

Russia takes Ukrainian border villages

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian forces have taken four border villages in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region, a local official said Tuesday, days after Russian President Vladimir Putin said he had issued an order to establish a buffer zone along the border.

Sumy borders Russia's Kursk region, where a surprise Ukrainian incursion last year captured a pocket of land in the first occupation of Russian territory since World War II.

The long border is vulnerable to Ukrainian incursions, Putin said, and creating a buffer zone could help Russia prevent further cross-border attacks there.

Meanwhile, a Russian bombing campaign that had escalat-

ed in recent days slowed overnight, with far fewer Russian drones targeting Ukrainian towns and cities.

Moscow's invasion has shown no signs of stopping despite months of intense U.S.-led efforts to secure a ceasefire and get traction for peace talks.

Since Russian and Ukrainian delegations met in Turkey on May 16 for their first direct talks in three years, a large prisoner exchange has been the only tangible outcome, but negotiations have brought no significant breakthrough.

The U.S. special envoy to Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, said Putin has not yet delivered a promised memorandum that the Russian leader told U.S. President Donald Trump in a phone call

on May 19 would outline the framework for a possible peace agreement.

The Kremlin has also ruled out the Vatican as a venue for negotiations, he said. "We would have liked to have it at the Vatican and we were pretty set to do something like that, but the Russians didn't want to go there ... so I think Geneva may be the next stop," Kellogg told the Fox News Channel.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said his country also was ready to host another round of peace talks.

Between Friday and Sunday, Russia launched about 900 drones at Ukraine, officials said, amid a spate of large-scale bombardments. On Sunday night, Russia launched its big-

gest drone attack of the 3-year-old war, firing 355 drones.

From Monday to Tuesday, Russia fired 60 drones at Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said. Russia's Defense Ministry said its defenses downed 99 Ukrainian drones overnight over seven Russian regions.

The weekend surge in Russian bombardments drew a rebuke from Trump, who said Putin had gone "crazy." That comment brought a sharp Kremlin reaction Monday, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov criticizing "emotional reactions" to events.

He took a milder tone Tuesday, hailing U.S. peace efforts and saying that "the Americans and President Trump have taken a quite balanced approach."

Pentagon gets 1st hypersonic missile defense radar

BY LARA KORTE

Stars and Stripes

A radar system that can track missiles flying five times the speed of sound has been delivered to the U.S. military, marking a major upgrade to one of its most essential missile defense systems.

The new version of the AN/TPY-2 radar comes with a complete gallium nitride-populated array, allowing it to track smaller objects at greater distances, manufacturer Raytheon said in a statement last week announcing the handover of the first system to the Missile Defense Agency.

It's the most advanced version of AN/TPY-2 that the company has built, said Sam Deneke, Raytheon's president of air and space defense systems.

The agency first awarded

Raytheon a \$14.9 million contract in 2016 to incorporate gallium into the radar system. In 2020, the company received a \$2.3 billion contract for seven gallium nitride-based radars as part of a foreign military sale to Saudi Arabia.

The radar system has long been the primary tracking device for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems, or THAADs, which are deployed in several other countries, including Israel.

Both Russia and China have highly advanced hypersonic missile arsenals, and Iran claims to have developed similar capabilities.

In March, a think tank report said the U.S. must make development of hardware to counter hypersonic missiles a national priority to alleviate what it

called an "unacceptable asymmetry."

"Russia has developed and deployed a nuclear-armed hypersonic weapon that holds the U.S. mainland at risk from a highly survivable nuclear first strike," Atlantic Council report author Michael E. White said.

The same month the report was issued, the Missile Defense Agency and the Navy conducted a successful hypersonic missile defense test near Hawaii, tracking a simulated projectile from the USS Pinckney.

Protecting against hypersonic missiles has been a key point of discussion in President Donald Trump's initiative to install a defense system known as the "Golden Dome" over the continental U.S.

The missiles can fly at

speeds of Mach 5 or faster and are harder to detect than traditional ballistic missiles because of their low flight paths and ability to maneuver.

In recent years, the defense industry has turned to gallium-based semiconductors to develop advanced radar to track the high-speed projectiles.

The Missile Defense Agency has also been using gallium nitride as part of its effort to modernize radar capabilities in the Patriot defense system.

This is the 13th AN/TPY-2 radar the company has delivered, though it's unclear when the other 12 will receive upgrades.

The agency's 2025 budget called for an additional \$29 million to support replacement of the outdated radars with the gallium nitride versions.

Ex-admiral: US has 500 trainers on Taiwan

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

About 500 U.S. defense trainers are operating on Taiwan, more than 10 times the number previously disclosed, according to recent congressional testimony by a retired U.S. Navy admiral.

Mark Montgomery, speaking May 15 before the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist party, said the U.S. should double that number to help Taiwan build “a true counter-intervention force.”

“We absolutely have to grow the joint training team in Taiwan,” he told the lawmakers, according to a transcript of his remarks posted on the committee’s website.

Montgomery did not specify

whether the personnel are active-duty troops, reservists or civilian contractors.

