

Biden and GOP reach debt-ceiling deal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An “agreement in principle” between President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy would raise the nation’s legal debt ceiling, but now Congress has only days to approve a package that includes spending cuts and would avert a potentially disastrous U.S. default.

The compromise announced late Saturday risks angering both Democratic and Republican lawmakers as they begin to unpack the concessions. Negotiators agreed to some Republican demands for increased work requirements for recipients of food stamps that House Democrats had called a nonstarter. But bargainers stopped short of greater spending cuts overall that Republicans wanted.

Support from both parties will be needed to win congressional approval before a projected June 5 government default on U.S. debts.

Lawmakers are not expected to return to work from the Memorial Day weekend be-

fore Tuesday, at the earliest, and McCarthy has promised lawmakers he will abide by the rule to post any bill for 72 hours before voting.

White House officials planned to brief House Democrats on a video call Sunday.

The Democratic president and Republican speaker reached the agreement after the two spoke Saturday evening by phone. The country and the world have been watching and waiting for a resolution to a political standoff that threatened the U.S. and global economies.

“The agreement represents a compromise, which means not everyone gets what they want,” Biden said in a statement. “That’s the responsibility of governing.”

Biden said the deal was “good news for the American people because it prevents what could have been a catastrophic default and would have led to an economic recession, retirement accounts devastated, and millions of jobs lost.”

McCarthy, in brief remarks at the Capi-

tol, said that “we still have a lot of work to do.”

But he added: “I believe this is an agreement in principle that’s worthy of the American people.”

With the outlines of an agreement in place, the legislative package could be drafted and shared with lawmakers in time for House votes as soon as Wednesday, and later in the coming week in the Senate.

Central to the compromise is a two-year budget deal that would hold spending flat for 2024 and increase it by 1% for 2025 in exchange for raising the debt limit for two years, which would push the volatile political issue past the next presidential election.

Driving hard for a deal to impose tougher work requirements on government aid recipients, Republicans achieved some but not all of what they wanted. The agreement would raise the age for existing work requirements on able-bodied adults, from 49 to 54, without children. Biden was able to secure waivers for veterans and the homeless.

Report: US Navy hit by Chinese hacking campaign

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — An alleged campaign by Chinese state-sponsored hackers on targets in the U.S. and Guam has raised fears that Beijing is preparing to disrupt communications in the Pacific in the event of a conflict.

The hacking campaign was first identified by Microsoft Corp. on Wednesday and quickly confirmed by authorities in the U.S., U.K. and other allied nations. Microsoft said the hacking group, which it dubbed Volt Typhoon, had breached government, communications, manufacturing and IT organizations in the U.S. and Guam, a crucial military post in the western Pacific Ocean.

While the identities of most of

the hacking victims remain unknown, U.S. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro told CNBC on Thursday that the Navy was impacted by the intrusions. The extent of the breach wasn’t immediately known. A spokesperson for the U.S. Navy declined to “discuss the status of our networks.”

Meanwhile, Rob Joyce, the director of cybersecurity at the National Security Agency, told CNN Thursday that Chinese hackers could still have access to sensitive U.S. networks that they’ve targeted. Joyce said the intrusions stood out in how brazen they were in “scope and scale.”

A NSA representative declined to comment and referred instead to a release by the NSA

and other U.S. agencies on the Chinese hacking group.

Microsoft said it had “moderate confidence” the breaches were carried out in preparation to upend communications in the event of a future crisis. The company’s disclosure came amid mounting concerns that China might take military action to enforce its claim to the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

Jon Darby, NSA’s former director of operations, said the operation matched a well-known way to infiltrate networks by accessing them at the edges rather than at what he called the bullseye and then staying undetected for years.

“The interesting thing is they got in from home routers all the way into the U.S. Navy infras-

tructure,” said Darby, who is not familiar with the details of this specific case.

“The scary thing is they could then launch disruptive or destructive attacks when things are hitting the fan,” he said. “If they’re in these networks they can wreak havoc. You’ve got to identify and plug up the vulnerabilities that allowed them to get into these networks and eradicate them.”

The NSA, along with intelligence agencies from the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and Canada also shared more details on the hackers. Those countries are all part of a key intelligence alliance known as the Five Eyes.

China has denied the hacking accusations.

Russia launches 'largest drone attack' on Kyiv

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's capital was subjected to the largest drone attack since the start of Russia's war, local officials said, as Kyiv prepared to mark the anniversary of its founding on Sunday. At least one person was killed.

