

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Two Pentagon officials placed on leave

‘Unauthorized disclosure’ cited as reason for move amid investigation into leaks at DOD

BY MATTHEW ADAMS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Dan Caldwell, a senior adviser to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and Darin Selnick, the Pentagon’s deputy chief of staff, were placed on administrative leave Tuesday for an “unauthorized disclosure” as part of an ongoing investigation into leaks at the Defense Department, a defense official confirmed.

However, the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, would not comment further because of the open investigation.

Caldwell was escorted from the Pentagon on Tuesday after being implicated during the investigation, according to a Reuters report. Selnick was also escorted out of the building, according to Politico.

The two men being placed on leave was a result of the investigation requested by Joe Kasper,

Hegseth’s chief of staff. He signed a memo March 21 calling for an investigation into “recent unauthorized disclosures of national security information involving sensitive communications.” Kasper added the use of polygraphs in executing the investigation would be “in accordance with applicable law and policy.”

Last month, the top editor of The Atlantic magazine, Jeffrey Goldberg, revealed he was mistakenly included in a conversation on the Signal messaging app in which national security officials for President Donald Trump discussed plans for airstrikes against Houthi targets in Yemen.

During the Signal chat, Hegseth named Caldwell as the best point of contact from his staff for the National Security Council as the U.S. prepared for the launch of the Houthi strikes.

Caldwell, a Marine Corps vet-

eran, had been deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to Defense Priorities, a Washington-based think tank.

Prior to becoming the deputy chief of staff, Selnick performed the duties of undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness and oversaw a number of changes in the Pentagon’s personnel policy.

Among other things, his efforts included rolling out the ban on and removal of transgender service members and the dismissal of probationary employees, which is part of a larger effort under the Trump administration and DOD to downsize the entire federal government.

Previously, Selnick was a senior adviser at Concerned Veterans for America from 2019 to 2024, the advocacy group that was once led by Hegseth.

Caldwell also worked for Concerned Veterans for America as director of policy from 2013 to 2017.

The decision to place both men on administrative leave is separate from the wave of military firings that have occurred since Hegseth took over at the Pentagon in January.

Vice Adm. Shoshana Chatfield, the U.S. military representative to the NATO Military Committee, and Air Force Gen. Timothy Haugh, who led the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command, were also recently removed from their posts.

Other top military officers who have recently been fired include Air Force Gen. Charles “CQ” Brown, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the former chief of naval operations, and the top military lawyers for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Army, Air Force libraries told to look for DEI content

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Army and Air Force libraries have been told to go through their stacks to find books related to diversity, equity and inclusion, according to new memos obtained by The Associated Press.

The orders from service leaders come about two weeks after the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., removed nearly 400 books from its library after being told by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s office to get rid of those that promote DEI.

The latest Army and Air Force orders are part of the Trump administration’s far-reaching efforts to purge so-

called DEI content from federal agencies.

The memos suggest that any removal of books will only happen after the initial lists are reviewed more closely. That slower pace may reflect a desire to be more careful about what books are pulled from shelves after the Navy faced criticism over some of those it removed.

Books on the Holocaust, histories of feminism, civil rights and racism, as well as Maya Angelou’s famous autobiography, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” were among the 381 books that were removed from the U.S. Naval Academy’s Nimitz Library.

The Army memo was sent to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., the Army War College in Pennsylvania and several other service departments. It says they must review their collections and any books promoting DEI, gender ideology and critical race theory “in a manner that subverts meritocracy and unity” must be removed “pending additional guidance.”

The memo — signed by Derrick Anderson, acting assistant Army secretary for manpower — says a list must be provided to the Army’s chief librarian by Wednesday. The order also applies to libraries under the au-

thority of the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, Army Special Operations Command and the Army Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School.

The Air Force memo, meanwhile, directs the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs, Colo., to review all of its titles for anything related to DEI, gender ideology and critical race theory. The school must provide an interim list by April 30 and a final list by May 30.

That memo was signed by Gwendolyn DeFilippi, the acting assistant secretary for manpower, and did not specify other libraries within the Air Force.

DODEA students sue over DEI items' removal

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A group of military families filed suit this week seeking to reinstate books and curriculum removed from Defense Department schools, following Pentagon orders to sideline materials that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Twelve students from six families in Europe, Asia and the United States are challenging "system-wide censorship" at their schools that they say violates their First Amendment rights to receive information.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed the suit on behalf of the families Tuesday in the federal eastern district of Virginia against the Department of De-

fense Education Activity, DODEA Director Beth Schiavino-Narvaez and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

The complaint asks the court to bring back books on topics such as slavery, Native American history, LGBTQ identities and history and preventing sexual harassment and abuse, as well as restoration of portions of the Advanced Placement psychology curriculum, the ACLU said in a statement Tuesday.

