

## Parris Island battalion to shut down

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Marine Corps is deactivating its formerly women-only recruit battalion at Parris Island and will train more female Marines in San Diego, moves that come a year after the service completed a shift toward gender-integrated recruit companies.

The 4th Recruit Training Battalion at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in South Carolina will close next month, the service said in a statement Wednesday.

The battalion was established in 1986 and was one of several all-female training units that existed at Parris Island from 1949 until recent years, when it opened to men.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger described the disbanding of the battalion as “a moment to celebrate progress.”

“I’m proud to see our male and female

recruits benefit from having access to the quality of all our leaders ... through an unchanging, tough and realistic recruit training curriculum,” Berger said in the statement.

All female Marine Corps recruits were trained at Parris Island until last year, when women began arriving for training at the service’s West Coast depot in San Diego.

Female recruits are expected to be split evenly between the two locations by next year, the Marine Corps statement said.

The Corps is the service with the highest percentage of men in the military. Fewer than 10% of active-duty Marines are women, according to the most recent Defense Department figures.

The service was the last to train men and women separately.

A June 2022 Marine Corps study on gen-

der-integrated recruit training found that it dispelled negative biases and stereotypes, while increasing trust, motivation and competition.

Meanwhile, survey respondents identified romantic distractions among recruits and physiological differences as some of the difficulties they experienced in mixed units.

Recruits reported wanting more integrated training, as well as mixed-gender drill instructor teams, according to the study.

The 4th Recruit Training Battalion will be deactivated during a ceremony June 15.

“It won’t be long before there are female drill instructors who, as recruits, graduated alongside their male counterparts,” Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Troy Black said in the statement. “They will train recruits and make Marines with that experience.”

## GAO: Navy hindered by maintenance, shipyard woes

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Navy, the bulwark in a potential armed conflict with China, suffers from failures in mission readiness that include maintenance backlogs, decaying shipyards and crew fatigue and shortages, the Government Accountability Office said in a report Tuesday.

The sea service’s readiness suffers to a greater degree than the other service branches, the report concluded.

The GAO assigned a “readiness rating” for the domains of air, sea, ground and space based on data from fiscal years 2017 through 2021. Only the sea rating decreased for both resource readiness and mission capability readiness during that period, according to the report.

### Backlogs and ‘cannibalizations’

The Navy was plagued by bad ship maintenance backlogs over that five-year period for 10 classes of ships reviewed by the GAO.

“The 10 ship classes we reviewed face a litany of maintenance and supply challenges related to the age of the ship, shortages of trained maintenance personnel, and dimin-

ished manufacturing sources for parts, among others,” the report states.

The most troubled areas were increasing lengths of depot maintenance delays, more frequent “cannibalizations” of working parts for use elsewhere due to shortages, and reports of ships too impaired to conduct their primary missions.

“The average days of depot maintenance delay per ship among the 10 ship classes we examined increased about 5 days to about 19 days per ship in fiscal years 2011 through 2021,” the report states.

Officials from program offices for nine of the 10 ship classes told the GAO that they had a hard time getting needed spare parts, which resulted in an increase in ship maintainers reusing parts.

### Shoddy shipyards

“The Navy in recent years has increasingly deferred maintenance on critical systems or canceled depot-level maintenance periods altogether for surface ships,” the report states.

At the GAO’s request, the Navy estimated a \$1.8 billion cost to complete the existing deferred-maintenance backlog. The lion’s

share of that, \$1.7 billion, was for surface ships, with \$100 million needed for aircraft carriers. Dealing with maintenance delays and backlogs, according to the GAO, is hindered by the poor condition of the Navy’s four public shipyards: Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia; Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Hawaii; Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine; and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Washington.

### China vs. U.S. shipyards

In February, Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro told reporters that China’s shipbuilding and repair capability far exceeds America’s, with the production capacity of its single largest yard greater than the U.S. Navy’s four yards combined. Shipyard capacity would be vital “if there were to be a major shooting war with China,” Jan van Tol, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and a former Navy warship commander, told Stars and Stripes.

“There would almost certainly be large losses of ships and aircraft (not to mention crews),” he wrote.

# US military action unlikely after tanker seizures

By ALISON BATH  
AND J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

U.S. military intervention is unlikely should Iran seize yet another oil tanker, but Washington is eager to demonstrate to Persian Gulf countries that it remains a force in the region, analysts have said.

It is typically the Pentagon that responds first to incidents such as Iran's purported commandeering of the Panama-flagged oil tanker Niovi on Wednesday in the Strait of Hormuz.

Instead, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet released the first statement of condemnation, along with video they said showed Iranian military boats swarming and seizing the tanker.

The fleet also took the lead last week when Iranian navy commandos seized a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker in the Gulf of Oman.

The Biden administration is frustrated with rhetoric that the United States considers the Middle East less strategically important than it did previously and is withdrawing from the region, said Will Todman, a fellow with the Washington, D.C.-

based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Putting the Bahrain-based Navy command at the forefront of the response sends a message to U.S. partners in the region to reassure them of continuing American commitment.

