

Helo crew rescued after Hormuz incident

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Two crew members have been safely rescued after a U.S. Army Apache helicopter went down near the Strait of Hormuz, U.S. Central Command said Tuesday.

President Donald Trump said that Iran shot down the helicopter and said the U.S. must respond.

Trump said on the Truth Social social media site that both troops “are safe and uninjured.”

“Nevertheless, the United States must, of necessity, respond to this attack,” Trump wrote.

The aircraft went down Monday evening near the coast of Oman while patrolling regional waters, CENTCOM said in a statement on X.

Within two hours, rescue crews from U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the 82nd Airborne Division retrieved the

two crew members, who are now in stable condition.

The two crew members were located by an unmanned surface vessel, or drone boat, from the Navy’s Task Force 59, CENTCOM spokesman Capt. Tim Hawkins confirmed to Stars and Stripes.

Hawkins said the 24-foot unmanned boat used to perform the rescue was a Corsair manufactured by Saronic Technologies, The Associated Press reported.

Task Force 59 was established in 2021 as the Navy’s first uncrewed and artificial intelligence unit that focuses on maritime security in the Middle East, including the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal.

The drone-assisted rescue is an apparent first for the Navy and the task force, which focuses on integrating unmanned systems and artificial intelligence with maritime operations

for the 5th Fleet.

The cause of the incident is still under investigation, CENTCOM said.

U.S. forces have continued to operate in and around the Strait of Hormuz even after a ceasefire in the war with Iran took effect in April.

Their mission includes defending commercial and military vessels from attacks, as well as holding a naval blockade on Iranian ports.

For weeks, U.S. officials have signaled that a peace deal is near, but talks have been stalled by intermittent fighting.

The war began in late February with strikes by the U.S. and Israel that killed a number of Iran’s top leaders.

Iran retaliated by attacking American military bases in the Middle East and choking off traffic in the strait, which is a major sea lane for oil shipments.

Sunday marked one of the most serious days of fighting between Iran and Israel after tensions in Lebanon escalated.

Iran insists Lebanon is party to the ceasefire deal and has rebuked Israel’s continued campaign against Hezbollah, an Iran-backed paramilitary group in the country.

The two countries agreed to pause their fighting after the U.S. intervened on Monday.

Trump said Monday the U.S. is “two or three days” away from having a “very, very good, strong, powerful deal” with Iran.

The U.S. can resume bombing “very easily,” but doing so would cause more casualties and likely further delay reopening the Strait of Hormuz, he said.

“If we do the bombing, a lot of people are going to be killed,” Trump said. “Who wants to do that? I don’t.”

Trump says US peace talks with Iran are on track

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump renewed his claims of momentum toward ending the conflict with Iran, after brokering a halt to hostilities between Israel and the Islamic Republic and easing tensions that had threatened to derail broader peace efforts.

“We’re in the final throes of what will be a very, very good deal,” Trump told reporters in New York on Tuesday. “We could have at least an idea one or two days from now.”

The U.S. president spoke on Monday hours after Iran and Israel agreed to halt strikes on each other following a flare-up that saw both countries launch

waves of ballistic missiles.

He has repeatedly spoken of an interim agreement to end the war that began when the U.S. and Israel started bombing Iran in February.

A ceasefire has been in place for about two months, but sporadic fighting among the U.S., Iran and Israel has continued, underscoring the risk of a return to full-scale war in the absence of a lasting peace deal.

Mediation efforts between the U.S. and Iran to strike a deal remain intense, according to people familiar with the matter.

Discussions between the mediators led by Pakistan and the two warring sides are ongoing, one of the people said, ask-

ing not to be named discussing private information. Talks between all parties are expected to continue this week, the person said.

Trump’s diplomatic tack is troubling Israel, which isn’t part of the negotiations and worries that a deal may leave Iran with the means to pose a threat in the future.

“We need to ensure that Iran comes out of this confrontation unable to reconstitute its own capabilities, as well as those of its proxies,” said Orit Strock, a member of Israel’s security Cabinet, referring to groups like Hamas in Gaza and Lebanon’s Hezbollah. Interviewed on Israel’s Army Radio, she

voiced hope that Tehran would not secure a windfall in sanctions relief.

“We’re doing everything possible to ensure that this doesn’t happen,” she said.

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a televised statement on Monday that he would hold fire on Iran for now but would respond should Tehran attack again. Earlier, local TV station N12 reported that strikes in south Lebanon, where Israel is fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah militants, would continue at full force. On Tuesday, Israel told residents of Tyre in Lebanon to leave the area before a possible operation in the area.

DOD nixes 'Christian' labels on religion codes

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department's much-slimmed list of codes for tracking service members' faith groups was revised just days after an earlier version drew the ire of Mormon lawmakers and others for excluding their church from Christianity.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell posted the initial list Friday with a May 20 memo that cut the number of religious categories from over 210 to just 31.

Following criticism, the Pentagon on Monday issued a revised list that removed a "Christian" tag that had preceded 21 denominations on the list.

