

3rd DOD official implicated in leak probe

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A third Pentagon official on Wednesday has been placed on administrative leave as part of an ongoing investigation into leaks at the Defense Department, a defense official confirmed.

Colin Carroll, chief of staff to Deputy Defense Secretary Stephen Feinberg, was placed on leave a day after two senior political appointees — Dan Caldwell, a senior adviser to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and Darin Selnick, the Pentagon's deputy chief of staff — were placed on leave for “unauthorized disclosures.”

Defense officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity did not provide more information about the officials placed on

leave or the investigation into leaks.

Carroll previously worked at Anduril Industries, a defense technology company that makes drones, and the Defense Department's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, according to his LinkedIn page.

Hegseth on Wednesday did not answer shouted questions from reporters about his advisers being implicated in the leak scandal as the defense secretary held a bilateral meeting at the Pentagon with El Salvador Defense Minister René Francis Merino Monroy.

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

The three 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 Houthis targets in Yemen.

During the Signal chat, Heg-

seth 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 veteran, deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to Defense Priorities, a Washington think tank.

Prior to becoming the deputy chief of staff, Selnick performed the duties of undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness and oversaw changes in the Pentagon's personnel policy. Among other things, his efforts included rolling out the ban and removal of transgender service members and the dismissal of probationary employees.

Ex-Pacific commander urges clarity on Taiwan policy

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

WAIKIKI BEACH, Hawaii — America should abandon its policy of “strategic ambiguity” toward Taiwan and instead declare outright whether it will or will not defend the island if attacked by China, a former head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Tuesday.

“There is no country more clear about what it intends to do about Taiwan than China,” retired Adm. Harry Harris said in the keynote speech at an event marking the 50th anniversary of the Honolulu-based Pacific Forum, a foreign policy research institute.

“We should be equally clear, and we should never allow China to dictate America's foreign policy with regard to Taiwan,” he

said.

Harris retired from a 40-year Navy career after heading INDOPACOM from 2015 to 2018. He then served as U.S. ambassador to South Korea until 2021.

“China seeks to isolate and then dominate Taiwan, and that runs counter to American interests,” Harris said.

He cited recent statements by Adm. Samuel Paparo, current INDOPACOM commander, that China's ever-growing naval maneuvers in waters off Taiwan are rehearsals for actual invasion.

China regards Taiwan, a self-governed democracy lying just off its southeast coast, as a renegade province that must be brought under Beijing's control.

The U.S. has for decades maintained “strategic ambiguity” about what military actions it

would take in the event China moved to take the island by force.

During his first trip to Japan as president in May 2022, Joe Biden seemed to suggest that the policy of ambiguity was ending. But a month later, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin declared the policy “unchanged and unwavering.”

Harris said he advocates clarity because “there are three constituents that deserve to know if the United States is going to defend Taiwan or not and not leave it up to some ambiguous agreement or promise at the time of impact.”

“The first constituent is Taiwan,” he said. “They ought to know so they can make the decision whether to arm up or capitulate.”

“China ought to know so they

can make a decision whether they're going to invade Taiwan or not. I mean, if they invade Taiwan, they're going to lose hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines, whatever they have, in a pitched battle over Taiwan.”

The third and most important constituent is the American citizenry, he said.

“You ought to know that your daughters and sons who are wearing the uniform of our nation are going to fight and potentially die over Taiwan,” he said.

Although the U.S. in 1979 switched formal recognition from Taiwan to China, it continues to supply arms to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act, passed by Congress the same year.

DOD to end rape tests for civilians overseas

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Defense Department civilian employees and contractors abroad can no longer get rape test kits done at military medical facilities, a decision that attorneys say will likely make it easier to get some evidentiary exhibits levied against accused service members excluded at court-martial.

The Military Health System said the recently issued guidance is meant to clear up confusion around who can receive the forensic evidence collection tests under existing policy.

It requires non-Tricare beneficiaries, which would include most civilian workers who aren't married to service members, to seek testing at foreign clinics, which may have different standards for processing evidence.

The March 13 memo from the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs states that military health care providers only can treat civilians who say they were sexually assaulted in emergency situations — where life, limb or eyesight are at risk.

"Forensic healthcare examination or follow-up care is not included in the definition on limited emergency services," the memo states.

The memo also says military facilities must establish a process that ensures non-Tricare beneficiaries are stabilized and transferred to a civilian facility should they request a forensic exam.

Regardless of eligibility, patients who seek care at military facilities after interpersonal violence should be treated as emergencies, the memo said.

About 35,000 civilian employees support 172,000 active-

duty service members stationed overseas, according to Defense Department data from December 2024, with the largest civilian populations living in Germany, Japan and South Korea.

Proper evidence collection can be an important part of a victim's legal argument in the event they accuse a service member of sexual assault and the case leads to a court-martial.

