

Ukraine says it will delay counteroffensive

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in remarks broadcast Thursday that Kyiv is delaying its long-awaited counteroffensive against Russia's occupying forces, saying that while such a campaign would succeed, too many Ukrainian lives would be lost.

His remarks, in an interview with European broadcasters, came shortly before Britain said it has sent air-launched cruise missiles to Ukraine that would allow pilots to target locations deep behind the front line.

A Ukrainian counteroffensive against Russia's more than 14-month-old invasion has been expected as winter turned to spring, and Zelenskyy said in an interview that "we can go forward and be successful," according to the

BBC.

"But we'd lose a lot of people. I think that's unacceptable," he was quoted as saying in the interview, which was conducted in Kyiv with public service broadcasters who are members of Eurovision News, including the BBC.

"So we need to wait. We still need a bit more time," Zelenskyy was quoted as saying. "In terms of equipment, not everything has arrived yet."

Ukraine is receiving Western training as well as advanced weapons for its troops as it gears up for such an assault.

Later Thursday, U.K. Defense Secretary Ben Wallace told lawmakers that it sent Ukraine the Storm Shadow missiles, a conventionally armed weapon with a range of more than 150 miles. By contrast, the U.S.-supplied truck-

mounted HIMARS launchers fire GPS-guided missiles capable of hitting targets up to 50 miles away.

Wallace said the cruise missiles "are now going into or are in the country itself," but he didn't say how many were being provided. The air-launched missiles would allow Ukrainian forces to target locations such as Russia-occupied Crimea. Kyiv has pledged not to use them to attack Russia itself, U.K. media reported.

The move gives another boost to the Ukrainian military after it received other advanced Western weapons including tanks and long-range precision artillery.

Ben Hodges, a former U.S. Army Europe Commanding General, tweeted: "Well done UK!"

"This will give Ukraine capa-

bility to make Crimea untenable for Russian forces" and require Russia to reevaluate the positioning of its Black Sea fleet, Hodges said.

Sidharth Kaushal, a research fellow at London's Royal United Services Institute, said the Storm Shadow missiles could allow Ukraine to strike Russia's Black Sea fleet and support vessels in Sevastopol, where Moscow's Kalibr missiles "have been used to target crucial Ukrainian infrastructure."

While a counterpunch is possible as the weather improves, there has been no word on when it might happen. Zelenskyy's remarks could be designed to keep the Russians guessing, and both sides have difficulty with the supply of ammunition, adding more uncertainty.

China, Japan coast guards feud for 13th time this year

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

Tokyo lodged another round of diplomatic protests with Beijing on Thursday over intrusions around Japan-controlled islands in the East China Sea, according to Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry.

The latest incident marked the 13th time this year that Chinese vessels have passed the 12-mile territorial limit around the Senkaku chain, a small but potentially significant flashpoint approximately halfway between Okinawa and mainland China.

Two Chinese coast guard ships passed the 12-mile limit between 2:56 a.m. and 3:32 a.m. Thursday and remained there into the afternoon, a Japan coast guard spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone that day.

Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry lodged complaints Thursday with the Chinese Embassy in Japan and with the Chinese government in Beijing, a ministry spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone that day.

"We asked them to leave the area," the spokesman said. Some government officials in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

The Senkakus — five uninhabited islets and three rocks 105 miles east of Taiwan — are administered by Japan but claimed by China and Taiwan, who refer to them as the Diaoyu and Tiaoyutai, respectively. The area reportedly holds a wealth of natural resources, including fish, oil and natural gas.

The first Chinese coast guard ship passed the territorial limit

southeast of Minamikojima, followed by a second vessel south of Uotsurijima, the coast guard spokesman said. Both were trailing Japanese fishing boats.

The Chinese ships were met by a larger contingent of Japanese coast guard vessels, the spokesman said. The Japanese ships positioned themselves between the fishing boats and the Chinese vessels and warned the Chinese by radio and electronic message boards to leave the area.

Chinese ships came within 12 miles of the Senakus 28 times and remained for a total of 37 days in 2022, the spokesman said. The record is 2013, when Chinese vessels entered the territorial limits 52 times and remained there for 54 days.

China is increasingly aggressive in asserting its claims or harassing its neighbors in the East

and South China Seas, vital waterways where an estimated \$1.2 trillion in global trade passes each year.

In February, Manila accused Beijing of temporarily blinding crew members on a Philippine coast guard vessel with a "military-grade" laser during a South China Sea resupply mission, Reuters reported on Feb. 13.

On April 23, a Chinese coast guard vessel blocked a Philippine patrol ship near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, 105 nautical miles west of Palawan, the Philippines. The two nearly collided, according to The Associated Press.

The U.S. and Philippine governments in February announced plans to resume later this year joint patrols in the South China Sea that were suspended in 2016.

Remains found in water near Yokosuka

By ALEX WILSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The skeletal remains of an unidentified person were found in water Wednesday near the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

The discovery was made near the shoreline of Recreation Bay on the base's eastern quadrant, Yokosuka spokesman Randall Baucom told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday. The bay is near a seaside playground, sports fields and several housing towers.

