

Probe: Problems plague SEAL training

LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The training program for Navy SEALs is plagued by widespread failures in medical care, poor oversight and the use of performance-enhancing drugs that have increased the risk of injury and death to those seeking to become elite commandos, according to an investigation triggered by the death of a sailor last year.

Medical oversight and care were “poorly organized, poorly integrated and poorly led and put candidates at significant risk,” the nearly 200-page report compiled by the Naval Education and Training Command concluded.

The highly critical report said flaws in the medical program “likely had the most direct impact on the health and well be-

ing” of the SEAL candidates and “specifically” on Kyle Mullen, the sailor who died. It said if the shortcomings had been addressed, his death may have been preventable.

The investigation also dug deep into the longstanding problem of sailors using steroids and similar banned drugs as they try to pass the SEAL qualification course. The report recommends far more robust testing for the drugs — a move the Navy and the military more broadly have been slow to make — and better education for service members in order to prevent their use.

Mullen collapsed and died of acute pneumonia just hours after completing the grueling Hell Week test last year. A report released in October by Naval Special Warfare Command con-

cluded that Mullen, 24, died “in the line of duty, not due to his own misconduct.”

It said there was no evidence of performance-enhancing drugs, but that he had an enlarged heart that contributed to his death. The report said, however, that he was not tested for some steroids because needed blood and urine samples were not available, and that multiple vials of drugs and syringes were later found in his car.

His death shined a light on the brutal test that pushes SEAL candidates to their limits. During the five-and-a-half-day test, which involves basic underwater demolition and survival and other combat tactics, sailors are allowed to sleep just twice, for two-hour periods only. It tests physical, mental and psychological strength along with leader-

ship skills, and is so grueling that at least 50% to 60% don’t finish it.

Navy leaders conducted multiple reviews and investigations in the wake of his death, and this latest report makes a lengthy series of recommendations for changes to medical care staffing and training and to drug testing.

Rear Adm. Keith Davids, who heads Naval Special Warfare Command, said the Navy will learn from the tragedy and was already taking steps to prevent it from happening again.

“Our effectiveness as the Navy’s maritime special operations force necessitates demanding, high-risk training,” Davids said in a statement. “While rigorous and intensely demanding, our training must be conducted with an unwavering commitment to safety

Guam ‘blessed’ with no early reports of major damage

Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam — Chainsaws buzzed Friday as neighbors helped neighbors clear toppled trees and began cleaning the wreckage of Typhoon Mawar, which walloped Guam as the strongest typhoon to hit the island in more than two decades but appeared to have passed without leaving death or massive destruction in its wake.

While it was still early in the recovery effort, police Sgt. Paul Tapao said there did not seem to be any major damage, main roads were passable and “Guam has been very blessed to have no storm-related deaths or any serious injuries.”

To Tapao, the roar of the mechanical saws was a reminder of the resilience of the storm-

prone U.S. Pacific territory and its people.

“Everyone helps out with the cleaning,” he said. “That’s the Guamanian way — that’s embedded in the blood.”

He added that there’s a saying in Chamorro — the indigenous language of the Mariana Islands — “inafa maolek,” that means cooperation, a concept of restoring harmony or order.

“Storms have taught our island to be resilient,” he said. “We’re still here.”

Still, officials said it could take weeks to clean up the mess after Mawar briefly made landfall as a Category 4 storm Wednesday night on the northern tip of the island of roughly 150,000 people, flipping cars, tearing off roofs and leaving

trees bare.

Some villages had little or no water Friday, Tapao said. About 51,000 customers were without electricity, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. There were 725 people in shelters Friday, down from nearly 1,000 on Thursday, officials said.

Water contamination from the heavy rains and runoff was a concern. The Guam Waterworks Authority advised residents to boil water before drinking it, and the Guam Environmental Protection Agency warned people to stay out of the sea at all beaches because of high bacteria content.

The central and northern parts of the island received more than 2 feet of rain as the

eyewall passed. The swirling typhoon churned up a storm surge and waves that crashed through coastal reefs and swamped houses.

On Friday, President Joe Biden declared that a major disaster exists for Guam and ordered federal aid to supplement recovery efforts.

The storm is forecast to continue moving northwest before turning sharply north Tuesday or Wednesday, according to Taiwan’s Central Weather Bureau. That track would keep the typhoon at sea for days as it gradually weakens.

The Navy has ordered the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier strike group to head to the island to assist in the recovery effort, according to a U.S. official.

Russia says border regions attacked

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia's southern Belgorod region bordering Ukraine came under attack Friday from Ukrainian artillery fire, mortar shells and drones, authorities said, hours after two drones struck a Russian city in an area next to the annexed Crimea Peninsula.

Moscow's forces, meanwhile, struck a building containing psychology and veterinary clinics in the city of Dnipro, in central Ukraine, killing two people and wounding 30, including two children, Ukrainian officials said.

Video released by regional Gov. Serhiy Lysak showed fire engulfing the three-story building that appeared almost destroyed, with only parts of a wall standing, as firefighters battled the flames.

