

Hegseth marks 100 days at Pentagon

The Washington Post

The Trump administration is transforming military culture and remaking the U.S. posture overseas, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Wednesday, marking his 100-day tenure atop the Pentagon with a defiant, expletive-laden address that was both an excoriation of his critics and a dismissal of Democrats' calls to resign.

Speaking to troops at the Army War College, Hegseth touted changes he said were necessary to bring the military in line with President Donald Trump's "America First" agenda, including an end to diversity initiatives, an overhaul of personnel regulations and an intensified campaign against Iran-linked militants in Yemen. He also mounted a pointed counterattack at a moment when his judgment is under scrutiny over his handling of sensitive information, his abrupt firing of a spate of experienced officers, and upheaval of his closest aides.

"The media likes to call it chaos," Hegseth said of his record since taking over in January. "We call it overdue.

"That means no more social engineering. No more climate change worship. No more electric tanks. No more gender confusion. No more pronouns. No more excuses. No more quotas. No more woke b----- that undermines commanders and command climates," he said. "We are laser-focused on our mission of warfighting."

Hegseth visited the Army site in rural Pennsylvania as he took the unusual step of using official Pentagon social media to amplify messages of support for him remaining in his job, promoting praise from Republican allies including Vice President JD Vance, Donald Trump Jr. and Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla. Numerous Democratic lawmakers and at least one Republican have suggested he step down following revelations that he repeatedly circulated ad-

vance attack plans — which former defense officials say would be highly classified in most circumstances — in a commercial messaging app.

Another official Pentagon account, meanwhile, posted a clip of White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt affirming to reporters that Trump retained confidence in Hegseth and denouncing a "smear campaign" against him.

The former Fox News host and Army National Guard officer was narrowly confirmed in January following a bruising confirmation process that aired allegations of heavy drinking and poor management, along with the disclosure that he paid a settlement to a woman who accused him of sexual assault. At the time, he vigorously denied any wrongdoing and sought to bat away the allegations by labeling them "anonymous smears," a phrase he has revived in recent days as he has campaigned to remain in

Trump's good graces.

In his remarks Hegseth repeated his long-standing criticism of the military's system for evaluating physical fitness and eligibility for combat roles. Before being tapped by Trump, Hegseth argued forcefully for scrapping policies that for a decade have permitted women to serve in all ground combat roles if they can meet standards for those jobs.

Since taking office he has mischaracterized the military's dual-track system for fitness and occupational standards, in which troops' physical fitness standards have been adjusted for age and gender, but where separate occupational standards for different military jobs, including ground combat positions, are gender-neutral. This week, the Army announced changes to its physical fitness rules, including the introduction of a gender-neutral fitness standard for troops serving in 21 combat jobs.

Trump asks court to keep trans troops ban, for now

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's administration on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to allow enforcement of a ban on transgender people in the military, while legal challenges proceed.

Without an order from the nation's highest court, the ban could not take effect for many months, Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote, "a period far too long for the military to be forced to maintain a policy that it has determined, in its professional judgment, to be contrary

to military readiness and the nation's interests."

The high court filing follows a brief order from a federal appeals court that kept in place a court order blocking the policy nationwide.

At the least, Sauer wrote, the court should allow the ban to take effect nationwide, except for the seven service members and one aspiring member of the military who sued.

The court gave lawyers for the service members challenging the ban a week to respond.

Just after beginning his sec-

ond term in January, Trump moved aggressively to roll back the rights of transgender people. Among the Republican president's actions was an executive order that claims the sexual identity of transgender service members "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life" and is harmful to military readiness.

In response, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a policy that presumptively disqualifies transgender people from

military service.

But in March, U.S. District Court Judge Benjamin Settle in Tacoma, Wash., ruled for several long-serving transgender military members who say that the ban is insulting and discriminatory and that their firing would cause lasting damage to their careers and reputations.

The Trump administration offered no explanation as to why transgender troops, who have been able to serve openly over the past four years with no evidence of problems, should suddenly be banned, Settle wrote.

US, Philippine fighters train to sink warships

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

CLARK AIR BASE, Philippines — U.S. and Philippine multirole fighter jets are preparing to destroy warships during annual drills in the Philippines, amid rising tensions with Beijing in the South China Sea.

Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornets and Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons — deployed from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and Misawa Air Base, Japan — are participating in Balikatan, annual combat drills that began Monday and run through May 9. The exercise brings together approximately 9,000 American and 5,000 Filipino troops in what officials describe as a “full battle test” for island defense.

“This year’s Balikatan will showcase a full battle test, the purposeful integration of real-world security situations relevant to the region with live, vir-

tual and constructive training,” the head of Marine Corps Forces Pacific, Lt. Gen. James Glynn, said at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, according to a Naval News report Tuesday.

The drills take place amid sporadic confrontations between the Philippine and Chinese coast guards in the contested South China Sea. The two sides have repeatedly clashed over competing territorial claims in the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone.

Air Force F-16s have trained regularly in the Philippines in recent years, said Lt. Col. Josh “Vegas” Plocinski, commander of Misawa’s 14th Fighter Squadron.

