

Trump tells allies to 'get your own oil'

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump said Tuesday countries that have stopped receiving fuel via the Strait of Hormuz should “just take it,” underscoring rising frustrations over Iran’s continued chokehold on the vital maritime shipping corridor.

The president, in a post to his Truth Social website, also criticized allied countries, including the United Kingdom, for what he sees as insufficient participation in the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran as it enters its fifth week.

Trump’s post said nations hurting from the oil shortage should “buy from the U.S.” or send their own forces to the strait, where Iran has been attacking merchant vessels since the war began on Feb. 28.

“Build up some delayed courage, go to the Strait, and just

TAKE IT,” the president wrote. “You’ll have to start learning how to fight for yourself, the U.S.A. won’t be there to help you anymore, just like you weren’t there for us.”

Trump’s comments came as Iran launched a drone strike on a fully loaded Kuwaiti oil tanker off the coast of Dubai. Authorities there said the fire was under control with no oil leakage or injuries reported.

One month into the war, the U.S. has reached many of its strategic goals, including killing Iran’s top leader and destroying much of its navy and weapons arsenal. But oil continues to move through the Strait of Hormuz at a trickle, with Iran allowing only a small number of ships to pass into the Persian Gulf.

In response, Trump has threatened to strike Iranian oil and energy infrastructure, sug-

gesting this week that the U.S. could blow up or seize Kharg Island, a critical oil terminal off the coast of Iran.

Trump has repeatedly urged NATO allies to take matters into their own hands and criticized them for not getting involved. Multiple European nations have prohibited the U.S. from using their territory for operations related to the Iran war, including Spain and France.

The Pentagon has moved thousands of additional Marines and paratroopers to the region, and the president has not ruled out a ground invasion into Iran, which would extend the conflict and likely result in a high number of U.S. casualties, experts say.

Meanwhile, The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday that Trump told aides he is willing to end the U.S. military campaign

against Iran even if the Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed. The president said the U.S. should decimate Iran’s military capabilities and wind down hostilities while using diplomacy to resume the free flow of trade, the report said.

On Tuesday, Bloomberg News reported that Iran hit a fully laden Kuwaiti oil tanker off the coast of Dubai during a fresh wave of attacks around the Persian Gulf, a sign it’s willing to escalate strikes on energy assets as the war drags on.

The Tuesday assault on the Al-Salmi, a large crude carrier in an area packed with ships, is one of the most significant on a vessel since the U.S. and Israel began bombarding the Islamic Republic more than a month ago. Dubai authorities said a fire was contained and all 24 crew members are safe, with no oil leaking.

Rubio questions US bases in Europe over Iran rift

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Secretary of State Marco Rubio said this week that the United States will need to reexamine its security relationship with NATO partner Spain and others in the alliance, after some European countries balked at lending assistance for operations against Iran.

Rubio, who before becoming secretary of state was a vocal supporter of NATO, on Monday questioned the utility of keeping overseas bases if they can’t be used in a crisis.

“If NATO is just about us defending Europe if they’re attacked but then denying us basing rights when we need them, that’s not a very good arrange-

ment,” Rubio said Monday on Al Jazeera. “That’s a hard one to stay engaged in and say this is good for the United States. So all that’s going to have to be reexamined.”

Rubio’s comments could have major implications for NATO and Washington’s ties with the alliance. President Donald Trump has long been critical of NATO, but during his first term he did not fundamentally alter the U.S. approach to the alliance, in part due to pushback from top officials who held more traditional views.

Rubio, however, suggested the current base arrangement needed to be adjusted. He blasted Spain in particular for denying the use of its bases for Iran operations at the outset of the

campaign and on Monday denied access to its airspace for military overflights related to the operation.

“We have countries like Spain, a NATO member, that we are pledged to defend, denying us the use of their airspace and bragging about it. Denying us the use of their bases. And there are other countries that have done that as well,” said Rubio, who didn’t specify what other countries he had in mind. “And so you ask yourself, ‘Well, what is in it for the United States?’”

On Tuesday, multiple Italian news agencies, citing unnamed defense ministry officials, reported that the use of Naval Air Station Sigonella for operations against Iran also was denied.

The Italian defense ministry later denied reports that it had cut off access to the base in Sigonella, while a Pentagon official told Stars and Stripes that the cooperation agreements between the militaries of Italy and the United States “remain strong.”

Later Tuesday, Trump took aim at France over a related issue. In a post to his Truth Social website, Trump complained that France “wouldn’t let planes headed to Israel, loaded up with military supplies, fly over French territory.”

“France has been VERY UN-HELPFUL with respect to the ‘Butcher of Iran,’ who has been successfully eliminated! The U.S.A. will REMEMBER!!!” Trump added.

Experts see risks in a Kharg operation

BY LARA KORTE

Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump is considering seizing Kharg Island, a major source of Iran's revenue that could give the U.S. more leverage in opening the Strait of Hormuz.

Doing so would require a large-scale operation and could lead to a significant number of U.S. casualties, experts say.

The island, about 20 miles off Iran's coast and 350 miles from the Strait of Hormuz, is the terminal for about 90% of Iran's crude oil, acting as a crucial hub for the country's most valuable export.

Earlier this month, Trump said U.S. forces had "totally obliterated" every military target on Kharg Island, but opted to leave the oil infrastructure alone.