Russia launched the "most massive attack" on the city overnight Saturday with Iranian-made Shahed drones, said Serhii Popko, a senior Kyiv military official. The attack lasted more than five hours, with air defense reportedly shooting down more than 40 drones.

A 41-year-old man was killed and a 35-year-old woman was hospitalized when debris fell on a seven-story nonresidential building and started a fire, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Debris from a drone damaged the building of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind. On Sunday morning, organization member Volodymyr Golubenko came to pick up his things. He was helped by his son Mykola, who searched

for his father's belongings among the rubble and at the same time tried to describe to his father what his office looks like now.

"This wall on the right is destroyed and on left also," said Mykola to his father.

Volodymyr Golubenko worked at this place for more than 40 years. He said it is a home for many blind people, because they come here to talk and support each other.

"If you don't even have a job, it's difficult to get a job now, because these events (war) have been going on since last year. At least people come here to chat," said Volodymyr.

Like Golubenko, many people in his district heard the sound of Shahed drones for the first time. Among them was 36-year-old Yana, who has three boys. The family hid in a corridor all night.

"Something started to explode above us. The children ran here in fear," said Yana.

Ukraine's air force said Saturday night was also record-breaking in terms of Shahed drone attacks across the country. Of the 54

drones launched, 52 were shot down by air defense systems.

In the northeastern Kharkiv province, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said a 61-year-old woman and a 60-year-old man were killed in two separate shelling attacks.

Kyiv Day marks the anniversary of the city's official founding. The day is usually celebrated with live concerts, street fairs, exhibitions and fireworks. Scaled-back festivities were planned for this year, the city's 1,541st anniversary.

The timing of the drone attacks was likely not coincidental, Ukrainian officials said.

"The history of Ukraine is a long-standing irritant for the insecure Russians," Ukraine's chief presidential aide, Andriy Yermak, said on Telegram.

"Today, the enemy decided to 'congratulate' the people of Kyiv on Kyiv Day with the help of their deadly UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles)," Popko also wrote on the messaging app.

Austin tells Navy grads they are ready to serve

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told newly commissioned officers at the U.S. Naval Academy on Friday that they are ready to "defend our democracy with honor, courage and commitment."

Austin, speaking during the ceremony at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, acknowledged the Navy's role in training allies, helping expand Ukraine's maritime capabilities in its fight against Russian invasion and bringing relief to international conflict zones.

"Class of 2023, wherever your career takes you, remind the world of what you stand for—and what America stands for: Honor. Courage. And commitment. Democracy. Liberty. And the rule of law," Austin told the 1,018 graduates.

The secretary said naval offi-

cers have a special understanding of the power of teamwork, and "we need that spirit for the crucial mission that you're all here to shoulder."

Austin said U.S. Marines are training alongside allies in Japan and the Philippines to strengthen deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. He also said the Navy is driving forward the AUKUS partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom.

He told graduates their leadership will be at the center of U.S. efforts for a more peaceful future.

"Our competitors openly challenge that vision," he said. "They want to replace the hard-won postwar system of rules and rights with a lawless world of autocracy and aggression. But the American flag atop a U.S. Navy ship has long been the symbol of hope for a more free and secure world."

USS Washington 'redelivered' to Navy after 6-year overhaul

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

The USS George Washington is back in Navy hands after an extended, six-year maintenance period at Huntington Ingalls' Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia.

The company, which built the aircraft carrier in the 1980s, officially returned, or "redelivered," it following three days of sea trials, the company said in a news release Thursday.

The George Washington since August 2017 has been in the Virginia shipyard for its midlife nuclear refueling and overhaul, a process expected to last four years but that ran into overtime due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other setbacks.

"George Washington has gone through a transformation and now returns to the fleet as a fully recapitalized ship, ready to support any mission and serve

our nation for another 25 years," Todd West, vice president of in-service aircraft carrier programs at the shipyard, said in the news release.

The sea trials, which began May 22, included high-speed operations and tests designed to "prove system performance" and demonstrate the carrier's various capabilities at sea, Huntington Ingalls said.

Sometime next year, the George Washington is scheduled to return to Yokosuka Naval Base, the ship's homeport south of Tokyo from 2008 to 2015. It will replace the USS Ronald Reagan as the centerpiece of the U.S. 7th Fleet's carrier strike group. The Ronald Reagan, which arrived at Yokosuka in 2015, will return for maintenance to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash., Naval Forces Japan announced in April.

