

Navy struggles with mental health care

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — It takes more than a month for sailors struggling with thoughts of suicide to get a mental health appointment, the Navy's top enlisted leader told House lawmakers Wednesday.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith was speaking from experience when he addressed the issue during a sub-panel hearing of the House Appropriations Committee.

"For those who are on the precipice of suicide, appointment times average five weeks," Smith told members of the subcommittee on military construction, veterans affairs and related agencies. "I can personally attest to this as I sought care last year and we had to use a private provider at my own expense — something our sailors should never have to endure."

Smith did not elaborate on his personal experience, but he said the coronavirus "pandemic exacerbated an already critical need for greater mental health care capacity."

Smith's comments come as the Navy copes with the suicides of seven sailors assigned to the USS George Washington. All the sailors

took their own lives since 2019 when the aircraft carrier began an overhaul in Newport News, Va.

Four of the suicides took place in the past year, with three happening during one week in April, the Navy has said.

A five-week wait is unacceptable for a mother of a George Washington sailor who she said survived a suicide attempt last week. Her son is now awaiting a spot in an in-patient treatment facility because many are full, she said.

Stars and Stripes is not naming the mother and sailor due to privacy concerns.

Smith said it's not just access to mental health care that's contributing to the problem — keeping sailors aboard the ship for long periods of time while it's in the ship-yards hurts morale.

For example, hundreds of the George Washington's 2,700-person crew were living aboard the ship earlier this year as its overhaul was scheduled to end. However, the schedule changed and the ship's time in Newport News was extended to March 2023. The crew was eventually moved off the aircraft carrier again last month after the string of suicides made headlines.

The Navy mother said her son can attest to the ship's harsh living conditions, which he told her included with power outages leading to hot water shortages and no air conditioning in the stuffy ship.

"The way he was treated, he would much rather be at boot camp than to be on the ship — and he's like, 'And no, I'm not putting [the difficulty of] boot camp lightly, Mom,'" she said. "So that's a bold statement."

Another reason driving the spike in suicides is sailors receive disappointing job assignments during maintenance periods unrelated to their Navy specialties, Smith said.

"Everybody who's there have those jobs [that are] not, frankly, what they were paid to do," he said.

When House lawmakers asked Smith what the Navy can do to address the issue, the master chief was blunt — those jobs are necessary for the carrier to remain in service.

"The pragmatic answer is to be honest with [sailors] and acknowledge and validate as they're feeling the frustration ... while still telling them that if [they're] not willing to do what they do, the George Washington doesn't have another 25 years of life to defend this nation," Smith said.

Ukrainian troops surrendering registered as POWs

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Hundreds more Ukrainian fighters who made their stand inside Mariupol's bombed-out steel plant surrendered, bringing the total to over 1,700, Russia said Thursday, amid international fears about the fate of the prisoners in Moscow's hands.

The Red Cross worked to register the soldiers as prisoners of war in a step toward ensuring their humane treatment under the Geneva Conventions.

Meanwhile, in the first war crimes trial held by Ukraine, a captured Russian soldier testified that he shot an unarmed Ukrainian civilian in the head on an officer's orders and asked the victim's widow to forgive him. The soldier pleaded guilty in the earlier week, but prosecutors presented the evidence against him in line with Ukrainian law.

In Mariupol, the nearly three-month siege

that has turned the strategic port city into a symbol of the war's horrors drew ever closer to an end as the fighters in the last bastion of resistance continued abandoning the Azovstal steel plant on orders from above to save their lives.

The Russian military said a total of 1,730 Ukrainian troops at the steelworks have surrendered since Monday. At least some were taken by the Russians to a former penal colony in territory controlled by Moscow-backed separatists. A separatist official said others were hospitalized.

It was not clear how many fighters were left in the maze of tunnels and bunkers at the plant. Russia in recent weeks had estimated that it had been battling some 2,000 troops at the steelworks.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said that it has registered hundreds of POWs from the plant under an agreement be-

tween Russia and Ukraine. It did not say whether it had visited the prisoners.

While Ukraine said it hopes to get the soldiers back in a prisoner swap, Russian authorities have threatened to investigate some for war crimes and put them on trial, branding them "Nazis" and criminals.

The defense of the steel mill has been led by Ukraine's Azov Regiment, whose far-right origins have been seized on by the Kremlin as part of its effort to cast its invasion as a war against Nazi influence in Ukraine.

Those threats and accusations have raised fears of Russian reprisals against the captured fighters.

Amnesty International had pushed for the Red Cross to be given access to the troops, citing lawless executions allegedly carried out by Russian forces in Ukraine and saying the Azovstal defenders "must not meet the same fate."

Army captain jailed after assault of soldier

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Army officer who put his head between a soldier's breasts during her promotion in Jordan was convicted by a court-martial of two related charges, documents provided Wednesday by the service show.

Capt. Billy Crosby pleaded guilty to conduct unbecoming an officer and assault consummated by battery, according to a summary of the trial provided to Stars and Stripes. A third charge for abusive sexual contact was dropped.