Baucom declined to say who found the remains.

Navy Security contacted Japanese police and the Japan coast guard, who recovered the remains and took over the investigation, Baucom said. He referred additional questions to Japanese authorities.

Base officials at about 7:30 a.m. notified the Japan coast guard about the body, which appears to have been a man around 5 feet, 11 inches tall, a Yokosuka Coast Guard Office spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

The remains had no clothing or other belongings that could lead to identification, the spokesman said, but investigators believe the man died approximately three months ago.

The Japan coast guard will attempt to identify the remains, he added. Some Japanese government officials are required to speak with the media only on condition of anonymity.

Such discoveries are not unheard of near the base, which hosts several protected bays and inlets near the mouth of Tokyo Bay.

Sailors aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam were anchored in Tokyo Bay when they found a floating body in October 2021. It was handed over to the Japan coast guard, which identified the person but declined to provide further details.

Air Force raises monthly incentive pay for airmen to stay in Turkey

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

About 35 airmen have signed up for an additional year in Turkey since the Air Force approved a tax-free bonus of \$1,000 per month, making it the most generous noncombat assignment pay in the service.

The Air Force bumped up the incentive pay at the end of last year from \$300 a month added to the paychecks of airmen based primarily at Incirlik Air Base on one-year unaccompanied tours.

For years, Incirlik has been low on airmen's wish lists, largely because of the heavy restrictions on leaving the base and on bringing families. In 2016, the Pentagon ordered nearly 700 military family members to leave Incirlik and two smaller bases because of deteriorating security.

But the Air Force began letting personnel into a roughly 10-block area outside the base in Adana, a city of about 1.8 million, just before the devastating earthquakes that struck southern Turkey and Syria in February, killing about 50,000 people.

Access to those 10 blocks was restricted after the earthquakes but has since been reinstated. Airmen can also visit select locations outside the base and throughout Turkey at their leisure or through base tours, 39th Air Base Wing officials said.

Some areas in Adana and elsewhere remain off-limits because of security concerns and earthquake damage.

Air Force 2nd Lt. Devon Canterbury signed up for the incentive pay before moving to Incirlik this spring, his first assignment out of technical school.

More time in one place, he figures, will give him a better foundation as he begins his Air Force career and will allow more time to travel. Canterbury, the officer-in-charge of the cyberoperations radio section for the 39th Communications Squadron, opted to extend before the natural disaster struck but doesn't regret his decision.

"The earthquakes made me worry a bit, but when my sponsor told me that the base and nearby areas did not undergo any major damages, I felt safe in my decision," he said.

While the quakes toppled poorly constructed high-rise buildings in the city, Incirlik was largely spared.

Taking the incentive pay can be a gamble since there's little time to test the waters. Airmen are eligible to enroll before moving to Turkey or within 60 days of arriving. A waiver is required to sign up outside of that window. The higher pay is in effect until Dec. 31 of this year and will be reviewed annually, base officials at Incirlik said. It's available to all ranks at all locations in Turkey.

In 2022, 65 airmen elected to stay in the country for another year for the extra \$300 a month. Incirlik has more than 1,500 personnel assigned, with more than 200 currently within the eligibility window for incentive

US Marines out in Estonia save life of a suffocating man

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

Three U.S. Marines are being credited with saving the life of a restaurant patron in Estonia over the weekend who was unconscious and not breathing.

Lance Cpl. Colton Allen, Lance Cpl. Christopher Butemeyer and Lance Cpl. Aiden Morey were dining in the capital Tallinn on Sunday when they noticed an unconscious man in a nearby booth, Task Force 61/2 said in a statement Wednesday.

The three are assigned to a reconnaissance company that has been training Estonian allies for more than a month.

Seeing that the man's lips were blue and his skin also was beginning to turn color, Allen and Butemeyer cleared his airway while Morey called emergency services, the statement said.

"I felt confident in our abilities to do the job," Butemeyer said in the statement. "We all knew what needed to be done and we all did our own individual tasks to help."

While Butemeyer rubbed the man's sternum to force him into consciousness, Allen monitored his pulse.

Medical workers later helped the man regain consciousness. They said that without the intervention of the Marines, he would have suffocated, according to the statement.

Election lies, insults mark Trump's town hall

Associated Press

During a contentious CNN town hall Wednesday night, former President Donald Trump dug in on his lies about the 2020 election, downplayed the violence on Jan. 6, 2021, and repeatedly insulted the woman whom a civil jury this week found him liable of sexually abusing and defaming.

Trump, returning to the network after years of acrimony, also refused to say whether he wants Ukraine to win the war against Russian aggression and said the United States “might as well” default on its debt obligation, despite the potentially devastating economic consequences.