“One of the bigger aspects we will be going to focus on in Balikatan is maritime strike,” he told Stars and Stripes on Thursday at Clark.

The squadron has deployed a dozen F-16s and 400 airmen to Clark. They will use modified

2,000-pound GPS-guided bombs during maritime strike missions, Plocinski said.

Maritime strike isn’t the Hornets’ primary mission, but it’s within their capability, said Marine Aircraft Group 39 commander, Col. Jeremie “Hank” Hester, an AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter pilot who is overseeing nearly 1,000 Marines during the exercise. The Marines, deployed from California, are operating from facilities spread from northern Luzon to Palawan, he said.

Eight Hornets from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 are at the base. Also in the Philippines are six MV-22B Ospreys from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 364 at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Hester said.

The Philippine air force has previously used its FA-50s — South Korean-made supersonic jets — at Balikatan. In 2023 drills, an FA-50 successfully launched a

missile strike on a mock target vessel, according to the state-run Philippine News Agency.

Manila is preparing to upgrade its fighter fleet. In March, the U.S. Department of Defense approved a \$5.58 billion sale of 20 Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 70/72 fighters — 16 single-seat C models and four dual-seat D models.

The Block 70/72 is an advanced fourth-generation fighter but lacks the stealth capabilities of fifth-generation aircraft like the F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has invested heavily in bolstering the Philippines’ military structure. Billions of dollars have gone toward modernizing runways and support facilities at Cesar Basa Air Base, just south of Clark and home to the Philippines’ 5th Fighter Wing, which flies the FA-50.

Navy ends search for sailor reported missing on Guam

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy has suspended its nearly weeklong search for a sailor assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz who was reported missing Saturday.

The active search was officially called off at 9 a.m. Thursday, after U.S. and civilian agencies looked for 120 hours and covered more than 14,000 square miles offshore, Carrier Strike Group 11 said in a news release that day.

The Navy did not identify the sailor, citing its next-of-kin notification policy. The Guam Police Department on Saturday identified him as Gabriel D. Holt when it sought the public’s help.

Navy policy calls for withholding identifying information until 24 hours after notification of an in-

dividual’s next of kin. The Navy lists the sailor as “whereabouts unknown,” the release states.

A strike group spokesperson did not respond to emails this week seeking additional information, including the circumstances of the sailor’s disappearance.

Holt was last seen at 11:57 p.m. Friday between Hotel Nikko and Gun Beach, a distance of about 220 yards, the police department said on its official Instagram account. The USS Nimitz was in Guam for a scheduled port visit as part of what is likely the aircraft carrier’s last deployment.

Police spokeswoman Berlyn Savella confirmed Thursday that “collaborative efforts within local and federal agencies have ceased” but Guam police consider the case open.

Sergeant gets 7 years for selling secrets to China

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

An Army sergeant was sentenced Wednesday to seven years in prison for selling classified military information about weapons, aircraft and tactics to an individual believed to be affiliated with the Chinese government, the Justice Department announced.

Korbein Schultz, of Wills Point, Texas, pleaded guilty in August to conspiring to collect and transmit national defense information, unlawfully exporting controlled information to China and accepting bribes in exchange for sensitive U.S. government information.

Schultz, 25, an intelligence analyst with the 506th Infantry Battalion who had a top-secret clearance, was sentenced in U.S. District Court for the Middle District

of Tennessee. He was paid \$42,000 for passing on information from 2022 until his arrest in March 2024 at Fort Campbell, Ky., according to the DOJ.

Schultz’s motive for selling secrets was apparently not limited to simply making money.

He at one point told his handler that he “wished he could be Jason Bourne,” according to the indictment filed March 6, 2024.

The Chinese handler had initially contacted Schultz through an internet platform that connects freelancers with clients, the news release states. As the relationship progressed, the handler pressed harder for sensitive and classified information, while offering higher payments for such materials than for open-source information.

IMF chief urges end to trade tensions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The head of the International Monetary Fund urged countries to move “swiftly” to resolve trade disputes that threaten global economic growth.

IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said the unpredictability arising from President Donald Trump’s aggressive campaign of taxes on foreign imports is causing companies to delay investments and consumers to hold off on spending.

“Uncertainty is bad for busi-

ness,” she told reporters Thursday in a briefing during the spring meetings of the IMF and its sister agency, the World Bank.

Georgieva’s comments came two days after the IMF downgraded the outlook for world economic growth this year. The 191-country lending organization, which seeks to promote global growth, financial stability and to reduce poverty, also sharply lowered its forecast for the United States. It said the chances that the world’s biggest economy would fall into reces-

sion have risen from 25%, to about 40%.

Georgieva warned that the economic fallout from trade conflict would fall most heavily on poor countries, which do not have the money to offset the damage.

Since returning the White House in January, Trump has aggressively imposed tariffs on American trading partners. Among other things, he’s slapped 145% import taxes on China and 10% on almost every country in the world, raising U.S. tariffs to levels not seen in

more than a century. But he has repeatedly changed U.S. policy — suddenly suspending or altering the tariffs — and left companies bewildered about what he is trying to accomplish and what his end game might be.

