviously."

## Panthers rally, beat Caps in overtime to even series

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The "Comeback Cats" are back — in playoff form.

Known for their propensity to play from behind and win on the way to the NHL's best regular season, the Florida Panthers finally delivered a little of that magic in the postseason, and not a minute too late.

Sam Reinhart tied it late in regulation, Carter Verhaeghe scored the overtime winner and the Presidents' Trophy-winning Panthers beat the Washington Capitals 3-2 in Game 4 Monday night to tie the first-round series.

No team had more comeback victories than Florida's 24 this season, and now it has home-ice advantage back going into Game 5 on Wednesday night in Sunrise, Fla.

"I feel a lot of trust in them that they'll make something happen," interim coach Andrew Brunette said. "They've done it all year and they continued to do it tonight."

The Panthers were just over two minutes away from facing the prospect of getting knocked out at home. Then, with goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky pulled for an extra attacker, Reinhart collected a loose puck after it bounced off Capitals forward Garnet Hathaway and beat Ilya Samsonov with 2:04 remaining in the third period.

**Flames 4, Stars 1:** Rasmus Andersson scored his team's first power-play goal since early in the playoff opener, Jacob Markstrom had 34 saves and visiting Calgary beat Dallas in Game 4 to even their first-round series.

Johnny Gaudreau converted a penalty shot with 12:13 left in the game to make it 2-0, and later assisted on Elias Lindholm's third goal of the series as the Pacific Division champions regained home-ice advantage over the wild-card Stars. Mikael Backlund added an empty-net goal in the final minute.

Tyler Seguin had a power-play goal and Jake Oettinger made 50 saves for Dallas.

Game 5 is Wednesday night in Calgary.

**Penguins 7, Rangers 2:** Sidney Crosby had a goal and three assists to become the sixth player in NHL history to reach 200 career playoff points and host Pittsburgh routed New York to take a 3-1 lead in the first-round series.

Jake Guentzel scored for the

fourth consecutive game and Jeff Carter, Danton Heinen, Mark Friedman and Mike Matheson also beat Igor Shesterkin as the Penguins chased the Vezina Trophy favorite for the second time in three days to move within one game of advancing in the postseason for the first time since 2018. Louis Domingue made 22 saves to win his third game of the series.

Shesterkin sat out the third period after giving up six goals on 30 shots. Alexander Georgiev allowed Evgeni Malkin's second goal of the playoffs in the third.

Alexis Lafreniere picked up his first career postseason goal for the Rangers to give New York an early lead. Adam Fox scored his second of the playoffs.



# Curry, Warriors rally past Grizzlies

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Their coach sidelined again as has happened several times before, even during the playoffs, Stephen Curry took charge and led the Golden State Warriors back.

Mike Brown grabbed the clipboard as acting head coach, just like he did during a title run five years ago with Steve Kerr out.

Curry converted eight free throws over the final 45.7 seconds on the way to 32 points, igniting the Warriors down the stretch on the way to a 101-98 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies

on Monday night and a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

Curry also dished out eight assists as Golden State rallied to win without Kerr after he tested positive for COVID-19 less than two hours before tipoff.

“Obviously there’s butterflies, because again you’re going into the game with a certain mindset and it’s a big game. Every game that we play at this point in the year, it’s huge,” said Brown, who agreed Sunday to become the Sacramento Kings new coach after this postseason run.

“So to have that kind of thrown at you, you’ve got to switch gears because I know what my responsibilities are going in as Mike Brown the assistant coach, and it changes.”

But Brown has done this previously. He led the Warriors to an 11-0 record during the 2017 title run when Kerr was out dealing with debilitating symptoms from complications of back surgery two years earlier.

“His head coaching record for a Warrior playoff game I think is undefeated,” Klay Thompson said. “We did miss Steve a lot, just

his voice, his presence, but we’ve been here before, 2017 when Mike took over and we rolled off a lot of wins, so I reflected on that a lot.”

Curry took charge and now Golden State is one win from a trip to the Western Conference finals for the first time since 2019. He tied it at 90 on a fall-away baseline jumper with 3:25 to go and his two free throws with 45.7 seconds to go gave the Warriors a 94-93 lead, their first of the night.

Golden State scored 39 points in the fourth, topping its 38 the entire first half.

## Suns’ Williams voted NBA Coach of the Year

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Monty Williams now has the honor that his Phoenix Suns players have been clamoring that he receive for two years: NBA’s Coach of the Year.

Good luck getting him to take credit.