In addition, a Russian S-300 missile hit a dam in the Karlivka district of Donetsk province in eastern Ukraine, threatening nearby settlements with flooding.

The town of Graivoron in Russia's Belgorod region, about 4 miles from the Ukrainian border, came under fire for several hours, damaging four houses, a store, a car, a gas pipeline and a power line, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported.

Closer to the frontier, a recreation center, a shop and an empty house were damaged in the village of Glotovo. One woman was wounded when nearby Novaya Tavolzhanka was shelled, Gladkov said.

Earlier this week, the Belgorod region was the target of one of the most serious cross-border attacks from Ukraine since the war began 15 months ago. Details of the raid were murky. Russia blamed the Ukrainian armed forces, but two Russian groups said they were involved, with the aim of bringing down Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Officials in Russia's southern city of Krasnodar, in the region of the same name bordering Crimea, said two drones struck

there. Witnesses told local media they heard something like the sound of a moped and then two explosions.

The blasts smashed a hole in the roof of one building and blew out windows in an apartment building.

"We just went to bed and then there was such a strong, terrible boom," said resident Tatiana Safonova. "We ran outside. There were people running, but nothing else was going on."

She said described the sound beforehand "like a growling, noisy moped driving by."

Krasnodar regional Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev wrote on Telegram that there were no casualties and that some buildings were damaged but essential infrastructure was unharmed.

Krasnodar Mayor Yevgeny Naumov said a residential building and an office building were damaged.

Drone attacks against Russian border regions have been a

regular occurrence since the start of the invasion in February 2022, with attacks increasing last month. Earlier this month, an oil refinery in Krasnodar was attacked by drones on two straight days.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry on Thursday published video that appeared to show a marine drone heading for Russia's Ivan Khurs reconnaissance ship in the Black Sea. The video didn't show the drone hitting the ship.

The video followed reports by Russia's Defense Ministry on Wednesday that Ukraine had launched an unsuccessful attack on the Ivan Khurs using three unmanned speedboats, with all three destroyed prior to reaching the ship. Moscow released video allegedly showing the destruction of one of the marine drones.

At least two civilians were killed and three others wounded in Russian attacks on Ukraine in the previous 24 hours, the Ukrainian president's office reported Friday.

Abrams tanks for training Ukrainians now in Europe

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday that more than 30 American-made M1 Abrams tanks for training Ukrainians have arrived in Europe, so they are prepared for when the battle-ready versions arrive later in the year.

"Earlier this month, 31 M1 Abrams training tanks from the United States arrived at Grafenwöhr in Germany," Austin said at the start of a virtual meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, a collection of about 50 nations that convenes regularly to decide what equipment Uk-

rainian forces need to fend off invading Russian forces.

The United States is still working on sending nearly three dozen battle-ready M1 Abrams tanks in the coming months, which are being refurbished with defense contractors.

Roughly 250 Ukrainian troops will arrive in Germany this week to begin training on the tanks, according to a report by Voice of America.

The meeting of the defense contact group covered some new issues, such as the recent international agreement to train Ukrainian pilots on fourth-gen-

eration fighter jets, including the U.S.-made F-16 Fighting Falcon.

Last week, President Joe Biden announced that the United States will support a joint effort with allies to train the Ukrainian pilots. Austin said Thursday that the Pentagon hopes that training will begin in "the coming weeks." The U.S. has not yet announced any specific plans, however, to send any fighter jets for use in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the State Department announced Wednesday that it has approved a possible sale of weapons and equipment including a National Advanced

Surface-to-Air Missile System, or NASAMS, to Ukraine for \$285 million.

The sale of the missile system to Ukraine includes one 3D radar system, canister launchers, GPS receivers, code launchers and other elements of logistics and program support.

The U.S. has given nearly \$37 billion in military aid to Ukraine since the Russian invasion in February 2022. The aid packages have included various weapons, air defenses, millions of munitions and ammunition rounds, armored vehicles, drone systems and field equipment.

Biden, McCarthy close in on budget deal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House negotiators are making progress toward an agreement with the White House to raise the nation's debt ceiling, racing to close out a deal ahead of a looming deadline to avert a potentially catastrophic government default, Republican Speaker Kevin McCarthy said Friday.

But McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol there was still more work to do.

"I thought we made progress last night, we've got to make more progress now," he said. "Now we've got a short timeframe."

Democratic President Joe Biden and the Republican speaker are straining to strike a budget compromise by this weekend. The two sides are narrowing differences on a two-year agreement that would curb federal spending and lift the borrowing limit ahead of a deadline as soon as June 1 when Treasury could run out of money to pay the

nation's bills.

Any deal would need to be a political compromise, with support from both Democrats and Republicans to pass the divided Congress.

While the contours of the deal have been taking shape to cut spending for 2024 and impose a 1% cap on spending growth for 2025, the two sides remain stuck on various provisions. The debt ceiling, now at \$31 trillion, would be lifted for two years to pay the nation's incurred bills, past the political interference of the presidential election.

