

## Families who fled Bahrain to head to US

By LARA KORTE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Hundreds of U.S. military dependents and Defense Department civilians who fled Bahrain at the start of the war with Iran will soon be required to relocate from Germany to the U.S., according to a new Pentagon memo.

Naval Support Activity Bahrain, home to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet, evacuated thousands of nonessential personnel at the start of Operation Epic Fury.

The mission began Feb. 28 with joint U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran. In retaliation, Iran launched attacks on U.S. military installations in a number of Middle Eastern countries. The ensuing days saw an exodus from NSA Bahrain,

which typically hosts more than 8,300 U.S. service members, civilian employees and their families.

Most evacuees traveled to stateside safe haven locations, but the Pentagon made an exception for those who wanted to wait out the conflict in the Kaiserslautern area.

It hosts the largest overseas military community and allowed students to finish the academic year in the Defense Department's school system.

Now, those evacuees must make plans to relocate to a different safe haven location by June 30, according to a Thursday memo seen by Stars and Stripes. According to a separate March 3 order, designated safe havens can be anywhere in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, or non-foreign U.S.

territories like Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to questions about why families and civilians were being directed to change their safe haven locations.

Many in Germany have been living in temporary housing on tourist visas, which have a 90-day limit. For those enrolled in DOD schools, classes end June 9. The Pentagon memo encouraged those with tourist visas to immediately apply for an extended visa.

Once families arrive at their new safe haven, the 180-day time limit for allowances will restart, according to the memo, which was signed by Anthony Tata, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

One military spouse from NSA Bahrain said her family

will be sad to leave the Kaiserslautern Military Community. It has been incredibly generous in helping her kids transition to a new school and environment, she said.

Stars and Stripes agreed not to identify the spouse because she feared speaking publicly could negatively impact her family. They'll figure out the logistics of next steps, she said, but they're still left with many questions.

"Our children consider Bahrain home," she said. "Their friends there are back to normal life, their activities have resumed, and they ask every day when they can go back."

Bahrain is the only accompanied billet in the region, and families there say they've grown close to the community during their multiyear stays.

## US ballistic missile submarine appears in Mediterranean

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — A Navy ballistic missile submarine arrived in a British territory along the Mediterranean Sea this week, an unusual glimpse of one of the service's stealthiest vessels coinciding with increasingly tense Middle East peace negotiations.

The submarine arrived for a port visit to Gibraltar on Sunday, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a statement Monday.

The Navy did not identify the submarine involved, but several ship watchers said it was USS Alaska.

Appearances of Navy submarines are rare and often designed to send a strategic deterrence message.

One of 14 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines, Alaska carries Trident missiles armed with nuclear warheads.

The vessel's visit is a demonstration of U.S. capability, flexibility and commitment to NATO allies, NAVEUR-AF/6th Fleet said in the statement. The Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines offer the U.S. its "most survivable leg of the nuclear triad," the Navy said.

In addition to submarine-launched ballistic missiles, the nation's nuclear triad includes land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and strategic bombers.

The presence of the submarine near a key maritime chokepoint in the western Mediterranean follows strained efforts to

hammer out an agreement to end hostilities between the U.S. and Iran.

On Sunday, President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that he had read Iran's response to a U.S. proposal to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. He called it "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!"

Trump on Monday said the Iran ceasefire is on "life support" after rejecting Tehran's latest proposal, which officials said included some nuclear concessions, according to The Associated Press. Trump also proposed suspending the federal gas tax to help with higher fuel prices caused by the war.

The stalled diplomacy and recent exchanges of fire could tip the Middle East back into open

warfare and prolong the worldwide energy crisis sparked by the conflict. Iran still has a chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for global oil and gas shipments, and America is blockading Iranian ports.

Asked at the White House if the ceasefire was still in effect, Trump said it's on "life support."

"I would call it the weakest right now after reading that piece of garbage they sent us," Trump added. "I didn't even finish reading it."

Tehran's multipage counteroffer included cessation of fighting and a gradual reopening of the strait as the U.S. lifts its blockade on Iranian ships and ports, among other points, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday.

# Housing allowance to increase on Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — U.S. service members who live off-base on Okinawa will soon receive \$400 to \$500 more per month from the U.S. government to pay their rent, according to the commander of the Air Force's 18th Wing.

Beginning May 16, active-duty troops across all service branches on the island will see an increase in their Overseas Housing Allowance, Brig. Gen. John Gallemore said during a May 1 livestreamed interview with American Forces Network.

The wing operates the Okinawa Family Housing Office on Kadena Air Base, which manag-

es all housing for service members, Defense Department civilians and their families on the island.

The office approves rental properties for use by military-affiliated tenants.

"The OHA rates for Kadena are not keeping pace with rising market prices because landlords are price-matching to the local civilian housing allowance, which is higher than current OHA rates," Gallemore said May 5.

"This has caused an increasing gap in what Service members are able to afford in the local area," he added. "Due to this shift, a review of rental allowances was warranted to ensure

that Service members and their families can afford local market housing."

The added allowance will give enlisted members up to E-4 another \$396 per month, Gallemore said on AFN.

