

Probe finds sub crash was 'preventable'

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Poor navigational planning, management and watch-team execution led to the USS Connecticut's underwater crash in October, according to a Navy investigation that recommended punishment for several of the submarine's leaders and crew.

"This mishap was preventable," Rear Adm. Christopher Cavanaugh wrote in the investigation's report, which was released Monday. "Prudent decision-making and adherence to required procedures in any of these three areas could have prevented the grounding."

As director of Pacific Fleet's maritime headquarters, Cavanaugh led the investigation, which analyzed what caused the subma-

rine's collision with an undersea mountain that injured 11 sailors and damaged the Sea-wolf-class submarine's ballast tanks and sonar sphere, according to the Navy.

Ballast tanks help provide a submarine's buoyancy, while sonar spheres allow sailors to sense what is around them in undersea waters.

The submarine, which is based in Bremerton, Wash., was operating "in a poorly surveyed area in international waters" in the South China Sea when it ran aground, according to the report.

The report found in the time before the Oct. 2 crash, the navigation review team "failed to identify and properly mark at least ten charted hazards to navigation in the vicinity of the grounding" before sending the submarine

through the waters.

"The [team], including the [commanding officer], incorrectly assessed that Connecticut would be operating in an open ocean environment," the report found. "They should have recognized the ship would be in restricted waters based on the planned track passing near multiple navigation hazards."

"Had they done so, a modified piloting party would have been stationed with additional watch-standers focused on navigation safety," the report added.

While much of the investigation's details are redacted in the report, it indicated at least some of the crew's watch-standing team were aware that something was amiss on the navigational chart, but the information was not communicated effectively.

Parris Island wages battles, not war, on climate change

Associated Press

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. — Rising seas are encroaching on one of America's most storied military installations, where thousands of recruits are molded into Marines each year amid the salt marshes of South Carolina's Lowcountry region.

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island is particularly vulnerable to flooding, coastal erosion and other impacts of climate change, a Defense Department-funded "resiliency review" noted last month. Some scientists project that by 2099, three-quarters of the island could be under water during high tides each day.

Military authorities say they're confident they can keep the second-oldest Marine Corps base intact, for now, through small-scale changes to existing infrastructure projects.

Maj. Marc Blair, Parris Island's environmental director, describes this strategy as "the art of the small," a phrase he attributes to the base's commanding general, Brig. Gen. Julie Nethercot. In practice, it means such things as raising a culvert that needs to be repaired anyway, limiting development in low-lying areas and adding floodproofing measures to firing range upgrades.

Others advocate much larger and more expensive solutions, such as building huge

seawalls around the base, or moving Marine Corps training away from the coast altogether.

Parris Island has an outsized role in military lore and American pop culture as a proving ground for Marines who have served in every major conflict since World War I. It remains a crucial training ground, along with Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. But the rising sea is proving to be a formidable enemy.

Salt marsh makes up more than half of the base's 8,000 acres, and the depot's highest point, by the fire station, is just 13 feet above sea level. It is linked to the mainland by a single road that's already susceptible to flooding.

Low-lying areas on the island and the nearby Marine Corps air station already flood about 10 times a year, and by 2050, "the currently flood-prone areas within both bases could experience tidal flooding more than 300 times annually and be underwater nearly 30 percent of the year given the highest scenario," according to the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Military reports have for decades acknowledged threats from climate change to national security, as wildfires, hurricanes and floods have prompted evacuations and damaged bases. A Pentagon document pub-

lished last fall, after President Joe Biden ordered federal agencies to revamp their climate resilience plans, says the DOD now has "a comprehensive approach to building climate-ready installations" and cites an adaptation and resilience study undertaken by Parris Island.

But day-to-day disruptions are growing, from nuisance flooding on roads to rising temperatures and higher humidity that when combined, limit the human body's ability to cool down with sweat.

Those wetter, hotter days could limit outdoor training. Already, more than 500 people on Parris Island suffered from heat stroke and heat exhaustion between 2016 and 2020, putting the base among the top 10 U.S. military installations for heat illnesses, according to the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch.

All the training that happens at Parris Island could be technically replicated on cooler, drier land somewhere else, said retired Brig. Gen. Stephen Cheney, who served as commanding general at the base from 1999 to 2001. But Cheney doesn't foresee any appetite in Congress for closing the base and relocating its mission to less risky ground, which means the government needs to start investing in structural solutions to protect its crucial components, he said.

Biden caps off Asia tour with Quad summit

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — President Joe Biden lifted off Tuesday in Air Force One from this airlift hub in western Tokyo, completing a five-day trip to Asia, his first as president, after strengthening ties with U.S. partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

Biden collected promises to improve a collective defense in South Korea and reinstate large military exercises there suspended in 2017, announced the formation of a 13-member Indo-Pacific Economic Framework in Japan and met with the leaders of Japan, India and Australia in a show of solidarity.