A person familiar with the talks said the two sides are "dug in" on whether or not to agree to Republican demands to impose stiffer work requirements on people who receive government food stamps, cash assistance and health care aid, some of the most vulnerable Americans.

Yet both Biden and McCarthy expressed

optimism heading into the weekend that the gulf between their positions could be bridged.

House Republicans have pushed the issue to the brink, displaying risky political bravado in leaving town for the Memorial Day holiday. The U.S. could face an unprecedented default hurling the global economy into chaos.

Lawmakers are tentatively not expected back at work until Tuesday, just two days from the early June deadline when Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the U.S. could start running out of cash to pay its bills and face a federal default.

Biden will also be away this weekend, departing Friday for the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, and Sunday for his home in Wilmington, Delaware. The Senate is on recess and will return after Memorial Day.

Judge to sentence 2 Oath Keepers members after founder gets 18 years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two members of the Oath Keepers who stormed the U.S. Capitol in a military-style formation were to be sentenced Friday, a day after the far-right extremist group's founder received an 18-year prison term for seditious conspiracy and other charges in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack.

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta will sentence Army veterans Jessica Watkins and Kenneth Harrelson after handing Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes the longest prison sentence so far in more than 1,000 criminal cases brought in the Jan. 6 riot.

Watkins and Harrelson were acquitted of seditious conspiracy but convicted of obstructing Congress in the trial alongside Rhodes and other members of the group that ended in November. One co-defendant, Florida chapter leader Kelly Meggs, was sentenced Thursday to 12 years in prison.

Harrelson was the group's "ground team lead" when Oath Keepers joined the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 and disrupted the joint session of Congress certifying President Joe Biden's electoral victory. Watkins founded and led a separate Ohio-based militia. Harrelson and Watkins marched toward the Capitol with other Oath Keepers members in "stack" formations.

Rhodes, 58, of Granbury, Texas, was the first Jan. 6 defendant convicted of seditious

conspiracy to receive his punishment for what prosecutors said was a weeklong plot to forcibly block the transfer of power from former President Donald Trump to Biden. Four other Oath Keepers convicted of the sedition charge during a second trial in January will be sentenced next week.

Justice Department prosecutors are seeking an 18-year prison sentence for Watkins, of Woodstock, Ohio, and a 15-year prison sentence for Harrelson, of Titusville, Fla.

Mehta canceled a sentencing hearing scheduled this week for another defendant — Thomas Caldwell of Berryville, Va. — as the judge weighs whether to overturn the jury's guilty verdict against Caldwell for obstruction and a documents tampering charge.

Lawyers for Oath Keepers argued there was no plan to attack the Capitol and insisted they never intended to interfere with Congress' certification of the election. Watkins testified at the trial that storming the Capitol was a "really stupid" decision, saying she got swept up in what seemed to be a "very American moment." Harrelson didn't take the witness stand.

During his sentencing Thursday, Rhodes defiantly claimed to be a "political prisoner," criticized prosecutors and the Biden administration and tried to play down his actions on Jan. 6.

20 impeachment charges are filed against Texas AG

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Following years of scandal, criminal charges and corruption accusations, Texas' Republican Attorney General, Ken Paxton, finds himself on the brink of impeachment, and a GOP-led panel is heading the charge.

In a unanimous decision, a Republican-led House investigative committee that spent months quietly looking into Paxton recommended impeaching the state's top lawyer Thursday on 20 articles, including bribery, unfitness for office and abuse of public trust.

The House could vote on the recommendation as soon as Friday. If it impeaches Paxton, he would be forced to leave office immediately.

The move sets up what could be a remarkably sudden downfall for one of the GOP's most prominent legal combatants, who in 2020 asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn President Joe Biden's victory. Only two officials in Texas' nearly 200-year history have been impeached.

Paxton has been under FBI investigation for years over accusations that he used his office to help a donor. He was separately indicted on securities fraud charges in 2015, but has yet to stand trial.

Supreme Court rolls back safeguards for wetlands

Associated Press

The U.S. Supreme Court has stripped federal agencies of authority over millions of acres of wetlands, weakening a bedrock environmental law enacted a half-century ago to cleanse the country's badly polluted waters.

A 5-4 majority significantly expanded the ability of farmers, homebuilders and other developers to dig up or fill wetlands near rivers, lakes and streams, finding the government had long overreached in limiting such activities.

The ruling Thursday may nullify key parts of a rule the Biden administration imposed in December, which two federal judges already had blocked from being enforced in 26 states. It's the latest turn in a decades-old struggle by courts and regulators to determine which waters are subject to protection under the Clean Water Act.

Some experts say the battle over wetlands now may shift to states, with red and blue states writing laws that take dramatically different approaches.

The high court's decision follows one in 2022 curtailing federal power to reduce carbon emissions from power plants and indicates a willingness by the court's emboldened conservatives to limit environmental laws and agency powers.

"This is one of the saddest chapters in the 50-year history of the Clean Water Act," said Jim Murphy, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation.

Industry and farm groups praised the ruling.

