

Biden visits memorial to Uvalde victims

Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas — President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden offered comfort Sunday to a city gripped by grief and anger as they paid respects at a memorial to 19 students and two teachers slain during a mass shooting at a Texas elementary school.

The visit to Uvalde was Biden's second trip in as many weeks to console a community in mourning after a staggering loss from a shooting. He traveled to Buffalo, N.Y., on May 17 to meet with victims' families and condemn white supremacy after a shooter espousing the racist "replacement theory" killed 10 Black people at a supermarket.

Outside Robb Elementary School, Biden stopped at a memorial of 21 white crosses — one for each of those killed — and the first lady added a bouquet of white flowers to a pile in front of the school sign. They viewed individual altars erected in memory of each student, and the first lady touched the children's photos as the couple moved along the row.

The shootings in Texas and New York and their aftermath put a fresh spotlight on the nation's entrenched divisions and its inability to forge consensus on actions to reduce

gun violence.

"Evil came to that elementary school classroom in Texas, to that grocery store in New York, to far too many places where innocents have died," Biden said Saturday in a commencement address at the University of Delaware. "We have to stand stronger. We must stand stronger. We cannot outlaw tragedy, I know, but we can make America safer."

After visiting the memorial, Biden arrived for Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where a teacher nearby held up a sign that said, "Mr. President, thank you for coming. I'm a teacher."

Later, the president planned to meet privately with family members and then with first responders at the airport before returning to Washington, the White House said. He was not expected to deliver formal remarks.

Mckinzie Hinojosa, whose cousin Eliahana Torres was killed Tuesday, said she respected Biden's decision to mourn with the people of Uvalde.

"It's more than mourning," she said. "We want change. We want action. It continues to be something that happens over and over

and over. A mass shooting happens. It's on the news. People cry. Then it's gone. Nobody cares. And then it happens again. And again.

"If there's anything if I could tell Joe Biden, as it is, just to respect our community while he's here, and I'm sure he will," she added. "But we need change. We need to do something about it."

The Bidens' visit comes amid mounting scrutiny of the police response to the shooting. Officials revealed Friday that students and teachers repeatedly begged 911 operators for help even as a police commander told more than a dozen officers to wait in a hallway. Officials said the commander believed that the suspect was barricaded inside an adjoining classroom and that there was no longer an active attack.

The revelation caused more grief and raised new questions about whether more lives were lost because officers did not act faster to stop the gunman.

"It's easy to point fingers right now," said Ronnie Garza, a Uvalde County commissioner, on CBS' "Face the Nation," before adding, "Our community needs to focus on healing right now"

Russians storm city, shell east as Zelenskyy visits

Associated Press

POKROVSK, Ukraine — Russian and Ukrainian troops engaged in close-quarter combat in an eastern Ukraine city Sunday as Moscow's soldiers, supported by intense shelling, attempted to gain strategic footholds for conquering the region in the face of fierce Ukrainian resistance.

Ukrainian regional officials reported Russian forces "storming" Sievierodonetsk after trying unsuccessfully to encircle the city. The fighting knocked out power and cell-phone service, and a humanitarian relief center could not operate because of the danger, the

mayor said.

Sieverodonetsk, located about 89 miles south of the Russian border, emerged in recent days as the epicenter of Moscow's quest to capture all of Ukraine's industrial Donbas region. Russia also stepped up its efforts to take nearby Lysychansk, where civilians rushed to escape persistent shelling.

The two eastern cities span the strategically-important Siverskiy Donetsk River. They are the last major areas under Ukrainian control in Luhansk province, which makes up the Donbas together with neighboring Donetsk.

Ukrainian President Volody-

myr Zelenskyy made a rare frontline visit to the city of Kharkiv as he sought to assert the strength of Ukraine's position there. Ukrainian fighters pushed back Russian forces from positions near the city, Ukraine's second-largest, several weeks ago.

"I feel boundless pride in our defenders. Every day, risking their lives, they fight for Ukraine's freedom," Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram messaging app after visiting soldiers stationed in Kharkiv.

Russia has kept up its bombardment of the northeastern city from afar, and explosions could be heard in the area short-

ly after Zelenskyy's visit. Shelling and airstrikes have destroyed more than 2,000 apartment buildings since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, according to the regional governor, Oleh Syniehubov.

In the wider Kharkiv region, Russian troops still held about 30% of the territory, while Kyiv's troops had recaptured another 5%, the governor said.

Zelenskyy acknowledged, however, that the battle for the east is "indescribably difficult." The "Russian army is trying to squeeze at least some result" by concentrating its attacks there, he said in a Saturday night video address.

CDC: Nearly 2K users of Navy well water fell ill

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Almost 2,000 residents living in households contaminated by Navy jet fuel in Hawaii late last year experienced one or more new or worsened health symptoms, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.

“Reported symptoms, such as those related to the respiratory system, gastrointestinal tract, nervous system and mental health were consistent with previous studies of exposure to petroleum hydrocarbons,” the CDC said in its

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

The findings are from a voluntary health assessment survey in January and February of individuals affected by petroleum contamination in the Navy’s water distribution system that supplies military communities on and near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Jet fuel leaking from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, a collection of massive underground tanks built during World War II, contaminated tap water in an estimated 9,694 households.