Ranks O-1, O-2 and E-5 will receive about \$504 more per month. O-3 and E-6 through E-8 will gain about \$450 more per month.

"I know that that is a big quality of life piece that has been affecting people, because on average folks have been coming out of pocket about 300 bucks," Gallemore said on AFN. "So not only were we able to meet that, but we were actually able to exceed that."

As of May 1, ranks E-1 through E-4 with dependents receive \$1,403.46 per month in rental allowance, according to the Defense Travel Management Office's online calculator. Without dependents, that figure drops by about \$140.

E-5s, O-1s and O-2s receive \$1,439.44 with dependents and about \$1,300 without. E-6 through E-8 and O3s receive \$1,655.36 and about \$1,500 without.

All ranks receive a monthly utility and maintenance allowance of \$661.56 with dependents or \$496.17 without.

So far, the allowance increase applies only to service members on Okinawa.

## USS Washington departs naval base in Japan ahead of its annual deployment

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The aircraft carrier USS George Washington quietly departed the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet over the weekend, likely for sea trials ahead of its annual patrol.

The carrier, along with its crew of about 3,100 people, left Yokosuka around 10 a.m. Sunday, the Yokosuka city government said in a news release.

The Navy rarely discusses ship movements publicly, but it regularly notifies the Japanese government when a nuclear-powered ship — aircraft carriers or submarines — arrive or depart Yokosuka city.

Spokespeople for 7th Fleet did not respond to Stars and Stripes' phone and email requests on Monday for comment.

Aircraft carriers typically un-

dergo sea trials for about a week prior to a deployment to evaluate the ship and its crew, a cruise that may include high-speed turns, anchoring trials and tests of the ship's defense systems.

Once it completes its sea trials, the carrier typically returns to Yokosuka for several days before departing again on its annual patrol. Deployments for 7th Fleet aircraft carriers have lasted about six months, typically with a brief return to Yokosuka halfway through.

The George Washington has completed one deployment since returning to Japan in late 2024.

Air crews with Carrier Air Wing 5, the carrier's dedicated wing based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, also prepare with their own qualifying event ahead of deployment.

## Patients may face delays amid Yokota shortages

By MARC CASTANEDA  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Patients at this airlift hub in western Tokyo may experience longer wait times and fewer appointment options this summer due to temporary staffing shortages, according to a recent announcement by the 374th Medical Group.

Clinics at the medical group expect reduced appointment availability due to staffing shortages linked to global combat operations and the annual permanent change of station season, according to a post Wednesday on the 374th Medical Group's official Facebook page.

"The medical group has coordinated with headquarters for manning assists and is temporarily shifting work internally with available staff across the unit," Capt. Emma Quirk, spokeswoman for the 374th Air-

lift Wing, said Friday.

The original Facebook post was changed afterward to remove the reference to combat operations, due to operational security concerns, Quirk said by phone Friday. The original post did not refer to a specific military operation.

The pediatrics clinic will see the greatest impact in the short term, though availability is expected to improve beginning June 1, according to the post.

The update did not specify how many providers are unavailable or how long the shortages may last. Patients should expect earliest available appointments to be between three to four weeks from initial inquiry, Quirk said.

The announcement comes as military installations across Japan enter the busy PCS season, when service members, families and civilian employees rotate to new assignments.

# US, French passengers positive for virus

*Bloomberg News*

The U.S. citizens who were aboard the MV Hondius cruise ship hit by a hantavirus outbreak have arrived in Nebraska for assessment, including one patient who is in a specialized biocontainment unit after testing positive for the rare respiratory disease.

The infected American and another French passenger tested positive for the Andes strain of the virus less than a day after passengers were evacuated from the expedition vessel. There have been at least eight confirmed infections, including the two new cases. All were caused by the Andes strain, the

only one known to move from person to person.

The French woman developed symptoms on the repatriation flight from the Canary Islands and worsened overnight, the country's health minister said. She and four other French passengers are now hospitalized and in isolation.

Governments are taking extensive precautions after a multi-country response to evacuate passengers from the Dutch-flagged ship at the center of an outbreak that has left three people dead. While public-health authorities continue to say the general risk from hantavirus is low and broader contagion is

unlikely, others are urging caution to contain the outbreak.

"It's a virus we know," said French Health Minister Stephanie Rist said. "The incubation period is quite long and we need to break the potential chain of transmission from the start."

The French passengers will be isolated for 42 days as France takes the strictest measures of any European Union country, Rist said.

The U.S. is taking a less stringent approach.

"We don't want to treat it like COVID," Jay Bhattacharya, acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told CNN's "State of the

Union" on Sunday. "We don't want to cause a public panic over this."

U.S. passengers who arrived at the National Quarantine Unit, a secured facility on the University of Nebraska Medical Center campus in Omaha, are now being interviewed and assessed for risk based on their proximity to those who were infected. Most will be given the choice to stay in the Nebraska unit or return to their communities to quarantine if "their home situation allows it," Bhattacharya said. They will be under the supervision of state and local public-health agencies with CDC support, he said.