"We're absolutely thrilled with the results," said Travis Cushman, deputy general counsel for the American Farm Bureau Federation. "This is the exact answer that we've been asking for for a long time."

The court's majority sided with an Idaho couple who sought to build a house near Priest Lake in the state's panhandle. Chantell and Michael Sackett objected when federal officials identified a soggy portion of the property as a wetland, requiring them to get a permit before filling it with rocks and soil.

"Now that the case is finally over ... they'll be able to make reasonable use of their property," said Damien Schiff of the Pacific Legal Foundation, which represented the couple.

While all nine justices agreed the Sacketts' property was not covered by the law, they disagreed over the definition of "waters of the United States" and which wetlands it includes.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito, echoed a 2006 opinion by the late Justice Antonin Scalia. It said federally protected wetlands must be directly adjacent to a "relatively permanent" waterway "connected to traditional interstate navigable waters" such as a river or ocean.

They also must have a "continuous surface connection with that water, making it difficult to determine where the 'water' ends and the 'wetland' begins," Alito wrote.

The court jettisoned a 17-year-old opinion by their former colleague, Anthony Kennedy, describing covered wetlands as having a "significant nexus" to larger bodies of water.

US study: 1 in 10 get long COVID after omicron

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — About 10% of people appear to suffer long COVID after an omicron infection, a lower estimate than earlier in the pandemic, according to a study of nearly 10,000 Americans that aims to help unravel the mysterious condition.

Early findings from the National Institutes of Health's study highlight a dozen symptoms that most distinguish long COVID, the catchall term for the sometimes debilitating health problems that can last for months or years after even a mild case of COVID-19.

Millions worldwide have had long COVID, with dozens of widely varying symptoms including fatigue and brain fog. Scientists still don't know what causes it, why it only strikes some people, how to treat it — or even how to best diagnose it. Better defining the condition is key for research to get those answers.

The new research, published Thursday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, includes more than 8,600 adults who had COVID-19 at different points in the pandemic, comparing them to another 1,100 who hadn't been infected.

By some estimates, roughly 1 in 3 of COVID-19 patients have experienced long COVID. That's similar to NIH study participants who reported getting sick before the omicron variant began spreading in the U.S. in December 2021. That's also when the study opened, and researchers noted that people who already had long COVID symptoms might have been more likely to enroll.

DeSantis pushes past embarrassing campaign start

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Thursday sought to push past an embarrassing beginning to his presidential campaign, outlining an aggressive travel schedule as his allies insisted they remain well funded and well positioned for a long Republican primary fight ahead.

While DeSantis supporters privately acknowledged the bungled announcement was an unwelcome distraction, there was a broad sense — even among some Republican critics — that it would likely have limited long-term political consequences, if any

at all. For the doubters, the campaign confirmed Thursday night that it had raised \$8.2 million in the 24 hours since entering the race, a massive sum that far exceeded the amount raised by President Joe Biden over the same period.

"Do they wish they could do it over again? Probably," David Oman, a veteran Republican Iowa operative, said of DeSantis' glitch-ridden opening. "Will we be talking about it in 10 days? Probably not."

DeSantis formally launched his campaign Wednesday night during an online conversation with Twitter CEO Elon Musk.

But the audio stream crashed repeatedly, making it difficult for most users to hear the announcement in real time.

The Republican governor has announced plans for a three-state blitz next week featuring at least a dozen stops. He's scheduled to campaign Tuesday and Wednesday in Iowa before a trip to New Hampshire on Thursday and South Carolina on Friday.

"We are laser-focused on taking Gov. DeSantis' forward-thinking message for restoring America to every potential voter in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina," campaign manager Generra Peck said.

Groups decry Taliban restrictions on women

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Two top rights groups on Friday slammed the severe restrictions imposed on women and girls by the Taliban in Afghanistan as gender-based persecution, which is a crime against humanity.

In a new report, Amnesty International and the International Commission for Jurists, or ICJ, underscored how the Taliban crackdown on Afghan women's rights, coupled with "imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment," could constitute gender persecution under the International Criminal Court.

The report by Amnesty and ICJ, titled, "The Taliban's war on women: The crime against humanity of gender persecution in

Afghanistan," cited the ICC statute, which lists gender-based persecution as a crime against humanity.

The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021 as U.S. and NATO troops were in the final weeks of their withdrawal from the country after two decades of war.

Despite initial promises of a more moderate rule, the Taliban started to enforce restrictions on women and girls soon after their takeover, barring them from public spaces and most jobs, and banning education for girls beyond the sixth grade. The measures harked back to the previous Taliban rule of Afghanistan in the late 1990s, when they also imposed their strict interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia.

The harsh edicts prompted an international outcry against the already ostracized Taliban, whose administration has not been officially recognized by the United Nations and the international community.

In the report, Santiago A. Canton, the ICJ secretary general, said the Taliban's actions are of such "magnitude, gravity and of such a systematic nature," that they qualify "as a crime against humanity of gender persecution."

Both organizations called on the International Criminal Court to include this crime in their ongoing investigation into what is happening in Afghanistan and take legal action.