The U.S. military has detailed protocols for the handling of evidence after an assault allegation, including rules about the chain of custody. Outside the military, collection methods vary by country.

A foreign test kit may be easier to discredit compared with one collected on base, said retired Lt. Col. Will Helixon, a former special victims prosecutor who now works as a civilian military defense lawyer in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Some nations, particularly in parts of the Middle East and Africa, also view the concept of sexual assault very differently, which can dissuade victims from seeking help off base.

Pete Kageleiry Jr., a retired lieutenant colonel and former judge advocate who now works as a private military defense lawyer in Virginia, said the memo raises questions about the reliability of evidence.

The memo is a step backward compared to recent improvements the military has made to its handling of sexual assault, and it's likely to impact overseas cases, he said.

Peter Graves, a spokesperson for the Military Health System, said forensic evidence collection policies were developed for the treatment of service members and their dependents and do not include testing for people who are not insured by Tricare.

Navy making progress towards easing shortage

BY SHANNON RENFROE
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Navy recruiting is making progress toward easing a long-standing manning shortage at sea, the service's top enlisted leader told sailors in Bahrain this week.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea praised recruiters during an all-hands meeting Wednesday at the service's base in Bahrain, where he expressed optimism that strengthening the ranks will ease the burden on deployed crews.

"Last year, we met our contracting goals, and this year, we're going to exceed those," Honea said.

Honea's comments come amid years of undermanning at sea.

Most of the service's surface ships, aircraft carriers and submarines can't complete regular routine maintenance and repairs while underway, a Government Accountability Office report said in September.

Inadequate crewing of ships also keeps sailors working longer hours, limiting their available time for sleep and contributing to fatigue.

At an April 15 awards ceremony honoring the Navy Midshipmen football team, President Donald Trump highlighted the significant rise in the service's recruitment since his second administration took office.

"Today, I'm proud to announce that in February, the US Navy had its best recruiting numbers since 2002, that's a long time ago and under my ad-

ministration, the Navy is on track to have the best recruiting year since the start of the war and the war on terror, but going back further than that, probably 25 to 30 years," Trump said.

The Navy met its 2024 recruiting goal with 40,000 contracts and expects to have those recruits deployed by year's end, narrowing the 20,000-sailor-at-sea shortfall to 18,000. It aims to fill 10,000 more sea-duty billets, with 100% of billets filled by 2027, Vice Adm. Richard Cheeseman said during Senate testimony on April 9.

Cheeseman, the Navy's top personnel officer, said that progress is being made but that it takes at least nine months for recruits to move through the full training pipeline.

During the all-hands call, Ho-

nea explained that the service has adapted its training pipeline to handle the influx of new sailors "so we don't end up with any kind of bottleneck along the way."

The Navy credits recent recruiting gains to cultural shifts, including the "Every Sailor a Recruiter" initiative and the appointment of a two-star admiral to oversee recruiting operations.

It also eased pressure on recruiters by shifting from monthly quotas to annual goals, promoting steadier performance in what is already a mentally demanding assignment.

Boosting training capacity at boot camp and technical schools ensures that the Navy can "flow people as quickly as possible out to the fleet," Honea said.

White House escalates battle with Harvard

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's administration has escalated its ongoing battle with Harvard, threatening to revoke the university's ability to host international students as the president called for withdrawing Harvard's tax-exempt status.

The Department of Homeland Security ordered Harvard late Tuesday to turn over "detailed records" of its foreign student visa holders' "illegal and violent activities" by April 30. International students make up 27% of the campus.

The department also said it was canceling two grants to the school totaling \$2.7 million.

The moves deepen the crack-

down on Harvard, which on Monday became the first university to openly defy the administration's demands related to activism on campus, anti-semitism and diversity. The federal government has already frozen more than \$2 billion in grants and contracts to the Ivy League institution.

Trump suggested Tuesday on social media that Harvard should lose its tax-exempt status "if it keeps pushing political, ideological, and terrorist inspired/supporting 'Sickness?'"

The hold on federal money for research at Harvard marked the seventh time the administration has taken such a step at one of the nation's

most elite colleges.

The government is attempting to force compliance with Trump's political agenda at schools he accuses of pushing "woke" policies and allowing antisemitism to fester.

In a letter to Harvard on Friday, Trump's administration called for broad government and leadership reforms at the university, plus changes to its admissions policies. It also demanded that the university audit views of diversity on campus and stop recognizing some student clubs.

Harvard President Alan Garber said Monday that the university would not bend to the government's demands.

Later that day, the White

House announced the freeze of more than \$2.2 billion in multi-year grants and \$60 million in contracts.

Conservative strategist Christopher Rufo said the government should respond to Harvard's defiance by cutting all federal money and stripping nonprofit status at Harvard and other Ivies that defy federal orders. Rufo urged the government to use the same tools it used during the Civil Rights Movement to force desegregation.

