

## USS Nimitz in Jamaica on way to US

BY GARY WARNER

*Stars and Stripes*

USS Nimitz arrived Monday at what may be the last foreign port of call for the Navy's longest-serving aircraft carrier.

"Jamaica will serve as the final stop in a multinational goodwill deployment that has taken the carrier throughout South America and the Caribbean," said a statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Jamaica.

The carrier is scheduled to stay in Jamaica until Friday. Barring a change of plans, it will then make the final leg of its planned voyage from Naval Base Kitsap on Washington's Puget Sound to its new homeport at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia.

Along the way, the Nimitz circumnavigated South America and transited Central America, sailing from the Pacific, through the Strait of Magellan into the Atlantic, and north to the Caribbean.

As part of the Southern Seas 2026 exercise, Nimitz took part in joint naval maneuvers and diplomatic visits involving more than a dozen nations, including Chile, Argentina and Brazil.

Nimitz was originally due to arrive in Norfolk in mid-May to begin its planned decommissioning, but its service life has been extended until at least March 2027 to align its departure from the fleet with the arrival of USS John F. Kennedy,

the second Gerald R. Ford-class carrier.

Despite its official goodwill role, the arrival of the Nimitz in the Caribbean spurred speculation that its presence was meant to pressure Cuba, an idea fueled by the Trump administration's decision to file criminal charges against former President Raúl Castro on the day the ship appeared in the region.

Castro and other Cuban officials are accused of ordering the February 1996 downing of two unarmed civilian aircraft carrying four U.S. nationals. The aircraft were affiliated with Brothers to the Rescue, a group that sought to aid Cubans fleeing to the United States.

Plans for the Nimitz's upcoming

return to the United States are still taking shape.

Lt. Cmdr. Peter Pagano, the carrier's spokesman, said that while the ship will go to Norfolk, the air units on board will return to their bases, primarily on the West Coast.

Helicopter Maritime Squadron 73 and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 6 will return to San Diego. Strike Fighter Squadrons 22 and 137 will go home to Naval Air Station Lemoore in California. Electronic Attack Squadron 139 will rejoin the other "Growler" squadrons at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island near Seattle. Fleet Logistics Support Squadron will have the shortest trip — it's based in Norfolk.

## Iran hits Kuwait, US responds in new Gulf attacks

BY LARA KORTE

*Stars and Stripes*

Fighting between the United States and Iran intensified this week in one of the most serious escalations since an April ceasefire, bringing a return to deadly violence and raising fears that the two sides could slip back into open conflict.

Iran launched missiles and drones at U.S. partners in the Persian Gulf on Tuesday and Wednesday, killing at least one person in Kuwait after an attack hit the country's international airport, resulting in a brief suspension of flights.

Kuwait's foreign ministry on Wednesday also reported an unspecified number of injuries and damage to other "vital facilities, including diplomatic missions," but it didn't elaborate further.

Earlier, U.S. Central Com-

mand said two Iranian missiles launched toward Kuwait either fell short or broke apart during flight, while three missiles fired at Bahrain were intercepted by air defenses.

An additional wave of Iranian drones attempting to attack U.S. forces in Kuwait "failed to impact intended targets," CENTCOM said, adding that multiple drones were intercepted and "no American personnel or assets were harmed."

In response, the U.S. carried out what it described as self-defense strikes against an Iranian military ground-control station on Qeshm Island, near the Strait of Hormuz, according to U.S. Central Command.

The attacks further complicated diplomatic efforts to preserve the temporary U.S.-Iran ceasefire that took effect on

April 8.

Iran this week threatened to cut off talks with the U.S. in protest of Israel's expanded offensive against Iran-backed Hezbollah militants.

While Iran insists that its ceasefire agreement with the U.S. includes Lebanon, Israel has continued to pursue military operations, pushing deeper into the country than it has in decades.

The Israeli military said Tuesday that it had established additional positions in southern Lebanon and on Wednesday warned civilians in the southern city of Al-Kharyeb to evacuate.

The U.S.-Iran talks, mediated by regional partners including Pakistan and Qatar, are meant to extend the ceasefire and create space for negotiations on more difficult dis-

putes that remain unresolved.

The U.S. and Iran remain far apart on several critical issues, including Iran's nuclear program and the future of the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has effectively closed since the war started in late February.

The U.S. has set up its own naval blockade on Iran and is currently guiding commercial ships through the strait.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio told Congress on Tuesday that negotiations on Iran's nuclear program could take months and will occur only after Iran reopens the waterway, which is a major sea lane for oil transport.

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump rejected reports that Iran had stopped negotiating with the United States, saying conversations have continued for days.

# VA testing MDMA to help treat veterans

BY LINDA F. HERSEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is launching a clinical trial on the potential benefits of using the hallucinogenic drug MDMA — commonly known as ecstasy — in therapeutic settings to treat post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol addiction in veterans.

The clinical trial, announced last week, will enroll 80 veterans to study the safety and effectiveness of MDMA-assisted therapy to address severe conditions that do not fully respond to standard treatments, according to the VA.

The trial began enrolling participants on May 18, and is actively recruiting, according to [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://ClinicalTrials.gov).