## Study says Europe needs \$55B more annually to reach defense autonomy

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Europe can break its dependence on U.S. military muscle over the next 10 years by spending about \$55 billion more annually on defense, says a new study identifying key security gaps that must be closed.

The report, which comes as the Pentagon prepares to reduce the number of U.S. troops based in Germany, argues that the biggest challenge facing Europe is finding the political will to bring a unified approach to its fragmented defense industrial network.

"The prerequisite is that Europe understands the strategic dimension of its defense challenge as its Manhattan Project," the report's authors said in the paper published by the Kiel Institute this month, using the American atomic bomb effort in World War II as a comparison.

Titled "Achieving European Defense Autonomy," the report estimates that closing some of the major defense capability gaps

would cost around \$230 billion over the next four years. Achieving near-complete autonomy in 10 years would cost roughly \$530 billion, it said.

The push for greater European military self-sufficiency comes as tensions with Washington have rattled long-standing European assumptions about U.S. security guarantees.

Concerns over President Donald Trump's repeated criticism of NATO and uncertainty about future U.S. political support for Europe's defense have accelerated calls for the Continent to develop a stronger military backbone.

It's unclear whether Europe can muster the kind of unity recommended in the report.

Despite the Pentagon's demands that Europe prepare to assume overriding responsibility for the defense of the Continent, the U.S. still aims to be a major seller of high-end weaponry to Europe. However, the report calls for largely circumventing U.S. weapons-makers.

## Body of missing US soldier is recovered in Morocco

By PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN

*Stars and Stripes*

The body of one of two U.S. soldiers who went missing during a training exercise in Morocco last week was recovered Saturday, as U.S. and Moroccan forces continued a large-scale search for the second soldier, military officials said Sunday.

A Moroccan military search team recovered the body of 1st Lt. Kendrick Lamont Key Jr., 27, of Richmond, Va., along the shoreline near the Cap Draa Training Area at about 8:55 a.m. local time, U.S. Army Europe and Africa said in a statement.

Key and another soldier disappeared May 2 after reportedly entering the ocean during African Lion 26, a multinational exercise led by U.S. Africa Command involving thousands of troops from more than 40 countries.

His body was found within about a mile of where the two soldiers were last seen entering the water, the USAREUR-AF statement said.

Key was assigned to Charlie

Battery, 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, part of the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, based in Germany. He served as a platoon leader and Air Defense Artillery officer.

"Today, we mourn the loss of 1st Lt. Kendrick Key, whose remains were recovered in Morocco," Brig. Gen. Curtis King, commander of the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, said in the statement. "Our hearts are with his family, friends, teammates, and all who knew and served alongside him."

Search operations involving more than 1,000 U.S. and Moroccan military and civilian personnel remain underway for the second missing soldier, whose name has not been released. Ground teams, aircraft, unmanned systems and maritime assets have been deployed in the effort, according to USAREUR-AF.

USAREUR-AF Commander Gen. Christopher Donahue said Moroccan forces had provided extensive support.

# China confirms this week's Xi-Trump summit

*Bloomberg News*

Beijing officially announced the date of Donald Trump's state visit this week, publicly green-lighting the first U.S. presidential trip to China in nearly a decade despite tensions over the Iran war.

Trump, who last visited China in 2017, will meet Xi Jinping in a much-anticipated summit that's already been rescheduled once due to the war. The White House had said the summit will be held May 14-15.

"At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, President Donald Trump of the United States of America will pay a state visit to China from May 13 to 15," China's state news agency Xinhua said Monday, citing a spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry.

Xi's government had been wa-

ry about proceeding with the visit until the conflict — now in its third month — is settled, people familiar with the matter said earlier. China never announced or commented on the dates of Trump's previously delayed visit in April, following its usual practice of announcing plans for its top leaders only days ahead for security reasons.

The pomp and pageantry of the state visit will now unfold against the backdrop of a fragile ceasefire between China's top geopolitical rival and its key strategic partner in the Middle East.

Tensions between the U.S. and China — one of Iran's biggest diplomatic backers and its top oil buyer — had been rising in recent weeks as the Trump administration struggles to end

a war that's triggered a global energy crisis.

The U.S. Treasury has recently sanctioned five Chinese private oil refiners, including one of the country's largest, for processing Iranian crude. Beijing responded publicly with unprecedented defiance, ordering companies to ignore U.S. sanctions, though its financial regulator privately advised large state-owned banks to suspend new loans to the blacklisted refiners.

The Iran war is expected to be high on the summit's agenda. A week before Trump was scheduled to land in Beijing, China flaunted its close ties and coordination with Iran by hosting the Islamic Republic's foreign minister.

The U.S. and China both want to see the reopening of the Strait

of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and gas flows passed before the conflict. The key question for Beijing is whether it's prepared to put pressure on Tehran, and what quid pro quo it would seek from Washington in return.

The two leaders are expected to seek an extension to a trade truce they reached in South Korea last October, which rolled back export controls including shipments of rare earths to the U.S.

The issue of Taiwan is also set to feature prominently during the talks. Beijing is concerned about U.S. arms sales to the self-ruling island and may seek to push the Trump administration to express opposition to Taiwan independence, Chinese analysts have said.

