

DOD review focuses on women in combat

By MATTHEW ADAMS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is conducting a six-month review of women serving in combat positions.

“Our standards for combat arms positions will be elite, uniform, and sex neutral because the weight of a rucksack or a human being doesn’t care if you’re a man or a woman,” Pentagon press secretary Kingsley Wilson said in a statement. “Under [Defense] Secretary [Pete] Hegseth, the Department of War will not compromise standards to satisfy quotas or an ideological agenda — this is common sense.”

Anthony Tata, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, wrote in a memorandum last month that the effort is to determine the “operational effectiveness of ground combat units 10 years after the Department lifted all remaining restrictions on women serving in combat roles.”

Tata requested that the Army and Marine Corps leaders provide data on the readiness, training, performance, casualties and command climate of ground combat units and personnel. The services are to provide points of

contact no later than Jan. 15 to the Institute for Defense Analyses, a nonprofit corporation that assists the government on national security issues.

The review was first reported by NPR.

Congress received the memo Tuesday, said an official, who was not authorized to comment publicly on the matter and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

“Contrary to the misguided beliefs of this administration, women have always made our military stronger and are more qualified to serve in their roles than Pete Hegseth is to serve as Secretary of Defense,” Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a combat veteran who served in that state’s Army National Guard, said in a statement. “This shadowy review effort from [the Defense Department] is clearly intended to shrink the number of women who bravely serve in combat roles, which would be devastating to our military readiness. There is no U.S. military as we know it without the incredible women who have earned their places in their units.”

Hegseth, a 45-year-old Army National Guard veteran and former Fox News TV host, drew fierce criticism leading up to his confir-

mation hearing for saying women have a place in the military but not in ground-based combat positions in special operations, artillery, infantry and armor units.

“I’m straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles,” he argued on a podcast in November 2024. “It hasn’t made us more effective, hasn’t made us more lethal, has made fighting more complicated.”

Before senators in January, Hegseth denied he ever disparaged women and said his concern was with what he believes are slipping standards and gender quotas. He said he would conduct a review of the requirements for combat positions if confirmed.

“In ways direct and indirect, overt and subtle, standards have been changed inside infantry training units, [Army] Ranger school, infantry battalions to ensure that commanders meet quotas to have a certain number of female officers or female enlisted,” Hegseth said during his confirmation.

Today, thousands of women serve in Army infantry, armor and artillery jobs, hundreds are in combat roles in the Marines and dozens are in special operations positions across the military.

Lawmakers: US troops not anticipated in Venezuela

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers who attended classified briefings with Trump administration officials on Wednesday said they do not expect to see troops on the ground in Venezuela though the deployment of troops in the region will continue indefinitely.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., described the U.S. capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro as a one-off military operation and said the closed-door meetings with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Secretary of State Marco Rubio did not indicate further troop involvement.

“We don’t anticipate boots on the ground,” Johnson said. “That is not the administration’s objective, it is not their expectation and I think that sentiment is shared by everybody in the auditorium today. We don’t anticipate that’s going to be necessary.”

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., also said it is

unlikely to see troops deployed to Venezuela. Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., said there were no boots on the ground “right now” but the U.S. has contingency plans around the world “just in case something does happen.”

President Donald Trump has said he is prepared to send American service members into Venezuela if interim President Delcy Rodríguez stops cooperating with the U.S. and threatened a second strike “if they don’t behave.”

About 15,000 troops and a dozen warships are deployed in the Caribbean, and lawmakers on Wednesday said administration officials did not give any indication on how long they will be there. Hegseth told reporters after a briefing with senators that “leverage” provided by the American military, including the seizure Wednesday of two oil tankers as part of the administration’s blockade of Venezuelan oil exports, will continue to be used.

“Our military is prepared to continue this,”

he said. “We are an administration of action to advance our interests and that is on full display.”

He dismissed questions about how much the military activity around Venezuela will cost taxpayers, arguing that such questions were rarely asked when the military was operating in regions such as the Middle East.

Senators seeking to claw back Congress’ authority to declare war said they were alarmed by the escalating campaign in South America and passed a measure requiring congressional approval for any follow-up hostilities against Venezuela.

Democrats and five Republicans voted to advance the war powers resolution on a 52-47 vote and ensure a later vote for final passage, The Associated Press reported Thursday. It has virtually no chance of becoming law because Trump would have to sign it if it were to pass the House. Still, it was a gesture that showed unease among some Republicans.

Poll: Most in US oppose a potential Greenland takeover

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Americans overwhelmingly oppose a possible U.S. military takeover of Greenland, according to a new poll.

Respondents in the YouGov survey conducted Wednesday also had little enthusiasm for the idea of a U.S. purchase of the Danish island territory in the north Atlantic Ocean.

Nearly three-quarters of those polled, 73%, said they're against using force to take over the island, with a majority of both Republicans and Democrats opposed to the idea. Only 8% said they favor using the U.S. military to seize the island.

Opinions on whether the United States should buy Greenland were more muddled, with divisions along party lines.

While 45% overall of those

polled opposed an acquisition, Democratic respondents were far less open to the idea than Republicans. Results among the former were 75% against, whereas only 14% of the latter rejected the idea.