But his pledge to militarily defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion drew the most attention from worldwide media and international security experts. Some analysts suggested

Biden's remarks reframed America's policy of strategic ambiguity toward Taiwan's relationship with China. Others said his remarks constituted only a repeat of the same pledge he's made earlier.

"My policy has not changed at all," Biden told reporters in Tokyo on Tuesday. "I stated that when I made my statement yesterday."

Biden's statement the previous day that, "yes," the United States would defend the island democracy, was "an intentional gaffe," according to Jeff Kingston, head of Asian studies at Temple University's Tokyo campus.

The comment was quickly walked back by the White House but left "a strong impression of U.S. engagement," he told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday.

Biden's trip began Friday at Osan Air Base, South Korea, and ended Tuesday at Yokota Air

Base, Japan, following the Quad summit, an informal strategic forum with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and newly elected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The four discussed their responses to the conflict in Ukraine and assessed its implications for the Indo-Pacific.

"Quad Leaders reiterated our strong resolve to maintain the peace and stability in the region," read a joint statement issued after the summit.

The statement didn't mention Russia, the aggressor in Ukraine. Moscow has been condemned and sanctioned by the U.S. and its allies but retains strong trade and defense ties to India.

The leaders also stated their support for freedom of navigation and overflight in the East and South China Seas.

China has occupied numerous islets and reefs in South China Sea in territory that is claimed by its neighbors. China also claims ownership of the Japan-administered Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, and frequently sends vessels to the area.

"We strongly oppose any coercive, provocative or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo and increase tensions in the area, such as the militarization of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia, and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities individually and collectively," the Quad leaders' statement said.

They announced plans to extend more than \$50 billion of infrastructure assistance and investment in the Indo-Pacific over the next five years.

Ukraine: 200 bodies found in basement in Mariupol

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Workers digging through the rubble of an apartment building in Mariupol found 200 bodies in the basement, Ukrainian authorities said Tuesday, as more horrors come to light in the ruined city that has seen some of the worst suffering of the 3-month-old war.

The bodies were decomposing and the stench hung over the neighborhood, said Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to the mayor. He did not know when they were discovered, but the sheer number of victims makes it one of the deadliest known attacks of the war.

Heavy fighting, meanwhile, continued in the Donbas, the eastern industrial region that Moscow's forces are intent on seizing. Russian troops intensi-

fied their efforts to encircle and capture Sievierodonetsk and neighboring cities.

Mariupol was relentlessly pounded during a nearly three-month siege that ended last week after some 2,500 Ukrainian fighters abandoned a steel plant where they had made their stand. Russian forces already held the rest of the city, where an estimated 100,000 people remain out a prewar population of 450,000, many of them trapped during the siege with little food, water, heat or electricity.

At least 21,000 people were killed in the siege, according to Ukrainian authorities, who have accused Russia of trying to cover up the horrors by bringing in mobile cremation equipment and by burying the dead in mass graves.

Unmanned helicopters are back at work in Indo-Pacific

By **ALEX WILSON**
Stars and Stripes

The latest version of an unmanned helicopter system went to work for the first time in the Indo-Pacific aboard a littoral combat ship, the system's manufacturer announced Monday.

The MQ-8C Fire Scout, an autonomous helicopter with the ability to take off and land on warships capable of carrying aircraft, went to sea aboard the USS Jackson in April, according to manufacturer Northrop Grumman.

The Fire Scout completed operational testing April 20 in the Philippine Sea, U.S. Navy Destroyer Squadron 7 said in a news release that week. The drone subsequently operated in the South China Sea on April 29.

The Fire Scout works alongside the Navy's MH-60S Seahawk

helicopter to provide "integrated, over-the-horizon intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting, and combat logistics support," according to Northrop Grumman.

With its combat capabilities proven, the drone is cleared to continue operating on the Jackson and other littoral ships in the region.

The Navy thus far has accepted the delivery of 38 MQ-8C Fire Scout systems with no plans to order more, according to a January report from Nickolas Guertin, head of the Pentagon's testing office.

While the new model is considered an improvement, it hasn't gone without issues. The Navy paused MQ-8C operations in 2020 after two mishaps occurred less than a week apart.

GOP backs Oz in suit on vote counting

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The national Republican Party is taking the side of celebrity heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz in Pennsylvania's neck-and-neck GOP primary contest for U.S. Senate and opposing a lawsuit that could help former hedge fund CEO David McCormick close the gap in votes.

McCormick's lawsuit was filed late Monday, less than 24 hours before Tuesday's deadline for counties to report their unofficial results to the state.

In it, McCormick asks the state Commonwealth Court to require counties to obey a brand-new federal appeals court decision and promptly count mail-in ballots that lack a required handwritten date on the return envelope.

Oz, who is endorsed by former President Donald Trump, has pressed counties not to

count the ballots and the Republican National Committee said it would go to court to oppose McCormick.

In a statement, the RNC's chief counsel, Matt Raymer, said "election laws are meant to be followed, and changing the rules when ballots are already being counted harms the integrity of our elections."

McCormick's lawsuit is the first — but likely not the last — in the contest between Oz and McCormick.