The live, televised event—held in early-voting New Hampshire

—underscored the challenges of fact-checking Trump in real time. The former president was cheered on and applauded by an audience of Republican and unaffiliated voters who plan to vote in the GOP primary, as moderator Kaitlan Collins sometimes struggled to correct the record as Trump steamrolled with untrue statements. “You are a nasty person,” he snapped at one point.

Trump on Wednesday repeatedly doubled down on his lies that the 2020 election had been “rigged,” even though state and federal election officials, his own campaign and White House aides, and dozens of courts, including Republican judges, have said there is no evidence to support his claims.

He also displayed no remorse for what happened on Jan. 6, when a mob of his supporters violently stormed the Capitol in a bid to halt the certification of Biden's win. He excused his delayed response that day — he was silent for more than three hours as the carnage unfolded — pulling out a printout of his tweeted timeline as a form of defense.

The primetime forum — the first major television event of the 2024 presidential campaign and Trump's first interview appearance on CNN since before he was elected president in 2016 — drew suspicion from both sides of the political divide as soon as it was announced.

Democrats questioned whether a man who continues to spread

lies about his 2020 election loss should have the airtime. Conservatives wondered why Trump would appear on — and potentially give a ratings bump to — a network he's continually disparaged.

The stakes were raised considerably Tuesday after jurors in New York found Trump had sexually abused and defamed advice columnist E. Jean Carroll nearly three decades ago, though they rejected her claim that he raped her. The jury awarded her \$5 million in damages.

Trump, at Wednesday's event, called the case “fake news” and insisted he didn't know Carroll, even as he attacked her in deeply personal terms. “She's a wack job,” he said, drawing laughs from the crowd.

FDA advisers back over the counter birth control pills

The Washington Post

Advisers to the Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday unanimously endorsed making birth control pills available without a prescription, overriding concerns raised by the agency about whether the medication could be used in a safe and effective manner without physician oversight.

The FDA's outside experts expressed confidence, in a 17-0 vote, that consumers could use an oral contraceptive called Opill correctly. They said the benefits of over-the-counter status, such as increased access to contraception, outweighed the risks, including a potential lack of adherence to daily pill-taking that could result in unintended pregnancies.

The move sharply bolsters the likelihood that Opill, made by HRA Pharma, which is owned by the consumer health giant Perrigo, will become the first birth control pill available in the United States without a prescription. The FDA does not have to follow the

guidance of its advisers, but a rejection of the OTC application — especially given the committee's view — would be awkward for an administration that has repeatedly pledged to protect reproductive rights following the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, which guaranteed the nationwide right to abortion.

Several panel members said they were moved by pleas from several women for improved availability of birth control pills during a public comment session Tuesday.

Still, FDA staffers, at the advisory committee meetings Tuesday and Wednesday, flagged concerns, including whether some women with breast cancer or some other medical conditions would correctly recognize that they should not take the medication.

And the staffers raised questions about the reliability of the company's data and faulted it for not including a greater number of younger adolescents in its studies.

EPA offers 1st limits on power plant greenhouse gas emission

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration proposed new limits Thursday on greenhouse gas emissions from coal- and gas-fired power plants, its most ambitious effort yet to roll back planet-warming pollution from the nation's second-largest contributor to climate change.

A rule unveiled by the Environmental Protection Agency could force power plants to capture smokestack emissions using a technology that has long been promised but is not in widespread use in the U.S.

“This administration is committed to meeting the urgency of the climate crisis and taking the necessary actions required,” EPA Administrator Michael Regan said during Thursday's announcement.

The new rule will “significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants, protecting health and protecting our planet,” Regan said. The plan would not only “improve air quality nationwide, but it will bring substantial

health benefits to communities all across the country, especially our frontline communities ... that have unjustly borne the burden of pollution for decades,” Regan said in a speech at the University of Maryland.

If finalized, the proposed regulation would mark the first time the federal government has restricted carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants, which generate about 25% of U.S. greenhouse gas pollution, second only to the transportation sector. The rule also would apply to future electric plants and would avoid up to 617 million metric tons of carbon dioxide through 2042, equivalent to annual emissions of 137 million passenger vehicles, the EPA said.

Almost all the coal plants — along with large, frequently used gas-fired power plants — would have to cut or capture nearly all their carbon dioxide emissions by 2038, the EPA said. Plants that cannot meet the new standards would be forced to retire.

Report: Record 71M people internally displaced in 2022

Associated Press

The war in Ukraine helped push the global total of people left internally displaced by conflict or natural disasters to a record high of 71.1 million last year, according to a report released Thursday by the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

By the end of 2022, 5.9 million people had been forced to move inside Ukraine because of Russia's invasion, bringing the global total of people internally displaced by conflict and violence to more than 62 million, an increase of 17% since 2021. Syria had 6.8 million displaced by conflict after more than a decade of civil war.

The number of people displaced inside their country at the end of the year because

of disasters like floods and famine reached 8.7 million, up by 45% from 2021.

The total of 71.1 million internally displaced worldwide was a 20% increase since 2021.

Internal displacement refers to people forced to move inside their own borders, and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's report didn't take into account those who left for different countries.