## Philippines VP shocks with plot to sink impeachment

*Bloomberg News*

Allies of Philippines' Vice President Sara Duterte took power in the Senate on Monday, giving them control over the chamber that will conduct her impeachment trial as the House of Representatives voted to move forward with the bid to oust her.

Duterte-aligned senators mounted a surprise Senate takeover, and installed Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano to head the chamber on Monday. The maneuver preceded the House of Representatives' approval of a second impeachment case against the vice president, sending a strong signal that the trial at the Senate could be stalled or lead to an acquittal.

Still, a total of 257 House members voted in favor of impeachment, which accuses Duterte of plotting to assassinate President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., among other charges.

The turnout far exceeds the

threshold required by the constitution for a one-third vote of the entire chamber, which is dominated by allies of Marcos.

A conviction, which would require a two-thirds vote in the 24-member Senate, would ban Duterte from politics for life and remove her from office.

The vice president's looming trial heightens political risks in a nation already rattled by a massive government corruption crisis and an oil-price shock stemming from the Middle East conflict.

Duterte is facing four charges, including misusing public funds and threatening to assassinate Marcos. She's denied any wrongdoing, claiming the charges are politically motivated.

The vice president, daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte, has declared her presidential ambition and leads opinion polls as the most popular candidate to succeed Marcos when his six-year term expires in 2028.

## S. Korea: External strikes caused ship fire in Hormuz

BY YOOJIN LEE  
AND JULIE MASSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The fire aboard a cargo ship operated by South Korea's HMM Co. in the Strait of Hormuz last week was caused by unknown airborne objects, according to South Korea's Foreign Ministry.

Authorities have not determined the origin of the attack on the Panama-flagged HMM Namu, which caught fire around 3:30 p.m. May 4 while anchored off the United Arab Emirates.

Commercial vessels are at risk in the strait, where Iran has threatened vessels attempting to transit the waterway and the United States is blockading ports.

None of the 24 crew members on the South Korean vessel — six South Koreans and 18 foreign nationals — were injured in the fire, according to a May 5 report by the Yonhap News Agency.

Seoul immediately launched an investigation into the incident to determine whether the dam-

age was caused by an external attack or internal factors.

Based on evidence collected onsite, surveillance camera footage and testimony from the vessel's captain, the government found that a pair of unidentified airborne objects had struck the vessel, said Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Park Il.

The vessel's side ballast tank was hit twice in separate strikes about one minute apart, Park said. The strikes damaged a section of the left stern measuring 16.4 feet wide and 23 feet deep and bent the hull frame inward, causing part of the outer hull plating to buckle outward, he said.

The first strike appears to have ignited the fire where the ballast tank's upper plating was perforated, while the subsequent strike likely intensified and spread the flames, according to the briefing.

The blast patterns and shape of the damage suggest the vessel was probably not hit by a mine or torpedo, Park said.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Plane strikes and kills pedestrian on runway

**CO** DENVER — A Frontier Airlines flight leaving Denver International Airport struck and killed a person who stepped onto the runway after jumping a fence.

The aircraft struck a pedestrian during takeoff at about 11:19 p.m. local time on Friday, sparking an engine fire, Denver International Airport said in a post on X. The Airbus A321 plane heading to Los Angeles International Airport was carrying 224 passengers and seven crew members, the airline said in a statement.

The pilots aborted the takeoff as smoke filled the cabin.

The airport authority said the pedestrian jumped over the perimeter fence, and was struck and killed two minutes later while crossing the runway.

The authority didn't identify the pedestrian but said the person was not believed to be an airport employee, and that the fence was intact.

### Fire department stresses: Closing doors saves lives

**NY** NEW YORK — Close the door.

FDNY officials once again shared three simple words that can save lives and property when a blaze breaks out and residents are trying to escape.

Officials are spreading the word in the wake of deadly fires within the last month that killed five people in Manhattan and the Bronx, blazes that could have been more easily contained if doors were used to help snuff out the flames.

"Please close the door when there is a fire in your building,"

said FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Flynn.

"Close every door possible. Every door in the public hallway, every door in your building, every door to your apartment. Make sure they are closed. Closed doors save lives."

Fire officials said an open door can allow toxic smoke and deadly gases to spread throughout a building in a matter of minutes.

Closing doors isolates fire and prevents smoke, heat and flames from spreading, officials said.

### 2 hikers seriously injured in bear attack at park

**WY** YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — A pair of hikers in Yellowstone National Park were seriously injured in a bear attack.

The number of bears involved, and their species, has not been released by park officials.

But Yellowstone is home to both black bears and grizzlies, and the attack occurred on a trail — Mystic Falls, near Old Faithful — that until 2024 had been closed to reduce the chance of conflicts with grizzlies, according to the WyoFile, a local nonprofit news outlet.

The two injured hikers, possibly brothers, were discovered by another hiker and airlifted to a nearby hospital, where one was listed in serious condition and the other in critical condition, according to another local news outlet, the Jackson Hole News & Guide.

The hikers were the first people injured by bears in Yellowstone in 2026, the National Park Service service said in a news release.