A total of 2,289 affected residents took part in the survey, which represented at least one participant from 1,389 households, the CDC said.

The survey found that 37% of participants sought medical care, with 17 people reporting that they had been hospitalized overnight.

Just over 80% of the 1,980 survey participants who experienced symptoms said they felt improvement after switching to an alternative water source, the CDC said.

“This incident was unprecedented and impacted the lives and health of thousands of

people,” Kathleen Ho, the Hawaii Department of Health’s deputy director of environmental health, said in a news release Thursday.

“This survey helps to quantify their experiences,” she said. “We are committed to continuing to work with [the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry] to search for answers on how the Navy’s contamination of its drinking water system impacts health and well-being.”

The CDC noted in its report that the survey method did not “capture the full scope of health aspects.”

USS Oregon joins Navy after pandemic delays

Associated Press

GROTON, Conn. — The USS Oregon officially joined the U.S. Navy fleet Saturday, marking the first vessel named after the Beaver State in more than a century.

The newest Virginia-class fast attack submarine, which can dive to depths greater than 800 feet, was originally christened in 2019. But the COVID-19 pandemic created some “slips in schedule” for the crew, said U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., whose district includes General Dynamics Corp.’s

Electric Boat Shipyard where the 377-foot submarine was constructed.

“But I think the record should be clear that despite that unprecedented disruption, you showed up for work every day and did your job,” Courtney told the crew of approximately 136 Navy personnel during Saturday’s ceremony, held at the U.S. Submarine Base in Groton.

“Please know that as you embark on your deployments, the people of this state in Rhode Island will be 100% behind you, and you will always be welcome

here,” Courtney said.

It marked the Navy’s first in-person commission ceremony since 2019, due to the pandemic. There was, however, a christening ceremony for the USS Hyman Rickover in August 2021.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, who said she felt at home with the mist and overcast skies, urged the crew members to embrace the traits Oregonians possess, including a sense of adventure as well as being courageous, collaborative and compassionate.

“May this crew remember that at the heart of service is compassion and love: love of this country, love of this people, love of her values,” said Brown, a Democrat.

The Oregon is the second Block IV Virginia-class submarine to enter service. The Navy said the sub is designed to conduct anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, delivery of special operations forces, strike warfare, irregular warfare, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and mine warfare.

Marine pilot honored for safe landing after mid-air collision

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — The Marine Corps pilot who safely landed a KC-130J tanker in a California field after a mid-air collision with an F-35B in 2020 received the highest military aviation award Wednesday in San Diego, the Marines said in a news release.

Marine Capt. Michael Wolff, a

KC-130J Super Hercules pilot, received the Distinguished Flying Cross at a ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, the Marines said, for landing “successfully after losing two engines in flight.”

Wolff landed the four-engine plane in a farmer’s field with the help of six crewmembers and a co-pilot, the Marine Corps said.

What the Marines’ news release doesn’t say is that Wolff lost those two engines due to a mid-air collision with a Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II jet while conducting refueling operations on Sept. 29, 2020. The pilot of the F-35 safely ejected before the jet crashed in the Imperial County desert. The four-engine KC-130, its two right-side

engines heavily damaged in the collision, made an emergency landing in a field near the Salton Sea.

“I’m thankful how everything turned out. I’m happy to be alive,” Wolff said in a statement. “I still love flying, and I was happy to get up in the air as soon as I could afterwards. Everyone did their part and came together.”

Early heat wave deaths raise questions

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Temperatures barely climbed into the 90s and only for a couple of days. But the discovery of the bodies of three women inside a Chicago senior housing facility this month left the city looking for answers to questions that were supposed to be addressed after a longer and hotter heat wave killed more than 700 people nearly three decades ago.

Now, the city — and the country — is facing the reality that because of climate change, deadly heat waves can strike just about anywhere, don't only fall in the height of summer and need not last long.

"Hotter and more dangerous heat waves are coming earlier, in May ... and the other thing is we are getting older and more people are living alone," said Eric Klinenberg, a New York University sociologist, who wrote "Heat

Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago." about the 1995 heat wave. "It's a formula for disaster."

The Cook County Medical Examiner's office has yet to determine the causes of death for the three women whose bodies were found in the James Sneider Apartments on May 14. But the victims' families have filed or plan to file wrongful-death lawsuits against the companies that own and manage the buildings.

The City Council member whose ward includes the neighborhood where the building is located said she experienced stifling temperatures in the complex when she visited.

"These are senior residents, residents with health conditions (and) they should not be in these conditions," Alderman Maria Hadden said in a Facebook video shot outside the apartments.

Part of the problem, experts say, is that communities nationwide are still learning how deadly heat can be. It took the sight of refrigerated trucks being filled with dead bodies after Chicago's 1995 heat wave to drive home the message that the city was woefully unprepared for a silent and invisible disaster. That realization led to a system in which city workers call the elderly and frail and turn city buildings into 24-hour cooling centers when temperatures become oppressive.

