

Trump says deal near, Iran contradicts

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump said an interim deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end the conflict with Iran would be signed on Sunday, a claim contradicted by Iran as the two sides still differ over key points, including management of the waterway and payments to the Islamic Republic.

"The Deal is scheduled to get signed tomorrow, and immediately after it is signed, the Hormuz Strait is OPEN TO ALL," Trump said in a social media post on Saturday, while claiming that Iran "no longer wants a Nuclear weapon."

Pakistan, which has served as a mediator, is preparing for an electronic signing of the peace deal, "followed by technical-level talks next week," Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said. Those talks would last up to 60 days and focus on Iran's nuclear program.

Trump said Iran would not get any money in the deal,

while Tehran was still insisting that it be paid for damage from the war and be able to reclaim its own assets that were frozen by the U.S. after the 1979 revolution.

Trump said that when other components of the deal were settled, the U.S. would "go in and get the Nuclear Dust," his term for highly enriched uranium, and would destroy it either in Iran or the U.S.

Iran said nothing had been finalized regarding the deal with the U.S. and that an agreement would not be reached on Trump's suggested timeline, the semi-official Fars News Agency reported on Sunday, citing an unidentified official close to the negotiating team. The terms of the accord still need to be approved by Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, according to a European official familiar with the matter.

A potential disruption to achieving a signed deal occurred Sunday when Israel

struck Hezbollah targets in Beirut. Iran warned of a military response, and Trump rebuked Israel in a social media post.

"This morning's attack on Beirut should not have happened," Trump said, adding "The attack it was responding to was very small and meaningless."

"We are very close to a Deal that will bring peace to the region, including to Lebanon," his post said. "Let's not blow it!"

Trump later told Fox News he expected an agreement with Iran to be signed in the coming hours and planned to ask Tehran not to respond to Israel's strikes, The Associated Press reported.

Trump has vowed dozens of times that an agreement to end the war that began in February is near, only for none to materialize so far. The primary U.S. objectives are to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to maritime traffic, and curb Iran's nuclear program. Iran insists on retaining a degree of control over the

waterway and gaining immediate access to its frozen funds.

The U.S. expects the deal will ensure Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapons program but would let it maintain a civilian nuclear energy program, a senior American official said. It would also ensure enriched nuclear material is removed from the country and end both sides' blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. If all terms are met, the U.S. would ease sanctions on Iran and allow it to reintegrate into the global economy, according to the official.

Some Iranian hard-liners still want to kill any breakthrough, the official said, and some of Trump's hawkish allies in the Republican Party are also skeptical of a deal.

Araghchi said Iran's sovereignty over the strait would be maintained under the proposed deal, adding the regime governing Hormuz would differ from the past, when Tehran provided management services free of charge.

Navy reactivates rotational submarine squadron

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy on Thursday reactivated Submarine Squadron 3 to support planned sub rotations in Western Australia.

The squadron will support Submarine Rotational Force-West, under which U.S. and British fast-attack submarines will begin rotations to HMAS Stirling near Perth in 2027, the Navy said in a Thursday news release.

The service did not announce which submarines would comprise the squadron. The rotational fleet was created as part

of the AUKUS pact, a September 2021 agreement creating a security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The reactivated squadron is part of an overall effort by the U.S. armed forces to forward position more troops, sea vessels, aircraft and logistics capacity in the Pacific. The positioning serves to both deter potential adversaries such as China and Russia and maintain proximity to them in the event of actual conflict.

Submarine Squadron 3 operated out of Joint Base Pearl

Harbor-Hickam before decommissioning in February 2012.

Five of its six subs were reassigned to Squadrons 1 and 7 at Pearl Harbor, with the sixth assigned to Squadron 15 on Guam.

Personnel from the reactivated Submarine Squadron 3 will integrate with their counterparts in the Australian navy to provide maintenance, logistics and operational support for all U.S. and U.K. subs at HMAS Stirling, the news release states.

"Adding an additional forward-positioned submarine squadron in the Indo-Pacific enhances our presence, agility,

and responsiveness across a range of operations," Rear Adm. Chris Cavanaugh, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet's Submarine Force, said.

As part of its build-up for Submarine Rotational Force-West, the Navy on May 30 also established Naval Support Activity Stirling at HMAS Stirling.

NSA Stirling will provide administrative, public affairs, morale, welfare and recreation, and pass-and-identification services for U.S. personnel assigned to the mission, Navy Region Japan spokesman Cmdr. Joe Keiley said.

Fertility care backing reversed in NDAA

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Senate Armed Services Committee Republicans, in a reversal, voted to oppose an NDAA provision that would broaden health care coverage for military families' fertility treatments, a Democratic senator said Thursday.

"After everything our troops sacrifice for our nation, they should never have to sacrifice their dreams of building a family," said Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill. Duckworth has said she had both of her children with in vitro fertilization.

The debate over the NDAA provision could attract attention in an election year. Anti-abortion conservatives have opposed IVF because some embryos are destroyed in the process.

Members of Congress and federal workers have had access to health care coverage for designated fertility treatments since last year.

But military families generally do not have the same coverage, except if infertility can be shown to be linked to their service.