MDMA stands for methylenedioxymethamphetamine. It is a Schedule I drug, which is illegal under federal law for general use outside of medically supervised, structured clinical trials.

The drug stimulates the nervous system and can produce intense feelings of euphoria, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The announcement of a clinical trial for MDMA-assisted therapy follows an executive order by President Donald Trump in April to fast-track evaluation of certain psychedelic drugs for treating mental health conditions.

Titled “Accelerating Medical Treatment for Serious Mental Illness,” the executive order cited the suicide rate among veterans as a reason for advancing studies into these alternative treatments. The rate is more than 1.5 times higher than in the general adult population, ac-

ording to the 2025 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.

The executive order directed the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services to work with the VA and the private sector to increase clinical trial participation in psychedelic therapies.

“Innovative methods are needed to find long-term solutions for these Americans beyond existing prescription medications,” according to the executive order.

For this study — titled “MDMA-Assisted Therapy for Veterans With PTSD and Alcohol Use Disorder” — veterans will be recruited from the VA Providence Healthcare System, in Rhode Island, and the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, in West Haven, Conn.

Participants will undergo a structured, multi-month therapeutic program that includes mental health counseling and the medically supervised delivery of “pharmaceutical-grade MDMA,” according to [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://ClinicalTrials.gov).

The study will compare outcomes between veterans who receive MDMA-assisted therapy with those receiving the same psychotherapy but who are administered an “active placebo.”

Participants will be given MDMA, or the placebo, “in a safe, controlled, clinical setting,” according to the VA.

The VA will coordinate research and share data with the FDA.

The VA is currently involved in 19 other active clinical trials focused on psychedelic therapies for mental health conditions, according to the agency.

# Solo headquarters set for US Space Forces Japan

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — U.S. Space Forces Japan is getting its own headquarters and another 60 guardians over the next year, according to its new commander.

Col. John Patrick took over the organization Wednesday morning from Col. Ryan Laughton during a ceremony at Yokota’s Enlisted Club.

The unit, established in December 2024, is focused on communications, space resilience, navigation and missile defense.

“In the next year, if possible, we will grow to 80 personnel as soon as possible,” Patrick said. The command now consists of 20 Space Force guardians.

Space Force has 116 guardians in units across Japan, 5th Air Force spokeswoman Air Force Capt. Tisha Yates said.

The command has been working from the headquarters of U.S. Forces Japan but will soon move to its building on the

air base, Yates said.

Present at the command ceremony were USFJ commander Lt. Gen. Stephen Jost; 5th Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Joel Carey; Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency president Hiroshi Yamakawa; and Space Operations Wing commander Maj. Gen. Hiroshi Ishii of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force.

Patrick on Tuesday passed command of Space Forces Korea, a position he held since July 2024, to Col. Dorian Hatcher during a ceremony at Osan Air Base, south of Seoul.

There will be an increase in the number of exercises that Space Forces Japan will do with the joint force and with alliance partners and multinational partners, he said at Yokota.

Japan’s Space Operations Wing has about 670 personnel and will be upgraded to a space operations command with around 880 personnel before the end of March 2027, a Japanese air force spokesman said.

# Sigonella food station has variety of on the go options

BY ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Navy junior sailors working in Sicily no longer will have to miss meals because of their work schedules thanks to a food service innovation designed to keep them fueled throughout the day.

A Grab n’ Go food station opened this week at Naval Air Station Sigonella, offering hot and cold meals for sailors whose work commitments may not allow them to eat during regular galley hours, the base said in a statement.

The program targets junior sailors, specifically those ranked

petty officer 3 and below who are receiving free Navy meals, known as rations-in-kind, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 LaToya Farrish, food service officer for NAS Sigonella’s galley.

“We’re just trying to ensure that they are getting a well-balanced meal and not just a granola bar or a bottle of water,” she said.

To that end, the station offers a variety of items, such as breakfast burritos and sandwiches, chicken fingers, burgers, salads, fresh sliced fruit as well as other sides and entrees designed for convenient consumption, Farrish said.

# US eyes broad tariffs after forced labor probe

*Bloomberg News*

WASHINGTON — The United States is proposing tariffs of at least 10% on imports from most major trading partners following an investigation into forced-labor practices, as President Donald Trump seeks to rebuild the sweeping tariff wall struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The 10% rate would apply to imports from Canada, Mexico, the European Union, Taiwan and the United Kingdom, among other places, according to a statement from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Products from other major economies, including China, India, Japan, South Korea, Brazil and Switzerland, would be sub-

ject to a higher 12.5% levy.

Trump has moved to reconstruct his tariff agenda by launching probes under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The recommended duties are a result of that investigation process. The levies won't go into effect immediately and are subject to a public comment and review period before implementation.

"The failure of our most important trading partners to address the importation of goods made with forced labor is unacceptable. This creates a dynamic where American workers are forced to compete globally on an unlevel playing field," U.S. Trade Representative Jamie-Greer said in a statement.

"We will no longer tolerate this disparity."

The move is a major step in Trump's push to reinstate the country-by-country tariffs he imposed during his first year in office before they were deemed unconstitutional.