All the plaintiffs are children of active-duty service members in pre-K to 11th grade, according to court papers.

They are named by their initials and represented by a parent or guardian.

They attend Crossroads Ele-

mentary School in Quantico, Va.; Barsanti Elementary School at Fort Campbell, Ky.; Aviano Middle High School in Aviano, Italy; and Sollars Elementary and Edgren Middle High schools in Misawa, Japan.

The litigation takes issue with three executive orders signed in late January aimed at ending "radical indoctrination" in K-12 schools, eliminating "gender ideology extremism" in the federal government and "restoring America's fighting force."

The Pentagon subsequently directed DODEA schools to review and remove material deemed to support DEI, end cultural observances and celebrations and shutter or reorganize clubs affiliated with gender,

ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Trump administration officials have characterized the moves as ways to eliminate discord and promote unity.

Hundreds of students have since staged walkouts to speak out against the changes.

Implementing the executive orders "without any due process or parental or professional input, is a violation of our children's right to access information that prevents them from learning about their own histories, bodies and identities," Natalie Tolley said in a statement provided by the ACLU.

Tolley is listed as a plaintiff on behalf of her three children in DODEA schools, according to the ACLU.

IG unable to find reason for selecting Colorado as HQ for Space Command

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With the Trump administration expected to reverse a controversial 2023 decision on the permanent location of U.S. Space Command, a review by the Defense Department inspector general could not determine why Colorado was chosen over Alabama.

The inspector general's report said this was in part due to a lack of access to senior defense officials from the Biden administration, when the review began.

The location of U.S. Space Command has significant implications for the local economy, given the fast growth in national defense spending in space-based communications and defenses.

In 2021, the Air Force identified Army Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., as the pre-

ferred location for the new U.S. Space Command due to cost and other factors.

But a temporary headquarters had already been established in Colorado Springs, Colo., and after multiple delays President Joe Biden announced it as the permanent headquarters.

Alabama's GOP congressional delegation accused the Biden administration of politicizing the decision.

But Colorado, which has Republican and Democratic lawmakers, is home to many other Air Force and Space Force facilities.

Last week, Rep. Mike Rogers House, an Alabama Republican who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, said he expects the decision to be reversed by the White House soon.

The location of Space Command would be one of many decisions that have swung back

and forth between Biden and President Donald Trump.

For instance, Biden stopped the construction of the border wall that began during Trump's first term, only to have Trump now vow to complete it. And Trump is again seeking to ban transgender troops from military service, after Biden removed Trump's first-term limitations.

The controversy over the basing decision began seven days before Trump's first term expired, when his Air Force secretary announced Alabama would be home to Space Command, pending an environmental review.

Instead, a year later, the Biden White House said it was keeping the headquarters in Colorado Springs, citing the time that would be lost relocating staff and the headquarters to Huntsville.

Marine Corps commander in S.C. ousted

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

The commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort was ousted due to "loss of trust and confidence" in his ability to lead the historic South Carolina base, the service confirmed Wednesday.

Col. Mark Bortnem was relieved Monday of the command that he has held since July 2023.

A spokesperson for Marine Corps Installations East declined to comment on why Bortnem was fired. The U.S. military routinely cites only a vague "loss of confidence" when removing leaders.

The air station's headquarters and headquarters squadron executive officer, Lt. Col. Michael Eubanks, will serve as acting commander until one is formally appointed.

USS Truman hosts Passover celebration

By ALISON BATH

Stars and Stripes

Sailors with the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group are celebrating an ancient story of liberation this week as they battle Iran-backed Houthi militants intent on throttling freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

On Saturday, about 25 Truman sailors gathered to celebrate Passover with a Seder. The traditional meal highlights the seven- to eight-day celebration, which recalls a Red Sea crossing thousands of years ago.

The strike group, which comprises the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman, the cruiser USS Gettysburg and

the destroyers USS Stout, USS Jason Dunham and USS The Sullivans, has been on duty in the Middle East since December.

For more than a month, Truman has conducted daily flight operations as part of a U.S. campaign to destroy Houthi military facilities and capabilities with the goal of undercutting the group's ability to attack military and commercial ships in the vital waterway.

Retelling the Passover story offers Jewish sailors the comforts of home while they are at sea, away from friends and family, said Lt. Cmdr. Yonatan Warren, a rabbi assigned to Truman. He'll conduct four more seders over the week on

other strike group ships.

The sailors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who attend the observances will take away their own interpretations of Passover's message, but the commemoration also reinforces their call to serve, he said.

"We're still out here engaged because we believe that freedom is a valuable and holy institution that should be expressed," Warren said.

The overall message "has always meant that we were going to have to work hard to build a society that values freedom," he added.

Celebration of another feast with religious origins is slated for the end of this week, with Easter services planned

aboard the ships.