“It needs to be a thousand,” he said. “If we are going to give them billions of dollars in assistance, sell them tens of billions of dollars’ worth of U.S. gear, it makes sense that we would be over there training and working.”

The U.S. has long provided Taiwan with weapons and military training aimed at deterring Chinese aggression.

Beijing views the self-governing island as a breakaway province and has not ruled out the use of force to bring it under control.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly stated that reunification with Taiwan is inevitable, and Chinese forces have stepped up military pressure

with air and naval exercises around the island in recent years.

While the U.S. does not formally recognize Taiwan diplomatically — a result of its 1979 recognition of China — it maintains unofficial relations under the Taiwan Relations Act, which mandates the provision of arms “of a defensive nature” to Taiwan and a U.S. commitment to resist coercion against the island.

The presence of U.S. military personnel on Taiwan was first confirmed by then-President Tsai Ing-wen in an October 2021 interview with CNN. At the time, she described it as a “small number.” A Congressional Research Service report in May 2024 listed only 41 U.S. military personnel in Taiwan as of December 2023.

Local media reported a significant milestone in bilateral defense cooperation on May 12, when Taiwanese troops fired U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, for the first time during a coastal drill at Jiupeng Base in southern Taiwan.

The 58th Artillery Command launched 33 rockets from 11 launchers into the Pacific Ocean, Taiwan’s state-run Central News Agency reported. Technicians from Lockheed Martin, the system’s U.S. manufacturer, attended the test, said Col. Ho Chih-chung, the unit’s deputy commander.

The scale of the U.S. training mission comes as a surprise, said Ming-Shih Shen, a researcher at the Institute for National Defense and Security Research in Taipei.

F-35C fighter jets join in on carrier-landing drills

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

IWO JIMA, Japan — U.S. Navy pilots are preparing for the USS George Washington’s inaugural patrol from its new homeport in Japan, conducting carrier-landing drills that, for the first time, include F-35C Lightning IIs on this historic island.

Iwo Jima — also known as Iwo To — has hosted field carrier landing practice since 1991 for aircraft such as the F/A-18 Super Hornet, EA-18G Growler and E-2D Hawkeye. But this year marks the first participation by the Navy’s most advanced fighter, said Naval Forces Japan spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Phillip Chitty.

Japanese government officials and media observed the training on Sunday. Pilots must

complete these exercises before the George Washington, which left Yokosuka Naval Base that morning, officially begins its annual patrol.

“Field carrier-landing practices are required in order to qualify fixed-wing pilots, and they ensure that they have the practice and qualification in order to maintain readiness,” Chitty said.

The drills, which began May 16 and end Saturday, involve a series of day and nighttime sorties, with repeated touch-and-go landings simulating conditions aboard a moving carrier.

The number of flights depends on pilot experience and how recently they last completed the training, said Capt. William Fallon, assistant chief of staff for operations, plans and training at Naval Forces Japan.

Sailor avoids jail in Japan for fatal motorcyclist crash

By ALEX WILSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA, Japan — A U.S. Navy sailor received a suspended sentence Tuesday for a traffic accident that killed a Japanese motorcyclist near Yokosuka Naval Base last year.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jaden Edwin Llanos, 22, assigned to the amphibious command ship USS Blue Ridge, was sentenced by the Yokohama District Court’s Yokosuka branch to 1 ½ years in prison without hard labor. The sentence was suspended for four years, meaning he will not serve time unless he commits another offense during that period.

Llanos pleaded no contest Tuesday to negligent driving causing death in the Sept. 18 collision that killed 22-year-old

Tsubasa Ito. The sailor admitted to making an illegal right turn at a busy intersection near the base, where his vehicle struck Ito’s motorcycle.

Ito died less than an hour later at Yokosuka Kyosai Hospital from heart damage caused by a chest injury, Judge Yasushi Katada said during Tuesday’s proceedings.

Ito’s parents sat quietly through the hearing. His father appeared stoic and his mother cried softly as the judge summarized the case. Llanos showed no visible reaction as the sentence was read.

Ito’s parents, speaking to reporters afterward, said they were dissatisfied with the suspended sentence and have asked prosecutors to appeal. Prosecutors and the defense have 14 days to file.

3 escapees from La. jail caught; 2 left

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Three more of the 10 inmates who escaped from a New Orleans jail earlier this month were re-arrested Monday in two different states after more than a week on the lam, authorities said.

One of the men was arrested in Baton Rouge, La., by local police and two others were arrested in Walker County, Texas, by officials there, Louisiana State Police posted on X.

Two more inmates are still on the run, state police said. No other details were immediately released about Monday's arrests.

Authorities have been scouring the New Orleans area for the men after they escaped in an audacious May 16 jailbreak. The men yanked open a faulty cell door inside a jail, squeezed through a hole behind a toilet, scaled a barbed-wire fence and fled into the coverage of darkness.

The inmates' absence wasn't discovered until a morning headcount, hours after they bolted for freedom.

Louisiana authorities named the latest inmates who were recaptured as Lenton Vanburen, Leo Tate and Jermaine Donald. Jail escapees Dkenan Dennis, Corey Boyd, Gary C. Price, Kendall Myles and Robert Moody were previously taken into custody by authorities.