The move will test the tolerance of economic partners, who have largely restrained from retaliating, opting instead to negotiate deals with the U.S. to lower import taxes and ensure market access.

Written comments are due to be submitted by July 6, and a Section 301 panel is expected to convene public hearings beginning July 7, according to the notice.

Trump's broad trade agenda

suffered a sharp blow in February when the Supreme Court struck down levies he imposed using emergency powers.

The 301 probe into forced-labor practices initially targeted around 60 economies.

Section 301 tariffs are seen as more legally sound and flexible than other powers Trump has eyed, but also more time-consuming.

As a stopgap measure, the president also implemented a 10% global levy under Section 122 of the trade law, though those import taxes expire in July. Greer has said the goal was to complete a series of trade investigations to allow Trump to quickly enact new tariffs after the outgoing measures expire.

## US lowers tariffs on farm and industrial equipment

*Bloomberg News*

The White House announced it will reduce tariffs on imported farm and construction equipment such as harvesters and forklifts, an effort to boost the industrial economy and provide relief for American farmers.

Under a proclamation issued late Monday, those duties would drop to 15% from 25%. Foreign companies could qualify for a lower 10% levy rate if capital equipment contains at least 85% U.S. steel or aluminum, according to a White House fact sheet.

The changes take effect Monday and would run through the end of 2027. The temporary relief will "spur near-term investments that will rebuild the Nation's industrial base," the fact sheet said.

The directive comes as Trump has been courting U.S. farmers, who have been wrestling with soaring fuel and fertilizer prices, and comparatively smaller gains in crop prices. The low-margin environment has intensified with the war in

Iran, further delaying purchases of larger farming equipment.

A monthly report from Purdue University and CME Group on Tuesday showed grower sentiment dropped in May, with an index of farm capital investment falling to the lowest level since September 2024.

Shares of industry leader Deere & Co. were up as much as 5.7% in New York on Tuesday, while tractor maker CNH Industrial NV jumped as much as 10%, the most in more than a year.

Rival AGCO Corp. rose as much as 6.6%. Construction equipment giant Caterpillar Inc. added 4.7%. Shares of Kubota Corp., the Japanese industrial machinery manufacturer, rose as much as 7.9% in Tokyo.

AGCO and CNH appear best positioned to benefit from the administration's decision, "given their relatively higher import exposure of finished goods," Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Christopher Ciolino wrote in a report.

## Order sets voluntary cyber reviews for advanced AI

*CQ-Roll Call*

Developers of frontier artificial intelligence models will have the option to voluntarily submit new technologies for review by federal cybersecurity agencies under a new executive order that comes after President Donald Trump backed away from an expected order last month.

Trump issued the executive order Tuesday morning in a private signing.

It represents the culmination of debate within the administration over the balancing of national cybersecurity concerns and the administration's support for American AI development.

He had been expected to sign the order May 21, but said at a White House event that day he postponed it because he did not support "certain aspects of it," noting that AI development was creating domestic jobs.

"I think it gets in the way of, you know, we're leading China, we're leading everybody. And I

don't want to do anything that's going to get in the way of that lead," he said.

The administration reportedly considered mandatory reviews, an idea that has since been dropped.

The order tasks the Treasury Department, the National Security Agency and the Homeland Security Department's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency with developing benchmarks to determine which models qualify as frontier AI models.

The agencies are then required to develop a voluntary framework so that developers could submit frontier models to the government up to 30 days before their release to "trusted partners."

The order would also allow developers to work with the agencies to "select trusted partners that will have early access to covered frontier models to promote secure innovation and strengthen the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure."

# High court: GOP in Ala. can redraw maps

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled Tuesday night that Alabama Republican leaders may redraw their congressional voting districts to oust a Black Democrat and elect a white Republican.

The court's conservatives, who ruled for Louisiana Republicans in a redistricting dispute, extended that decision to Alabama. The three liberals dissented.

The decision clears the way for the governor and state lawmakers to redraw their congressional voting map with six districts that favor Republicans and one that favors a Democrat.

"Weeks ago, I warned that vacating the District Court's injunction in these cases would 'un-

leash chaos and ... confuse voters,' " Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in dissent. "Yet just as Alabama doubled down on racial discrimination, the Court today doubles down on chaos. Because I choose to defend the rule of law and the right of all Alabamians to participate equally in democracy, I respectfully dissent."

The justices granted an emergency appeal that was backed by the Trump administration and set aside the decision of a three-judge panel in Alabama.

The court in a brief opinion said the three judges should not have blocked Alabama's new map.

"While federal courts should not impose changes close to an election, states are free to decide

for themselves whether last-minute changes to an election are in their best interests," the court said.

Alabama's emergency appeal went to Justice Clarence Thomas, who referred it to the full court.

Those three judges, two of them Trump appointees, ruled that Alabama's state lawmakers discriminated against Black voters, who made up a near majority in the center of the state.

Three years ago, the Supreme Court agreed.

In a 5-4 decision written by Chief Justice John Roberts, the justices upheld the creation of a second district in the center of the state where Black voters had a near majority.

The result then was an Alabama state voting map that favored five Republicans and two Democrats for the House of Representatives.