Warren estimates there are as many as 50 Jewish sailors across the strike group, but the Seders are open to all service members.

Participants will dine on matzo ball soup, kosher Meals, Ready to Eat of beef goulash or chicken and Warren's own recipe of haroseth, or charoset, a fruit-and-nut dish specific to Passover, he said.

Each Seder is an opportunity to remind sailors of their importance and value, said Warren, adding this is the second time he's celebrated Passover in the Red Sea.

"I strive for everyone to find their meaning and purpose in this great enterprise," he said.

Israel: Troops will remain in Gaza Strip indefinitely

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's defense minister said Wednesday that troops will remain in so-called security zones in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria indefinitely, remarks that could further complicate talks with Hamas over a ceasefire and hostage release.

Israeli strikes across Gaza meanwhile killed another 22 people, according to local health officials, including a girl who was not yet a year old. The girl's mother, who was wounded in the strike, embraced her daughter, still wearing a bloodied dress, before she was taken for burial.

Israeli forces have taken over more than half of Gaza in a renewed campaign to pressure Hamas to release hostages after Israel ended their ceasefire last month.

Israel has also refused to withdraw from some areas in Lebanon following a ceasefire with the Hezbollah militant group last year, and it seized a

buffer zone in southern Syria after rebels overthrew President Bashar Assad in December.

"Unlike in the past, the (Israeli military) is not evacuating areas that have been cleared and seized," Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement. The military "will remain in the security zones as a buffer between the enemy and (Israeli) communities in any temporary or permanent situation in Gaza — as in Lebanon and Syria."

The Palestinians and both neighboring countries view the presence of Israeli troops as military occupation in violation of international law. Hamas has said it will not release dozens of remaining hostages without a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a lasting ceasefire.

"They promised that the hostages come first. In practice, Israel is choosing to seize territory before the hostages," the main organization representing families of the hostages said in a statement.

Russian glide bombs and artillery strike in Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian glide bombs and artillery struck a city in southern Ukraine on Wednesday, killing one person and wounding five others as Moscow forces continued daily attacks across the country.

The city of Kherson was struck with glide bombs on Wednesday morning, and when rescue teams arrived at the scene, Russian forces launched an artillery barrage, said the region's head, Oleksandr Prokudin. "This is a deliberate tactic by Russia to hinder the rescue of the injured and harm doctors, rescuers, and police," he said.

The attack damaged a sports facility, a supermarket, residential buildings and civilian vehicles, Prokudin added.

The strike on Kherson followed other deadly attacks in recent days.

On Palm Sunday, two Russian ballistic missiles hit the northeastern city of Sumy near the Russian border, killing 35 people and injuring more than 100

others in the deadliest attack on Ukrainian civilians this year. The Russian military said that the strike targeted a gathering of senior military officers but did not offer evidence.

The attack on Sumy and other areas came even as Moscow and Kyiv both agreed last month to implement a 30-day halt on strikes on energy facilities. Both parties have differed on the start time for stopping strikes and alleged daily breaches by the other side.

Asked Wednesday if Russia is going to stop abiding by the limited ceasefire after 30 days, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov demurred, saying the decision will be made later.

Moscow has effectively refused to accept a comprehensive ceasefire that President Donald Trump has sought and Ukraine has endorsed. Russia has made it conditional on a halt in Ukraine's mobilization efforts and Western arms supplies, the demands rejected by Ukraine.

White House sues Maine for ignoring trans athlete ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration sued Maine on Wednesday for not complying with the government's push to ban transgender athletes in girls and women's sports, escalating a dispute over whether the state is abiding by a federal law that bars discrimination in education based on sex.

The lawsuit follows weeks of feuding between the Republican administration and Democratic Gov. Janet Mills that has led to threats to cut off crucial federal funding and a clash at the White House when she told President Donald Trump: "We'll see you in court."

The political overtones of the moment were clear, with Attorney General Pam Bondi — and several athletes who joined her on stage at the Justice Department — citing the matter as a priority for Trump. Bondi said other states, including Minnesota and California, could be sued as well.

"This has been a huge issue for him," Bondi said of the president. "Pretty simple, girls play in girls sports, boys play in boys sports. Women play in women's sports, men play in men's sports."

Trump campaigned against the participation of transgender athletes in sports in his 2024 race.

As president, he has signed executive orders to do that and to use a rigid definition of the sexes, rather than gender, for federal government purposes. The orders are being challenged in court.

Trump's departments of Education and Health and Hu-

man Services have said Maine's education agency is violating the federal Title IX antidiscrimination law by allowing transgender girls to participate on girls teams.

The Justice Department is asking the court to order the state to direct all schools to prohibit the participation of males in athletic competition designated for females.

Maine officials have refused to agree with a settlement that would have banned transgender students from sports, arguing that the law does not prevent schools from letting transgender athletes participate.