“I’ve often said about my life that God knocks the ball out of the park and I get to run the bases,” Williams said. “Yeah, my name goes on the plaque, but my name represents a lot of names.”

The 50-year-old Williams won the award on Monday after leading the Suns to a franchise-record 64 wins during the regular season. They were the NBA’s best team by far, finishing with eight more wins than any other team.

Williams joins Cotton Fitzsimmons (1988-89) and Mike D’Antoni (2004-05) as coaches who have won the award with Phoenix.

The runner-up to New York’s Tom Thibodeau last season, Williams was the runaway winner this time. He received 81 of 100 first-place votes from a global panel of

100 sports writers and broadcasters, finishing with 458 points.

Memphis’ Taylor Jenkins was second with 17 first-place votes and 270 points. Miami’s Erik Spoelstra and Boston’s Ime Udoka also received a first-place vote.

Williams is known for his calming presence on the sideline and tight relationships with players. He was brought to the Suns in 2019 to rebuild a franchise that had been among the worst in the NBA over the previous decade and quickly delivered, especially once 12-time All-Star point guard Chris Paul signed with the team in 2020.

Williams said bonding with his players and their families has been rewarding.

“It’s probably more important than everything that we do, from the X’s and O’s to the drills, to even playing games,” Williams said. “I’ve probably lost out on jobs because people thought I was more interested in the relationship piece than the competition piece. I think they both go hand in hand.”

## Horford helps Celtics even series with Bucks

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Al Horford has played in more than two dozen postseason series in a 15-year NBA career but rarely has outwardly shown much emotion during all those appearances.

That all changed Monday night.

The 35-year-old Horford had just capped a 10-0 run by driving down the baseline, hitting a game-tying dunk and drawing a foul on two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo. Horford celebrated by letting out a scream and pumping his fists.

Horford’s big moment was the signature play in a fourth-quarter comeback that enabled the Boston Celtics to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 116-108 and tie their Eastern Conference semifinal at two games apiece.

“I usually just kind of go about my business,” said Horford, who finished with a career playoff-high 30 points. “I do get excited, but I guess you kind of pick your spots, your moments. This was an emotional game.”

The teams have alternated victories in this best-of-seven series, which continues Wednesday with Game 5 in Boston.

The Celtics tied the series mainly because of Horford and Jayson Tatum, who also had 30 points. Horford had 16 points and Tatum 12 in the fourth quarter alone to help the team outscore the defending NBA champions 43-28.

“We love Al,” said Boston’s Marcus Smart, who scored 18 points. “Best vet we’ve ever had. Best vet I’ve ever had. He comes in, never changes whether things are going bad or good. He’s going to be him, and nine times out of 10, it’s going to work out in our favor.”

Horford and Tatum helped the Celtics rally even while Jaylen Brown dealt with foul trouble that caused him to play less than half of the fourth quarter. Boston played the whole game without forward/center Robert Williams, who was out with soreness in his surgically repaired left knee.

Horford had the Celtics’ first six points and Tatum the last eight during a 14-2 run that put Boston ahead for good and gave them a 106-96 advantage with 3:33 left. Milwaukee wouldn’t cut the margin below six the rest of the way.

# NCAA clarifies NILs but is crackdown likely?

Associated Press

Eleven months after the NCAA lifted most of its restrictions against athletes cashing in on their fame, college sports leaders are trying to send a warning to schools and boosters they believe have crossed a line: There are still rules here and they will be enforced.

But following last year's Supreme Court ruling against the NCAA in an antitrust case, is a crackdown on so-called collectives brokering name, image and likeness deals still likely — or even possible?

"I didn't think (the NCAA) would not try at some point," said Maddie Salamone, a sports attorney and former Duke lacrosse player. "That's why many attorneys have been kind of giving cautious advice in terms of what is and is not allowed. Especially when it comes to collectives and different NIL deals."

The NCAA's Division I Board of Directors on Monday approved guidance developed

by a group of college sports administrators, clarifying the types of NIL payments and booster involvement that should be considered recruiting violations.

"Specifically, the guidance defines as a booster any third-party entity that promotes an athletics program, assists with recruiting or assists with providing benefits to recruits, enrolled student-athletes or their family members," the NCAA release said. "The definition could include 'collectives' set up to funnel name, image and likeness deals to prospective student-athletes or enrolled student-athletes who might be considering transferring."

The NCAA added a reminder: Recruiting rules bar boosters from recruiting or providing benefits to prospects.

