

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Trump threatens response after attacks

By LARA KORTE  
*Stars and Stripes*

President Donald Trump warned Wednesday that Iran would have to “pay the price” after an exchange of fire that began with the downing of a U.S. Army Apache helicopter, raising the prospect of a broader escalation in the conflict.

His comments came after Iran said it had launched attacks against U.S. military bases across the Middle East in retaliation for American strikes on Iranian targets.

“The Bully of the Middle East is DEAD!!!” the president said on Truth Social. “They’ve taken too long to negotiate a deal that would have been great for them, now they will have to pay the price!!!”

In a subsequent phone call with Fox News, Trump said he “may keep going” with strikes against Iran, threatening to hit civilian infrastructure like power plants and bridges.

The government of Bahrain,

which hosts a U.S. Navy base that is home to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the 5th Fleet, sounded air sirens and warned residents to seek shelter Wednesday. Meanwhile, Kuwait said it was intercepting hostile aerial targets.

Iranian state media reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had targeted 21 American air and naval bases across the region, including the Bahrain installation and Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan, which has been known to house F-35 fighter jets.

Tehran also claimed to have downed an MQ-9 Reaper drone over the Persian Gulf.

Responding to a Stars and Stripes request about the attacks, a U.S. official said there was no “significant damage” and “no harm done to U.S. personnel.”

Before the strikes, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on X that foreign military forces operating near the

country were “at constant risk.”

Afterward, he vowed a response, saying Iranian forces “will leave no attack or threat unanswered.”

Also, for the second consecutive day, the U.S. military on Tuesday disabled an oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman attempting to transport oil from Iran, U.S. Central Command said. The ship was the Palau-flagged M/T Settebello.

“A U.S. aircraft fired precision munitions into the ship’s engine room after the crew repeatedly failed to comply with directions from American forces,” CENTCOM said in a post on X.

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.

The renewed conflict began

Monday when Iranian forces shot down an Army Apache helicopter off the coast of Oman.

Trump, speaking to Fox News, said the aircraft had been hit by an Iranian drone, which did not explode upon impact but caught fire and became lodged between the two pilots. The crew was able to take the helicopter into the sea where they were later rescued.

Hours later, CENTCOM conducted what it described as “self-defense strikes” against Iranian targets, calling them a “proportional response to unjustified Iranian aggression.”

The strikes targeted air defense, ground control stations and surveillance radar sites near the Strait of Hormuz using precision munitions from Air Force and Navy fighter jets, CENTCOM said.

The exchange threatened a return to broader hostilities and cast new doubt on efforts to extend a ceasefire that took effect in April.

## Navy drone-boat rescue near Iran marks milestone

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

A speedboat drone that helped rescue two U.S. service members this week marked a milestone for a Navy task force that has spent five years experimenting with crewless vessels in the Middle East, offering a glimpse of how robotics will transform future rescue missions.

The two rescued crew members were retrieved some two hours after their Apache helicopter went down Monday near the Strait of Hormuz, U.S. Central Command said Tuesday.

A U.S. Navy Corsair drone

boat was dispatched to the scene, where it picked up the personnel and carried them to another location where they were then hoisted onto a helicopter for onward movement, officials said.

U.S. officials say the operation marked the first time the Navy successfully used an unmanned vessel to carry out a rescue at sea. The mission also demonstrated how drones and robotic systems, long used primarily for surveillance and combat operations, could take on a growing role in rescuing and recovering personnel.

The mission was conducted

by the U.S. 5th Fleet’s Task Force 59, based out of Bahrain, which was formed five years ago to boost Navy efforts to monitor Iranian vessels and other ships transiting the region.

The task force has used a variety of systems to sail across waters in the Middle East. Corsairs, which can carry up to 1,000 pounds and travel around 1,000 miles, are among the recent additions to the task force’s fleet.

The multi-purpose vessels can do everything from reconnaissance and maritime domain awareness operations to search and rescue.

The Navy’s approach follows

the lead of Ukraine, which has put drones and robotics to innovative use during its war with Russia.

Small and affordable drones have been used by Ukraine to penetrate deep into Russian territory, destroying everything from energy production infrastructure to multimillion dollar long-range bombers.

Meanwhile, persistent Russian drone surveillance inside Ukraine has made rescue operations exceedingly dangerous. To operate under those conditions, Ukrainian forces have developed armored robotic vehicles to extract injured troops.

# Sailor sentenced for killing his shipmate

By KAYLYN BARNHART BATISTA  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAVALSTATIONNORFOLK, Va.—A Navy sailor was sentenced Tuesday to more than 40 years in prison after being convicted of killing a shipmate and dumping her body near a Virginia naval base last year.

A military judge sentenced Seaman Apprentice Jermiah Copeland to 44 years in confinement at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., for the death of Petty Officer 3rd Class Angelina Resendiz in May 2025. The military court at Naval Station Norfolk credited him with one year of time served.

“I committed the worst betrayal possible. I will live with my actions every minute of every day,” Copeland said as he stood and faced Esmeralda Castle, the mother of Resendiz, before the sentence was announced.