"Although, clearly, that presence has not deterred Iran from taking both of these tankers," Todman said.

The Navy has also increased the visibility of its regional drug and weapons busts, which it conducts alongside partners and allies as part of task forces headquartered in Bahrain. The smuggling rings are often linked to Iranian proxy groups, the Navy has said.

Iran is likely to remain undeterred despite those efforts, however, said Michael Pregent, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C.

It may take a credible show of force, such as firing warning shots when Iran attempts to seize a ship or steer it into its territorial waters, Pregent said.

"I don't see that happening," said Pregent, who noted that Iran has not faced consequences, such as additional sanctions, for its actions. "The administra-

tion doesn't want to escalate right now."

The U.S. has also beefed up patrols in the region and highlighted the presence of an Ohio-class submarine carrying Tomahawk missiles, which is something the Navy rarely announces.

But Iran knows the U.S. won't fire missiles into Iran or its Arab proxies, Pregent said.

"The more you flex that muscle and don't use it, the more your adversary throws punches," he said.

Iran wants concessions, such as the lifting of economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. in a bid to deny Tehran the funds to sponsor militant proxy groups in the region, among other reasons.

Iran also wants the return of a tanker carrying Iranian crude oil that was reportedly redirected away from China last week by the U.S. in an effort to enforce the sanctions, Pregent said.

Also on Wednesday, the Navy said Iran has harassed, attacked or interfered with the navigational rights of 15 internationally flagged merchant vessels over the past two years.

Iranian authorities have said

they're enforcing punishment of maritime infractions. They accused the tanker seized last week, the Advantage Sweet, of crashing into another ship. The company operating the tanker said it had no knowledge of such a collision.

The Niovi was seized because of a private complaint winding through Iranian courts, said a report Wednesday by the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency.

But some analysts think the seizure of the Niovi might have been staged by Iran. The ship was not carrying any cargo at the time, and it has a history of being used to skirt sanctions by receiving Iranian oil.

Leaked emails suggest the Niovi's seizure is connected to a legal dispute with a company sanctioned by the U.S. government, Claire Jungman, chief of staff at the nongovernmental organization United Against Nuclear Iran, tweeted Wednesday.

Todman said Iran doesn't want to be seen as weak and is drawing red lines to temper U.S. actions.

"It wants to maintain a defense that it is a threat, and it needs to be treated, in its eyes, with respect," he said.

## Zelensky convinced Putin will face court justice

*Associated Press*

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday that he was convinced Russian President Vladimir Putin would face an international war crimes court when Ukraine wins the war that has been raging for over a year.

In a speech titled "No Peace without Justice for Ukraine" given in The Hague, the city that hosts the International Criminal Court, Zelensky said Putin "deserves to be sentenced for these criminal actions right here in the capital of the international

law."

"And I'm sure we will see that happen when we win. And we will win," he said. The ICC has issued an arrest warrant for Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine, relating to the abduction of children.

The ICC cannot prosecute the crime of war aggression itself. Zelensky's speech was an appeal for a full-fledged tribunal to prosecute that overarching crime, a heartfelt plea for a special tribunal for aggression.

"If we want true justice, we should not look for excuses and should not refer to the

shortcomings of the current international law, but make bold decisions that will correct the shortcomings that unfortunately exist in international law."

Zelensky was welcomed outside the ICC building by the court's president, Poland's Piotr Hofmanski. Staff crowded at windows to get a glimpse of Zelensky's arrival and raised a Ukrainian flag next to the court's own flag outside the building.

ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan has made repeated visits to Ukraine and is setting up an office in Kyiv to facilitate his ongoing investigations.

# Ex-Proud Boys leader guilty of sedition plot

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio was convicted on Thursday of orchestrating a plot for members of his far-right extremist group to attack the U.S. Capitol in a desperate bid to keep Donald Trump in power after the Republican lost the 2020 presidential election.

A jury in Washington, D.C., found Tarrio guilty of seditious conspiracy after hearing from dozens of witnesses over more than three months in one of the most serious cases brought in the stunning attack that unfolded on Jan. 6, 2021, as the world watched on live TV.

It's a significant milestone for the Justice Department, which has now secured seditious conspiracy convictions against the leaders of two major extremist groups prosecutors say were intent on keeping Democrat Joe Biden out of the White House at all costs. The charge carries a prison sentence of up to 20 years.

Tarrio was a top target of what has become the largest Justice Department investigation in American history. He led the neo-fascist group — known for street fights with left-wing activists — when Trump infamously told the Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by” during his first debate with Biden.

Tarrio wasn't in Washington on Jan. 6, because he had been arrested two days earlier in a separate case and ordered out of the capital city. But prosecutors said he organized and directed the attack by Proud Boys who stormed the Capitol that day.

Prosecutors told jurors the group viewed itself as “Trump's army” and was prepared for

“all-out war” to stop Biden from becoming president.

