

Biden: US will defend Taiwan if invaded

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — President Joe Biden, speaking Monday during his first visit presidential visit to Japan, signaled an apparent end to the U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity by saying the United States would defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion.

“Yes,” Biden replied when asked by a reporter in Tokyo if he was willing to get involved militarily to defend the island.

“That’s the commitment we made,” he said at a press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

The U.S. has maintained a “One China policy” that acknowledges Beijing’s claim of sovereignty over Taiwan. The policy, however, doesn’t give China the right to use force to take over the island, Biden said.

“We agree with the One China policy and all the attendant agreements we made, but the idea that it can be taken by force, just taken by force, would just not be appropriate,” Biden said. “It would dislocate the entire region and be another action similar to what happened in Ukraine.”

China could attempt to take control of Taiwan by the end of the decade, Adm. Phil Davidson, then-commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, told Congress last year.

“My expectation is that it will not hap-

pen,” Biden said in Tokyo, where he arrived Sunday on a five-day trip to South Korea and Japan.

A White House official said Biden’s comments did not reflect a policy shift, The Associated Press reported Monday. Biden and Kishida in a joint statement issued later that day said their basic positions on Taiwan remain unchanged.

But Biden’s comments seemingly end America’s policy of strategic ambiguity, a position intended to deter China and Taiwan from escalating their feud by leaving doubt as to when or if the U.S. might intervene in conflict.

Another former Indo-Pacific command chief, retired Navy Adm. Harry Harris, said in September that the policy should be reviewed, according to Japan’s Kyodo News.

In January, the vice chairwoman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., said new legislation is needed to allow the U.S. to respond faster in case of an invasion.

China expressed strong dissatisfaction and opposition to Biden’s Taiwan-related remarks made in Tokyo, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said, adding that the “Taiwan question is purely China’s internal affair that brooks no external interference,” China Daily, a newspaper owned by the Chinese Communist Party, tweeted Monday

evening.

Biden’s comments send a clear signal, said Norah Huang, director for international relations at the Prospect Foundation, a security and foreign affairs think tank in Taipei.

“It will not be taken well by China for sure,” she told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday.

Beijing will likely claim that Biden’s comments impinge on its sovereignty, said Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore.

The president’s words indicate that the U.S. position hinges on whether China uses force and doesn’t recognize Taiwan independence, Chong told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday.

“If anything, it is a strong statement to maintain the status quo,” he said. “The U.S. position is also a response to increasing Chinese pressure on Taiwan over the past decade.”

Biden and Kishida on Monday also committed to work closely to address China’s increasingly coercive behavior, which runs counter to international law, the White House said in a statement.

The pair also promised to address the challenge of North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs, the statement said.

Air, Space Force recruiting memo eases tattoo rules

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

The Space Force is going one step beyond the Air Force with a neck tattoo policy that gives some young recruits another reason to look to the stars.

The Space Force will permit small neck tattoos, and the Air Force is waiving some size limits on hand tattoos, according to an Air Force Recruiting Service memo leaked recently on the popular Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook page.

“The tattoo policy has not

changed,” Air Force Recruiting Service spokeswoman Chrissy Cuttita told Stars and Stripes by email Friday. “New as of May 13, 2022, an Air Force Recruiting Service memo informed recruiters that the two-star AFRS commander may waive qualified applicants who have small, discreet hand tattoos under specific circumstances.”

The waiver allows commanders to ensure the Air Force does not lose quality recruits, she said.

The revised tattoo policies are

small concessions. Hand tattoos may not cover more than 25% of an Air Force recruit’s hand. The Space Force limits neck tattoos to one inch in length in any direction, and they may be located only on the back of the neck.

Space Force guardians with neck tattoos cannot qualify to dual track with the Air Force and may only apply for eligible Space Force jobs.

The Air Force has been struggling to meet its recruitment numbers this fiscal year.

The goal is 27,452 new airmen

by Sept. 30. Halfway into the fiscal year, 9,920 new recruits are in uniform and 5,314 have signed contracts, according to Air Force data reported on March 25.

Each Air Force enlisted recruiting squadron has a dedicated Space Force recruiter for a total of 24 in the Air Force Recruiting Service.

The goal for recruiting guardians this fiscal year is 521 enlisted and about 70 officers, according to the Space Force website.

Russian sentenced to life in war crimes trial

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A captured Russian soldier who pleaded guilty to killing a Ukrainian civilian was sentenced Monday to life in prison — the maximum — in the first war crimes trial since Moscow invaded Ukraine three months ago.

Meanwhile, in a rare public expression of opposition to the war from the ranks of the Russian elite, a veteran Kremlin diplomat resigned and sent a scathing letter to foreign colleagues in which he said, “Never have I been so ashamed of my country as on Feb. 24 of this year.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for “maximum” sanctions against Russia in a video address to world leaders and executives at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

On the battlefield, heavy fight-

ing raged in the Donbas in the east, where Moscow’s forces have stepped up their bombardments. Cities not under Russian control were constantly shelled, and one Ukrainian military official said Russian forces targeted civilians trying to flee.

In the first in what could be multitudes of similar prosecutions, Russian Sgt. Vadim Shishimarin, 21, was sentenced for the killing of a 62-year-old man who was shot in the head in a village in the northeastern Sumy region in the early days of the war. Shishimarin, a member of a tank unit, apologized to the man’s widow in court.