Trump’s tariffs — a sharp reversal of decades of U.S. policy in favor of free trade — and the resulting uncertainty around them have caused a weekslong rout in financial markets. But stocks rallied Wednesday after the Trump administration signaled that it is open to reducing the massive tariffs on China.

Man charged with arson after allegedly sparking fire

Associated Press

A man set a bonfire using wooden pallets in New Jersey’s Pine Barrens and left them without fully extinguishing the blaze, sparking a quick-moving wildfire with smoke affecting air quality in the New York City area, authorities said Thursday.

Authorities arrested the 19-year-old from Waretown, N.J., and charged him with arson and aggravated arson in the fire that’s still burning in southern New Jersey that they described as started with “an improperly extinguished bonfire.”

Prosecutors said there’s no attorney listed for him.

It’s peak forest fire season in

the vast pine wilderness that covers more than 1 million acres — an area roughly as large as the Grand Canyon — and firefighters are contending with low humidity and the aftermath of a monthslong drought in the region.

Though large tracts of the Pine Barrens are uninhabited, New Jersey is the nation’s most densely populated state and officials have warned the fire could threaten developments nearby. The fire had grown to more than 23 square miles on Thursday, approaching what officials believe to have been the largest wildfire in the state in the last two decades.

Authorities had said there were no injuries or deaths in the fire, but a commercial building and some vehicles had been destroyed. About 5,000 people had been evacuated but were permitted to return home on Wednesday, officials said.

“This is still a very active fire,” Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette said Wednesday. “As we continue to get this under full control the expectation is that the number of acres will grow and will grow in a place that is unpopulated.”

The effects of the fire are beginning to be seen beyond the state.

Higher-than-normal pollution levels were expected Thursday in New York City, Rockland and Westchester counties, and in Long Island’s Nassau and Suffolk counties, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation advised Wednesday. The fire is roughly 54 miles south of New York City.

It said “going indoors may reduce exposure” to problems such as eye, nose and throat irritation, coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath. The Ocean County Sheriff’s Office in New Jersey also cautioned early Thursday about air quality, saying “smoke will continue to permeate the area.”

Most in US expect higher prices as a result of tariffs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans’ trust in President Donald Trump to bolster the U.S. economy appears to be faltering, with a new poll showing that many people fear the country is being steered into a recession and that the president’s broad and haphazardly enforced tariffs will cause prices to rise.

Roughly half of U.S. adults say that Trump’s trade policies will

increase prices “a lot” and another 3 in 10 think prices could go up “somewhat,” according to the poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

About half of Americans are “extremely” or “very” concerned about the possibility of the U.S. economy going into a recession in the next few months.

While skepticism about tariffs is increasing modestly, that

doesn’t mean the public is automatically rejecting Trump or his approach to trade. However, the wariness could cause problems for a president who promised voters he could quickly fix inflation.

Three months into his second term, Trump’s handling of the economy and tariffs is showing up as a potential weakness. About 4 in 10 Americans approve of the way the Republican

president is handling the economy and trade negotiations.

About half of U.S. adults, 52%, are against imposing tariffs on all goods brought into the U.S. from other countries. That’s up slightly from January, when a poll found that 46% were against tariffs. Driving that small shift largely appears to be adults under age 30 who didn’t previously have an opinion on tariffs.

Trump urges Putin to ‘STOP!’ after Kyiv hit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday offered rare criticism of Vladimir Putin, urging the Russian leader to “STOP!” after a deadly barrage of attacks on Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital.

“I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP! 5000 soldiers a week are dying,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform. “Let’s get the Peace Deal DONE!”

Russia struck Kyiv with an hourslong barrage of missiles and drones. At least 12 people were killed and 90 were injured in the deadliest assault on the city since July.

Trump’s frustration is growing as a U.S.-led effort to get a peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia has not made progress.

Trump lashed out at Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday and accused him of prolonging the “killing field” by refusing to surrender the Russia-occupied Crimean Peninsula as part of a possible deal. Russia illegally annexed that area from Ukraine in 2014.

Zelenskyy has repeated many times during the war that began when Russia invaded in February 2022 that recognizing occupied territory as Russia’s is a red line for Ukraine. Zelenskyy noted Thursday that Ukraine

had agreed to a U.S. ceasefire proposal 44 days ago as a first step to a negotiated peace, but that Moscow’s attacks had continued.

Trump’s criticism of Putin is notable because Trump has repeatedly said Russia, the aggressor in the conflict, is more willing than Ukraine to get a deal done.

“I thought it might be easier to deal with Zelenskyy,” Trump told reporters Wednesday. “So far it’s been harder, but that’s OK. It’s all right.”

In his dealings with Zelenskyy and Putin, Trump has focused on which leader has leverage. Putin has “the cards” and Zelenskyy does not, Trump has said repeatedly. At the same

time, the new Republican administration has taken steps toward a more cooperative line with Putin, for whom Trump has long shown admiration.