The Proud Boys were “lined up behind Donald Trump and willing to commit violence on his behalf,” prosecutor Conor Mulroe said in his closing argument.

The backbone of the government's case was hundreds of messages exchanged by Proud Boys members in the days leading up to Jan. 6 that show the far-right extremist group peddling Trump's false claims of a stolen election and trading fears over what would happen when Biden took office.

As Proud Boys swarmed the Capitol, Tarrio cheered them on from afar, writing on social media: “Do what must be done.” In a Proud Boys encrypted group chat later that day someone asked what they should do next. Tarrio responded: “Do it again.”

“Make no mistake,” Tarrio wrote in another message. “We did this.”

Defense lawyers denied there was any plot to attack the Capitol or stop Congress' certification of Biden's win. A lawyer for Tarrio sought to push the blame onto Trump, arguing the former president incited the pro-Trump mob's attack when he urged the crowd near the White House to “fight like hell.”

Tarrio, a Miami resident, was charged and tried with four other Proud Boys: Ethan Nordean, Joseph Biggs, Zachary Rehl and Dominic Pezzola. Nordean, of Auburn, Wash., was a Proud Boys chapter leader. Rehl led a group chapter in Philadelphia. Biggs, of Ormond Beach, Fla., was a self-described Proud Boys organizer. Pezzola was a group member from Rochester, N.Y.

# GOP in Florida passes school bills on diversity and pronouns

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Republicans on Wednesday approved bills to ban diversity programs in colleges and prevent students and teachers from being required to use pronouns that don't correspond to someone's sex, building on top priorities of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The two proposals were given final passage by the Republican supermajorities in the House and Senate. DeSantis is expected to sign the bills into law.

DeSantis, who is expected to announce a presidential campaign in the coming weeks, has driven a hardline conservative agenda as he seeks to bolster support of Republican primary voters ahead of his White House run.

The state's Legislative session, scheduled to end this week, has been dominated by divisive cultural issues, with Republican allies of DeSantis approving his priority bills on sexual orientation, gender identity, race and education that are expected to aid the governor in his presidential bid.

The Senate on Wednesday voted to expand the law critics call “Don't Say Gay,” a major calling card of DeSantis, with a sweeping bill that prevents school staffers or students from being required to refer to people by pronouns that don't correspond to the person's sex.

It also bans classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation up to the 8th grade, legally reinforcing a DeSantis administration move to prohibit such lessons in all grades.

# Trump calls rape accuser ‘nut job’ in video deposition

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jurors heard former President Donald Trump blast a woman who accused him of rape as a “nut job” and “mentally sick” in a video recording that was shown Thursday during the trial of her federal lawsuit.

A transcript of Trump's remarks about accuser E. Jean Carroll emerged in court filings before the trial. But the deposition played in the courtroom allowed jurors to hear Trump speak about the case in his own voice. Other

sections of the recording were shown in court Wednesday.

Thursday's portions also included Trump standing by his repeated prior comment that Carroll was “not my type” and his defense — as “locker room talk” — of his notorious boasts on a 2005 “Access Hollywood” hot-mic recording about grabbing women's genitals.

Carroll, a 79-year-old writer, alleges that Trump raped her in an upscale New York department store dressing room on an unspecified date in spring 1996.

Trump, 76, says that she fabricated the entire encounter and that he has never met her, except for a brief exchange of pleasantries at a 1987 social event. “I think she's sick, mentally sick,” Trump said calmly during the deposition, which was taken in October. He added: “She said that I did something to her that never took place. There was no anything. I know nothing about this nut job.”

Trump hasn't attended the trial, and his lawyers have said he won't testify or call any witnesses on his behalf.

# Suspected gunman plotted Mexico escape

Associated Press

CLEVELAND, Texas — A man suspected of killing five of his neighbors in Texas after they asked him to stop shooting his gun near their house hid out just miles away from the slayings while he and his domestic partner plotted his escape to Mexico, authorities said Wednesday.

Francisco Oropeza showered and slept at the house outside the city of Conroe on Tuesday while Divimara Lamar Nava got him donuts from a nearby store, a prosecutor said. Lamar Nava also acknowledged delivering a message from Oropeza to his cousins in the area asking them to help him get out of the country, the prosecutor said at Lamar Nava's probable cause hearing. The cousins refused to help.

Authorities believe Lamar Nava was talking to investigators at the same time she was trying to help Oropeza, San Jacinto County District Attorney Todd Dillon said at a news conference. She initially told authorities she didn't know where Oropeza was, but later told a federal agent that he showed up at the house at about 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, according to the

prosecutor at the probable cause hearing.

Oropeza, 38, was arrested there on Tuesday evening, just 20 miles from the city of Cleveland, where the shootings took place.

Acting on a tip, authorities found him hiding under a pile of laundry in a closet after a four-day manhunt. Lamar Nava, 53, was arrested at the house on Wednesday.

Authorities identified Lamar Nava as Oropeza's wife, though jail records list her as not being married but sharing a home address with him.