"Trump needs to follow through on his threat to defund one of the Ivy League universities," Rufo said on social media Tuesday. "Cut the funding and watch the university implode."

Revoked student US visas bring about legal challenges

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Several international students who have had their visas revoked in recent weeks have filed lawsuits against the Trump administration, arguing the government denied them due process when it suddenly took away their permission to be in the U.S.

The actions by the federal government to terminate students' legal status have left hundreds of scholars at risk of detention and deportation.

Their schools range from private universities like Harvard and Stanford to large public institutions like the University of Maryland and Ohio State University to some small liberal arts colleges.

At least 901 students at 128 colleges and universities have had their visas revoked or their legal status terminated since mid-March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements and correspondence with school officials.

In lawsuits against the De-

partment of Homeland Security, students have argued the government lacked justification to cancel their visa or terminate their legal status.

Visas can be canceled for a number of reasons, but colleges say some students are being singled out over infractions as minor as traffic violations, including some long in the past. In some cases, students say it's unclear why they were targeted.

"The timing and uniformity of these terminations leave little question that DHS has adopted a nationwide policy, whether written or not, of mass termination of student (legal) status," ACLU of Michigan attorneys wrote in a lawsuit on behalf of students at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan.

In New Hampshire, a federal judge last week issued a restraining order in the case of a Dartmouth College computer science student from China, Xiaotian Liu, who had his status terminated by the government.

Suspect reportedly in custody in Fla. shooting

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A suspect has been taken into police custody and multiple victims were reported in a shooting Thursday at Florida State University, a person familiar with the matter said.

The extent of the victims' injuries was not immediately known and there were no additional details about the person who was in custody.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

At least six people have been hospitalized, including one person in critical condition, a spokesperson for Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare said. The other patients were in serious condition, the spokesperson said.

Ambulances, fire trucks and patrol vehicles from multiple law enforcement agencies raced toward the campus that sits just west of Florida's state capital after the university issued an active shooter alert

midday Thursday, saying police were responding near the student union.

"Our prayers are with our FSU family and state law enforcement is actively responding," Gov. Ron DeSantis wrote on X.

Hundreds of students streamed away from the direction of the student union.

Students were glued to their phones, some visibly emotional, while others hugged each other. Dozens gathered near the music school waiting for news.

Ryan Cedergrén, a 21-year-old communications student, said he and about 30 others hid in the bowling alley in the lower level of the student union after seeing students running from a nearby bar.

"In that moment, it was survival," he said.

After about 15 minutes of hiding, university police escorted the students out of the union and he saw a person getting emergency treatment on the lawn, he said.

US, Europe talks focus on Ukraine war

Associated Press

PARIS — France hosted a series of talks Thursday about Ukraine and its security, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and presidential envoy Steve Witkoff and top Ukrainian and European officials.

After hours of separate meetings at the French presidential palace with U.S., Ukrainian and European officials, French President Emmanuel Macron brought them all together for a final round of talks at the end of the day.

The outcome of the negotiations wasn't immediately clear.

The meetings come as concerns grow about President Donald Trump's readiness to draw closer to Russia, and after weeks of U.S. efforts to broker a ceasefire in Ukraine.

There is also frustration over the Trump administration's other moves, from tariffs on some of its closest partners to rhetoric about NATO and Greenland.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Andrii Yermak said the Ukrainian delegation discussed

with European partners next steps toward achieving a "just and lasting peace," including a full ceasefire, the deployment of a multinational military contingent, and the development of an effective security architecture for Ukraine.

"It was a very substantive conversation. We continue our work," he wrote.

Rubio and Witkoff met Macron and held "talks with European counterparts to advance President Trump's goal to end the Russia-Ukraine war and

stop the bloodshed," State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, also joined the talks.

Other participants included Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, the German government's foreign policy adviser and German Foreign Ministry's political director.

Trump rails about interest rates, Fed Chair Powell

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump slammed Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Thursday, reiterating his frustration that the Fed has not aggressively cut interest rates and saying that the central bank leader's "termination cannot come fast enough."

Trump hinted at moving to fire Powell, whose term does not expire until May 2026. The Republican president's broadside comes a day after Powell signaled that the Fed will keep its key interest rate unchanged while it seeks "greater clarity" on the impact of policy changes in areas such as immigration,

taxation, regulation and tariffs.

Powell also reiterated that Trump's tariffs would likely raise inflation and slow the economy, which could make it harder for the Fed to cut rates anytime soon. The Fed chair also suggested that the central bank will focus on fighting inflation in the wake of the tariffs, even if the duties did weaken the economy. Powell's comments contributed to a drop in stock prices Wednesday.

"Oil prices are down, groceries (even eggs!) are down, and the USA is getting RICH ON TARIFFS," Trump said in a social media post.