His Ukraine-appointed defense attorney, Victor Ovsyanikov, argued his client had been unprepared for the “violent military confrontation” and mass casualties that Russian troops encountered when they invaded. He

said he would appeal.

Ukrainian civil liberties advocate Volodymyr Yavorsky said it was “an extremely harsh sentence for one murder during the war.” But Aarif Abraham, a British-based human rights lawyer, said the trial was conducted “with what appears to be full and fair due process,” including access to an attorney.

Shishimarin had told the court that he at first disobeyed his immediate commanding officer’s order to shoot the unarmed civilian but had no choice but to follow the order when it was repeated forcefully by another officer.

Before the sentencing, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Moscow was unable to defend the soldier “on the ground” but will consider trying to do so “through other channels.”

Meanwhile, Boris Bondarev, a veteran Russian diplomat to the

U.N. office at Geneva, resigned and sent a letter railing against the “aggressive war unleashed” by Russian President Vladimir Putin. In a rare, if not unprecedented, case of public criticism from Russia’s diplomatic corps, Bondarev, 41, told The Associated Press: “It is intolerable what my government is doing now.”

In his letter, Bondarev said those who conceived the war “want only one thing — to remain in power forever, live in pompous tasteless palaces, sail on yachts comparable in tonnage and cost to the entire Russian Navy, enjoying unlimited power and complete impunity.”

At the Davos forum, Zelenskyy said sanctions against the Kremlin need to go further. He urged an embargo on Russian oil, a complete cutoff of trade with Russia and a withdrawal of foreign companies from the country.

Cargo plane renamed for ‘candy bomber’ Halvorsen

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A C-17 Globemaster III out of South Carolina has been dedicated to the memory of the Air Force’s legendary “candy bomber,” who brought relief to German children during the Berlin Airlift nearly 75 years ago.

The aircraft was given the name “Spirit of the Candy Bomber” at a ceremony Friday in Provo, Utah, during a two-day event to honor Col. Gail Halvorsen.

Halvorsen, who died in February at age 101, conceived the idea to incorporate chocolate into deliveries of crucial supplies during the operation, which became a defining moment of the Cold War.

In all, the Air Force delivered more than 2.3 million tons of food and fuel to West Berlin, which was isolated because of a Soviet

blockade. In addition, 46,000 pounds of candy was attached to handkerchief parachutes and dropped to children below.

“This C-17, the Spirit of the Candy Bomber, serves as a small token of our larger inheritance from Colonel Halvorsen and will transport Halvorsen’s example around the world,” Gen. Mike Minihan, Air Mobility Command chief, said in a statement.

The Candy Bomber C-17 dedication coincides with the Air Force’s 75th anniversary as an independent military branch. The Berlin Airlift was one of the service’s first major operations.

The event in Utah included a flyover by the Spirit of the Candy Bomber, which was joined by the Spirit of Freedom, a C-54 that took part in the original airlift. It dropped candy to the crowd.

Friendship Festival returns to Yokota Air Base in Japan

By KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Friendship Festival, a two-day open house at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, resumed over the weekend where it left off nearly three years ago before the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 110,000 people lined the sidewalks outside Yokota’s gates on Saturday and Sunday to gain entrance to the event, which was capped off this year with the arrival of President Joe Biden aboard Air Force One on Sunday afternoon. The festival provides a once-a-year opportunity for Japanese citizens to peruse Yokota’s flight line, inspect military aircraft and mingle with the U.S. population at souvenir stands, music stages and food stalls.

Senior Airman Anthon Wil-

liams, 25, and Airman Preston Taylor, 21, both firefighters, spent hours posing with Japanese visitors on Sunday. The pair helped children and adults in and out of their oversized, heavy protective coats and helmets.

“These are people we haven’t met before who show their appreciation by standing out here with us,” Williams said.

Taylor said the children reminded him of himself at a young age, hoping someday to become a firefighter.

“It brings me back, and humbles you in a way,” he said.

Thirty examples of American, Japanese and civilian aircraft on display drew steady streams of onlookers. Fighter jets shared the flight line with a C-17 Globemaster, a C-5 Galaxy and a C-130J Super Hercules.

Southern Baptists allegedly rebuffed sex abuse victims

Associated Press

Leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, America's largest Protestant denomination, stonewalled and denigrated survivors of clergy sex abuse over almost two decades while seeking to protect their own reputations, according to a scathing 288-page investigative report issued Sunday.

These survivors, and other concerned Southern Baptists, repeatedly shared allegations with the SBC's Executive Committee, "only to be met, time and time again, with resistance, stonewalling and even outright hostility from some within the EC," said the report.

The seven-month investigation was conducted by Guidepost Solutions, an independent firm contracted by the Executive Committee after delegates to last year's national meeting pressed for a probe by outsiders.

"Our investigation revealed that, for many years, a few senior EC leaders, along with outside counsel, largely controlled the EC's response to these reports of abuse ... and were singularly focused on avoiding liability for the SBC," the report said.

"In service of this goal, survivors and others who reported abuse were ignored, disbelieved or met with the constant refrain that the SBC could take no action due to its polity regarding church autonomy — even if it meant that convicted molesters continued in

ministry with no notice or warning to their current church or congregation," the report added.