That number included Catholics, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses and others, but the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was not among them.

The omission prompted outcry from Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, who said on X late Sunday that he had just spoken to President Donald Trump about the matter and was "thrilled about where this is heading."

"The Pentagon list included redundant and unnecessary labeling, and the mistake has been fixed," the Defense Department's official rapid response account said on X. "The Pentagon's job is not to adjudicate theological debates, but in-

stead to ensure sincerely held faith is respected and encouraged in our ranks."

In a post Monday saying he was grateful to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for correcting the error, Lee said he agreed with the statement.

Sen. John Curtis and U.S. Rep. Michael Kennedy, both Utah Republicans, also spoke out over the issue. Curtis said in an X post Saturday that it is "unacceptable for a government entity to characterize a faith in a manner that contradicts the religion's own foundational tenets."

Though Mormons profess faith in Jesus Christ, some denominations consider them he-

retical because their teachings about God, Jesus and the Trinity differ from traditional doctrines reflected in the Nicene Creed, a fourth-century statement of Christian belief.

However, the Pentagon did not withhold the label from other groups whose status as Christian is disputed because they reject the creed or traditional teachings about Christ's divine nature.

The controversy over the missing label drew criticism from both sides of the aisle, with the Utah Democratic Party saying on X that the government "doesn't get to decide which communities count as authentically Christian."

Navy vet arrested in alleged ISIS plot

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

A Navy veteran is among three men charged with attempting to supply the Islamic State with \$2,040 in cryptocurrency to fund an attack on American service members overseas.

Bareen Dzayee, 25, of Lakeside, Calif.; Elias Shamsaldeen, 21, of Porterville, Calif.; and Bissaam Ghafoor, 21, of Leawood, Kan., were arrested Friday on charges of conspiring to provide material support to ISIS.

All three are U.S. citizens, according to federal authorities.

"Committed grand treason and literally got away with it," Ghafoor allegedly told an FBI informant prior to his arrest, according to the criminal complaint.

Dzayee enlisted in the Navy in November 2021 and served as a seaman until July 2024, including an assignment to the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS John S. McCain, homeported at Everett, Wash. He re-

ceived the National Defense Service Medal, which was awarded to all service members from Sept. 11, 2001, to Dec. 31, 2022, for taking part in the Global War on Terrorism.

He also qualified as a Pistol Marksman.

The charges were filed in the U.S. District Court of Kansas. If found guilty on all counts, each defendant faces up to 20 years in prison, up to life in supervised release and a fine and fees of up to \$250,100.

Federal prosecutors say the three men contacted a person they believed was aligned with ISIS but was actually an undercover law enforcement officer.

The men said they wanted their funds to buy rocket-propelled grenades and drones for ISIS to use to attack U.S. Special Forces, especially Green Berets, federal prosecutors said. No specific target sites were mentioned in the criminal complaint.

Federal investigators say the three communicated with each

other between February 2025 and June 2026, using telephone calls and the Discord chat app to plan how to support ISIS.

The complaint alleges that the defendants also discussed traveling outside the United States to fight on behalf of ISIS and, in some communications, expressed a willingness to die for the organization.

In addition to funding the weapons attack by ISIS, Ghafoor allegedly expressed a desire to carry out a knife attack by beheading a female U.S. service member.

"I wish I could kill 300,000,000 Americans," he was quoted as saying by the FBI.

Investigators say that Ghafoor wanted to have his name written on an RPG that would be fired at the American troops. The FBI provided a photograph to be sent to Ghafoor, which showed a grenade with his name alongside other explosives in the back of a white pickup.

1 sailor dead, 1 in custody after shooting aboard carrier

By EMELY
MIRANDA-AGUILAR
Stars and Stripes

A shooting aboard the future USS John F. Kennedy left one sailor dead and another in custody, the U.S. Navy confirmed Monday.

Boatswain's Mate Seaman Jesse Braswell was killed in an incident involving a firearm about 5 a.m. Saturday aboard the aircraft carrier, a Navy spokesperson said. The ship is docked at Newport News Shipyard in Virginia, awaiting commissioning.

The other sailor was placed in confinement, but charges have not yet been filed because the case is still under investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

The carrier is scheduled to be delivered and officially commissioned in March 2027.

Ex-JAGs join fight on expanded use of military lawyers

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

More than two dozen former officers in the judge advocate general corps are joining a legal fray stemming from the U.S. government's use of military lawyers to prosecute civilians in federal court.

A friend-of-the-court brief filed Monday was signed by 27 onetime members of the JAG corps from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

The filing expresses opposition to the practice, which the Justice Department has adopted as part of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown even in cases that have no apparent ties to the armed forces.

Trump's administration has expanded the assignment of military lawyers for civilian prosecutions "far beyond its historical and statutory bounds," according to the filing in U.S. district court in Minnesota by the Protect Democracy Project.

Continuing to allow the practice "erodes democratic norms, harms military readiness and unlawfully inserts the military into civilian law enforcement's core functions," the brief states.