What happened this month is a reminder that the safeguards in place to make sure people don't freeze to death because they have not paid their heating bills often do not exist to prevent people from overheating in their homes.

"We have nothing for air conditioning," Hadden said.

In Chicago, Hadden said the building's management compa-

nies believed it was not allowed to turn off the heat and turn on the air conditioning until June 1, because of the city's heat ordinance. But while she said the ordinance has no such requirement, the explanation may at least be a signal that the ordinance should be amended.

There also is evidence that people don't appreciate or even know just how dangerous the heat can be. In a study published in 2020, Gregory Wellenius, a Boston University professor of environmental health, and other researchers estimated that nationwide about 5,600 deaths a year could be attributed to high heat — eight times more than the 700 heat-related deaths that the study found were officially reported each year.

In Cook County, the medical examiner's office reported two heat-related deaths last year, and seven the year before.

Judge: Ex-Proud Boys head to remain jailed until trial

Associated Press

The former top leader of the Proud Boys will remain jailed while awaiting trial on charges that he conspired with other members of the far-right extremist group to attack the U.S. Capitol and stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's presidential victory, a federal judge has ruled.

Henry "Enrique" Tarrío poses a danger to the public that cannot be mitigated by home detention and banning him from using social media, U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly said in an order issued Friday. Tarrío, a South Florida resident, has been jailed since his arrest on March 8, a day after his indictment on charges including conspiracy.

Tarrío and other Proud Boys leaders used electronic communications to plan and carry out a plot to storm the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and interfere with the certification of the Electoral College

vote, according to the indictment.

Tarrío asked Kelly to order his release on bond, but the judge rejected the request. Kelly said the evidence against Tarrío is "very strong" despite Tarrío's argument that authorities essentially do not have "a smoking gun" against him.

Tarrío was not in Washington when the insurrection took place. Police had arrested Tarrío two days before the riot and charged him with vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner during a protest in December 2020. A judge ordered Tarrío to stay out of the nation's capital.

Before he left, Tarrío met with Oath Keepers founder and leader Elmer "Stewart" Rhodes, authorities say. Rhodes and several other members or associates of the anti-government militia group are charged with seditious conspiracy in the Capitol attack.

US flyers face cancellations over Memorial Day weekend

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Hundreds of flights worldwide were canceled by midday Sunday, adding to the mounting number of scrubbed flights during the busy Memorial Day holiday weekend in the U.S.

More than 1,030 flights had been canceled as of 11:30 a.m. EDT Sunday, according to flight tracking website FlightAware. That followed more than 2,300 cancellations Friday and another 1,500 on Saturday.

More than 250 of Sunday's cancellations involved aircraft scheduled to fly to or from U.S. cities.

Delta Air Lines canceled the most flights among major U.S. airlines, with more than 250 flights, or 9% of its operations, eliminated Saturday. More than 140 Delta flights were canceled by mid-day Sunday, according to FlightAware.

Saturday's cancellations were due to bad weather and "air traf-

fic control actions," Atlanta-based Delta said in an email to The Associated Press, noting it's trying to cancel flights at least 24 hours in advance of the Memorial Day weekend.

"More than any time in our history, the various factors currently impacting our operation — weather and air traffic control, vendor staffing, increased COVID case rates contributing to higher-than-planned unscheduled absences in some work groups — are resulting in an operation that isn't consistently up to the standards Delta has set for the industry in recent years," Delta's Chief Customer Experience Officer Allison Ausband said in a post.

Airlines and tourist destinations are anticipating huge crowds this summer as travel restrictions ease and pandemic fatigue overcomes lingering fear of contracting COVID-19 during travel.

'We will come together,' Harris tells Buffalo

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Mourners laid to rest the last of 10 Black people killed in a racist attack at a Buffalo supermarket with a service on Saturday that became a call to action and an emotional plea to end the hate and violence that has wracked the nation.

The funeral for 86-year-old Ruth Whitfield — the oldest of the 10 people killed in the attack two weeks ago — included an impromptu speech by Vice President Kamala Harris. She attended the service at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Buffalo with second gentleman Doug Emhoff.

Harris told the mourners this is a moment in time to stand up to the injustice that happened at the Tops Friendly Market on May 14, as well as at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and in other mass shootings.

"This is a moment that requires

all good people, all God-loving people to stand up and say we will not stand for this. Enough is enough," said Harris, who wasn't scheduled to speak and came to the microphone at the urging of the Rev. Al Sharpton. "We will come together based on what we all know we have in common, and we will not let those people who are motivated by hate separate us or make us feel fear."

Following the funeral, Harris and Emhoff visited a memorial outside the supermarket. The vice president left a large bouquet of white flowers, and the pair paused to pray for several minutes. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden had placed flowers at the same memorial on May 17 and had visited with the victims' families. The Bidens went to Texas on Sunday to visit with the families of victims of Tuesday's school shooting.

Harris later told reporters that the administration is not "sitting around waiting to figure out what the solution looks like" to the nation's gun violence problem.

"We know what works on that," she said, reiterating support for background checks and a ban on assault weapons.