Crosby was sentenced to 30

days confinement, a plea agreement signed in November said.

The plea agreement resulted in no fines, reduction in rank or reprimands for Crosby, who was not required to register as a sex offender.

The Army released the court documents after an image of the findings emerged recently on Reddit, along with speculation as to what occurred.

"(Capt.) Crosby's behavior was not in line with the Army values," Maj. Jessica Rovero, spokeswoman for the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, said in a statement.

"Multiple soldiers immedi-

ately reported the behavior, and Crosby pled guilty at trial," the statement added. "Throughout the court-martial, all parties were treated with dignity and respect."

After Crosby found out that a soldier under his command was to be promoted to sergeant, he announced twice in front of a witness that he would "motorboat" her at her promotion ceremony, court documents said.

The term "motorboating" refers to the act of placing one's head in between someone's breasts and moving one's face from side to side.

Promotion ceremonies, espe-

cially to sergeant, are a major event in many careers. Sometimes they include a light punch at the rank on a newly promoted service member's chest by their peers or by loved ones.

The future sergeant declined Crosby's offer to stage a promotion ceremony, however, the documents said.

After the rejection, Crosby entered the sergeant's workplace last May and ordered the soldier to stand up. He placed her new rank in front of her chest, leaned in to grab the rank with his teeth and put his face into her chest without her consent, court documents said.

DODEA teacher, nurse on Okinawa jailed for cannabis

By MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A teacher and school nurse at Defense Department schools on Okinawa were arrested by Japanese police this week for alleged cannabis possession.

John R. Gouldman, 59, and Holly A. Gouldman, 57, were taken into custody around 7 a.m. Tuesday at their home in Chatan, a spokesman for the Okinawa Police Station told Stars and Stripes by phone on Thursday.

Local police searched the couple's home after receiving information from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service that they were suspected of using cannabis. Police found an unspecified amount of dried cannabis in two jars and a plastic bag, the spokesman said.

John Gouldman is a teacher at Kadena Middle School on Kadena Air Base, according to his LinkedIn page and the Department of Defense Education Activity-Pacific; Holly Gouldman

is a nurse at Kubasaki High School at Camp Foster, according to the school directory and DODEA.

The couple was still in custody Thursday and being questioned further "to see the whole picture," the police spokesman said. The couple "admitted to possessing the cannabis" following their arrest, he said.

The Gouldmans are considered absent without leave from their jobs, according to an email Thursday from DODEA-Pacific spokeswoman Miranda Ferguson.

"While DoDEA will not discuss details of personnel matters publicly, officials will take appropriate action," she wrote.

Cannabis possession can bring up to five years in prison under Japan's Cannabis Control Act. Five cases so far this year involving Marines smuggling the drug onto Okinawa by mail, however, drew fines and suspended sentences of two to three years.

Busy agenda awaits Biden on first presidential trip to Asia

By DAVID CHOI
AND ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

South Korea has a plan to protect President Joe Biden in case the North tests a nuclear weapon or ballistic missile during the initial leg of his first presidential trip to Asia, according to the White House.

Biden is meeting with the leaders of key allies in the Indo-Pacific region to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to security there, as global attention and NATO resources flow into Ukraine to counter the 3-month-old Russian invasion.

"We think this trip is going to put on full display President Biden's Indo-Pacific strategy, and that it will show in living color that the United States can at once lead the free world in responding to Russia's war in Ukraine and at the same time chart a course for effective, principled American engagement and leadership in a region that will define much of the future of the 21st century," national security adviser Jake Sulli-

van said at a White House media briefing Wednesday.

Biden was to depart from Washington, D.C., on Thursday for South Korea. From there he'll continue to Tokyo to huddle with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ahead of a Quad summit next week, a meeting of allied Indo-Pacific leaders from the U.S., Japan, Australia and India.

In South Korea, Biden is scheduled to meet President Yoon Suk Yeol, inaugurated May 10, who campaigned on a pledge to strengthen military ties with the U.S. and improve relations with Japan.

Biden "will highlight the truly global nature" of the U.S.-South Korea alliance, "from climate and energy and technology to economic growth and investment," Sullivan said.

"He will see American and Korean troops standing shoulder-to-shoulder in defense of our collective security and consult on the challenge posed by [North Korea's] nuclear and missile program," he said.

Turkey's leader says 'no' to NATO bids

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Turkey will oppose Sweden and Finland joining NATO, the country's president flatly stated in a video released Thursday.

"We have told our relevant friends we would say 'no' to Finland and Sweden's entry into NATO, and we will continue on our path like this," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a group of Turkish youth in the video for Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, a national holiday.

Turkey's approval of Finland and Sweden's application to join the Western military alliance is crucial because NATO makes decisions by consensus. Each of its 30 member

countries has the power to veto a membership bid.

The military alliance's top official, however, said he expects the issue to be resolved and the two Nordic nations to become members soon.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday he was "confident that we will come to a quick decision to welcome both Sweden and Finland to join the NATO family."