The report asserts that an Executive Committee staffer maintained a list of Baptist ministers accused of abuse, but there is no indication anyone "took any action to ensure that the accused ministers were no longer in positions of power at SBC churches."

The most recent list includes the names of hundreds of abusers thought to be affiliated at some point with the SBC. Survivors and advocates have long called for a public database of abusers.

Among the report's key recommendations:

- Form an independent commission and later establish a permanent administrative entity to oversee comprehensive long-term reforms concerning sexual abuse and related misconduct within the SBC.

- Create and maintain an Offender Information System to alert the community to known offenders.

- Provide a comprehensive Resource Toolbox including protocols, training, education and practical information.

- Restrict the use of nondisclosure agreements and civil settlements which bind survivors to confidentiality in sexual abuse matters, unless requested by the survivor.

Pfizer says 3 doses of COVID-19 vaccine will protect kids under 5

Associated Press

Three doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine offer strong protection for children younger than 5, the company announced Monday. Pfizer plans to give the data to U.S. regulators later this week in a step toward letting the littlest kids get the shots.

The news comes after months of anxious waiting by parents desperate to vaccinate their babies, toddlers and preschoolers, especially as COVID-19 cases once again are rising. The 18 million tots under 5 are the only group in the United States not yet eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

The Food and Drug Administration has begun evaluating data from rival Moderna, which hopes to begin offering two kid-sized

shots by summer.

Pfizer has had a bumpier time figuring out its approach. It aims to give tots an even lower dose — just one-tenth of the amount adults receive — but discovered during its trial that two shots didn't seem quite strong enough for preschoolers. So researchers gave a third shot to more than 1,600 youngsters — from age 6 months to 4 years — during the winter surge of the omicron variant.

In a press release, Pfizer and its partner BioNTech said the extra shot did the trick, revving up tots' levels of virus-fighting antibodies enough to meet FDA criteria for emergency use of the vaccine with no safety problems.

2022 midterms: What to watch in Ga., Texas, others

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia takes center stage in Tuesday's primary elections as Gov. Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger try to fight back challengers endorsed by former President Donald Trump, who is seeking revenge for his 2020 election defeat in the state.

In Alabama, three Republicans are in a tight race for the nomination to replace retiring U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby. In Arkansas, former White House press secretary Sarah Sanders is a front-runner for the Republican nomination for governor.

In Texas, two runoffs are drawing outside attention: Attorney General Ken Paxton is trying to hold off Land Commissioner George P. Bush, while Rep. Henry Cuellar is trying to fend off his progressive challenger in a rematch from 2020.

Georgia

Trump recruited former U.S. Sen. David Perdue to take on Kemp for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, but Perdue has lagged. Kemp has been increasingly confident the GOP will send him forward to a November rematch with Stacey Abrams.

Raffensperger, the state's top elections official, is facing a tough challenge from U.S. Rep. Jody Hice, who has promoted Trump's lies that voter fraud was widespread in 2020.

Alabama

U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks faces Katie Britt, the former leader of the Business Council of Alabama and Shelby's former chief of staff, and businessman Mike Durant, best known as the helicopter pilot shot down and held captive in the events chronicled in "Black Hawk Down."

Arkansas

Two-term U.S. Sen. John Boozman hopes to fend off a challenge from three Republican rivals in a race in which he's had to rely on his endorsement from Trump as well as the state's top GOP figures.

Sanders, Trump's former spokesperson, is heavily favored in her Republican primary for governor. She faces a long-shot primary challenge from former talk show radio host Doc Washburn.

Texas

Republican George P. Bush, a son of former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, has spent the past year mounting a primary challenge to Paxton, the two-term attorney general.

On the Democratic side, Cuellar's bid for a 10th term has run head-on against Jessica Cisneros, a 28-year-old immigration attorney.

Zelenskyy urges ‘maximum’ sanctions on Russia

Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for “maximum” sanctions against Russia during a virtual speech Monday to corporate executives, government officials and other elites on the first day of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

He said sanctions need to go further to stop Russia’s aggression, including an oil embargo, blocking all of its banks and cutting off trade with Russia completely. He said it’s a precedent that would work for decades to come.

“This is what sanctions should be: They should be maximum, so that Russia and every other potential aggressor that wants to wage a brutal war against its neighbor would clearly know

the immediate consequences of their actions,” Zelenskyy said through a translator.

He also pushed for the complete withdrawal of foreign companies from Russia to prevent supporting its war, and said Ukraine needs at least \$5 billion in funding per month.

“The amount of work is enormous: we have more than half a trillion of dollars in losses, tens of thousands of facilities were destroyed. We need to rebuild entire cities and industries,” Zelenskyy said, coming days after the Group of Seven leading economies agreed to provide \$19.8 billion in economic aid.

He said that if Ukraine had “received 100% of our needs at once, back in February” in terms of weapons, funding, political support and sanctions

against Russia, “the result would be tens of thousands of lives saved.”

Zelenskyy’s speech is a key focus Monday at Davos, the village in the Swiss Alps that has been transformed into a glitzy venue for the four-day confab ostensibly dedicated to making the world a better place. The event is resuming in person after a two-year hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which also delayed this year’s meeting from its usual winter slot.