Doctor fined for talking about 10-year-old's abortion

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — An Indiana board decided Thursday night to reprimand an Indianapolis doctor after finding that she violated patient privacy laws by talking publicly about providing an abortion to a 10-year-old rape victim from neighboring Ohio.

The state Medical Licensing Board voted that Dr. Caitlin Bernard didn't abide by privacy laws when she told a reporter about the girl's treatment in a case that became a flashpoint in the national abortion debate days after the U.S. Supreme Court over-

turned *Roe v. Wade* last summer.

The board, however, rejected accusations from Indiana's Republican attorney general that Bernard violated state law by not reporting the child abuse to authorities. Board members chose to fine Bernard \$3,000 for the violations, turning down a request from the attorney general's office to suspend Bernard's license. The board issued no restrictions on her practice of medicine.

Bernard has consistently defended her actions, and she told the board on Thursday that she followed Indiana's reporting re-

quirements and hospital policy by notifying hospital social workers about the child abuse — and that the girl's rape was already being investigated by Ohio authorities. Bernard's lawyers also said that she didn't release any identifying information about the girl that would break privacy laws.

The Indianapolis Star cited the girl's case in a July 1 article that sparked a national political uproar in the weeks after last summer's *Roe v. Wade* decision put into effect an Ohio law that prohibited abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

Ford electric vehicles to get access to Tesla stations

Associated Press

DETROIT — All of Ford Motor Co.'s current and future electric vehicles will have access to about 12,000 Tesla Supercharger stations in the U.S. and Canada starting next spring.

Ford CEO Jim Farley and Tesla CEO Elon Musk announced the agreement Thursday during a "Twitter Spaces" audio chat.

"We think this is a huge move for our industry and for all electric customers," Farley said.

Musk said he didn't want Tesla's network to be a "walled garden" and that he wants to use it to support sustainable transportation.

"It is our intent to do everything possible to support Ford and have Ford be on an equal footing at Tesla Superchargers," Musk said.

Farley said there will be a cost to Ford owners, perhaps a monthly subscription, but he didn't give specifics. Details of any financial arrangement between Ford and Tesla were not announced.

At first, Ford's current electric vehicles will need an adapter to hook into the Tesla stations, which have their own connector. But Ford will switch to Tesla's North American Charging Standard connector with its second-generation EVs starting in 2025, Farley said.

Ford said Tesla's connector is smaller and lighter than those in use by other automakers.

Farley said Tesla's Superchargers have great locations.

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Celtics thrive on 3s, beat Heat 110-97

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Celtics have looked elimination in the face four times this postseason and still haven't blinked.

Derrick White had 24 points, including six 3-pointers, and the Celtics dominated the Miami Heat 110-97 on Thursday night in Game 5 to extend the Eastern Conference finals.

Marcus Smart had 23 points and five steals. Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown finished with 21 points apiece as the Celtics won their second straight and trimmed Miami's series lead to 3-2. The Celtics are halfway to becoming the first team in NBA history to overcome a 3-0 deficit to win a series.

"We've got to do whatever it takes to get a win," White said.

Boston also survived two elimination games in the second round against the 76ers. Teams that fell behind 3-0 are 0-150 all-time in series.

"It just says that our backs are against the wall and we're stick-

ing together and we're competing at a high level to give ourselves a chance," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said.

Game 6 is Saturday in Miami, where the Heat will try again to become the second No. 8 seed to reach the NBA Finals in the current format, which dates to 1984.

"We're always going to stay positive, knowing that we can and we will win the series," the Heat's Jimmy Butler said. "We just have to close it out at home."

A day after the Florida Panthers punched the franchise's first ticket to the Stanley Cup Finals since 1996, for the second straight game the Heat were denied a spot in the NBA Finals.

"One game doesn't lead to the next game," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "It just doesn't matter. It's about collectively preparing and putting together a great game. We'll play much better on Saturday. That's all we just have to focus on right now."

Duncan Robinson led the

Heat with 18 points. Bam Adebayo added 16 points and eight rebounds. Butler had 14 points, five rebounds and five assists, but sat out the final 9:47 of the game. Caleb Martin finished with 14 points.

It was Butler's lowest-scoring game of the playoffs. He had 16 points in Game 3, a blowout win by Miami.

Miami never led and had 16 turnovers.

"I don't want to say we're surprised by it, but they raised their level," Robinson said. "We've got to raise ours now as well."

Boston entered the day just 4-5 at TD Garden this postseason. But with a raucous home crowd behind them, the Celtics thrived on their energy.

They dove for loose balls, out-fought Miami for rebounds and found each other for layups and dunks in transition as they built as much as a 20-point lead in the first half.

The Heat cut into it, but Bos-

ton kept knocking down 3s and grew its edge as high as 96-72 in the fourth quarter.

Boston's fans reignited a "Beat the Heat!" chant that hadn't been prevalent since Game 1.

The Heat started Kyle Lowry at point guard after Gabe Vincent was ruled out with a sprained left ankle earlier in the day. It was Lowry's first start since Feb. 2.