Stoltenberg told reporters in Copenhagen, Denmark, that "we are addressing the concerns that Turkey has expressed."

Erdogan has said Turkey's objection stems from grievances with Sweden's — and to a lesser degree with Finland's — perceived sup-

port of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and an armed group in Syria that Turkey sees as an extension of the PKK. The conflict with the PKK has killed tens of thousands of people since 1984.

Turkey also accuses Sweden and Finland of harboring the followers of Fethullah Gulen, a U.S.-based Muslim cleric whom the Turkish government blames for 2016 military coup attempt.

A full recording of Erdogan's conversation with the youth for the holiday that marks the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence in 1919 was expected to be released Thursday night. It was not immediately clear when the conversation took place.

Officials: A third of US should be considering masks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — COVID-19 cases are increasing in the United States — and could get worse over the coming months, federal health officials warned Wednesday in urging areas hardest hit to consider reissuing calls for indoor masking.

Increasing numbers of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations are putting more of the country under guidelines issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that call for masking and other infection precautions.

Right now, about a third of the U.S. population lives in areas that are considered at higher risk — mostly in the Northeast and Midwest. Those are areas where people should already be considering wearing masks indoors — but Americans elsewhere should also take notice, officials said.

"Prior increases of infections, in different

waves of infection, have demonstrated that this travels across the country," Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, said at a White House briefing with reporters.

For an increasing number of areas, "we urge local leaders to encourage use of prevention strategies like masks in public indoor settings and increasing access to testing and treatment," she said.

Officials were cautious about making concrete predictions, however, saying how much worse the pandemic gets will depend on several factors, including to what degree previous infections will protect against new variants.

Last week, White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha warned in an interview with The Associated Press that the U.S. will be increasingly vulnerable to the coronavirus this fall and winter if Congress doesn't swiftly approve new funding for more vaccines and treatments.

Jha warned that without more funding from Congress, the virus would cause "unnecessary loss of life" in the fall and winter, when the U.S. runs out of treatments.

He added the U.S. was already falling behind other nations in securing supplies of the next generation of COVID-19 vaccines and said the domestic manufacturing base of at-home tests is already drying up as demand drops off.

Jha said domestic test manufacturers have started shuttering lines and laying off workers, and in the coming weeks will begin to sell off equipment and prepare to exit the business of producing tests entirely unless the U.S. government has money to purchase more tests, like the hundreds of millions it has sent out for free to requesting households this year.

That would leave the U.S. reliant on other countries for testing supplies, risking shortages during a surge, Jha warned.

Massachusetts reports a rare US case of monkeypox

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Massachusetts on Wednesday reported a rare case of monkeypox in a man who recently traveled to Canada, and health officials are looking into whether it is connected to small outbreaks in Europe.

Monkeypox is typically limited to Africa, and rare cases in the United States and elsewhere are usually linked to travel there. A small number of confirmed or suspected cases have been reported this month in the

United Kingdom, Portugal and Spain.

U.S. health officials said they are in contact with officials in the U.K. and Canada as part of the investigation. But "at this point in time, we don't have any information that links the Massachusetts case to cases in the U.K.," said Jennifer McQuiston of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Though it's the only U.S. case the CDC is aware of, "I do think we are preparing for the possibility of more cases," she said.

The U.S. case poses no risk to the public,

and the Massachusetts resident is hospitalized but in good condition, officials said.

The case is the first in the U.S. this year. Last year, Texas and Maryland each reported a case in people who traveled to Nigeria.

Monkeypox typically begins with a flu-like illness and swelling of the lymph nodes, followed by a rash on the face and body. In Africa, people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals, and it does not usually spread easily among people.

Biden speeds production of baby formula amid shortage

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden invoked the Defense Production Act to speed production of infant formula and authorized flights to import supply from overseas, as he faces mounting political pressure over a domestic shortage caused by the safety-related closure of the country's largest formula manufacturing plant.

The Defense Production Act order requires suppliers of formula manufacturers to fulfill orders from those companies before other customers, in an effort to eliminate production bottlenecks. Biden is also authorizing the Defense Department to use commercial aircraft to fly formula supplies that meet federal standards from overseas to the United States, in what the White House is calling "Operation Fly Formula."

Supplies of baby formula across the country have been severely curtailed in recent weeks after a February recall by Abbott Nutrition exacerbated ongoing supply chain disruptions among formula makers, leaving fewer options on store shelves and increasingly anxious parents struggling to find nutrition for their children.

"I know parents across the country are

worried about finding enough formula to feed their babies," Biden said in a video statement released Wednesday by the White House. "As a parent and as a grandparent, I know just how stressful that is."

The announcement comes two days after the Food and Drug Administration said it was streamlining its review process to make it easier for foreign manufacturers to begin shipping more formula into the U.S.

In a letter Wednesday to the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, Biden directed the agencies to work with the Pentagon to identify overseas supply of formula that meets U.S. standards over the next week, so that chartered Defense Department flights can swiftly fly it to the U.S.