Referring to the European

Central Bank, he added that Powell "should have lowered Interest Rates, like the ECB, long ago, but he should certainly lower them now. Powell's termination cannot come fast enough!"

The European Central Bank on Thursday lowered its key interest rate from 2.5% to 2.25%.

Powell was initially nominated by Trump in 2017, and he was appointed to another four-year term by President Joe Biden in 2022. At a November news conference, Powell indicated he would not step down if Trump asked him to resign.

He has also said that the removal or demotion of top Fed officials was "not permitted under

the law."

Trump's comments come with the backdrop of a legal case at the Supreme Court that could determine whether presidents can fire the heads of independent agencies such as the Fed.

The case stems from Trump's firings of officials from two independent agencies. The Supreme Court last week let the firings stand while it considers the case. It could issue a broader ruling this summer that would enable the president to fire Fed officials, including the chair.

Powell said the Fed is watching the case closely, adding that it might not apply to the Fed.

Trump says he's in 'no rush' on deals to end tariffs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he is in "no rush" to reach any trade deals because of the revenues his tariffs are generating, but suggested while meeting with Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni that it would be easy to find an agreement with the European Union and others.

His administration has indicated that offers are coming from other countries and it is

possible to do 90 deals during the 90-day tariff pause, but the president played down the likelihood of an accelerated timeline, saying any agreements would come "at a certain point."

"We're in no rush," said Trump, hinting that he has leverage because other countries want access to U.S. consumers.

Meloni's meeting with Trump will test her mettle as a bridge between the EU and the United States. She is the first

European leader to have face-to-face talks with him since he announced and then partially suspended 20% tariffs on European exports.

Meloni secured the meeting as Italy's leader, but she also has, in a sense, been "knighted" to represent the EU at a critical juncture in the fast-evolving trade war that has stoked recession fears. She was in close contact with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen be-

fore the trip, and "the outreach is ... closely coordinated," a commission spokeswoman said.

"We know we are in a difficult moment," Meloni said this week in Rome. "Most certainly, I am well aware of what I represent, and what I am defending."

The EU is defending what it calls "the most important commercial relationship in the world," with annual trade with the U.S. totaling \$1.8 trillion.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Shooting planned for Columbine anniversary

PA STATE COLLEGE — A Pennsylvania man was jailed after authorities accused him of planning a school shooting near the anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre.

Police said Braeden Phillips, 20, had planned to commit a mass shooting at State College High School in Central Pennsylvania on April 21, one day after the 26th anniversary of the deadly Columbine shooting, according to a criminal complaint.

Police allege Phillips had compiled a “hit list” and that Phillips planned to place bombs in the school bathrooms.

Phillips has been charged with conspiracy to commit murder and unlawful possession of a firearm.

Two teenage boys went on a killing rampage at Columbine High School in suburban Denver on April 20, 1999. They shot and killed 12 classmates and a teacher and wounded two dozen others before taking their own lives.

Police: Man stabbed by mortuary worker in fight

TX HOUSTON — A Texas man was stabbed by a mortuary worker during a fight over the condition of bodies discovered at the facility, police say and news outlets report.

The man and his sister went to Richardson Mortuary in Houston on April 11 to discuss upcoming funeral services for their mother, but what they found inside shocked them, KRIV reported.

The man took video at the mortuary and shared it on Face-

book. Multiple bodies can be seen on gurneys, some partially uncovered, video shows. A hallway is completely filled with caskets and gurneys. He says flies and gnats are present around the bodies, and there is no air conditioning.

At some point after posting the video, police said the man got into a confrontation with a Richardson Mortuary employee, and the employee stabbed him, KPRC reported. The man suffered minor injuries, drove himself to a hospital and was later released.

State seeks to ban soda, candy from SNAP

AR LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas officials moved Tuesday to ban soft drinks and candy from the program that helps low-income people pay for groceries, becoming the first state to ask the Trump administration to let it restrict such items from the program long known as food stamps.

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the request is aimed at improving the health of nearly 350,000 Arkansas residents who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The plan, which would take effect in July 2026, would exclude soda, including no- and low-calorie soda; fruit and vegetable drinks with less than 50% natural juice; “unhealthy drinks”; and candy.

Man charged with threatening Gabbard

GA LILBURN — A Georgia man is accused of threatening to harm Director of National Intelli-

gence Tulsi Gabbard and her family, prosecutors said.

Aliakbar Mohammad Amin, 25, of Lilburn, was arrested and charged with transmitting interstate threats after he allegedly sent text messages that stated how Gabbard and her family are “going to die soon” and that he will “personally do the job if necessary,” according to the Department of Justice.

“Death to America means death to America literally, Tulsi is living on borrowed time,” one message read.

The second stated that “the home you two own ... is a legitimate target and will be hit at a time and place of our choosing.”