Following a year when conflict raged in Ukraine, Syria, Ethiopia and elsewhere, there has been no respite in 2023. The United Nations migration agency said this week that 700,000 people have been internally displaced in a matter of weeks by the conflict in Sudan between the army and a rival paramilitary group.

Pakistan's Supreme Court orders release of former PM Imran Khan

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, whose arrest earlier this week sparked a wave of violence across the country by his supporters.

After the ruling, clashes quickly erupted near the Supreme Court building between police and hundreds of celebrating supporters of the former premier. As police swung batons and fired tear gas, protesters with sticks smashed police car windows.

For a nation accustomed to military takeovers, political crises and violence, the turmoil of the past week has been unprecedented. Since Khan's dramatic arrest on Tuesday, protesters have been clashing with police in areas around the country, and mobs have attacked military and government sites, trying to storm the military's main headquarters and burning down the residence of a top general in Lahore. The government responded with a crackdown on Khan's supporters, arresting more than 2,000 so far.

As the Supreme Court ruled Khan's arrest two days ago was illegal, Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday urged Khan to appeal to his supporters to remain peaceful.

Though Khan was released from custody, the court ordered him kept under protection of security forces in a safe location in the capital, Islamabad, the head of his legal team, Babar Awan, told reporters. Awan underlined that Khan is a "free citizen" and will be allowed to meet with lawyers and supporters. Khan is next to appear before the Islamabad High Court on Friday, Awan said.

Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif denounced the Supreme Court ruling at a press conference, calling it a "special reprieve" for Khan and saying the court was ignoring his supporters' attacks on military installations.

The violence has escalated a long burning confrontation between the former prime minister and the current government of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. Khan was removed from office a year ago by a no-confidence vote in Parliament, but he still holds fervent support in many areas. He also faces at least 100 criminal charges against him filed by various government agencies, mostly on corruption. Khan has depicted his removal and the charges as part of a campaign against him by Sharif, the United States and the Pakistani military — a claim all three have denied.

Israeli airstrikes kill at least two militant leaders

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip killed two militant commanders on Thursday, the army said, as the Palestinian death toll from the latest burst of fighting rose to 28. Rocket fire toward southern Israel continued even as Egypt pressed on with attempts to broker a cease-fire.

It has been the worst bout of fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza in months, and among the dead were also women and children. The conflagration, now in its third day, comes at a time of soaring tensions and spiking violence over the past year in the occupied West Bank.

Early on Thursday, the Israeli military carried out strikes against the Islamic Jihad militant group and said a senior commander in charge of the group's rocket launching force, Ali Ghali, was killed when his apartment was hit.

Later in the day, Israel said it killed another Islamic Jihad commander who was meant to replace Ghali in southern Gaza. Islamic Jihad confirmed the man, Ahmed Abu Daqqa, was one of its commanders.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said 28 people — including at least 10 civilians — have been killed since the fighting erupted. Among the dead were at least nine Islamic Jihad militants and nine others, including four whom Israel said were killed in failed rocket launches, whose affiliation remained uncertain.

Military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari told Israeli Army Radio that two other militants were also killed in the early morning strike, although no group immediately claimed them as members, and that the rest of the building remained intact.

"The apartment was targeted in a very precise way," Hagari said. "I hope this leads to a reduction, a blow and a disruption of the Islamic Jihad rocket abilities."

The strikes targeted the top floor of a building in a residential, Qatari-built complex in southern Gaza Strip. The pre-dawn airstrike in the city of Khan Younis caused damage to three surrounding buildings. The complex, known as Hamad City, consists of several tall buildings and thousands of housing units. The strike created panic among residents, with falling debris and shattered glass littering the streets.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

After 100-plus years, last grads leave university

MI HANCOCK — After more than a century, a university in Michigan's Upper Peninsula has celebrated its last group of graduates.

Nearly 100 graduates crossed a stage Sunday at Finlandia University, which had announced in March that it would close, citing debt, low enrollment and other challenges.

"This is not a funeral," Stephen Nikander, whose great-grandfather founded what began as Suomi College, told graduates. "Commencement means beginning. As your post-collegiate lives begin, know that you received a unique valuable learning experience here."

Finlandia was founded in 1896 by Finnish Lutheran immigrants. It is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ex-federal agent gets life sentence for sex assaults

CA RIVERSIDE — A former U.S. Homeland Security special agent was sentenced to life in federal prison Monday for sexually assaulting two women he silenced by telling them he was "above the law."

John Jacob Olivas, 48, of Riverside, was sentenced by a judge who said he had engaged in "systematic torture of women" and his victims would "live with this trauma for the rest of their lives," the U.S. attorney's office said in a statement.

Last December, Olivas was found guilty of three counts of deprivation of rights under color of law.

Olivas began his career with

Immigration and Customs Enforcement in 2007 and resigned in 2015 after working for more than six years as a Homeland Security special agent. Olivas attacked both women in 2012, prosecutors said.