Mills said Wednesday that the lawsuit was expected and is part of a pressure campaign by Washington to force Maine to ignore its own human rights laws.

"This matter has never been about school sports or the protection of women and girls, as has been claimed, it is about states rights and defending the rule of law against a federal government bent on imposing its will, instead of upholding the law," Mills said in a statement.

The government's complaint cites as examples the case of a biological boy who in February won first place in pole vault at Maine's indoor track and field meet and a biological male who last year began competing in female cross country races in the state and placed first in the women's 5K.

The lawsuit reflects a stark philosophical turnabout from the position on gender identity issues taken during Democratic administrations.

US judge pushes on return of wrongly deported Salvadoran

Associated Press

GREENBELT, Md. — A federal judge said Tuesday that she will order sworn testimony by Trump administration officials to determine if they complied with her orders to facilitate the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was mistakenly deported to a notorious El Salvador prison.

U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis in Maryland issued her order after Trump officials continually refused to retrieve Abrego Garcia. She said they defied a "clear" Supreme Court order.

Xinis also downplayed Monday's comments by White House officials and El Salvador's president that they were unable to bring back Abrego Garcia.

"The Supreme Court has spoken," Xinis said, adding that what was said in the Oval Office on Monday "is not before the court."

The hearing came a day after White House advisers repeated the claim that they lack the authority to bring back the Salvad-

oran national from his native country. The president of El Salvador also said that he would not return Abrego Garcia, likening it to smuggling "a terrorist into the United States."

Abrego Garcia's deportation has become a flashpoint as President Donald Trump follows up on campaign promises of mass deportations, including to an El Salvador prison.

An attorney for Abrego Garcia said contempt proceedings could be the logical next step after the fact-finding phase.

"This is still a win, and this is still progress," Rina Ghandi said.

On Wednesday, Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen arrived in El Salvador to push for Abrego Garcia's release.

Van Hollen, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a video posted to X before he boarded his flight that he hopes to meet with Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran citizen who was living in Maryland.

Biden: Trump has 'taken a hatchet' to Social Security

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Former President Joe Biden warned Tuesday that President Donald Trump has "taken a hatchet" to Social Security, weighing in on a critical issue for millions of Americans as the 82-year-old Democrat briefly returned to the national stage.

Biden, who has largely avoided speaking publicly since leaving the White House in January, gave an evening speech at the national conference of Advocates, Counselors and Representatives for the Disabled in Chicago. The former president was speaking as Democrats across the nation offered similar warnings for what they described as a Social Security Day of Action.

"In fewer than 100 days, this new administration has done so much damage and so much destruction. It's kind of breathtaking," Biden charged during a speech that spanned just under a half-hour. "They've taken a hatchet to the Social Security Administration."

It was no coincidence that Tuesday's appearance, which marked Biden's first major event since leaving office, was focused on Social Security. Democrats have increasingly focused on Trump's turbulent leadership over the popular government agency that provides benefits to more than 70 million Americans.

Both parties expect Social Security to emerge as a key issue in next year's midterm elections.

Trump planning to join trade talks with Japanese officials

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he's joining some of his top economic advisers on Wednesday for negotiations at the White House over tariffs and trade with a top Japanese official who is traveling to Washington for the talks.

The Republican president said in a post on his social media platform that he'll attend the meeting alongside Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, top economic advisers with a central role in his trade and tariff policies.

Trump recently announced a round of global tariffs but then quickly put them on hold for 90 days after the markets tanked and fears of a recession mounted. He left steep tariffs in place

against China.

The move put Japan's 24% across-the-board tariff on hold, but a 10% baseline tariff and a 25% tariff on cars, auto parts, steel and aluminum exports to the U.S. remain in place.

U.S. economic rival China, meanwhile, is trying to capitalize on the turmoil around Trump's announcements, with its leader, President Xi Jinping, touring nations of Southeast Asia and promoting his country as a more reliable trade partner.

Japan, like many other nations around the world that are fearful of Trump's tariffs and the likely economic fallout, has been scrambling to respond. It has set up a special task force to assess the impact of the tariffs and offer loans and consultation to anxious companies.

Although Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has been working hard to coax exemptions out of Trump, the government has said little officially on what concessions it might offer during these talks.

"Japan is coming in today to negotiate Tariffs, the cost of military support, and 'TRADE FAIRNESS.' I will attend the meeting, along with Treasury & Commerce Secretaries," Trump wrote in the social media post. "Hopefully something can be worked out which is good (GREAT!) for Japan and the USA!"

Japan's Economic Revitalization Minister Ryosei Akazawa was headed to Washington on a mission to convince U.S. officials to remove Trump's tariff measures.

RFK Jr.'s measles message draws flak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s efforts to contain an epidemic in a tight-knit, religious community in West Texas have run counter to established public health strategies deployed to end past epidemics.