Trump planned to meet later Thursday with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre to discuss the war in Ukraine, U.S. tariffs and other issues. Norway, a member of NATO and strong supporter of Ukraine, shares a roughly 123-mile border with Russia.

The White House announced Tuesday that Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, would visit Moscow this week for a new round of talks with Putin about the war. It would be their fourth meeting since Trump took office in January.

French student arrested after fatally stabbing another

Associated Press

PARIS — A high school student stabbed four other students at his school in western France on Thursday, killing at least one and injuring three others before being arrested, police said.

The student stabbed four people with a knife during a lunch

break at the private Catholic Notre-Dame-de-Toutes-Aides High School in Nantes near France’s Atlantic coast, a national police official told reporters.

Teachers subdued him, and he was later taken in by police, the official said.

Students at the school told

French media at the scene that the suspect had sent an email with unspecified grievances to all students just before the attack took place.

The school confined the students inside for hours while police secured the site and carried out questioning and worried parents waited outside, accord-

ing to French media. Police and military armed forces surrounded the area.

Education Minister Elisabeth Borne and Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau arrived at the school later in the day.

Borne said that she wanted to show “solidarity with victims and the school community.”

VP Vance pours out praise, beer during Ramstein stop

By ZADE VADNAIS

Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Vice President JD Vance toasted U.S. service members with a beer stein in hand during a visit Thursday to this major military hub.

Accompanied by his wife and children, Vance served beers to service members to show his appreciation during a brief refueling layover.

The stop was part of his return from a weeklong trip to Italy and India that began late last week.

The family also toured a

C-130 and spent time speaking with several dozen airmen, soldiers and Space Force guardians while at the installation.

The hangar hosting the event buzzed with excitement as music played and service members chatted while eagerly waiting.

Gen. James Hecker, commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe — Air Forces Africa, greeted the Vance family on the flight line upon their arrival.

When the vice president stepped into view, service members welcomed him with cheers and prepped beers in hand, courtesy of the USO.

Brig. Gen. Adrienne Williams, the 86th Airlift Wing commander, welcomed the vice president and his family with a commemorative beer stein bearing the wing’s insignia. Vance used the stein to offer a toast in honor of the troops.

“To the airmen of this base and all of our troops serving overseas, God bless you guys,” he said. “We know that military service, especially at the level you guys do it, is an incredible sacrifice.”

“We’re grateful to you guys. We’re thankful for what you do, and as a small token of appre-

ciation, I’m going to serve you some beers,” he added.

He then manned a nearby beer tap, topping off drinks and spending the better part of an hour chatting with service members, thanking them personally and posing for photos.

“I was one of the first in line,” said Tech. Sgt. Michael Killebrew, a cyber technician with USAF-AFACRICA’s directorate of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

“He’s been in our shoes before, so he understands what it means to sacrifice for your country,” he said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Khalil is denied release before birth of his child

NY NEW YORK — The wife of detained Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil accused federal immigration officials of purposely denying a request for her husband to attend the birth of their first child in order to make the family suffer.

Noor Abdalla said in a statement that she had to give birth to a baby boy on Monday without her husband by her side. She said ICE had declined a request to grant Khalil temporary release from a detention center in Louisiana so he could travel to New York for the birth.

Khalil is a legal permanent U.S. resident and graduate student who served as spokesperson for campus activists last year during large demonstrations at Columbia against Israel's treatment of Palestinians and the war in Gaza. The federal government contends Khalil is a national security risk.

EPA chief demands that Mexico stop sewage flow

CA SAN DIEGO — The head of the Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday that Mexico must stop the flow of billions of gallons of sewage and toxic chemicals from Tijuana that has polluted the Pacific Ocean off neighboring Southern California, closing beaches and sickening Navy SEALs who train in the water.

Lee Zeldin made the demand during an Earth Day trip to the California-Mexico border, where he toured a plant in San Diego County that treats the sewage as a secondary facility and flew along the frontier to

see the Tijuana River.

Zeldin said that his agency will present Mexico a to-do list of projects to resolve the decades-long environmental crisis, but he stopped short of specifying how the Trump administration would hold Mexico accountable if it does not act.

Alicia Bárcena, Mexico's Environment and Natural Resources secretary, said her country also wants to resolve the problem. She met with Zeldin the previous evening and said they made progress in finding solutions.

"We are here because we want to solve this," Bárcena said in a statement. "Not only so there is no untreated wastewater on Mexican beaches, but in the United States as well."

The 120-mile-long Tijuana River runs near the coast in Mexico and crosses into Southern California, where it flows out to the Pacific.

FAA finds safety concerns in review at Vegas airport

NV LAS VEGAS — A federal review of helicopter safety around some of the busiest U.S. airports, prompted by the deadly midair collision in January between a passenger jet and Army helicopter in Washington, D.C., revealed dangerous flying conditions at the Las Vegas airport.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Tuesday the potential for a collision between air tour helicopters and planes at Harry Reid International Airport led the agency to make immediate changes to flying rules. In the first three weeks after implementation the number of collision alerts for planes dropped 30%.