Supreme Court strips feds of authority over 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 ex-

perts 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."

Ind. doctor punished 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 newspaper 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 overturned *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 Indiana 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 requirements 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.

Fewer births, aging boomers push United States median age higher

Associated Press

The United States grew older, faster, last decade.

The share of residents 65 or older grew by more than a third from 2010 to 2020 and at the fastest rate of any decade in 130 years, while the share of children declined, according to new figures from the most recent census.

The declining percentage of children under age 5 was particularly noteworthy in the figures from the 2020 head count released Thursday. Combined, the trends mean the median age in the U.S. jumped from 37.2 to 38.8 over the decade.

America's two largest age groups propelled the changes: more baby boomers turning 65 or older and millennials who became adults or pushed further into their 20s and early 30s. Also, fewer children were born between 2010 and 2020, according to numbers from the once-a-decade head count of every U.S. resident. The decline stems from women delaying having babies until later in life, in many cases to focus on education and careers, according to experts, who noted that birth rates never recovered following the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

"In the short run, the crisis of work-family balance, the lack of affordable childcare, stresses associated with health care, housing, and employ-

ment stability, all put a damper on birth rates by increasing uncertainty and making it harder to decide to have and raise children," said Philip Cohen, a sociologist at the University of Maryland.

There are important social and economic consequences to an aging population, including the ability of working-age adults to support older people through Social Security and Medicare contributions. The Census Bureau calculates a dependency ratio, defined as the number of children plus the number of seniors per 100 working-age people. While the dependency ratio decreased for children from 2010 to 2020, it increased for seniors by 6.8 people.

At the top end of the age spectrum, the number of people over 100 increased by half, from more than 53,000 people to more than 80,000. The share of men living into old age also jumped, benefiting from a century of vaccines and antibiotic developments, improvements in surgery and better treatment of diseases, said Thomas Perls, a professor of medicine at Boston University.

"Many more people who have the genetic makeup and environmental exposures that increase one's chances of getting to 100, but who would have otherwise died of what are now readily reversible problems, are able to fulfill their survival destiny," Perls said.

Erdogan claims election victory in Turkey

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey's incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared victory Sunday in his country's runoff election, extending his increasingly authoritarian rule into a third decade.

With nearly 99% of ballot boxes opened, unofficial results from competing news agencies showed Erdogan with 52% of the vote, compared with 48% for his challenger, Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

In his first comments since the polls closed, Erdogan spoke to supporters on a campaign bus outside his home in Istanbul.

"I thank each member of our nation for entrusting me with the responsibility to govern this country once again for the upcoming five years," he said.

He ridiculed his challenger for his loss, saying "bye bye bye, Kemal," as supporters booed.

"The only winner today is Turkey," Erdogan said.

In Istanbul, Erdogan supporters began celebrating even before the final results arrived, waving Turkish or ruling party flags, and honking car horns. The outcome could have implications far beyond Ankara. Turkey stands at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, and it plays a key role in NATO.

Erdogan's government vetoed Sweden's bid to join NATO and purchased Russian missile-defense systems, which prompted the United States to oust Turkey from a U.S.-led fighter-jet project.

But it also helped broker a crucial deal that allowed Ukrainian grain shipments and averted a global food crisis.

The competing news agencies get their data from completed ballot box counts that are gathered by personnel on the field, and are strong in different regions, explaining some of the variation in preliminary data.

Turkey's electoral board sends its own data to political parties throughout the vote count but doesn't declare official results un-

til days later. Erdogan, who has been at Turkey's helm for 20 years, was favored to win a new five-year term in the second-round runoff, after coming just short of outright victory in the first round on May 14.

The divisive populist finished four percentage points ahead of Kilicdaroglu, the candidate of a six-party alliance.

Erdogan's performance came despite crippling inflation and the effects of a devastating earthquake three months ago. It was the first time he didn't win an election where he ran as a candidate.

Critics blame Erdogan's unconventional economic policies for skyrocketing inflation that has fueled a cost-of-living crisis.

Many also faulted his government for a slow response to the earthquake that killed more than 50,000 people in Turkey.

Erdogan, 69, could remain in power until 2028. A devout Muslim, he heads the conservative and religious Justice and Development Party, or AKP.

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.

"Sometimes I hear people say, 'Oh, everybody's a little tired,'" said Dr. Leora Horwitz of NYU Langone Health, one of the study authors. "No, there's something different about people who have long COVID and that's important to know."