Oz led McCormick by 992 votes, or 0.07 percentage points, out of 1,341,037 ballots reported by the state as of Tuesday morning.

The race is close enough to trigger Pennsylvania's automatic recount law, with the separation between the candidates inside the law's 0.5% margin. The Associated Press will not declare a winner in the race until the likely recount is complete.

That could take until June 8.

It's not clear how many mail-in ballots that lack a handwritten date have been received by counties. Although he trails the vote count, McCormick has been doing better than Oz among mail-in ballots.

In an appearance Monday on a conservative Philadelphia radio talk show, McCormick insisted "every Republican vote should count" and said his campaign believes the federal court decision is binding on counties.

Ruling in a separate case late Friday, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the state election law's requirement of a date next to the voter's signature on the outside of return envelopes was "immaterial." The lawsuit emerged from a county judicial election last year, and the three-judge panel said it found no reason to refuse counting the ballots in that race.

Opponents of federal vaccine mandate seek rehearing

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A federal appeals court is being asked to reconsider its decision allowing the Biden administration to require that federal employees get vaccinated against COVID-19.

A panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last month vacated a lower court ruling blocking the mandate and ordered dismissal of a lawsuit challenging the policy, which was ordered by President Joe Biden in September.

However, that 2-1 ruling by the appellate panel doesn't take effect until May 31. On Saturday, opponents of the mandate, led by

a group called Feds for Medical Freedom, filed a petition asking that the April ruling be vacated and that the full 17-member court hear new arguments in the case.

On Monday, the 5th Circuit asked the government to respond by June 2; it was unclear if the court would take any action before then.

Biden issued an order Sept. 9 that more than 3.5 million federal executive branch workers undergo vaccination, with no option to get regularly tested instead, unless they secured approved medical or religious exemptions.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Brown, who

was appointed to the District Court for the Southern District of Texas by then-President Donald Trump, issued a nationwide injunction against the requirement in January. At the time, the White House said 98% of federal workers were already vaccinated.

In February, one 5th Circuit panel refused to block Brown's ruling pending appeal. After hearing arguments in March, a different panel ruled 2-1 that Brown didn't have jurisdiction in the case and those challenging the requirement could have pursued administrative remedies under Civil Service law.

Cooler New Mexico weather aids effort to fight fires

Associated Press

MORA, N.M. — Nearly 3,000 firefighters in New Mexico kept the nation's largest active wildfire from growing on Monday as they took advantage of cooler weather before the return of more dangerous conditions later in the week.

"Overall, a good day," fire operations chief Alex McBath said Monday night. "Everything stayed within the fire lines."

Firefighters also expanded contingency firebreaks northeast of Santa Fe as forecasters warned that hotter, windier weather will return by Friday.

"Just because we've had a few good days

of weather ... it doesn't mean we are out of the woods yet," San Miguel County Sheriff Chris Lopez said Monday night.

The blaze that started nearly seven weeks ago in the Rocky Mountains foothills southeast of Santa Fe remained just 40% contained Monday. It started as two fires and burned into one large conflagration now larger than the city of Los Angeles.

Flames have consumed more than 484 square miles of timber, grassland and brush, and evacuations have been in place for weeks.

Evacuation orders, however, were relaxed in many areas and stretches of high-

way reopened south of Taos.

Along with cooler temperatures, fire crews were helped over the weekend by water-dropping helicopters and aircraft. Rising humidity was expected to help add moisture to the bone-dry fuels on forest floors for a few more days, forecasters said.

"By Friday, we're back to the same old critical fire weather that we have been experiencing for many, many days," however, said Stewart Turner, a fire behavior analyst for the U.S. Forest Service.

The New Mexico fire accounts for nearly 60% of the 536 square miles consumed by wildfires in the United States so far this year.

Calif. aims to shield against Texas abortion laws

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — State lawmakers on Monday voted to stop courts in Texas and other states from penalizing abortion providers and volunteers in California, part of Democrats' plan to make the state a sanctuary for women seeking reproductive care should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Texas bans abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, which is usually after the first six weeks of pregnancy. The law is unusual because it does not allow state officials to enforce it. Instead, only private citizens can enforce the law by suing the people who provided or aided in the abortion.

California Democrats have

worried the Texas law — and those like it that have since been passed or proposed in other conservative states — could expose their abortion providers and volunteers to civil judgments from other states. Monday, Democrats in the state Assembly gave key approval to a bill that would ban enforcing those judgments in California courts.

"Taking this action now is crucial as we prepare for the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and unleash a flood of hostile bans in more than half the states," said Molly Robson, legislative director for Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California.

Abortion foes have said the bill is illegal because a clause in the U.S. Constitution requires

each state to give "full faith and credit" to the laws of every other state.

"California is part of the United States of America and is bound by U.S. Constitution and is not a nation or law unto itself," said Dean Broyles, a lawyer and president of the National Center for Law & Policy, told lawmakers during a legislative hearing earlier this year. "If enacted, as a constitutional attorney I can assure you California will spend a lot of money defending this bill and will lose."