Overall, 28% of those polled expressed approval of an American purchase of the island, with 51% of Republicans onboard, compared with 10% of Democrats. Meanwhile, 27% were undecided.

President Donald Trump's push to take control of Greenland has rattled NATO ally Denmark and other members of the bloc.

White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt told reporters Wednesday that the idea of purchasing the territory is being discussed by Trump and his national security team.

Alarms have been raised domestically, with a number of lawmakers speaking out against the notion.

"When Denmark and Greenland make it clear that Greenland is not for sale, the United States must honor its treaty obligations," Sens. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., said in a joint statement Tuesday.

Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said Wednesday that the way to strengthen the American position in the Arctic is through bolstering alliances already in place.

"Threats and intimidation by U.S. officials over American ownership of Greenland are as unseemly as they are counterproductive," McConnell said in a statement.

President seeks \$1.5T for defense in 2027

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Wednesday proposed setting U.S. military spending at \$1.5 trillion in 2027, citing "troubled and dangerous times."

Trump called for the massive surge in spending days after he ordered a U.S. military operation to capture Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and spirit him out of the country to face drug trafficking charges in the United States. U.S. forces continue to mass in the Caribbean Sea. The 2026 military budget is set at \$901 billion.

"This will allow us to build the 'Dream Military' that we have long been entitled to and, more importantly, that will keep us SAFE and SECURE, regardless of foe," Trump said in a posting on Truth Social.

The military just received a boost of \$175 billion in the GOP's "big, beautiful bill" that Trump signed into law last year.

Insisting on more funding for the Pentagon is almost certain to run into resistance from Democrats who work to maintain parity between changes in defense and non-defense spending. But it's also sure to draw objections from the GOP's deficit hawks who don't want larger military spending.

But Trump said he feels comfortable surging spending on the military because of increased revenue created by his administration through tariffs imposed since his return to office. The U.S. government collected gross revenues of \$288.5 billion last year from tariffs and other excise taxes, up from \$98.3 billion in 2024, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center.

Deal could lead to 100-year-old B-52s

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

Boeing received a \$2 billion contract last month to start work on extending the life of 60-year-old U.S. Air Force B-52H Stratofortress bombers into the 2060s.

The program to upgrade all 76 B-52Hs is expected to cost \$48.6 billion. The Air Force will redesignate the bombers as B-52J.

The \$2 billion contract awarded on Dec. 23 is to upgrade two aircraft with new engines, avionics and other systems, which can be tested before the rest of the planes are converted.

Since entering service with the Air Force in 1955, the B-52 has been powered by eight

TF-33 Pratt & Whitney turbofan engines. Pratt & Whitney has said it could no longer support maintenance on the engines after 2030.

Under the Commercial Engine Replacement Program, the Air Force sought new powerplants already used in civilian aircraft that could be converted to use in the B-52.

The winning plan calls for eight Rolls-Royce F-130 engines used in the Gulfstream G650 business jet and in the military variants of the light jet transport, the C-37.

The plan would also upgrade brakes and wheels, improve avionics and communications and convert some remaining analog dials in the bombers' cockpit to digital displays.

The upgrade is expected to keep the B-52H — delivered in 1961 and 1962 — flying as late as the 2060s. The Air Force said some planes could surpass 100 years in service.

The Air Force wants to keep the B-52 because it can carry over 70,000 pounds of weaponry more than 8,600 miles without refueling.

The Air Force plans to retire its B-1 Lancer and B-2 Spirit bombers by the end of the decade while it receives about 100 Northrop Grumman B-21 Raider stealth bombers.

The first B-52 flew in 1952 and was delivered to the Air Force in 1955. The Air Force received 755 B-52s in total, with the last models — the B-52H — delivered in 1961 and 1962.

US will exit 66 international organizations

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration will withdraw from dozens of international organizations, including the U.N.'s population agency and the U.N. treaty that establishes international climate negotiations, as the U.S. further retreats from global cooperation.

President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed an executive order suspending U.S. support for 66 organizations, agencies, and commissions, following his administration's review of participation in and funding for all international organizations, including those affiliated with the United Nations, according to a White House release.

Many of the targets are U.N.-

related agencies, commissions and advisory panels that focus on climate, labor, migration and other issues the Trump administration has categorized as catering to diversity and "woke" initiatives. Other non-U.N. organizations on the list include the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

"The Trump Administration has found these institutions to be redundant in their scope, mismanaged, unnecessary, wasteful, poorly run, captured by the interests of actors advancing their own agendas contrary to our own, or a threat to our nation's sovereignty, freedoms, and general prosperity,"

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

Trump's decision to withdraw from organizations that foster cooperation among nations to address global challenges comes as his administration has launched military efforts or issued threats that have rattled allies and adversaries alike, including capturing autocratic Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and indicating an intention to take over Greenland.

The administration previously suspended support for agencies like the World Health Organization, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees known as UNRWA, the U.N. Human Rights Council and the U.N. cultural agency UNESCO. It has taken a larger, à la carte approach to paying dues to the

world body, picking which operations and agencies it believes align with Trump's agenda and those that no longer serve U.S. interests.