The slayings Friday sent shudders through a nation already dealing with a wave of shootings that have put the U.S. on a torrid pace for mass killings this year.

Outside the Conroe-area home, yellow police tape could be seen Wednesday in both the front and back, although the officers were gone. Neighbor Angel Lozano recalled looking up from unloading tools from his truck Tuesday night to see unmarked law enforcement vehicles streaming onto his normally quiet street.

"A bunch of people got out with guns and they went straight to the house and surround-

ed the area," Lozano, 39, said Wednesday, estimating that at least 50 officers surrounded the home two doors down from his. "It was a really fast job they did. They got him without people getting hurt or another shooting."

Several others have also been arrested, authorities said, although they only shared details about one of them. Domingo Castilla, a friend of Oropeza, was arrested on Tuesday in the Trail's End neighborhood where the victims were shot, Dillon said.

Castilla was charged with marijuana possession but authorities also expect to charge him with obstructing Oropeza's apprehension, Dillon said.

Oropeza was charged Wednesday with five counts of first-degree murder during a court hearing in jail, said San Jacinto County Justice of the Peace Judge Randy Ellisor. Bond is set at \$1.5 million per count, for a total of \$7.5 million, Ellisor said.

Lamar Nava is being held at the Montgomery County jail on a felony charge of hindering the apprehension or prosecution of a known felon. Her bail has been set at \$250,000. Bond for Castilla was set at \$5,000, Ellisor said.

## Man shouting on subway held in chokehold, dies

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A man who had been shouting at people aboard a New York City subway train died after fellow riders tackled him and one put him in a chokehold that lasted until his body went limp, according to police officials and video of the encounter.

Jordan Neely, 30, died from compression of the neck, the city's medical examiner determined Wednesday. On Monday afternoon, he was yelling and pacing on an F train in Manhattan, witnesses and police said, when he was restrained by at least three people, including a U.S. Marine veteran who pulled one arm around his neck.

Video of the altercation posted online showed the man lying beneath Neely, holding him in a headlock position for several minutes as Neely tried and failed to break free. A second passenger pinned Neely's arms while a third held down his shoulder.

The 24-year-old Marine veteran was taken into custody and released without charges. The Manhattan district attorney's office said it is investigating.

## Sex offender in Oklahoma fatally shot 6, killed self

Associated Press

An Oklahoma sex offender who was released from prison early shot his wife, her three children and their two friends in the head and then killed himself, authorities confirmed Wednesday as concerns grew about why he was free as his trial on new sex charges loomed.

Oklmulgee Police Chief Joe Prentice said the victims had each been shot in the head one to three times with a 9 mm pistol when they were found Monday near a creek and in a heavily wooded area in rural Oklahoma.

The bodies had apparently been moved there from where they were originally killed, the scene "staged" before Jesse McFadden, a 39-year-old convicted sex offender, killed himself, Prentice said.

The discovery of the bodies near McFadden's home in Henryetta, a town of about 6,000 about 90 miles east of Oklahoma City, came on the same day he was to stand trial on charges he solicited nude images from another teen while he was imprisoned for rape.

## Shooting suspect charged in fatal Atlanta incident

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The suspect in a mass shooting in Atlanta that left one woman dead and four others wounded has been charged with one count of murder and four counts of aggravated assault, Fulton County Jail records show.

Deion Patterson was awaiting his first court appearance Thursday after police said he opened fire in the waiting room of a medical practice Wednesday. Workers and others in a bustling commercial district took shelter for hours during the manhunt.

Authorities swarmed the city's midtown neighborhood shortly after noon in search of the shooter. Patterson, 24, was captured in Cobb County, just northwest of Atlanta.

Atlanta Police Deputy Chief Charles Hampton Jr. declined to discuss any details of the investigation or a possible motive.

Patterson had an appointment at a Northside Medical building and opened fire shortly after arriving in an attack that lasted about two minutes, law enforcement officials said at a news conference Wednesday.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Genealogy is used to arrest man in 1988 killing**

**MI** THREE RIVERS — A South Carolina man has been charged in a Michigan woman's 1988 slaying after investigators used genetic genealogy to narrow the pool of suspects to a single family, authorities said.

Robert Odell Waters, 53, was arrested Sunday in Beaufort, S.C., where he lives, in the killing of Cathy Sue Swartz, St. Joseph County Prosecuting Attorney David Martin said.

The 19-year-old Swartz was beaten, stabbed and strangled in December 1988 in her apartment in Three Rivers. Her 9-month-old daughter was in the next room when her mother was killed, Three Rivers police said.

Last year, Three Rivers police, working with Michigan State Police and others, used forensic genetic genealogy to narrow the suspect pool to a single family. After investigators interviewed and fingerprinted members of that family and analyzed their DNA, officials identified Waters as a suspect in Swartz's killing.

**State forms reconciliation panel in eugenics matter**

**VT** SHELBURNE — Two years ago, the legislature apologized to all Vermonters and their families who were harmed by state-sanctioned eugenics policies that started in the early 1900s and led to institutionalizations and sterilizations, targeting Native Americans, French Canadians and disabled and poor people.