The Defense Department's lack of broad coverage for the treatments is a concern for many people in the service and their spouses. Infertility rates among military personnel are higher than those of comparable civilians. For some, it is a quality-of-life issue that affects whether they want to stay in the military or recommend the military as a career, surveys have shown.

The Senate committee's

NDAAs in fiscal 2025 and 2026 contained provisions to authorize coverage for treatments such as in vitro fertilization for active-duty service members and their dependents under the TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select health care plans.

In each of the last two years, the provisions were supported — in committee and on the floor — by bipartisan majorities in both the House and Senate NDAAs.

But the provisions were removed from both the final fiscal 2025 and 2026 measures by Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., before the conference reports were finalized, supporters of the fertility provisions have said.

The House Armed Services Committee this month adopted

by voice vote an amendment to its NDAA by Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif., that would once again propose expanding coverage of fertility treatments for military families.

But last week, the fiscal 2027 measure that the Senate Armed Services Committee took up departed from the pattern of the previous two years and did not include a fertility provision in the underlying bill text that the committee considered.

When Duckworth offered an amendment to put the provision in the bill, it was defeated, she said in her statement.

She did not disclose the vote tally on her amendment. The breakdown is expected to be made public when the report accompanying the bill is published this week.

US troops sent to Kenya to build Ebola facility

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. troops have been dispatched to central Kenya to help build an Ebola quarantine facility in connection with a push to contain a major outbreak of the virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The effort in Kenya is part of a \$220 million whole-of-government response led by the U.S. State Department, a U.S. official

said Friday in an emailed statement to Stars and Stripes.

U.S. Africa Command deployed the personnel to Laikipia, Kenya, to establish a temporary isolation unit for Ebola, according to the statement.

"Personnel include medical, engineer, communications, security and contract planners," said the statement, without detailing how many service members are involved.

The U.S. military will not pro-

vide any frontline medical care, it added, saying the military is using its rapid-response logistics capabilities to support other U.S. government agencies.

"AFRICOM is not involved in other activities regarding Ebola, however the command remains postured to support tasking if and when directed," the official said.

While the U.S. military's current role in the Ebola response is limited, AFRICOM played a

central role in Operation United Assistance, a 2014 mission that supported efforts to contain an Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Some 3,000 U.S. troops, including from the 101st Airborne Division, were deployed in that effort, which involved delivering supplies and building temporary hospitals.

The U.S. Embassy in Kenya said the facility is "part of a holistic response to prevent spread of the disease."

Trump says US killed Tren de Aragua cartel leader

Bloomberg News

The U.S. has killed the leader of the Tren de Aragua drug cartel, Niño Guerrero, in a strike that was coordinated with Venezuela, President Donald Trump said Friday night.

"Tren de Aragua terrorists no

longer have safe haven in Venezuela or anywhere else," Trump said in a post made on Truth Social.

Trump designated the group as a terrorist organization in what was one of his earliest acts after returning to office last

year.

After starting in a prison in Venezuela more than a decade ago, Tren de Aragua spread across Latin America and entered the U.S. in part through its participation in human trafficking and undocumented migra-

tion.

It is also involved in extortion, weapons trafficking, prostitution, illegal mining, robbery and kidnapping.

Some its senior leaders are thought to be outside Venezuela.

Judge halts effort to change parks signs

SFGate, San Francisco

A federal judge issued a preliminary injunction Friday that halts the Trump administration's effort to erase some historical and scientific facts on signs in national parks.

The court order requires the government to restore the materials that have been removed or changed since May 20, 2025, within three weeks, and stop all further such changes. The administration will also be required to provide regular progress reports to the court.

The Trump administration issued the "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History" executive order in March 2025, urging park visitors to report signs that "inappropriately disparage Americans past or living," with plans to erase evidence of the his-

tory of slavery, civil rights, Indigenous peoples and climate change. It led to a grassroots effort to document removals, as well as any informational signs at risk of removal. Signs that have been removed include those connecting American explorers and massacres of Native Americans at both Grand Teton National Park and Glacier National Park. A rainbow flag was also taken down at Stonewall National Monument.

"Plaintiff has demonstrated a likelihood that Defendants' efforts, ostensibly taken in the name of restoring dignity, instead seek to rewrite the Nation's history with a white-out pen," the court order read.

The case was brought in March by a coalition that includes the National Parks Conservation Association, American Association for

State and Local History, Association of National Park Rangers and the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks.

"This ruling is from a liberal activist judge. The Department will look at our appeal options while we celebrate UFC Freedom 250 on the South Lawn of the White House this weekend in honor of our nation's 250th with the greatest president in the history of our country — President Donald Trump," an Interior Department spokesperson said in a statement emailed to SFGate on Saturday.

Organizations involved in the case previously told SFGate they were worried not only about the removal of information, but also how it could snowball into further restrictions, possibly even closing monuments altogether that are inextricably linked with history.

"This is the fierce urgency of now. Things seem to be kicking into high gear for the administration and the National Park Service, acting under duress to implement these policies," Alan Spears, the senior director for cultural resources at the National Parks Conservation Association, told SFGate in March. "The first thing we need to do is stop the freefall, stop the removal — and then work on building back better."