"Imports of baby formula will serve as a bridge to this ramped-up production," Biden wrote.

Regulators said Monday that they'd reached a deal to allow Abbott Nutrition to restart its Sturgis, Mich., plant, the nation's largest formula plant, which has been closed since February due to contamination issues. The company must overhaul its safety protocols and procedures before resuming production.

Unemployment benefit claims increase in US

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More Americans applied for jobless aid last week, but the total number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits is at a 53-year low.

Applications for unemployment benefits rose by 21,000 to 218,000 for the week ending May 14, the Labor Department reported Thursday. First-time applications generally track the number of layoffs.

The four-week average for claims, which smooths out some of the weekly volatility, rose 8,250 from the previous week to 199,500.

The total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits for the week ending May 7 fell again from the previous week, to 1,317,000. That's the fewest since December 27, 1969.

American workers are enjoying historically strong job security two years after the coronavirus pandemic plunged the economy into a short but devastating recession. Weekly applications for unemployment aid have been consistently below the pre-pandemic level of 225,000 for most of 2022, even as the overall economy contracted in the first quarter and concerns over inflation persist.

Earlier this month, the government reported America's employers added 428,000 jobs in April, leaving the unemployment rate at 3.6%, just above the lowest level in a half-century. Hiring gains have been strikingly consistent in the face of the worst inflation in four decades, with employers adding at least 400,000 jobs for 12 straight months.

Inflation may be the only thing hotter than the U.S. job market. Last week, the government reported that U.S. producer prices soared 11% in April from a year earlier, a hefty gain that indicates high inflation will remain a burden for consumers and businesses in the months ahead.

Also last week, the government reported that inflation at the consumer level eased slightly in April after months of relentless increases but remained near a four-decade high. Consumer prices jumped 8.3% last month from a year ago, just below the 8.5% year-over-year surge in March, which was the highest since 1981. Earlier in May, the Federal Reserve ratcheted up its fight against the worst inflation in 40 years by raising its benchmark short-term interest rate by a half-percentage point.

Fire crews slow New Mexico fires, brace for dangerous conditions

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — More than 2,000 firefighters battling the largest U.S. wildfire dug back-up fire lines and rear-ranged fire engines around homes in northeast New Mexico on Wednesday in anticipation of a return to windy, dangerous conditions in the days ahead.

After a break in the weather allowed for significant progress on the ground and from the air in recent days, forecasters issued warnings for high fire danger from southern Nevada through parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado starting Thursday.

"The next three days are going to be the giddy-up days," fire behavior analyst Dennis Burns said Wednesday.

"Crews are out there working as hard as they can to get in line as quickly as possible," he said during an afternoon briefing at the fire east of Santa Fe stretching northeast

toward Taos.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has said damage estimates for homes and structures could reach more than 1,000 by the time all the assessments are done.

On Wednesday, no new evacuations were ordered and some were relaxed. Burns said the biggest new concern was that thunderstorms packing lightning and down-draft winds would fuel the fire again Thursday.

Bulldozers and hand crews were building contingency lines near the town of Angel Fire east of Taos to make sure the flames don't reach U.S. Highway 64 within about 25 miles of the Colorado line.

"If we are fortunate enough to dodge that bullet, the cloud cover will actually shade out the fuels and moderate the fire behavior a little bit, which is a good thing," Burns said Wednesday. "But tomorrow will be the day to tell."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge: Wrong to ban beer label with nudity

NC ELIZABETH CITY — North Carolina regulators were wrong to reject a beer label that featured a silhouette of a naked man standing next to a campfire, a federal judge has ruled.

The owners of Maryland-based Flying Dog Brewery argued that the North Carolina Alcohol Beverage Control Commission violated their First Amendment rights by rejecting the label for its Freezin' Season Winter Ale. The commission had said the label was in "bad taste," but later allowed the beer to be sold. Flying Dog proceeded with the lawsuit anyway, hoping to get the regulation struck down.

U.S. District Judge Terrence W. Boyle ruled in favor of the craft brewery, finding that the regulation was vague and overbroad, violating the free speech rights of Flying Dog and its competitors. The ruling requires North Carolina to remove the current regulation.

Guardsmen honored for medical evacuation

TN LOUISVILLE — Four members of the Tennessee National Guard were honored recently for a life-saving medical evacuation in the Smokies.

The members of the 1-230th Assault Helicopter Battalion responded last June after a 17-year-old girl was attacked by a bear while camping in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The girl was seriously injured, and park rangers called the guard to airlift her to a near-

by hospital, according to a news release.

The four-man crew out of Louisville consisted of Capt. Philip Webster, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Andrew Redley, Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta and Sgt. Timothy Allen. They received the Star of Life award from the Children's Emergency Care Alliance of Tennessee on May 4.

Woman: Dog defended her from mountain lion

CA BIG BAR — A woman who was attacked by a mountain lion in Northern California said her dog jumped to her defense and was badly wounded in protecting her.