In court, he admitted killing Resendiz by strangling her on the floor of his barracks room. Copeland pleaded guilty on Monday to five offenses: unpremeditated murder, aggravated assault by strangulation, indecent recording, obstruction of justice and making a

false official statement. As part of a plea agreement, he will receive a dishonorable discharge, forfeit all pay and allowances and be reduced in rank to seaman apprentice. He must also register as a sex offender.

Castle said the sentencing represented only part of the process and is not true justice.

“Today is just the completion. We’re still not done,” Castle said. “This isn’t justice. This is a process. Justice is when everyone is safe and this doesn’t happen again.”

Castle said the Navy could have prevented the tragedy, arguing Copeland should not have been recruited given his history and that his previous commands should have intervened after allegations of sexual and violent offenses against other women.

“I think there should be more people in jail. Yes, he (Copeland) took the life, but the conditions were created by the leadership.”

The Navy has denied any wrongdoing in the response to Resendiz’s disappearance and death.

Resendiz, a 21-year-old culinary specialist assigned to the destroyer USS James E. Wil-

liams was first reported missing May 29, 2025. Court records show Copeland falsely told investigators he had dropped her off at her barracks and did not know where she was.

Prosecutor Lauren Mayo told the court that Copeland’s actions were “calculated” and “deliberate.”

“He has chosen this path,” Mayo said.

It wasn’t until June 3, 2025 — five days after Resendiz was last seen or in contact with family and friends — that a statewide missing adult alert was issued. That lag occurred because the Navy initially considered her absent without official leave, a response that has drawn criticism from her family and congressional inquiries into the handling of her disappearance.

Twelve days after she was reported missing, Resendiz’s badly decomposed body was found inside a black duffel bag near a Broad Creek neighborhood on June 9, 2025. The bag was presented in court on Tuesday.

Copeland also faces charges in two other cases linked to his time aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman.

## USS Theodore Roosevelt to lead RIMPAC drills

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt will lead America’s participation in the biennial Rim of the Pacific maritime exercise that begins June 24 in Hawaii.

A record 31 nations are joining the five-week exercise, which will feature about 40 surface ships, five submarines, 140 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel, according to the U.S. Navy.

The Nimitz-class carrier, commissioned in 1986, has been operating and training along the West Coast since early this year. It completed its last deployment in 2024, returning to its homeport of San Diego after 278 days at sea.

The Theodore Roosevelt carries a crew of about 5,000 while deployed and is the flagship for

Carrier Strike Group 9.

It will lead a small fleet of U.S. vessels during RIMPAC. Among them will be the guided-missile destroyers USS Paul Hamilton, USS Decatur, USS Wayne E. Meyer and USS Carl M. Levin and the cruiser USS Chosin.

Participating submarines are USS Charlotte and USS Columbia, Los Angeles-class fast attack vessels. Several Navy oilers and a dry cargo ship will also join, along with the Honolulu-based Coast Guard cutter Kimball.

South Korea’s Aegis-equipped destroyer Jeongjo the Great departed Jēju Naval Base last week for the exercise, according to a June 2 report by the Asia First News Agency. The ship will play a prominent role in the exercise, as South Korea will command the drill’s maritime component, according to the U.S. Navy.

## Base employee critical following shark attack

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

An employee of a Navy installation in Florida was fighting for his life this week following a shark attack near the base marina, according to officials and news reports.

The man had injuries to both arms after he was attacked at Naval Support Activity Panama City shortly before noon Monday, local NBC affiliate WJHG reported.

The employee, said to be in his late 20s, was taken to a hospital in critical condition and underwent immediate surgery. No further information on his medical status was available Wednesday morning.

Cellphone footage of the encounter was posted to X. The man is seen shouting for help as

a dorsal fin thrashes in the water around him before he is submerged.

Base leader Cmdr. Tristan Oliveria told reporters that the man had been swimming with a colleague on their lunch break. The other swimmer was not injured. The man has worked at the base for four years, Oliveria said, according to WJHG.

“Our prayers and thoughts go out to the family, and we want to send our appreciation to the first responders who rendered initial aid,” Oliveria told the station.

Officials are investigating the attack, WJHG said.

Last year, Florida had 11 cases of unprovoked attack by sharks, according to a tracking website run by the Florida Museum of Natural History.

# Trump signs immigration funding bill

*CQ-Roll Call*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed into law a \$70 billion reconciliation package to fund immigration enforcement agencies for the rest of his term on Wednesday, the day after House Republicans sent it to him.

On a party-line vote of 214-212, the House cleared the reconciliation bill that the Senate passed last week. Independent Kevin Kiley of California, who caucuses with the Republicans, voted no.

Final passage of the measure brings to an end a monthslong partisan stalemate over immigration enforcement funding.

The bill provides \$38 billion

for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and \$26 billion for the Border Patrol, The Associated Press reported. An additional \$5 billion would cover unforeseen costs, according to the White House.

After immigration agents shot and killed two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis last winter, Democrats insisted on imposing new policy restrictions to advance fiscal 2026 Homeland Security funding. Republicans resisted the curbs, saying they would hamstring the Trump administration's immigration enforcement crackdown.