Judge Angel Kelley of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, a Biden appointee, issued the 63-page ruling, writing, "History cannot be faithfully told while excluding the experiences of communities whose contributions, struggles and achievements form an important part of our Nation's story."

After courts nix gas, Ala. asks to use lethal injection

AL.com

The state of Alabama isn't giving up trying to execute Jeffrey Lee, even after the Supreme Court upheld a ruling barring the state from gassing him Thursday night.

Less than 24 hours after the Supreme Court upheld a ruling calling the state's nitrogen method "likely unconstitutional" and canceling Lee's nitrogen gas execution, Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall's office asked the Alabama Supreme Court for permission to execute Lee by lethal injection.

The high court's ruling meant Alabama couldn't put Lee to death using nitrogen gas: It didn't mean the state couldn't put him to death using another method.

"While Lee elected hypoxia, he has made clear that he does not want to be executed by that method, and the federal courts have prohibited [Alabama Department of Corrections] from

employing it with him," wrote the state's top prosecutors. "ADOC is prepared, however, to execute Lee via lethal injection with the three-drug cocktail adopted in 2014 and used since that time."

Lethal injection is the state's default execution method. The state's lethal injection process has faced scrutiny after several executions were called off when prison workers couldn't find a vein to insert the intravenous lines. Gov. Kay Ivey briefly paused the state's execution process for an internal investigation.

In 2018, Alabama passed a law to allow nitrogen gas as another method of execution.

Lee's lawyers argued that Alabama's method of carrying out nitrogen executions causes extreme mental and physical pain and suffering, and they proposed alternatives to the nitrogen-gassing method, including a firing squad.

Trump to meet Mideast partners at G7 summit

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump will meet with U.S. partners in the Middle East at the Group of Seven leaders' summit in France this week, underscoring the outsized role the war in Iran continues to play as European allies grapple with the global economic fallout.

The president will hold bilateral meetings with the leaders of France, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Egypt as well as India, according to senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the upcoming trip on the condition of anonymity. India and the Middle Eastern countries are not part of the G7.

The United States and Iran are closing in on an agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which could be signed as early as Sunday on the sidelines of the summit.

The Trump administration believes it has a strong deal, one of the U.S. officials said, adding that there are many actions that other

G7 member nations can take once the agreement with Iran moves forward.

The president is expected to focus on economic development and security, supply chain resilience, artificial intelligence, regulatory streamlining and energy abundance, the officials said.

The meeting at Évian-les-Bains from Monday to Wednesday comes at a time of growing tensions between the U.S. and many of its largest economic and security partners.

The war delivered a global energy shock with Iran closing the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for oil and gas shipments, roiling financial markets, causing gasoline prices to spike and raising fears about the impact on global growth. Trump has lashed out at European allies for not doing more to help open the strait, even again floating the prospect of the U.S. exiting NATO.

Rise of subs reshapes global security

BY GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The threat and the promise of submarines played out on opposite sides of the world this year.

In early March, a U.S. Navy submarine sank the Iranian corvette IRIS Dena off Sri Lanka with a MK 48 torpedo. About 87 of the crew were killed.

Near the end of May, a South Korean submarine arrived at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, in British Columbia, after an 8,400-mile trip across the Pacific. South Korea is hoping to convince Canada to buy its submarines — business also sought by Germany.

The sinking and sales pitch were reminders of the tactical potency of submarines and the status of having an undersea force.

More than 480 submarines from more than 40 nations currently operate in the oceans of the world, according to a 2025 count by the international data aggregator World Population Review. The submarine forces range from the all-nuclear-powered U.S. fleet of about 67 fast-attack, ballistic-missile and guided-missile submarines to the one-sub force of Poland.

Although the U.S. exported a significant number of subs early in the Cold War, it hasn't built a conventionally powered sub since the USS Blueback was commissioned in 1959. That's left the sub market to the rest of the world.

Navy Chief of Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle said on March 30 at a Center for Strategic and International Studies event that the U.S. is committed to an all-nuclear fleet.

Caudle said the Navy could, perhaps, procure large conventionally powered undersea drones.

“But as far as going to a full-scale manned diesel submarine? — It isn't happening,” he said.

Mark Cancian, a Marine vet-

eran who is an analyst at CSIS, says the U.S. couldn't build submarines for export even if it wanted.

“The United States is unable to accelerate its own submarine production until the mid-2030s because of constraints in shipyards and the labor force,” he said.

While the Cold War spurred submarine building after World War II, regional conflicts now drive much of the market: China and Taiwan; India and Pakistan; North Korea and South Korea; Iran and Israel.

The Soviet Union heavily exported its diesel-electric submarines, selling or giving allies 60 “Whiskey-class” submarines in the two decades before 1980. The submarines went to China, North Korea, Cuba, Egypt, Poland, Syria, Bulgaria and Albania, according to Nuclear Threat Institute. The modern Kilo-class went to China, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Venezuela.

Russia has largely resisted transferring nuclear sub technology to other nations, with the exception of China. In 2012, for the first time, it leased an Akula-class nuclear submarine to India.