For the attendees, there’s much to tackle amid soaring food and fuel prices, Russia’s war in Ukraine, climate change, inequality and persistent health crises. But it’s hard to predict if the high-minded discussions will yield substantial announcements that make headway on the

world’s most pressing challenges.

“This war is really a turning point of history, and it will reshape our political and our economic landscape in the coming years,” said the event’s founder, Klaus Schwab.

Besides Zelenskyy’s speech, a sizable Ukrainian government delegation is attending in person, making their case for more Western support in the country’s fight against Russia.

Russian officials have not been invited to Davos this year, with what was dubbed the “Russia House” having been transformed by critics — including Ukrainian tycoon Victor Pinchuk and the country’s Foreign Ministry — into what they call the “Russia War Crimes House.”

Taliban enforcing face-cover order for female TV anchors

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers on Sunday began enforcing an order requiring all female TV news anchors in the country to cover their faces while on-air. The move is part of a hard-line shift drawing condemnation from rights activists.

After the order was announced Thursday, only a handful of news outlets complied. But on Sunday, most female anchors were seen with their faces covered after the Taliban’s Vice and Virtue Ministry began enforcing the decree.

The Information and Culture Ministry had previously announced that the new policy was “final and non-negotiable.”

“It is just an outside culture imposed on us forcing us to wear a mask and that can create a problem for us while presenting our programs,” said Sonia Niazi, a TV anchor with TOLONews. In an act of solidarity with female colleagues, the channel’s male personnel covered their faces

with masks, including the main evening news reader.

A local media official confirmed his station had received the order last week, but on Sunday it was forced to implement it after being told it was not up for discussion. He spoke on condition he and his station remain anonymous for fear of retribution from Taliban authorities.

Earlier this month, the Taliban ordered all women in public to wear head-to-toe clothing that leaves only their eyes visible. The decree said women should leave the home only when necessary and that male relatives would face punishment for women’s dress code violations, starting with a summons and escalating to court hearings and jail time.

The Taliban leadership has also barred girls from attending school after the sixth grade, reversing previous promises by Taliban officials that girls of all ages would be allowed an education.

Expert: Monkeypox was likely spread by sex at Europe raves

Associated Press

LONDON — A leading adviser to the World Health Organization described the unprecedented outbreak of the rare disease monkeypox in developed countries as “a random event” that might be explained by risky sexual behavior at two recent mass events in Europe.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Dr. David Heymann, who formerly headed WHO’s emergencies department, said the leading theory to explain the spread of the disease was sexual transmission among gay and bisexual men at two raves held in Spain and Belgium. Monkeypox has not previously triggered widespread outbreaks beyond Africa, where it is endemic in animals.

“We know monkeypox can spread when there is close contact with the lesions of someone who is infected, and it looks like sexual contact has now amplified that transmission,” said Heymann.

That marks a significant departure from the disease’s typical pattern of spread in central and western Africa, where people are mainly infected by animals like wild rodents and primates and outbreaks have not spilled across borders.

To date, WHO has recorded more than 90 cases of monkeypox in a dozen countries including Britain, Spain, Israel, France, Switzerland, the United States and Australia.

On Sunday, the chief medical adviser of Britain’s Health Security Agency, Dr. Susan Hopkins, said she expected more monkeypox cases to be identified in the country “on a daily basis.”

Heymann chaired an urgent meeting of WHO’s advisory group on infectious disease threats on Friday to assess the ongoing epidemic and said there was no evidence to suggest that monkeypox might have mutated into a more infectious form.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Gun buyback program nets dozens of weapons

NY NEW YORK — A gun buyback program has netted dozens of weapons in New York City, where authorities are battling a wave of gun violence.

Police and prosecutors said 69 guns were turned in anonymously on Saturday at the event at a Brooklyn church, no questions asked. In exchange, people received \$200 gift cards — paid for with drug and gambling forfeiture — and iPads donated by the owner of the iconic cheesecake maker Junior's restaurant.

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez said one of the guns came from a grandmother who took it from her grandson.

"She said when he opens the drawer, he'll have the gift card and the iPad, but that gun is out of the house," Gonzalez said.

Late spring snowstorm leaves 210K powerless

CO DENVER — A late spring Colorado snowstorm dumped several inches in the Denver metro area Saturday and knocked out electricity for about 210,000 customers, officials said.

The wet snow weighed down tree branches and sent them toppling onto power lines, the KUSA television station reported. Much more snow fell in mountainous regions of Colorado.

By Saturday night, power had been restored to 160,000 customers but about 50,000 still did not have it back, the Xcel Energy Colorado utility said in a statement.

The small Colorado community of Cripple Creek near the base of Pikes Peak got 20 inches of snow, KUSA reported.

Speedway evicts trucks from People's Convoy

MD HAGERSTOWN — A western Maryland racetrack has evicted the remnants of a trucker protest that had used the site as a staging ground.

The People's Convoy had conducted a series of rolling protests around the Capital Beltway in March to protest pandemic restrictions and similar measures.

After a hiatus, a smaller group of truckers returned Wednesday to the Hagerstown Speedway.