Vincent, the Heat's third-leading scorer this postseason, got hurt late in Miami's Game 4 loss when he landed awkwardly while trying to save a loose ball near the Heat bench.

His presence was missed as Miami struggled early on the offensive end, swarmed by a Celtics' defense that forced the Heat into 10 first-half turnovers that led to 17 Boston points. Lowry played 31 minutes, scored five points and finished with four turnovers.

"I think now it's a series," Brown said.

Hall crashes the 'Block' party at Colonial with 62

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — California club pro Michael Block was living the dream at the PGA Championship. Thursday at Colonial brought him back to reality.

A sensation at Oak Hill when he tied for 15th against the strongest field in golf, Block opened with three straight bogeys and finished with three double bogeys over his last four holes of an 11-over 81 that left him in last place and 19 shots behind Harry Hall in the Charles Schwab Challenge.

Block received a sponsor exemption — he has one for the RBC Canadian Open next week, too — after his amazing week at the PGA Championship. He was on "CBS This Morning," received a text from Michael Jor-

dan and signed with WME Sports.

"I've got nothing," he said to himself after a tee shot on the 13th barely cleared the water and finished on the back left of a green that had a front right pin.

"If you are a golfer, you've had the day I've had," Block said after his worst score by seven shots in the four PGA Tour-level events he has played this year. "You understand the facts of where the lies aren't good and the trees are in your way every time. Even your good shots are bad, your bad shots are worse."

"It is what it is. I'm going to live with it," he said. "I thought it was going to happen that third or fourth round last week at Oak Hill, and it never happened. It happened now, and I wasn't surprised by it, to tell you the truth."

Hall had a dream start. The PGA Tour rookie from England took only 22 putts, the last one an 8-foot birdie for an 8-under 62 that gave him a three-shot lead over Harris English.

Along with his eight birdies, Hall made par putts of 15 and 30 feet.

Tom Hoge, who played his college golf at TCU and now makes Fort Worth his home, holed out for eagle on the seventh fairway on his way to a 66.

Scottie Scheffler, who returned to No. 1 in the world with his tie for second at the PGA Championship, and defending champion Sam Burns were in the large group at 67. Jordan Spieth didn't make his lone birdie until the eighth hole and opened with a 72.

Hall changed up his routine

this week by playing 36 holes of practice at Colonial — a Monday pro-am and then nine holes on Tuesday and Wednesday. That helps, along with his putter.

"Maybe that's the key, just to see a bit more of the course than I have done in the past," Hall said. "I didn't do too much different. I kind of just made things a little bit more simple."

He missed seven greens and played those holes in 1 under, the biggest a chip-in for birdie from about 80 feet on the 12th hole.

"I was really in the moment out there and determined to play some good golf," Hall said. "The 7 out of 7 scrambles doesn't really surprise me because that's the best part of my game, but the way I hit the ball the first two-thirds of that round was pretty special."

Riley, d'Arnaud power Braves past Phillies

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Austin Riley hit a pair of monstrous homers and pinch-hitter Travis d'Arnaud came through with a tiebreaking, two-run single in the eighth inning that carried the Atlanta Braves to an 8-5 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies on Thursday night.

D'Arnaud, sent up for slumping Michael Harris II with the bases loaded, lined a one-out single to left field off Gregory Soto (1-4). Matt Olson added a sacrifice fly.

In the first meeting between the NL East rivals since the Phillies' upset victory in the 2022 divisional round, both teams displayed plenty of power to open a four-game series.

Bryce Harper hit a mammoth homer for the Phillies, and Alec Bohm connected on a two-run shot. Marcell Ozuna went deep for the Braves, who became the first team in nearly four years to hit three homers off Aaron Nola. Nola lasted six innings, giving up five earned runs to match his season high.

Nick Anderson (2-0) earned the win with a perfect eighth, and Raisel Iglesias picked up his fourth save in five chances.

Padres 8, Nationals 6: Rougned Odor hit a three-run homer off Hunter Harvey with two outs in the ninth inning, giving San Diego the win over host Washington, stopping a streak of five straight series losses.

Washington trailed 5-1 before a five-run seventh. Jake Cronenworth and Juan Soto singled leading off the ninth. Harvey (2-2) struck out Xander Bogaerts and Matt Carpenter, and Odor homered, lining the ball just inside the right-field foul pole.

Odor also hit a two-run double and had five RBIs, one short of his career high.

Drew Carlton (1-0) pitched a 1-2-3 eighth for his first decision in parts of three major league seasons with Detroit and San Diego. Josh Hader struck out

two in a perfect ninth for his 13th save in 15 chances.

Mets 10, Cubs 1: Pete Alonso launched his major league-leading 19th home run and Carlos Carrasco earned his first win this season as New York routed Chicago to avoid a three-game sweep.

Brett Baty knocked in New York's first two runs and the Mets pounded out 15 hits on a chilly night at Wrigley Field to ruin Kyle Hendricks' season debut for the Cubs in his return from a serious shoulder injury.