China is the third major power in the submarine sales or transfer mix. It has followed dual tracks, rapidly building conventionally powered submarines to scale up its navy, while adding more nuclear boats to modernize the mix.

The Pentagon, in its annual analysis of Chinese military power, reported in December that China's armed services have 60 submarines, with six attack submarines and six missile submarines powered by nuclear reactors. Taiwan has two conventional-powered submarines.

Much of the submarine activity is focused on the 1.4 million square-mile South China Sea. Unlike the globe-straddling zones of competition between

the U.S. and Soviet Union, the focus today is on China's anti-access/area denial through the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

“PLA Navy submarines are central to China's strategy to deny adversary forces access to waters within the First Island Chain,” the 2025 Pentagon report said.

About \$3 trillion in annual trade moves through the South China Sea each year, according to a Pentagon estimate.

The United States says it wants to balance the nuclear-powered submarine presence in the region through its AUKUS program, which will allow Australia to eventually buy some of the Navy's older Virginia-class nuclear attack submarines and develop their nuclear-powered technology.

The biggest military in the area is Japan. It operates about 23 submarines of a domestic design, though it has purchased a Swedish air-propulsion system to use on submarines. As a close ally, the United States has sold UGM-84L Harpoon Block II submarine-launched missiles to Japan.

South Korea has 22 submarines and enough shipyard capacity for an aggressive overseas sales effort on its KSS-III attack submarine it's seeking to sell Canada and other countries. It has sold submarines to Indonesia and is eager to add Canada to its customer list.

North Korea has about 24 submarines, mostly variations of Russian or Chinese designs, and in December 2025 the country unveiled in-progress construction of what the military says is its first nuclear-powered missile submarine. The nuclear capability has not been independently verified.

The United States, Russia and China account for more than 40% of submarines, and some of the largest second-tier fleets are in the Indo-Pacific region, but subs are built, bought and sold

around the world.

India and Pakistan continue to develop nuclear-powered vessels in a region with ongoing tensions. India commissioned INS Arighaat in August 2024 — a 6,000-ton submarine with a light water reactor that has test-launched a submarine-launched ballistic missile from the Bay of Bengal.

In Europe, the United Kingdom and France operate nuclear-powered submarines in their navies. Germany does not, but exports its conventionally powered designs to countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Singapore, South Korea, Norway and Turkey, according to NTI.

In 2021, Norway and Germany signed a pact to produce six Type 212CD submarines — two for Germany and four for Norway. The first boat in the 5-billion-euro deal is scheduled for delivery to Norway in 2029.

France's Naval Group exports Scorpène-class diesel-electric submarine and conventionally powered versions of the French nuclear-powered Barracuda-class. Customers have included Brazil, Malaysia, India, Chile, Indonesia and the Netherlands.

The Todaro-class submarines built by the German-Italian Submarine Programme plans to sell boats to Qatar. Italy had a joint submarine project with Russia that it terminated when Moscow invaded Crimea in 2014.

Sweden has exported three classes of submarines to Singapore, Australia and Denmark, and retrofitted Japanese subs with its air-propulsion system.

As navies seek to modernize for advantages against regional adversaries, the demand for submarines is likely to continue to rise, experts say.

“Not many countries can afford an aircraft carrier, but they can afford a submarine,” said Cancian.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman charged for kicking urn into creek

TX BRYAN — A Bryan woman has been arrested on a charge of abuse of a corpse after she allegedly kicked an urn with human ashes into a creek.

According to a Bryan police report, Ashley Nicole Olden, 34, threw a box containing two urns with a man's father's ashes into a creek and kicked a third urn into the water.

The man told the officer that Olden threw his father's ashes and watch, and the man's wallet into a creek. When he retrieved the wallet, his Department of Veterans Affairs cards and his photos were gone. When the officer questioned Olden, she reportedly admitted to having burned them. She also reportedly admitted to throwing a box with two of the urns into the creek and kicking the third urn into the creek. The man was upset because he could not locate the third urn or the watch.

Aldermen push for stiffer penalties on pot smoking

IL CHICAGO — Aldermen advanced a proposed ordinance Tuesday that stiffens penalties for marijuana-related offenses near Chicago schools and parks — and could include sharp punishments for smoking cannabis in public.

The measure would expand the city's long-standing "safe passage" laws that already place steep minimum fines and jail sentences for weapons violations near such locations. With Tuesday's vote, aldermen moved closer to adding more offenses tied to cannabis consumption to the mix.

The ordinance affecting parks, playgrounds and "student safety zones" is an effort to crack down on marijuana sales in areas where children are present, chief sponsor Alderman Gilbert Villagas told the City Council Public Safety Committee.

Bill would make NYPD report all shots fired

NY NEW YORK — The NYPD would have to make public any information about incidents in which someone fires a gun, even if no one is struck, under terms of a bill being considered by the City Council.

The Police Department currently posts on its website information about shooting incidents, defined as instances in which someone is injured or killed, and the number of shooting victims.

It does not, however, release information about shots-fired incidents in which no one is struck, the Daily News reported last month.

That would change if the proposed local law, sponsored by Council members Oswald Feliz, D-Bronx, who chairs the Public Safety Committee, and Joann Ariola, R-Queens, passes.