Federal courts have recognized some exceptions to the "full faith and credit" clause, including for laws in one state that violate the "public policy" of another state. This is to avoid what the U.S. Supreme Court has said

would be an "absurd" outcome of a state court not being able to enforce its own laws.

The bill that passed the California Assembly seeks to exploit that exception, declaring that suing someone in California for performing or aiding in an abortion is "contrary to the public policy of this state."

"I hope that states that share our interests in protecting abortion and abortion providers will do everything they can to ensure that there is safe access to abortion in their state," said Democratic Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, who authored the bill and is an attorney.

"I think what we're doing is absolutely constitutional and I think others should do the same if they feel likewise."

Californians could see forced water cuts as drought lingers

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California Gov. Gavin Newsom threatened Monday to impose mandatory water restrictions if residents don't use less on their own as a drought drags on and the hotter summer months approach.

Newsom raised that possibility in a meeting with representatives from water agencies that supply major cities including Los Angeles, San Diego and the San Francisco Bay Area. The Democratic governor has avoided issuing sweeping, mandatory cuts in water use and instead favored giving local water agencies power to set rules for water use in the cities and towns they supply.

January through March is typically when most of California's annual rain and snow falls, but this year those months were the driest in at least a century. Despite calls for conservation, the state's water use went up dramatically in March — 19% compared to the same month in 2020 — and now Newsom is considering

changing his approach.

"Every water agency across the state needs to take more aggressive actions to communicate about the drought emergency and implement conservation measures," Newsom said in a statement.

California is in its third year of drought and virtually all areas of the state are classified as either in severe or extreme drought. Due to low water levels in state reservoirs, the state is releasing only a limited amount of water from its supplies.

Several local water officials present in the meeting said the tone was positive and focused on how all of the agencies can work together to promote conservation.

"From our perspective, it works best when local water managers deal with local water supply conditions, but we're trying to support the state, we're trying to support the governor as best we can," said Ed Stevenson, general manager for the Alameda County Water District.

DOJ agents must intervene if they witness police abuse

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department has updated its use-of-force policy for the first time in 18 years, telling federal agents they have a duty to intervene if they see other law enforcement officials using excessive force — a change that follows years of protests over police killings.

The new policy is outlined in a memo issued Friday by Attorney General Merrick Garland, which circulated Monday among rank-and-file federal law enforcement agents.

The Washington Post reviewed a copy of the four-page memo addressed to the heads of the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Prisons. Garland wrote in the memo that the guidance aims to keep the official policies of those agencies, which are arms of the Justice Department, up

to date with current training and practices of federal law enforcement.

"Officers will be trained in, and must recognize and act upon, the affirmative duty to intervene to prevent or stop, as appropriate, any officer from engaging in excessive force or any other use of force that violates the Constitution, other federal laws, or Department policies on the reasonable use of force," the memo states.

The policy, which is slated to take effect July 19, does not compel state and local police — or federal law enforcement agencies outside the Justice Department — to follow a similar standard.

Larry Cosme, president of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, said the policy did not arise out of any particular incident but was rather a part of a larger, longer effort to update rules and guidelines for federal law enforcement.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Deputy charged after stun gun ignites biker

FL KISSIMMEE — A Florida deputy who accidentally set a gasoline-covered motorcycle rider on fire with a stun gun is facing a misdemeanor charge, officials said.

Osceola County Sheriff Marcos López said during a news conference that the deputy is being charged with culpable negligence, the Orlando Sentinel reported. The sheriff also said the burned biker faces charges of reckless driving, fleeing law enforcement and resisting arrest.

Osceola deputies followed the biker out of their jurisdiction because they believed he had been part of a group of bikers brandishing guns at people, the sheriff said. The biker's motorcycle was knocked over during the arrest, spilling fuel, officials said. One of the deputies activated his stun gun while the biker was on the ground, soaked in the spilled gas. State fire marshals concluded that the stun gun caused the fire, leaving burns on 76% of the biker's body.

6 injured when bull escapes rodeo arena

CA REDDING — Several people were injured when a bull jumped a fence and escaped an arena during a popular Northern California rodeo, authorities said.

The escape occurred during the final section of the Redding Rodeo's bull riding event, the Redding Rodeo Association said on Facebook. The bull leaped over a fence then ran through a crowd of spectators and across a parking lot before it was captured near a bridge about a half mile

from the arena.

At least six people were treated for minor injuries.

Electrical crew saves 2 from house on fire

ME RICHMOND — Three Central Maine Power workers who smelled smoke and decided to investigate are being credited with helping to save a mother and son from a burning home in Richmond, officials said.

Adam Douin, Jeff Dyer Jr. and Carl Urquhart were wrapping up their shift when they smelled something burning and noticed a plume of smoke. They found a house afire with windows exploding from the heat.

They helped a man who was climbing out of a window 10 feet high and then raced with a ladder to the other side of the house to rescue the man's mother from a second-floor window, with flames lapping up from below.