But last month, in the wake of the Louisiana decision, Alabama's lawmakers went back to court, arguing that the state may return to the voting map with only a single Black majority district.

In his appeal to the Supreme Court, Alabama's Attorney General Steven Marshall argued that the high court's decision in favor of Louisiana "vindicates Alabama's position on the lawfulness" of its earlier voting map. He said the state should not be penalized for "refusing to intentionally discriminate" to favor Black voters.

## Riders at Disneyland exit on their own during breakdown

*The Orange County Register*

Haunted Mansion riders squeezed out of their ride vehicles and helped free other passengers from their doom buggies during a highly unusual attraction evacuation at Disneyland that left former employees and longtime fans shaking their heads in disbelief.

Disneyland cast members evacuated the Haunted Mansion on May 27 after a small electrical malfunction on the track, according to Disneyland officials.

Out of an abundance of caution, Haunted Mansion cast members gave verbal instructions and were deployed to assist guests during the evacuation procedure, according to Disneyland officials.

All guests were safely evacuated from the attraction and no injuries were reported, according to Disneyland officials.

A 30-second video posted to Facebook by Tim McKenny showed Haunted Mansion riders squeezing out of their doom buggies and unlatching the clamshell doors on the ride vehicles to free other passengers during the

emergency evacuation.

"At first, the cast members advised people to remain seated and to wait to be escorted off the ride," McKenny wrote on Facebook. "After about 10 minutes, the message changed, stating that the cast members could no longer assist us."

The video showed Disneyland visitors squeezing past the lapbars on the closed ride vehicles and walking around the Haunted Mansion cemetery set amid moving animatronic figures and props.

"We ask that you hop out of your buggy and find the nearest exit," a Haunted Mansion cast member said over the intercom system inside the attraction. "If you can, there is a latch on the left hand side that you can press down to open the clamshell."

Disneyland's standard evacuation procedure typically involves employees walking along the track to unlock the ride vehicles one by one and escorting riders out of the attraction, according to a former cast member on Reddit.

## DHS head refuses to commit to following US court orders

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin, under intense grilling at a Senate hearing Tuesday, refused to commit to abiding by federal court orders.

His refusal to commit with court orders came during a testy exchange with Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn. Murphy quoted Chief U.S. District Judge Patrick Schiltz in Minnesota — a Republican appointee — who said U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement had violated nearly 100 court orders and had "likely violated more court orders in January 2026 than some federal agencies have violated in their entire existence."

When Murphy asked Mullin to commit to complying with court orders in the future, Mullin replied that his agency would not break the law.

"But that doesn't sound like the same thing as committing that you will obey a court order," Murphy said.

"If we didn't think the courts

were politicized, then I would probably be able to answer that. But we see courts over and over again that use their bench for political opinion and not just the rule of law," Mullin said.

"So you'll pick and choose which court orders you'll obey?" Murphy asked.

Mullin told Murphy not to put words in his mouth.

Addressing his fellow senators, Murphy said, "If you're a Democrat or a Republican on this committee, you should be really, really freaked out."

Murphy later returned to the court orders question, saying that ignoring judges erodes democracy.

"I agree that there is politics involved in judicial decisions," he said. "I do not think that gives an excuse to either Democratic or Republican administrations to ignore those court orders. I think that's actually the end of our republic, if the administration willfully ignores a court order because they disagree with it or its motivation."

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Judge: US must pay \$16K to man hurt in ICE arrest**

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — A federal judge ordered the United States to pay \$15,800 in legal fees in the immigration case of a man who claims he suffered a severe head injury while being taken into custody during Operation Metro Surge.

In an order filed Friday, U.S. District Judge Donovan Frank determined the circumstances surrounding the immigration case of Alberto Castañeda Mondragón warranted the amount, saying the facts surrounding his detention proved “difficult to gather” for attorneys while building the case.

“(His) attorneys were referred to him after he was brought to the hospital by ICE agents. Petitioner had severe head injuries and was in a coma,” Frank said in his order. “This made it difficult to collect information for Petitioner’s case and develop a litigation strategy.”

Lawyers for the U.S. government disputed the amount requested by Castañeda Mondragón’s attorneys, arguing the number of hours they claimed to have worked was not reasonable, and likely duplicative or excessive, according to the judge’s order.

Frank countered that ICE agents “were not forthcoming about the details” surrounding Castañeda Mondragón’s arrest.

**Homicides down 23% in Baltimore from last year**

**MD** BALTIMORE — Baltimore’s decline in violent crime continued through May, with homicides

down more than 23% compared with the same point last year as city leaders pointed to a combination of focused policing, violence interruption programs and community partnerships.

As of June 1, Baltimore recorded 40 homicides and 120 nonfatal shootings in 2026, compared with 52 homicides and 121 nonfatal shootings during the same period in 2025. The reductions extend a yearslong downward trend in lethal violence that city officials say has produced some of Baltimore’s lowest homicide totals in decades.

“We still see too many people turning to guns to solve conflicts, and one life lost to violence in our city is one too many,” Mayor Brandon Scott said.