The two parties eventually agreed to fund the Department of Homeland Security except for

Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol through September, the end of the fiscal year.

And Republicans decided to break the gridlock over immigration enforcement funding by resorting to a filibuster-proof reconciliation bill that would fund those agencies without any new restrictions.

The new law front-loads routine annual funding, ensuring a virtually uninterrupted flow of money as the Trump administration seeks to deport some 1 million people per year, AP reported.

The Senate passed the bill last week in a mostly party-line 52-47 vote, after delays caused by

proposed security funding for the White House ballroom project and the administration's \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund for the Justice Department, which was eventually shelved.

House Republicans criticized Democrats over the department's lengthy shutdown and said the bill would allow Trump to continue to enact his agenda to secure the border and restrict immigration.

Democrats blasted Republicans for bringing forward a bill that would spend much more on immigration enforcement without policy changes or addressing other major issues, like growing costs on American consumers.

## Security is heavy in DC ahead of 250th festivities

*CQ-Roll Call*

The National Mall is being transformed for almost daily events in the weeks leading up to the nation's 250th birthday on July 4, with unprecedented security and a request that those planning to participate in some of the main activities register in advance.

Events kick off Friday evening near the Capitol with a watch party for the U.S. men's soccer team's first game in the FIFA World Cup tournament.

And if a federal court doesn't block it, this weekend will feature a press conference Friday and a weigh-in Saturday at the Lincoln Memorial for the Ultimate Fighting Championship bouts planned at the White House on Sunday.

Celebrations of the "semi-quincentennial" really gear up 10 days before the Fourth of July, starting with a rally and speech by President Donald Trump on June 24 followed by daily events at a "Great American State Fair" on a section of

the Mall between the Capitol and the Washington Monument highlighted by a Ferris wheel.

All of the events in Washington have been organized by Freedom 250, a public-private partnership set up by the White House that is separate from America250, the bipartisan commission established by Congress in 2016 to plan for commemorations of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

While America250 is promoting nationwide events to celebrate the 250th, the Freedom 250 plans in Washington are dominated by Trump and his supporters, from the UFC event being held on his 80th birthday Sunday to the daily Great American State Fair events running through July 10.

All the activities have been designated as a National Special Security Event by the Department of Homeland Security, meaning there will be extensive security on the Mall for much of the summer.

## 'Anti-weaponization' fund challengers questioning its demise

*CQ-Roll Call*

WASHINGTON — Challengers to the Trump administration's \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization fund" asked a judge Tuesday to let them seek evidence the Justice Department truly is abandoning the program.

The filing came in response to arguments the Trump administration made in filings last week that the lawsuit is unnecessary because the fund "is now not going forward."

But the challengers argue the administration has been unclear about the fate of the fund, which the DOJ announced as part of settling a lawsuit brought by President Donald Trump against his own administration following the leak of Trump's tax returns during his first term.

For example, in the same week acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said the fund was "not going forward," Trump himself said the fund was a "great idea,

and so do many other Republicans," the filing said.

The government repeatedly cited unsworn statements from Blanche but has otherwise offered no evidence or explained how that position interacts with the settlement of the tax return lawsuit, the challengers told the judge.

One DOJ official made "no commitments that the Fund will not be established or operated in the future," the challengers wrote, and instead only confirmed that there were no activities taken to the fund as of June 8.

The lawsuit was brought by several individuals, Common Cause, the National Abortion Federation and the city of New Haven, Conn.

They asked for evidence that the DOJ has affirmatively abandoned the fund, such as statements that the settlement no longer creates a binding obligation for its creation.

# Platner wins Dem Senate primary in Maine

*Bloomberg News*

Progressive Democrat Graham Platner won the party's Senate primary in Maine after a bruising campaign which became as much about his past and accusations of misbehavior as about the policies voters cared about.

With more than 30% of votes counted, Platner, a 41-year-old oyster farmer and military veteran, had about 74% support.

Maine Gov. Janet Mills, who suspended her campaign in April amid lackluster polling and fundraising but remained on the ballot, had 20%.

Platner accepted the nomination in Blue Hill on Tuesday evening, vowing to "be a sen-

ator for the people who cannot afford to buy a senator."

"I have been willing to die for my country," he said, referencing his four tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. "There is nothing I will not do for the state of Maine."

Platner peppered his victory speech with subtle references to the controversies that have dogged his candidacy in recent weeks, mentioning the toll he has said the wars took on him, his imperfections and redemption, in between reiterating his progressive platform.

The November Senate race in Maine carries outsized importance to Democrats, who consider it to be one of their best shots at toppling a Repu-

blican incumbent and securing the net gain of four seats they need to reclaim the chamber.

Republican incumbent Susan Collins, 73, is seeking to secure a sixth term.

Platner raced out to a huge polling and fundraising lead with a campaign centered on an ire for billionaires, big corporations and the Washington establishment on both sides of the aisle. Touting his status as a political outsider, Platner tapped into voter anger over rising costs, calling for universal healthcare and higher taxes on the rich and denouncing elements of the national Democratic party as too beholden to corporate power.

On the campaign trail,

Platner faced a series of scandals, including a since covered-up Nazi symbol tattoo and, most recently, a New York Times report that some ex-girlfriends found his behavior disturbing.