The FAA said after the collision between an American Airlines jet and an Army Black Hawk helicopter in January, which killed 67 people, that it planned to use artificial intelligence to dig into the millions of reports it collects to assess other places with busy helicopter traffic.

The FAA's acting administrator, Chris Rocheleau, said Las Vegas quickly became a concern once the agency dug into the data because agreements with helicopter operators there didn't clearly define vertical and lateral separation requirements when helicopters were approaching the airport. And air traffic controllers in the tower weren't issuing traffic advisories between returning helicopters and airplanes.

Governor reopens his fire-damaged residence

PA HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro reopened the governor's official residence to the public Tuesday for an Easter egg hunt barely a week after an alleged arsonist's fire tore through one of its wings and said he will begin sleeping there again soon.

"I'm not going to live in fear," Shapiro told reporters after the annual Easter egg hunt held for children on the west lawn of the residence along the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg.

Large waste disposal bins sat on the east side of the residence while workers cleared out the fire-damaged rooms. Plywood covered broken windows on the three-story brick Georgian-style residence built in the 1960s.

Cody Balmer, 38, is accused

of scaling the nearly 7-foot iron security gate, crossing the grounds and smashing windows with a hammer, igniting two glass bottles filled with gasoline and crawling inside before slipping off into the night minutes later. The rooms he allegedly lit ablaze were where Shapiro's family had held a Passover Seder just hours earlier.

Guidance on dealing with ICE draws GOP backlash

WI MADISON — Guidance from the Democratic governor of Wisconsin's administration to state employees about what to do if immigration officials or other federal agents show up at their workplace drew fire Monday from Republicans, who said it was in defiance of the law and President Donald Trump.

The memo from Gov. Tony Evers' administration sent last week comes as Trump's administration has ramped up efforts to deport people living in the country illegally, setting off a string of lawsuits and resistance among Democrats.

Anne Hanson, deputy secretary at Evers' Department of Administration, said in the email to state employees that the guidance was sent after receiving questions about how to respond if Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents or other federal agents show up at their workplace.

The memo advises state employees not to answer questions from agents, not to give them permission to enter nonpublic areas and not to give them access to paper files or computer systems without first talking with an attorney.

— From wire reports

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Butler injured as Rockets even series

Associated Press

HOUSTON — In his playoff debut last weekend, Jalen Green admitted that playoff jitters got the best of him.

"The lights were bright, the crowd was here, the court looked huge," he said. "So I couldn't really get a chance to settle in. My legs was a little shaky."

Things were much different Wednesday night.

Green made eight 3-pointers and scored 38 points to lead the Houston Rockets to a 109-94 victory over the Golden State Warriors in a testy matchup to even the first-round Western Conference series at one game apiece.

"I feel like I did a good job of answering back," he said. "From the beginning my whole mindset from today was to go in and be aggressive and get back to being myself."

The seventh-seeded Warriors

never led and played short-handed for most of the night after Jimmy Butler left with a pelvic contusion after a hard fall on a foul late in the first quarter.

Green, the No. 2 pick in the 2021 draft, rebounded from a flop in his playoff debut, when he scored just seven points on 3-of-15 shooting, with a dominant Game 2.

His eight 3-pointers were two more than the No. 2-seeded Rockets made on 6-of-29 shooting in a 95-85 Game 1 loss.

Alperen Sengun had 17 points and 16 rebounds for the Rockets. Tari Eason had 14 points off the bench.

Coach Ime Udoka raved about the combination of Green and Sengun.

"When they're both rolling, we're hard to beat," he said.

Stephen Curry had 20 points and nine assists for the Warriors and became the 11th player in

NBA history to reach 4,000 career playoff points. He finished the night with 4,017.

"He did a great job," coach Steve Kerr said. "We just didn't have enough tonight."

Houston led by 20 with about 10 minutes left before the Warriors used a 9-0 run, with two 3s from Quinten Post, to get within 11. Jalen Green was called for a flagrant foul on Draymond Green at the end of that run after he flailed an arm into his face.

The Rockets then used an 8-0 spurt, highlighted by a step-back 3 from Green, to extend the lead to 99-80 with 5½ minutes remaining. Draymond Green received a technical foul in that stretch for arguing with officials and Eason received one for throwing a towel in an "unsportsmanlike manner."

The loss of Butler, acquired from Miami in a February

trade, was a huge blow to the Warriors after he had 25 points, seven rebounds and six assists in the series opener.

Kerr said it's too soon to speculate about the availability of Butler for Game 3. He was to have an MRI on Thursday.

Butler was injured when Amen Thompson was pushed into his legs as he jumped to try to grab a rebound. Both players crashed to the court in the collision.

"Hopefully Jimmy will be able to play," he said. "But if not we have to go through our options and put together a plan."

On top of Butler's injury, the Warriors were also hampered by Brandin Podziemski's stomach ailment.

He missed most of the first half dealing with the problem and was scoreless in 14 minutes after scoring 14 points in Game 1.