But The Herald-Mail in Hagerstown reported Saturday that Speedway General Manager Lisa Plessinger asked the group to leave amid infighting over its next steps. The last of the truckers left Friday night, she said.

A press release issued Friday on a Facebook page for The People's Convoy "declares victory and announces its conclusion of the national convoy portion of this great movement."

Fleeing suspect jumps in pond, never reappears

FL BRADENTON — A burglary suspect in Florida trying to escape police officers jumped into a pond and never resurfaced, authorities said Saturday.

Police officers had responded to reports of vehicle burglaries at an apartment complex in Bradenton early Saturday and

found two men hiding on the porch of an apartment, the Bradenton Police Department said in a news release.

Officers detained one of the men, but the other man jumped a fence and ran down an embankment into a pond. The 19-year-old suspect went underwater and never resurfaced, the news release said.

A dive team from the Manatee County Sheriff's Office found the suspect's body a short time later.

Nearly 8K-year-old skull found in depleted river

MN REDWOOD FALLS — A partial skull that was discovered last summer by two kayakers in Minnesota will be returned to Native American officials after investigations determined it was about 8,000 years old.

The kayakers found the skull in the drought-depleted Minnesota River about 110 miles west of Minneapolis, Renville County Sheriff Scott Hable said.

Thinking it might be related to a missing person case or murder, Hable turned the skull over to a medical examiner and eventually to the FBI, where a forensic anthropologist used carbon dating to determine it was likely the skull of a young man who lived between 5500 and 6000 B.C., Hable said.

Hable said the remains will be turned over to Upper Sioux Community tribal officials.

Runner collapses, dies after half-marathon

NY NEW YORK — A 30-year-old man crossing the finish line of a Brooklyn

half-marathon collapsed and died Saturday morning, officials in New York said.

The runner was transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead, fire department spokesperson Frank Dwyer said.

It was unclear what caused the runner to collapse, though a statement from the nonprofit New York Road Runners said it happened after the man finished the 2022 RBC Brooklyn Half.

Dwyer said six other runners were transported to the hospital Saturday morning. Three had serious, non-life threatening injuries, while the remaining three had minor injuries.

Amid record heat, skier saved from mountain fall

NH MOUNT WASHINGTON — The summit of Mount Washington experienced record-breaking heat Saturday, but it was still ski season for some elsewhere on the mountain, including a woman who was rescued after taking a serious fall in a ravine.

The woman, an experienced backcountry skier, tumbled and fell several hundred feet onto rocks in the Great Gulf on Saturday afternoon, according to New Hampshire Fish and Game.

Other skiers helped bring her at least 700 feet to the rim of the gulf, and they later flagged down a train from the Cog Railway to take her down the mountain. Her injuries were not considered life-threatening.

The temperature at the summit hit 62 degrees, setting a new record high for the day.

— From wire reports

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Tulsa thriller: Thomas wins PGA playoff

Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — Justin Thomas wrapped his arms around the 27-pound Wanamaker Trophy after winning his second PGA Championship, and thousands of fans ringing the 18th green amid the setting sun at Southern Hills showered him in adulation.

Good thing they woke up in time for his Sunday charge.

For nearly four full days, the year's second major had been a major snooze, the cast atop the leaderboard a list mostly made up of also-rans searching for a moment of stardom. The golf itself was unspectacular, too, as everyone from Abraham Ancer to Tiger Woods ground their way around a Perry Maxwell classic that was both forbidding and unforgiving.

Heck, even the eventual champ shanked one off the tee on Sunday.

"Just cold shanked it," Thomas said. "Don't really know how else to say it. It was the best bogey I've ever made in my life."

Cameron Young tried to move up the leaderboard during the final round, then left his chances of victory in a fairway bunker on the 16th hole. Will Zalatoris hung on for life as iron shots found creeks, shrubs and very little short grass. Chile's Mito Pereira had a ca-

reer-changing moment staring him in the face until a fateful shot on the 18th hole.

That's about the time the PGA Championship went from uninspiring to unbelievable.

Pereira's shot into the creek off the tee on the 490-yard finishing hole led to a double bogey, not only robbing him of the most unexpected of major championships — and the \$2.7 million winner's purse, a lifetime spot in the tournament and all the other baubles — but keeping him out of the three-hole aggregate playoff to decide the thing.

Thomas had rattled off a couple of birdies on the back side before an up-and-down for birdie at the 17th, moving him to 5-under and within a shot of the lead. And he hit a brilliant shot to within 15 feet at the 18th to set up another birdie, only to watch the putt that in the moment he thought he needed for a playoff go skating past the hole.

The crowd around the green, now fully invested in the goings-on, let out a groan.

"The leaders could have shot 3- or 4-under today, and like, I could have grinded and made a couple more birdies and look at the leaderboard on 18 and I'm four or five back," Thomas said later. "I just was trying to birdie every hole I could."

Coming up behind him, Zalatoris had fi-

nally wrangled his renegade irons in time to make birdie at the 17th, getting him back to 5-under. He never gave himself a chance for birdie at 18, instead making a nervy 8-footer to stay there.

"I always felt like I was one, two, three back," Zalatoris said, "and then once I saw Mito hit into the water on 18, I know that putt that I was going to have on 18 was probably to get into a playoff. So I will bottle that putt on 18 for the future."