Legislators also vowed to do more. Now the state has formed

a truth and reconciliation commission with the task of creating a public record of discrimination against certain marginalized populations caused by state laws and policies, as well as making recommendations for repairing the damage and preventing it from happening again.

The three commissioners were appointed last month to three-year terms, with annual salaries of \$80,000 each. Last year's act to create the commission allocated \$748,000 in state funds this fiscal year to the panel, which will also hire staff.

**Many dead California condors had avian flu**

**AZ** PHOENIX — Twenty California condors in northern Arizona and southern Utah have died since March, and half of the endangered birds tested positive for a strain of avian flu, according to authorities.

Four condors are still receiving supportive care and have shown improvement. But wildlife officials told The Arizona Republic that they are worried the recent outbreak could potentially spread to other condor populations.

So far, authorities say, the virus hasn't been detected in the condor populations in California or Baja California, Mexico.

The Peregrine Fund, a group that manages wild populations of the bird, estimates there are 116 wild condors flying over Arizona and Utah and occupying the landscape within Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, on the Kaibab Plateau and in surrounding areas.

Before the recent string of deaths, the National Park Service said only 334 condors remained in the wild.

**Some charges tossed in Hells Angels gunfire case**

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Seven alleged Hells Angels members won't face racketeering or gang charges in a Las Vegas-area freeway shooting that authorities said injured rival Vagos motorcycle gang members almost a year ago, a judge decided Monday.

Clark County District Court Judge Tierra Jones also reduced from 25 to five the number of shooting counts in the case against defendants, including the Hells Angels Las Vegas chapter president, Richard Devries.

"The court finds that the ... indictment does not specify which of the defendants engaged in which type of criminal activities, and further does not include the specificity of the racketeering crimes," Jones wrote. Her ruling followed a March 31 hearing with attorneys and defendants in the case.

Police said seven people were treated at hospitals for wounds or injuries following the gunfire that erupted on Interstate 11 in Henderson after a Memorial Day weekend ceremony at a veterans cemetery in Boulder City.

**State debates extending film tax credit program**

**LA** BATON ROUGE — In Louisiana, dubbed by some as "Hollywood South," lawmakers advanced a bill that would extend a motion picture tax credit program, which at-

tracts movie producers and film companies to the state, by another decade.

But opponents say that it is time for the incentive program to expire, slamming it for returning only pennies on the dollar to the state treasury.

"At the end of the day, we have much more significant things that we can spend our money on," Republican Rep. Richard Nelson said during debate on the House floor Monday. "I invite you to tell me which of these movies (filmed in Louisiana) is worth more than the bridge in your district, the school in your district or paying your police."

Lawmakers in the state House passed a bill, which proposes extending the motion picture tax credit program that is set to expire in two years, until 2035. The legislation, which was voted in favor of 74-24 and advances to the Senate next, would allocate \$150 million a year to film tax breaks.

**Current longest-serving governor won't run again**

**WA** SEATTLE — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a Democrat who has sought to make the state a leader on progressive policies from climate change to gun violence prevention, said Monday he will not seek a fourth term in office.

Inslee, 72, who is the longest-serving governor in office in the U.S., was first elected in 2012. Washington does not have term limits.

He made a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020 on an environmental platform, but struggled to gain traction in a crowded field.

— From wire reports

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# Brown scores 25, Celtics ruin Embiid's return

*Associated Press*

BOSTON — The Celtics walked off the court angry and frustrated after giving up home-court advantage in their series-opening loss to the 76ers.

Boston called on those emotions — and its defense — to dominate in Game 2.

Jaylen Brown scored 25 points and the Celtics rolled past Philadelphia 121-87 on Wednesday night, spoiling the return of new league MVP Joel Embiid.

The Celtics tied the series at one game apiece as the Eastern Conference semifinal series shifts to Philadelphia for Game 3 on Friday.

“I think we’ve just got to take more pride in ourselves. That’s it,” Brown said. “I just feel like we underperformed last game. We wanted to come out and play to the best of our ability. And that’s what we did.”

Malcolm Brogdon added 23

points, connecting on six of Boston’s 20 three-pointers. Derrick White and Marcus Smart added 15 points apiece. Jayson Tatum played most of the game in foul trouble and was held to seven points.

Boston ratcheted up its defense and limited a 76ers team that hit 17 three-pointers in its Game 1 win to just 6 of 30 from beyond the arc on Wednesday. The Celtics led by as many as 36 points in the fourth quarter.

Brogdon said their charge now is to maintain the same mindset going forward.

“It doesn’t mean anything if there’s no carryover,” he said.

Tobias Harris led the 76ers with 16 points. Embiid finished with 15 points, three rebounds and five blocks in his first game back from a sprained right knee that caused him to miss the final game of the 76ers’ first-round sweep of Brooklyn. He also sat out

Philadelphia’s Game 1 win on Monday.