Harris said the nation has to come together, as well.

"We have to agree that if we are to be strong as a nation, we must stand strong, identifying our diversity as our unity," she said.

Whitfield, a grandmother and mother of four, had been inside the supermarket after visiting her husband of 68 years in a nursing home when a gunman identified by police as 18-year-old Payton Gendron began the deadly onslaught.

Authorities said Gendron, who is white, targeted the store three hours from his home in Conklin

because it is in a predominantly Black neighborhood.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who delivered a fiery tribute to Whitfield at the beginning of the funeral service, called for all "accomplices" who aided and abetted "this monster" who opened fire in the supermarket to be held accountable, from the gun manufacturers and distributors to the parents of the suspect.

Crump said those who "instructed and radicalized this young, insecure individual" should also be held to account for taking Whitfield from her family, the Buffalo community and the planet.

In all, 13 people were shot in the attack that federal authorities are investigating as a hate crime. Three people survived.

Gendron is charged with first-degree murder and is being held without bail.

Navy changes status of 13 USS Indianapolis sailors

By Wyatt Olson
Stars and Stripes

The Navy has finally resolved the fates of 13 sailors from the USS Indianapolis, nearly 77 years after they disappeared in the Pacific Ocean.

A Japanese torpedo sank the Indianapolis in July 1945 after the cruiser had completed a secret mission that was key to ending World War II. Almost 900 sailors lost their lives by the end of the crew's ordeal, the greatest loss of life on a single ship in the history of the U.S. Navy.

On Thursday, the Navy Casualty Office officially changed the status of 13 sailors who died as a result of the attack from "unaccounted for" to "buried at sea."

The change comes after extensive research by the Naval History and Heritage Command, Navy Casualty Office, the USS Indianapolis Survivors Association, the USS Indianapolis Legacy Organi-

zation, and the Chief Rick Stone and Family Charitable Foundation, the Navy said in a news release Thursday.

"Due to administrative errors, many Sailors who were recovered from the ocean and buried at sea from responding vessels were misclassified as 'missing in action' or 'unaccounted for,'" the Navy said.

The Indianapolis and its crew of 1,195 delivered to the island of Tinian key components for what would be the first atomic bomb used in warfare. The B-29 Enola Gay dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on Aug. 6, 1945.

The Indianapolis was heading toward the Philippines on July 30 when a Japanese submarine torpedoed the ship, which sank with 300 men aboard. The Navy did not learn of the sinking for four days.

Of the 890 sailors who were set adrift, 316 were still alive when rescuers arrived.

Israeli nationalists chant 'Death to Arabs' at march

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Thousands of Israeli nationalists, some of them chanting "Death to Arabs," paraded through the heart of the main Palestinian thoroughfare in Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday, in a show of force that risked setting off a new wave of violence in the tense city.

The crowds, who were overwhelmingly young Orthodox Jewish men, were celebrating Jerusalem Day — an Israeli holiday that marks the capture of the Old City in the 1967 Mideast war. Palestinians see the event, which passes through the heart of the Muslim Quarter, as a provocation. Last year, the parade helped trigger an 11-day war with Gaza militants, and this year's march drew condemnations from the Palestinians and neighboring Jordan.

Israel said it deployed thousands of police and security forc-

es for the event, and small scuffles between Jewish and Palestinian groups erupted inside the Old City before the parade began.

As the march got underway, groups of Orthodox Jewish groups gathered outside Damascus Gate, waving flags, singing religious and nationalistic songs, and shouting "the Jewish nation lives" before entering the Muslim Quarter. One large group chanted "Death to Arabs," and "Let your village burn down" before descending into the Old City.

Sunday's march came at a time of heightened tensions.

Some 19 Israelis have been killed by Palestinian attackers in Israel and the occupied West Bank in recent weeks, while over 35 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli military operations in the occupied West Bank.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Home that inspired 'The Conjuring' sold

RI BURRILLVILLE — The Rhode Island farmhouse that inspired the 2013 horror movie "The Conjuring" has been sold to a Boston developer who plans to keep it open to the public.

The 18th-century home in Burrillville sold for \$1.525 million, far higher than the \$1.2 million asking price.

"This purchase is personal for me," buyer Jacqueline Nuñez, owner of WonderGroup LLC, told The Boston Globe. "It's not a real estate development. It's around my own beliefs."

Nuñez plans to continue the paranormal business Cory and Jennifer Heinzen, the couple who sold the home, started.

Man charged with 12 felonies after standoff

MN ST. CLOUD — A St. Cloud man was charged with a dozen felony counts in regards to an eight-hour standoff with police where he allegedly fired a gun through a wall when officers were on the other side.

Shawn L. Jacobs, 37, is charged with nine counts of first-degree assault for using deadly force against a peace officer, as well as two firearms-related counts and one count related to committing a crime while wearing a bulletproof vest.

Members of the Central Minnesota Violent Offender Task Force raided a St. Cloud apartment on suspicion Jacobs was distributing methamphetamine and other controlled substances from the residence.

Jacobs eventually left the

apartment and was arrested. Officers found guns, a "large amount of methamphetamine (Jacobs) tried to flush," and other drugs and paraphernalia, the complaint said.