Many of the men were originally in the New Orleans jail awaiting sentences or trials for alleged violent crimes including murder.

After the escape, a jail maintenance worker was arrested and accused of turning off the water to the toilet, an act authorities said helped the men get out. The worker said he had been threatened by one of the inmates if he refused to do so.

In addition, four other people have been arrested for allegedly helping the inmates once they were on the loose.

Trump's \$100M cut for Harvard

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is asking federal agencies to cancel contracts with Harvard University worth about \$100 million, a senior administration official said Tuesday, intensifying the president's clash with the nation's oldest and wealthiest university.

A draft letter from the General Services Administration directs agencies to review contracts with the university and seek alternate vendors.

The administration plans to send a version of the letter Tuesday, the official said. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations.

President Donald Trump has railed against Harvard, calling it a hotbed of liberalism and anti-semitism. The school filed a lawsuit April 21 over the administration's calls for changes to the university's leadership, governance and admissions policies.

Since then, the administration has slashed the school's federal funding, moved to cut off its enrollment of international students and threatened its tax-exempt status.

The administration has identified about 30 contracts across nine agencies to be reviewed for

cancellation, according to another administration official who was not authorized to speak publicly and provided details on the condition of anonymity.

The contracts total roughly \$100 million.

They include executive training for Department of Homeland Security officials, research on health outcomes related to energy drinks and a contract for graduate student research services.

Agencies with contracts that are deemed critical are being directed not to halt them immediately, but to devise a plan to transition to a different vendor other than Harvard.

The letter applies only to federal contracts with Harvard and not its remaining research grants.

Trump laid into Harvard on social media over the weekend, threatening to cut an additional \$3 billion in federal grants and give it to trade schools across the United States. He did not explain which grants he was referring to or how they could be reallocated.

The president also accused Harvard of refusing to release the names of its foreign students.

In a new line of attack, he argued that students' home coun-

tries pay nothing toward their education and that some of the countries are "not at all friendly to the United States."

International students are not eligible for federal financial aid, but Harvard offers its own aid to foreign and domestic students alike.

"We are still waiting for the Foreign Student Lists from Harvard so that we can determine, after a ridiculous expenditure of BILLIONS OF DOLLARS, how many radicalized lunatics, troublemakers all, should not be let back into our Country," Trump said on social media.

It wasn't clear exactly what he was demanding. The federal government already has access to visa information and other records on foreign students at Harvard and other universities.

The Department of Homeland Security has demanded that Harvard turn over a trove of files related to its foreign students, including disciplinary records and records related to "dangerous or violent activity."

Harvard says it complied, but the agency said its response fell short and moved to revoke the university's ability to enroll foreign students. A federal judge in Boston temporarily blocked the move after Harvard sued.

NPR sues Trump over funding cut order

Associated Press

NEW YORK — National Public Radio and three of its local stations filed a lawsuit Tuesday against President Donald Trump, arguing that an executive order aimed at cutting federal funding for the organization is illegal.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Washington by NPR, Colorado Public Radio, Aspen Public Radio and KUTE, Inc. argues that Trump's executive order to slash public subsidies to PBS and NPR violates the First Amendment.

Trump issued the executive order earlier this month that in-

structs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other federal agencies "to cease Federal funding for NPR and PBS" and requires that they work to root out indirect sources of public financing for the news organizations. Trump issued the order after alleging "bias".

"The Order's objectives could not be clearer: the Order aims to punish NPR for the content of news and other programming the President dislikes and chill the free exercise of First Amendment rights by NPR and individual public radio stations across the

country," the lawsuit alleges.

"The Order is textbook retaliation and viewpoint-based discrimination in violation of the First Amendment, and it interferes with NPR's and the Local Member Stations' freedom of expressive association and editorial discretion," it said.

The court fight seemed preordained, given that the heads of NPR and PBS both reacted to Trump's move with statements that they believed it was illegal. The absence of PBS from Tuesday's filing indicates the two systems will challenge separately.

Liverpool driver arrested after ramming parade

Associated Press

LIVERPOOL, England — A 53-year-old British man who injured 65 people when his car rammed into a crowd of Liverpool soccer fans celebrating their team's Premier League championship was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, police said Tuesday.

The driver was also being held on suspicion of dangerous driving and driving on drugs, Detective Chief Superintendent Karen Jaundrill said.

The incident late Monday afternoon turned a jubilant parade into a tragedy that sent 50 people to hospitals for treatment of their injuries. Eleven

remained hospitalized Tuesday in stable condition.

The wounded included four children, one of whom had been trapped beneath the vehicle with three adults.

Police had closed off the area to traffic, but the driver is believed to have maneuvered around a road block by following an ambulance that was rushing to treat a person, Assistant Chief Constable Jenny Sims said.

Merseyside Police said they were not treating the incident as terrorism and were not looking for other suspects.

The force has not identified the arrested driver. Police in

Britain usually do not name suspects until they are charged.