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 United States 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.

But about 2,230 patients had their first coronavirus infection after the study started, allowing them to report symptoms in real time — and only about 10% experienced long-term symptoms after six months.

Conn. lawmakers absolve accused witches

Associated Press

With distant family members looking on, Connecticut senators voted Thursday to absolve the 12 women and men convicted of witchcraft — 11 of whom were executed — more than 370 years ago and apologize for the "miscarriage of justice" that occurred over a dark 15-year-period of the state's colonial history. The Senate voted 33-1 in favor of a resolution that officially proclaimed their innocence. It marked the culmination

of years of effort by a group called the CT Witch Trial Exoneration Project, made up of history buffs and descendants. Some of the descendants recently learned through genealogy testing that they were related to the accused witches and have since lobbied the state's General Assembly to officially clear their names.

"People can say we're wasting our time this afternoon, maybe we could be doing other things," said Republican state Sen.

John Kissel, acknowledging early criticism of the legislative effort. "But I think it's a small step to acknowledge our history and move forward together, Democrat, Republican, men and women into a brighter future."

The resolution, which lists the nine women and two men who were executed and the one woman who was convicted and given a reprieve, already passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 121-30.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Baby bison put to death after visitor picks it up

WY YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Yellowstone National Park officials killed a newborn bison because its herd wouldn't take it back after a man picked it up.

The calf became separated from its mother when the herd crossed the Lamar River in northeastern Yellowstone. The unidentified man pushed the struggling calf up from the river and onto a roadway, park officials said.

Park rangers tried repeatedly to reunite the calf with the herd but were unsuccessful. Visitors saw the calf walking up to and following cars and people, creating a hazard, so park staff killed the animal, according to the statement.

Park officials are investigating the calf incident. The suspect was a white male in his 40s or 50s who was wearing a blue shirt and black pants, the statement said.

Virgin Galactic prepares for paying customers

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Virgin Galactic completed what's expected to be its final test flight before taking paying customers on brief trips to space.

Six of the company's employees, including two pilots, landed at Spaceport America in southern New Mexico after the short up-and-down flight that included a few minutes of weightlessness. It took about an hour for the mother ship to carry the spaceplane to an altitude of 44,500 feet, where it was released and fired its rocket motor

to make the final push.

It reached an altitude of 54.2 miles before gliding back to the runway, company said.

Fuzzy falcon chicks who nest at stadium banded

MI EAST LANSING — Newly fitted with tracking bands, four peregrine falcon chicks named Pickles, Muhammad, Egbert and Swooper have a nest in one of the best seats — make that perches — at Michigan State University's football stadium.

Scientists and college students carefully attached metal tracking bands to the fluffy white chicks' legs. At about a month old, they're still not much bigger than a pigeon and can't yet fly away from their man-made nest atop Spartan Stadium.

The chicks have become celebrities in East Lansing and around the globe, thanks to a web camera and livestream by the school's Fisheries and Wildlife Club, which installed the nest box on the stadium roof last year.

Melting snow means cold, deadly torrents

CA SACRAMENTO — California rivers fed by this winter's massive Sierra Nevada snowpack have been turned into deadly torrents, drawing warnings from public safety officials ahead of the Memorial Day weekend's traditional start of outdoor summer recreation.

At least seven people, including two children, have died or gone missing this spring in the grasp of powerful rivers plung-

ing down from California's towering mountain range, and there have been numerous rescues.

The city has already had 20 water rescues this year, nearly as many as all of 2022.

House OKs tax rebates of \$210 per taxpayer

AL MONTGOMERY — The Alabama House of Representatives unanimously approved a one-time rebate that would give \$210 to single people and \$420 to married couples.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and lawmakers proposed rebates to return money to taxpayers as the state sees a rare \$2.8 billion education budget surplus, but have quibbled over the amount. The proposed rebates are half the amount that Ivey proposed in her State of the State address earlier this year, but double the \$105 and \$210 rebates approved in the Alabama Senate.

Representatives voted 101-0 for the legislation. Lawmakers sent the legislation to conference committee to try to work out differences in the House and Senate versions of the bill.

City to clear tents blocking sidewalks

OR PORTLAND — Portland will remove tents blocking sidewalks under a tentative settlement announced Thursday in a lawsuit brought by people with disabilities who said sprawling homeless encampments prevent them from navigating Oregon's most populous city.