Erin Wilson, 24, was on a path near unincorporated Big Bar with Eva, her 2½-year-old Belgian Malinois, when a mountain lion lunged and swiped at her.

"I yelled 'Eva!' and she came running," Wilson said. "And she hit that cat really hard."

The cougar bit the dog's head and wouldn't let go. Wilson said she ran back to her truck, grabbed a tire iron and flagged down a passing car. The driver, Sharon Houston, told the Sacramento Bee that she grabbed a long length of PVC pipe and pepper spray. Together, the women began beating the lion, which had dragged the dog off the trail. Houston finally sprayed the animal with the pepper spray and it fled, she said.

Wilson was treated for non-life-threatening scratches, scrapes and bruises. Wilson's husband, Connor Kenny, told SFGATE that Eva had severe head injuries and had seizures on the drive to the vet but stabilized overnight.

Officials: 7 hurt in explosion at nail salon

MD WOODLAWN — Seven people, including police officers and EMS personnel, were injured in an explosion at a Maryland nail salon, officials said.

Baltimore County police officers responded to a disturbance at a Woodlawn nail salon and encountered a person who refused to leave, police said in a news release. He refused to follow officers' commands and ran to the back of the store where he started a fire that produced an explosion, police said.

Firefighters found smoke coming from the rear of the salon and extinguished a fire quickly. The blaze did not spread to neighboring businesses, but they were damaged by the blast, officials said.

The man, who is believed to be a former employee at the salon, was taken into custody, then taken to a hospital with life-threatening injuries, police said. Four officers and two volunteer EMS personnel were taken to a hospital with injuries that were not considered life-threatening, and all but one officer had been released by Tuesday, officials said.

Police arrest 8 on site of planned police facility

GA ATLANTA — Atlanta police said at least eight people were arrested at the site of a planned \$90 million public safety training center that opponents have been occupying for months in an attempt to prevent construction.

Atlanta Police Department Assistant Chief Darin Schier-

baum told reporters that some opponents threw rocks and what he said was a Molotov cocktail at officers who swarmed the property. In a news release, police said the Molotov cocktail caused a small fire that had to be extinguished and that later, another lit Molotov cocktail was thrown toward officers.

Schierbaum said charges included criminal trespass and obstruction of law enforcement officers.

Opponents of the center have continued to protest the \$90 million project, which would be built by the Atlanta Police Foundation, saying that cutting down so many trees would be environmentally damaging.

Judge vacates woman's 2001 murder conviction

NV LAS VEGAS — A judge has vacated the murder conviction of a 78-year-old Las Vegas woman who spent 20 years in prison for the killing of her millionaire husband before she was paroled.

Margaret Rudin was found guilty in 2001 of murder in the 1994 death of real estate mogul Ron Rudin. Prosecutors said he had been shot in the head and his body dumped in the desert.

U.S. District Judge Richard Boulware ruled recently Margaret Rudin had received ineffective assistance of counsel from her late defense attorney, Michael Amador, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

A socialite antiques shop owner the media later dubbed the "Black Widow," she was indicted in 1997 in what authorities portrayed as a crime committed for financial gain.

— From Associated Press

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Spieth seeking an elusive fourth slam

Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — Not long ago, it seemed a foregone conclusion that Jordan Spieth would one day capture golf's career Grand Slam.

Even more recently, it seemed as if he might never contend again.

After scorching a Tiger-esque path through his first three years as a pro, including triumphs at the Masters and U.S. Open in 2015 and the British Open in '17, things suddenly went sideways for Spieth. That crisp ball striking that was once the envy of so many had abandoned him, his driver went a bit haywire and his short game had let him down.

The former No. 1 went nearly four years without a win, plummeting to 92nd in the world rankings

Armed with a retooled swing thousands of shots in the making, though, and brimming with confidence after winning at Hilton Head and finishing second at last week's Byron Nelson, the popular 28-year-old Texan arrived this week at the PGA Championship once again among the favorites to raise the Wannamaker Trophy on Sunday.

And at long last, join that most exclusive club.

"Certainly at this point, having won the other three, it's an elephant in the room for

me," Spieth acknowledged before heading out for Wednesday's practice round. "If you just told me I was going to win one tournament the rest of my life, I'd say I want to win this one, given where things are at."

History is not necessarily on his side.

Of the five players to have won the Grand Slam, none waited more than three years for the final leg. Gene Sarazen in 1935, Ben Hogan in '53 and Tiger Woods in 2000 did it in their very first try; Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player weren't far behind.

Some of the game's greatest players never did it.

Arnold Palmer's victory in the 1961 British Open left him, much like Spieth, needing the PGA to finish it, but he played the tournament 34 times without winning. Phil Mickelson's vexing second-place history at the U.S. Open is well-documented. The same tournament is also missing from three-time PGA champion Sam Snead's résumé. Byron Nelson and Raymond Floyd never won the British Open. Lee Trevino won every major (twice) except the Masters.