One victim testified that Olivas tried to rape her "after making it clear to her that the police would not be responsive to any report she would make about Olivas because he was 'above a cop,' and 'untouchable' and 'invisible' to police" because of his federal position, the U.S. attorney's office statement said.

2 set for trial in shooting at FedEx driver's van

MS BROOKHAVEN — An August trial has been set for two white men in Mississippi who are accused of chasing and shooting at a Black FedEx driver who had dropped off a package at a home.

Brandon Case and his father, Gregory Charles Case, were indicted in November on charges of attempted first-degree murder, conspiracy and shooting into the vehicle of D'Monterrio Gibson in January 2022.

On Monday, Lincoln County Circuit Court Judge David Strong set Aug. 8 as the starting date for their trial, the Daily Leader reported.

Gibson, who was 24 at the time, was not injured.

Days after the incident, Gibson said he was wearing a FedEx uniform and was driving an unmarked van that FedEx had rented when he dropped off a package at a house in Brookhaven. He said as he was leaving, he noticed a white pickup truck pulling away from another house on the same large lot.

Gibson said the pickup driver

tried to cut him off as he left the driveway. Gibson said he swerved around the driver and then encountered a second man who had a gun pointed at the van. Gibson said the man fired as he drove away. He said the pickup chased him to Interstate 55 before ending the pursuit.

Man convicted of killing prison director fully freed

OR PORTLAND — A man who spent nearly three decades in prison for the 1989 killing of Oregon's prisons director has been granted his full freedom.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John V. Acosta ordered the Marion County murder indictment against Frank Gable be dismissed on Monday and prohibited the state from retrying him in the death of Oregon prison chief Michael Francke, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Gable left prison in 2019 after the judge found that the trial court made an error in excluding evidence of third-party guilt. He has remained on federal supervision.

John Crouse, a Salem man who had then been on parole for a robbery, repeatedly said he killed Francke, telling law enforcement officers as well as relatives and a girlfriend that he stabbed Francke when Francke caught Crouse burglarizing his car. Crouse is dead.

Senate overrides veto of clean home heating bill

VT MONTPELIER — The Democrat-controlled Vermont Senate voted Tuesday to override Republican Gov. Phil Scott's veto of a bill encouraging Vermonters to move

away from using fossil fuels to heat their homes in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A two-thirds vote is needed to override a gubernatorial veto. The vote was 20-10.

Now a veto override must be considered in the House.

Scott vetoed the Affordable Heat Act last week. He said he supports the bill's goal, but he believes the legislation would give too much authority to the unelected Public Utilities Commission and could end up punishing Vermonters who are least able to afford to switch. He vetoed a similar bill last year.

Governor schedules special session on gun measures

TN NASHVILLE — Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee on Monday announced that he would call lawmakers back to the state's Capitol on Aug. 21 for a special session after the Republican-led Legislature adjourned earlier this year without taking on gun control.

The announcement comes weeks after six people — including three young children — were killed in a Nashville school shooting. The tragedy sparked Lee, a Republican, to urge the General Assembly to pass legislation that would keep firearms away from people who could harm themselves or others. But instead, GOP leaders moved to quickly adjourn rather than take up the governor's request.

Lee has mounted a campaign for "temporary mental health orders of protection" and has maintained that it is not a so-called red flag law, which he has described as a "toxic political label."

— From wire reports

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Curry, Warriors beat Lakers to force Game 6

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Draymond Green loved Golden State's defensive energy against LeBron James and knows the Warriors must bring that same urgency back to Los Angeles with another chance to save this topsy-turvy season and defend their title.

They need the same focus again whether or not Lakers star Anthony Davis is clogging up the middle after he suffered a head injury in the fourth quarter.

Stephen Curry had 27 points and eight assists, Andrew Wiggins added 25 points, seven rebounds and five assists, and the reigning champion Warriors staved off elimination by beating the Lakers 121-106 in Game 5 of the Western Conference semifinals Wednesday night.

The Warriors have rallied before with this core group on the big postseason stage, becoming the first defending champion to

come back from 2-0 down to beat Sacramento in the first round.

"We're champions, so there's pressure every time you step on the floor," Green said. "You go out there, you don't win people are ready to crush you. People forget about the things that you've done in the past."

James had 25 points and nine rebounds for Los Angeles. Davis added 23 points and nine rebounds but went to the locker room late after getting hit in the head by Kevon Looney as they fought for position in the paint on D'Angelo Russell's layup with 7:43 remaining.

Davis grabbed at his head grimacing before going to the locker room. His status for Game 6 on Friday night back in Los Angeles is unclear, but coach Darvin Ham was encouraged afterward without providing details on what evaluation — such as concussion testing — the big man went through once in the locker room. TNT reported Da-

vis required a wheelchair to go to the locker room.

"Obviously, everyone saw he took a shot to the head, but we just checked in on him, he seems to be doing really good already," Ham said. "That's just where he's at. That's the status of it right now."

Austin Reaves made a three-pointer with 5:25 to play that cut the Warriors' lead to single digits at 104-95 only for Curry to answer with five straight points, then he hit another big shot after Russell connected from deep.