State offers driver's licenses with 'X' gender

NY ALBANY — New York state is now offering driver's licenses with an "X" gender identity marker, Gov. Kathy Hochul said.

The "X" option for licenses, learner's permits and non-driver identification cards is being implemented in conjunction with a state law approved last June. Proponents of the change had argued that limiting gender identity on licenses to either male or female discriminated against nonbinary New Yorkers.

The option is open to new applicants as well as New Yorkers with existing licenses. They will have the option to change their gender marker from "M" or "F" to "X."

Police: Teen sneaks gun into holding facility

SC COLUMBIA — A 13-year-old arrested for having a loaded gun at a South Carolina mall apparently sneaked a second loaded weapon into the facility where he was taken, authorities said.

A Columbia Police Department spokesperson called the incident "an egregious failure on many levels," WLTX-TV reported.

It started when the boy and a relative were arrested for having guns at Columbiana Centre Mall. Police said officers did an initial search of the boy and confiscated a loaded, 9 mm hand-

gun but they missed another gun he was hiding.

Department of Juvenile Justice Director Eden Hendrick told the television station it was not until the next day that the second weapon was discovered and later recovered by facility staff, Hendrick said.

The department said the arresting officers who missed the gun have been put on administrative duty pending completion of training programs.

Coal firm held in contempt over pollution

WV HUNTINGTON — A Kentucky coal company has been found in contempt for failing to submit court-ordered plans to clean up two polluted West Virginia mine sites.

U.S. District Judge Robert Chambers issued a contempt order against Lexington Coal Co. LLC. Chambers wrote that the company "shirked its responsibility to satisfactorily comply" with an order to submit a plan by April 16 to address selenium discharges and other pollution at the sites in Mingo County.

Chambers said he will fine the company if it does not submit a cleanup plan within 10 days, the Charleston Gazette-Mail reported.

Man accused of throwing hammer that struck child

WA SPOKANE VALLEY — A man is accused of throwing a hammer that struck an 8-year-old in the forehead when the child's father stopped to try to help the man near the city of Spokane Valley.

Spokane County Sheriff's deputies responded to a report

of a man, later identified as Cole L. Healy, 39, blocking traffic while swinging a hammer around and trying to light his vehicle on fire, according to a sheriff's office release.

A witness reported driving by Healy's vehicle and stopping to help, thinking the vehicle had broken down, the sheriff's office said. He told deputies Healy was instantly confrontational.

Healy allegedly threw a large hammer through the witness' open passenger side window, striking his son in the forehead. The blow caused the area over his eye to swell rapidly, and his father drove him to the hospital.

Cops find 1,200 catalytic converters as thefts soar

AZ PHOENIX — An Arizona man is facing multiple theft charges after detectives found more than 1,200 catalytic converters packed into a storage unit, a case that highlights a national surge in thefts of the pricy auto parts that play a critical role in reducing vehicle emissions.

The discovery followed a monthslong investigation that began with a January tip that someone was storing stolen catalytic converters in an industrial area near Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

"We were very surprised at the amount in there," Phoenix police Det. Adam Popelier said in a police video taken Thursday as officers were pulling converters from the jam-packed storage locker.

The 48-year-old man who police said was buying and selling the converters was charged with 40 counts of theft and may face additional charges.

— From wire reports



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

Reporting World, National and Military News

NBA's playoffs don't hold candle to NHL's

Associated Press

If you're looking for some excitement, forget about the NBA playoffs.

They've been a total snooze, filled with blowouts and only a handful of must-see moments.

The lack of drama has been especially striking when compared to the NHL postseason, which has produced one thrill after another.

Games 7s? Check. Overtime goals? Check. Fierce rivalries? Check.

Once again, hockey's playoffs are proving to be the most compelling show in all of sports, leaving hoops and most everything else in their wake.

Just check out that game late Thursday night, when the Edmonton Oilers won the Battle of Alberta with a 5-4 overtime victory over the Calgary Flames.

The Western Conference semifinal only went to five games, making it a bit of an outlier for these Stanley Cup playoffs, which have featured six of 12 series going the seven-game max — and two of those decided by overtime goals in Game 7.

Still, the Oilers-Flames showdown produced plenty of "Did you see that?!" moments, including a stunning stretch in

the decisive contest when the teams combined for four goals — two by each squad — in a 71-second span.

That was the fastest four goals in NHL playoff history, breaking a 46-year-old record.

What a series!

There was another exhilarating finish Friday night, when Darren Helm scored with 5.6 seconds left in regulation to give Colorado a series-ending 3-2 victory over the St. Louis Blues, sending the Avalanche to the conference finals against the Oilers.

Now, let's venture over to the opposite end of the emotional scale.

The NBA playoffs.

Roughly an hour before McDavid scored the overtime clincher for the Oilers, the Golden State Warriors locked up their spot in the NBA Finals with a ho-hum win over the Dallas Mavericks that was a microcosm of the entire basketball postseason.