"I think what we're seeing is the crystallization of the U.S. approach to multilateralism, which is 'my way or the highway,'" said Daniel Forti, head of U.N. affairs at the International Crisis Group. "It's a very clear vision of wanting international cooperation on Washington's own terms."

It has marked a major shift from how previous administrations — both Republican and Democratic — have dealt with the U.N., and it has forced the world body, already undergoing its own internal reckoning, to respond with a series of staffing and program cuts.

Fla. to call special session for new congressional districts

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Wednesday he plans to call a special session in April for the Republican-dominated legislature to draw new congressional districts, joining a redistricting arms race among states that have redrawn districts mid-decade.

Even though Florida's 2026 legislative session starts next week, DeSantis said he wanted to wait for a possible ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court on a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. The ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais* could determine whether Section 2, a part of the Voting Rights Act that bars discrimination in voting systems, is constitutional. The governor said "at least one or two" districts in Florida could be affected by the high court's ruling.

"I don't think it's a question of if they're going to rule. It's a question of what the scope is going to be," DeSantis said at a

news conference in Steinhatchee, Fla. "So, we're getting out ahead of that."

Currently, 20 of Florida's 28 congressional seats are held by Republicans.

Congressional districts in Florida that are redrawn to favor Republicans could carry big consequences for President Donald Trump's plan to reshape congressional districts in GOP-led states, which could give Republicans a shot at winning additional seats in the midterm elections and retaining control of the closely divided U.S. House.

Nationwide, the unusual mid-decade redistricting battle has so far resulted in a total of nine more seats Republicans believe they can win in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio — and a total of six more seats Democrats expect to win in California and Utah, putting Republicans up by three. But the redrawn districts are being litigated in some states.

2 shot and killed outside church in Salt Lake City

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Two people were killed and six others injured in a shooting outside a Salt Lake City church Wednesday night while mourners were attending a memorial service inside, police said.

The shooting took place in the back parking lot of a house of worship for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Utah-based faith known widely as the Mormon church.

Authorities said no suspect was in custody Wednesday.

All the victims were adults. At least three of the injured were in critical condition, police said.

Police said they do not believe the shooter had any animus toward a particular faith. They also don't think the shooting was random.

"We don't believe this was a targeted attack against a religion or anything like that," Salt Lake City Police Chief Brian Redd said.

The red brick church in the northwest Salt Lake City neighborhood mostly serves Tongan congregants and holds regular worship services in their native tongue, according to its website.

Upon hearing gunshots, residents from a low-income housing complex next to the church flooded outside to help victims and console dozens of people who had been attending a funeral for a person who was not identified.

Brennan McIntire said he and his wife, Kenna, heard several loud gunshots from their apartment next to the church parking lot while watching TV. He jumped off the couch and ran outside in flip-flops to see what happened.

"As soon as I came over, I see someone on the ground," he said.

Kenna McIntire was rattled at the sight of first responders lifting an unconscious woman into an ambulance while people huddled around and sobbed.

Minneapolis on edge after fatal shooting

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis was on edge Thursday following the fatal shooting of a woman by a federal officer taking part in the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown, with protesters venting their outrage, the governor demanding that the state take part in the investigation and schools canceling classes as a precaution.

State and local officials demanded that the immigration agents leave Minnesota after the unidentified Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot 37-year-old mother of three Renee Good in the head on Wednesday. But Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said agents won't be going anywhere.

The Department of Homeland Security has deployed more than 2,000 officers to the area in what it says is its largest immigration enforcement operation ever. Noem said more than 1,500 people have already been arrested.

Dozens of protesters gathered Thursday outside of a federal building on the edge of Minneapolis that is serving as a major base for the immigration crackdown. They shouted "No More ICE," "Go Home Nazis," and other slogans as Border Patrol officers pushed them back from the gate, doused them with pepper spray and fired tear gas.

Gregory Bovino, a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol official who has been the face of the crackdowns in other cities, walked along the long line of officers, looking at the crowd as protesters yelled at him, including a man who shouted, "Border Patrol should be along the border!"

The anti-immigration enforcement protests weren't confined to Minneapolis, as demonstrations also took place or were expected to Thursday in New York City, Seattle, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Antonio, New Orleans and Chicago. Protests were also scheduled for later this week in Arizona, North Car-

olina, and New Hampshire.

Bystanders captured video of Good's killing in a residential neighborhood south of downtown, and hundreds of people turned up for a Wednesday night vigil to mourn her.

The videos of the shooting show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The Honda Pilot begins to pull forward, and a different ICE officer standing in front of it pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him.

It isn't clear from the videos if the vehicle makes contact with the officer, and there is no indication of whether the woman had interactions with ICE agents earlier. After the shooting the SUV speeds into two cars parked on a curb before crashing to a stop.

In another recording made afterward, a woman who identifies Good as her spouse is seen

crying near the vehicle. The woman, who is not identified, says the couple recently arrived in Minnesota and that they had a child.

Noem called the incident an "act of domestic terrorism" against ICE officers, saying the driver "attempted to run them over and rammed them with her vehicle. An officer of ours acted quickly and defensively, shot, to protect himself and the people around him."