Green contributed 20 points and 10 rebounds as Golden State played tough defense that led to better chances on the offensive end — just as coach Steve Kerr has challenged his team to do.

"Our defensive mindfulness was there," Curry said.

Now, it's back to LA where the Lakers are 5-0 at home this postseason, having won eight consecutive games on their own floor since losing to the Bulls on

March 26.

Golden State is trying to rally from a 3-1 series deficit for only the second time in franchise history and will try to win one more to bring Game 7 back to Chase Center on Sunday. The Warriors rallied from 3-1 down in the 2016 Western Conference finals against Oklahoma City.

Curry beat the halftime buzzer with a three-pointer over Lonnie Walker IV as the Warriors took a 70-59 lead. The 70 first-half points were the most by Golden State in the playoffs since scoring 72 in a Game 6 first-round win over the Clippers in 2019. The last team to score 70 or more in the first half of a playoff game versus the Lakers was Phoenix with 71 in Game 4 of the 2000 second round.

"I have a lot of confidence we can come back in this series," Curry said. "And until otherwise, we stay in that kind of mindset."

Brunson, Knicks top Heat to cut deficit to just a game

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jalen Brunson never talked to his coach about how many minutes he would play, or how many points he had to score.

In the situation the Knicks faced, there's no need for talk.

"Nothing was said at all," Brunson said. "Whatever it takes."

It might take the same effort again in two nights.

Brunson had 38 points, nine rebounds and seven assists while playing all 48 minutes in a season-extending performance, and New York beat the Miami Heat 112-103 on Wednesday night in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The Knicks denied the Heat's first attempt to become just the second No. 8 seed to reach the conference finals and sent the series back to Miami for Game 6 on Friday night.

RJ Barrett added 26 points and Julius Randle — his face a little swollen after getting hit by Bam Adebayo in the first quarter — had 24 for the fifth-seeded Knicks, who

stayed alive in hopes of reaching the conference finals for the first time since 2000. They did that by getting by the Heat in seven games in the second round, a possibility that still exists.

The Knicks built a 19-point lead in the third quarter, then hung on when the Heat finally got their three-pointers to start falling and cut it to two with 2½ minutes remaining.

"You've got to kind of scratch and claw and do whatever you can to win the game," Barrett said.

Jimmy Butler had 19 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Heat, getting held below 25 points for the first time in this postseason. Adebayo added 18 points and Duncan Robinson had 17.

Butler poured in 42 points when the Heat finished off Milwaukee in Game 5 in the first round but took only 12 shots Wednesday, even while playing the entire second half.

"It doesn't matter if I score 40 or 50 or 19 or nine, we always have enough to win," Butler said. "And if I score 10 points in that

game and we win, that wouldn't be an issue, wouldn't be a question and I will continue to play the right way."

The 1999 Knicks, for now, remain the only No. 8 to get to a conference finals in the current playoff format that began in 1984. They got all the way to the NBA Finals after upsetting the top-seeded Heat in the first round.

The Knicks used a pair of huge quarter-opening runs — 18-2 to begin the second and 23-7 in the third — to build a 73-54 lead midway through the third quarter. The Heat got it all the way down to 103-101 before Isaiah Hartenstein — in the game because the Heat were intentionally fouling starting center Mitchell Robinson — slammed home a follow dunk to start New York's finishing kick.

Only once the Knicks had held on could Brunson finally get a break.

"You have to respect him as a competitor and then find a way to get the job done," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "And he was able to get the job done, make those big, important plays."

Rookie goalie Woll helps Leafs stay alive

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — There was an unintentional assist from one of the referees. There was a nearly flawless performance from a rookie goalie making his first playoff start. And there was no sense of panic.

Toronto is going home — for another game, not to start the off-season.

Joseph Woll stopped 24 shots in his first playoff start, Mitch Marner and William Nylander had the goals and the Maple Leafs staved off elimination by beating the Florida Panthers 2-1 in Game 4 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series Wednesday night.

“It was a pretty awesome game to get put into,” Woll said.

Another pretty awesome chance awaits Friday, when Game 5 will be on Toronto’s ice.

Sam Reinhart scored for Florida, which got 23 saves from Sergei Bobrovsky. The Panthers still lead the series 3-1, though their franchise-

playoff-record six-game winning streak is now over.

“We lost a game today. That happens in the playoffs,” Panthers coach Paul Maurice said. “We’re good. We’re OK. We get to play the next one. I think we’re all good with that. It wasn’t so fabulous a win that they’re not going to let us play the next one.”

Nylander was the beneficiary of an odd bounce for a power-play score in the second period, Marner scored midway through the third and Woll did the rest as he took the place of injured starter Ilya Samsonov.

Woll, who turns 25 on July 12, was bidding to become the youngest Toronto goalie to have a playoff shutout since Felix Potvin — then 23 — stopped 42 shots to beat Chicago 3-0 on May 9, 1995.