Scott gave partial credit for the decline to Baltimore’s Safe Streets program, a community-run organization that uses mediation instead of incarceration to help reduce gun violence.

**\$3.5B High-Speed Rail contract gets OK**

**CA** FRESNO — After more than a decade of construction in the Central Valley, the California High-Speed Rail Authority could be fewer than six months from laying the system’s first tracks.

The rail authority’s board on Monday awarded a track and systems construction contract of up to \$3.5 billion to an operation between rail and engineering contractors Kiewit, Stacy Witbeck and Herzog. The joint venture is expected to do the track work between Merced and Bakersfield in various phases that will each require board approval.

The board’s new chair, Steve

Kawa, described the award as a turning point for a project that has been slow to clear environmental rules, acquire the necessary right-of-way and build out infrastructure.

California voters first approved \$9.95 billion in bonds for a Los Angeles-to-San Francisco system initially projected to cost \$45 billion. The rail authority today is focused on first completing a 171-mile Merced-to-Bakersfield route by 2033 for \$34.76 billion on the low end.

**Executive order aims to boost menopause help**

**WA** SEATTLE — Gov. Bob Ferguson signed an executive order on Monday directing state agencies to develop and adopt standard workplace accommodations for employees experiencing perimenopause and menopause.

Menopause is the point when a person stops experiencing menstruation following years of transition or perimenopause. During this transition, people may have symptoms like hot flashes, brain fog and migraines that can interfere with their ability to work.

Federal law requires that employers provide reasonable accommodations to workers with disabilities. But that doesn’t necessarily include people going through menopause, which is not explicitly covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In the absence of a mandate, some employers voluntarily provide employees going through that stage of life with reasonable accommodations.

Common examples include lowering workplace temper-

atures, providing extra bathroom breaks and allowing workers to take sick leave to address menopause symptoms.

Because there’s no single standard for menopause accommodations, workers’ experiences can vary widely from employer to employer.

**Judge stops law banning some credit card fees**

**IL** CHICAGO — Financial institutions seeking to stop Illinois’ novel law banning certain credit card fees notched wins in both the state legislature and federal court on Monday, after a federal judge issued a permanent injunction on the law in question.

The action by Chief Judge Virginia M. Kendall in the Northern District of Illinois followed Illinois lawmakers’ decision in the early hours Monday to, for the second time, delay implementation of the same law. The law on so-called interchange fees, or swipe fees, was aimed at providing financial relief for retailers and has been challenged by banks and their allies since it went into effect two years ago.

Opposing organizations representing both banks and retailers late Monday afternoon indicated the fight over the first-in-the-nation law wasn’t over, though they provided few specific details on next steps in the courts.

Credit card companies and financial institutions currently charge retailers a fee when consumers use cards — based on the total transaction, including goods, taxes and tips. The law bans fees on the tax or tip portions of customers’ bills.

— From wire reports



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**Reporting World, National and Military News**

# Hertl lifts Knights past Canes in Game 1

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — It took just one shot and 25 seconds worth of game action for the Vegas Golden Knights to find themselves in a hole in the Stanley Cup Final.

And by midway through the opening period, they were down two goals against a fast-skating Carolina Hurricanes team riding the energy from a buzzing home crowd.

No matter. And no panic. Not with this tested Vegas team.

Tomas Hertl took a backhand pass from Colton Sissons and beat Frederik Andersen from the slot with 3:24 left in the third period, lifting the Golden Knights past Carolina 5-4 in Tuesday night's opener of the Stanley Cup Final.

"I've said it all through the playoffs: it's a find-a-way league," Vegas coach John Tortorella said. "We found a way tonight."

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is Thursday in Raleigh, with the Golden Knights already having taken home ice away from the

Hurricanes as they chase a second Cup title in four seasons.

"Momentum swings happen quickly," Tortorella said. "We want to keep the momentum on our side, so there's no question we're looking to get two."

Hertl's finish off Sissons' feed from the right faceoff circle broke a 4-4 tie and pushed Vegas ahead in an entertaining, back-and-forth start on the sport's biggest stage. It marked the Golden Knights' seventh straight win of the playoffs, starting with the last two games of the six-game second-round series against Anaheim and then the shocking four-game sweep of Presidents' Trophy-winning Colorado.

That series included Vegas erasing a 3-0 deficit to take Game 3, and now it has followed by rallying from another multigoal deficit — this time 2-0 in the opening period — against the team that finished second only to the Avalanche in the regular season.

"It was a terrible start," said center William Karlsson, who

capped a run of three straight goals that pushed the Golden Knights to a 3-2 second-period lead. "Just like it was against Colorado, a lot of time left. We always believe."

Things changed after Tortorella gathered his team around the bench during a TV timeout after Carolina had sprinted out to its lead, coming as Vegas had a slow start out of its six-day break while waiting for the Hurricanes to close out Montreal in a five-game Eastern Conference Final.

"Just stick with the program, on our game plan, and not get impatient," said defenseman Brayden McNabb, who had three assists. "They pressure a lot and we want to keep the puck going north, and limit east-west plays."