Mitchell, Cavs hold off Heat; Brown has 36 for Celtics

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Donovan Mitchell delivered when the Cleveland Cavaliers needed him most.

After the Miami Heat seized momentum and appeared on the verge of possibly tying the series, Mitchell took over. He scored Cleveland's next eight points and the Cavaliers held on for a 121-112 victory on Wednesday night for a 2-0 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

"I love the fact the game happened like this. We had to really find a way as a group and then we responded," said Mitchell, who led Cleveland with 30 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter. "I kept trying to find the mismatch and make a play."

It was the 27th career playoff game with at least 30 points for Mitchell, who also had six rebounds and six assists.

"He's a superstar for a rea-

son. It's kind of like there is nothing you can do in the NBA sometimes when someone is hitting tough shots like that," said Miami's Davion Mitchell, who scored 18 points.

The Cavaliers had a 19-point lead with under 3 minutes remaining in the third quarter before the Heat made their run to get within 105-103 lead with 3:11 left.

Mitchell responded on the ensuing trip by driving and making a step-back floater to put the Cavs up by four.

After Jarett Allen made a steal on a bad pass by Miami's Nikola Jovic, Mitchell buried a 3-pointer to give momentum back to the Cavaliers, along with some breathing room.

"I'm proud of the guys for holding our composure. It helps when you have Donovan Mitchell. It was one of those superstar takes over games," coach Kenny Atkinson said.

The top-seeded Cavaliers set an NBA playoff record with 11 3-pointers in the second quarter and had 22 for the game, tied for sixth most. Evan Mobley had 20 points and Darius Garland 19 for Cleveland.

Tyler Herro scored 33 points for Miami, which hosts Game 3 on Saturday afternoon.

"We lost the game. I don't think there are any moral victories, to be honest. We can't have lapses where we're not fully engaged," Herro said. "We've got to get that cleaned up or we'll be down 3-0."

Celtics 109, Magic 100: Jaylen Brown wanted Boston coach Joe Mazzulla to know something ahead of Boston's Game 2 against Orlando.

"He came in saying he was going to do everything it takes to win," Mazzulla said.

Brown came through on that promise. And his Celtics teammates followed his lead.

Brown had 36 points, 10 rebounds and five assists, Kristaps Porzingis returned to the game after getting a bloody gash to the forehead and finished with 20 points.

Boston took a 2-0 series lead while playing without Tatum, who has a bone bruise in his right wrist and missed a playoff game for the first time in his career.

"Obviously, JT is the offensive leader, and we play off of him," Brown said. "But any given night I can rise to the occasion."

Boston led by 15 points in the second half, then held off a late push by Orlando. The Celtics hit 12 3-pointers and went 25 of 33 from the free-throw line. Derrick White and Brown had 17 of Boston's 28 points in the final period; White finished with 17.

"He was leading us on both ends," Porzingis said of Brown. "He was being JB."

Seguin lifts Stars over Avs in overtime

Associated Press

DENVER — Tyler Seguin scored at 5:31 of overtime after Dallas killed a late double-minor penalty, and the Stars beat Colorado 2-1 in Game 3 on Wednesday night in a contest that featured the return of Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog.

Dallas took a 2-1 lead in the first-round series with its second straight overtime victory. The Stars have led for only 1:02 in regulation so far.

Game 4 is Saturday night in Denver.

Seguin knocked the puck past Mackenzie Blackwood off a feed from Mason Marchment. It was Marchment who was sent off for four minutes in the final minute of regulation for a high-stick that caught Brock Nelson in the face.

"We did a lot of really good things," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "Our penalty killing has been one of the best in the

league the last three years. We felt confident into the overtime that we could get the job done. And if we did, I think there was a good feeling that we were going to win the game.

"Knowing Mason and how he was feeling about that penalty, you couldn't have written a better script for how it ended."

Seguin had his second career OT playoff goal. His first was in 2012 with Boston.

"Good feeling," Seguin said. "There's so much more tonight than that goal. It's the penalty kill, it's the details of the game of what the guys did. ... I was just the beneficiary of it. Collectively, just a great road win by the guys."

Stars defenseman Esa Lindell made a key play in overtime when he deflected a shot by Artturi Lehkonen down low.

Jamie Benn tied it midway through the third period for Dallas. Jake Oettinger stopped 27 shots.

Valeri Nichushkin scored in the first period for Colorado, and Blackwood made 26 saves.

The late score spoiled the return of Landeskog, who was greeted with cheers and chants by the amped-up crowd in his first NHL appearance since June 26, 2022, when he and the Avalanche beat Tampa Bay to capture the Stanley Cup. Landeskog has been sidelined because of a chronically injured right knee.

It was 1,032 days since his last Avalanche game. He became the fifth player in NHL history — a minimum of 700 games played — to return to his team after 1,000 or more days without a contest, according to NHL Stats.

It was an emotional lead-up to the game for Landeskog, too. There were the ovations by the crowd, and chants of "Landy, Landy, Landy." There were signs all over the arena, including one held up by his kids that

read, "So proud of you Daddy!"