The federal class action lawsuit, filed in September, alleged

that the city violated the American with Disabilities Act by allowing tents to obstruct sidewalks. The plaintiffs included a caretaker and nine people with disabilities who use wheelchairs, scooters, canes and walkers to get around.

Legislature overrides veto of tribal regalia bill

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Legislature overrode Gov. Kevin Stitt's veto of a bill that would allow students to wear Native American regalia during high school and college graduations.

The state House and Senate easily cleared the two-thirds threshold needed to uphold the measure, which takes effect July 1 and had strong support from many Oklahoma-based tribes and Native American citizens.

It would allow any student at a public school, including colleges, universities and technology centers, to wear tribal regalia such as traditional garments, jewelry or other adornments during official graduation ceremonies. Weapons such as a bow and arrow, tomahawk or war hammer are specifically prohibited.

Stitt, a Cherokee Nation citizen who has feuded with many Oklahoma-based Native American tribes throughout his two terms in office, vetoed the bill earlier this month, saying at the time that the decision should be up to individual districts. Stitt also suggested the bill would allow other groups to "demand special favor to wear whatever they please at a formal ceremony."

— From Associated Press



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Celtics stun Heat, force seventh game

Associated Press

MIAMI — The Boston Celtics were a tenth of a second away from elimination. The Miami Heat were a tenth of a second from the NBA Finals.

Derrick White owned that final moment.

White scored on a putback as time expired and the Celtics moved to the brink of the greatest comeback in NBA playoff history, holding off the Heat 104-103 on Saturday night to force a Game 7 in the Eastern Conference finals.

“Derrick White, like a flash of lightning, just came out of nowhere and saved the day, man,” Boston’s Jaylen Brown said. “An incredible play.”

White knew it was good. Referees reviewed it, but it didn’t take long to give the official word.

Elation for Boston. Devastation for Miami.

“Ball came to me,” White said. “I made the shot.”

Perhaps Boston will call it

The Shot.

White became the second player in NBA history to hit a buzzer-beater with his team trailing and facing elimination — Michael Jordan’s “The Shot” for Chicago against Cleveland in 1989 being the other.

“I was just happy,” White said. “Season was on the line. We don’t want to go home.”

Jayson Tatum scored 31 points, Brown scored 26 and Marcus Smart added 21 for the Celtics, who became only the fourth NBA team to erase a 3-0 deficit in a best-of-seven series and force a deciding game. The others in that club — the 1951 New York Knicks in the NBA Finals, the 1994 Denver Nuggets in the second round and the 2003 Portland Trail Blazers in the first round — all lost Game 7, all on the road.

Boston, however, is going home for its shot at history. Game 7 is Monday night on the Celtics’ floor, a matchup that’ll decide who meets the Western

Conference champion Denver Nuggets in a title series that will start Thursday.

“It’s a seven-game series,” Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. “There’s nothing better than Game 7s.”

Jimmy Butler made three free throws with 3.0 seconds left — the foul was originally called with 2.1 seconds left; referees put 0.9 seconds back on after reviewing the play to see if it was a three-point try that Al Horford fouled him on — for a one-point Heat lead. It capped a Miami rally from 10 points down with less than 4 minutes remaining.

The Celtics had White inbound the ball on the game’s final possession, and he passed to Smart — who missed a three-pointer. But White sprinted from the inbound spot to the rim, the ball fell into his hands and he got the layup away just before time ran out to extend Boston’s season.

There had been other buzzer-

beaters from players whose teams were facing an elimination game, but before Saturday, only Jordan’s came with his team trailing.

Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla was asked what went through his mind at that moment.

“Nothing,” Mazzulla said. “Game 7.”

Butler scored 24 points and Caleb Martin had 21 for the Heat, who are trying to pull off their own improbable trek to the title series by being only the second No. 8 seed to make the NBA Finals. They’ve now lost as many games this week — three — as they had in their first 14 playoff games this spring combined on the way to ousting No. 1 Milwaukee, then No. 5 New York and taking what was supposed to be an insurmountable 3-0 lead over the second-seeded Celtics.

“We’ve got to go on the road and do something special,” Butler said. “But we’ve got a special group.”

Nuggets try to stay sharp while waiting for opponent

Associated Press

DENVER — Denver Nuggets guard Bruce Brown has been using the long layoff before the start of the NBA Finals to work on his game — his golf game.

“First day of golf I played pretty well,” Brown recounted. “The second day was terrible.”