"What we are lacking now is one clear, strong voice — from the federal to the state to the local — saying that the vaccine is the only thing that will prevent measles," said Patricia Stinchfield, a nurse practitioner and infectious disease expert who helped stop a 2017 measles out-

break in Minnesota's Somali community.

Kennedy's inconsistent and unclear message on the measles vaccines has also made the outbreaks difficult to contain, experts say.

He has occasionally endorsed the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine as "effective," but also continues to raise safety concerns about the shots in other statements.

In a CBS interview last week, he claimed the vaccines were "not safety tested."

That approach has been the biggest flaw of the govern-

ment's response, said Dr. Carlos del Rio, past president of the Infectious Disease Society of America.

"Imagine if the captain of the Titanic had told you that you need to be careful about life-boats and think about other opportunities," del Rio said.

Trials were conducted on thousands of children before the vaccine was approved for use in the 1960s.

The federal government has since used medical records to continue to monitor for side effects from use in millions of people since.

Judge rules EPA can't end grants

Associated Press

A federal judge says some nonprofits awarded billions for a so-called green bank to finance clean energy and climate-friendly projects cannot have their contracts scrapped and must have access to some of the frozen money. The ruling is a defeat for President Donald Trump's Environmental Protection Agency, which argues the program is rife with financial mismanagement.

The order late Tuesday by U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan "gives us a chance to breathe after the EPA unlawfully — and without due process — terminated our awards and blocked access to funds that were appropriated by Congress and legally obligated," said Climate United CEO Beth Bafford.

The lawsuit by Climate United Fund and other groups contends that the EPA, Administrator Lee Zeldin and Citibank, which held the grant money, illegally blocked the funds awarded last year and had jeopardized the organizations' operations.

Chutkan said Citibank must provide the money that was due to the nonprofits before the EPA froze their accounts in mid-February. The EPA immediately appealed.

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, commonly referred to as a "green bank," was authorized by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act under Democratic President Joe Biden. Its goals run counter to the Trump administration's opposition to climate-friendly policies and its embrace of fossil fuels.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting World, National and Military News

Warriors get first ever play-in victory

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Jimmy Butler and Stephen Curry threw their arms around each other and embraced.

Playoff Jimmy in all his brilliance on the big stage took all the pressure off Curry, and now they're taking the Golden State Warriors to the playoffs.

"I know I want to win a championship so he needs, his what, this would be No. 5?" Butler said.

Butler had 38 points, seven rebounds and six assists creating opportunities on both ends at every chance, Curry scored 37, and the Warriors earned the seventh seed in the Western Conference by beating the Memphis Grizzlies 121-116 on Tuesday night in the Play-In Tournament.

Curry knocked down a baseline 3-pointer with 1:50 to go and one from the left wing with a minute on the clock then converted four free throws in the closing five seconds.

Golden State is now headed for a best-of-seven first-round series with the Rockets beginning with Game 1 on Sunday in Houston.

"It took 83 games but we're right where we want to be, which is back in the playoffs and we've got a chance," coach Steve Kerr said.

After a pair of free throws by Curry with 5.4 seconds left, the Grizzlies had one last chance — but Santi Aldama couldn't inbound the ball before a five-second violation.

Desmond Bane scored 30 points and Ja Morant 22 for Memphis, which will head home to play Friday against the winner of the Mavericks-Kings matchup on Wednesday night in Sacramento to determine the eighth playoff spot.

With the Grizzlies on a roll midway through the third, Butler grabbed momentum back with a steal and dunk. He shot 12 for 20 in a second straight 30-

point performance and his highest scoring game since joining the Warriors at the trade deadline. He made 12 of 18 free throws — having been 63 of 68 from the line over the previous eight games in April.

Morant went down hard rolling his right ankle when he stepped on Buddy Hield's foot and was fouled by Quinten Post with 4:25 remaining in the third, but got up and finished the three-point play to pull the Grizzlies within 82-81.

Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 18 points, while Zach Edey contributed 14 points, 17 rebounds and hit two free throws with 14.3 seconds left.

Curry had eight rebounds, four assists and shot 9 for 22 while regularly swarmed by Scotty Pippen Jr. before he fouled out late.

Curry had lit up Memphis for 52 points on its home floor in a 134-125 win on April 1, and the Grizzlies made him a top priori-

ty this time — so Butler took charge.

"He's different," Draymond Green said.

Curry led four straight scoring possessions to put Golden State up 31-18 late in the first quarter — assisting on Gary Payton II's cutting dunk, dishing to Post for a 3 and making a 3-point shot and three-point play himself. Butler showed no signs of being affected by a tender left quadriceps muscle after he took a knee from Kawhi Leonard on Sunday.

The Warriors hoped to avoid this extra game, but lost in overtime to the Clippers in the regular-season finale Sunday for their third home defeat over the final week.