The guidance is effective immediately. NCAA enforcement staff was directed to look for possible violations that might have occurred before May 9, but "pursue only

those actions that clearly are contrary to the published interim policy, including the most severe violations of recruiting rules or payment for athletics performance."

The NCAA neither changed its rules nor created new ones.

"I don't think they're even necessarily clarifying the rules," said attorney Darren Heitner, who helped craft Florida's NIL law. "My understanding is this is just certain individuals who have made up a working committee deciding that after almost 11 months, we want to enforce our rules."

The rise of booster-funded collectives prompted the board in February to ask the DI Council to review the NCAA's interim NIL policy. The concern among many in college sports has been that payments from collectives are being made to high school recruits and to college athletes in hopes of getting them to transfer to a particular school.

# Ohtani lifts Angels with first grand slam as a pro

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani hit his first grand slam in professional baseball on a two-homer night, and the surging Los Angeles Angels beat the Tampa Bay Rays 11-3 on Monday.

The AL MVP hit two homers in a game for the second time this season and eighth in the majors. Ohtani had a solo shot in the sixth inning off Jalen Beeks. In the seventh, he connected on a 3-1 cutter from Calvin Faucher, who was making his big-league debut, and sent it over the wall in left field for his sixth homer and the Angels' third grand slam this season.

Mike Trout and Jared Walsh also went deep and drove in three runs each for Los Angeles.

Randy Arozarena homered and Wander Franco had three hits for the Rays, who have dropped their last two after winning six straight.

Trout's two-run shot to left field off Beeks in the sixth inning extended the Angels' lead to 5-1. Ohtani then homered on the next pitch, the fourth time the

two MVPs have connected in consecutive at-bats and the first since June 8, 2019.

Arozarena gave the Rays a 1-0 lead in the fourth inning with a drive into the right-center field bleachers off Noah Syndergaard (3-1).

**Guardians 12, White Sox 9 (11):** Josh Naylor hit a tying grand slam with two outs in the ninth inning and a three-run homer in the 11th, powering a huge comeback that carried Cleveland to a win at Chicago.

Naylor also had a run-scoring double in the eighth and finished with eight RBIs for the Guardians, who stunned the White Sox by rallying from an 8-2 deficit in the ninth aided by two Chicago errors.

Andrés Giménez led off the inning with a homer and then doubled home a run in the 10th as the Guardians snapped Chicago's six-game winning streak. They have won eight of 10 following a seven-game skid.

Naylor's go-ahead drive came off Ryan Burr (0-1) and barely cleared the right-field fence. Emmanuel Clase (1-2) allowed a

run in the 10th but earned the win. Trevor Stephan pitched a perfect 11th for his second major league save and first this season.

**Yankees 1, Rangers 0:** Nestor Cortes took a no-hit bid into the eighth inning before Eli White singled, and Anthony Rizzo doubled in a run in the bottom half to lift host New York over Texas for its sixth straight series win.

Cortes pitched a career-high 7½ innings, walked four and struck out 11, one shy of his high. He threw 68 of 103 pitches for strikes.

**Giants 8, Rockies 5:** Carlos Rodón matched his season high with 12 strikeouts in six innings and host San Francisco beat Colorado.

**Pirates 5, Dodgers 1:** At Pittsburgh, Jose Quintana pitched six scoreless innings for his first win since 2019 and the first victory by a Pittsburgh starting pitcher this season.

**Cubs 6, Padres 0:** Kyle Hendricks came within one out of a three-hit shutout for Chicago, which won at listless San Diego to snap a season-high five-game

losing streak.

**Phillies 9, Mariners 0:** Jean Segura and Rhys Hoskins hit back-to-back home runs in the second inning, Ranger Suárez tossed six strong innings and Philadelphia won at Seattle.

**Diamondbacks 4, Marlins 3:** Ketel Marte hit a go-ahead solo homer, Daulton Varsho and Christian Walker each added two hits, and host Arizona kept rolling with a win over slumping Miami.

**Orioles 6, Royals 1:** Tyler Wells pitched six strong innings to earn his first victory of the season and host Baltimore used a six-run fifth inning to surge past Kansas City.

**Reds 10, Brewers 5:** Colin Moran homered in his third straight at-bat, Brandon Drury and Kyle Farmer each hit a three-run homer, and host Cincinnati won two straight games for the first time this season.

**Athletics 2, Tigers 0:** Paul Blackburn threw 6½ strong innings to improve to 4-0 as Oakland won at Detroit to snap a season-high nine-game losing streak.