Federal law enforcement also found other “similar threats” allegedly made by Amin on social media in which he posted images of guns being pointed at both Gabbard and her husband, according to the DOJ.

Judge drops contempt case against ICE agent

MA BOSTON — A federal judge has dismissed a contempt case against an agent for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement whose arrest of a man during his trial sparked criticism among the law enforcement community in Boston.

ICE agent Brian Sullivan took Wilson Martell-Lebron, 49, into custody last month as he was leaving court. Boston Municipal Court Judge Mark Summerville found Sullivan in contempt, arguing that he deprived Martell-Lebron of his rights to due process and fair trial.

But on Monday, U.S. District Judge William Young dismissed the case after Massachusetts Attorney General An-

drea Campbell agreed with U.S. Attorney Leah Foley that the order should be vacated.

Ryan Sullivan, one of the attorneys for Martell-Lebron, described a tense arrest scene in which ICE agents pounced on Martell-Lebron without identifying themselves, put him into a pickup and sped away. The trial had begun with opening statements and the first witnesses.

The Justice Department said that agents, including Brian Sullivan, identified themselves and told Martell-Lebron to stop before detaining him.

Hackman's wife researched illnesses

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Authorities on Tuesday released a lengthy investigation report detailing some of the last emails and internet searches done by actor Gene Hackman's wife in the days before her death, indicating that she was scouring the internet for information on flu-like symptoms and breathing techniques.

Betsy Arakawa died in February of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome — a rare, rodent-borne disease whose symptoms can include flu-like illness, headaches, dizziness and severe respiratory distress, investigators have said.

Hackman is believed to have died about a week later of heart disease with complications from Alzheimer's disease.

The partially mummified remains of Hackman, 95, and Arakawa, 65, were found in their Santa Fe home on Feb. 26, when maintenance and security workers showed up at the home and alerted police.

— From Associated Press

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Herro, Heat dominate Bulls to advance

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Tyler Herro and the Heat had it going right from the start. Another performance like that could catapult Miami into the playoffs.

Herro scored 38 points as the Heat dominated the Chicago Bulls 109-90 on Wednesday night to advance in the Play-In Tournament.

Herro scored 23 points as Miami grabbed a 71-47 half-time lead, and the Heat knocked the Bulls out of the play-in for the third year in a row. They play at Atlanta on Friday for a chance to meet top-seeded Cleveland in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. The Hawks lost to Orlando on Tuesday.

"We're only halfway there," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We didn't have the luxury of having the one game and then you're automatically in. Guys feel great about this win

and really put a lot into this. This is not something that could just happen overnight. I feel like there's been some good things happening the last several weeks."

Getting to this point hasn't been easy for the Heat. There was the standoff with Jimmy Butler that ended with a trade-deadline deal to Golden State in February, and a 10-game losing streak in March. Miami then won eight of 12 to close the regular season and finish 10th in the East at 37-45.

Against Chicago, Herro made his first eight shots and was 13 of 19 in the game.

"I've been saying this all year," Bam Adebayo said. "It's good for him to have these types of moments. In past years, he's been injured and (had) his name thrown in the mud. To have a year like this, I've got the utmost respect for the kid. He's doing his thing.

He's out there playing basketball free and putting the ball in the basket."

Andrew Wiggins had 20 points and nine rebounds. Adebayo added 15 points and 12 rebounds, and Davion Mitchell chipped in with 15 points and nine assists. The Heat had 10 steals and seven blocks, and it added up to pay-back for a three-game sweep in the regular season.

Josh Giddey had 25 points and 10 rebounds for the Bulls. Coby White scored 17, though he shot 5 of 20.

Nikola Vucevic finished with 16 points and 12 rebounds.

"We didn't really have game-plan discipline," White said. "We beat them in the regular season. We thought if we just do what we normally do, then we'll be good. But obviously, they've got guys that have been to the finals. They've got guys that know

what it takes. They got a head coach who's one of the best head coaches in the league. They came in and they were the better team tonight."

Chicago got within 13 early in the fourth quarter, only to get shut down the rest of the way and miss the playoffs for the third year in a row.

"A lot of us made big-time buckets at the right time," Adebayo said.

Herro set the tone, making all eight shots as Miami broke the game open in the first half. He was hardly a one-man show, with Wiggins scoring 12 in the half and Adebayo adding 11 points and seven rebounds.

"We knew what our path was, it was gonna take two wins on the road, which we're capable of," Herro said. "We knew that from the beginning. We're excited for this challenge going into Atlanta."

Thompson fuels late surge as Mavericks top Kings

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Klay Thompson scored 16 of his 23 points in Dallas' dominant second quarter to get redemption for his dud in Sacramento a year ago, helping the Mavericks beat the Kings 120-106 on Wednesday night to advance in the Play-In Tournament.