City approves automated license plate readers

CA SAN DIEGO — The Imperial Beach City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to authorize the San Diego County Sheriff's Office to install four automated license plate reader cameras and launch a two-month pilot program for two public safety cameras, joining a growing number of the county's jurisdictions using the technology.

The 4-0 vote, with Council member Matthew Leyba-Gonzalez absent, authorizes staff to execute the agreement and negotiate final contract language with the Sheriff's Office.

The cameras will be manufactured by Flock Safety, the same vendor used by more than a dozen other county jurisdictions including Chula Vista, Carlsbad and Coronado.

River pollution projects advance with EPA help

MI DETROIT — Michigan and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently announced a new \$10 million partnership that will accelerate pollution cleanup work on the Detroit River, a waterway loaded with toxic compounds left behind by factories, coal plants and sewage overflows that dominated the river's shoreline for a century.

Under the partnership, staff from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and EPA will develop a plan for cleaning approximately 800,000 cubic yards of polluted sediment from the stretch of the river along Belle Isle, areas they call Harbortown and Harbortown-Upstream.

They will also develop preliminary cleanup goals for removing polluted sediment from the rest of the river. EPA put \$6.5 million and EGLE put \$3.5 million toward the project.

Arrest after illegal killing of alligator was recorded

NC CHARLOTTE — A 12-foot alligator became evidence in an unusual crime, after closer inspection re-

vealed it had been fatally shot by a poacher, North Carolina wildlife officials said.

The discovery was made April 2 along U.S. 264 in Dare County, and a tip led to video of the killing posted on social media, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission says.

"A member of the public came forward and reported that a video of the incident was circulating on social media. After reviewing the video, Officer [John] Schlegel was able to determine 23-year-old Noah Voyles of Chesapeake, VA., was involved."

Voyles was charged April 6 with unlawfully taking an alligator during the closed season, and unlawfully taking a protected species on the N.C. Threatened Species List, state officials said.

Vitamin D shows promise for pancreatic cancers

MD BALTIMORE — Patients receiving a type of vitamin D lived longer after chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer in a small study run by researchers with the Salk Institute.

Among 36 patients with previously untreated pancreatic cancer that had metastasized or spread, those taking a type of vitamin D called paricalcitol experienced a significant survival boost one year after the trial, researchers from the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in La Jolla, Calif., found.

The supplement, administered orally or by injection, reduced the presence of inflammation and fibroblasts: thick mats of connective tissue cells that form the protective shield around many cancers.

— From wire reports

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Knicks top Spurs for 1st title since 1973

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Jalen Brunson and the Comeback Knicks did it again. And now they're the Champion Knicks.

For the first time in 53 years, New York rules the NBA. Brunson scored 45 points, including 13 straight in the fourth quarter, and the Knicks beat the San Antonio Spurs 94-90 in Game 5 of the NBA Finals on Saturday night.

New York won the series 4-1, rallying from double-digit deficits in all four of those victories. The deficit was 16 on Saturday night. Brunson and the Knicks were never fazed.

"I have no words," Brunson, the NBA Finals MVP, said during the on-court celebration. "It's everything I ever dreamed of."

Brunson, fittingly, closed with a flourish. He set a New York record for points in a Finals game; it had been 38 by Willis Reed against the Los Angeles Lakers in Game 3 of the 1970 series. It now belongs to the left-handed point guard who changed the franchis-

es' fortunes when he arrived four years ago.

"It's surreal," Knicks coach Mike Brown, who was hired a year ago — making him the franchise's 24th coach since the franchise's last championship in 1973. "I still can't believe it's happened."

Mikal Bridges and Josh Hart combined to score 27 points. Bridges had 14 and Hart added 13.

"I don't know what I'm feeling," Brunson said. "I'm in awe. Whenever someone counted us out, we found a way to come back and do something about it."

Dylan Harper scored 25 for the Spurs, who got 19 points, 14 rebounds and five blocked shots from Victor Wembanyama.

"This is the biggest lesson of my life, the biggest learning moment," Wembanyama said.

The Knicks improved to 4-0 in closeout opportunities this season, winning them all on the road. It didn't feel like the road, though — not with thousands of New York faithful having made the trip to Texas to see a moment 53 years in the making.

New York got to the brink of this title by rallying from 29 points down in Game 4 to win 107-106 on OG Anunoby's tip-in with 1.2 seconds left on Wednesday night. It was the largest comeback in NBA Finals history and the biggest comeback in any game this season, regular season or playoffs.

By comparison, then, a 16-point rally in this one seemed easy. And San Antonio had to shuffle off into the offseason, listening to Knicks fans celebrating in their building.

"We weren't ready to win an NBA championship," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "The better team won. We did a lot of good things, and we didn't finish the job. That's what it is."

The game followed the same script in the opening minutes as all the others in the series, with San Antonio taking a double-digit lead in the first quarter and then frittering most of it away in the second quarter.

The Spurs became the first team in the play-by-play era, which started in the 1996-97 season, to lead five Finals games by

10 points or more in first quarters.