Detectives were still working to piece together why the minivan plowed into crowds packing a narrow street just after the players of Liverpool Football Club had celebrated its championship with an open-topped bus parade.

The incident cast a shadow over a city that has suffered twin tragedies linked to the soccer team and led to widespread expressions of shock.

"It is truly devastating to see that what should have been a joyous celebration for many could end in such distressing circumstances," King Charles

III said in a statement while on a visit to Canada. "I know that the strength of community spirit for which your city is renowned will be a comfort and support to those in need."

Water Street, near the River Mersey in the heart of the city, was cordoned off by police tape, and a blue tent had been erected on the road strewn with the detritus of celebration, including bottles, cans and Liverpool flags.

Teams of officers wearing white forensic suits scoured the damp streets for evidence and snapped photos of clothing and other items left behind as people fled the chaotic scene.

Man bitten by gator, shot attempting assault on deputies

The Charlotte Observer

A man appeared to have survived an alligator attack while swimming across a lake, then he charged deputies with a pair of shears and was shot dead, a Florida sheriff said.

The man has been identified as 42-year-old Timothy Schulz.

Someone at a gas station called 911 in the early morning of Memorial Day on May 26 to report a man was acting unusual and asking to call his son, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd

in a news conference.

Within a couple hours, the sheriff's office got another call about a man swimming in a lake in Lakeland.

The caller spotted one gator close to the man, according to the sheriff.

The caller suspected he under the influence, and one bystander tried to throw him a life preserver, but Schulz refused to take it, Judd said.

During Schulz's swim across the lake, "it appears that his

right arm is bitten by an alligator," Judd said.

Witnesses said the man got out of the lake and grabbed a pair of garden shears, then he tried to break into a vehicle by throwing a brick, according to the sheriff.

When deputies arrived, they said they jumped out of their vehicles and saw Schulz walking between homes with a set of shears, then he was accused of charging at the deputies.

Judd said they tried to de-es-

calate and used a Taser on him twice, but he continued to be aggressive toward them.

Then Schulz jumped into the passenger seat of a running patrol vehicle and tried to grab a firearm inside.

At which point two deputies fired their weapons, killing Schulz, the sheriff said.

According to Judd, the man has a history of meth-related arrests and had been released from jail less than a week before the shooting.

Man swims Martha's Vineyard for 'Jaws' 50th anniversary

Associated Press

VINEYARD HAVEN, Mass. — A British-South African endurance athlete became the first person to swim around the island of Martha's Vineyard on Monday, completing a 60-mile trek over multiple days to raise awareness about the plight of sharks as the film "Jaws" nears its 50th birthday.

Lewis Pugh, 55, began swimming multiple hours a day in the 47-degree water on May 15. He wants to change perceptions

and encourage protections for the at-risk animals — which he said the film maligned as "villains, as cold-blooded killers."

"We've been fighting sharks for 50 years," he said after completing the last 1.2 miles of the swim before exiting the ocean near where "Jaws" was filmed. "Now, we need to make peace with them."

In total, Pugh swam for about 24 hours over 12 days. His first stop in Edgartown after greeting cheering fans on the beach

was at an ice cream shop, where he enjoyed a cone of salted caramel and berry brownie.

Rough waters made a cold swim harder. Pugh said this was among his most difficult endurance swims in an almost 40-year career. He said he expected the swim to be difficult because of the water temperature, the distance and the fact that it was happening during the start of shark migration season. But the weather proved the most challenging element of all.

"It's been a long journey, it really has — 12 days, cold water, constant wind, waves, and then always thinking of what may be beneath me. It's been a big swim. A very big swim," he said. "When you swim for 12 days, you leave as one person and I think you come back as a different person with a new reflection on what you've been through."

There were no shark sightings along Pugh's journey, but he said he saw sun fish, seals and terns.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Ex-chief serving prison sentence escapes

AR CALICO ROCK — A former police chief in Arkansas who is serving decades-long sentences for murder and rape escaped from prison Sunday, state corrections officials said.

Grant Hardin, the former police chief of the tiny town of Gateway near the Arkansas-Missouri border, escaped from the North Central Unit in Calico Rock, where he has been held since 2017. Corrections officials did not provide any details about how he escaped.

They did say that Garvin had disguised himself and was “wearing a makeshift outfit designed to mimic law enforcement when he escaped the North Central Unit.”

Ex-Rep. Charles Rangel dies at age 94

NY NEW YORK — Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel of New York, an outspoken, gravel-voiced Harlem Democrat who spent nearly five decades on Capitol Hill and was also a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, died Monday at age 94.

The family confirmed the death in a statement provided by City College of New York spokesperson Michelle Stent. He died at a hospital in New York, Stent said.

Rangel, a veteran of the Korean War who received a Purple Heart, defeated legendary Harlem politician Adam Clayton Powell in 1970 to start his Congressional career. During the next 40-plus years, he became a legend himself — a founding

member of the Congressional Black Caucus, dean of the New York Congressional delegation, and in 2007, the first African-American to chair the powerful Ways and Means Committee.

He served in Congress until 2017.