The barefoot woman suffered burns on her feet and legs, fell from the ladder and was caught by the men below. The homeowner was reported to be in fair condition at Maine Medical Center.

Man charged for driving car into a Dairy Queen

WV WINFIELD — A man has been charged in West Virginia with intentionally driving a car into a Dairy Queen restaurant and then attacking staff at a hospital, authorities said.

News outlets reported that Casey Matthew Oxley, 40, has been charged with attempted malicious assault, battery on health care and emergency workers, reckless driving and other offenses

after he crashed into the Dairy Queen in the Scott Depot community of Putnam County.

State police said five employees were inside at the time of the crash, but they were safely evacuated. The dining room was closed for remodeling. A gas line ruptured, and crews used white foam to keep the building from catching fire, officials said.

Oxley was taken to Charleston Area Medical Center Teays Valley Hospital, where he assaulted hospital staff and police had to restrain him, officials said.

University to launch program in craft beer

WA SPOKANE — Eastern Washington University and No-Li Brewhouse of Spokane will create the school's first professional certificate program for the craft beer industry.

The 15-credit program begins in the fall.

No-Li Brewhouse owners John and Cindy Bryant donated \$10,000 to help launch the certificate program. Students will gain knowledge of the various types, flavors and ingredients of beer; proper serving styles; storage and draft line system management; and diversity, inclusion and equity issues and opportunities within the industry.

Man gets 10 years for racist acid attack

WI MADISON — A judge sentenced a white Wisconsin man to a decade in prison for throwing acid in a Latino man's face in a racist attack at a Milwaukee bus stop.

Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Jean Marie Kies told Clifton Blackwell, 64, that he acted

with hate when he threw the acid on Mahud Villalaz in November 2019. She said he wasn't provoked and that his behavior was "diabolical."

"We're all different from one another. ... When we let those differences cloud our judgment, that's bias or prejudice or discrimination, and in this instance it is hate," the judge told Blackwell. "I'm sure (the acid) was absolutely painful. And you caused him emotional distress that I think is never going to heal. You made him feel he's not worthy, and that's diabolical."

Villalaz testified that the vision in his left eye was permanently damaged by the attack, and the judge said Villalaz suffered second-degree burns.

Riverside erosion threatening graves

VA NORFOLK — Dozens of graves at a city-owned cemetery in Norfolk are threatened by eroding shorelines on the Elizabeth River.

A city review of the 44-acre site at Riverside Memorial Park found the shoreline surrounding the cemetery has been damaged by decades of dredging, nearby marine industrial activity and wind-driven waves that have undercut the riverbanks.

At least 10 headstones are only feet away from steep slopes leading down to the river, The Virginian-Pilot reported.

The city is asking for \$1.9 million from the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund to repair 1,500 feet of shoreline. But the money in the fund comes from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, from which Gov. Glenn Youngkin wants to withdraw.

— From wire reports

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Lightning sweep, roll into East finals

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Jon Cooper had every reason to be confident the two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning could keep their bid for a three-peat alive.

“Our story is not finished being written,” the coach said this month with his team on the brink of elimination in the first round against the Toronto Maple Leafs. “We’ve got a lot left in us, we feel.”

Andrei Vasilevskiy is one of reasons.

The reigning Conn Smythe Trophy winner has won six straight games since the Lightning fell behind the Maple Leafs 3-2 in their opening round series, including a Game 7 gem in Toronto and a four-game sweep of the Florida Panthers in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Up next is Tampa Bay’s sixth trip to the East finals in eight years, where it will face either the Carolina Hurricanes or the New York Rangers.

“We’ve found a recipe that has obviously allowed us to go deep into the playoffs, and especially in the last 2½ years now, and we want to keep it up,” captain Steven Stamkos said after Monday night’s 2-0 victory over Florida gave the Lightning its first sweep of a playoff series in 11 years.

“It’s the most fun and gut-wrenching and nerve-wracking time of the year, but that’s just an amazing feeling,” Stamkos added. “You can’t really describe it unless you go

through it, and this group has certainly been through it.”

Vasilevskiy had 49 saves and posted the sixth shutout in his past seven series-clinching wins.

Since yielding three or more goals in each of Tampa Bay’s first six games against Toronto, he’s given up four total in the last five outings.

“It’s my job to just give our boys the chance to win, and I think we’ve done a pretty good job doing that the whole series,” Vasilevskiy said, playing down the way he’s played time and time again during his team’s championship run.

“Nothing special. I think it’s just the way the whole team is playing in those games. The whole series just constant blocked shots, sacrifices, and boys literally breaking bones to stop the puck,” the goaltender added. “Just such a great effort by everybody on our team. It’s obviously not just me. I’m just trying to do my job as best I can.”

Pat Maroon, chasing his fourth consecutive Stanley Cup title, snapped a scoreless tie a little over six minutes into the third period. Ondrej Palat added a empty-net goal with 22 seconds remaining for the Lightning, who had two goals disallowed within a 48-second span of the second period.