Platner has denied one woman's claim of physical roughness and has said he wasn't aware of the historical significance of the skull-and-crossbones tattoo on his chest until it drew attention last fall.

But he has previously acknowledged misogynistic and offensive comments made years ago on Reddit, saying they occurred during a dark period in his life after he returned from his military service.

## Hilton, Becerra to square off for California governor

*Los Angeles Times*

Republican Steve Hilton, a former Fox News commentator, clinched one of the top spots in California's gubernatorial primary Tuesday, earning him the right to challenge Democratic candidate and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra in the November election to determine the state's governor.

The contest offers voters two starkly different politicians. Hilton was endorsed by President Donald Trump and has wooed his MAGA supporters, blaming Democratic policies for California's homelessness crisis, high costs of living and other entrenched ills. Becerra campaigned as a battle-tested warrior against the Republican president and a champion of affordable health care.

Hilton's victory was declared by The Associated Press on Tuesday, days after Becerra secured one of the top spots and a week after the June 2 election. Under California's primary system, the

two candidates who receive the most votes in the primary advance to the November general election, regardless of their party affiliation. According to the latest vote count, which is ongoing, Becerra has a slight edge over Hilton. Democratic voters in California outnumber Republicans by an almost 2-to-1 margin.

A British immigrant and former political adviser to U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron, Hilton, 56, embraces traditional conservative ideals that have echoed across the country since the days of President Ronald Reagan — cutting taxes, weeding out government fraud and waste and promising to unbridle entrepreneurs and homebuilders from regulation.

Becerra, 68, came up in Los Angeles politics in the 1980s and has long supported policies to expand protections and resources for immigrants. He earned a reputation as a cerebral, analytical politician who would fully commit to his positions after taking time to mull them through.

## Every member of Artemis III crew has military experience

*Staff and wire reports*

They won't be flying to the moon, but will be paving the way. NASA announced Tuesday the four astronauts assigned to Artemis III, a mission targeting launch from Kennedy Space Center in Florida next year.

The crew includes NASA astronauts Randy Bresnik as mission commander, and Andre Douglas and Frank Rubio as mission specialists; and European Space Agency astronaut Luca Parmitano as the pilot.

Instead of returning to the moon, Artemis III will remain in low-Earth orbit with its primary objective of testing Orion's docking capability with one or both of the two lunar landers that could be tasked to fly the next mission, Artemis IV. That would be the first planned crewed mission to the lunar South Pole in 2028.

Each crew member has military experience, across different branches and disciplines.

Bresnik is a retired U.S. Marine colonel who has logged

more than 7,000 hours in 95 types of aircraft. After his graduation from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, he was deployed as an F/A test pilot to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Rubio served more than 28 years in the U.S. Army as an aviator, physician and astronaut after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1998. As an aviator, he flew more than 1,100 hours, including more than 600 hours of combat during deployments to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Douglas graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and served in the Coast Guard where he conducted search and rescue, marine salvage and drug interdiction operations.

Parmitano became a test pilot for the Italian air force in 2007 before being promoted to colonel in 2019. He logged 2,000 flight hours across 40 types of aircraft.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Safe Streets worker charged after shooting

**MD** BALTIMORE — Antoine Burton, a 51-year-old worker with Baltimore's Safe Streets program, which aims to prevent gun violence, has been charged with attempted murder after a shooting Sunday night in Northwest Baltimore left one man hospitalized.

The shooting was one of two that happened within a few hours Sunday night in the Park Heights zone of the Safe Streets program.

Before Sunday, the area had gone more than 500 days without a homicide, the longest streak of any Safe Streets zone in the city.

At the time of his arrest, Burton was a Safe Streets worker in the Belvedere neighborhood, according to a statement from the mayor.

### Police arrest 15 at Gayborhood Pride event

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — Fifteen people were arrested at a Pride celebration in the Gayborhood on Sunday, authorities said, and the response drew criticism from some LGBTQ+ residents over how police handled crowd control at the event.

Images of police officers engaging with attendees in Center City circulated widely across local social media feeds on Monday, featuring criticisms of what some considered to be an outsized and aggressive law enforcement presence.

The revelry outside some of the city's best-known gay establishments was not affiliated with the official Philly Pride

March and Festival event.

For their part, police said they deployed 600 officers for Sunday's Pride events — including 150 officers to the Gayborhood — to maintain public safety.

### New circuit judge to oversee Murdaugh trial

**SC** COLUMBIA — The S.C. Supreme Court has named a circuit court judge to oversee the retrial of Alex Murdaugh.

Judge Debra McCaslin, a former criminal defense attorney who practiced in the Midlands, will have the duties of overseeing what is expected to be one of the state's highest profile trials.

In an ironic twist, McCaslin will preside over the trial of a former law school classmate.

She was a student at the University of South Carolina School of Law at the same time as Murdaugh. He was in the class of 1994. She was one year ahead, in the class of 1993, according to law school and state records.