Strauss’ ‘Blue Danube’ to be sent into space

FL CAPE CANAVERAL — Strauss’ “Blue Danube” is heading into space this month to mark the 200th anniversary of the waltz king’s birth.

The classical piece will be beamed into the cosmos as it’s performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. The celestial send-off on May 31 — live-streamed with free public screenings in Vienna, Madrid and New York — also will celebrate the European Space Agency’s founding 50 years ago.

Although the music could be converted into radio signals in real time, according to officials, ESA will relay a pre-recorded version from the orchestra’s rehearsal the day before to avoid any technical issues.

Random mob wreaks havoc in downtown area

CA LOS ANGELES — The crowd gathered at midnight at Washington Boulevard and Maple Avenue.

It’s unclear why dozens of people converged at the intersection just south of downtown Los Angeles, but some were dressed to party, wearing pink platform heels and cat ears, according to video shot by news outlet OnScene.TV. A man gulped from a jug filled with a flammable liquid that he spat onto a torch, throwing flames in-

to the night sky.

As a helicopter circled overhead, a man wearing a leather jacket clambered up a light pole, his feet perched on a street sign. He pulled out his phone and appeared to film himself talking into the camera.

The crowd’s attention turned to an A Line train, which had stopped along its route on Washington Boulevard. According to the footage, vandals within the crowd began spray-painting the train and hammering on the windows.

The Los Angeles Police Department was alerted at 12:12 a.m. Sunday by a caller who said five male suspects had entered a train car and were vandalizing the interior, said Officer Kevin Terzes, an LAPD spokesperson.

Video showed dozens of officers massed in a skirmish line across the street from the mob, gripping black and green riot guns that fire foam rounds.

At 12:19 a.m., the LAPD received another call of people being “disruptive” on a train at Washington Boulevard and Trinity Street, Terzes said.

Sewage-boat explosion on river kills man

NY NEW YORK — An explosion on a boat carrying raw sewage that was docked on the Hudson River killed a New York City employee, authorities said.

Another worker on the city-owned Hunts Point vessel was injured and taken to the hospital after the blast Saturday near the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant, said city Fire Department Deputy Assistant Chief David Simms. A third refused medical treatment.

The cause of the explosion

was under investigation, but New York City Mayor Eric Adams said in statement that criminal intent was not suspected. The men on the boat, which takes raw sewage from the city to be treated, were doing work involving a flame or sparks when the explosion occurred, the U.S. Coast Guard said.

10 people shot at holiday boat party

SC LITTLE RIVER — Ten people were shot during a fight that started after a private boat hosting a holiday weekend party arrived at a dock Sunday night on the South Carolina coast, authorities said.

No one died in the shooting in Little River although some of the wounded were in critical condition, Horry County Police said in a statement.

The shooting happened around a dock where a private charter boat leaves for cruises. The boat was docked and detectives are trying to figure out exactly where the fight and shooting began, police said.

A flyer online advertised a party Sunday night with a DJ on a three-hour cruise ending at 9 p.m. A woman who answered a phone number on the flyer said she was distraught seeing her friends get shot but then said she didn’t want to talk any more and hung up.

No arrests have been made as detectives continue to investigate, police said.

A North Myrtle Beach police officer responding to the shooting accidentally shot himself in the leg at a marina about 3 miles away and is in the hospital in stable condition, a North Myrtle Beach spokeswoman said.

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Williams, Holmgren star as Thunder get big win

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — With Oklahoma City clutching a four-point lead, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander drove into the lane and smacked into triple coverage — doing the splits as he stopped and desperately tried to find a safe place for the ball.

Somehow, as Gilgeous-Alexander lost his balance and fell toward the court, he found space to fling it between the legs of Minnesota's Jaden McDaniels — and straight to a wide-open Jalen Williams behind the arc with 1:21 to go.

Swish. Game. Maybe even the series.

The Thunder saw that seven-point lead shrink back to one in the closing seconds, but they staved off the late push with a parade to the free-throw line and pulled out a 128-126 victory in Game 4 that gave them a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference finals.

Even the NBA MVP needs a wingman, and Gilgeous-Alexander has two. Williams and Chet Holmgren were so good in their

own ways that a 40-point, 10-assist, nine-rebound performance by Gilgeous-Alexander on Monday night was somehow overshadowed.

Williams had 13 of his 34 points in the first quarter to give OKC the scoring to match their tenacious start after a 42-point loss in Game 3. He shot 13-for-24, including 6-for-9 from 3-point range, and had three of the team's 14 steals.

"From start to finish, he picked his spots great, he was aggressive, stepped into everything," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "He was who he is. He's gotten all these awards this year for a good reason, and he proved it tonight. He's a really good basketball player. It's crazy to think he's so young and what he has already achieved."

Holmgren had nine of his 21 points in the fourth quarter. He went 9 for 14 from the floor, grabbed four of his seven rebounds on the offensive end and blocked three shots — including a highlight-reel rejection of McDaniels in the final minute in

a five-point game.

After McDaniels followed his hard drive right with a slick spin move to beat him to the basket for a left-side layup attempt, Holmgren never lost his footing despite the change in direction and swiftly slid to his right before a perfectly timed jump to swat the ball without fouling as the clock dropped under the 40-second mark.