New York simply could not make a shot, missing on 16 of its first 18 tries and each of its first 11 two-point attempts. There even was a point in the second quarter when Wembanyama had more blocked shots (five) than the Knicks had made shots (four). San Antonio's lead was as many as 10 in the first quarter, as many as 16 in the second.

Of course, none of it mattered much. A 22-9 run in the second quarter got the Knicks within three, before Devin Vassell scored just before the halftime buzzer to give the Spurs a 42-37 edge at the break.

And that capped an opening 24 minutes of either offensive ineptitude or defensive prowess, depending on perspective. The 79 combined points in the first half were the lowest in a Finals game since Game 7 of Lakers-Celtics in 2010, and the combined 31.8% field goals shooting by New York and San Antonio was the lowest in the first half of a Finals game in the play-by-play era.

Balogun scores 2, sparks dynamic US win over Paraguay

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Folarin Balogun fired his second goal into the top far corner of Paraguay's net and then led his American teammates to the corner of their home stadium, reveling in the frenzy created by their historic first half at their World Cup opener.

The world's biggest soccer tournament finally returned to the United States on Friday night after a generation of anticipation.

With this phenomenal match, the Americans also look like they've arrived.

Balogun scored twice in the Americans' three-goal barrage before halftime, and the U.S. opened its first home World Cup in 32 years with its biggest win in the tournament, a dynamic 4-1 victory over Paraguay.

Christian Pulisic had an assist in a stellar first-half playmaking performance for the Americans, who enthralled their Southern California fans with an aggressive attack while streaking to a 3-0 lead — the team's largest in any World Cup game.

"It meant everything for us," Pulisic said. "A half like that, for it to go as it did, and have the fans excited about our performance, it felt amazing."

Gio Reyna ripped another goal in the dying moments of second-half injury time, giving the Americans four goals in a World Cup match for the first time in their tournament history dating to 1930.

This production, this confidence, this dominance — it was nothing like the vast majority of the Americans' previous perfor-

mances on the international stage over the years and decades.

They've won exactly one knockout-round game in the World Cup. They've almost always struggled to score in the biggest events, most recently managing only three goals combined in their four matches at the Qatar World Cup in 2022.

In this pressure-packed home opener, the Americans were a team transformed while playing in coach Mauricio Pochettino's more creative system in front of a passionate, star-studded Los Angeles crowd of 70,492. Led by the elite talent and coach-inspired fearlessness of Balogun, Pulisic and Weston McKennie up front, the U.S. finally had its breakthrough performance at SoFi Stadium.

Not everything went perfectly:

Pulisic was replaced by Sebastian Berhalter at halftime for precautionary reasons. Pochettino said Pulisic was kicked in the back of his left calf during a training session this week, and felt some subsequent tightness during the match.

"Staying positive," Pulisic said. "I don't think it's anything."

Mauricio scored in the second half for Paraguay, but La Albirroja fell too far behind early in their first World Cup match in 16 years.

"The U.S. won this match very clearly and fairly," Paraguay coach Gustavo Alfaro said through an interpreter. "They dominated tactically, technically and physically as well. ... This team is a complex challenge because they have answers to everything you throw at them."

Ehlers puts Canes on cusp of Cup win

Associated Press

MORRISVILLE, N.C. — Nikolaj Ehlers had made a costly mistake.

The Carolina Hurricanes winger had thrown a puck over the glass for a delay of game penalty in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Final, leading to a power-play goal for the Vegas Golden Knights.

He knew he had to make up for it.

He did it, too. Not with a goal, but with a shot pass that perfectly hit a cutting captain Jordan Staal in stride for a redirection score that helped the Hurricanes go on to win 4-2.

“As a player,” teammate Seth Jarvis said two days later, “it’s incredible to watch what he can do individually with the puck.”

The Hurricanes signed Ehlers last summer as an answer in a multiyear quest to add high-end skill, a “missing piece” acquisition for a playoff-tested lineup chasing a breakthrough moment. He’s now had back-to-back three-point games, helping Carolina move within a victory of hoisting the Stanley Cup en-

tering Sunday’s Game 6.

“He’s an elite player, playmaker — that’s what we knew we were getting,” coach Rod Brind’Amour said after Saturday’s practice.

There have been plenty of goal-scoring highlights for Ehlers, who had spent 10 seasons in Winnipeg before signing a six-year deal with Carolina. That included a two-goal game that included the overtime winner in a pressure-packed Game 2 of the Eastern Conference finals against Montreal with the Hurricanes facing a possible 0-2 series deficit.

But his passing has proven just as critical. He had three assists in Thursday’s 4-2 win in Game 5, which followed his two assists to go with an empty-net clincher in a 5-3 road win in Game 4. That pushed him to five multipoint playoff outings in the past nine games after having just one in the first eight.

Now Ehlers and the Hurricanes have a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series entering Sunday’s game in Las Vegas.

“It’s going to be really hard,”

Ehlers said after Thursday’s win. “It’s going to be a really tough game, but we’re excited for it. We’re ready for it. This team has been working all year for moments like this, and especially this moment.”

He pounced for a goal just 25 seconds into Game 1 then added a second in the first period of that 5-4 loss. He has scored or assisted on six of Carolina’s past eight goals.