Thomas and Zalatoris watched Pereira come undone, and then headed back out for the playoff.

After the two matched birdies at the 13th hole, Thomas showed the kind of calm that comes with having been in such a situation before, ripping his tee shot onto the green at the 308-yard 17th. He made a two-putt birdie while Zalatoris could only manage par, sending the 2017 PGA champ to the 18th again — this time with a one-shot lead of his own.

With the once-slumbering crowd still jostling for position, Thomas and Zalatoris found the green with their approach shots, and the only drama left was whether the son of a longtime club professional could get down in two for the win.

Wiggins, Warriors dunk Mavs for 3-0 edge in series

Associated Press

DALLAS — Stephen Curry shimmied for the TV crew, Andrew Wiggins shook Luka Dončić with a posterizing dunk and the Warriors are thinking sweep.

Curry scored 31 points, Wiggins' playoff career high 27 points included the dunk that was originally called an offensive foul and Golden State beat the Dallas Mavericks 109-100 Sunday night for a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference finals.

"He's looking like Dominique Wilkins out there," Klay Thompson said of Wiggins after scoring 19 points as the Warriors moved to the brink of the NBA Finals, three years after the end of a five-year run that yielded three titles.

Golden State, which swept Portland in its most recent West finals in 2019 before Toronto

won the title, goes for the sweep in Game 4 on Tuesday in Dallas. No team has rallied from 3-0 down to win an NBA playoff series.

"I love the position we're in," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "I love the fact that our team came in and got the win tonight. This was the one we felt like we had to get. Coming here up 2-0, you've got to take advantage of your momentum."

Dončić scored 40 and beat the first-quarter buzzer with a 32-footer that got the crowd going with the Mavericks again at home trailing 2-0, as they did against top-seeded Phoenix before winning the series in seven games.

But that shimmy-inducing bucket from the young superstar was a blip on an otherwise rough night from three-point range for Dallas, which missed

its first seven and finished 13-for-45.

Reggie Bullock and Maxi Kleber, two long-range specialists for the Mavs, missed all 12 of their threes combined and were 0-15 overall. Both went scoreless, offsetting Spencer Dinwiddie's 26 points off the bench.

Wiggins' one-handed dunk over Dončić midway through the fourth quarter was called a foul because his elbow made contact around Dončić's neck as Dončić jerked backward and fell. But the replay ruling after Kerr challenged was incidental contact, giving Golden State a 93-83 lead.

"I got hit a little bit, but that was impressive," Dončić said. "I'm not going to lie. I saw the video again, and I was like, 'Oh ...' That was pretty incredible. I wish had those bunnies."

About a minute later, Wig-

gins, who matched his playoff career high with 11 rebounds, moved quickly down the baseline for a follow dunk on a miss by Curry.

"Just feeling the energy," Wiggins said of his dunk over Dončić. "That's the main thing when I seen the rim. That's all I seen. They tried to take it away from me, but ..." Wiggins said, interrupting himself with a laugh before thanking Kerr for the challenge.

Curry scored 11 points in the third quarter, giving the Warriors their biggest lead at 78-64 with a step-back three in the final minute and turning to the national TV crew for a close-up view of his shoulder shimmy.

Dončić scored 21 points in the fourth quarter as Dallas tried desperately to close the gap but fell to 2-6 when he scores at least 40 points.

Dixon's 234-mph run earns Indy pole

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Not much rattles The Iceman at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, not even record speeds.

Scott Dixon smashed the Indianapolis 500 pole-winning record with a breathtaking qualifying run of more than 234 mph. His hands were shaking when he climbed from his car following his first run Sunday, but the New Zealander was unbothered and went back out for an incredible final run.

His four-lap average of 234.046 mph around Indianapolis Motor Speedway gave Dixon the fifth Indy 500 pole of his career. He'll lead the field to green next Sunday in "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing."

"That's what this place is about, the ups and downs that you have just in one day, it's crazy," Dixon said. "I think that's kind of what we all secretly thrive on, right? To live on that edge is an amazing feeling and when you do nail it, that's what it's all about. Days like these are amazing."

Considered the best driver of his generation, Dixon's average

broke Scott Brayton's pole-winning record of 233.718 mph set in 1996. Arie Luyendyk holds the four-lap qualifying record of 236.986 mph, also done in 1996, but not in a run for the pole.

Dixon's qualifying run was the second fastest in 106 runnings of the most prestigious race in the world.

Dixon's first lap was an eye-popping 234.437 mph and drew a roar from the fans. His second lap was 234.162 and wife Emma bent over the pit wall in amazement, her hands covering her mouth. Dixon's drop-off from there was minuscule: his fourth and final lap was 233.726 as his consistency gave Chip Ganassi Racing its seventh Indy 500 pole.

"The first number does mean a lot, and when I saw 234, it was 'OK, this is going to be a good run,'" Dixon said. "But you're busy, you're consumed. Gone on the early years of just hitting the apexes and enjoying the speed."

Dixon also started from the pole in 2008 when he scored his only Indy 500 win, as well as 2015, 2017 and last year.

Ganassi advanced all five of his

drivers into the two-round qualifying shootout to determine the starting order for the first three rows for next week's race. Seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson needed a massive save in the first turn of his first lap and didn't advance out of the round of 12.