"Long-term," Spieth said, "it would be really cool to say that you captured the four biggest tournaments in the world, that are played in different parts of the world, and different styles, too. You feel like you kind of accomplished golf."

It's a feeling that Rory McIlroy, who will play with Spieth and Tiger Woods for the first two rounds at Southern Hills, knows too well. The two-time PGA champion has taken eight swings at winning the Masters, the lone major missing from his own ledger, and has been in the top 5 four times, with a second-place finish earlier this year.

"I think the most consistent way to get yourself to be able to have chances to win these major championships is to sort of adopt a conservative strategy," McIlroy said. "Tiger did it most of his career, and OK, he had a couple of huge wins in there, but a lot of times being conservative with his strategy, letting other guys make the mistakes — pars are pretty good in major championships, and that's sort of the philosophy that I believe in going forward."

Another word for conservative could be deliberate, and that's a good way to describe Spieth these days.

When mired in mediocrity, he tore down his swing and began to rebuild it. Spieth implemented a curious pre-shot rehearsal — almost mechanical in nature — designed to get into the proper position at the right tempo. The deliberate routine isn't just for the driving range or practice rounds, either. Spieth takes it right onto the course with him.

Warriors romp past Mavericks in Game 1 of series

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Once Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson slowed down, caught their breath and stopped rushing shots, the Splash Brothers got on a roll that proved too much for Dallas to stop.

Especially because Andrew Wiggins worked end to end to make sure Luka Doncic couldn't get going.

Curry had 21 points and a game-high 12 rebounds, Golden State held Doncic in check and the Warriors beat the Mavericks 112-87 on Wednesday night for a 1-0 lead in the Western Conference finals.

"Just make him work, that was the main thing," Wiggins said.

Doncic scored 20 points but shot just 6-for-18 and 3-for-10

from deep. He made back-to-back three-pointers late in the first half to get his team within 54-45 at the break, but Curry and Thompson heated up and helped Golden State pull away in the second half.

"A great job. That's it," Doncic said. "They did a great job."

Jalen Brunson scored 14 points but missed all five of his three surprising Dallas, which stunned the top-seeded Suns in a 123-90 thumping in Game 7 on Sunday in Phoenix.

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series is Friday night at Chase Center, where the raucous, yellow-clad sellout crowd brought back memories of that 2007 "We Believe" Warriors playoff team led by Baron Davis that shocked the No. 1-seeded Mavericks in a

six-game first-round upset at Oracle Arena.

That helped propel Golden State back to prominence. The Warriors reached five straight NBA Finals from 2015-19, but missed the playoffs the past two years before this run.

Wiggins added 19 points, getting Golden State going by making six of his first eight shots on the way to shooting 8-for-17. Jordan Poole also scored 19 off the bench.

Doncic received a scratch across his face early from a first-quarter swipe by Wiggins. The mark — "makes me look tough," he quipped — went from the bridge of the star guard's nose across his right cheek under the eye. Doncic also tugged at his troublesome right shoulder that

has been taped previously during these playoffs.

"They did a really good job. Wiggins picking him up full court," Mavs coach Jason Kidd said. "They went box-and-one, they went zone. We understood coming into the series that we were going to see that. We'll go back and look at the video and see what we can do better."

Stopping Doncic, who was averaging 31.5 points in the playoffs, is the tall task this time after the Warriors already handled two-time reigning MVP Nikola Jokic of Denver in the first round, then Ja Morant early last series before his knee injury.

"I thought Wiggins was fantastic," coach Steve Kerr said. "Doncic is as difficult a cover as there is in this league."

Tkachuk's 3 goals helps Flames take win in Game 1

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — The first Battle of Alberta in the playoffs in 31 years didn't disappoint.

The Calgary Flames got a hat trick from Matthew Tkachuk to outlast the Edmonton Oilers 9-6 and grab Game 1 of the second round series Wednesday night after a blistering game that saw the most goals in a postseason game in 29 years.

"Strange game," Flames coach Darryl Sutter said. "We scored on our first two shots and there were probably six different games out there. Take the win. Move on."

Blake Coleman scored twice for Calgary. Rasmus Andersson and Andrew Mangiapane each had a goal and two assists, and Elias Lindholm and Brett Ritchie also scored. Jacob Markstrom stopped 22 shots for the win.

Zach Hyman scored twice for the Oilers and Connor McDavid had a goal and three assists for his fourth straight multipoint game in the playoffs.

McDavid leads the league's postseason

points race with five goals and 13 assists. Leon Draisaitl had a goal and two assists and Kailer Yamamoto and Evan Bouchard also scored for Edmonton.

Oilers starter Mike Smith was pulled in the first period after allowing three goals on 10 shots. Mikko Koskinen made 32 saves in relief.

"We fought back and made it a game, but we can't feel good about that in any way because we scored six goals in game and found a way to not win it," Edmonton coach Jay Woodcroft said.