The Warriors raced out to a 17-point halftime lead and went on cruise control the rest of the way. The Mavericks trailed by as many as 25, cut the margin down to eight late in the third period, but couldn't get over the hump in a 120-110 setback.

Yawn.

In the Eastern Conference, there was finally a bit of back-and-forth as the top-seeded Miami Heat forced a decisive Game 7 by gutting out a 111-103 victory in Boston over the Celtics on Friday night.

No matter who won Sunday's game, it feels like we're all losers. Four of the first five games were decided by double-digit margins, including 20- and 25-point blowouts.

Even Game 3, which wound up a 109-103 win for Miami, wasn't really that close. The Heat bolted to a 26-point lead in the first half and withstood a furious Boston comeback.

Forty-two of the first 80 games in these NBA playoffs were decided by double digits — with 15 of those at least a 20-point victory and another seven that weren't even remotely competitive, finishing with margins of at least 30 points.

Stunningly, one of those max blowouts was Game 7 of the West semifinals, when the top-seeded Phoenix Suns — who had the league's best record during the regular season at 64-18 — were blitzed 123-90 on their home court by the Mavericks.

That came after a series that

may have looked somewhat close from afar, given it was among just three of the 14 series to go the full seven games, but that would be a misnomer.

Even before the Game 7 rout, three other games had been decided by at least 20 points. Not once did a game go down to the final possession.

Celtics coach Ime Udoka had some thoughts on the NBA's sorry state of affairs in the post-season.

"A big part of it is the scoring nowadays," he said. "Teams go on crazy runs. Defense, depending on the team, is more of a luxury at times. It's not always the premium with every team. A lot of times you have these shootouts, and they can get ugly pretty quickly."

Indeed, the league has devolved into a rather one-dimensional offensive style, with wins and losses essentially coming down to which team gets hot beyond the three-point arc.

Another theory that's been advanced is the lack of additional rest days between games, especially when much of that time can be eaten up by travel.

Whatever the case, this is hardly a new conundrum for the NBA.

Shesterkin, Chytil help Rangers force Game 7

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Rangers got off to a strong start and didn't need a comeback to win another elimination game.

One more like this — but on the road — and they'll be heading to the Eastern Conference finals.

Igor Shesterkin stopped 37 shots and became the fifth goalie in NHL history to have two assists in a playoff game, and the Rangers beat the Carolina Hurricanes 5-2 on Saturday night to force a deciding Game 7

in their second-round series.

"He made some real key saves for us," Rangers coach Gerard Gallant said. "Obviously the two assists are huge, but I think he was trying to get three there in the third when he passed it up the middle. He's outstanding. He's been like that all year for us."

Tyler Motte and Mika Zibanejad scored in the first period, Filip Chytil had two goals in the second and Artemi Panarin tallied in the third period to help New York win its fourth straight elimination game, including

Games 5, 6, and 7 in the first round against Pittsburgh. They had to rally from a deficit in each of those games.

The Rangers also set a franchise record with their sixth straight home win since a three-OT defeat to the Penguins in Game 1 of that series.

"Didn't surprise me," Gallant said. "I knew we'd come out hard and play well. ... We jumped on them early, got a couple of goals and that was key."

Game 7 is back in Raleigh, N.C., on Monday night. The winner will open the Eastern Confe-

rence finals at home against Tampa Bay on Wednesday night.

Shesterkin had assists on Zibanejad's first-period goal and Chytil's second of the second period to give him three assists in 13 postseason games.

"Tonight was definitely an important game," Shesterkin said through a translator. "We had to win and that's exactly what we did. About the two assists, honestly, I think it was mostly the guys that did all the work. I just got them the puck and they delivered."

Gauff, now 18, returns to French quarters

Associated Press

PARIS — Quite a trip to Paris in the springtime for 18-year-old American Coco Gauff. She celebrated graduating from high school — an achievement saluted via social media by former first lady Michelle Obama — and now is into the French Open quarterfinals for the second consecutive year.

Learning as she goes, Gauff took control of a tight opening set against No. 31 seed Elise Mertens of Belgium on Sunday and grabbed the last eight games to pull away for a 6-4, 6-0 victory in the fourth round at Roland Garros.

“You’re never going to play your best tennis in a Slam every moment of the match, but I think I’m getting better and better,” said Gauff, who is seeded 18th at the clay-court major tournament, “and I think, mentally, I can’t ask for much more from myself in each match.”

Next up will be a match against Sloane Stephens, the 2017 U.S. Open champion and 2018 French Open runner-up, or No. 23 seed Jil Teichmann of

Switzerland.

Defending men’s champion Novak Djokovic has made the quarterfinals in Paris 13 years in a row and reached his record 16th career Roland Garros quarterfinal. He could find a familiar foe across the net next: Rafael Nadal.

The No. 1-ranked Djokovic quickly recovered from only the slightest of blips at the start of the second set and went on to a 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 victory over 15th-seeded Diego Schwartzman of Argentina.

Djokovic has won all 12 sets he’s played so far in this year’s tournament and dropped a total of merely 30 games across the four matches.

He fell behind 3-0 in the second set but grabbed seven games in a row to take that set and a 1-0 lead in the third.