### Man faces only federal charge in Trump threats

**NC** RALEIGH — The Wake County district attorney's office dropped charges against a South Carolina man who allegedly wrote on his car that he was going to kill President Donald Trump, court records showed.

Daniel Rodney Swain, 41, was charged with communicating threats against the president on April 30, The News & Observer previously reported. An Apex car wash attendant called 911 to report the threats written on Swain's BMW, according to a federal complaint.

The Apex Police Department charged Swain on April 30 with possession of methamphetamine, resisting a public officer and displaying a fictitious license plate. The charges were dropped on May 4 because Swain was taken into federal custody, court records showed.

Swain still faces the federal charge. If convicted, he could face up to five years in prison, The N&O previously reported.

### State seeks to aid groups that help pay for schools

**NY** NEW YORK — Gov. Kathy Hochul intends to opt New York in to the Republican-backed federal tax-credit scholarship program that would expand school choice across the state by helping nonprofits offering financial assistance for private school expenses raise money, her office said Friday.

The program will provide a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 for donors to scholarship-granting nonprofits. In turn, the organiza-

tions will give families who make up to 300% of the local median income dollars for private school tuition, tutoring, and other school-related costs.

The tax credit was created in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed into law by President Donald Trump last summer. The program was quickly embraced by Republican-led states, but only one Democratic governor has opted in so far: Gov. Jared Polis of Colorado. North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein has said he intends to opt in after more details of the program are released.

### Tax preparer pleads guilty in \$4M PPP fraud scam

**FL** FORT LAUDERDALE — A Broward County tax preparer has pleaded guilty to his involvement in a scheme where he submitted hundreds of fraudulent COVID-19 loan applications during the pandemic, amounting to more than \$4 million.

Roody Metelus, 47, owned the tax preparation business JRS Tax Services LLC, doing business as Liberty Tax Service, based in Dania Beach. In early 2021, Metelus began recruiting customers and others to apply for federal Paycheck Protection Program loans, known as PPP loans, according to a factual proffer, the facts agreed on by the defense and prosecution.

He prepared loan applications and supporting documents to falsely list applicants as sole proprietors of business, despite the fact that many people were not business owners, the court document said. He then submitted the applications to a bank in another state.

— From wire reports

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# 2026 NBA draft class boasts star power

Associated Press

AJ Dybantsa is calling it already: The NBA draft class of 2026, in his mind, is one of the best in the history of the league.

And nobody has even been drafted yet.

If there is one characteristic that the players expected to be at the very top of next month's draft share, it is confidence. They know they're good, and they don't mind telling you that they're good. And for the teams now in position to get those top players — Washington at No. 1, Utah at No. 2, Memphis at No. 3 and Chicago at No. 4 — the next few weeks are going to be teeming with promise.

"Since I'm in this draft class, I'm going to say we're one of the best draft classes," said Dybantsa, who led Division I men's college basketball in scoring this past season. "We'll see how that pans out and how our careers pan out, but if you ask me right now, I think we're one of the best draft classes."

An unforeseen trade or

something popping up in the medical exams that will take place over the next few weeks could change things, but for now, it seems like the first four names Commissioner Adam Silver will call on June 23 will be BYU's Dybantsa, Kansas' Darryn Peterson, Duke's Cameron Boozer and North Carolina's Caleb Wilson.

They are not the only four good players in this draft. Far from it, it seems. But there does seem to be a significant amount of star power at the top, which made Sunday's draft lottery feel perhaps a bit more consequential than others.

Indiana was devastated not to get a pick after having the league's second-worst record this season. The Pacers surrendered the No. 5 pick to the Los Angeles Clippers to help pay off the trade made this season for center Ivica Zubac, who surely is going to help Indiana when Tyrese Haliburton returns from his torn Achilles.

Wizards President Michael

Winger likes to get into the math of things, and he knows a 14% chance isn't exactly great. But it was as good as anyone else in that draft lottery, and in the end it was good enough to get Washington that No. 1 pick.

They weren't the only winner.

Oklahoma City gets a lottery pick in this draft because of the years and years and years that general manager Sam Presti spent on collecting both good players and draft capital. That means the reigning champions — maybe back-to-back champions by draft time — will only get even better.

The Clippers got a top-five pick, Memphis gets a No. 3 pick, Chicago's rebuild will see the Bulls land an extremely good player, and Utah — which was fined \$500,000 this year for sitting some players in the fourth quarters of games — is sitting at No. 2.

"Agree to disagree," is what Jazz owner Ryan Smith famously wrote when the NBA hit

him for the half-million-dollar fine. The credo now might be wait and see; the Jazz have a lot of young talent, and now will get even deeper on that front.

Jazz guard Keyonte George was at Sunday's lottery. He said the Jazz are keeping the receipts — his way of saying yes, Utah has taken note of all the tanking talk that dogged the team this season.

"We're going to make sure we go at our own pace, understand we're a new group and we're on our journey to something special," George said. "But yeah, as a group, we'll have a chip on our shoulder for sure."