Tampa Bay joined the New York Islanders and Montreal Canadiens as the only franchises to win at least 10 consecutive playoff se-

ries. Maroon, who won with St. Louis in 2019 before signing with the Lightning two years ago, has been a part of 14 consecutive series wins.

“I’m fortunate to play with two really good teams the last few years, but this team has been very impressive,” Maroon said.

“The way we compete. The way we stick in there every every game, we’re never out of it. ... It’s been tremendous to watch what we’ve been through the last few years,” Maroon added, “and it’s unbelievable to be a part of it.”

Tampa Bay is the third franchise to win at least 10 consecutive playoff series. Montreal has done it twice, taking 13 in a row from 1976-80 and 10 straight from 1956-60. The New York Islanders won a record 19 in a row from 1980-84.

Two more series wins, and the Lightning will become the first team to win three consecutive Stanley Cup titles since the Islanders claimed four in a row from 1980-83.

“Twelve would sound even better, wouldn’t it?” forward Alex Killorn said.

“It’s impressive. I know, Coop mentioned that, and then Patty has 14. So he’s got the one up, but it’s special to be a part of this group,” Killorn added. “Like I said, with Vassy. I think there’s a lot of players on this team that will go down as some pretty good players, Hall of Fame players. So I’m just happy to be a part of it, to be honest.”

Kadri scores hat trick, Avs rout Blues for 3-1 lead

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Nazem Kadri had the last laugh.

Kadri scored three goals, including two during a four-goal second period barrage, and the Colorado Avalanche beat the St. Louis Blues 6-3 on Monday night to take a 3-1 lead in their Western Conference series.

Kadri’s outburst came after he received racist death threats on social media following a first-period collision with Blues goalie Jordan Binnington in Game 3 on Saturday night.

“I wanted to come out tonight and really put a mark on this game, especially after what happened,” Kadri said. “I tried to do that as best as possible. So-

metimes you’ve got to be patient and you’ve got to wait. I was able to strike early in the second period and was able to get the mojo going.”

Kadri, who was booed heavily every time he touched the puck, skated toward the glass and appeared to salute the Blues fans after each of his first two goals, inciting even more jeers. It was his first career playoff hat trick.

“I know that they’re booing me and what-not, but that’s what being a fan is,” Kadri said. “As a home team and a home player, you want the fans on your side and heckling the other team, as long as it’s within the guidelines. I’ve got no issues with that and I know what was

said isn’t a reflection on every single fan in St. Louis. I understand that and I want to make that clear. But for those that wasted their time sending messages like that, I feel sorry for them.”

Kadri said he heard no racial taunts from the crowd on Monday.

“Naz’s focused, he’s a big boy, he’s a tough guy, and he’s a resilient guy,” Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said. “And we’re proud of him as a group and we have a task that we’re trying to complete and Naz understands that and it’s unfortunate he has to deal with it and he knows that we’re all with him and that’s what we care about.”

Erik Johnson and Devon Toews also scored and Mikko Rantanen added an empty netter for Colorado, while Darcy Kuemper made 17 saves.

David Perron scored twice and Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and an assist for the Blues. Ville Husso, making his first start since Game 3 of the first round against Minnesota, made 31 saves.

Game 5 is Wednesday on the Avs’ home ice.

“We got outskated for most of the game 5-on-5,” St. Louis coach Craig Berube said. “It’s pretty simple. I don’t know why. We got outskated. They outskated us. Got to every loose puck. Lost a lot of puck battles.”

Celtics torch Heat early, even series

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Miami Heat left Jayson Tatum lying on the court with a pain in his neck in the closing minutes of Game 3.

The Celtics All-Star did his part to make sure the Heat were hurting after Game 4.

Tatum scored 31 points and Boston took its turn pounding Miami early, jumping out to a 26-4 lead and cruising to a 102-82 victory that evened the Eastern Conference finals at two games apiece.

“Obviously, we knew how important this game was,” Tatum said. “Everybody just had to come up with a different sense of urgency.”

The Heat missed 15 of their first 16 shots as this bizarre series produced another game that was all but over after 12 minutes. Miami led 39-18 after the first quarter of Game 3.

The Celtics improved to 5-0 this post-season following a loss. Boston coach Ime Udoka said the challenge is finding more consistency.

“Just got to muster that same energy when we came off a win as well as a loss,” Udoka said. “This is a three-game series now. Can’t always just flip the mindset when we come off a loss and get a little desperate.”

Game 5 is Wednesday in Miami.

Payton Pritchard had 14 points for the Celtics. Derrick White added 13 points, eight rebounds and six assists, and Robert Williams finished with 12 points and nine rebounds.

“We just wanted to up the effort all-around,” Williams said.

The Celtics led by 27 points in the second quarter and stretched their advantage to 32 in the third. Each game in this series has featured a lead of at least 20 points, and none has been close down the stretch.

Victor Oladipo led the Heat with 23 points. Miami’s starting five of All-Star Jimmy Butler (six points), Kyle Lowry (three points), P.J. Tucker (no points), Max Strus (no points) and Bam Adebayo (nine points) were a combined 7-for-36 shooting. They all sat out the fourth quarter.