Nadal was playing his fourth-round match against Felix Auger-Aliassime later Sunday.

Third-seeded Alexander Zverev is into his fourth quarterfinal at Roland Garros thanks to a 7-6 (11), 7-5, 6-3 win against 131st-ranked qualifier Bernabe

Zapata Miralles.

Zverev lost in the semifinals a year ago.

The 25-year-old German will play No. 6 Carlos Alcaraz or No. 21 Karen Khachanov in the quarterfinals.

The other women’s quarterfinal on the bottom half of the draw will be a meeting between left-handers: No. 17 Leylah Fernandez, a 19-year-old Canadian who reached the final at last year’s U.S. Open, against 59th-ranked Martina Trevisan of Italy, who also got to the quarterfinals in Paris two years ago.

Fernandez compiled more than twice as many winners, 35, as unforced errors, 17, and broke serve a half-dozen times to beat 20-year-old American Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 on a chilly, windy day. Trevisan grabbed the last four games and eliminated Aliaksandra Sasnovich 7-6 (10), 7-5.

“Every time I step out on the court, I still have something to prove,” said Fernandez, who was ranked only 73rd last September when she beat four-time major champion Naomi Osaka

on the way to being the runner-up to Emma Raducanu at Flushing Meadows. “I still have that mindset I’m the underdog. I’m still young.”

Gauff, of course, is even younger.

In 2021, she was the youngest French Open quarterfinalist in 15 years, but frittered away five set points in the opener of a loss to eventual champion Barbora Krejčíková.

That stuck with her Sunday, when she was in a back-and-forth first set against Mertens that was 4-all before Gauff got going. Afterward, she praised herself for staying calm in the moment.

“That was the biggest lesson I learned last year in my quarterfinal match. I had a couple set points and I think I freaked out when some of those points didn’t go my way,” said Gauff, who delivered one around-the-net-post backhand on the run, but ultimately lost that exchange. “Today, I didn’t freak out when a couple of those important points didn’t go my way.”

Maple Leafs’ Spezza retires after 19 NHL seasons

Associated Press

TORONTO — Veteran Maple Leafs forward Jason Spezza announced his retirement Sunday after a 19-season NHL career.

The 38-year-old is moving into the Maple Leafs’ front office as a special assistant to GM Kyle Dubas.

Taken second overall by Ottawa in the 2001 draft, Spezza spent his first 11 seasons with the Senators before joining the Dallas Stars in 2014 and Toronto in 2019.

Spezza finished with 995 points (363 goals and 632 assists) in 1,248 regular-season NHL games, with another 76 points (28 goals and 48 assists) in 97 playoff games.

The two-time NHL All-Star (2008, 2012) ranks in the top 100 on the NHL’s career list for games played (tied for 96th), assists (80th) and points (94th).

He had 12 goals and 13 assists in 71 games this season, adding another assist in five playoff games.

“Hockey has been my life’s work and to be able to come home to Toronto and bookend my playing career where it started was incredible,” Spezza said in a statement. “To the fans — in Ottawa, Dallas, Toronto and across the league — your impact on the game is immeasurable. I’ll never be able to replicate that feeling of stepping onto the ice to the roar of the crowd, but it is something I’ll always remember. Thank you.”

Berry wins Xfinity race

CONCORD, N.C. — Josh Berry outdueled teammate Justin Allgaier to give JR Motorsports its first win at Charlotte Motor Speedway in the Xfinity Series race on Saturday.

Berry took the lead with 22 laps to go when Allgaier got loose and brushed the outside wall in Turn 1. Berry slowly pulled away and won by more than 18 seconds while Allgaier finished seventh after expe-

riencing a leaky tire.

Ty Gibbs finished in second place and pole sitter Sam Mayer was third.

Berry led 89 laps. He has won four career Xfinity races in 47 starts, including a victory earlier this year at Dover.

JR Motorsports has won 63 Xfinity Series races and two Trucks races, but this was the first win at CMS.

In other racing news:

■ Sergio Perez rebounded from Red Bull team orders that denied him a chance to race for the win one week ago to pick up his first Formula One win of the season in the rain-marred Monaco Grand Prix.

Perez earned his third career F1 victory on the slick city streets of Monaco after a questionable strategy call by Ferrari cost pole-sitter Charles Leclerc a win on his home circuit.

Although Leclerc finished the race for the first time in four tries, he finished fourth.

MLB suspends Pham 3 games for Pederson slap

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Cincinnati Reds outfielder Tommy Pham was suspended by Major League Baseball for three games Saturday after he slapped San Francisco Giants outfielder Joc Pederson because of a dispute about their fantasy football league.

The 34-year-old Pham also was fined. The suspension was made retroactive to Friday night, and he will serve the final two games this weekend.

While the Giants warmed up in the outfield before Friday's series opener, Pham confronted Pederson and smacked him in the face before the two were separated.

Pham said Saturday that there was some "sketchy" stuff going on with the fantasy league, and Pederson also made "disrespectful" comments about Pham's former team, the San Diego Padres.

"We had too much money on the line, so I look at it like there's a code," Pham said.

Pham also said Pederson was "messing with my money."