One year to the day when Thompson missed all 10 of his shots in his final game for the Golden State Warriors during their play-in loss in Sacramento, Thompson fueled the victory with four 3-pointers in Dallas' 44-point second quarter. That turned the game into a laughter and kept the Mavs' chaotic season alive for at least one more game.

"Human nature, when you end a season on a sour note like that you want to come out and prove people wrong," Thompson said. "But I thought I did a good job to start the game of trying to dish, rebound, play defense. The shots came to me after that."

Dallas advanced to play at Memphis on Friday night for the chance to get into the playoffs as the eighth seed in the West. The winner of that game will open the

playoffs on Sunday at top-seeded Oklahoma City.

As for the Kings, soon after the game, the team and general manager Monte McNair agreed to part ways. A person familiar with the decision said the sides mutually agreed on the breakup. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team hadn't announced the move.

The Mavericks have undergone a rough season after trading young superstar Luka Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers on Feb. 2 in a seismic deal that brought Anthony Davis to Dallas and vitriol from the fan base to the organization.

Star point guard Kyrie Irving went down with a season-ending knee injury shortly after that trade, seemingly ending any realistic hopes of another deep playoff run after making it to the NBA Finals last season.

"We've had a tumultuous season to say the least," Thompson said.

"The injury bug has struck us like I've never seen before. But we're still here playing postseason basketball. We can really give the city of Dallas some hope,

especially if we go to Memphis and repeat this type of performance."

The Mavs opened the second quarter with a 20-6 run fueled by back-to-back 3s from Thompson. He hit two more 3s later in the quarter as Dallas built the lead to 23 points at the half, removing any drama.

"We shot it very well, get stops on defense and were able to run," said Davis, who led the Mavericks with 27 points. "Offense was clicking. We had what, 44 in the quarter? We played with a lot of pace and opened up the game."

DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points for Sacramento, and Zach LaVine added 20.

It was a disappointing ending to an underwhelming season for the Kings, who fired coach Mike Brown in December and traded star point guard De'Aaron Fox to San Antonio in February. It all led to Sacramento missing the playoffs for the 18th time in 19 seasons, raising questions about the team's future.

"This is where I want to be," interim coach Doug Christie said. "You guys know that. I need to finish what I started."

Canadiens finally wrap up playoff spot

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Kaiden Guhle scored twice and the Montreal Canadiens wrapped up the last Eastern Conference playoff spot with a 4-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes on Wednesday night in their regular-season finale.

Montreal needed at least a point to eliminate Columbus from playoff contention. It will face Washington in the first round.

Nick Suzuki broke a tie late in the second period with his 30th goal and also had an assist, Jake Evans had an empty-net goal and Sam Montembeault made 27 saves to help the Canadiens finish 40-31-11 and reach the playoffs for the first since 2021.

Taylor Hall and Tyson Jost scored for Carolina, and Pyotr Kochetkov stopped 17 shots. The playoff-bound Hurricanes rested several key players.

Carolina regulars Sebastian Aho, Jaccob Slavin, Jalen Chatfield, Jordan Staal, Seth Jarvis, Jordan Martinook and Jackson Blake sat out. It was already locked into facing New Jersey in the first round.

Montreal missed opportunities to wrap up the playoff spot

in its three previous games. The Canadiens lost in regulation to Ottawa before falling in overtime to Toronto and a shootout against Chicago.

Jets 2, Ducks 1 (OT): Mark Scheifele scored at 1:11 of overtime to give Presidents' Trophy-winning Winnipeg a victory over visiting Anaheim in its regular-season finale.

The Jets finished at 56-22-4 to set a franchise record with 116 points.

Connor Hellebuyck made 30 saves for Winnipeg in his 47th victory, the most in franchise history, and the Jets wrapped up the Jennings Trophy for fewest goals against.

Winnipeg will face St. Louis in the first round of the playoffs.

Red Wings 5, Devils 2: Red Wings captain Dylan Larkin scored and added an assist and Alex Lyon made 28 saves as visiting Detroit downed New Jersey.

Jonatan Berggren, J.T. Compher, Alex DeBrincat and Marco Kasper also scored for the Red Wings, who won their third straight. Detroit will miss the playoffs for a ninth straight season.

The Devils finished with 42

wins and 91 points for third place in the Metropolitan Division. New Jersey will play Carolina in the first round.

Larkin increased the lead to 3-0 with his 30th goal at 2:55 of the third. Simon Edvinsson, Moritz Seider and Lucas Raymond each had two assists for the Wings.

Predators 5, Stars 1: Ryan O'Reilly had a goal and two assists and host Nashville closed its disappointing season with a victory over playoff-bound Dallas.

Jordan Oesterle and Jonathan Marchessault each had a goal and an assist, and Jakob Vrana and Justin Barron also scored for the Predators. Juuse Saros made 29 saves, and Filip Forsberg had two assists.