Shea Theodore, Ivan Barbashev and Brett Howden also scored for the Golden Knights, with Howden's postseason-leading 11th score giving them a 4-3 lead just 1:21 into the third period. Carter Hart finished with 23 saves, including a key stop on Seth Jarvis only seconds before

Hertl's winner.

Nikolaj Ehlers scored twice for Carolina, with the first coming 25 seconds into the game when he got loose on a rush and blasted one past Hart from the left side on the game's first shot. He followed with a breakaway that gave the Hurricanes a 2-0 lead and sent a charged home crowd into an eruption in the team's first Stanley Cup Final game in two decades.

Jordan Staal and Shayne Gostisbehere each scored tying goals after Vegas had pushed to a lead, with Gostisbehere skating in clean on the left side to blast one past Hart at 11:19 of the third period and tie it once more at 4-all.

Defense had been the standout feature for both teams, in fact, with Carolina having allowed two or fewer goals in 12 of 13 playoff games. But that wasn't the case in Tuesday's fast-paced series opener, with both teams capitalizing on their chances in an entertaining back-and-forth game before Hertl got the Golden Knights the lead for good.

# Sabalenka collapses again as Shnaider claims victory

Associated Press

PARIS — After letting another big lead slip with an error-strewn performance at the French Open, top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka felt like getting as far away from the courts as possible.

"Just want to quit tennis right now," Sabalenka said after wasting a lead of a set and two breaks in a 3-6, 7-5, 6-0 loss to Diana Shnaider in the quarterfinals Wednesday. "We'll see in a few days. Hopefully I'll get back on track mentally."

Sabalenka's wait for a first French Open title continues despite the four-time major winner leading 4-1 in the second set and being two points from victory while serving for the match at 5-4. What followed was a complete collapse as she lost 12 of the last 13 games against a player appearing in her first Grand Slam quarterfinal, looking increasingly frustrated and forlorn in the windy conditions.

Just like her loss to Coco Gauff in last year's final, when she also won the first set before becoming undone with a slew of unforced er-

rors, this one will take some time to get over.

"You know those rooms where you just go in and you smash everything," Sabalenka said. "Probably I will spend a whole day tomorrow over there destroying stuff. Maybe it will help, maybe not."

Sabalenka stood still and screamed loudly after losing a point to fall 0-30 down in the sixth game of the decider and, although she saved two match points at 0-40 down, she lost when she sent a shot into the net.

"I just think it's combination of everything," Sabalenka lamented. "You overthink, then you make easy mistakes, then you miss opportunities."

Shnaider next faces Maja Chwalinska, who extended her remarkable Roland Garros run by beating No. 22-seeded Anna Kalinskaya 7-6 (3), 6-3.

But for Sabalenka, her struggles were reminiscent of the match against Gauff, when she remonstrated loudly, shouting to herself and glaring at her team box.

Shnaider, who was already on her best run

at a major, broke Sabalenka before taking complete control.

"Well, honestly I am speechless. Super happy," Shnaider said. "I feel like I was trying to focus point by point. Not thinking about the score. She is the world No. 1, so I just trying to do my best. I just had to fight for every point."

Sabalenka looked increasingly frustrated as the third set wore on, and when she missed a volley at the net in the fourth game of the decider she crouched and rested her head on her racket.

## Another upset

It was another big upset in a tournament where defending champion Gauff (third round) and four-time winner Iga Swiatek (fourth round) already tumbled out.

Defending men's champion Jannik Sinner served for the match in a second round defeat, and 24-time major winner Novak Djokovic wasted a two-set lead in a third round loss.

# Brunson enters greatest Knick debate

*Associated Press*

Jalen Brunson might be playing for something more than a championship in these NBA Finals.

A victory would put him in the conversation as the greatest Knick ever, and at the same time earn New York sports immortality status.

After just four years, he is all over the record book for a Knicks franchise that has been around for all 80 NBA seasons. He is already third on its career list in playoff points. New York has advanced in the postseason every year since Brunson arrived in 2022, after winning one series in the two decades before.

Now the Knicks are in the NBA Finals for the first time since 1999, with a shot to win their first title since 1973.

Patrick Ewing, Walt Frazier and Willis Reed — in some order — are widely regarded as the top

players in franchise history. If Brunson can lead New York to the title now, there's an argument he could be the best of them all.

"Well, right now a lot of people say he's the greatest Knick ever because of getting them to the finals and obviously if he wins a championship," Frazier said. "So I don't think he's the greatest Knick ever — I always say it's Willis, and Willis said it's Patrick, and Patrick says it's Patrick. So he would definitely be on Mount Rushmore. We'll put him up there if he can bring this title."

Brunson is averaging 26.9 points in the postseason, slightly up from his 26 per game in the regular season. The Eastern Conference finals MVP is making history just by reaching the Finals, as he and his father, Rick, a New York assistant who played for them in 1999 when Jalen was

just shy of 3 years old, will become the first father-son duo to play in the Finals for the same franchise.

None of this was expected when Brunson signed with the Knicks. This wasn't Victor Wembanyama arriving in San Antonio from France as the No. 1 pick in the draft as a 7-foot-4 giant whose array of skills made it easy to forecast that he could become one of the greats of the game.