“They came out and jumped us,” Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. “We’re not making any excuses. They outplayed us tonight for sure. We never could get any kind of grip on the game.”

And Boston stymied Miami without Defensive Player of the Year Marcus Smart, who sat with a sprained right ankle he suffered in the second half of Game 3.

The Heat were without Tyler Herro, who suffered a groin injury late in Game 3.

Butler was in the starting lineup after missing the second half of Game 3 with swelling in his right knee. Lowry (strained left hamstring), Strus (strained hamstring) and Tucker (left knee irritation) all tested their injuries pregame before being cleared to go.

“It’s a part of playoffs. You learn to adapt,” Adebayo said. “Guys being out, guys playing half, guys playing 20 minutes in the game, just depends. You’ve just got to find a way to win.”

The Celtics’ Williams returned after missing a game with soreness in his surgically repaired left knee.

Even with their banged-up roster, the team enjoyed its fastest start of the series. Starting in place of Smart, White scored the game’s first seven points as Boston took an 8-0 lead.

It quickly grew to 18-1, with Miami misfiring on its first 14 shots. The Heat didn’t get their first points until Adebayo’s free throw at the 7:56 mark. Miami made its first field goal at 3:22, a three-pointer by Oladipo, and finished the quarter 3 for 20.

The Celtics took a 29-11 lead into the second quarter and led 57-33 at the half.

Russia’s Medvedev off to good start at French Open

Associated Press

PARIS — U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev acknowledged it’s “very strange” that he could rise to No. 1 in the rankings as a result of not being allowed to play at Wimbledon.

The Russian, ranked second behind Novak Djokovic, began his French Open campaign with a straight-set victory on Tuesday, but the All England Club’s decision to ban players from Russia and Belarus from Wimbledon because of the invasion of Ukraine was still the main talking point.

In response to the ban, the ATP and the WTA women’s tour announced they would not award ranking points to any players for results at Wimbledon.

That means all players who

earned ranking points at Wimbledon in 2021 — Djokovic earned the maximum 2,000 for taking the championship — will have those erased from their record as part of the usual 52-week system that counts someone’s best 19 tournaments over that span. Djokovic is currently 680 points ahead of Medvedev but the Serb could also lose ranking points if he fails to defend his French Open title.

Wimbledon begins on June 27.

“Very strange,” Medvedev said of the situation, after beating Facundo Bagnis 6-2, 6-2, 6-2. “I need to be honest. But yeah, as I said last time, I’d be really happy to play Wimbledon.

“But if I cannot, I mean, just going to prepare for next tournaments and ... just follow

what’s happening there. There are no points, I become No. 1, well great for me. If there are points, I cannot become No. 1, I’m going to be gutted. It is what it is. I cannot change some decisions, both about ATP and Wimbledon.”

The 26-year-old Medvedev, playing just his second match after returning from hernia surgery, was a quarterfinalist at Roland Garros last year after four straight losses in the first round.

He’s never been a big fan of clay, but he’s warming to Paris.

“I need to be 100% focused and ready for what clay has to give to me. Right now I feel ready,” said Medvedev, who lost to Rafael Nadal in this year’s Australian Open final.

Also Tuesday, Danish teenag-

er Holger Rune upset 14th-seeded Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (4) in the first round.

Frances Tiafoe finally earned his first French Open victory on his seventh attempt.

The American beat Benjamin Bonzi 7-5, 7-5, 7-6 (5) for his first win at Roland Garros after six first-round defeats.

The 24th-ranked Tiafoe converted just five of 23 break point opportunities against his French opponent but advances to a second-round match against David Goffin of Belgium.

Tiafoe reached the fourth round at the U.S. Open in both 2020 and 2021.

In the women’s draw, Third-seeded Paula Badosa needed just 54 minutes to beat wildcard entry Fiona Ferro 6-2, 6-0 at Roland Garros.

Goldschmidt slam in 10th lifts Cards

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Paul Goldschmidt hit a walk-off grand slam in the 10th inning Monday night, lifting the St. Louis Cardinals to a 7-3 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

“I was just trying to make sure I could put something in play,” Goldschmidt said. “I was able to get enough of it to get it out of there.”

St. Louis native David Phelps (0-1) began the 10th and a wild pitch sent pinch-runner Lars Nootbaar — who was on second as the automatic runner — to third. After striking out two, Phelps walked Tommy Edman. Ryan Borucki, the sixth Toronto pitcher, came in and walked pinch-hitter Edmundo Sosa.

Goldschmidt, who sat out Sunday, struck out three times and hit into a double play in his previous four at-bats.

“You don’t have any other choice,” Goldschmidt said. “I had five outs in four at-bats. That’s not what you want to do. I was preparing for the at-bat. It was pretty cool.”

Goldschmidt sent a 1-2 pitch over the left field fence for his seventh homer. It was his seventh career grand slam, his seventh career winning homer and his seventh extra-inning home run.