Curry, Green and Golden State had been 0-3 in play-in games during appearances in 2021 and last year. The Grizzlies eliminated them at Chase Center with a 117-112 overtime victory in '21.

Anthony, Magic defeat Hawks to claim East's 7th seed

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Cole Anthony came off the bench with 26 points and six assists to lead the Orlando Magic to a 120-95 win over the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday night in the first game of the Play-In Tournament.

Paolo Banchero had 17 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for Orlando, and Wendell Carter Jr. added 19 points and seven rebounds. Anthony Black scored 16 points on 6-of-7 shooting off the bench in the Magic's first appearance in a play-in game.

"It was a fun game, a big-time game, a unique type of challenge," said Banchero. "I was interested to see how they were going to try to guard me. You could tell in the first quarter I was trying to get my teammates involved, moving the ball, and those guys got going. They carried us throughout the game."

Earning the Eastern Conference's seventh seed after a 41-41 regular season, Orlando will start its first-round series at Bos-

ton on Sunday. The Magic split their four games against the defending champs this season, but the Celtics rested their top six players in a loss at Orlando last week.

"It's a great opportunity to play against the best team in the league, and they're the champs still until somebody beats 'em," said Magic coach Jamahl Mosley. "What they present is a lot of challenges, and we have to try to find a way to figure that out."

Trae Young led Atlanta with 28 points and six assists before getting two technical fouls and an automatic ejection with 4:47 left in the game.

"I thought we did a good job on Paolo and Franz (Wagner)," said Hawks coach Quin Snyder, "and they had some other players who really stepped up and made plays."

Atlanta, which has reached the playoffs through the play-in route in two of the last three seasons, will play at home Friday night for the eighth spot against the winner of Wednesday night's game in Chicago between the Bulls and Miami Heat.

Banchero and Black produced most of

the offense and the Hawks scored just two points in the final 6 minutes of the first quarter, and Orlando led by as much as 22 late in the first half.

In three regular-season games against Atlanta, Banchero scored more than 30 points in each and shot 46%. The Hawks took the ball out of his hands Tuesday night, but Banchero knew where to send it.

"Anthony Black, Cole (Anthony) obviously ... everyone came in and made plays and made my job easier," Banchero said.

Atlanta cut the gap to three and had a chance to tie the game when they turned it over with 2:36 left in the third quarter.

"They went on their own run and we weathered the storm. We didn't let them back in the game from that point on," Anthony said. "We got stops, we pushed the pace and we held a really good offensive team to 90 points."

Anthony, who averaged 9.4 points in an injury-plagued season, made 10-of-17 shots including 4-of-9 3-pointers.

Eriksson Ek's goal puts Wild in playoffs

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota Wild clinched a spot in the playoffs in dramatic fashion when Joel Eriksson Ek scored the tying goal with 20.9 seconds left in regulation, forcing overtime on Tuesday against the Anaheim Ducks.

With an empty net for the extra attacker, Matt Boldy's pass across the slot set up Eriksson Ek at the edge of the crease. Ducks goalie Lukas Dostal stopped his first try with his stick, but a second whack at the puck got it across the line for his 14th goal of the season.

Reaching overtime was all the Wild needed to secure their place in the playoffs, and with the pressure off, Filip Gustavsson had a heart-warming idea as overtime approached.

At Gustavsson's suggestion to coach John Hynes in one last

tribute to one of the NHL's greatest goalies, the Wild sent the soon-retiring Marc-Andre Fleury out to take Gustavsson's place in the net for the extra period — and watched the 21-year veteran put on quite a show in his final regular-season game.

Fleury made five saves in less than five minutes, including a couple of kick-save classics and a determined denial of a 4-on-3 power play by the Ducks, and Boldy scored the winner with 17.9 seconds remaining in overtime to give Fleury one more win to pad his career total that's the second most in league history at 575.

"Try to have some fun with this. I wasn't too sharp, right? Just dive around, don't let them shoot, I guess," Fleury said. "The guys battled hard too around the net. They helped me out, so it was nice."

Gustavsson, 26, got a career-high 58 starts this season and will almost certainly be the goalie for every game in the playoffs, which will start for the Wild on the road this weekend in a first-round series against Vegas.

He has expressed admiration of and gratitude for his 40-year-old mentor who essentially became this season the most popular backup goalie in the history of organized hockey. So it was only fitting that Gustavsson surprise Fleury with his offer.

"Little shocked, little shocked, little worried. I'd been sitting there for a few hours," said Fleury, who also padded his all-time record with his 71st career overtime win. "A good talk from Gus, and obviously Hynes let me go in too. I'm happy I got to go play just a little bit more at home."