Murdaugh, a disbarred attorney, is accused of killing his wife, Maggie, and son Paul in June 2021. Their bodies were found on the grounds of the Murdaugh 1,700-acre family estate in Colleton County. Maggie had been shot to death with an assault rifle; Paul, with a shotgun.

Murdaugh's earlier trial, in early 2023, was called South Carolina's "trial of the century" and was followed by people not just around South Carolina but the nation. It was a "whodunit" because Murdaugh contended he was innocent and there was no indisputable evidence, such as DNA or a video showing the killings. Murdaugh was a fourth-generation lawyer in a

family dynasty prominent in law enforcement, political and social circles in the Lowcountry.

That trial lasted six weeks, and more than 70 witnesses testified. The jury was out less than three hours.

Last month, the state Supreme Court overturned Murdaugh's conviction in a unanimous 5-0 decision.

### NYC stab spree suspect was high during attack

**NY** NEW YORK — The suspect police say stabbed five men in an unprovoked spree in Manhattan's Penn Station was high on drugs during the attacks and appears to have mental health issues, police sources said Monday.

The suspect is apparently homeless and has prior arrests in New Jersey for assault and drugs, sources said. His rampage started about 7 p.m. Sunday in the boarding area for New Jersey Transit.

The victims were taken to Bellevue Hospital with wounds described as non life-threatening. One victim is in serious condition while the others suffered moderate or minor wounds.

The suspect was taken to the same hospital for a psychiatric evaluation. Charges against him are pending.

Amtrak police officers arrested the suspect moments after he attacked his fifth victim.

### Pacifica pier shut down, taped off due to cracks

**CA** LOS ANGELES — The Pacifica Municipal Pier was shut down and taped off last week after city workers noticed cracks running

through the landmark structure and concrete chunks falling into the ocean.

It's just one of many coastal California structures that have recently crumbled under pressure from a rising and relentless ocean.

Officials from the small beach city just south of San Francisco said the pier was closed due to "cracking, separation, and displacement of the concrete walkway and structural elements."

It will stay closed while structural engineers assess its safety.

This is not the first time the 53-year-old pier has shown signs of stress. In 2021, part of it was shut down after handrails along the edge collapsed. And in 2023, after a series of storms pummeled the Central California coast, damaging parts of the pier, the structure was partially closed for more than year.

### Man dressed as Walmart worker stole from store

**MD** ABERDEEN — Aberdeen Police are searching for a man who they say stole from Walmart's customer service desk Sunday while "posing as a Walmart employee."

The suspect entered the store at 645 S. Philadelphia Blvd., along with other employees starting their shift at 6 a.m., police told The Aegis.

While wearing a blue Walmart vest and black clothes, the suspect went behind the customer service counter and took lost credit cards from the lost-and-found cabinet, according to a Monday Aberdeen Police news release; he then fled in a black pickup truck.

— From wire reports

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# Staal, Canes top Knights to tie series at 2

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The Carolina-Vegas series was largely expected to be a Stanley Cup Final in which goals were at a premium and each shift felt like a march up a well-defended hill.

Yeah, that isn't this.

Another two-goal lead went the way of the landline Tuesday night, the go-ahead shot came from a 37-year-old on his stomach on one of the great runs in Cup Final history, and the winning goalie made his first start in two months and doesn't know if that will be his last one this post-season.

None of it makes sense, and yet it all somehow does in this series that is now even after four games — probably aptly so — because of Jordan Staal's second goal at 6:32 of the third period that came while sprawled on the ice in what became a 5-3 Hurricanes victory over the Golden Knights.

"It's a wild ride, isn't it?" Staal said.

Now the series heads back to Carolina for Game 5 on Thurs-

day night. The Hurricanes will potentially have two games on home ice to win their first Cup in two decades. Coach Rod Brind'Amour captained that 2006 team, and though he's not ready to look at the big picture, he recognizes this is a unique Final.

"I know I need to (appreciate it) because this doesn't come across very often," Brind'Amour said. "But it is pretty stressful."

The same applies at the other end, where 9-year-old Vegas chases its second championship in four years. The Golden Knights' position isn't all that different from when the day started — two more wins and they're there — but now they need to win at least once more on the road.

Whichever team winds up losing can point to a number of moments that could have changed the outcome.

Each game until this one was decided by one goal. It appeared this one would as well until Nikolaj Ehlers deposited an empty-

net goal from 187 feet.

A two-goal lead has disappeared in all four games in what has been a remarkable series in which momentum often changes at a moment's notice. Each team has led by at least that many twice.

The 33 combined goals are tied for the third highest in a Cup Final with the New York Islanders-Philadelphia series in 1980.

Staal became the first player in 44 years to score at least one goal in each of the first four games of the Final and the ninth overall. Mike Bossy in 1982 with New York against Vancouver was the last player to score in the first four games of a Final.

Ehlers' goal was part of a three-point night for him, Jackson Blake had a goal and an assist and Logan Stankoven scored a goal.

Brandon Bussi started in place of Frederik Andersen in goal and made 18 saves, and including his work in relief in Game 2, Bussi has 36 saves on 40 shots. Brind'Amour said Ander-

sen, who did not dress, needed the rest. Pyotr Kochetkov was the backup goalie with Andersen serving as the emergency goaltender.