He was 7:47 away from pulling it off.

Reinhart — who had the OT winner in Game 3 — took a quick pass from Matthew Tka-

chuk and found a way to just get the puck through Woll’s leg pads for a power-play score, cutting Toronto’s lead to 2-1. The Leafs called their timeout immediately after the goal, just to calm everyone down.

“I thought we were playing a really good period to that point,” Leafs coach Sheldon Keefe said. “It really was to give our guys a breath. ... I didn’t have to say much.”

Woll didn’t have to do the job alone, either. Toronto blocked 21 shots as a team.

“We’re just going to keep fighting,” Leafs forward John Tavares said.

Nylander’s surname is pronounced KNEE-lander, which seemed fitting on the opening goal.

Toronto went more than five full periods — 107 minutes and 46 seconds, to be exact, going back to late in the second period of Game 2 — without a power play until Florida’s Eetu Luostarinen got called for high-

sticking the Leafs’ Michael Bunting early in the second period.

And the Leafs cashed in, thanks to the hockey gods who oversee crazy bounces.

Bunting tried dumping the puck around the net from the right-wing boards, only to have it bounce off the knee of referee Jon McIsaac as he tried to get out of the way. It skipped to the front of the net, where Nylander knocked it past Bobrovsky for a 1-0 Toronto lead.

“A bit unlucky bounce, but it is what it is,” Bobrovsky said. “Again, I thought we had a good game. We compete. We fight. We played a solid defensive game. They are a good team as well, so that’s the score tonight.”

It was the first goal of the series for Toronto’s big four players of Nylander, Auston Matthews, Tavares and Marner.

“It’s not going to get easier,” Nylander said.

Nugent-Hopkins, Oilers even series with Golden Knights

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The Edmonton Oilers bounced back nicely from a bad home loss.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins had a goal and an assist as the Oilers beat the Vegas Golden Knights 4-1 Wednesday night to even their second-round playoff series at two games apiece.

Nick Bjugstad, Evan Bouchard and Mattias Ekholm also scored as the Oilers built a four-goal lead in the second period. Connor McDavid had two assists and Stuart Skinner stopped 25 shots.

“We’ve got to follow it up,” McDavid said. “Someone’s got to do it two nights in a row. It’s got to be us.”

Nicolas Roy scored in the third period for Vegas. Adin Hill stopped 29 shots in his first NHL playoff start after playing

minutes in the two previous games of the series.

Game 5 of the best-of-seven series is Friday night at Las Vegas, and Game 6 will be back in Edmonton on Sunday.

“We think when we’re at our best, we are a very tough team to handle,” Oilers coach Jay Woodcroft said. “I’ve seen it so far in two of the four games. The challenge is going to be to put them together back to back and win a game in a tough building.”

The Golden Knights took the first game 6-4 and the Oilers the second 5-1 in Las Vegas. Edmonton lost 5-1 at home in Game 3 before earning a split with this win. The Oilers must win on the road at least once to advance to the Western Conference finals.

“It was a great response to-

night, but we need to replicate that in Game 5,” Nugent-Hopkins said.

Golden Knights defenseman Alex Pietrangolo took a major and a game misconduct with less than 90 seconds remaining. After Leon Draisaitl shot wide of an empty net, Pietrangolo slashed the Oilers’ forward across the arms. McDavid then sought retribution in the corner from Pietrangolo.

“You’d like to see it reviewed for sure,” McDavid said. “I mean it’s as intent to injure as you can get. ... Time, score, clock, all play a factor. He comes from over his own head and places it kind of under Leon’s chin. You’d like to see something like that suspended. It’s not a hockey play.”

It came late in a penalty-filled third period, with all the

infractions coming in the final 10 minutes. Vegas’ Chandler Stephenson and Jonathan Marchessault were assessed misconducts, along with Edmonton’s Kailer Yamamoto and Evander Kane earlier in the period. The Golden Knights’ Nicolas Hague and the Oilers’ Darnell Nurse were also sent off for fighting, with Nurse getting an instigator penalty and a misconduct as well. Vegas’ Brett Howden also received a misconduct with 25 seconds remaining.

Bjugstad, coming off Edmonton’s bench, forced a turnover by Shea Theodore in the offensive zone. When Klim Kostin missed the net, Bjugstad got the puck behind the goal line and banked a backhand off Hill’s leg at 6:46 of the first period to give the Oilers a 1-0 lead.

NFL season kicks off with Lions-Chiefs

Associated Press

Patrick Mahomes and the Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs will kick off the 2023 season against the upstart Detroit Lions in a matchup of high-powered offenses while Aaron Rodgers will make his New York Jets debut on “Monday Night Football” against the Buffalo Bills.

Coming off their second championship in four seasons, the Chiefs will host the Lions on Sept. 7 on “Thursday Night Football.” The Lions finished 9-8 last season after a 1-6 start and knocked Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers out of the playoffs with a 20-16 victory at Lambeau Field in the final regular-season game.

Mahomes, the two-time NFL MVP, led the Chiefs to a 38-35 comeback win over the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super

Bowl.