There's a lot of basketball left to be played this season. New York is in the NBA's final four already, awaiting Cleveland or Detroit in the Eastern Conference finals. Oklahoma City can get back to the Western Conference finals on Monday, and if the Thunder get there they'll be waiting for either San Antonio or Minnesota.

## Knicks hit 25 3s to sweep 76ers, return to East finals

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — PHILADELPHIA — Jalen Brunson, Josh Hart and the New York Knicks are back in the Eastern Conference finals, tying the NBA postseason record with 25 3-pointers in front of a raucous crowd rooting for the road team and rolling past the Philadelphia 76ers 144-114 on Sunday to sweep the second-round series.

Deuce McBride started in place of the injured OG Anunoby and hit seven 3-pointers, going 4-for-4 in the first quarter when the Knicks had another record with 11, and scored 25 points. Brunson had 22 points and Hart and Karl-Anthony Towns each scored 17 in the Knicks' latest lopsided playoff victory.

The Knicks' 19.4 point-per-game margin of victory is the lar-

gest through two rounds since the playoffs went to 16 teams in 1984.

"It's just us being very locked in to the moment," Towns said.

The Knicks advanced to the East finals for the second straight season and will play the winner of the Cleveland-Detroit series. The Pistons lead 2-1.

The Knicks last season reached the conference finals for the first time in 25 years before losing to Indiana. The Knicks then fired coach Tom Thibodeau and replaced him with Mike Brown, who has guided them to seven straight playoff wins, starting with the last three games against Atlanta.

The Knicks used the 3-point arc as a starting point for their personal pop-a-shot game.

McBride hit four 3-pointers in succession for a 20-6 lead and the

Sixers were already on their heels. McBride became the first Knick (since play-by-play tracking began in 1997) to hit four 3s in the first quarter of a playoff game.

Brunson added two in the period (six total) to help make the Knicks 11 of 13, which tied the NBA mark for most makes in a quarter.

The Knicks totaled 18 3s in the first half to score 54 points off the long ball, compared to 57 total for the 76ers. Overall, that was an 81-57 lead and helped power the Knicks toward their first best-of-seven series sweep since the 1999 East semis against Atlanta.

The Knicks scored 80-plus points in the first half twice in five road playoff games this season.

The Sixers are headed home after a gutsy 3-1 series comeback

to beat Boston in the first round.

Joel Embiid ended another injury-riddled season with 24 points, Tyrese Maxey had 17 and the Sixers still have not advanced out of the second round since 2001.

**Timberwolves 114, Spurs 109:** Anthony Edwards had 16 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter to help Minnesota even their second-round NBA playoff series against San Antonio with a home victory following the stunning ejection of star Victor Wembanyama early in the second quarter of Game 4.

Naz Reid took the fateful elbow to the neck from a frustrated Wembanyama and finished with 15 points and nine rebounds to help the Timberwolves finish strong after some shaky stretches.

# Road-course ace dominates field again

*Associated Press*

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y. — Shane van Gisbergen insists his NASCAR road-course dominance is harder than it looks and that he feels “a lot of pressure” to beat the best in stock-car racing.

But the Trackhouse Racing driver was in another league Sunday, schooling the stars of the Cup Series at Watkins Glen International.

Starting from the pole position, van Gisbergen scored his seventh Cup Series victory — all on road or street courses — and his second consecutive on the 2.45-mile track by leading 74 of 100 laps in his No. 97 Chevrolet.

“We weren’t very good in practice, and then qualifying was amazing, and then today, what a race car,” van Gisbergen said. “And then (crew chief) Stephen (Doran) made great calls. I wasn’t sure how it was going to work, and then to run them down like that, it’s very, very special to do two in a row.”

Pitting from the lead under green with 24 laps remaining, van Gisbergen emerged in 24th and was nearly 30 seconds behind leader Ty Gibbs.

Extending his Cup record of wins by a driver born outside the United States, the New Zealand native needed only 17 laps to retake the lead from Gibbs, winning by 7.288 seconds over Michael McDowell.

“He’s made it pretty clear, especially at these tracks, he likes to be on offense, so we put him there and just let him go do his thing,” Doran said of the call to make a late stop for four tires instead of pitting earlier and conserving fuel as many others did.

Gibbs finished third, followed by Chase Briscoe and points leader Tyler Reddick.

McDowell, who started second, also had to

charge through the pack after falling to 27th on his last pit stop. He occasionally thought he could keep pace with the race winner but soon realized van Gisbergen was playing possum.

“It felt like he was just pacing himself off me, and he’d take back off,” McDowell said. “We still got a little work to do, but it’s a good building block.”

Dating to Mexico City last June, van Gisbergen has now won six of the past seven races on road or street courses in Cup.

“It’s not easy,” van Gisbergen said. “Everyone’s really good. McDowell was good. Connor (Zilisch) was good. Tyler Reddick. There were some really good guys and a lot of pressure. So just stoked to execute every facet of our game. And speechless. This is so cool.”

## Trackhouse sweep

The win by van Gisbergen came a day after a win in the O’Reilly Auto Parts Series by rookie teammate Zilisch, who finished 20th Sunday after a tire problem late in the race. It still was a strong showing for Trackhouse, which qualified all three of its cars in the top five after compiling only four top-10 finishes in the first 11 races.