Minnesota authorities had expected to work with the FBI on the shooting investigation. But the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension said Thursday that the U.S. attorney's office changed course Wednesday and barred it from taking part.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Thursday demanded that the state be allowed to take part, as it would be the only way the public could be confident in its findings, noting it would be "very, very difficult for Minnesotans" to accept that an investigation that excludes the state could be fair.

New guidelines: Choose protein over processed foods

Associated Press

Americans should eat more whole foods and protein, fewer highly processed foods and less added sugar, according to the latest edition of federal nutrition advice released Wednesday by the Trump administration.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins issued the 2025-30 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which offer updated recommendations for a healthy diet and provide the foundation for federal nutrition programs and policies. They come as Kennedy has for months stressed overhauling the U.S. food supply as part of his Make America Healthy Again agenda.

"My message is clear: Eat real food," Kennedy said at a White

House briefing.

The guidelines emphasize consumption of fresh vegetables, whole grains and dairy products, long advised as part of a healthy eating plan. Officials released a new graphic depicting an inverted version of the long-abandoned food pyramid, with protein, dairy, healthy fats and fruits and vegetables at the top and whole grains at the bottom.

But they also take a new stance on "highly processed" foods, and refined carbohydrates, urging consumers to avoid "packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat or other foods that are salty or sweet, such as chips, cookies and candy." That's a different term for ultraprocessed foods, the tasty, energy-dense products

that make up more than half the calories in the U.S. diet and have been linked to chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity.

The new guidance backs away from revoking long-standing advice to limit saturated fats, despite signals from Kennedy and Food and Drug Commissioner Marty Makary that the administration would push for more consumption of animal fats to end the "war" on saturated fats.

Instead, the document suggests that Americans should choose whole-food sources of saturated fat — such as meat, whole-fat dairy or avocados — while continuing to limit saturated fat consumption to no more than 10% of daily calories. The guidance says "other options can include butter or beef tallow,"

despite previous recommendations to avoid those fats.

The dietary guidelines, required by law to be updated every five years, provide a template for a healthy diet. But in a country where more than half of adults have a diet-related chronic disease, few Americans actually follow the guidance, research shows.

The new recommendations drew praise from some prominent nutrition and medical experts.

"There should be broad agreement that eating more whole foods and reducing highly processed carbohydrates is a major advance in how we approach diet and health," said Dr. David Kessler, a former FDA commissioner.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Coast Guard rescues 9 from grounded boat

AK ANCHORAGE — Nine crew members were hoisted to a helicopter off a commercial crab boat amid near gale force winds, strong downward drafts from a nearby cliff and rough seas after the fishing vessel grounded on an Alaska island in the Bering Sea.

The Coast Guard said there were no injuries to the crew members of the Arctic Sea, a 134-foot boat owned by the Coastal Villages Region Fund and fishing for tanner crab.

The ship grounded Monday on the northern shore of Saint George Island, the southernmost of the small Pribilofs islands group with fewer than 100 residents, predominantly Aleuts. The islands are about 750 miles west of Anchorage.

The vessel came to a stop near a cliff face that rose hundreds of feet above the water, Lt. Cmdr. Conor Regan and Lt. Cmd. Josh Womboldt, the pilots of the rescue helicopter, said in a statement to The Associated Press. The pilots positioned the MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter about 50 feet above the Arctic Sea and hovered in the rough conditions to conduct the rescue.

A private company has been contracted to oversee salvage operations of the Arctic Sea, the Coast Guard said.

Hotel apologizes for canceling agents' rooms

MN LAKEVILLE — A Minnesota hotel that wouldn't allow federal immigration agents to stay there this month is apologizing and saying the refusal violated its

own policies. The Department of Homeland Security had accused the global Hilton hotel chain of a "coordinated" effort to refuse service to its employees.

Hilton and local operators of the Hampton Inn Lakeville property released statements within hours apologizing and said the messages refusing to serve agents who were focused on immigration enforcement didn't reflect their policies.

In a social media post, DHS posted screenshots of a message sent last Friday from a Hilton email address saying that immigration agents would not be allowed to stay at the hotel about 20 miles south of Minneapolis, and that their reservation was canceled.

Hampton Inn locations are under the Hilton brand, but a Hilton representative said the property is independently operated.

"We have been in direct contact with the hotel, and they have apologized for the actions of their team, which was not in keeping with their policies," the statement said.

Everpeak Hospitality, the hotel operators, said in a statement that the cancellation was inconsistent with their policy.

'To Die For' conviction overturn sought by Smart

MA BOSTON — Pamela Smart, who is serving life in prison for orchestrating the murder of her husband by her teenage student in 1990, is seeking to overturn her conviction over what her lawyers claim were several constitutional violations.

The petition for habeas corpus relief was filed Monday in

New York, where she is being held at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women, and, in New Hampshire, where the murder happened.

In their petition, lawyers for the 57-year-old Smart argue that prosecutors misled the jury by providing them with inaccurate transcripts of surreptitiously recorded conversations of Ms. Smart that included words that were not audible on the recordings.

Smart was a 22-year-old high school media coordinator when she began an affair with a 15-year-old boy who later fatally shot her husband, Gregory Smart, in Derry. The shooter was freed in 2015 after serving a 25-year sentence. Although Smart denied knowledge of the plot, she was convicted of being an accomplice to first-degree murder and other crimes and sentenced to life without parole.