"That was as close as I got to losing it during warmup, when I looked over at that and seeing their big, smiling faces," Landeskog said about his family. "They've probably been thinking that I've been lying this whole time that I play hockey."

"They were 1 and 2 when I last played and now they're 5 and 4. They're growing up. We've got another one on the way coming this summer. It just puts it in perspective how much time has passed. It's very special."

Landeskog played more than 13 minutes and had a team-leading six hits.

"Felt great in all areas tonight in terms of being back," Landeskog said. "Very special night regardless of the outcome."

The Avalanche finished 0-for-6 on the power play. Asked what needed to better with the skater advantage, Avalanche coach Jared Bednar simply said, "everything."

Thompson dazzles late as Caps go up 2-0 on Canadiens

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Connor McMichael and Dylan Strome scored a minute apart early in the second period, Logan Thompson made some spectacular stops among his 25 saves and the Washington Capitals beat the Montreal Canadiens 3-1 on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the teams' best-of-seven first-round series.

Thompson was at his best in the third, notably robbing Josh Anderson of what would have been the tying goal on a 2-on-0 breakaway with 10:59 left, then later getting his stick on a deflection by Christian Dvorak. Fans chanted "L-T! L-T!" and gave the goaltender a standing ovation in honor of his performance in just his second game back from injury.

"He shut the door when we

needed it most," Strome said. "He was unbelievable, especially in the last five minutes."

Until that point, Thompson did not have much work to do as his teammates outshot Montreal 18-8 in the second when Washington tilted the ice toward Sam Montembeault. McMichael added his second into an empty net with 1.1 seconds left.

McMichael and Strome turned the tide in favor of the Capitals, who after an uneven start looked every bit like the top team in the Eastern Conference and one of the best in the NHL this season. They controlled the puck for long stretches and got to the middle of the ice in front of Montembeault easily and with little resistance from a smaller and less experienced opponent.

Montembeault, like in Game 1, was arguably the Canadiens' best player, turning aside 29 of the 31 shots he faced, including Anthony Beauvillier on a quality scoring chance in the first and Nic Dowd on a shorthanded odd-man rush in the second. Cracking him twice allowed Washington to take control of the series.

"It was a tight game, but, yeah, a huge win," Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin said. "They play hard, we play hard. It's the playoffs. All the small details gonna count."

Kings 6, Oilers 2: Adrian Kempe had two third-period goals and two assists, captain Anze Kopitar added a goal and three assists, and host Los Angeles routed Edmonton to seize a 2-0 lead in their first-round series.

Quinton Byfield and Andrei Kuzmenko scored for the second straight game, and Brandt Clarke scored his first playoff goal to begin an overwhelming performance by second-seeded Los Angeles.

The Kings blew a four-goal lead before winning Game 1, and they let a three-goal lead slip to 3-2 early in the third period of Game 2 before seizing control with three goals in less than five minutes while chasing goalie Stuart Skinner.

Game 3 is Friday night in Edmonton.

Leon Draisaitl and Viktor Arvidsson scored for the Oilers, but the defending Western Conference champions' endemic defensive struggles couldn't be covered up by the brilliance of Draisaitl and Connor McDavid, who was held scoreless.

Mets top Phillies in 10, complete sweep

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Juan Soto threw out Nick Castellanos at the plate to prevent the go-ahead run in the eighth inning, and Starling Marte capped a two-run 10th inning with a walk-off single as the New York Mets beat the Philadelphia Phillies 4-3 on Wednesday to complete a three-game sweep that extended their winning streak to seven games.

New York went 7-0 on its second-longest unbeaten homestand behind a 10-0 run against the Phillies, Braves and Marlins in April 2015. The Mets are 12-1 at Citi Field and opened a five-game lead over their NL East rival Phillies.

With the game tied 2-2, Castellanos tried to score from second on Max Kepler's two-out single to right. Soto made a one-hop throw to rookie catcher Hayden Senger that was slightly to the first-base side. Senger snagged the ball, lunged across the plate and tagged Castellanos, who slid feet first.

Phillies manager Rob Thomson tried to call for a video review, but plate umpire Mark Wenger appeared to decide Thomson waited past the 15-second limit.

Castellanos hit a go-ahead single in the 10th off Edwin Díaz, who left with a left hip cramp, and Max Kranick (2-0) escaped a one-out, bases-loaded jam by retiring Alec Bohm and Kepler.

Automatic runner Francisco Lindor advanced to third on Soto's groundout off Jordan Romano (0-1) starting the bottom half and Pete Alonso doubled for his NL-best 26th RBI.

Brandon Nimmo was intentionally walked, Mark Vientos struck out and Marte singled into short center for his 12th walk-off RBI.

Braves 4, Cardinals 1: Eli White hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the eighth inning as Atlanta beat visiting St. Louis to win the three-game series.

JoJo Romero (1-3) gave up singles to Matt Olson and Ozzie Albies before White went deep to left field off Ryan Fernandez. White was making only his sixth start of the season, including his fourth in left field.