The winner of the best-of-seven series advances to the Western Conference final. Game 2 is Friday at the Saddledome before the series heads to Oilers home ice for Sunday's Game 3 and Tuesday's Game 4.

It was the highest scoring postseason game since Los Angeles beat the Flames 9-6 in the 1993 division semifinals.

In a matchup of potent offenses, Calgary scored twice in a 25-second span in the first minute and led 3-0 by 6:05 when Smith was replaced by Koskinen.

Next long shot? Fenwick is 50-1 in Preakness

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Rich Strike winning the Kentucky Derby at 80-1 may not be the only big upset this Triple Crown season.

Not if Fenwick has anything to do about it.

Two weeks after Rich Strike became the second-biggest long shot to win the Derby, Fenwick could join him in the record books at the Preakness Stakes. The 50-1 shot also has as heartwarming a story and is as unlikely to be on the Triple Crown trail: named after owner Jeremia Rudan's mother who died in a house fire when he was 19 and running for Kevin McKathan two years after the trainer lost his brother because of a heart attack.

"This is one of those deals where you can stop and take a breath and say: 'You know what, we can do this,'" McKathan said Wednesday. "It can happen."

Fenwick has the longest odds of any horse in the field of nine for Saturday's Preakness, which is being run without Rich Strike, largely because Fenwick finished last in his most recent race in April and has just one win in six lifetime starts. Rich Strike also had only won once before shocking the sports world in the Derby.

"Everyone's like, 'This is a real sport for the rich and famous,'" McKathan said. "But let me tell you what: You just end up with a good horse and you can beat 'em all. That horse has no idea. He has no idea what he cost. He has no idea who owns that guy. He has no idea what kind of plane they flew in here on. They don't know."

Few know much about Fenwick, who was bought by Rudan and McKathan for the modest sum of \$52,000 as a yearling and went unsold as a 2-year-old after a freak accident caused him to run slower than expected.

"He goes faster, he brings \$900,000 and we're not here," McKathan said. "Someone else is."

Perhaps it's par for the course for the big chestnut colt who McKathan acknowledged runs into troubles on the racetrack. That would explain the 11th-place finish in the Blue Grass Stakes on April 9 when Rudan said Fenwick "broke a step slow (and) got cut off in the corner."

"He's the kind of horse who needs to be free to run," Rudan said. "He didn't get that chance. I'm not saying he would have won, but if he had made that hole on the first turn, it might have been a different race."

Cole's OT goal lift Canes in opener

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Sebastian Aho extended the game. Ian Cole ended it. And that allowed the Carolina Hurricanes to escape their first home loss of the playoffs despite being completely outplayed most of the night.

Cole beat Igor Shesterkin at 3:12 of overtime to help the Hurricanes beat the New York Rangers 2-1 Wednesday night, making a late rally to win Game 1 of their second-round playoff series.

Aho had forced the extra period when he pushed one past Shesterkin late in the third period in a dramatic finish. Yet it overshadowed that the Metropolitan Division winners were fortunate to win after the Rangers controlled the first 40 minutes.

"Kudos to our guys, they got it going in, it certainly was a good third period," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "We're not going to get away with that, not playing two periods and expect to win a game — especially at this time of year against that team."

The Hurricanes won home-ice by securing the division title with a win against New

York in Madison Square Garden in the final week of the regular season. They nearly handed it over but instead will seek a sixth straight win here when they host Game 2 on Friday night.

Cole's rebound winner clipped the stick of Rangers defenseman Ryan Lindgren, with the puck changing direction before slipping past Shesterkin.

"I was looking to pass it to someone," Cole said. "And no one was really kind of anywhere dangerous. So I was like, 'Well, I guess I'll throw it on net and see what happens.'"

"Hockey's a game of weird bounces and it happened to go in. Not the prettiest, but we'll take it."

The score capped Carolina's late comeback, which began with the Hurricanes showing more urgency and aggression coming out of the second intermission.

Carolina also got a key effort from Antti Raanta, who had 27 saves and helped the Hurricanes hang around until their attack finally took its familiar form.

Both teams advanced through grueling seven-game first-round series.

Turner HR sends Dodgers to sweep

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Walker Buehler tossed his first career shutout against the Arizona Diamondbacks last month. He wasn't nearly as sharp facing them again.

Still, Buehler and the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied for a 5-3 victory on Wednesday to complete a four-game sweep.

"Not a great outing," Buehler said after allowing two runs and six hits in five innings. "It's my eighth start, I probably should be in game shape by now, but I've struggled. It's tough to not go and perform the way you think you ought to."

Justin Turner picked up the Dodgers with a three-run homer in the fourth inning, helping them win their fifth straight overall. Los Angeles finished off a 5-3 homestand that included eight games in seven days and four within 42 hours.

Like Buehler, Turner is still finding his way. He's batting just .203, but is hitting .361 with runners in scoring position and leads the team with 28 RBIs.

"It certainly helps to have all these guys in front of you," Turner said, referring to Mookie Betts, Freddie Freeman and Trea Turner, among others. "It's a lot more fun to go up and hit."