The Justice Department contends that judge advocates may be tasked to represent the United States in civil and criminal cases.

"The only connection to the military is their membership, which is not part of their enforcement of civilian law," the government said in a brief filed with the court in March.

The case that prompted the new brief was brought on behalf

of Paul Johnson, a Minnesota resident accused of assaulting federal officers with pepper spray in January during a protest. The plaintiffs had sought to remove Army lawyer Capt. Michael Hakes-Rodriguez, who was appointed sole prosecutor in the case. The brief argues that Magistrate Judge Shannon Elkins erred in her ruling last month that allowed the case to proceed.

Despite finding the Justice Department's use of Hakes-Rodriguez as a civilian prosecutor contradictory to military regulation, she said she had no authority to stop the government from doing so.

Eleven military veteran attorneys who agreed with Johnson's argument filed a friend-of-the-court brief in March, also through Protect Democracy, supporting the removal of the Army attorney.

They argued that using a JAG in a case unrelated to the military violates the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, a federal law that bars service members from conducting law enforcement activities within the United States.

The list of former JAG officers supporting the latest friend-of-the-court brief has more than doubled.

Signatories of the new brief have served as military judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, JAG school instructors, service academy professors and legal assistance attorneys supporting service members and their families, according to the filing.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth last year approved sending up to 600 military lawyers to the Justice Department to serve as temporary immigration judges.

Navy support unit to aid subs in Australia

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A new Navy support unit established in Western Australia ahead of planned U.S. submarine rotations under the AUKUS security partnership will operate under Navy Region Japan, service officials said.

Naval Support Activity Stirling was established May 30 at HMAS Stirling near Perth, the Navy announced Tuesday on X.

It will support Submarine Rotational Force-West, which is expected to station up to four U.S. submarines and one British submarine in Western Australia beginning next year.

NSA Stirling falls under Navy Region Japan, Cmdr. Joe Keiley, a spokesman for the command headquartered at Yokosuka Naval Base, south of Tokyo, said Tuesday.

The support activity operates from Australia's largest naval

base, home to the country's submarine fleet and a workforce of roughly 2,300 service members and hundreds of civilian employees and contractors.

"Establishment of NSA Stirling with our AUKUS partners demonstrates our command mission to support the Fleet, warfighter, and family," Vice Adm. Scott Gray, who leads Navy Installations Command, said in a news release provided Tuesday by the U.S. Embassy in Canberra.

The Australian government invited the United States to establish the support activity, according to the release.

The first U.S. sailors are already working at NSA Stirling, and another 80 personnel are expected to arrive by year's end, bringing the American presence, including family members, to about 200 people, Keiley said.

Hawaii leave law gives military families flexibility

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Hawaii workers whose relatives are deployed or called to active duty may qualify for up to four weeks of unpaid leave beginning July 1 under a new state law aimed at supporting military families.

Gov. Josh Green signed legislation last month expanding Hawaii's family leave law, which already allows eligible workers to take unpaid leave for events such as the birth of a child or caring for a seriously ill family member.

Under the expansion, workers may also take unpaid leave when a child, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, parent or grandparents is affected by a military-related exigency.

Qualified workers are guaranteed the right to return to their

jobs.

"The expansion of Hawaii's family leave law ensures that workers can respond to urgent situations related to active duty military service without jeopardizing their employment," Jade Butay, director of the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, said in a news release Thursday.

The law applies only to employers with 100 or more workers, who must have held their positions for at least six months to qualify.

The scope of military exigencies covered under the new law mirrors those laid out in the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, according to the Hawaii Employers Council's website.

It is unclear how many Hawaii workers could be affected.

Blanche heads into confirmation clash

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday sent to the Senate the nomination of acting Attorney General Todd Blanche to fill the role permanently, teeing up what could be a bruising confirmation process for a Trump ally who has drawn bipartisan criticism for recent Justice Department moves.

The president's former defense attorney has pursued an aggressive agenda during his short tenure as the acting head of the department, including indictments against perceived political enemies of the president.

Blanche has been tied to an array of rolling controversies at the Justice Department, including the handling of the release of the Epstein files and now-scrapped plans to set up a \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization"

fund that critics say could be funneled to rioters who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The idea for the fund was outlined as part of a settlement in the unprecedented \$10 billion lawsuit that Trump brought against the IRS earlier this year, a scenario in which Trump sued the same federal government he oversees.

Democrats have also laced into Blanche for signing a memo, similarly tied to the settlement of the Trump lawsuit against the IRS, that outlined a sweeping pledge in which the IRS is "forever barred" from "examinations" against Trump, certain members of his family, the Trump Organization or "related or affiliated individuals."

The nomination is also sure to test Trump's influence among Senate Republicans, some of

whom expressed deep concern with the "anti-weaponization" fund.

Democrats and some Republicans raised the concern that it would be used to compensate defendants who attacked police officers during the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, and who Trump later pardoned.

Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, in a statement released after the White House sent the nomination, called Blanche "well-qualified" and said he appreciates his "commitment to transparency and support for law enforcement."