Tigers 6, Padres 0: Reese Olson allowed two hits in $7\frac{2}{3}$ scoreless innings as host Detroit defeated San Diego to win the three-game series.

Justyn-Henry Malloy homered and doubled for the Tigers, who took two of three from the Padres to improve to 9-4 at home. Detroit has won six of its first eight series this season for the first time since 2015.

Olson gave up two singles — both to former Tiger Jose Iglesias — and walked one batter while striking out seven.

Reds 5, Marlins 2: Austin Wynns homered, doubled and singled, Brady Singer struck out eight in six strong innings and Cincinnati won at Miami.

Wynns hit a solo shot off Sandy Alcántara (2-2) in the third. The catcher has nine hits in his last 11 plate appearances, including two homers. He was a triple shy of the cycle after driving in a run with a double in the ninth.

Yankees 5, Guardians 1: Carlos Rodón pitched seven strong innings, Paul Goldschmidt drove in two runs and Aaron Judge raised his major league-leading batting average to .415 as New York won at Cleveland to avoid a series sweep.

Rodón (3-3) allowed just four hits, struck out five straight in one stretch and kept the Guardians off balance. Fernando Cruz and Luke Weaver pitched an inning each to complete the five-hitter.

Judge and Goldschmidt each drove in a run in the first inning off Luis Ortiz (2-3) as the Yankees took the finale of the three-game set. New York hasn't been swept in a series of at least three games in Cleveland since 1970.

Judge has reached base in 21 straight games. The superstar

entered the game leading the majors in batting average, hits and on-base percentage.

Cubs 7, Dodgers 6: Pete Crow-Armstrong homered and drove in four runs, and Chicago topped visiting Los Angeles.

Dansby Swanson had two hits and two RBIs as NL Central-leading Chicago improved to 4-1 on an eight-game homestand.

Mariners 8, Red Sox 5: Right-hander Emerson Hancock struck out a career-high seven batters and J.P. Crawford had four RBIs to help Seattle win at Boston.

Hancock (1-1) allowed two runs on five hits with two walks, lowering his ERA from 12.71 to 7.71. Andrés Muñoz, who entered the game leading the American League in saves, pitched a scoreless ninth for his eighth save of the season.

Nationals 4, Orioles 3: Luis Garcia Jr.'s sacrifice fly to deep center plated Alex Call with the go-ahead run in the bottom of the eighth, James Wood led off the game with his eighth homer and Washington beat visiting Baltimore.

Wood drove the fifth pitch of the game by Orioles starter Tomoyuki Sugano 431 feet over the right-center field wall and Josh Bell added a two-run shot as the Nationals raced out to a 3-0 lead on three hits in the first inning.

Astros 3, Blue Jays 1: Christian Walker homered in a three-run second, Ryan Gusto pitched well into the sixth and host Houston beat Toronto to sweep the three-game series.

Walker led off the second with a home run to left off Bowden Francis (2-3), Yainer Diaz tripled and scored on Zach Denzenzo's RBI single and Yordan Alvarez capped the scoring with a sacrifice fly.

Twins 6, White Sox 3: Byron Buxton and Trevor Larnach homered to help host Minnesota beat last-place Chicago.

Larnach hit a solo shot in the sixth, his second blast in two games, to make it 4-3. Buxton

hit a two-run homer an inning later as Minnesota won its second straight in the series.

Pirates 3, Angels 0: Oneil Cruz blasted a 463-foot home run to center field — the fourth longest in MLB this season — and Andrew Heaney retired the first 13 batters he faced to help visiting Pittsburgh down Los Angeles.

Heaney (2-1) struck out nine and allowed just one hit in six innings for his first win at Angel Stadium since being traded by Los Angeles in February.

Giants 4, Brewers 2: Wilmer Flores hit a two-run single in the sixth inning to back another strong start by ace Logan Webb as San Francisco beat visiting Milwaukee.

Jung Hoo Lee added three hits to help the Giants improve to 14-2 against right-handed starters this season, tops in the majors.

Athletics 5, Rangers 2: Shea Langeliers had four hits and Nick Kurtz drove in a run with a base hit his first time up in his major-league debut to help the Athletics beat visiting Texas on a night when the Rangers' Joc Pederson ended a 0-for-41 slump with a pinch-hit double.

Lawrence Butler homered — his fourth — to center field leading off the first on a 3-2 pitch from Rangers starter Kumar Rocker (1-3) to ignite a four-run outburst. Tyler Soderstrom doubled and scored on a hit by Langeliers. Kurtz, the fourth pick in last year's draft, made it 3-0 with a two-out single and Gio Urshela added an RBI double.

Rays 7, Diamondbacks 6 (11): Kameron Misner and Yandy Diaz had RBI doubles in the 11th inning and Tampa Bay held on to beat host Arizona, overcoming Corbin Carroll's two home runs.

Misner drove in Chandler Simpson with a double off Drey Jameson (0-1), but was thrown out trying for a triple. Jonathan Aranda walked and scored on a two-out double by Díaz.