Mark Stone, William Karlsson and Brett Howden scored goals for Vegas, and Carter Hart made 23 saves. Karlsson also had an assist.

Carolina came out blazing, taking a 3-1 lead in the first period. The Golden Knights nearly cut it to one, but Brayden McNabb's goal came right after the period ended and didn't count.

Vegas scored twice in the second to tie the game, and it has now outscored the Hurricanes 9-1 in that period. But the Golden Knights failed to add to that total, shifting home-ice advantage back to Carolina.

"We knew it was going to be a tight series," Vegas defenseman Rasmus Andersson said. "We're playing a really good team and 2-2, best out of three and fly out to Carolina (Wednesday) and take care of business in Game 5."

# Williams returns with doubles win alongside Mboko

Associated Press

LONDON — After nearly four years away from professional tennis, Serena Williams showed she still has plenty of power to her game as she made a winning return at Queen's Club on Tuesday.

The 44-year-old Williams hit service winners of up to 120 mph and some ferocious winners as she teamed up with 19-year-old Canadian Victoria Mboko to win their opening doubles match at the Queen's Club grass-court tournament.

Williams and Mboko beat third-seeded duo Nicole Melichar-Martinez and Erin Routliffe 7-6 (2), 6-2 in Williams' first professional match since the 2022 U.S. Open. They next face Leylah Fernandez and Laura Siegemund in the quarterfinals.

As if to punctuate that she's

back, Williams served out the first-round match with two aces followed by a service winner.

"It was so fun. I had so much fun playing with Victoria," Williams said in an on-court interview. "We've never played together, but it just felt so natural playing with her."

Later, though, Williams gave herself a modest grade in her post-match news conference.

"A C-minus," Williams said, before cutting herself some slack. "With all the elements, considering coming back on grass is probably not the easiest surface. ... Grass, four years. Overall, I think it was decent."

Perhaps more than decent, given the quality of the opposition. Routliffe is a two-time U.S. Open champion in doubles and Melichar-Martinez has made the

doubles final at both Flushing Meadows and Wimbledon.

Sure, Williams' performance was uneven, and at times it looked like she may have lost half a step. But it was clear she can still compete at a high level.

Even Williams seemed to be surprised at the quality of her rapid-reaction backhand winner at 4-4 in the first set, laughing as she high-fived Mboko.

Williams received a standing ovation as she made her entrance, by far the loudest cheer of the day at the Andy Murray Arena, even from a crowd that had earlier watched British players Emma Raducanu and Katie Boulter secure wins in the singles tournament at the HSBC Championships.

It was Williams' first appearance at Queen's Club, which did

not stage a women's tournament for more than 50 years before the WTA tour returned to the venue in 2025.

The men's tournament, which starts next week, has long been one of the main grass-court warm-up events for Wimbledon and counts Carlos Alcaraz, Andy Murray, Rafael Nadal, Pete Sampras, Boris Becker and John McEnroe among its former winners.

"I never got to play here, it was always just the men," Williams said. "It felt really special to play some place so iconic."

Williams is also set to play doubles at the Berlin Open in Germany next week. But even after a winning return, she remains undecided when it comes to whether to extend her comeback to Wimbledon, which starts June 29.

# Knicks need response after Spurs' Game 3 win

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The last time the New York Knicks lost a game, they didn't do it again for another month and a half.

When they fell behind against Atlanta in the first round of the NBA playoffs, desperation turned into domination. New York won 13 straight games, many of them blowouts, in one of the most impressive postseason stretches in NBA history.

The Knicks don't need to do anything so dramatic now. With a 2-1 lead over the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA Finals, a simple 2-2 record the rest of the season would give New York its first championship since 1973.

So after dropping Game 3, the Knicks don't need an overhaul. But they do need to be better.

"We have a veteran group. Nobody is quote-unquote panicking or anything like that," New York coach Mike Brown said Tuesday. "Everybody is disappointed that we didn't go out and execute and play to

what we feel our standard is. That's not taking anything away from San Antonio, but we feel like we can play a lot better than what we did.

"We're looking forward to going out on the floor and showing it."

Game 4 is Wednesday in a series in which the road team has won all three games, only the second time that's happened in the NBA Finals.

The Spurs jumped on the Knicks right at the start and then outplayed them late in their 115-111 victory Monday. Victor Wembanyama controlled the action on both sides with 32 points, eight rebounds, six assists and three blocked shots.

Showing no fear of a rowdy road environment in the first NBA Finals game at Madison Square Garden since 1999, just as they didn't in winning a Game 7 on the road against defending champion Oklahoma City in the Western Conference

finals, Wembanyama and San Antonio again looked like a team that might be able to win a title without first experiencing the growing pains that other young groups have.

"We will see. But my bet would be yes, it's possible," Wembanyama said.

The Spurs thought so even after dropping two games at home, which means to win the title they would have to become the first team to do so after starting 0-2 in their own building.

"I didn't want us to get too happy about one win and get satisfied and take our foot off the gas a little bit for the next game," said guard Stephon Castle, who scored 23 points. "But I think since the end of Game 2 we've still been confident that we're going to win this series, and that's what we plan to do."