"The Senate Judiciary Committee's work to process Blanche's nomination is underway," Grassley said.

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., a member of the Judiciary Com-

mittee that holds confirmation hearings for Justice Department nominees, told reporters last week he has "a lot of respect" for Blanche and acknowledged that he will face criticism in the process for previously serving as Trump's personal attorney.

Tillis also laid out one of his "circuit breakers" for nominees: supporting people involved in the Jan. 6 attack. The current 12-10 breakdown of the committee would give Tillis or any other lone Republican the ability to deadlock the panel.

"J6 is a circuit breaker for me. It's not a gray area for me. He either equivocated and said harming these Capitol police officers was an OK thing, or he didn't, and we'll find that in the due diligence," Tillis said.

ICE surge is 'coming,' border chief tells NYC

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has drawn up a plan to surge U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel to New York City, a move that threatens to escalate tensions with New York Gov. Kathy Hochul over the president's migrant crackdown.

President Donald Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, said Monday he'd warned Hochul of the surge before she signed a bill late last month curbing operations and banning masked ICE agents in her state.

"You're going to see more ICE than you've ever seen in New York City, and it's coming," Homan said on Fox. "I just reviewed an operational plan. I'm not going to tell you exactly when it's going to happen, but it's coming."

Trump and Homan have previously threatened to drastically increase the number of immigra-

tion agents in New York City, but have yet to follow through like the administration did in other Democrat-run cities and states.

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said such a crackdown would ruin the spirit of the World Cup, which is expected to draw thousands of foreign visitors to the New York metro area, which is hosting several matches starting this month, including the championship.

"We will not allow ICE or anyone else to sow fear in our communities — especially at this moment. As the world comes to our city, we will stand proudly with our immigrant neighbors and reject these attacks for what they are: an attempt to divide us," Mamdani posted on X.

Homan said he told Hochul privately that he would flood the city with ICE agents if she prevented them from arresting people already in police custody.

Judge seeks answers on White House UFC fight

New York Daily News

A Washington, D.C., federal judge Monday moved quickly to order arguments in a new federal lawsuit that seeks to block President Donald Trump's planned Ultimate Fighting Championship event on the grounds of the White House, which critics say will only benefit Trump and the organizers of the mixed martial arts spectacular.

District Court Judge Amit Mehta ordered the Interior Department to immediately propose a schedule for briefings and a potential hearing in the case, which claims the event, timed for Trump's 80th birthday on Sunday, amounts to a "corrupt" misuse of the White House grounds.

"This is fundamentally a private, commercial, corrupt use of our most sacred national monuments for private gain," said Brendan Ballou, a lawyer for the plaintiffs. "And that is what is motivating this lawsuit."

The lawsuit says Trump violated National Park Service regulations prohibiting sporting events on federal parklands by approving the event.

It claims Congress should have been asked to approve erection of the towering arch on the south lawn and no environmental review was conducted before the construction.

The White House countered by deriding the suit as "obstructionist, baseless, and dilatory." It portrays the UFC event as an ordinary presidential event and a part of the celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary on July 4.

Mehta has previously ruled against Trump and some of his allies in other high-profile cases related to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

The Obama appointee ruled that Trump did not hold blanket presidential immunity from civil claims over his involvement in the attack.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Candidate suspends campaign after diagnosis

FL ORLANDO — Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings on Friday said he was suspending his campaign to be Florida's next governor after being diagnosed with cancer.

"Monday of this week I received some bad news," he said. "I have prostate cancer, and because of that, I am going to suspend my campaign for governor."

Demings, a Democrat who has been mayor since 2018, made the somber announcement to reporters following his eighth and final "State of the County" address in which he highlighted the county's successes.

"I intend to continue running through the finish line as the mayor of Orange County," said Demings, 66. "But in order for me to receive the treatment that I need, I'm going to have to come off the campaign trail," he said, adding that the cancer was caught early.

Rancher acknowledges her employee shot wolf

CO DENVER — Fourth-generation Colorado rancher Susan Nottingham acknowledges that one of her employees was behind the killing of the matriarch of the new King Mountain wolf pack in March.

The father of the King Mountain pack died in January 2026 while CPW officers attempted to replace his GPS collar. Left to their own devices, the mother and four pups moved into a hay meadow Nottingham owned, a place where more than 1,100 cows go to calve.

Nottingham estimates she

ended the previous year 60 calves short, a loss she valued at approximately \$180,000.

Her ranch hand was tending the new calves on March 10 when he noticed the mother wolf running toward some cows and their calves.

He fired two warning shots. He fired a third shot, unsure if it had hit the wolf, which ran off.

The state has tried to strike a balance between protecting the economic livelihood of ranchers and establishing an apex predator that was once active in the state.

Bay Area saw \$720M boost from Super Bowl

CA SANTA CLARA — The Super Bowl at Santa Clara's Levi's Stadium in February is estimated to have injected about \$720 million into the Bay Area economy, according to new analysis released by the nonprofit that helped bring the Big Game to the region.