The case inspired Joyce Maynard's 1992 book "To Die For" and the 1995 film of the same name, starring Nicole Kidman and Joaquin Phoenix.

Ex-bus aide pleads guilty in assault of 3 students

CO DENVER — A former school bus aide pleaded guilty Monday to assaulting three nonverbal students with autism who were unable to report the abuse.

Kiara Jones, 30, entered guilty pleas to 12 charges under a plea agreement as she was about to go on trial in suburban Denver for abuse that was revealed in 2024 by bus surveillance video, according to prosecutors and court documents.

Jones is represented by lawyers from the public defender's office, which does not comment

to the media on its cases.

The abuse was discovered after Jessica Vestal, the mother of one of the nonverbal students, asked school officials to review the surveillance video to try to explain a series of injuries her son, then 10, suffered after going to school early last year, including bruises all over his body and a black eye.

Jones pleaded guilty to 10 felony counts of third-degree assault of an at-risk child and two misdemeanor counts of child abuse, the office of 18th Judicial District Attorney Amy Padden said.

Trump-themed store set to close after 6 years

PA BENSALAM — A suburban Philadelphia shop selling President Donald Trump-themed merchandise that became a magnet for die-hard supporters announced it's closing its doors, six years after opening.

The Trump Store, which sells hats, flags, T-shirts and other items in hotly politically contested Bucks County, posted on social media that its storefront will be closing at the end of the month.

Owner Mike Domanico said in a phone interview Tuesday that he's closing the store because he's focusing on another business, selling firearm targets and other items at gun shows, and he's semi-retired. But the closure is also an acknowledgment that business has slowed down.

"The store has kind of run its course," he said. "You know, it's been six years and the elections are over. Trump's not gonna be in another election, even though he'll be part of it."

— From wire reports

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Source: Hawks will trade Young to Wizards

Associated Press

Trae Young's tenure in Atlanta is over, with the Hawks agreeing to trade the high-scoring and frequently criticized guard to the Washington Wizards for a package including veteran CJ McCollum, a person with knowledge of the move said Wednesday night.

Corey Kispert is also headed from Washington to Atlanta, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the trade had not received the required league approval. Typically, teams cannot discuss pending trades until they are approved by the league, and the league's trade call had not taken place, the person said.

"I know you all have questions for me that right now I'm not at liberty to talk about or answer," Hawks coach Quin Snyder said, unprompted, at the start of his postgame news conference Wednesday night after Atlanta's win over New Orleans.

NBA reporter Marc Stein was first to disclose that the sides were closing in on a deal, and ESPN first reported that the agreement was in place.

The Wizards held McCollum and Kispert out of their loss at Philadelphia on Wednesday night, and Young was on the bench in street clothes for the Hawks.

Young leaves Atlanta as the Hawks' career leader in assists and 3-pointers. He's sixth on Atlanta's scoring list.

Hawks power forward Mouhamed Gueye said he didn't know during Wednesday's game that the trade news had gone public. He had nothing but high praise afterward for his time with Young.

"That's T.Y. That's Trae Young," Gueye said. "When I first got here, he was one of the first guys that texted me, welcoming me to the city, gave me a lot of advice. Obviously, playing

with Trae, as a big, is like a dream come true. I love him as a guy, I love him as a teammate. ... An Atlanta legend."

Young is 10th in points, 12th in points per game, first in assists and first in assists per game since entering the NBA as the No. 5 pick in the 2018 draft.

He is one of five players to rank in the top 10 in both points and assists since he entered the league; the others are Denver's Nikola Jokic, the Los Angeles Lakers' Luka Doncic, the Los Angeles Clippers' James Harden and Phoenix's Devin Booker.

Jokic has won a championship and is a three-time MVP. Doncic is considered an MVP candidate, Harden is a member of the 75th anniversary team and Booker is a two-time Olympic gold medalist.

Young doesn't get the level of respect as those players. He's a four-time All-Star — two of those nods coming through voting, two of them coming when he was

added as an injury replacement.

But the Hawks, this season anyway, have been better without Young.

Atlanta was 2-8 this season when Young played, but is 16-13 without him. Over his career, the Hawks won 49% of their games when Young wasn't in the lineup — as opposed to 45% when he played.

He has a player option for about \$49 million for next season and is eligible for a three-year extension with Washington.

McCollum averaged 18.8 points in 35 games with the Wizards this season and is a 19.6-point scorer for his career. Atlanta will become his fourth team; he also played for Portland and New Orleans.

Kispert has been a backup for the bulk of his five NBA seasons, all with Washington. He's averaged 10.9 points for his career while shooting 38% from 3-point range.

Dolphins fire coach McDaniel after missing playoffs again

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The Miami Dolphins fired coach Mike McDaniel on Thursday following a 7-10 season in which they missed the playoffs for the second straight year. The decision ends McDaniel's four-year tenure in Miami, a period defined by soaring expectations that ultimately went unfulfilled.