“Just frustrating because we had a really good day going,” Zilisch said. “At worst, we were going to get ourselves our first top five and walk out of here with something. But congrats to Shane, Trackhouse and everybody who makes this happen.”

## Stumping for his uncle

Chase Elliott is known for avoiding public stances on NASCAR topics, but the eight-

time Most Popular Driver concluded a Saturday media availability by volunteering a strong opinion.

With the vote on the NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2027 set for May 19, Elliott made an impassioned plea to elect his uncle Ernie Elliott, who built engines for Hall of Famer Bill Elliott, Chase’s father.

Ernie Elliott is on the ballot for the first time this year.

“I don’t talk about this stuff a lot, but you don’t have to dig very far into the Elliott racing story to recognize how much of a family effort it was,” Chase Elliott said. “I don’t think the story has the same ending, throughout the course of the 1980s and even leading into my career, without Uncle Ernie and what he meant to all of us. He’s meant a lot to my career. There are a lot of very, very deserving names on the list, but he is one of the very deserving that doesn’t get talked about enough for the credit that he deserves.”

## One and done

The first May race at Watkins Glen might mark the only time that NASCAR runs the road course in the spring.

NASCAR has already announced a September 2027 return to the Glen on a date to be determined. The 2024 race was held Sept. 15, and the other 42 Cup races at Watkins Glen were held in July or August.

NASCAR won’t unveil next year’s schedule for a few more months, but new CEO Steve O’Donnell reaffirmed on the Fox pre-race show that Homestead-Miami Speedway, which will take over from Phoenix Raceway as this season’s finale, likely will be the final race in 2027.

# Caufield, Canadiens rout Sabres, taking 2-1 series lead

*Associated Press*

MONTREAL — Cole Caufield scored his second goal of the playoffs and added an assist as the Montreal Canadiens beat the Buffalo Sabres 6-2 in a dominant Game 3 on Sunday night to take a 2-1 lead in their second-round playoff series.

Alex Newhook had two goals, including an empty-netter, and Zachary Bolduc, Juraj Slafkovsky and Kirby Dach also scored for Montreal.

Lane Hutson and Jake Evans

each had two assists, and Jakub Dobes made 26 saves as the Canadiens won consecutive games for the first time in this season’s playoffs.

Tage Thompson and Rasmus Dahlin each had a goal and an assist for Buffalo, which dropped its first road game of the postseason. Alex Lyon stopped 31 shots in his second straight loss.

The teams split the first two games in Buffalo. The Sabres handed the Canadiens a 4-2 loss in Game 1 before Montreal respon-

ded with a 5-1 victory in Game 2.

Game 4 is Tuesday night in Montreal.

**Ducks 4, Golden Knights 3:** Alex Killorn and rookie Beckett Sennecke had a goal and an assist apiece, and host Anaheim beat Vegas in Game 4 to even their second-round series at two games apiece.

Ian Moore got his first career playoff goal, Cutter Gauthier contributed three assists and Mikael Granlund also scored for the upstart Ducks, who responded to

their 6-2 blowout loss in Game 3 with a mature two-way performance in their first playoff run since 2018.

Lukas Dostal made 18 saves in a strong bounce-back effort after getting pulled from Game 3 for allowing three goals in his latest shaky first period, and his teammates provided more than enough offense to even the series.

Game 5 is Tuesday night in Las Vegas.

Pavel Dorofeyev and Brett Howden scored for Vegas.

# Elder, Braves stifle Dodgers to win series

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Bryce Elder allowed one hit in 5½ scoreless innings, Mauricio Dubón had a three-run double and the Atlanta Braves defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers 7-2 on Sunday.

Drake Baldwin and Matt Olson homered for the Braves, who took two of three in a weekend series between National League division leaders by winning the last two games by identical scores. Atlanta is 11-1-1 in 13 series this season.

Baldwin and Olson connected late in the game off Justin Wroblewski, who gave up seven runs and seven hits in 8⅓ innings. Wroblewski (5-1) had permitted five runs combined in his first six starts.

Elder (4-1) struck out eight and walked four while lowering his ERA to 1.81.

Los Angeles generated two earned runs in 18⅓ innings against Braves starting pitchers during the series.

With the bases loaded and two outs in the sixth, Braves right fielder Eli White banged hard into the wall while catching Max Muncy's long drive.

White was replaced by Mike Yastrzemski in the eighth, and manager Walt Weiss said White will go through concussion protocol.

Yastrzemski was hit in the helmet by a pitch from Wroblewski in the ninth but stayed in the game. Yastrzemski said afterward he felt fine.

White opened the scoring with an RBI single in the second before Dubón's two-out double down the left-field line put Atlanta up 4-0 after two innings for the second consecutive game.

Elder was lifted after walking three straight batters with two outs in the sixth. Robert Suarez came on to retire Muncy, who hit a two-run homer off Tyler Kinley in the eighth to break up the shutout.

**Reds 5, Astros 0:** Andrew Abbott allowed three hits in six sharp innings and Spencer Steer homered to help host Cincinnati

beat Houston.