"Super Bowl LX was truly a transformational event for the Bay Area," Zaileen Janmohamed, president and CEO of the Bay Area Host Committee, said in a statement. "We've demonstrated that the Bay Area's world-class infrastructure, hospitality, and business ecosystem can deliver meaningful economic benefits that extend far beyond game day."

The analysis, compiled by Boston Consulting Group, projected that the Super Bowl provided a \$425 million boost to San Francisco County, \$195 million to Santa Clara County and another \$100 million to other Bay Area counties.

It also found the event raised \$20 million in revenue for local governments and supported

about 4,000 jobs across the region.

Governor's task force to protect immigrants

MD BALTIMORE — Maryland Gov. Wes Moore on Friday created a task force that studies scams targeting immigrants and recommends strategies to prevent them. But analysts say the governor's actions don't do much beyond symbolically supporting immigrant rights.

The governor signed an executive order creating the 12-month-long Maryland Immigrant Rights Protection Task Force, claiming there's a rise in schemes preying on immigrants' fears of being detained by law enforcement.

This is the first action the governor has taken on immigration policy without the General Assembly's approval.

The Community Trust Act became law this month, prohibiting local law enforcement from inquiring about a detainee's citizenship or immigration status, among other things. A lawmaker-approved ban on local law enforcement's cooperation with ICE also took effect in February.

3rd inmate in a month dies at women's prison

MI YPSILANTI — A third inmate in less than a month has died at Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility in Washtenaw County, according to the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Ashley Hoath, 36, died Saturday morning at Trinity Health Hospital several hours after being transferred out of the prison's medical unit, said MDOC

spokesperson Jenni Riehle.

A corrections officer noticed Hoath was not feeling well early Saturday morning and took her to the medical unit and she was later taken to the hospital, Riehle said. She was responsive when she was taken to the hospital, Riehle said.

Several hours later, Hoath died.

Her death was unexpected and is under investigation.

Hoath is the prison's third death in less than a month, a trend that has had 30 lawmakers calling for MDOC Director Heidi Washington's resignation.

Hiker recovering after grizzly bear attack

MT GLACIER NATIONAL PARK — A San Diego man said he feels lucky to be alive and recovering at home after surviving a grizzly bear attack at Glacier National Park on May 28.

"I'm honestly grateful I still have an arm," said Daniel Crago, 32. "It's pretty painful, but I'm making progress day by day."

The attack unfolded at the end of the last hike on the last day of a long-awaited trip to the popular Montana park, which sees more than 3 million visitors annually.

The bear bit through flesh and bone, dragging Crago for about 20 feet before dropping him and running away.

Once down, bystanders quickly rushed to his aid.

One, a pediatric ER doctor, wrapped his arm in a makeshift tourniquet and stuffed the wound to staunch the bleeding while others called for help.

— From wire reports

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Spurs snap Knicks' win streak in Game 3

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Victor Wembanyama has his first NBA Finals win — and the New York Knicks suddenly have a lot of work left to end their 53-year championship drought.

Wembanyama had 32 points, eight rebounds and six assists, carrying the San Antonio Spurs to a 115-111 victory Monday night that cut New York's lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

San Antonio is trying to make a first-of-its-kind NBA Finals comeback, and the 7-foot-4 Wembanyama, with his array of skills, makes anything look possible.

"I'm sure Victor has numerous sources of motivation," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "I don't think any of us are surprised or expect anything different than a strong performance."

San Antonio handed the Knicks their first loss in 46 days and potentially salvaged their season in front of a Madison Square Garden crowd that included President Donald Trump.

New York had its 13-game

winning streak, the second-longest in NBA postseason history, snapped and missed a chance to move to the brink of their first title since 1973. The Knicks' last loss had been April 23 in a one-point defeat to Atlanta. They won the next three against the Hawks, swept Philadelphia and Cleveland and took the first two games against the Spurs.

The run stirred New York into a frenzy, with raucous watch parties, fans paying outrageous sums of money for tickets and "Knicks In Four" becoming a daily greeting on streets, subway cars and in workplaces.

But Wembanyama and San Antonio ended the streak and ruined New York's first home NBA Finals game since 1999.

"At home, it really feels like playing six against five. Here, it feels like five against six," Wembanyama said. "It really shows what teams are made of."

Knicks coach Mike Brown complained about the Spurs' 24-8 advantage in free throw attempts in the second half.

"I tell the guys, it's a seven-game series for a reason,"

Brown said. "They are a great team. They are well-coached. They have an iconic player. It's not going to be easy."

Stephon Castle and De'Aaron Fox hit big shots late as San Antonio avoided falling into a 3-0 hole, which no NBA team has escaped. Now the Spurs can tie the series Wednesday night and are guaranteed another game at home, with Game 5 scheduled for Saturday.

Castle finished with 23 points as San Antonio got started in its quest to become the first team to win the NBA Finals after losing the first two games at home.

Jalen Brunson scored 32 points and OG Anunoby had 28 for New York.