Mason Marchment scored and Jake Oettinger made 17 saves in the first two periods for the Stars, who concluded the regular season on an 0-5-2 slide after not losing more than two straight this season prior to the current stretch. Oettinger was replaced by Casey DeSmith to start the third. DeSmith made 12 saves.

Dallas will face Colorado in the first round of the Stanley

Cup playoffs.

Golden Knights 4, Canucks 1: Pavel Dorofeyev broke a tie at 7:59 of the third period with his 35th goal and visiting Vegas beat Vancouver in the regular-season finale for both teams.

Jack Eichel — making in the lineup after missing four games because of an upper-body injury, followed Dorofeyev's goal with his 28th with 9:15 left.

Victor Olofsson tied it at 1 with 1:27 left in the second, and also had an assist, Cole Schwindt scored an empty-netter for his first NHL goal.

The Golden Knights won the Pacific Division and finished second in the Western Conference at 50-22-10. Vegas will face Minnesota in the first round of the playoffs.

Oilers 3, Sharks 0: Ty Emberson had a goal and an assist, Stuart Skinner stopped 18 shots, and visiting Edmonton completed a four-game season series sweep of San Jose with a victory in the regular-season finale for both teams.

Max Jones and Corey Perry also scored goals while Connor McDavid had an assist on Emberson's goal for his 100th point of the season.

Giants open to Hunter playing WR, CB if they draft him

Associated Press

The New York Giants are open to allowing Colorado standout Travis Hunter to play on both sides of the ball if they wind up using the third overall pick in next week's NFL draft on the cornerback and wide receiver.

Giants general manager Joe Schoen said during the team's pre-draft news conference Wednesday that it "would not be afraid to play him on both sides of the ball." Hunter has made it clear he intends to play both offense and defense in the NFL, telling CBS Sports recently that

his response to any team trying to limit him would be "never playing football again."

Hunter not only won the Heisman Trophy, the most prestigious award in college football, he also took home the Bednarik Award as college football's top defensive player and was selected as The Associated Press player of the year. He caught 96 passes for 1,258 yards and 15 touchdowns while also making 35 tackles, breaking up 11 passes and picking off four.

That has some NFL scouts rating him as both the best wide receiver and best cornerback

available in this year's draft.

Still, playing both ways in college is much different than the NFL, where Schoen said the mental demands could be more taxing on Hunter as the physical toll in playing the majority of the snaps that take place in a game.

"Offense is very hard to learn and then the defense on a weekly basis — it's not college anymore where, 'Hey, these are our basic plays, this is our basic defense and we're going to go play cover-3h against Kansas, we're going to play cover-3 against Nebraska,'" Schoen said. "There's a lot more week-to-

week matchup type-stuff that our coaches are doing.

"So, just how much can you handle mentally where you can go out there and execute and they can trust you to do your job?"

Hunter insisted in a recent interview with The AP that he was capable of handling the load.

"I wouldn't doubt the kid. He's that type of athlete," Schoen said. "He's had that type of production, the number of snaps he plays in a game, doesn't sit down, goes over, gets a drink of water and gets back out on the field."

Guerrero's 1st homer helps Jays top Braves

Associated Press

TORONTO — Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit his first home run of the season and drove in a pair, Chris Bassitt pitched five shutout innings and the Toronto Blue Jays spoiled Spencer Strider's return from elbow surgery by beating the Atlanta Braves 3-1 on Wednesday.

Chris Bassitt (2-0) struck out a season-high 10 and allowed three hits, all singles. The right-hander lowered his ERA to 0.77 through four starts.

The Blue Jays set a single-game, nine-inning record with 19 strikeouts.

Jeff Hoffman gave up Drake Baldwin's first career home run in the ninth inning, but finished for his fourth save in four opportunities.

Strider (0-1) allowed two runs and five hits in five-plus innings. The Braves ace struck out five, walked one and hit a batter in his first start in just over a year.

Twins 4, Mets 3 (10): Ty France singled in the 10th inning to give host Minnesota a victory over New York, which had rallied with a three-run eighth.

With the speedy Byron Buxton conveniently on second as the automatic runner, France smacked a 1-1 pitch from Reed Garrett (0-1) with none out that bounced in center field with no chance for Tyrone Taylor to get his glove down.

Pete Alonso and Jesse Winker hit RBI doubles to end a 12-inning scoreless streak for the Mets in the eighth against Griffin Jax, and Luisangel Acuña tied it with a two-out single.

Brewers 5, Tigers 1: Christian Yelich, Rhys Hoskins and Sal Frelick all hit home runs as host Milwaukee defeated Detroit.