On Friday, it was back to the business of Brown hitting the shots he hits the best — jumpers — as the Nuggets returned to the court for a light practice. Game 1 of the franchise’s first appearance in an NBA Finals is still nearly a week away and their opponent has yet to be determined, with Boston and Miami heading into Game 7 of their Eastern Conference finals series.

The rest has certainly been welcome. The rust, though, does become a concern.

“It’s impossible to keep your rhythm if you’re not playing games,” Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. “You can do whatever you want in practice, but there’s no way you can replicate playing in an NBA playoff game.”

The Nuggets celebrated sweeping the Los Angeles Lakers on the plane ride home. It bought them a day off Tuesday and an optional day Wednesday (although, quite a few players showed up). On Thursday, there were conditioning drills and individual drills before reassembling on the practice floor Friday. The intensity will pick up closer to the start of the series Thursday — and once they know who they’re facing.

“Right now, as I told our players, this is about us,” Malo-

ne said. “We have to shore up who we are and address the areas that we have not been maybe good enough or areas that we can clean up.”

Before the break, Nikola Jokic, guard Jamal Murray and the Nuggets were cruising along, too, turning in a 12-3 mark in the postseason. Murray’s biggest piece of advice — keep practicing like they expect to play.

“Don’t pick up bad habits throughout this week,” Murray said. “Just being able to stay locked in. You don’t want to get relaxed. I think that’s the biggest — we don’t want to relax and just wait. We want to stay sharp.”

Malone said his family has helped keep him grounded.

“I can’t go home and be in like Game 7 mindset, because my

wife and kids would leave me,” Malone said. “I have to force myself to take a deep breath and remind myself that I am a husband, I am a father and to be a part of my family.”

This weekend, Malone may even play some pickleball — just to take his mind off a grinding series that lies ahead. It could be Jayson Tatum and the Celtics. Or Jimmy Butler and the Heat, the eight seed that made it into the playoffs through the play-in tournament.

For Brown, no matter who it is, the game will be a reunion of sorts. He’s from Boston and went to college at the University of Miami.

“But if we did go to Boston, it would be a lot of tickets,” Brown joked. “So it would be really expensive.”

Dellandrea's 2 goals keep Stars alive

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — With Dallas' season on the line, the Stars got two critical goals from a player who was a healthy scratch the first two games of the Western Conference finals.

Ty Dellandrea's goals came within a 1:27 span midway through the third period, and the Stars beat the Vegas Golden Knights 4-2 on Saturday to keep alive their hopes of advancing to the Stanley Cup Final to face the Florida Panthers.

"He's one of the best guys I've ever played with," said Stars goalie Jake Oettinger, who made 27 saves. "He deserves every opportunity he gets, and there's no one happier for him than the guys in this room. It shows how special you are when you get taken out. He didn't make it about him. He needed the opportunity to step up, and that's what he did."

The Stars escaped elimination for the second game in a row and head to Dallas for Game 6 on Monday night down 3-2. Dallas is attempting to become the

fifth team in NHL history to win a series after being down 3-0.

And look who's back for the Stars? Captain Jamie Benn returns after a two-game suspension for his cross-check to the neck of Vegas captain Mark Stone in Game 3. That was the only game in this series that was decided early, and until Saturday the Stars hadn't even had a multigoal lead.

"I know our group, and we weren't happy about being in the hole we were in, and they decided to do something about it," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "And now we're rolling."

The only problem for DeBoer was waiting two days to play.

DeBoer said before the game if his team won, the pressure would shift to the Knights. Now it's up to them to respond after twice being a period away from playing in the Stanley Cup Final and letting both opportunities slip away.

"I don't think we brought our best the last two games," Stone said. "We were still in a good spot to win the game. We've got

to bring a little bit better effort and start playing a little more desperate."

Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said "it's a very good question" why his team didn't play with more desperation, but he also wasn't thrilled with the Knights' execution.

"We had 24 giveaways," Cassidy said. "I'm not sure you're beating the Arizona Coyotes in January with 24 giveaways. That's no disrespect to Arizona, but it's not the right way to play."

Dellandrea found the right way to play and had the first multigoal playoff game of his career. Jason Robertson and Luke Glendening also scored, and Thomas Harley had two assists.

Chandler Stephenson and Ivan Barbashev scored for the Knights, and Jonathan Marchessault had two assists to extend his points streak to four games. Adin Hill made 30 saves.