Fans who endured long lines to get in with the extra security measures in place — and some who paid five-figure sums for the chance to do so — were treated to a back-and-forth game as the NBA Finals returned to Madison Square Garden for the first time in 27 years.

Wembanyama, whose turnover late in Game 2 cost the Spurs dearly, didn't make many mistakes Monday. He had 10

points in the final quarter, helping San Antonio build just enough of a cushion to withstand Brunson's latest comeback attempt.

Minutes after Trump was booed loudly when he was shown during the national anthem, the Spurs got off to an ideal start. Wembanyama dunked for their first two baskets and they had a double-digit lead 4½ minutes into the game. They made nine of their first 11 shots, with the Knicks and their fans frustrated by the referees and the home team's sloppy play, and led 33-22 after one.

The Garden crowd didn't really start to rock until Anunoby's 3-pointer capped an 11-2 surge that cut it to 40-38. New York got its first lead of the night on Brunson's 26-footer as part of a big burst to finish the half. The Knicks led 64-57 at the break.

But San Antonio went back ahead in the third quarter and led 111-104 on Castle's 3-pointer with 1:53 to play. Castle then closed the scoring with two free throws with 6.8 seconds left after Anunoby's 3-pointer cut it to two.

Judge clears QB Sorsby to play for Texas Tech despite ban

Associated Press

A Texas judge granted Texas Tech quarterback Brendan Sorsby a temporary injunction that clears the way for him to play this fall despite being declared ineligible by the NCAA for wagering on college sports, including bets made on his own team while he was at Indiana.

The decision sent shock waves across college sports since bans for gambling are a bedrock rule of the NCAA and many professional sports.

The NCAA said it strongly disagrees with the ruling and "is deeply concerned about the damaging, far-reaching and broadly destabilizing ramifications of this outcome — which undermines and corrupts the integrity of sports." The NCAA said it would appeal to the Court of Appeals for the Seventh District of Texas in Amarillo.

Sorsby, whose school said he has a gambling problem that he is addressing through

treatment, will miss Texas Tech's first two games next season under a judge-approved penalty that had been proposed by his attorneys. The NCAA, which usually handles such punishments, was not involved.

The ruling by Judge Ken Curry prevents the NCAA from being able to block the transfer QB's eligibility for what will be his final college season with a team among the favorites to win the Big 12 Conference and return to the College Football Playoff for a second consecutive season.

Big 12 Commissioner Brett Yormark said that the ramifications of the ruling "could have broad impacts across college athletics, creating great concern amongst our membership." He called a meeting this week of his league's athletic directors and executive board, and had been in touch with NCAA President Charlie Baker.

Texas Tech opens the season on Sept. 5 at home against Abilene Christian. The Red

Raiders then play Oregon State before their Big 12 opener at home on Sept. 18 against Houston.

"I'm very grateful for the endless support I have received throughout this entire process," Sorsby posted on social media. "I am also grateful for the chance to rejoin my teammates. This opportunity comes with the responsibility to remain focused on my personal growth, the ability to learn from this experience and to be able to use my situation to help others going forward."

Nebraska athletic director Troy Dannen confirmed to The Associated Press that his coaches have been told to not schedule Texas Tech in any sport, as first reported by Yahoo Sports. Georgia also will not schedule the Red Raiders in any sport, according to multiple media outlets.

"This may be one of those seminal moments we've all been waiting for," Dannen said in a text to the AP.

Brewers outlast A's in 12-inning slugfest

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Andrew Vaughn had four hits and four RBIs, including a two-run double that tied the score in the ninth inning, and the Milwaukee Brewers outlasted the Athletics 15-14 in 12 innings Monday night at Las Vegas Ballpark in a wild game that featured 11 homers.

Automatic runner Christian Yelich scored the decisive run from third when A's second baseman Jeff McNeil threw wide to home plate on a grounder by Brice Turang in the top of the 12th.

The teams totaled 34 hits, and 14 pitchers combined to throw 444 pitches. It was the fourth game in major league history with at least 29 runs and 11 homers.

Tyler Soderstrom and Nick Kurtz each homered twice for the Athletics, who went deep seven times at the site of their Triple-A affiliate, the Las Vegas Aviators. The team normally

plays at its temporary home in West Sacramento, Calif., but is playing six games in Las Vegas this week ahead of a scheduled move into a new stadium in the city in 2028.

Mariners 6, Orioles 3: Josh Naylor hit a grand slam during a five-run fifth inning and visiting Seattle beat Baltimore.

Randy Arozarena had three hits for the AL West-leading Mariners, who have won 10 of their last 13 games.

Rays 3, Red Sox 1: Yandy Díaz hit a leadoff homer and drove in two runs as host Tampa Bay beat Boston.

Jonathan Aranda knocked in the tiebreaking run with a fifth-inning single for the AL East-leading Rays, who had lost five of six.

Yankees 7, Guardians 5 (10): Cody Bellinger hit a two-run single with the bases loaded in the 10th inning and visiting New York defeated Cleveland.

Paul Goldschmidt and Ryan McMahon homered for the

Yankees, who won for the first time in four extra-inning games this season.