The Brewers pushed across a run in the second off Keider Montero (0-1) when Garrett Mitchell tripled with one out and scored on Oliver Dunn's sacrifice bunt. Dunn became

the first Milwaukee player to use a "torpedo" bat during the plate appearance.

José Quintana (2-0), making his second start of the season after pitching seven shutout innings in his Brewers debut on Friday, held the Tigers to one run and four hits over 5½ innings.

Cardinals 4, Astros 1: Lars Nootbaar hit a three-run homer in the fifth inning, and Steven Matz pitched five strong innings in his first start of the season to help host St. Louis beat Houston.

Matz (1-0) retired the last 15 batters he faced, striking out five, after allowing a run on a pair of singles to lead off the game.

Ronel Blanco (1-2) allowed three runs and five hits and three walks in five innings for the Astros, who have not won consecutive games this season.

Padres 4, Cubs 2: Fernando Tatis Jr. and Manny Machado each drove in two runs and Nick Pivetta pitched six strong innings for host San Diego, which beat Chicago to take two of three in a series between National League division leaders.

Tatis and Machado each hit an RBI single in the third off Matthew Boyd. Machado hit an RBI double in the seventh off Daniel Palencia, and Tatis drew a bases-loaded walk against Luke Little with two outs in the eighth.

Pivetta (3-1) allowed one run and four hits in a sharp performance. He struck out six and walked one.

Pirates 6, Nationals 1: Oneil Cruz hit his first career grand slam to help host Pittsburgh beat Washington.

Henry Davis also connected for Pittsburgh, which had dropped four of five. Isiah Kiner-Falefa had two hits and scored run.

The benches cleared in the seventh after a pitch by Jorge López went near Andrew McCutchen's head. López, who

also hit Bryan Reynolds, was ejected and later suspended three games.

Orioles 9, Guardians 1: Jackson Holliday hit a second-inning grand slam, Dean Kremer turned in his best start of the young season and host Baltimore routed Cleveland.

Holliday snapped an 0-for-17 drought with a drive that carried into the Orioles bullpen in center field off Gavin Williams (1-1) with one out in the second.

Kremer (2-2) entered the game with an ERA of 8.16 but allowed just one run — a homer by Gabriel Arias in the third — in 5½ innings. He allowed four hits.

Diamondbacks 6, Marlins 2: Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit a two-run homer and visiting Arizona went deep four times to beat Miami for its fourth straight victory.

Josh Naylor, Pavin Smith and Tim Tawa added solo shots for the Diamondbacks, who have won six of seven following a three-game skid.

Brandon Pfaadt (3-1) allowed one run and five hits over 5½ innings, striking out six.

Mariners 5, Reds 3: Cal Raleigh hit two more homers and Bryce Miller pitched five sharp innings, helping visiting Seattle beat Cincinnati.

Raleigh hit a solo drive from each side of the plate. The catcher has five homers in his last five games, giving him 100 for his career.

Dylan Moore had two hits and scored two runs for the Mariners in their fifth win in six games. Randy Arozarena and J.P. Crawford each had two hits and drove in a run.

Yankees 4, Royals 3: Aaron Judge hit a tiebreaking homer leading off the seventh inning that ended a 10-game drought, and host New York defeated Kansas City to complete a three-game sweep.

Yankees starter Clarke Schmidt had some dominant

moments and pitched 5½ innings of three-run ball in his season debut.

Giants 11, Phillies 4: Jung Hoo Lee singled, doubled and drove in two runs to help visiting San Francisco beat Philadelphia.

The Giants improved to 13-5 with their third win in four games. Mike Yastrzemski, Wilmer Flores and Patrick Bailey also drove in a pair of runs for San Francisco.

Red Sox 1, Rays 0: David Hamilton hit a third-inning home run, four pitchers combined to strike out 13 and visiting Boston beat Tampa Bay.

Hamilton lined a 3-2 fastball just inside the right-field foul pole off Rays starter Zack Littell (0-4) to lead off the third and give the Red Sox all they needed in the three-game series finale. Boston rebounded from Monday's 16-1 loss to win the final two games.

Athletics 3, White Sox 1: Gio Urshela snapped a sixth-inning tie with a two-run triple that sent the visiting Athletics past struggling Chicago.

JJ Bleday had three hits, including a double and an RBI single, to help the Athletics win their second straight on a cold night.

Rangers 3, Angels 1: Corey Seager and Jake Burger each had three hits, and host Texas beat Los Angeles.

Seager also drove in two runs in the Rangers' seventh consecutive home win. It was Burger's first multihit game with Texas.

Dodgers 8, Rockies 7: Shohei Ohtani and Freddie Freeman homered in host Los Angeles' seven-run first inning, and the Dodgers held on for a victory over Colorado.

Andy Pages drove in three runs and Austin Barnes had a two-run double for LA, which blew most of an early 7-1 lead before its bullpen secured the series sweep with six innings of three-hit ball.