Brunson stands just 6-2 and doesn't appear to be blessed with explosive speed. That's how a two-time NCAA champion and college player of the year at Villanova ended up as just a second-round pick in 2018. He landed in Dallas at the same time as Luka Doncic, and seeing how easy the Slovenian sensation made the game look had Brunson wondering about his own abilities.

"It made me kind of question

myself to see how hard I actually had to work to be in the position I wanted to be," he said.

He was largely a backup in his four seasons with the Mavericks before New York spent more than \$100 million to pry him away. It's probably the best decision the Knicks ever made — and with what Brunson has done in New York at that low cost for a now perennial All-Star, one of the best free agent moves any team ever has.

The Knicks have just two NBA titles, and the wait for a third has lasted so many generations that Brunson would easily join New York sports icons such as Joe Namath, Derek Jeter or Reggie Jackson, still celebrated around the five boroughs long after their championships, if he can win just one now.

Get it and the second-team All-NBA pick would be confirmed as a superstar.

# McVay doesn't quell speculation about Donald's return

*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — When Sean McVay was asked about Aaron Donald during Myles Garrett's introductory news conference with the Los Angeles Rams on Tuesday, the coach gave no indication Donald would make the decision to return — but he didn't exactly tamp down the speculation, either.

"Aaron is a guy that I stay really close in touch with, and I know the respect that he has for Myles," McVay said. "Talked to him about the opportunity to be able to bring (Garrett) on board. If Aaron decides he wants to dust them off at the age of 35, I bet you he could still do it at a pretty high clip."

While the Rams would never close the door on Donald's possible return to the NFL, McVay confirms it's entirely up to the superstar defensive tackle to open that door if he wants to play alongside Garrett.

The possibility of Donald's return from two seasons in retirement became a hot topic almost immediately after the Rams swung their blockbuster trade Monday to acquire Garrett from the Cleveland Browns.

ESPN personality Pat McAfee stoked the idea on Tuesday when he said he had texted about a comeback with Donald. McAfee said Donald told him that Garrett's arrival in LA "for sure got me thinking," and that he's "gotta see if that fire can light back up."

But because Donald retired at a relatively young age for defensive linemen, his possible return has been a topic of conversation for two full years in Los Angeles.

## Falcons extend wideout London for 4 years, \$141 million

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Falcons have agreed to a four-year, \$141 million contract extension with Drake London, making him one of the NFL's highest-paid wide receivers.

Spotrac.com reported the financial details of London's deal, which has not been disclosed by the Falcons. According to the website, London's average salary through 2030 is \$35.25 million, making him third among the league's receivers behind Cincinnati's Ja'Marr Chase (\$42.25 million) and Seattle's Jaxon Smith-Njigba (\$42.15

million).

London's deal includes \$100 million guaranteed and could be worth \$150 million with incentives.

London set career highs with 100 receptions for 1,271 yards and nine touchdowns in 2024 and had 68 catches for 919 yards and seven touchdowns in 12 games last season.

## Steelers, LB Herbig agree to 4-year extension

PITTSBURGH — Nick Herbig wants to be a Pittsburgh Steeler for life.

The outside linebacker is well on his way after agreeing to a new four-year deal on Tuesday that will keep him in Pittsburgh for the rest of the decade, a person with knowledge of the agreement told The Associated Press. The person spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the contract has not yet been made public.

The agreement is worth up to \$100 million, heady territory for a player thought to be a little too small (6-foot-2, 240 pounds) to thrive in the NFL after winning Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year honors in 2022.

# Homer hits Adell's head, Rockies rout Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — TJ Rumfield got a gift when his long fly ball bounced off Jo Adell's head for a most unusual home run, and the Colorado Rockies defeated the Los Angeles Angels 8-2 on Tuesday night.

With the Rockies holding a 7-0 lead, Rumfield sent a fly ball to deep right-center, where the ball grazed the outside of Adell's glove before hitting his head and bounding over the wall.

There was brief confusion on the field when the ball caromed back into the outfield. Rumfield stopped at second base, initially unsure of the ruling, before proceeding around the bases.

"I was toward the line and I felt like I had a little bit longer way to go than I normally do on a route like that and just missed it," said Adell, who also went 0-for-4 at the plate with two strikeouts. "It hit off my hat. I don't know if I overran it and took a step over. But it was kind of the icing on the cake because I was (bad) all the way around the whole day today."

Willi Castro hit a three-run homer in the fourth inning and Hunter Goodman also had a solo shot in the second. Tomoyuki Sugano (5-4) allowed two runs in five innings for the win.

**Reds 4, Royals 3 (10):** Blake Dunn hit a single in the 10th inning to drive in automatic runner Spencer Steer and give host Cincinnati a win over Kansas City.

Steer homered twice and Will Benson hit a tying solo shot in the ninth for the Reds, who only had four hits in the game.

The Royals had runners on first and third with one out in the 10th, but Jac Caglianone lined out to short and Brock Burke (2-2) struck out Kyle Isbel to end the threat.

**Tigers 8, Rays 0:** Gleyber Torres hit a leadoff homer, Wenceel Pérez and Riley Greene also went deep and visiting Detroit routed Tampa Bay.