Phillies 5, Blue Jays 2: Christopher Sánchez (8-2) struck out 10 and allowed two runs in seven innings to win for the sixth time in seven starts, Adolis García hit a two-run homer and visiting Philadelphia beat Toronto.

Alec Bohm reached base twice and drove in a run as the Phillies won for the sixth time in seven games.

Astros 5, Angels 4 (10): Jose Altuve scored the go-ahead run in the 10th inning on a popout to shallow center field, and Houston left fielder Brice Matthews threw out Mike Trout at home plate in the bottom half to preserve a victory over host Los Angeles.

Christian Walker hit an RBI single for the Astros off Kirby Yates with one out in the ninth, tying it at 4-all.

Padres 6, Reds 2: Gavin Sheets hit a tying double and then scored the go-ahead run

while Cincinnati misplayed three consecutive bunts by host San Diego in the seventh inning, sending the Padres to a victory.

Freddy Fermin homered in his third consecutive game and drove in two runs for San Diego, which was struggling offensively for yet another night until it found a highly unorthodox way out of its slump and into just its third win in 14 games.

Nationals 4, Giants 3: Daylen Lile hit a go-ahead single in the ninth inning after CJ Abrams' tying base hit, and visiting Washington rallied against closer Keaton Winn to spoil Logan Webb's one-run, eight-inning outing and beat San Francisco.

Pitching for the third straight day, Winn (2-2) couldn't hold a two-run lead. He gave up a one-out double to Luis García Jr. and hit Curtis Mead with a pitch to put the tying runs on base. A passed ball advanced both runners, who scored on Abrams' single.

Cheering fans help US settle into World Cup training base

Associated Press

IRVINE, Calif. — The U.S. national team already knew it was in for a once-in-a-lifetime experience this month as the home team in a World Cup.

But when the 26 players took the field at Orange County's Great Park on Monday to the cheers of several thousand fans who had turned out just to watch a mere practice, they were given yet another reminder of just how special this opportunity will be if they seize it.

The Americans projected confidence and excitement as they settled into their training base for at least the next three weeks in Southern California. The team convened in Georgia last month before playing two friendlies in the past eight days.

All three of the Americans' World Cup group stage matches are on the West Coast, starting with their opener Friday night against Paraguay at SoFi Stadium, the palatial NFL arena about 50 miles away in Inglewood, Calif.

"I think the group is in a really good place at the minute," U.S. captain Tim Ream said.

"We've all been, I wouldn't say overwhelmed, but pleasantly surprised by the excitement and the buzz around the team and in the stadiums. Pulling up here with 5,500 fans ready to watch a training session is incredible. I just think we're in a good place mentally right now. It's been a long two weeks, a hard two weeks, but guys are in a great position mentally, physically and emotionally, and ready to get going."

The team was greeted in Irvine by rows of enthusiastic fans who won a multi-stage lottery among 32,000 applicants for the chance to watch practice and to get autographs at FIFA's Community Day event. U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino entertained the crowd and got a "U-S-A!" chant going while his team was doing a brief gym workout before it got on the grass.

"The facilities are amazing," Pochettino said. "It's more than we expect, and not only the facilities, but the people who are here working. Great facilities and great people are an amazing combination. We are grateful, and I want to say a big thanks."

The fans stood in lengthy security lines at this sprawling athletic complex for an up-close morning look at a team that isn't among the favorites, but has the backing of millions in a country where soccer has proliferated in popularity since the World Cup's last visit in 1994. The Americans' training stadium is the normal home of Orange County SC, a club in the second-tier USL Championship, which didn't exist three decades ago.

"I'm old enough that I remember bits and pieces of 1994," said the 38-year-old Ream, who grew up in St. Louis before his lengthy career as a defender in England and the United States, where he now plays for Charlotte in Major League Soccer, which didn't stage its inaugural season until 1996.

"So I've tried to tell guys and tried to convey the messaging that this is a once-in-a-career opportunity, and with that comes more expectation, more pressure," Ream added. "But we have to enjoy it. There's nobody putting more expectation and more pressure on us than ourselves, and that's the way it should be."

Knights already among top expansion teams

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The line to get into Vegas' practice Monday morning stretched well outside the door at the rink, and Golden Knights fans have had plenty to celebrate in its team's nine seasons.

Back in the Stanley Cup Final for the third time, Vegas two victories away from winning its second championship in four years.

Carolina will have plenty to say about whether the Golden Knights get there, as the Hurricanes tried to even the series at 2-2 and reclaim home-ice advantage when the teams met Tuesday in Las Vegas. A win by the Golden Knights puts them in a commanding position.

Hockey historian Eric Zweig said Vegas is already on the short list of top expansion franchises in NHL history, and another Stanley Cup should put the Golden Knights in the conversation as the best.

"It's hard to compare," Zweig said. "Frankly, in a 32-team league — I guess it was only 31 when they started — anything

you do now is harder than it had to have been before. It just is. There's so many more rounds of playoffs to go through. There's so many more teams that you have to be better than to get there."