Dansby Swanson homered in the first off Carrasco (1-2), who pitched 6% effective innings in his fifth start this year and second since missing about a month with an elbow injury. He allowed five hits and struck out four with two walks in his longest outing of the season.

Back from a capsular tear in his right shoulder, Hendricks (0-1) made his first start since June 5 last year. He gave up five runs — three earned — and six hits in 4½ innings. The right-hander struck out five and walked two.

Cardinals 2, Reds 1: Nolan Gorman hit a tiebreaking double in the eighth inning and scored on a wild pitch, helping St. Louis to its 13th win in 18 games.

Miles Mikolas (3-1) won his third straight decision, allowing five hits over seven scoreless innings, which matched his season high. He struck out five and walked none.

Giovany Gallegos gave up a two-out RBI single to Stuart Fairchild in the ninth before striking out Luke Maile for his fifth save in six chances.

Reliever Lucas Sims (1-1) took the loss to the Reds.

Rays 6, Blue Jays 3: Zach Eflin became major leagues' third seven-game winner, and Tampa Bay beat struggling Alek Manoah and Toronto to take three of four from the Blue Jays.

Eflin (7-1) allowed one run

and six hits in seven innings as the major league-leading Rays (37-15) stole seven bases for the second time this season and improved to 24-5 at home. He joined teammate Shane Bieber (8-0) and Minnesota's Joe Ryan (7-1) as the big leagues' winningest pitchers.

Colin Poche got his first save this season.

Manoah (1-5), a 16-game winner last year, extended his winless streak to nine starts after giving up five runs, three hits and five walks over three innings with six strikeouts.

Orioles 3, Yankees 1: Kyle Gibson allowed two hits over seven scoreless innings and Baltimore beat host New York to take two of three games in the series.

Anthony Santander had three hits, including an RBI single in the fifth off Clarke Schmidt (2-5). Austin Hays hit a two-run double in the eighth against Clay Holmes, a drive off the top of the right-field wall.

Gibson (6-3) entered 1-6 with a 6.75 ERA in 10 outings against the Yankees. He allowed a first-pitch single to Gleyber Torres leading off the first and a single to Willie Calhoun leading off the seventh. Gibson worked around four walks and struck out three, getting 13 outs from ground balls.

Mike Baumann struck out two in a perfect eighth before Aaron Judge led off the ninth with the first walk off Yennier Cano in 21 games this season. Calhoun hit a two-out double and Cano retired Anthony Volpe on a flyout for his fourth save in four chances, finishing a three-hitter.

Giants 5, Brewers 0: Michael Conforto went 4 for 4 with a homer, and six San Francisco pitchers combined on a four-hitter against host Milwaukee.

In a designed bullpen game, Scott Alexander, Taylor Rogers, Jakob Junis (3-2), Sean Manaea, Tyler Rogers and John Brebbia teamed up to strike out

13 and walk two.

The Giants' triumph spoiled the return of Brewers starter Julio Teheran (0-1), who allowed only one run over five innings in his first major league appearance since April 2021, with the Detroit Tigers.

Rockies 7, Marlins 6: Ezequiel Tovar singled through a five-man infield during a ninth-inning storm, lifting Colorado over visiting Miami after the Rockies wasted a four-run lead in the top of the inning.

Colorado took a 6-2 lead with four runs in the eighth, but Jorge Soler and pinch-hitter Garrett Cooper hit two-run homers on curveballs from Pierce Johnson in the ninth.

Brent Suter (3-0) got the final out of the Rockies, who took three of four in the series.

Tigers 7, Whites Sox 2: Alex Faedo struck out a career-high 10 batters in six innings and Detroit beat Chicago.

Faedo (1-2) has 22 strikeouts and one walk in four starts this season. The 27-year-old right-hander allowed two runs on three hits against the White Sox.

Lucas Giolito (3-4) matched a career high with seven walks and was tagged for four runs in 3½ innings. He allowed six hits, including a home run to Akil Baddoo, and struck out four.

Gavin Sheets led off the fifth with a home run for Chicago.

Mariners 3, Athletics 2: Ty France homered twice in his return to the lineup, Logan Gilbert pitched eight outstanding innings and Seattle finished a four-game sweep of Oakland.

Eugenio Suárez drew a bases-loaded walk from reliever Garrett Acton in the eighth to push across the go-ahead run.

Gilbert (3-2) allowed just three hits, including Seth Brown's two-run homer in the first. He retired 15 straight batters during one stretch, and 22 of his last 23. Paul Sewald fanned two in a perfect ninth, improving to 11 for 11 in save chances.

Stars top Golden Knights, avoid sweep

Associated Press

DALLAS — Joe Pavelski admits that he probably appreciates the big playoff goals more the later he gets in his career. But they all still feel just as good, and his latest kept the season alive for the Dallas Stars.

“Just really living in the moment,” Pavelski said. “A tremendous feeling for sure, and glad we could play another game, and go from there and try to extend it.”