Look at Ehlers’ third assist in Game 5 as an example. The guy nicknamed “Fly” for his open-ice speed collected a power-play pass near the slot, spun and sent an on-the-tape pass to Andrei Svechnikov for the easy finish at the right post for a 4-1 lead.

Jarvis has typically played on Carolina’s Sebastian Aho-centered top line with Svechnikov in these playoffs. But Brind’Amour recently juggled his lines to put Jarvis alongside Ehlers and captain Jordan Staal looking for a boost from his top producers.

That worked during Round 2 against Philadelphia. Jarvis scored his first of the postseason

on a third-period feed from Ehlers, coming on their first shift of Game 2 together.

“You know he’s looking for you,” Jarvis said. “You know he is looking to make plays, so it’s just about managing myself and where I am on the ice and positioning myself with a chance to be on the receiving end of it and score or make another play.”

That helps offset any potential mistakes he’ll make, too.

Carolina improbably committed three “DOGPOG” penalties for throwing the puck over the glass in Game 5. Ehlers committed two, prompting Ehlers to call it “probably my worst game in the whole playoffs.” He also joked he was nervous about the criticism he’d get from his father — Heinz, a professional hockey coach in Europe — for the penalties when they caught up afterward.

“To do that twice in a game is not something that I’m very proud of,” Ehlers said.

“But you’ve got to try and stick with it and try to make up for it, not try to do too much — which I also did tonight.”

Rager, Lachance star as Sooners rout Crimson Tide

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Freshman left-hander Cord Rager allowed three hits over seven innings, an injured Deiten Lachance hobbled around the bases after hitting a two-run homer and Oklahoma continued its postseason tear with a 9-0 victory over Alabama in the College World Series on Saturday.

The Sooners (39-22) advanced to play Monday against Georgia. The Crimson Tide (42-20) will face Texas in an elimination game Monday.

Alabama, which won two of three on the road against Oklahoma in April, was on its heels from the start in its first CWS appearance since 1999.

The Sooners put up two runs in the first inning against Tyler Fay (11-5), who grew up two hours west of Omaha in Doniphan, Neb. He gave up five runs in six innings, and the Sooners added four more in the eighth against two relievers.

Rager (6-3) held Alabama hitless until John Lemm drilled his first pitch up the middle leading off the fifth and Eric Hines sent a ball down the third-base line. A double play and groundout ended the threat.

Rager allowed three singles in the longest outing of the season, walked none and struck out eight. Of his 88 pitches, 63 were strikes. He said going through the Southeastern Conference schedule

prepared him for the postseason. In his last 19 innings, he’s given up three runs on 11 hits with 22 strikeouts and one walk.

The Sooners won seven of eight in the NCAA Tournament with a .347 batting average, 19 homers, 31 extra-base hits and 79 runs.

No one has been better than Lachance, the 6-foot-5, 231-pound Canadian catcher whose nickname is “Big Maple.”

He stayed in the game after he rolled his left ankle going into second base in the first inning. He drove a ball out to left for a 5-0 lead in the sixth, laboring during his trot around the bases and nearly making a full stop a few steps from the plate to raise his

arms and pull them down with a clap.

Georgia 7, Texas 1: Joey Volchko struck out a career-high 15 in his first complete game and the Bulldogs capitalized on Long Horn ace Dylan Volantis’ horrific first inning in a showdown of the Southeastern Conference’s top two teams.

Volchko (11-2) fanned nine of the first 13 batters he faced, allowed just four singles and didn’t issue a walk until the ninth inning of his 114-pitch masterpiece.

Georgia (52-12) improved to 6-0 in the NCAA Tournament and has won 20 of its last 21 games since April 25. Texas (45-14) has lost four straight in the CWS over three appearances since 2021.

Marte's late homer lifts Reds over D-backs

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Noelvi Marte hit a go-ahead homer in the eighth inning, Rhet Lowder allowed one run in 5½ innings and the Cincinnati Reds edged the Arizona Diamondbacks 2-1 on Saturday.

Lowder missed nearly a month with a shoulder injury that kept him out until early June and he wasn't effective in his return from the injured list this month. But on Saturday, Lowder delivered one of his best starts of the season, giving up five hits while striking out six and walking two.

He initially faced some trouble when he gave up a solo homer to Corbin Carroll in the first inning. But Lowder cruised through the rest of his start before being relieved by Caleb Ferguson with two outs in the sixth. Tony Santillan got three outs for his third save.

Matt McLain doubled in the third and scored on Edwin Arroyo's single to tie it at 1. Cincinnati had been hitting .133 with runners in scoring position in June.

Dodgers 7, White Sox 1: Yoshinobu Yamamoto carried a no-hit bid into the ninth inning, sending visiting Los Angeles over Chicago.

Yamamoto (7-4) retired his first 23 batters before Chase Meidroth reached on a two-out error on shortstop Mookie Betts in the eighth. Jacob Gonzalez then bounced to second, ending the inning.

But Tristan Peters hit a lead-off drive for the White Sox in the ninth. Peters drove a 96.6 mph fastball deep to right for his third homer.