James Harden, who tied his postseason career high with 45 points in Game 1, missed all six three-pointers and shot 2-for-14 overall while finishing with 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Embiid’s return came a day after being voted MVP for the first time.

He was cleared to play by doctors and training staff following a pregame, on-court workout. That was after he did some light work during the 76ers’ morning shoot-around.

Embiid said he was told it could take four to six weeks for his injury to heal and the opportunity to take a 2-0 lead ultimately made him want to play, even if there was rust.

“I felt pretty good to play and I felt like I could help the team,” he said. “I feel like I just got this out the way. Disappointed by the loss.

But that’s a step toward getting back to myself.”

Embiid started slowly offensively, but with the 76ers struggling to make shots from the outside, he made an almost immediate impact defensively.

First, he blocked an early shot by Smart and then forced White to adjust another attempt. Embiid had five blocks his first 13 minutes of action.

But his conditioning was noticeably lacking as he lumbered into sets at times. He played just shy of seven minutes in the first quarter before getting his first rest. He returned for the final 1:05 of the period.

Brown said they expect to arrive in Philadelphia and face a 76ers team motivated after losing for the first time this postseason.

“Hostile environment. But it should be fun,” he said. “We should all be excited to embrace that challenge.”

## Griner using new platform for greater good in WNBA return

*Associated Press*

PHOENIX — Brittney Griner caught a flight to Washington, D.C., to attend the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner, landed back at Phoenix around 4 a.m. and was up five hours later for the start of training camp.

After going through her first workout with the Phoenix Mercury, she hopped on a plane to New York to attend the Met Gala, schmoozing with Usher, Patrick Mahomes and Dwyane Wade before returning to the desert. Griner didn’t get back until after 1 a.m. and was back on the court with the Mercury later that morning.

“It’s been a whirlwind,” Griner said Wednesday at the Mercury’s media day. “I have a lot of respect for the stars that do that. It’s not me. I don’t know how they do it. It was amazing, two big honors to be able to go and be there, but I’m taking a big nap today.”

Griner mostly kept a low profile since a nearly 10-month detainment in Russia on drug-related charges ended with a prisoner swap in December. Now that the WNBA season is just around the corner, the Mercury star has been front and center on the court and off it.

Griner’s return to the Mercury rekindles

hope the franchise can make another run to the WNBA Finals. The extra exposure from being detained in Russia for having vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage has given Griner a platform to advocate for other Americans being detained abroad.

“It’s cool because now I’m able to reach even more people and bring them into the WNBA, but then also keep them aware of other people that are still left behind right now and trying to get home,” Griner said. “Just using that bigger outlet to continue to support others that don’t have the spotlight or the media coverage that they should be able to get.”

Griner has been an LGBTQ+ activist since publicly coming out in 2013 and became the first openly gay athlete to be sponsored by Nike. She made an appearance last month at a women’s empowerment luncheon held during the Rev. Al Sharpton’s National Action Network event, and last week said she will use her elevated platform to continue fighting for LGBTQ+ rights during her first news conference since being released.

“That definitely is high on the list of things that I will be fighting for and speak-

ing up against,” she said. “Everyone deserves the right to play, everyone deserves the right to come here to sit in these seats and feel safe and not feel like there’s a threat or they can’t be who they are. I think it’s a crime to separate someone for any reason.”

Following her detainment in Russia, Griner has taken an active role in trying to help bring home other Americans detained in foreign countries.

Griner announced last week she is working with Bring Our Families Home, a campaign formed in 2022 by the family members of American hostages and wrongful detainees held overseas. She said her team has been in contact with the family of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who is being detained in Russia on espionage charges.

“I would say to everyone that is being wrongly detained across the world: Stay strong. Keep fighting. Don’t give up. Just keep waking up,” she said. “Find a little routine and stick to that routine. Just keep pushing, because we’re not going to stop. We’re not going to stop fighting. We’re not going to stop bringing awareness to everyone that’s left behind right now.”

# Knights overcome Draisaitl's four goals

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Golden Knights coach Bruce Cassidy could only laugh at the brilliance that was Leon Draisaitl, who scored four goals to nearly beat Vegas by himself.

However, the Golden Knights prevailed in Game 1 of the second-round playoff series because their depth was the difference in Wednesday night's 6-4 victory over the Edmonton Oilers.

Ivan Barbashev scored two goals, including one that put Vegas ahead for good, and he was one of five Knights players to find the back of the net.

It was the second night in a row a team had won despite allowing an opposing player to score four goals. Seattle beat Dallas 5-4 on Tuesday even with Joe Pavelski scoring four goals for the Stars. Teams with a player scoring four goals had been 36-3 before that game in the playoffs, and it had been 30

years since a team had overcome such a performance.

This was the Oilers' first regulation loss since March 11.

"Overall, we weren't good enough," Draisaitl said. "It's not even close to how we play. We've got to move on, and we'll be better."