The 38-year-old Pavelski scored on a power play at 3:18 of overtime — a one-timer from the middle of the left circle to the far post — and the Stars avoided a sweep in the Western Conference Final with a 3-2 victory over the Vegas Golden Knights on Thursday night.

Jason Robertson scored twice for his first career multigoal playoff game for Dallas, which played without suspended captain Jamie Benn.

“We’re looking for goals and that’s kind of my responsibility I put on myself,” Robertson said. “I know these playoffs have been tough. ... I was able to get the bounces that we needed to-night.”

Jake Oettinger had 37 saves, two nights after the 24-year-old Stars goalie was pulled 7:10 into

Game 3 after allowing three goals on five shots.

The Stars had the man advantage in overtime after Brayden McNabb’s high-sticking penalty on Ty Dellandrea. Fifty seconds into the power play, Pavelski scored on a pass from Miro Heiskanen. They won for the first time in their five OT games this postseason — Vegas won the first two games of this series past regulation.

It was only the second Vegas penalty of the game, both high-sticking calls against McNabb. His penalty on Pavelski late in the first period set up the power play when Robertson scored his first goal with some nifty stick-work.

Pavelski, in his 15th NHL season and still looking for his first Stanley Cup, scored his ninth goal in 12 games this postseason, but his first in five games. He has 73 career postseason goals — the most for U.S.-born players and the most among all active players.

“He’s ageless. ... I’ve seen that movie over and over again. Never gets old,” Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. “He lives for those moments and he wants to be in those situations. Always has, and delivers almost every time.”

Benn was suspended two games by the NHL on Wednesday for his cross-check with his stick landing near the neck of Vegas captain Mark Stone in the first two minutes of Tuesday’s Game 3. Benn also will miss Saturday’s Game 5 in Las Vegas.

William Karlsson and Jonath-an Marchessault scored for Vegas. Adin Hill had his five-game winning streak snapped. He made 39 saves, including a game-saver with his extended left leg without about two minutes left in regulation on rookie Fredrik Olofsson’s swiping try in his first career playoff game.

“Our effort wasn’t good enough. Closing a series is probably the hardest game in a series, right, so it just wasn’t good enough from our group,” Marchessault said. “It was still a one-goal game in overtime. It was right there for us.”

Karlsson and Marchessault are among six of the original Vegas players still on the team from the inaugural 2017-18 season that ended with the Knights playing for the Stanley Cup, though they lost in five games to the Washington Capitals.

Vegas missed a chance to complete a sweep, a night after the Florida Panthers finished off a sweep of the Carolina Hur-

ricanes in the Eastern Conference Final.

Vegas took a 2-1 lead midway through the second period when Marchessault, after whacking his stick on the back of Ryan Suter in front of the net, scored on a pass between the Stars defenseman’s legs from McNabb, another original Golden Knight.

Robertson’s tying goal late in that period came on a ricochet off the back board just seconds after he had another shot hit the post. That was the fourth goal of this series, and sixth in the playoffs, after this regular season becoming the first Dallas player with a 100-point season.

On his first goal late in the first that tied it 1-1, Robertson deflected Heiskanen’s shot from just inside the blue line up into the air. As Hill was trying to secure the puck into his glove, Robertson knocked it free and then reached around and swiped the puck into the net with his stick parallel to the ice.

With former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson and wrestling great Ric Flair looking on, Dallas was avoided being swept in the playoffs for the first time since 2001 against St. Louis in the second round. This was the Stars’ 21st playoff series since then.

Suspended Lions WR says he wasn’t aware of policy

Associated Press

ALLEN PARK, Mich. — Detroit Lions receiver Jameson Williams, suspended for the first six games of the season, said he was unaware of the NFL gambling policy he violated.

“It hit me out the blue,” Williams told reporters Thursday. “And, it hit a couple other players around the league and on my team out the blue.”

The league suspended former Lions players Quintez Cephus and C.J. Moore, along with Washington’s Shaka Toney, for

the entire 2023 season in April for betting on NFL games last year, adding they may petition for reinstatement.

Williams, the No. 12 pick overall in 2022, and teammate Stanley Berryhill were benched for six games for betting on non-NFL games at a league facility.

“I wasn’t aware of this situation,” Williams said, insisting he didn’t recall what he bet on or where he gambled.

The former Alabama star, who missed much of his rookie season with a knee injury, said

he was informed of the suspension a day before it was announced last month.

“I was sick,” he recalled. “I was hurt.”

Violations of the league’s gambling have been rare in recent years. Atlanta Falcons wide receiver Calvin Ridley was suspended for the entire 2022 season for gambling on NFL games and was later reinstated. In 2019, Arizona Cardinals cornerback Josh Shaw was suspended for gambling on an NFL game and he has not

played in the league since.

“It’s an emphasis on the league right now,” Lions coach Dan Campbell said. “It’s a big thing. Our players know. We’ve tried to hammer it home. Certainly, we did after that point and a few more times and we’ll keep doing it.”

Even though Williams said he was unaware of the NFL’s rules on gambling, he accepted responsibility for his actions.

“I broke a policy,” he said. “I pretty much looked past those things.”