"On both ends of the floor, he affects the game at such a high level," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "And it's crazy because he's out there just running around right now. We rarely call plays for him. He rarely gets anything set for him. He's just out there playing off of feel and affecting the game at a high level, whether it's making open shots, blocking shots, offensive rebounding, defensive rebounding."

"He's just a winning player."

Though the Timberwolves regained possession after a charging foul on Gilgeous-Alexander, precious more time went by before they scored again on a 3-

pointer by McDaniels with 23 seconds left.

Gilgeous-Alexander helped ice the game at the line, and Williams eventually grabbed a desperation inbound pass by Minnesota from half-court with 0.3 seconds left.

Holmgren, the second overall pick in the 2022 draft who missed his entire rookie season with a foot injury and 50 games this season following a pelvic fracture from a hard fall, happily left his hometown with a statement performance that put him and his teammates within one win of reaching the NBA Finals.

"When you have really good players that the other team needs to stop, they're going to have to help recover from somewhere," Holmgren said. "So just understanding that we have to make them pay for that and just try to be aggressive, try to make the right play, too. It's not always score. Sometimes it's make the extra pass, sometimes it's find the next action, whatever it is, just try to leave fingerprints on the game and make winning plays."

Hurricanes top Panthers to avoid another sweep

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — With their season on the line, the Carolina Hurricanes found a way to play their best hockey.

Frederik Andersen returned to the net and stopped 20 shots for his fifth career playoff shutout, Logan Stankoven got the only goal Carolina needed and the Hurricanes won their first Eastern Conference finals game in nearly 20 years by beating the Florida Panthers 3-0 on Monday night.

Sebastian Aho and Jordan Staal got empty-netters to seal it for Carolina, which staved off elimination and cut Florida's lead in the series to 3-1. It had dropped 15 consecutive East finals games, getting swept in 2009, 2019 and 2023, then dropping the first three games of this matchup.

"We made hard plays and kept them off the good scoring chances," Aho said.

And there was no sweep this time. The Hurricanes kept the Panthers' offense completely bottled up for much of the game, limiting the reigning Stanley Cup champions to 12

shots through two periods.

"We were good all night," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It's how we need to play if we're going to have a chance, and we gave ourselves a chance. That's all you can ask."

Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 25 shots for Florida, which played without injured Sam Reinhart, Niko Mikkola and A.J. Greer.

Game 5 is Wednesday in Raleigh, N.C. If Game 6 is needed, it'll be back in Sunrise on Friday.

"Obviously, we wanted to win tonight," Bobrovsky said. "But they played a good game, so it is what it is. We'll get ready for the next game."

Stankoven gave the Hurricanes their first lead of the series midway through the second period when he took a cross-ice diagonal pass from Alexander Nikishin at the blue line and skated in alone on Bobrovsky. He beat the Panthers goalie over the right shoulder for the 1-0 lead, ending a drought that — depending on perspective — had lasted for either six games or two years.

"It all starts with him," Stankoven said of

Nikishin's pass. "Great play by him."

It was Carolina's first lead in an East finals game since the second period of Game 2 of the 2023 matchup against Florida. A total of 364 minutes, 53 seconds — the equivalent of more than six regulation games — had elapsed in East finals games for the Hurricanes since their last lead.

"Credit to them ... they were good," Panthers coach Paul Maurice said.

And the win was Carolina's first in an East finals game since beating Buffalo in Game 7 in 2006, which came on the Hurricanes' way to the Stanley Cup. The game-winning goal that night came from Brind'Amour.

Carolina switched starting goalies again for Game 4, going back to Andersen. He started Games 1 and 2, then watched Game 3 when Carolina went with Pyotr Kochetkov. But Andersen was brilliant Monday, as Brind'Amour expected.

"There were some real tough shots that looked easy tonight," Brind'Amour said. "That's when you know he's really on."

Weather can't slow Djokovic in opener

Associated Press

PARIS — Novak Djokovic experienced the lowest of lows — pulling out of the French Open after tearing the meniscus in his right knee — and the highest of highs — winning a long-sought Olympic gold medal for Serbia — at Roland-Garros last year. This trip to the site went smoothly, once he got going.

Other than some first-set interruptions by, and lengthy discussions about, the windy, wet weather, the 24-time major champion was unbothered during a 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 victory over 98th-ranked Mackie McDonald of the United States at Court Philippe-Chatrier in the first round.

“He makes it seem like a video game, almost, for him,” said McDonald, a 30-year-old Californian who played college tennis at UCLA and twice has been to the fourth round at Grand Slam tournaments. “He’s able

to just do so much. I don’t even think he was playing his best tennis or his highest level. But if I pushed him to a different point, he would bring it up.”

One example: When McDonald earned his first break points, getting to love-40 at 3-2 in the second set, Djokovic came up with three big serves, a 120 mph ace, a 123 mph ace and a 122 mph service winner.

Djokovic compiled 32 winners — 18 more than McDonald — and just 20 unforced errors in a match that eventually was played with the lights on and the retractable roof closed.