In addition to Barbashev, the Knights also received goals from Chandler Stephenson, Michael Amadio, Mark Stone and Jack Eichel. Eichel's goal was an empty netter from deep in his zone, and he and Stone also each had an assist. Zach Whitecloud had two assists.

Evan Bouchard, Mattias Ekholm, Zach Lyman and Connor McDavid each had two assists for the Oilers.

"I don't think our team was anywhere near where it needed to be in order to walk away with a road win in the playoffs," Edmonton coach Jay Woodcroft said. "Leon had a great effort. He's been good all

playoffs, but our team can do things a lot better than we did tonight."

Game 2 is Saturday in Las Vegas.

Draisaitl extended his goal streak to four games, and he has at least a point in all seven playoff games. He had never scored four goals in a playoff game, and had reached that mark just once in the regular season — March 2, 2020, against Nashville.

Draisaitl has 11 goals in the postseason.

"Does that sound funny to you, 11 goals in the second round?" Cassidy said. "That is unbelievable."

Two of his goals against Vegas came on the power play, making Edmonton 11-for-19 this postseason with the man advantage. The Oilers set an NHL record during the regular season by converting 32.4% of their chances.

One goal, at even strength,

came at the end of the first period when Draisaitl bounced a puck off Knights goalie Laurent Brossoit from the goal line.

This series was billed as the Oilers' star power against the Knights' balanced attack, and that's how the opening game played out. Vegas found a way even with one of the NHL's most dynamic scorers having a career night.

"We used our four lines," Cassidy said. "We didn't have to get too far away from our line combinations. We're aware of their top guys and the damage they can do, but we like our team. We feel like if our team plays well, we'll have success."

After Draisaitl scored on a power play less than two minutes into the third period to make the score 3-3, the Knights took the lead for good with two goals in 50 seconds. Barbashev scored on a rebound and Stephenson from the right circle.

## Hurricanes swamp Devils in second-round opener

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Carolina Hurricanes spent the first period swarming the puck and closing just about any fleeting bit of open ice the New Jersey Devils could find.

It was a dominating start to their second-round playoff series — and the blueprint the Hurricanes know they must follow going forward.

The Hurricanes got goals from Brett Pesce and Seth Jarvis alongside a suffocating defensive performance in the first, allowing Carolina to jump quickly on New Jersey en route to a 5-1 win Wednesday night to start this best-of-seven series.

Jesper Kotkaniemi, Brady Skeji and Jesper Fast also scored for the Hurricanes, who took the Devils completely out of any type of first-period flow while

surrendering a single shot on goal.

Meanwhile, Pesce scored on a low-flying shot through traffic to beat Akira Schmid and Jarvis blew past Ryan Graves near the blue line to beat Schmid over his glove for a 2-0 lead.

By the time Kotkaniemi followed early in the second, Schmid was headed for the bench.

"That's a super-skilled team that is fast and comes in waves," said Carolina forward Jordan Martinook, who found Kotkaniemi for his point-blank putaway. "If you can stay on top of them and kind of limit their space, that's what we're going to have to do."

"Yeah, it's hard. It's a lot of work, but we're willing to put it in."

Nathan Bastian scored for the Devils, who played this one with-

out trade-acquisition Timo Meier following his huge hit from New York Rangers forward Jacob Trouba during Monday's Game 7 win. Bastian's goal came when he got loose coming into the zone to beat Frederik Andersen at 5:02 of the second period, but the Devils got no closer.

### In net

The Hurricanes went back to Andersen in net over Antti Raanta after Andersen got his first start of the playoffs in the Game 6 clincher against the New York Islanders. He finished with 18 saves.

The 22-year-old Schmid had been terrific in the first round, posting a 1.38 goals-against average and a .951 save percentage while posting two shutouts. But he surrendered three goals on 11

shots.

"It had nothing to do with our goalie," Ruff said. "I could've taken multiple players out."

Vitek Vanecsek had 10 saves on 11 shots in relief, though he survived one second-period power play that saw Carolina's Sebastian Aho hit the left post, then Jarvis follow with his own ping moments later.

### At stake

This is a matchup of the top teams in the Metropolitan Division, with the Hurricanes winning their final regular-season game to edge the Devils by a point (113-112) in the standings. And with Boston gone in a first-round stunner after a record-setting regular season, the winner of this series will have home-ice advantage for the rest of the playoffs.

# Rodgers, Jets bonding in the Big Apple

Associated Press

Aaron Rodgers was sitting alone in the dark two months ago, pondering his future while many speculated about his next move.

Now, the New York Jets quarterback is the toast of his new town, bonding with the Big Apple and his excited teammates.

“That’s a legend right there, that’s a Hall of Fame player,” wide receiver Garrett Wilson said Wednesday during a video call. “This is something 20 years from now, 30 years from now, I can tell my kids, ‘You know, I played with Aaron Rodgers.’ I try not to think about it too much at this point, you know, just because we’re going to work and he’s my teammate and that’s got to be the mindset.

“But the reality of it is it’s awesome, man.”