Pederson acknowledged to reporters Saturday that "there was a lot of money involved" and said Pham was telling the truth.

A candid Pederson even showed reporters the GIF he sent teasing Padres players

who were in the group chat about their struggles on the field down the stretch last season. Pederson was with the Atlanta Braves at the time, and Pham was playing for San Diego.

"In the group chat there was also some — there was more than one Padre, there was four or five that, I'm kind of close with a couple of them," Pederson said. "It was supposed to be a friendly thing, just making fun of they were playing bad, and just talking back and forth. And yeah, (Pham) did not like that and he responded, 'Joc, I don't know you well enough to make any jokes like this.'"

Diaz, Margot get timely late hits as Rays edge Yanks

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Corey Kluber and Gerrit Cole duelled evenly for six impressive innings before the Tampa Bay Rays scored a pair of late runs to beat the Yankees 3-1 Saturday, ending New York's four-game winning streak.

Yandy Diaz had a tiebreaking infield hit in the seventh and Manuel Margot extended his hitting streak to 15 games with an RBI single in the eighth.

Kluber allowed one run and three hits, walking none and striking out five. Cole struck out 10, giving up one run and two hits with three walks.

Reds 3, Giants 2: Right fielder Aristides Aquino threw out pinch-runner Joey Bart at the plate to end the game, and host Cincinnati held on behind Kyle Farmer's early three-run homer.

The strong-armed Aristides saved this one, nailing Bart trying to score the tying run from second on Wilmer Flores' two-out single in the ninth inning.

Guardians 8, Tigers 1: José Ramírez homered and drove in five runs, leading Shane Bieber and the visiting Guardians to the win.

Ramírez hit a three-run triple in the seventh inning and a two-run shot in the ninth for his 12th homer. The three-time All-Star

is batting .297 with a major league-best 48 RBIs in 42 games.

Marlins 4, Braves 1: Miami's Sandy Alcantara matched his career high with 14 strikeouts, dominating host Atlanta for the second time in a week.

Alcantara (5-2) allowed four hits in eight innings while earning his third consecutive win.

Rangers 11, Athletics 4: Marcus Semien hit a grand slam for his first home run after signing with Texas in the offseason.

Corey Seager and Adolis García also homered for the visiting Rangers, who collected 18 hits for the team's highest total since Sept. 8, 2019. Taylor Hearn (3-3) pitched six innings of three-run ball.

Nationals 13, Rockies 7; Rockies 3, Nationals 2: José Iglesias had three hits and drove in the go-ahead run in the seventh, Chad Kuhl pitched 6½ innings and Colorado beat host Washington in the nightcap to split a doubleheader.

In the opener, Victor Robles homered, singled twice and drove in a career-high six runs in Washington's win.

Cardinals 8, Brewers 3: Nolan Gorman hit his first major league homer for host St. Louis, and Matthew Liberatore earned his first major league win.

Liberatore (1-0) pitched

around a couple of Gorman errors in five scoreless innings. He allowed two hits, struck out six and walked three. Gorman had four hits, drove in four runs and scored three times.

Red Sox 5, Orioles 3; Orioles 4, Red Sox 2: Rowned Odor hit a three-run homer and visiting Baltimore beat Boston, earning a split in the day-night doubleheader.

In the opener, Nathan Eovaldi pitched a seven-hitter for his first career complete game for Boston.

Royals 7, Twins 3: Kansas City rookie Bobby Witt Jr. delivered three more doubles for his second straight three-hit game.

A double shy of hitting for the cycle Friday, Witt doubled in his first two at-bats, both times driving home Andrew Benintendi.

Cubs 5, White Sox 1: Keegan Thompson outpitched Johnny Cueto over five sharp innings in a spot start, Frank Schwindel drove in two runs and the visiting Cubs beat the crosstown White Sox.

Thompson (5-0) matched his longest outing of the season, allowing one run and five hits while striking out four and walking one.

Mets 8, Phillies 2: Jeff McNeil hit a go-ahead, three-run homer during a rain-soaked

fourth inning, Francisco Lindor drove in three to extend his RBI streak to a career-best six games and host New York beat Philadelphia.

Taijuan Walker (3-0) limited the Phillies to two runs in five innings, Luis Guillorme matched a career-high with three hits and the NL East leaders improved to 31-17.

Dodgers 3, Diamondbacks 2: Mookie Betts started the game with a leadoff homer, Justin Turner added four hits and visiting Los Angeles extended its winning streak to three games with a victory over Arizona.

Mariners 6, Astros 0: Kyle Lewis homered for the second straight game, Julio Rodríguez got three more hits and host Seattle defeated Houston.

Blue Jays 6, Angels 5: Matt Chapman hit a go-ahead, two-run double during Toronto's three-run eighth inning and the visiting Blue Jays rallied for the second straight night to defeat Los Angeles.

Pirates 4, Padres 2: Ke'Bryan Hayes hit a three-run homer off major league saves leader Taylor Rogers with one out in the ninth inning, leading visiting Pittsburgh past San Diego for the Pirates' first win in 25 chances when trailing after eight innings.