“I’m a competitor, and losing stings,” McDonald said, “but playing Novak on that court is something I’ll remember.”

Before Djokovic, who just turned 38 and won his 100th career title last weekend, walked onto the playing surface, he was identified by the stadium announcer by his total number of

Slam trophies, the three he’s won at the French Open, and the Summer Games gold he won “here in Paris.”

“I still remember last year’s Olympic Games. It was the last time I was here,” Djokovic said afterward. “The emotion is very strong.”

The medal that means so much to him?

“I don’t have the medal with me. But I have a picture of the medal in my bag,” he said. “The medal is with my father. My dad likes trophies more than I do, so I gave him mine.”

What else happened on Tuesday?

Once Coco Gauff found her rackets — a relatively important piece of equipment for a tennis player — all was well for her in the first round. Gauff showed up on court, opened her bag and peered inside to find it

was missing her rackets. The start of the warmup was delayed, but then everything went Gauff’s way, and the 2023 U.S. Open champion got past Olivia Gadecki 6-2, 6-2. Other winners included the No. 3 seeds, Jessica Pegula and Alexander Zverev, and 18-year-old Mirra Andrejeva, but 2021 U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev, who was seeded 11th, lost to Cam Norrie 7-5, 6-3, 4-6, 1-6, 7-5 across nearly four hours.

Who is playing on Wednesday?

The second round begins on Day 4, with a schedule that includes defending champions Iga Swiatek and Carlos Alcaraz, 2024 runner-up Jasmine Paolini and two-time finalist Casper Ruud. Swiatek meets 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu in the day session’s last match in the main stadium.

Vanderbilt leads record 13 SEC teams in tournament

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Vanderbilt, which gave up just three runs in three games in the SEC Tournament, was awarded the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament on Monday and was among a record 13 teams from the conference to be selected to the 64-team field.

The tournament opens Friday with 16 double-elimination regionals. Winners advance to eight best-of-three super regionals. Those winners move on to the College World Series in Omaha beginning June 13.

The Commodores have won eight straight games and 13 of their past 16 to earn the No. 1 seed for the second time, and first since 2007.

“It’s amazing, it’s cool, it’s great, I love it,” shortstop Jonathan Vastine said. “The team was excited about it. After to-

day, that No. 1 seed kind of goes out the door because anything can happen.”

Vanderbilt, which plays Wright State in the opener of the Nashville Regional, is in the tournament for the 19th straight time for the longest active streak.

“We understand we have a goal at the end of the year to get to the middle of the country,” pitcher JD Thompson said, referring to Omaha. “You can’t de-value anybody coming into a regional like this. It’s all good teams, so you respect everybody. If we play good baseball and keep the trend of what we’re doing right now, then we have a good chance.”

The national seeds following Vanderbilt (42-16) are Texas (42-12), Arkansas (43-13), Auburn (38-18), North Carolina (42-12), LSU (43-14), Georgia

(42-15) and Oregon State (41-12-1). Those eight teams would be in line to host super regionals if they win their regionals.

Seeds Nos. 9 through 16: Florida State (38-14), Mississippi (40-19), Clemson (44-16), Oregon (42-14), Coastal Carolina (48-11), Tennessee (43-16), UCLA (42-16) and Southern Mississippi (44-14).

The last four teams to get at-large bids, in alphabetical order, were Arizona State, Kansas State, Oklahoma State and Southern California.

The first four teams left out were Southeastern Louisiana, Troy, UConn and Virginia.

The SEC’s 13 teams in the tournament are two more than its record 11 that made it in 2024.

The Atlantic Coast Conference has nine teams in the field followed by the Big 12 with eight and the Big Ten with four. The

American Athletic, Big West, Conference USA and Sun Belt all have two teams in the tournament.

First-year SEC member Texas, which opened 38-5 overall and 19-2 in conference play, appeared to be a lock for the No. 1 seed before finishing 5-7 with a loss to Tennessee in its conference tournament opener.

The Longhorns are in the tournament for a record 64th time. Miami, which lost six of its past seven games, is making its 50th appearance. Florida State will be a regional host for a Division I-record 37th time.

The longest active streaks behind Vanderbilt belong to Florida (17), LSU (13), and Oklahoma State (12).

USC Upstate (36-23) is the only team that will be making its first appearance in the Division I tournament.

Orioles get 1st 3-game win streak of year

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Dylan Carlson hit a three-run homer against his former team, Charlie Morton earned his first victory with Baltimore, and the Orioles achieved their first three-game winning streak of the season, beating the St. Louis Cardinals 5-2 on Monday.

Carlson's drive in the fourth off Erick Fedde (3-4) put Baltimore up 5-0. Morton (1-7) took a shutout into the fifth before allowing a two-run shot by Pedro Pagés. The right-hander, who signed with the Orioles in the offseason, allowed four hits in six innings after losing his first six starts of the season. He'd pitched mostly in relief lately.

After Morton exited, three Baltimore relievers — Seranthony Domínguez, Yennier Cano and Félix Bautista — retired all nine of their hitters. Bautista pitched the ninth for his eighth save in nine chances.