Guardians 3, Tigers 1: Tarik Skubal was tagged for a two-run homer by Cleveland's Daniel Schneemann in the two-time reigning Cy Young winner's return from elbow surgery, and the host Guardians downed Detroit.

Skubal (3-3) threw 80 pitches in his first start since April 29.

The left-hander had a loose body removed from his elbow during an innovative surgical procedure May 6, allowing Skubal to come back earlier than expected.

The win came at a steep price for Cleveland as star third baseman José Ramírez suffered a broken bone in his left hand. Ramírez fractured his hamate bone on a swing in the fifth inning. He'll be out for an indefinite period.

Phillies 9, Brewers 8: J.T. Realmuto hit a three-run homer and visiting Philadelphia scored five times in the sixth inning before holding on for a win over Milwaukee.

Bryson Stott put the Phillies ahead 4-3 in the sixth with his second RBI double of the game. Realmuto followed with his fourth home run this season, and Bryce Harper added a sacrifice fly later in the inning.

Jackson Chourio homered twice and went 4-for-5 with four RBIs for the Brewers, who have lost three of four following a four-game winning streak. Garrett Mitchell added a two-run shot.

Cardinals 9, Twins 6: Blaze Jordan hit his first major league homer and Iván Herrera went deep twice for visiting St. Louis in a power-fueled victory over Minnesota.

Herrera and Jordan Walker had back-to-back home runs off reliever Justin Lawrence that broke a seventh-inning tie, and Jordan followed with a three-run shot against Travis Adams. Lawrence (0-3) surrendered four straight hits after striking out the first two batters.

Yankees 3, Blue Jays 1: Paul Goldschmidt hit a tiebreaking home run in the ninth inning and visiting New York beat Toronto.

After Cody Bellinger singled to open the ninth against Blue Jays closer Louis Varland, Goldschmidt followed with a 400-foot drive to left for his ninth home run.

Braves 3, Mets 1: Eli White homered and matched a career high with three hits, leading visiting Atlanta over New York.

White laced an RBI double in the second inning and homered in the fourth before hitting another double in the seventh as the major league-leading Braves halted their second three-game losing streak of the season.

Padres 9, Orioles 3: Jackson Merrill and Samad Taylor each hit a two-run homer in the first inning, and three more visiting San Diego batters went deep as it rolled over Baltimore.

Taylor's home run was the first of his career, and it gave the Padres a 4-0 lead. Pete Alonso went deep in the bottom of the first for the Orioles, but Randy Vásquez (6-4) held them to two runs in five innings, and San Diego added two runs in the fifth to take a 6-2 lead. Then Gavin Sheets, Rodolfo Durán and Manny Machado added solo shots in the seventh, eighth and ninth for the Padres.

Pirates 3, Marlins 2: Spencer Horwitz was hit by a pitch from Anthony Bender with the bases loaded in the eighth inning to bring in the go-ahead run and give host Pittsburgh a win over Miami, ending its six-game win streak.

Bender (1-1) struck out the first two batters of the inning before surrendering singles to Tyler Callihan and Jake Mangum and walking Jared Triolo. On the first pitch following a mound visit, Bender hit Horwitz with a 97 mph sinker to bring home Callihan.

Nationals 8, Mariners 3: Luis García Jr. broke a fifth-inning tie with a two-run homer and host Washington defeated Seattle.

CJ Abrams had three hits and two RBIs for the Nationals (36-35), who improved to 13-21 at home after losing their previous four games in Washington. Abrams also scored twice.

Red Sox 6, Rangers 3: Cedanne Rafaela's two-run single snapped a tie in the seventh inning as host Boston beat Texas.

Rafaela's two-out, two-strike hit off Robby Ahlstrom with the bases loaded gave the Red Sox a 4-2 lead and helped them clinch their first series win at Fenway Park since April 6-8 when they took two of three games from Milwaukee.

Astros 8, Royals 7: Jose Altuve hit a tying home run in the eighth inning, Joey Loperfido scored the go-ahead run when the Royals botched a potential inning-ending double play in the ninth and visiting Houston beat Kansas City.

Christian Walker, Brice Matthews and Jake Meyers also went deep in a game delayed for 91 minutes in the eighth due to tornadowarnings. The Astros have hit multiple homers in three straight games, 10 in all.

Angels 8, Rays 0: Jose Soriano (8-4) pitched five innings of three-hit ball, Denzer Guzman drove in three runs and host Los Angeles extended its winning streak to four games with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Jose Siri hit a two-run home run and Donovan Walton had two RBI hits to put the Angels in line for just their second series sweep of the season Sunday.

Athletics 7, Rockies 5: Pinch-hitter Tyler Soderstrom delivered a go-ahead double in the sixth inning and the host Athletics beat Colorado for their fourth straight comeback victory.

Zack Gelof had a two-run homer and Alik Williams went 3-for-3 with a walk for the A's, including a tying single in the sixth.

Cubs 6, Giants 1: Pete Crow-Armstrong homered on the first pitch of the game and visiting Chicago hit two more home runs in a victory over San Francisco.

Ben Brown (3-2) allowed a run on seven hits in five innings for the Cubs.