Fans will get their first look at Rodgers in his new green-and-white No. 8 Jets jersey when New York hosts Josh Allen and the Bills in an AFC East battle on Sept. 11, according to early details released Thursday on this year’s NFL schedule.

The NFL planned to release the full schedule on Thursday night.

Other games revealed Thursday include a rematch of the NFC championship game in Week 13. Jalen Hurts and the Eagles will host the San Francisco 49ers on Dec. 3. The Eagles knocked quarterback Brock Purdy out of the conference title game on their way to a dominant 31-7 win. Purdy had elbow surgery in the offseason but should be ready by the time the teams meet again.

Mahomes and the Chiefs will

host AFC West rival Las Vegas in the early game on Christmas Day and the Dallas Cowboys will visit San Francisco on “Sunday Night Football” in Week 5.

The New England Patriots also announced seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady will be honored at the team’s home opener. Brady, who led the Patriots to six Super Bowl titles, retired in February after spending the last three seasons with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

On Wednesday, the NFL announced that Trevor Lawrence and the Jacksonville Jaguars will become the first NFL team to play two international games in the same season when they spend back-to-back weeks in London this year.

The Jaguars will host the Atlanta Falcons at Wembley Stadium on Oct. 1 and visit the Bills at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium

on Oct. 8. The Jaguars were set to play two designated home games in London in 2020 but the pandemic canceled those plans.

The NFL also announced dates for three other international games. The Tennessee Titans will host the Baltimore Ravens at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Oct. 15. The Chiefs will host the Miami Dolphins in Germany at Eintracht Frankfurt Stadium on Nov. 5. The New England Patriots will host the Indianapolis Colts on Nov. 12, also in Frankfurt.

The league also revealed Wednesday that Rodgers and the Jets will host the Dolphins in the first Black Friday game on Nov. 24. The Eagles will host the New York Giants on Christmas Day and the Chiefs will host Joe Burrow and the Cincinnati Bengals in a rematch of the AFC championship game in Week 17.

PGA Championship has 99 of top 100 in the field

Associated Press

The PGA Championship stuck to its mission of getting the strongest field of the four majors, announcing a field Wednesday that includes 99 of the top 100 in the world ranking no matter what tour they play.

Kerry Haigh, the chief championships officer for the PGA of America, said in February that players from all tours would be considered to assemble a strong field, and he delivered a field that looks no different from previous years.

The only player from the top 100 not in the field is Will Zalatoris, who is No. 9 in the world and out for the rest of the season after surgery on his lower back. Tiger Woods is not playing, either, because of ankle surgery last month that likely will keep him out of the next two majors.

Also missing from the 155-player list is Sergio Garcia, the former Masters champion who had been eligible for every ma-

yor dating to the 1999 British Open at Carnoustie.

The PGA Championship starts next Thursday at Oak Hill just outside Rochester, N.Y.

The field has 18 players from Saudi-funded LIV Golf — the same number from the 89-man field at the Masters last month.

That includes Phil Mickelson, who won the 2021 PGA Championship at Kiawah Island at age 50 to become the oldest major champion. He missed his title defense last year while taking time off after his inflammatory comments about both the Saudis and the PGA Tour.

LIV Golf still does not get Official World Golf Ranking points for its 48-man fields and 54-hole events while its application remains under review. A number of players who fell out of the top 100 were not invited: Cameron Tringale (103), Jason Kokrak (110), Sebastian Munoz (111) and Kevin Na (117).

Kokrak, Na and former Brit-

ish Open champion Louis Oosthuizen (163) were at the Masters from having been among the top 50 at the end of last year. Oosthuizen, a runner-up at Kiawah Island two years ago, had been eligible for every major dating to 2009.

Garcia’s history in the majors goes back another decade. The last time he was not eligible was for the U.S. Open in 1999 — he was 19 and in his second month as a pro. Garcia did not play the 2020 Masters held in November because he tested positive for the coronavirus. The Spaniard currently is No. 189 in the world.

The PGA of America does not say what constitutes a special invitation, though it offered one to Webb Simpson (No. 150 in the world ranking) and LIV player Paul Casey (131).

Casey tied for fourth at the PGA Championship in 2021 and did not return last year after missing four months with a back injury.

One spot in the field remains for the winner of this week’s AT&T Byron Nelson if not already eligible. The PGA typically uses its points list — a PGA Tour money ranking over the last 12 months — to fill spots in the field.

Next in line would be Alex Smalley, who was born in Rochester. Smalley is No. 102 in the world ranking and withdrew from the Byron Nelson earlier this week.

Justin Thomas is the defending champion. He rallied from seven shots behind last year at Southern Hills and defeated Zalatoris in a three-hole aggregate playoff.

Among other players receiving special invitations were Danish twins Nicolai and Rasmus Hojgaard, both among the top 115 of the world ranking. Rikuya Hoshino (No. 125) received an exemption. He finished second on the Japan Golf Tour money list last year.