Dellandrea scored from the right circle to put Dallas ahead, the puck deflecting off Vegas defenseman Alex Pietrangelo

with 9:25 left for a 3-2 lead. Then, Dellandrea scored from the slot with 7:58 remaining.

Dellandrea said the older players kept him motivated when he was temporarily sidelined.

"There's no denying it's hard," he said. "I'm thankful for a good group of character guys, and you've just got to stay ready."

The teams traded goals in the first two periods.

Jack Eichel battled two Stars players for the puck in Vegas' offensive zone, and then Barbashev swooped in and made a fantastic move to glide past Oettinger and score with 6:24 left in the first period. The Stars wasted little time in answering when Glendening scored on a deflection less than two minutes later.

As in the first period, the Knights had a goal in the second quickly answered by one from the Stars. Stephenson scored from the left circle at 16:40 of the period, and Robertson knocked in his own rebound 2:09 later to make it 2-2.

Keith Tkachuk's words lit fuse to ignite the Panthers

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Keith Tkachuk never played a game for the Florida Panthers and hadn't recorded an assist at the NHL level in nearly 13 years.

That is, until March 29. That's the day he might have had the biggest helper in Florida's season — by calling the Panthers "soft," among other things.

The now-infamous rant on a Toronto radio station that morning by Tkachuk — a former hockey great himself and current Florida star Matthew Tkachuk's father — just happened to coincide with the Panthers turning their season around. Hours later, the Panthers beat the Maple Leafs to start a push that let them squeak into the playoffs

and ultimately roar into the Stanley Cup Final.

"He's still in timeout," Matthew Tkachuk said, explaining why he's urged his dad not to do more interviews right now.

Doesn't matter. His words live on, and he didn't offend the Panthers. They're going to the title round next week, with Game 1 at either Vegas or Dallas.

"We're here because of him," Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov said.

Barkov wasn't kidding. There have been countless reasons for Florida's improbable postseason run — airtight defense led by goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, figuring out how to erase a 3-1 deficit against overwhelming favorite Boston in Round 1, needing only

nine games combined to oust Toronto and Carolina — but March 29 certainly provided some of the season's biggest moments.

Matthew Tkachuk has been the flair-for-drama star of the playoff run: nine goals, 12 assists, 21 points.

That said, his dad sure seemed to be a spark.

"I'm a little disappointed in the Panthers," Keith Tkachuk said in the interview with TSN 1050. "They're a soft team and they're getting everything they deserve right now."

It didn't stop there. Keith Tkachuk, who had 538 goals and 527 assists in 18 NHL seasons, also questioned how hard the Panthers were playing.

"It's up to them to get their

butts going and start playing like the team that should be a lot better than what they're showing right now," he said.

As he spoke, the Panthers were facing long odds of just getting into the postseason. They had lost four straight. They were trailing the Maple Leafs later that night 2-1 late in regulation. That was also the night that Panthers coach Paul Maurice had seen enough, blasting his team in a second-period bench rant. His words weren't exactly radio-friendly.

Starting with that night, the Panthers have won 18 of their past 24 games, 10 of those victories of the comeback variety, seven of them coming in overtime.

Yankees walk off on Padres in 10th

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Isiah Kiner-Falefa hit a game-ending single with one out in the 10th inning as the New York Yankees beat the San Diego Padres 3-2 on Saturday.

After Anthony Volpe and Aaron Judge hit into double plays in the eighth and ninth, the Yankees got their fifth walk-off win when Kiner-Falefa sent Nick Martinez's 2-0 pitch down the line just past the glove of third baseman Rougned Odor to score Greg Allen.

"I was just trying to see if he was gonna come after me," Kiner-Falefa said. "He threw two balls out of the zone and I was just looking for something. I thought he was going to throw something elevated and I was going to be able hit a pop fly to left field right there, but I was a little bit out front and I was able to hook it in the line."

It was Kiner-Falefa's third career walk-off hit and first since joining the Yankees to play shortstop last season. This time, he got the hit while contin-

uing to play as an outfielder for the first time in his career.

"Whatever role it's been in, he's worked his tail off to acclimate himself to it and be ready for it," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "And now he's gotten some more starts lately. You get him in matchups where you feel like he can be really successful and he's done a really nice job here for us."

Dodgers 6, Rays 5: Freddie Freeman extended his hitting streak to 16 games, Max Muncy and Miguel Vargas homered, and NL West-leading Los Angeles beat MLB-best Tampa Bay.