Miami went 35-33 under McDaniel, reaching the playoffs in his first two seasons but losing in the first round each time. The Dolphins missed the postseason in 2024 after being eliminated by the Jets in the regular-season finale. This year, their postseason hopes ended with a loss to Pittsburgh in Week 15, ensuring that their 25-year playoff-win drought — the longest streak in the NFL — would continue.

Miami parted ways with longtime general manager Chris Grier on Oct. 31 and began its

search for a new general manager this week. But a disjointed finish to the season that saw former first-round pick Tua Tagovailoa get benched proved the final straw for Ross, who decided to move on from McDaniel, the quirky, dry-witted wunderkind head coach once viewed as the franchise's future.

"I love Mike and want to thank him for his hard work, commitment and the energy he brought to our organization," Ross said in Thursday's statement. "Mike is an incredibly creative football mind whose passion for the game and his players was evident every day. I wish him and his family the best moving forward."

McDaniel, 42, won 20 of his first 33 games, including a 3-0 start during his first year with wins over Baltimore, Buffalo and New England. He took the Dolphins to the playoffs that season and nearly beat the Bills with

rookie Skylar Thompson starting in place of the concussed Tagovailoa.

His off-the-cuff jokes, idiosyncratic sayings and flashy style were a refreshing deviation from the approach of many other head coaches — but they were also initially met with needed results on the field.

Tagovailoa had credited McDaniel with rebuilding his confidence after former Miami coach Brian Flores tore it down as a young quarterback. Tagovailoa said last year that the constant criticism early in his career left him doubting himself. He was the fifth pick in the 2020 draft and won the starting job, but was benched twice as a rookie and faced uncertainty his second year amid speculation the Dolphins were seeking a trade for Deshaun Watson.

"If you woke up every morning and I told you you suck at what

you did, that you don't belong doing what you do, that you shouldn't be here, that this guy should be here, that you haven't earned this right. ... And then you have somebody else come in and tell you, 'Dude, you are the best fit for us, you are accurate, you are the best.' How would it make you feel listening to one or the other?" Tagovailoa said in a 2024 interview on "The Dan LeBatard Show."

With McDaniel tailoring Miami's offense to his strengths, Tagovailoa led the NFL's top offense in 2023, throwing for a league-best 4,624 yards and 29 touchdowns. He led the league in 2024 with a 72.9 completion rate.

Since that season, which ended in a 26-7 loss in a frigid wild-card game at Kansas City, the Dolphins have gone 15-19, and appear far from the franchise that just a couple of years ago spoke of contending for a Super Bowl.

Murray, Watson lead Nuggets' rally vs. Celtics

Associated Press

BOSTON — Jamal Murray had 22 points and 17 assists and Peyton Watson scored 30 for the Denver Nuggets, who went on a 14-0 run to rally from a fourth-quarter deficit and pull away to beat the Boston Celtics 114-110 on Wednesday night.

In a game missing its two biggest stars — Denver's three-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic and Boston All-Star Jayson Tatum — the teams played through 26 lead changes and another nine ties before the Nuggets turned a three-point deficit midway through the fourth into a 101-90 lead.

The Celtics trailed 107-95 and cut it to three points in the final seconds, but it was too late.

Jaylen Brown scored 33 and Neemias Queta grabbed a career-high 20 rebounds for Boston, which had won five in a row.

Denver had lost six of its last 10 since opening the season 20-6, losing ground on defending champion Oklahoma City in the Western Conference race. The Nuggets are 3-2 since Jokic went out with a hyperextended left knee. Murray and Christian Braun returned to the starting lineup after sitting out Monday's overtime loss to Philadelphia, the second game of a back-to-back.

Denver trailed 90-87 before scoring 14 straight, getting nine points from Watson and eight from Zeke Nnaji in the fourth.

Raptors 97, Hornets 96: Immanuel Quickley hit a 3-pointer from the top of the key at the buzzer and visiting Toronto rallied from a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat Charlotte.

RJ Barrett finished with 28 points and seven rebounds, while Quickley added 21 points. Scottie Barnes chipped in with 17 points as the Raptors won for the fifth time in six games.

Collin Sexton led the Hornets with 22 points.

LaMelo Ball, who scored 15 points, made a driving left-handed layup with 1.6 seconds left to give Charlotte a 96-94 lead. But

Quickley got free off of a side-inbounds play and drilled his third 3 of the game, drawing a loud collective groan from the home crowd.

Magic 104, Nets 103 (OT): Paolo Banchero banked in a 3-pointer from the top of the key at the overtime buzzer to give visiting Orlando a victory over Brooklyn.

Two nights after falling at Washington, the Magic beat the Nets for the eighth straight time to improve to 21-17.

Banchero scored 30 points to lead Orlando.

Michael Porter Jr. led Brooklyn with 34 points, and Demin had 18.

Trail Blazers 103, Rockets 102: Deni Avdija had a season-high 41 points and host Portland won its fourth straight with a wild victory over Houston.

The Trail Blazers held off the Rockets through most of the second half, but Houston tied it at 84 on a Amen Thompson's free throw with 8:56 left. Shaedon Sharpe's 3-pointer put Portland back in front.

With the Blazers holding a 103-100 lead, Durant made a pair of free throws with 5.9 seconds left. On a Portland inbound, the Rockets were called for a loose ball foul, which coach Ime Udoka successfully challenged, giving Houston the ball.