The crowd at Xcel Energy Center had been engulfed in tension after the Ducks took a 2-1 lead midway through the third period, realizing the Wild might have to sweat out the results for St. Louis and Calgary as the three teams entered the night in competition for the two wild card spots. Then came Eriksson Ek's goal and the collective exhale following the club's return to the postseason after missing out last year was secure.

The roars kept coming from the fans, once Fleury skated into the crease and started fending off shots in his familiar exaggerated fashion. After Boldy scored the winning goal, Fleury was swarmed by teammates. He went through a solo handshake line with the Ducks team, before skating to mid-ice for another stick-tap salute from the Wild.

Stolarz posts shutout, helping Leafs lock up Atlantic

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Anthony Stolarz stopped 35 shots for his third consecutive shutout in Buffalo, and the Toronto Maple Leafs clinched their first Atlantic Division title with a 4-0 victory over the Sabres on Tuesday night.

Steven Lorentz scored the go-ahead goal on a one-timer with 5:45 left in the second period. Mitch Marner set a career high with 100 points by scoring with 4:21 left in regulation, Auston Matthews' empty-net goal was the 400th in his career and Nicholas Robertson also scored.

Devils 5, Bruins 4 (OT): Brian Dumoulin scored 90 seconds into overtime to lead visiting New Jersey past Boston and end the Bruins' first season without a playoff berth since 2016.

Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and two assists, Jordan Kyrou scored twice and Jimmy Snuggerud, Brayden Schenn and Zack Bolduc each added a goal and an assist for the Blues. Robert Thomas contributed a pair of assists and Jordan Binnington made 22 saves for St. Louis, which will face the conference-leading Winnipeg Jets in the opening round of the playoffs.

Greaves continued to backstop the Blue Jackets to their fifth straight victory and an unexpected late-season push for the final playoff spot in the East.

Flames 5, Golden Knights 4 (SO): Morgan Frost scored in regulation and the shootout, helping host Calgary beat Vegas after the Flames were eliminated from the playoff race.

Nazem Kadri, Mikael Backlund and Adam Klapka also scored as Calgary extended its point streak to seven games.

Blackhawks 4, Senators 3 (OT): Frank Nazar scored 48 seconds into overtime to give visiting Chicago a victory over Ottawa in its season finale.

The Blackhawks (25-46-11) missed the playoffs for the fifth straight year.

With an eye toward the playoffs, the Senators (44-30-7)

rested players for the second straight game.

Lightning 5, Panthers 1: Brayden Point had a goal and two assists to lead host Tampa Bay to a victory over Florida.

The teams will meet in the opening round of the playoffs starting this weekend.

Capitals 3, Islanders 1: Dylan Strome scored three times as visiting Washington beat New York.

It was Strome's third career hat trick. Charlie Lindgren made 33 saves for Washington, which had dropped two in a row.

The Islanders have dropped four of five.

Kings 6, Kraken 5: Samuel Helenius scored twice, David Rittich made 28 saves and Los Angeles spoiled Seattle's home finale.

The Kings head into their regular-season finale locked into a first-round playoff series against Edmonton.

Blues 6, Utah 1: St. Louis secured the second wild-card spot in the Western Conference playoffs with a victory over visiting Utah.

Hays powers Reds to fourth straight win

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Austin Hays drove in four runs in his season debut, and the Cincinnati Reds beat Luis Castillo and the Seattle Mariners 8-4 on Tuesday night.

Hays, who signed with Cincinnati in free agency, singled in Matt McLain in the third inning. He capped the Reds' four-run fifth with a three-run shot to center as they moved over .500 with their fourth straight win and sixth win in their last seven games.

Hays missed the start of the season with a left calf strain that occurred on the final day of spring training.

Castillo (1-2) was charged with six runs and seven hits in 4 1/3 innings in his first career start against Cincinnati. He was traded from the Reds to the Mariners in July 2022.

Dylan Moore homered twice and drove in four runs for Seattle, which had won four in a row. Moore had three of the Mariners' six hits.

Dodgers 6, Rockies 2: Will Smith hit a three-run homer and host Los Angeles beat Colorado to snap its streak of three straight series losses.

The Dodgers took the first two of their three-game set against the Rockies, who fell to a franchise- and MLB-worst 3-14 overall and 1-10 on the road.

LA wore its Brooklyn replica uniforms on Jackie Robinson Day in front of a sellout crowd of 53,198. Robinson's No. 42 was mowed into the center field grass and every player, manager and coach around the major leagues donned his jersey number to mark the 78th anniversary of his breaking baseball's color barrier.

Cubs 2, Padres 1 (10): Nico Hoerner's triple leading off the 10th inning drove in automatic runner Dansby Swanson, and visiting Chicago beat San Diego, handing the Padres their first loss in 12 home games.

Hoerner's opposite-field liner to right-center off Yuki Matsui

(0-1) rolled to the wall. Swanson scampered home and Hoerner slid into third headfirst ahead of the throw from center fielder Jason Heyward.