Jack Flaherty (1-7) struck out

six in five-plus innings for his first win since last September. Matt Vierling tripled, doubled and drove in two runs.

The Tigers had lost eight consecutive series, their longest such streak since dropping nine straight in 2019. Detroit has won back-to-back games for the first time since May 2 and 3.

**Phillies 3, Padres 2:** Bryce Harper hit his 377th career home run and Jhoan Duran struck out the side in a perfect ninth for his 13th save in as many opportunities to lead host Philadelphia over San Diego.

The Phillies got some help in the eighth inning on a baserunning blunder by Fernando Tatis, on first base with two outs after his third hit of the game. Miguel Andujar hit a light chopper to third baseman Alec Bohm, who faked a throw to first and Tatis was tagged out in a run-down to end the inning.

**Orioles 4, Red Sox 2:** Pete Alonso hit a two-run homer and Shane Baz pitched seven solid innings as visiting Baltimore beat Boston.

Baz (3-5) pitched seven innings for a second straight start, allowing four hits and striking out six as he picked up consecutive wins for the first time this season. After giving up a leadoff triple to Jarren Duran in the first, Baz held Boston without another hit until the fifth and had a stretch of retiring 10 straight batters.

**Marlins 7, Nationals 3:** Joe Mack, Heriberto Hernández and Otto Lopez hit successive home runs in the fifth inning to power visiting Miami past Washington.

Hernández added a two-run shot in the ninth for the Marlins, who didn't give up a hit until Drew Millas singled leading off the sixth against Ryan Gusto, the third Miami pitcher.

**Guardians 9, Yankees 4:** José Ramírez doubled in three straight at-bats and drove in the go-ahead run against Cam Schlichter in the fifth inning be-

fore visiting Cleveland pulled away for a victory over New York.

Kyle Manzardo launched a two-run homer off Schlittler (7-3) in the fourth and rookie Travis Bazzana hit a three-run double off Camilo Doval in the eighth. Bazzana and Brayan Rocchio each had a sacrifice fly for the Guardians, who totaled 12 hits and scored their most runs since May 17.

**Braves 4, Blue Jays 3:** Matt Olson hit a tiebreaking homer, Bryce Elder bounced back from his worst start of the season and host Atlanta defeated Toronto.

Elder (5-3) went 6⅓ innings, allowing six hits and three runs. It was a big improvement over his last appearance, when he was rocked for nine hits and six runs in 3⅓ innings of an 8-0 loss to the Red Sox at Fenway Park.

**Twins 6, White Sox 4:** Luke Keaschall and Tristan Gray drove in two runs apiece in a bottom-of-the-order attack, and host Minnesota beat Chicago to deliver right-hander Davis Martin a rare loss.

Keaschall, Gray and Alex Jackson — batting seventh, eighth and ninth — each had two hits off Martin (8-2), who lasted 4⅓ innings in his shortest of 12 starts this season. The 29-year-old allowed six runs on a career-high 10 hits and three walks, after entering the night ranked sixth in the majors with a 2.00 ERA.

**Brewers 8, Giants 3:** Kyle Harrison matched his season high with 12 strikeouts, Jake Bauers hit a three-run homer and host Milwaukee beat San Francisco.

Harrison (7-1) allowed one run in 5⅓ innings, improving to 6-0 in his last seven starts. He fanned at least 10 batters for the fifth time in his career and third this season as the NL Central-leading Brewers moved a season-high 16 games over .500.

**Rangers 7, Cardinals 4:** Joc Pederson hit a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning and vis-

iting Texas beat St. Louis for its season-best fifth straight victory.

Pederson went 3 for 4 with two doubles and two RBIs. Josh Jung also drove in two runs and Kyle Higashioka had three hits for Texas.

**Athletics 2, Cubs 1:** Gage Jump (1-1) pitched seven effective innings of one-run ball in his first major league win, and the visiting Athletics beat Chicago.

Nick Kurtz homered for the A's, who had lost seven of nine. Zack Gelof also drove in a run on an RBI single in the fourth.

**Pirates 10, Astros 6:** Oneil Cruz and Brandon Lowe hit three-run homers and Endy Rodríguez added a two-run shot to power visiting Pittsburgh over Houston.

Jake Mangum tied a career-high with four hits to help the Pirates to their fourth straight victory.

**Mariners 8, Mets 3:** Patrick Wisdom hit his first home run this season, Jhonny Pereda went deep for the second time in the majors and host Seattle beat New York for its season-high eighth straight victory.

The Mariners (33-29) improved to a season-best four games over .500 on the strength of another stellar offensive performance. They smacked three home runs, increasing their total to 21 during a winning streak that is the team's longest since rattling off eight straight wins in September last season.

**Dodgers 6, Diamondbacks 5:** Shohei Ohtani had a double, triple and two RBIs to stay hot at the plate, Freddie Freeman and visiting Los Angeles held on late to beat Arizona.

With the Dodgers up 6-2 in the seventh, Nolan Arenado's two-run double cut the deficit to 6-4 and Pavin Smith walked with the bases loaded to make it 6-5. Will Klein coaxed a groundout from rookie Tommy Troy to end the threat.