Pistons 108, Bulls 93: Isaiah Stewart scored a career-high 31 points to help short-handed Detroit beat visiting Chicago.

Ayo Dosunmu had 24 points for the Bulls, who have lost three straight. Nikola Vucevic added 20 points and 16 rebounds, and Matas Buzelis also had 20 points.

Chicago led 77-76 at the end of the third quarter, but the Pistons scored the first seven points of the fourth to go up 83-77.

76ers 131, Wizards 110: Joel Embiid scored 28 points, Paul George added 23 and all of host Philadelphia's starters scored in double-figures as it beat Washington.

Tyrese Maxey contributed 22 points and eight assists for the 76ers, who have won four of five.

Tre Johnson had a team-high 20 points for the Wizards, who played without several key players on the second night of a back-to-back. CJ McCollum (right quad soreness) and Khrist Middleton (right knee injury) were among the Washington players sidelined.

Knicks 123, Clippers 111: Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points, 11 rebounds and a season-high seven assists, Jalen Brunson scored 26 points and host New York snapped its four-game losing streak with a victory over Los Angeles.

Towns bounced back from a quiet game Monday in Detroit, when he took just four shots and had only six points and six turnovers in the Knicks' 121-90 loss that gave them their longest losing streak of the season. This time, the center had 10 points in the fourth quarter to help New York break open the game.

Kawhi Leonard scored 25 points for the Clippers, who lost for just the second time in nine games. James Harden had 23 points and nine assists after sitting out Monday against Golden State because of right shoulder soreness.

Hawks 117, Pelicans 110: Zaccharie Risacher scored 25 points, Jalen Johnson added 19 and seven Atlanta players scored in double figures in a win over visiting New Orleans as the Hawks traded four-time All-Star Trae Young to Washington.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 17 points, Kristaps Porzingis, Luke Kennard and Dyson Daniels added 13 points apiece, and Mouhamed Gueye finished with 10 as Atlanta snapped a two-game skid after losing consecutive games to Toronto on Saturday and Monday.

The Hawks agreed to trade Young, who was listed out for the game due to a quad contusion, to the Wizards for a package includ-

ing veteran CJ McCollum, a person with knowledge of the move told The Associated Press.

Suns 117, Grizzlies 98: Dillon Brooks scored 21 points, fellow former Memphis player Grayson Allen added 19 and visiting Phoenix routed the Grizzlies.

The Suns, who were coming off a 100-97 loss to Houston on Monday night, have won seven of their last nine.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led short-handed Memphis with 19 points, while Cam Spencer, Javon Small and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope finished with 14 points each. The Grizzlies shot 42% and committed 18 turnovers, leading to 25 Phoenix points.

Thunder 129, Jazz 125 (OT): Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 46 points and host Oklahoma City beat Utah in overtime to snap a two-game losing skid.

Lauri Markkanen had 29 points and 13 rebounds for Utah. Keyonte George added 25 points and 11 assists, and Jusuf Nurkic chipped in 15 points and 15 rebounds as the Jazz lost their fifth straight.

Spurs 107, Lakers 91: Keldon Johnson had 27 points, Victor Wembanyama added 16 points and 14 rebounds, and host San Antonio overcame 38 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists from Luka Doncic to beat Los Angeles.

The Spurs moved into second place in the Western Conference despite shooting 4 for 25 on 3-pointers.

Warriors 120, Bucks 113: Stephen Curry had 31 points, highlighted by a step-back 3-pointer with 26 seconds left, and added seven assists and seven rebounds to help host Golden State beat Milwaukee.

Antetokounmpo had 34 points, 10 rebounds and five assists while Kevin Porter Jr. contributed 15 points, nine assists and four rebounds for the Bucks, who couldn't withstand the Warriors' 18 made 3s and a 53-42 rebounding disadvantage.

No. 1 Arizona tops Kansas St., stays perfect

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Brayden Burries scored 28 points, Motiejus Krivas added a career-high 25 and No. 1 Arizona remained unbeaten with a 101-76 win over Kansas State on Wednesday night.

The Wildcats (15-0, 2-0 Big 12) are off to their best start since winning the first 21 games of the 2013-14 season. Arizona won by at least 18 points for the 10th consecutive game, matching a mark Michigan had earlier this season that tied for the longest such run since 2003-04.

Burries had his fifth 20-point game and matched his career high by going 12 for 16 from the field while adding nine rebounds. Krivas was 7 of 10, making 11 of 13 free throws, and had 12 rebounds.

No. 3 Iowa State 70, Baylor 60: Joshua Jefferson had 19 points and 17 rebounds as the visiting Cyclones won their 15th consecutive game to start the season, over Baylor.

Tamin Lipsey scored 24 points on 8-of-12 shooting after early foul trouble, and Killyan Toure had 12 for Iowa State (15-0, 2-0

Big 12). The Cyclones didn't lead until Jefferson's 3-pointer on their final shot before halftime, and stayed ahead after a 14-1 run to begin the second half when six players scored and Jefferson capped it with a fast-break dunk.