Ely De La Cruz had three hits and scored twice as the Reds won their second in a row following an eight-game losing streak. JJ Bleedy provided a two-run triple.

Cincinnati took two of three in the weekend series, rebounding from a 10-0 defeat in the opener by giving up only one run over the next two games.

**Marlins 5, Nationals 2:** Christopher Morel hit a go-ahead single in the eighth to lift host Miami past Washington on Sunday.

Morel's one-out hit to center against Gus Varland (0-1) put the Marlins up by one run in the eighth. Following Miami's second double steal of the inning, Heriberto Hernández hit a two-run single that scored Morel and Jakob Marsee tied for fifth in the major leagues.

**Orioles 2, Athletics 1:** Chris Bassitt pitched six solid innings in relief and Leody Taveras threw out the potential tying run at the plate in the seventh to lift Baltimore to a home win over the Athletics.

The Orioles announced shortly before the game that left-hander Keegan Akin would start on the mound instead of Bassitt, and that ploy worked out when Akin struck out two in a 1-2-3 first and then Bassitt (3-2) came in and yielded only one run in six innings.

**Rays 4, Red Sox 1:** Junior Caminero hit a solo homer over the Green Monster, Nick Martinez pitched one-run ball into the sixth inning and visiting Tampa Bay beat Boston to win the rain-shortened series.

Tampa Bay won for the 14th time in 16 games after their seven-game winning streak was stopped Friday. The Rays gave up three or fewer runs for a franchise-record 16th straight game, the first team to accomplish the feat since 2010 San Francisco Giants did it in 18 straight.

**Phillies 6, Rockies 0:** Kyle Schwarber homered twice, Bryce Harper also went deep and host Philadelphia beat Colorado to win

for the 10th time in 13 games since Don Mattingly replaced Rob Thomson as manager.

Schwarber has five home runs over his past four games, tying the New York Yankees' Aaron Judge for the major league lead at 16. It is the second four-game home run streak of Schwarber's major league career.

**Angels 6, Blue Jays 1:** Jo Adell hit a pair of solo homers, José Soriano struck out seven over 7⅓ innings to stop a three-start winless streak and Los Angeles avoided a three-game sweep by beating Toronto.

Oswald Peraza added a two-run homer as Los Angeles ended an eight-game road losing streak dating to April 16, while also ending a nine-game slump in Toronto.

**Twins 5, Guardians 4:** Kody Clemens had three hits and Kendry Rojas earned his first major league win with a strong outing in relief as visiting Minnesota held off Cleveland on Sunday.

Brooks Lee hit a tiebreaking single in a four-run fifth inning for the Twins, who took two of three in the series from their AL Central rivals.

**White Sox 2, Mariners 1:** Randal Grichuk hit a solo home run and Drew Romo scored the winning run in the eighth inning for Chicago in a home win over Seattle.

Grichuk hit a 377-foot drive over the right field wall to tie the game. Romo tagged up on Miguel Vargas' fly out to Randy Arozarena, who overthrew home.

**Brewers 4, Yankees 3:** Brice Turang homered off David Bednar with two outs in the ninth inning, and Milwaukee completed a three-game sweep of New York Yankees with a home victory.

Bednar (1-3) struck out Joey Ortiz and Jackson Chourio to start the ninth before Turang hit a 411-foot drive over the center-field wall for his first big league walk-off homer.

**Rangers 3, Cubs 0:** Jacob deGrom tied his season high with 10 strikeouts while earning the

1,900th of his career, Evan Carter hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning and host Texas beat Chicago.

The Texas right-hander allowed three hits in seven innings while striking out Ian Happ three times to end Happ's career-best streak for reaching base at 30 games.

**Giants 7, Pirates 6 (12):** Jesús Rodríguez hit an RBI single in the 12th inning and host San Francisco rallied from a pair of two-run deficits to beat Pittsburgh.

The Giants loaded the bases against Justin Lawrence (0-2) when Matt Chapman hit a double that only advanced automatic runner Heliot Ramos to third, and Drew Gilbert was intentionally walked.

**Diamondbacks 5, Mets 1:** Eduardo Rodríguez came within two outs of his first major league complete game, Ryan Waldschmidt had his first three big league RBIs and host Arizona beat hapless New York.

Rodríguez (4-0) took a no-hit bid into the sixth inning and allowed four hits in 8⅓ innings, earning an standing ovation as he walked off the field following Mark Vientos' bloop single. Rodríguez struck out four and walked three.

**Padres 3, Cardinals 2 (10):** Nick Castellanos hit a tying, two-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning and Manny Machado delivered a sacrifice fly in the 10th to rally host San Diego past St. Louis.

Walker Buehler pitched six solid innings for the Padres, who earned a split of the four-game series and pulled into a tie with the rival Los Angeles Dodgers atop the NL West.

**Tigers 6, Royals 3:** Gage Workman came off the bench and hit his first major league homer, a two-run shot that sent visiting Detroit past Kansas City to snap a five-game losing streak.

Matt Vierling had a two-run double and Riley Greene reached safely four times as the Tigers prevented a three-game sweep.