Mets 13, Giants 3: Pete Alonso hit an early three-run homer moments after Francisco Lindor’s tying, two-run double, and visiting New York routed stumbling San Francisco.

Jeff McNeil added a two-run homer in the eighth inning and Mark Canha followed with a solo drive in his return to the Bay Area after playing for the Oakland Athletics. That was

the second time the Mets connected for back-to-back homers this year, also on April 15 against Arizona.

Dodgers 10, Nationals 1: Tyler Anderson pitched eight shutout innings, Trea Turner had three RBIs in his first game against his former team and Los Angeles rolled at Washington.

Anderson retired his first 16 batters before César Hernández’s one-out double in the sixth.

Phillies 7, Braves 3: Zack Wheeler pitched 6⅔ strong innings with a season-high 10 strikeouts, Rhys Hoskins knocked in three runs with an early double and Philadelphia won at Atlanta.

The teams began the day tied for second in the division, eight games out of the lead, and hadn’t met since Sept. 30 when the defending World Series champion Braves won to clinch their fourth consecutive NL East title.

Twins 5, Tigers 4: Max Kepler hit an early grand slam and Gio Urshela’s infield single in the bottom of the ninth inning gave host Minnesota a win over Detroit.

Urshela hit a grounder toward Tigers shortstop Javier Báez, who couldn’t make a play. That allowed Kepler to score the winning run. It’s the second time this season the Twins have walked off the Tigers at Target Field. Minnesota won in walk-off fashion on a bizarre series of plays April 26 against Detroit.

Cubs 7, Reds 4: Ian Happ and Patrick Wisdom hit three-run homers and Chicago won at Cincinnati despite two home runs by Aristides Aquino.

Happ drove in Seiya Suzuki with a fourth-inning double before Wisdom hit his team-leading 10th homer. With the Cubs holding a 4-3 lead with two outs in the seventh, Happ drove the first pitch he saw from reliever Luis Cessa into the right-field bleachers.

Pirates 2, Rockies 1: Ke’Bryan Hayes had three hits and scored the tiebreaking run on Yoshi Tsutsugo’s infield single in the eighth inning as host Pittsburgh edged Colorado.

Hayes singled to lead off the eighth against Tyler Kinley (1-1), stole second base and advanced to third on Daniel Vogelbach’s groundout. Tsutsugo then beat out a slow bouncer to second base, enabling Hayes to score.

Guardians 6, Astros 1: José Ramírez homered with four RBIs and Triston McKenzie pitched seven sharp innings to help Cleveland win at Houston.

Ramírez had two hits, highlighted by a two-run shot in the fifth inning that pushed the lead to 4-0.

Padres 3, Brewers 2 (10): San Diego rookie José Azocar singled home Manny Machado with two outs and the bases loaded in the 10th inning to lift the host Padres over NL Central-leading Milwaukee.

Mariners 7, Athletics 6: Prized rookie Julio Rodríguez homered at home for the first time, a three-run shot, and host Seattle won its 13th straight over Oakland.

Diamondbacks 9, Royals 5: Christian Walker and Pavin Smith homered, Ketel Marte’s two-run double broke a fourth-inning tie and Arizona beat Kansas City in Zack Greinke’s return to Chase Field.

MLB suspends Donaldson, Orioles defeat Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ramón Urías hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning off Gerrit Cole, and the Baltimore Orioles withstood Aaron Judge’s two home runs to beat the Yankees 6-4 Monday night and send New York to its season-high third straight loss.

“I thought we grinded out at-bats really well,” Orioles manager Brandon Hyde said. “Gerrit Cole’s got great stuff. He’s an ace. He’s an ace for a reason and to be able to put some runs up on the board against him, I’m proud of our hitters.”

Earlier, Major League Baseball suspended New York slugger Josh Donaldson for one game and fined him an undisclosed amount after he made multiple references to Jackie Robinson while talking to White Sox star Tim Anderson on Saturday. Shortly before the penalty was announced, the Yankees put Donaldson on the COVID-19 injured list.

Urías started Baltimore’s four-run third with a double down the left field line, then snapped a 4-all tie by lining an 0-1 fastball to the short porch in

right field off Cole (4-1).

New York, which began the day with the best record in the majors, is on its first three-game losing streak since dropping seven straight last September. Before getting swept in Sunday’s doubleheader to the White Sox and losing their second straight to the Orioles, the Yankees had won 24 of 29.

“Yesterday, tough doubleheader against a good team and we couldn’t pull anything out there. And tonight we got the offense going early and we’re playing against an Orioles team

that scrapped out some runs, got some big time hits with guys on base,” Judge said.

Judge upped his major league-leading home run total to 17, five ahead of Houston slugger Yordan Alvarez and Angels star Mike Trout. Judge hit his 31st and 32nd career homers against Baltimore pitching when he connected in the first and fifth off Jordan Lyles (3-4).

It was Judge’s 20th career multi-homer game, fourth this season and seventh in his career against the Orioles.