Marlins 8, Angels 5 (10): Jorge Soler homered in his fifth consecutive game, and pinch-hitter Garrett Cooper delivered a tiebreaking double during visiting Miami's four-run 10th inning against Los Angeles.

Rangers 5, Orioles 3: Andrew Heaney pitched seven innings of four-hit ball, Marcus Semien extended his hitting streak to 16 games with a pivotal two-run single and visiting

Texas beat Baltimore.

Phillies 2, Braves 1: Zack Wheeler struck out 12 in eight shutout innings as visiting Philadelphia beat Charlie Morton and Atlanta.

Twins 9, Blue Jays 7: Willi Castro had his first multi-homer game, Matt Wallner homered among his career-high four hits, and host Minnesota held off Toronto.

Red Sox 2, Diamondbacks 1: Reese McGuire's safety squeeze with the bases loaded brought home Triston Casas, which proved to be the difference as visiting Boston beat Arizona.

Cardinals 2, Guardians 1 (10): Brendan Donovan homered in the second inning and scored on a passed ball in the 10th to lift visiting St. Louis over Cleveland.

Tigers 7, White Sox 3: Zach McKinstry homered in a three-run seventh inning as host Detroit rallied to beat Chicago.

Giants 3, Brewers 1: Mitch Haniger hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth inning and

Logan Webb allowed one run in seven innings to pace visiting San Francisco past Milwaukee.

Mariners 5, Pirates 0: Luis Castillo struck out 10 in six crisp innings as host Seattle blanked Pittsburgh.

Astros 6, Athletics 3: Jeremy Peña hit a two-run homer in his first at-bat following a planned day off, and Framber Valdez pitched six stingy innings as visiting Houston handed Oakland its 10th consecutive defeat.

Reds 8, Cubs 5: Jonathan India homered twice and drove in five runs, powering visiting Cincinnati past struggling Chicago.

Nationals 4, Royals 2: CJ Abrams hit a two-run double in visiting Washington's four-run sixth inning, Corey Dickerson got his 1,000th hit and the Nationals defeated Kansas City.

Rockies 10, Mets 7: Ryan McMahon hit a go-ahead homer in the seventh inning and host Colorado outslugged New York after blowing an early six-run lead.

Ukraine's Kostyuk causes stir by not shaking hands

Associated Press

PARIS — Unable to sleep the night before her first-round match at the French Open against Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, the Grand Slam tournament's No. 2 seed, Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine checked her phone at 5 a.m. Sunday and saw disturbing news back home in Kyiv.

At least one person was killed when the capital of Kostyuk's country was subjected to the largest drone attack by Russia since the start of its war, launched with an invasion assisted by Belarus in February 2022.

"It's something I cannot describe, probably. I try to put my emotions aside any time I

go out on court. I think I'm better than before, and I don't think it affects me as much on a daily basis, but yeah, it's just — I don't know," Kostyuk said, shaking her head. "There is not much to say, really. It's just part of my life."

That, then, is why Kostyuk has decided she will not exchange the usual postmatch pleasantries with opponents from Russia or Belarus. And that is why she avoided a handshake — avoided any eye contact, even — after losing to Australian Open champion Sabalenka 6-3, 6-2 on Day 1 at Roland Garros.

What surprised the 20-year-old, 39th-ranked Kostyuk on Sunday was the reaction she

received from the spectators in Court Philippe Chatrier: They loudly booed and derisively whistled at her as she walked directly over to acknowledge the chair umpire instead of congratulating the winner after the lopsided result. The negative response grew louder as she gathered her belongings and walked off the court.

"I have to say," Kostyuk said, "I didn't expect it. ... People should be, honestly, embarrassed."

Kostyuk is based now in Monaco, and her mother and sister are there, too, but her father and grandfather are still in Kyiv. Perhaps the fans on hand at the clay-court event's main stadium were unaware of

the backstory and figured Kostyuk simply failed to follow usual tennis etiquette.

The highest-seeded player to go home was No. 7 Maria Sakkari, who lost 7-6 (5), 7-5 to 42nd-ranked Karolina Muchova.

The first seeded man to bow out was No. 20 Dan Evans, eliminated 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 by wild-card entry Thanasi Kokkinakis.

Sabalenka called Sunday "emotionally tough" — because of mundane, tennis-related reasons, such as the nerves that come with any first-round match, but more significantly because of the unusual circumstances involving the war.