After an offseason that included Rodgers going on an isolation retreat in Oregon and deciding to continue his playing career — and with the Jets — the four-time NFL MVP was formally introduced by New York last Wednesday after acquiring him from Green Bay. The deal brought one of the league’s greatest players to a franchise frustrated by 12 straight seasons without a playoff appearance and hungry for a winner.

And Rodgers is already making an impact.

“We know that all of the sudden, all eyes are on us,” Wilson said. “We’ve got to back it up every time we take the field, you know, practice or game.”

Rodgers is also enjoying his turn as New York’s newest celebrity while taking in Knicks and Rangers games at Madison Square Garden.

“I met Spike Lee, Martha Stewart and Patrick Ewing,” Rodgers said Tuesday on “The Pat McAfee Show” on YouTube. “I’m sitting next to Jack Harlow. So much fun. Just having a ball.”

He was there with former Packers teammate Allen Lazard and running back Breece Hall for the Rangers’ 5-2 win over the Devils in Game 6 last Saturday. Rodgers and Lazard were back the next day for the Knicks’ playoff loss to Miami in Game 1. On Tuesday night, Rodgers and cornerback Sauce Gardner sat courtside next to actor Jerry Ferrara and former Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist for the Knicks’ victory in Game 2.

“It was great being around a veteran guy like him, a down-to-earth guy who — I didn’t know he was that funny,” Gardner said.

“Everybody knew who he was and I was able to just be in his shadow a little bit.”

Rodgers, who’s 39, teased the 22-year-old Gardner about his age at times during their

night out on the town.

“We were getting seated (at the Garden) and he was like, ‘We’re about to sit by Jessica Alba,’” said Gardner, last season’s AP Defensive Rookie of the Year. “I was like, ‘Oh, I don’t know who that is.’ He looked at me like I’m crazy.”

Rodgers probably would’ve had a similar look a few months ago if someone had told him he’d be calling the New York/New Jersey area home — as a member of the Jets.

“I’m just pinching myself a lot of days,” Rodgers said. “I can’t believe it’s real sometimes. It’s been a dream, for sure, just to be here.”

Rodgers is participating in offseason workouts, something he hadn’t done the past couple of seasons in Green Bay while he feuded with the Packers’ front office. A slow-motion video posted Monday by the Jets of Rodgers throwing a pass to Wilson, last season’s AP Offensive Rookie of the Year, has gotten more than 9.6 million views.

“I ain’t gonna lie to you, I was kind of star-struck at first,” linebacker Quincy Williams said with a smile. “I was like, ‘Hold on, coach, let me just take a little minute to just take this in,’ just to watch a few throws and seeing him in the green.”

## Another step in Hendriks’ recovery from lymphoma

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Wearing a black T-shirt with white lettering that read “STRUCKOUT CANCER,” Liam Hendriks directed a few well-placed jabs toward a couple of his teammates. He joked about his reading habits and chuckled as he explained how he actually gained weight while fighting non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

It was the same old Hendriks — as if the fight of his life had only reinforced everything the Chicago White Sox closer already knew.

“It was never a thing to me where I ever worried,” Hendriks said. “Like I never self-involved and looked into it as a ‘Why me?’ thing. I looked at it as a ‘Why not me?’”

That’s how Hendriks got through all of it. From noticing lumps on his neck last summer to a diagnosis of stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma and then immunotherapy and chemotherapy, all the way to a clean bill of health last month. All the way to a Triple-A rehab assignment that begins Friday.

All the way back to the White Sox — quite possibly, very soon.

“It hasn’t changed my outlook on life, but it’s definitely made me miss being in this clubhouse,” Hendriks said Wednesday in his first media session since he announced his diagnosis in January. “It’s made me miss being a part of the team.”

The White Sox missed their eccentric Australian closer.

“No matter what we do as a

team, this is the best news of the year,” right-hander Lucas Giolito said. “He beat cancer. He’s back. He’s going to compete at a very, very high level.”

Chicago manager Pedro Grifol said the plan is for Hendriks to make four or five rehab appearances in the minors before determining if he is ready to return to the majors. How Hendriks feels will be the determining factor.

“He lifts us all up. He’s an inspiration to us all,” Grifol said.

The 34-year-old Hendriks has 115 saves and a 3.81 ERA over 12 seasons with Minnesota, Toronto, Kansas City, Oakland and Chicago. He signed a \$54 million, three-year deal with the White Sox in January 2021.

Hendriks led the American

League with a career-high 38 saves in his first year with Chicago. The right-hander was third in the majors with 37 saves and made his third All-Star team in 2022, but he felt drained toward the end of the year — and now, he thinks he knows why.

“With the lumps in my neck coming around June, when I got the PET scan done, one, I looked like a Dalmatian, which is not great even though we have one,” he said. “But it turned out the ones in my hips were actually bigger.

“So, there’s no way to put a real timeline on it, but if I had the ones in my neck in June and the ones in my hip were bigger, there was always the chance that I pitched damn near all year with lymphoma in my system.”