But Dixon did, along with his other three Honda-powered teammates. That made it Dixon, reigning IndyCar champion Alex Palou, Marcus Ericsson and Tony Kanaan in a head-to-head "Fast Six" shootout against Chevrolet-powered teammates Ed Carpenter and Rinus VeeKay.

"This is what real competitors want, true competitors want this," Ganassi said before the session. "This is a moment made for champions."

The 21-year-old VeeKay on Saturday posted the third-fastest qualifying run in track history but didn't have enough for Dixon's big, big laps. Palou, who averaged 233.499, qualified second alongside his teammate and VeeKay was third at 233.385.

Palou, who led 35 laps last year and finished second to Helio Cas-

troneves, said he knew he'd be beaten by his teammate.

"There was not a lot of nerves, I kinda knew he was going to get it," Palou said. "I was super comfortable and I did everything I had. I kind of wish because Scott already had four poles here, he could have given me one, but he doesn't share much."

VeeKay, who qualified third last year, as well, has never started lower than fourth.

"I'm very proud to be on the front row again, and I haven't qualified worse than fourth in my three qualifying attempts, so I am very proud of that," VeeKay said. But the 21-year-old said his best run was on Saturday — "I did what Scott did yesterday" — and he knew quickly that he couldn't beat Dixon for the pole.

"I think we could have put rocket fuel in our engine and I still think not beat Scott," VeeKay said. "He was not just a fraction faster, he was a lot faster than everyone else."

Carpenter was fourth and followed by Ericsson and Kanaan, who at 232.372 was the slowest of the final six shootout.

Lightning place Panthers on the brink of elimination

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Steven Stamkos scored two goals and Nikita Kucherov had a goal and three assists and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Florida Panthers 5-1 to move to the brink of another trip to the Eastern Conference final on Sunday.

Corey Perry and Erik Cernak also scored, and reigning Conn Smythe Trophy winner Andrei Vasilevskiy had 34 saves to help the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions take a commanding 3-0 series lead over the Panthers, who had the NHL's best record during the regular season.

Game 4 is Monday night at Amalie Arena, where the Lightning have won three of four games this postseason. One more victory will send them to the Eastern Conference final for the sixth time in eight years.

Sam Reinhart scored Florida's lone goal. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 31 of 34 shots.

Rangers 3, Hurricanes 1: Mika Zibanejad had a goal and an assist, Igor Shesterkin stopped 43 shots, and host New York beat Carolina in Game 3 of their second-round playoff series.

Chris Kreider and Tyler Motte also scored as the Rangers cut their deficit to 2-1 in the best-of-seven matchup. Game 4 is Tuesday night at Madison Square Garden.

Nino Niederreiter scored for the Hurricanes, and Antti Raanta finished with 30 saves. Carolina dropped to 0-4 on the road this postseason to go along with their 6-0 home mark.

Shesterkin had 17 saves in the first period, 17 in the second and nine in the third.

Oilers 4, Flames 1: Evander Kane had three goals in a six-minute span in the second period, Leon Draisaitl set an NHL record with four assists in one playoff period and host Edmonton defeated Calgary to take a 2-1

lead in their second-round playoff series.

Zach Hyman had the other goal for the Oilers and Connor McDavid had three more assists. Mike Smith, who was briefly replaced by Mikko Koskinen in the third period after getting run over by Milan Lucic, made 31 saves. Koskinen wasn't forced to make a stop in just over four minutes.

Oliver Kyllington scored the lone goal for the Flames. Jacob Markstrom allowed four goals on 34 shots before getting pulled for Calgary, which has been outscored 8-1 since taking a 3-1 lead in the second period of Game 2. Dan Vladar made seven saves in relief.

McDavid has 23 points (six goals, 17 assists) through 10 postseason games. The only players in NHL playoff history with more points in the same span are Wayne Gretzky (29 in 1983; 25 in 1985), Mario Lemieux (25 in 1992) and Rick Middleton (23 in 1983).

Anderson, White Sox silence Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tim Anderson hit a three-run homer and then put a finger to his lips to silence the booing fans, capping a tumultuous weekend at Yankee Stadium and helping the Chicago White Sox beat New York 5-0 Sunday night for a doubleheader sweep.

A day after Anderson, who is Black, accused Yankees slugger Josh Donaldson, who is white, of making a racist remark, the All-Star shortstop didn't play in the first game. AJ Pollock hit a tiebreaking homer off Aroldis Chapman (0-2) in the ninth inning as the White Sox won 3-1.

Anderson was booed during pregame introductions and prior to each at-bat in the nightcap. He had already hit two singles when he homered over the right field wall with two outs in the eighth. Anderson took a slow trot and put his hands to his lips in a shushing gesture as he rounded the bases. He clapped his hands several times upon crossing home plate and pointed skyward before again making a silencing motion.

Before the five-run eighth, the story was White Sox starter Michael Kopech, who retired the first 17 batters he faced on just 60 pitches before Rob Brantly doubled to left field. Kopech (1-1) allowed just the one hit and two walks while striking out six in seven innings.

Yankees starter Luis Severino scattered eight hits over seven scoreless innings. Jonathan Loaisiga (1-2) lost in relief.