San Diego had runners on first and third with two outs in the bottom of the inning before Caleb Thielbar got three-time batting champion Luis Arraez to fly out to left to get his first save.

Nationals 3, Pirates 0: James Wood led off the game with a home run and Jake Irvin pitched seven scoreless innings to lead visiting Washington over Pittsburgh.

Irvin (1-0) allowed three hits, struck out six and walked one as the Nationals snapped a three-game losing streak. The Pirates never got a runner past second base in losing for the fourth time in five games.

Jose A. Ferrer and Kyle Finnegan pitched one inning each to finish the four-hitter. Finnegan notched his sixth save in as many opportunities.

Phillies 6, Giants 4: Bryce Harper and J.T. Realmuto homered and Bryson Stott and Max Kepler added two hits apiece as host Philadelphia beat San Francisco.

Realmuto had two hits and two RBIs to snap out of a funk in which his batting average dipped to .222. Alec Bohm added a key RBI single in the sixth that scored the go-ahead run to help the Phillies rally.

Jung Hoo Lee and Matt Chapman each had two hits for the Giants, who are 3-2 midway through a 10-game trip. Justin Verlander (0-1) took the loss, working 5 1/3 innings and allowing eight hits and four earned runs. Casey Schmitt added a two-run single for the Giants.

Diamondbacks 10, Marlins 4: Corbin Carroll hit a grand slam and drove in five runs, and visiting Arizona beat Miami.

Geraldo Perdomo and Josh Naylor also went deep as the Diamondbacks won for the fifth time in six games. Merrill Kelly (3-1) struck out nine in six

sparkling innings.

Griffin Conine had two hits and scored two runs for the Marlins. Liam Hicks drove in two runs.

Red Sox 7, Rays 4: Alex Bregman went 5-for-5 with two home runs and four RBIs, Jarren Duran added a two-run homer and visiting Boston beat Tampa Bay.

Bregman fell a triple shy of the cycle and had his seventh two-homer game. Kameron Misner nearly robbed him of the second one, but the ball fell out of the rookie's glove and over the right-center fence.

Red Sox starter Walker Buehler (2-1) allowed three hits and two runs over five innings. Buehler walked three and struck out three.

Guardians 6, Orioles 3: Logan Allen (1-1) allowed two hits in 5 1/3 scoreless innings, and visiting Cleveland beat Baltimore for its sixth victory in seven games.

Steven Kwan hit a two-run homer for the Guardians in the fifth and an RBI single in the sixth.

Yankees 4, Royals 2: Jasson Dominguez went 3 for 3 with a three-run double that put host New York ahead in the sixth inning in a victory over Kansas City.

MJ Melendez homered and Bobby Witt Jr. hit an RBI double off the right-center fence in the third for the Royals, who lost for the fourth time in five games and fell to 2-6 on the road. KC has dropped 19 of its past 20 completed series against the Yankees since May 2015, including the playoffs.

Blue Jays 6, Braves 3: Alan Roden hit his first career home run, Anthony Santander also connected and host Toronto beat Atlanta.

The Blue Jays hit more than one home run in a game for the first time this season. Toronto has 11 homers in 18 games. Their opponents have 24.

Brewers 5, Tigers 0: Quinn

Priester and four relievers combined on a one-hitter and Rhys Hoskins broke out of his early-season slump to help host Milwaukee snap a three-game skid by beating Detroit.

In his second start since the Brewers acquired him from the Boston Red Sox last week, Priester (1-0) held the Tigers hitless until he allowed a leadoff double to Gleyber Torres in the sixth. Priester departed at that point, having struck out four and walked three.

Twins 6, Mets 3: Ryan Jeffers and Harrison Bader had three hits apiece and Brooks Lee homered as host Minnesota defeated New York.

Bailey Ober (1-1) gave up three earned runs on five hits with no walks and five strikeouts in 6 1/3 innings to pick up his first victory since Aug. 9, a span of 13 starts.

Astros 2, Cardinals 0: Jake Meyers had three hits and drove in a run, Hunter Brown threw six shutout innings and visiting Houston beat St. Louis.

Brown (2-1), making his first career appearance against the Cardinals, allowed four hits in pitching his fourth quality start of the season. He struck out four and walked two.

Athletics 12, White Sox 3: Tyler Soderstrom hit a pair of three-run home runs, his major league-leading seventh and eighth homers of the season, and the visiting Athletics beat Chicago.

Jeffrey Springs (3-1) gave up a three-run shot to Andrew Vaughn in the first, but got the win after settling down to pitch five innings.

Rangers 4, Angels 0: Tyler Mahle struck out nine over six sharp innings, and host Texas snapped a three-game losing streak with a win over Los Angeles.

Mahle (3-0) limited the Angels to three singles and walked two batters before four relievers finished off the third shutout win for Texas already this year.