No. 4 UConn 103, Providence 98 (OT): Braylon Mullins scored eight of his career-high 24 points in overtime and the visiting Huskies rallied past the Friars for their 11th consecutive victory.

Silas Demary Jr. had 23 points, 15 assists and five steals for UConn (15-1, 5-0 Big East), which trailed by 11 with under three minutes remaining in regulation. But the Huskies went on a 9-0 run and then tied it at 89 on a putback by Tarris Reed Jr. with 13 seconds left.

No. 5 Purdue 81, Washington 73: Braden Smith finished with 23 points and seven assists and made two late free throws to help the host Boilermakers fend off the Huskies' late rally.

Trey Kaufman-Renn added 14 points and 14 rebounds as Purdue won its fifth in a row and matched a school-best start at 14-1 (4-0 Big Ten) for the ninth

time in program history.

No. 9 BYU 104, Arizona State 76: Richie Saunders scored a career-high 31 points and grabbed eight rebounds to lead the host Cougars over the Sun Devils.

Saunders, who averaged 28 points in two wins over Arizona State last season, went 10 of 13 from the field and made six 3-pointers. AJ Dybantsa added 23 points, seven boards and five assists to help BYU (14-1, 2-0 Big 12) win its 11th straight game. Robert Wright III had 27 points.

No. 11 Vanderbilt 96, No. 13 Alabama 90: Tyler Tanner scored a career-high 29 points and the host Commodores remained undefeated by beating the Crimson Tide.

Vanderbilt (15-0, 2-0 Southeastern Conference) extended its best start since winning 16 straight games to open the 2007-08 season. This is only the second time in the program's 124-year history that the Commodores have won their first 15.

No. 15 Arkansas 94, Mississippi 87: Darius Acuff Jr. had 26 points and nine assists, and the visiting Razorbacks got double-figure scoring from five players

in a win over the Rebels.

Arkansas (12-3, 2-0 SEC) used a decisive 14-6 run midway through the second half to build an insurmountable 76-61 lead. The win snapped a three-game losing streak to Ole Miss (8-7, 0-2).

No. 23 Virginia 84, California 60: Malik Thomas scored 20 points and the host Cavaliers beat the Golden Bears in their Atlantic Coast Conference home opener, scoring at least 80 points for the 14th time in 15 games this season.

Johann Grunloh, Thijs De Ridder, Sam Lewis and Ugonna Onyenso each added 12 for Virginia (13-2, 2-1), which assisted on 23 of 30 baskets and dominated the glass with 45-26 edge in rebounding.

Clemson 74, No. 24 SMU 70: RJ Godfrey scored 17 points and the host Tigers held down the Mustangs.

Clemson (13-3) has started 3-0 in the Atlantic Coast Conference for a second consecutive season. And the Tigers did it by corralling one of the highest-scoring teams in the country most of the way.

Stars end 6-game losing streak with win over Capitals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Radek Faksa scored a shorthanded goal, Casey DeSmith made 23 saves and the Dallas Stars ended their losing streak at six games by defeating the Washington Capitals 4-1 on Wednesday night.

Dallas bounced back from a 6-3 drubbing at Carolina 24 hours earlier that included the Hurricanes chasing U.S. Olympic goaltender Jake Oettinger, winning for the first time since Dec. 21.

Faksa put the Stars up 1-0 just over three minutes in with Ilya Lyubushkin in the penalty box for holding, cashing in on his own rebound off Washington netminder Logan Thompson. Early in the second period, Canadian Olympic defenseman Thomas Harley made the play to set up Sam Steel's net-front tap-in past Thompson.

Steel assisted on Wyatt Johnston's goal,

his 24th of the season, with 6:29 left in regulation. Roope Hintz sealed it with an empty-netter with 18.6 seconds remaining.

Canadiens 4, Flames 1: Alexandre Texier had a goal and two assists, Jacob Fowler made 28 saves and host Montreal beat Calgary.

Lane Hutson, Oliver Kapanen and Cole Caufield also scored to help the Canadiens improve to 24-13-6.

Mammoth 3, Senators 1: Lawson Crouse and John Marino scored in a 3:21 span in the first period, Karel Vejmelka made 33 saves and host Utah beat Ottawa to cap a big day for the franchise.

The Mammoth won hours after the NHL announced the team will host the 2027 Winter Classic at the University of Utah's football stadium.

Blackhawks 7, Blues 3: Oliver Moore and Connor Murphy scored during Chicago's four-goal second period, and the host Blackhawks beat St. Louis for their fourth consecutive win.

Moore, Murphy, Louis Crevier and Landon Slaggert each had a goal and an assist as Chicago improved to 2-1-0 against the Blues this season. Spencer Knight made 27 saves and Nick Lardis, Jason Dickinson and Andre Burakovsky also scored.

Sharks 4, Kings 3 (OT): William Eklund scored 3:08 into overtime, Macklin Celebrini had the tying goal and two assists to extend his point streak to 12 games, and visiting San Jose defeated Los Angeles.

Celebrini evened the score at 3 with 1:07 remaining in regulation. He deked his way past Warren Foegele and sent a wrist shot through traffic that beat goalie Darcy Kuemper through the legs for his 24th goal this season. The 19-year-old center has nine goals and 15 assists during his point streak.