Rangers 6, Angels 5 (10): Nathaniel Lowe hit a two-run homer on the first pitch in the bottom of the 10th inning and host Texas completed a three-game sweep of Los Angeles.

The Angels tied it at 4 on Jared Walsh's second homer of the game, a two-run shot in the ninth inning. They went ahead in the top of the 10th on a fielder's choice grounder by Mike Trout, who homered earlier.

Los Angeles starter Shohei Ohtani struck out seven and walked two while allowing two runs and six hits in six innings. The right-hander also threw two wild pitches.

Brewers 7, Braves 6 (11): Keston Hiura returned to the majors and led off the 11th with a two-run homer off Jesse Chavez (0-1), capping host Milwaukee's comeback from a 4-0, fourth-inning deficit.

Kolten Wong's two-out RBI triple tied the score in the ninth, the first blown save for Kenley Jansen in 10 chances.

Rockies 5, Giants 3: C.J. Cron hit a tie-breaking two-run homer off José Álvarez (1-1) in a three-run eighth, and host Colorado stopped its 12-game losing streak against San Francisco.

Charlie Blackmon hit his 37th leadoff home run.

Rays 6, Tigers 1: Isaac Paredes hit a pair of solo homers against his former teammates to double his career big league total and host Tampa Bay beat Detroit.

Twins 14, Athletics 4: Carlos Correa went 2-for-4 with an RBI double in his return from a stint on the injured list caused by a bruised middle finger on his right hand, and visiting Minnesota set a season high for runs.

Phillies 3, Padres 0: Zack Wheeler struck out nine in seven shutout innings, Rhys Hoskins homered and host Philadelphia beat San Diego.

Wheeler (2-3) allowed four hits and walked none over 94 pitches.

Yankees 3, Orioles 2: Gerrit Cole out-pitched Jordan Lyles in a duel of veteran right-handers, and visiting New York squeezed past skidding Baltimore to clinch

their ninth straight series win.

Gleyber Torres hit an RBI double and scored in a three-run first inning that propelled the Yankees to their 21st win in 24 games, including nine of their last 10.

Red Sox 5, Astros 1: Nick Pivetta pitched a two-hitter, Xander Bogaerts hit a solo home run and Rafael Devers added an RBI double as host Boston beat Houston in the rubber match of the three-game series.

It marked the first complete game by a Red Sox pitcher since Chris Sale on June 5, 2019, at Kansas City.

Mariners 5, Blue Jays 1: Ty France hit a two-run homer, Marco Gonzales pitched six solid innings to snap a five-start winless streak and visiting Seattle beat Toronto to avoid a three-game sweep.

Nationals 5, Marlins 4 (10): Keibert Ruiz had three hits, including a go-ahead double in the 10th inning, and visiting Washington topped Miami.

César Hernández tripled and doubled, Maikel Franco singled twice and Juan Soto had three walks for the Nationals, who avoided their second three-game sweep to the Marlins this season.

Pirates 3, Cubs 2: Rookie Jack Suwinski, who attended high school 20 minutes from Wrigley Field, hit a tiebreaking home run and visiting Pittsburgh ended Chicago's four-game winning streak.

Suwinski made his major league debut this season and began the day hitting .183 with two homers.

Royals 6, White Sox 2: Bobby Witt Jr. and MJ Melendez homered and fellow rookie Emmanuel Rivera hit a go-ahead triple, leading host Kansas City over Chicago.

Sidelined: Scherzer pulls himself in 6th amid Mets rout

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Max Scherzer had a four-run lead in the sixth inning and everything was rolling right along for the New York Mets — same as all season.

Until the three-time Cy Young Award winner signaled to the dugout that he was done.

Scherzer pulled himself from a start Wednesday night with discomfort in his left side before New York finished off an 11-4 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals. He plans to get an MRI on

Thursday.

"I don't think this is a major strain," Scherzer said. "I was kind of tight and then all of a sudden it went. But I don't feel like I really ripped it. It just kind of got worse. So hopefully I got out of there quick enough to prevent a major injury here because I know oblique, intercostal, those things can be nasty. Hopefully I avoided a serious injury."

Pete Alonso homered and drove in four runs for the Mets (25-14), already missing ace

starter Jacob deGrom and his effective replacement in the rotation, Tylor Megill, because of injuries.

Still, they improved to 13-1 following a loss. The only time they have dropped consecutive games this season was April 10-11.

Jeff McNeil had an early two-run single and Alonso snapped a 2-all tie with an RBI single off rookie reliever Jake Walsh (0-1) in a four-run fifth. Dominic Smith singled home a run and

Luis Guillorme drove in another with a nicely executed safety squeeze.

New York batters were hit by pitches three times, increasing their major league-leading total to 28. That includes eight by Cardinals pitchers in six games.

Both clubs were warned Wednesday night after Mark Canha was hit near the ribs by a 98 mph fastball from Cardinals starter Jordan Hicks in the third, but there was no trouble between the teams.