"Charlie threw outstanding," said Carlson. "It was great playing behind him, great pace, bullpen did a great job. Guys up and down the lineup contributed, did a great job. Good team win."

Tigers 3, Giants 1: Keider Montero pitched five scoreless innings and Riley Greene drove in two runs to help host Detroit beat San Francisco.

Montero (2-1) entered the game with a 5.28 ERA in six games, but held the Giants to one hit and two walks while striking out three.

Brewers 3, Red Sox 2: Jackson Chourio homered on the opening pitch from Garrett Crochet, and host Milwaukee defeated Boston.

Brewers starter Chad Patrick pitched 4⅓ scoreless innings, giving up three hits while walking two and striking out six. DL Hall (1-0), fresh off the 60-day injured list, came on to relieve Patrick and pitched 2⅓ innings to get the win.

Dodgers 7, Guardians 2: Shohei Ohtani hit a leadoff homer for the second straight game and visiting Los Angeles defeated Cleveland.

Will Smith also went deep for the Dodgers, who bounced back after dropping two of three games in New York to the Mets.

Rays 7, Twins 2: Jonathan Aranda hit a three-run homer

and Danny Jansen added a two-run shot as host Tampa Bay extended its winning streak to six games with a win over Minnesota.

Kody Funderburk, the Twins' only left-handed reliever, entered with one out in the eighth and the bases empty and allowed back-to-back singles to Aranda and Curtis Mead. A two-out, two-run double by José Caballero and Jansen's fourth homer made it 7-2.

Padres 4, Marlins 3 (11): Manny Machado hit a tying homer in the eighth inning and Tyler Wade scored the winning run on Cade Gibson's wild pitch in the 11th as host San Diego rallied past Miami.

Jose Iglesias had a two-run double in the fourth to begin the Padres' comeback from a 3-0 deficit. Machado tied it with his sixth homer, a leadoff shot to left-center off reliever Calvin Faucher.

Blue Jays 2, Rangers 1: Kevin Gausman struck out six over eight strong innings, Daulton Varsho had a solo homer among his three hits and visiting Toronto beat Texas.

Diamondbacks 5, Pirates 0: Eugenio Suárez and Josh Naylor homered to back a stellar start from Ryne Nelson as host Arizona beat Pittsburgh to end a five-game skid.

Cubs 3, Rockies 1: Jameson Taillon pitched four-hit ball into the seventh inning, Kyle Tucker drove in two runs and host Chicago beat Colorado.

Reds 7, Royals 4: Nick Martinez worked seven strong innings and Tyler Stephenson had three hits including a two-run homer to lead visiting Cincinnati to a win over Kansas City.

Mets 2, White Sox 1: Tyrone Taylor hit a leadoff double in the ninth inning and scored on Francisco Lindor's sacrifice fly as host New York mounted a late comeback to edge Chicago in the opener of a three-game series.

Yankees 5, Angels 1: Anthony Volpe hit a three-run double during visiting New York's four-run fourth inning, and Ryan Yarbrough yielded two hits over six innings in the Yankees' victory against Los Angeles.

Fever's Clark out at least 2 weeks with quad strain

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Fever star Caitlin Clark will miss at least two weeks after straining her left quadriceps during Saturday's 90-88 loss to the defending WNBA champion New York Liberty.

Coach Stephanie White told reporters Monday that she wasn't sure exactly when Clark was injured, but was told after the game she had "something going on with her leg." An MRI confirmed the diagnosis. Clark's absence could wind up being a big blow for one of the league's title favorites.

"Obviously, she wants to play and, obviously, everyone wants to see her play," White said after Monday's practice. "But for me, it's about maintaining perspective. It's making sure that we address this that doesn't affect the long term, that we take care of it and don't overpush, don't overexert."

Clark was not seen with her teammates at the end of practice and was not available for comment. Team officials said additional updates will be provided as circumstances warrant.

It's the first time in Clark's career she's missed a game after playing in all 40 games and both playoff games last season and the first four games this year. She did miss Indiana's first preseason game this year with a leg injury.

Last season's WNBA rookie of the year finished with 18 points and 10 assists Saturday, but lost the ball on the Fever's final possession as she tried to take a 3-pointer that could have won the game in the waning seconds.

Afterward, White complained that New York was not called for a foul. Clark is averaging 19.0 points, 9.3 assists and 6.0 rebounds this season as Indiana has opened with a 2-2 mark. The Fever return to action

Wednesday at Washington and Clark is expected to miss that game as well as home contests against Connecticut and Washington and Indiana's rematch at Chicago on June 7 against her rival, Angel Reese.

The league's top drawing player could miss additional time, but the Fever seem more capable of winning without Clark this season after using the offseason to bring in a large group of veteran players with championship experience.

It's unclear just how Indiana will try to replace Clark's play-making ability.

"Sometimes great players don't tell you when they're hurting," White said. "I'm glad that she did because we need to nip this in the bud."

Clark set a single-season league record last season with 337 assists after leading the Iowa Hawkeyes to back-to-back national runner-up finishes in college.