Aaron Judge's eighth-inning homer off Kendall Graveman (1-1) cost Johnny Cueto a win in the opener. The resurgent 36-year-old righty allowed six hits, walked two and struck out five in his second major league outing of the season. Liam Hendriks struck out two in a perfect ninth.

Cardinals 18, Pirates 4: Albert Pujols hit two homers to boost his career total to 683, then caught the warmup tosses when catcher Yadier Molina made his first pitching appearance to close out host St. Louis' romp over Pittsburgh.

Molina gave up homers to Yoshi Tsutsugo and Jack Suwinski and four runs while working the ninth inning, eventually completing the Cardinals' three-game sweep. But it was not all fun and games for St. Louis. Starter Steven Matz lasted only four pitches before being pulled with stiffness in his left shoulder.

Angels 4, Athletics 1: Shohei Ohtani hit a 443-foot leadoff home run and Mike Trout added a solo shot while getting three hits and two RBIs in Los Angeles' victory over

visiting Oakland.

Patrick Sandoval (3-1) struck out seven as he pitched four-hit ball into the eighth inning for the Angels, who won the final two games of the weekend series after a four-game skid. Raisel Iglesias pitched the ninth for his 10th save.

Phillies 4, Dodgers 3 (10): Max Muncy's two-run fielding error in the 10th capped a wild late-inning sequence and allowed host Philadelphia to beat Los Angeles.

With two outs and men on second and third in the 10th, Alec Bohm hit a little dribbler off Evan Phillips (1-2) to Muncy at second for what appeared to be the final out of the inning. But Muncy didn't field it cleanly, allowing Garrett Stubbs to score the tying run and Roman Quinn to bring in the winning run just ahead of the throw home.

Stubbs had hit his first major league homer to get the Phillies on the board in the sixth. They had tied it with two outs in the ninth on Jean Segura's single to left that scored Nick Castellanos, whose two-out double started the rally.

Red Sox 8, Mariners 4 (10): Franchy Cordero hit a grand slam with two outs in the bottom of the 10th, lifting surging host Boston past Seattle.

Trevor Story continued his recent power surge with his fifth homer over the Green Monster in four days and Christian Arroyo added a solo shot for the Red Sox, who posted their season-high fifth straight victory and completed a four-game sweep over Seattle.

Mets 2, Rockies 0: Francisco Lindor broke a scoreless tie with a single in the sixth inning, Taijuan Walker and three relievers combined on a six-hitter and New York extended its streak of rebounding from losses by winning at Colorado.

Orioles 7, Rays 6 (11): Rounned Odor had his second game-winning at-bat in three days as host Baltimore edged Tampa Bay.

The Orioles won two of three and won a series against the Rays for the first time since July 31-Aug. 2, 2020, when Baltimore managed a three-game sweep at home.

Padres 10, Giants 1: Manny Machado set a career high and matched a franchise record with four extra-base hits, and surging San Diego completed a three-game sweep at San Francisco.

On a day when every Padres starter had at least one hit and the Giants used outfielder Luis González to pitch, Machado's big afternoon included three doubles, a triple

and two RBIs. The five-time All-Star was also intentionally walked. He's the eighth player in team history to have four extra-base hits in one game.

Marlins 4, Braves 3: Sandy Alcantara pitched a six-hitter and host Miami beat Atlanta.

The 26-year-old-Alcantara (4-2) limited the Braves to three unearned runs and six hits. He walked two and struck out seven for his fourth career complete game.

Reds 3, Blue Jays 2: Joey Votto hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning and Cincinnati avoided a three-game sweep with a win at Toronto.

The one-run win was the second of the season for the Reds. Cincinnati has won nine of 15 following a 3-22 start.

Astros 5, Rangers 2: Jose Altuve hit his fifth leadoff home run of the season and a double, José Urquidy tied a career high with 10 strikeouts and host Houston defeated Texas.

Urquidy (4-1) allowed six hits and one run in a season-high 6⅔ innings as the Astros won for the third time in this four-game series. Urquidy improved to 4-0 in five career starts against the Rangers and has won three straight games overall.

Cubs 5, Diamondbacks 4: Patrick Wisdom and Frank Schwindel hit consecutive homers against Ian Kennedy in the eighth inning, and host Chicago edged Arizona to avoid a four-game series sweep.

Wisdom had a bounce go just foul right before he connected for his ninth homer, sending a leadoff drive deep to center field. Schwindel then drove a 1-0 pitch from Kennedy (3-3) into the bleachers in left for his fourth homer. Schwindel and Wisdom also hit back-to-back homers during the Cubs' 7-6 loss on Saturday.

Tigers 4, Guardians 2: Rookie Alex Faedo allowed two runs in 5⅓ innings for his first major league win and Miguel Cabrera had an RBI double as Detroit won at Cleveland.

Faedo (1-1) struck out two in his fourth appearance since being called up from Triple-A Toledo on May 4.

Nationals 8, Brewers 2: Lane Thomas hit two RBI doubles and Washington broke out of its hitting slump in a victory at Milwaukee, which lost Freddy Peralta to shoulder tightness in the fourth inning.

Twins 7, Royals 6: Gio Urshela hit a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning to complete Minnesota's comeback from a six-run deficit at Kansas City.