New York's first loss since April 23 didn't send it scrambling for solutions, because it was constantly looking for ways to improve even when all

it did was win.

"Each game, no matter what the situation is, we're growing as a team. I think we're learning and we're getting better — obviously before last night," Jalen Brunson said. "No matter what the situation is, we're going to stick together. We're going to execute, we're going to be better. That's just how our mindset has to be going forward."

There are things to fix. Karl-Anthony Towns isn't scoring in the fourth quarter. Wembanyama has clearly figured out ways to hurt the Knicks in the last 1½ games after struggling by his standards before that. They have to turn the ball over less and defend better without fouling.

"We have, what, 13 games in a row, 50 days of film to show what it looks like when we're at our best. So we've got good film," Towns said. "We'll get back to our fundamentals, what makes us great, what made us great and get back to work."

# US keepers eager to shine as soon as starter named

Associated Press

IRVINE, Calif. — In many previous World Cup cycles over the past three decades, the best and most accomplished players on the U.S. men's roster were their goalkeepers.

Kasey Keller. Brad Friedel. Tim Howard. Brad Guzan. They all played on major international club stages, and their national team could always count on having elite talent in net, even when the rest of the roster wasn't world-class.

That's no longer the case as the current American team prepares for its home World Cup. While Matt Freese and Matt Turner are both solid domestic professionals, they have yet to match their esteemed predecessors' level of international accomplishment for club or country. Both are hoping they can summit that obstacle

over the next few weeks — as soon as coach Mauricio Pochettino lets them know who's starting Friday night, that is.

"It's fair to say the U.S. has a great goalkeeping corps, historically," said Freese, the New York City FC keeper. "I was a fan of that goalkeeping corps for most of my life. Still am. And so it's an honor to be on this team and be a part of that group to hopefully continue that great legacy."

The United States arrived at its final World Cup training base in Orange County this week, but Pochettino has yet to announce which of his goalkeepers will start when his team opens the group stage against Paraguay in Inglewood, Calif. — and it's tough not to see that as an indicator of the state of the U.S. situation in net.

Freese has been the Americans' regular starter since the

CONCACAF Gold Cup last summer, while Turner was their starter at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar under coach Gregg Berhalter. Freese seems likely to be Pochettino's pick for Friday, but the fact that it hasn't been made yet is interesting for both competitors for the job.

"Not a ton of clarity, but I think the messaging for me is just to always be ready," Turner said Tuesday. "It's about training really well, keep fighting, and then the decision will be made."

The 27-year-old Freese has spent his pro career in Major League Soccer since he left Harvard in early 2019. The 31-year-old Turner is also back in North America's top league with the New England Revolution after his European career stalled before it really got rolling.

Pochettino has split up the time

in net in the Americans' four matches in 2026, even working third-stringer Chris Brady into the mix. Turner started their friendly against Senegal last month, while Freese got his turn last weekend against Germany.

Turner knows he is probably behind Freese on Pochettino's depth chart, but the lack of a starting announcement has him working just that much harder.

"Given the fact that I haven't played a ton in the last year for the national team, of course, for me, that makes me feel like the door is always cracked," Turner said. "Everyone has a chance. But I think the coach will always pick the guy that's playing the best, and he's going to make the right decision for the team, and whatever my role is going to be, I'm going to be ready to do it to the best of my ability."

# White Sox's Montgomery hits walk-off in debut

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Braden Montgomery hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning of his major league debut to rally the Chicago White Sox past the Atlanta Braves 6-5 on Tuesday night.

Miguel Vargas launched a two-run shot in the third to begin Chicago's comeback from a 4-0 deficit against Atlanta, which has the best record in the majors at 45-22. Montgomery made it 4-3 with an RBI single in the fourth, and Jacob Gonzalez tied it with a run-scoring single in the seventh.

Matt Olson homered twice in the first three innings for the Braves, accounting for three runs. Star outfielder Ronald Acuña Jr. exited in the fourth with left hamstring tightness, but Mauricio Dubón put Atlanta up 5-4 in the top of the 10th with an RBI single.

With two outs in the bottom half, Montgomery connected on an 0-1 changeup from closer Raisel Iglesias (0-1) and drove it 343 feet over the left-field wall to send the Rate Field crowd into a frenzy.

**Reds 5, Padres 3 (11):** Cincinnati rookie Sal Stewart hit a tie-breaking two-run homer in the 11th inning and the visiting Reds snapped their five-game losing streak with a victory over San Diego.

The 22-year-old Stewart drove his 13th homer to center field off Yuki Matsui (0-1) and then gleefully celebrated all the way around the bases. Cincinnati hung on for just its third win in 12 games after its bullpen escaped the last of several late jams.

Both teams scored in the 10th. Eugenio Suárez led off with an RBI double that ended his 2-for-26 slump for the Reds, but Samad Taylor drove an RBI single up the middle for the Padres.

**Mariners 6, Orioles 5 (10):** Randy Arozarena hit a two-run homer to lead off the 10th inning and visiting Seattle beat Baltimore.

Mitch Garver also homered

for the AL West-leading Mariners, who have won 11 of their last 14 games and at 36-32 are tied for a season-high four games over .500.