Vegas has a locker room full of players who have lifted the Stanley Cup, and their experience is especially valuable when the goal of winning it again is so close.

"I think it goes a long way," said forward Brett Howden. "Just the experience that we have in his locker room, the leadership, the way we've gone through adversity, the way our team stays composed. It just speaks volumes to our locker room."

Howden was on the 2023 team that won the Cup, but there are a number of notable players still chasing their first title. Players such as Mitch Marner, Rasmus Andersson and Tomas Hertl.

Hertl came close in 2016 with San Jose, reaching the Cup Final before losing in six games to Pittsburgh. The Sharks made the Western Conference Final in

2019 before falling to St. Louis in six games.

"In the third season when I got to the Cup, I was like, 'I'll be right back,'" Hertl said. "You have a couple of good runs. You have a couple of years missing the playoff. You're like, 'Will it ever come again?' You come here and it's a great team in the first two seasons. We've been in the playoff, but we never get far. And now we're sitting there, we have two wins to the Cup Final."

And, likely, among the greatest expansion franchises.

Zweig said Vegas is in the company of Philadelphia, the New York Islanders and Edmonton.

■ The Flyers entered the league in the 1967-68 season and made the playoffs in its first two seasons and three of its first four. The Broad Street Bullies won the Cup in 1974 and 1975 and lost in the Final in 1976.

■ New York debuted in the 1972-73 season and began a 14-year streak of making the playoffs in its third year. That included winning four Cups in a row starting in 1980.

■ The Wayne Gretzky-led Oilers were part of the World Hockey Association merger with the NHL in 1979 and made the postseason in each of its first 13 years in the new league.

The Golden Knights aren't overly concerned about history, but they are trying to survive what has been an unexpectedly high-scoring series against Carolina filled with whiplash-inducing momentum swings. Vegas could just as easily be down 2-1 or even 3-0 in this series, but it overcame an early two-goal deficit in the opener and escaped in double overtime of Game 3 after blowing a four-goal lead.

"There was no panic," coach John Tortorella said. "The only way I can explain it is (the players) get it, they've been there. A lot of this team has won and gone through the process of going through playoffs, and they rely on that. I think they challenge themselves. It isn't a physical skill, it's a mental skill, and we have that. I don't know if we win the series, but I know we have that in this organization."

Hocevar accused of 'creating a lot of enemies' after car crash

Associated Press

Carson Hocevar sat on the Michigan International Speedway pit wall Sunday with a blank look and calmly waited as Bubba Wallace laid into him with an animated lecture.

As Wallace did nearly all the talking, Hocevar nodded and offered a few smiles. The one-sided conversation ended with Hocevar patting Wallace on the shoulder — defusing the tension while offering little remorse.

The third-year Cup Series driver, whose aggression has earned him the nickname of "The Hurricane" in rubbing the NASCAR establishment the wrong way, left a trail of wreckage in his wake Sunday at Michigan.

With a fifth-place finish in the No. 77 Chevrolet, the Portage, Mich., native earned his best ca-

reer Cup finish at his home-state track. He also triggered a nine-car crash on a midrace restart by bumping John Hunter Nemechek as the cars ahead of him were slowing down.

"I was like, 'Man, I didn't mean to do that,'" Hocevar said. "I obviously feel bad that I wrecked them and everything, but my intention wasn't to wreck anybody, really. So next time I'll know what to do a little differently."

Many of his peers believe the Spire Motorsports driver should be doing everything differently.

"Well, you can count on Hocevar to always do dumb (stuff)," Nemechek radioed his team. Josh Berry jokingly referred to Hocevar as "The Intimidator," the moniker of seven-time champion Dale Earnhardt.

"I hope at some point (Hoce-

var) figures it out, but I know I'm not going to show anything to him for a long time," said Austin Dillon, who finished 36th after his No. 3 Chevy was trashed in the wreck.

In their pit-wall discussion, Wallace told Hocevar he was jealous of his speed.

"He's one of the fastest in the field, and that's his natural ability," Wallace said. "I've got to give respect to it. But at the same time, Kevin Harvick told me four or five years ago, 'Stop hitting (stuff), and your finishes will show.' And that's what I simply tried to tell (Hocevar), man. He's going for every move, every second. Not worth it."

"He's creating a lot of enemies. I just told him, 'You're fast. A lot of us are jealous of what you're able to do. But we're beating you be-

cause we can put a race together better than you.'"

An unfazed Hocevar essentially shrugged when asked about Wallace's criticism.

"I get his point and everything," he said. "I'm just racing really hard, and there were times where I tried to make a move and get two spots when I probably should have just got one, and it cost me."

The 23-year-old upstart did show some acquiescence toward the end of the race when he waved by the faster cars of Wallace, Erik Jones and Kyle Larson.

If he shows restraint, Hocevar might lose his grip on a top-16 spot in the Chase (he is ranked seventh with 11 races left in the regular season). Yet his recalcitrance also runs the risk of costly retribution.