Coby Mayo homered during a two-run ninth-inning as the Orioles rallied to tie the game at 4-4. They have lost four in a row for the first time since a five-game skid from April 30 to May 4.

**Dodgers 12, Pirates 3:** Andy Pages hit a two-run homer and added a sacrifice fly during a seventh-inning outburst against Pittsburgh's bullpen as visiting Los Angeles quickly pulled away once Pirates ace Paul Skenes exited after six innings of two-run ball.

Dalton Rushing led off the seventh with a single off Wilber Dotel (1-1), advanced to third on a single through the hole by Alan Freeland and scored the go-ahead run when Pittsburgh catcher Henry Davis' attempt to pick Rushing off third hit the Dodger catcher instead and rolled away.

A throwing error by Pirates second baseman Brandon Lowe, a couple of bases-loaded walks and Freddie Freeman's 2,500th career hit — a sharp RBI single to center — highlighted the rest of LA's biggest inning since an 11-run outburst against St. Louis on June 2, 2021.

**Rays 4, Red Sox 3:** Nick Martinez (6-2) gave up six hits over seven innings, Ben Williamson and Nick Fortes hit RBI doubles, and host Tampa Bay held on to beat Boston.

Ryan Vilade had three hits and scored the Rays' first run in the fourth inning. Williamson and Fortes each had two hits, and Tampa Bay managed 12 overall while going 5 for 10 with runners in scoring position.

**Tigers 10, Twins 4:** Dillon Dingler had two homers among his four hits and drove in four runs Tuesday night, leading host Detroit over Minnesota.

Kerry Carpenter hit a go-ahead two-run home run in the

fifth as the teams combined for eight homers in the game. Riley Greene homered and drove in two runs as the Tigers won for the sixth time in seven games. Gleyber Torres drove in two runs with a single.

**Marlins 10, Diamondbacks 6:** Otto Lopez hit a tiebreaking RBI single to start off host Miami's four-run eighth inning and Joe Mack went 4-for-4 and scored three runs as the Marlins beat Arizona for their sixth win in seven games.

Lopez's run-scoring single started a four-hit sequence. Javier Sanoja drove in two more runs with a single and Esteury Ruiz followed with a one-run single as Miami broke open a 6-all tie.

**Yankees 3, Guardians 2:** Jazz Chisholm Jr. homered leading off the eighth inning and visiting New York defeated Cleveland.

Spencer Jones also went deep with his first major league home run for the Yankees, who have won three straight and are 10-4 since May 24.

**Blue Jays 3, Phillies 2:** Brandon Valenzuela hit a game-winning single in the ninth inning and host Toronto scored twice off Jhoan Duran to beat Philadelphia.

Duran (1-3) blew a save opportunity for the first time this season after starting 16 for 16. The Blue Jays' rally came after Bryson Stott gave the Phillies the lead with an RBI double in the top of the ninth.

**Cardinals 7, Mets 0:** Alec Burleson homered and finished with three RBIs, powering surging St. Louis over host New York.

Dustin May (4-6) tossed six shutout innings with six strikeouts to snap a seven-start winless streak for the Cardinals, who have won five straight games — one shy of their season high.

**Royals 5, Rangers 3:** Jac Caglianone went 3-for-3 with two home runs and three RBIs as host Kansas City erased an early deficit to defeat Texas.

Caglianone, who missed the

Royals' previous game with right shoulder soreness, ended Nathan Eovaldi's no-hit bid with a leadoff homer in the fifth. In the sixth, Caglianone drove Jalen Beeks' first-pitch changeup 431 feet to right-center for a two-run shot that gave Kansas City a 5-2 lead.

**Rockies 7, Cubs 3:** Hunter Goodman hit a two-run homer in the first inning to spark the offense and host Colorado broke a four-game skid with a win over Chicago.

Ezequiel Tovar also homered for the Rockies, while Edouard Julien drove in three runs. Outfielder Cole Carrigg had a memorable major league debut, finishing 1 for 3 with a triple in the fifth for his first hit.

**Angels 10, Astros 1:** Wade Meckler and Jo Adell keyed a five-run second inning with two-run doubles, and Walbert Ureña navigated heavy traffic through five shutout innings with seven strikeouts to lead host Los Angeles over Houston.

Houston put two runners on in the first, second and fifth and loaded the bases in the third, but Ureña (4-4) pitched out of each jam to lower his ERA to 2.44 on the season and 1.84 in his past eight starts.

**Nationals 6, Giants 3:** Luis García Jr. launched a two-run homer, Jacob Young scored a pivotal run on a wild pitch in the seventh inning and visiting Washington beat San Francisco.

James Wood had three hits and Young added two as the Nationals secured a fifth consecutive road series win for the first time since 2014.

**Athletics 7, Brewers 5:** Henry Bolte hit his first career home run and the host Athletics went deep five more times Tuesday night at Las Vegas Ballpark on the way to a victory over Milwaukee.

Tyler Soderstrom snapped a 3-all tie with a two-run homer in the fifth, and the A's also got solo shots from Nick Kurtz, Jonah Heim and Zack Gelof.