This week, Trump suggested the U.S. could go further.

"Maybe we take Kharg Island, maybe we don't. We have a lot of options," he said Monday in an interview with the *Financial Times*. "It would also mean we had to be there (on Kharg Island) for a while."

In a post later Monday on his Truth Social website, Trump included Kharg Island on a list of Iranian targets he said he was considering "blowing up and completely obliterating" if Iran does not immediately open the Strait of Hormuz and agree to a peace deal.

The president's comments come as the U.S. reportedly considers sending up to 10,000 additional troops to the region, adding to the thousands of Marines and sailors who have already arrived.

While a seizure would be a blow to Iran, it also could come at a great cost to U.S. forces, experts say.

"We could suffer, potentially,

much larger numbers of casualties than we've suffered until now," said Michael Eisenstadt, a former military analyst who now directs the Military and Security Studies Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"It's a very small island. It's right off the coast. It will become a drone and missile magnet."

More attacks likely

There is no guarantee that such an operation could deliver a decisive victory or shorten the war, wrote Ryan Brobst and Cameron McMillan, experts at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, in an analysis last week. In fact, they said, it would likely have the opposite effect.

Iran would likely launch mass attacks against U.S. forces during a seizure and any subsequent occupation, they said. As a result, the U.S. would need to protect troops with robust defense systems, which require a large number of personnel and would be difficult to quickly set up on the island.

Seizing Kharg Island would also require significant support from U.S. air and naval assets, which are already strained across several missions. Deploying warships and fighter jets so close to Iran would also leave them vulnerable to potentially deadly attacks from short-range weapons.

"Iran is currently limited to primarily using its diminishing long-range capabilities, but the U.S. placing troops on the island would allow Iran to employ much more of its arsenal," Brobst and McMillan wrote.

Retired Gen. Joseph Votel, who served as the head of U.S. Central Command from 2016 to 2019, said the Marine units deployed in the region are capable of seizing the island, but doing so

would require sustained protection, which could pull resources from other parts of the theater for long periods of time.

"We can do anything if we prioritize it," said Votel, who is now a distinguished fellow at the Middle East Institute. "When you start putting troops on the ground, then you really become anchored in terms of the support that you have to provide them."

Some, like Eisenstadt, have advocated for other options, including mining the waters around Kharg Island, which would prevent Iran from exporting oil and free up troops to do other missions in the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. could also help establish its own blockade of oil tankers on the outside of the Strait of Hormuz, which would put similar economic pressure on Iran.

"There's a lot of ways to skin this cat that involve less risk," Eisenstadt said.

Troops head to Mideast

The Pentagon is surging troops to the region as it prepares for weeks of ground operations in Iran, *The Washington Post* reported over the weekend.

Sailors and Marines aboard the USS *Tripoli* arrived in the Middle East on Friday, according to U.S. Central Command. The *Tripoli* is the flagship of its amphibious ready group and the Japan-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Marine Expeditionary Units, sometimes referred to as one of the military's "Swiss Army knife" forces, are often used in missions that involve seizing territory, conducting raids and intercepting vessels.

The 31st MEU is one of seven in the Marines and features a combination of air, ground and

support elements designed to quickly respond to combat and noncombat situations. The *Tripoli* can carry MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, F-35 fighter jets and a variety of helicopters.

The Pentagon is also sending elements of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based near San Diego, and elements of the USS *Boxer* Amphibious Ready Group to the region.

Nearly 2,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division were recently ordered to the Middle East. The soldiers are drawn from the unit's quick-reaction brigade known as the Immediate Response Force, which is designed to mobilize anywhere in the world in 18 hours.

The units have a wide range of capabilities and give the combatant commander flexibility, Votel said.

"These are high-end units," he said. "They carry a certain reputation that connotes readiness, that connotes aggressiveness, that connotes fighting success."

News reports indicate the Pentagon could deploy additional forces, including infantry and armored units, to serve alongside the Marines and paratroopers.

The vast majority of Democrats in Congress have rejected the idea of a ground invasion, while Republicans remain split on the issue.

Some, like South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, have pushed the president for troops on the ground, saying the U.S. can take Kharg the same way it took Iwo Jima in World War II, a battle that killed nearly 7,000 U.S. Marines.

"We did Iwo Jima, we can do this," he told Fox News last week. "My money's always on the Marines."

Trump wants Congress back to end shutdown

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump wants Congress to nix a two-week recess and return to the Capitol to address the ongoing Department of Homeland Security shutdown, his top spokesperson said Monday.

“The president is also encouraging Congress to come back to Washington to permanently fix this problem and to fund and reopen the Department of Homeland Security entirely,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters.

The Senate late last week approved a DHS spending measure that, at Democrats’ behest, excluded new monies for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection.

House GOP leaders rejected that measure, instead approving an eight-week DHS funding measure along party lines.

For his part, Trump signed an executive order to pay Transportation Security Administration employees in order to address long wait times at U.S. airports.

But Leavitt contended that was far from a long-term solution.

“Of course, the president just can’t keep signing presidential memorandums and proclamations every time Congress fails to do its job,” she said.

As Trump has since the weeklong DHS shutdown began, Leavitt pinned all of the blame for the stalemate on congressional Democrats.

She accused Democrats of “holding our entire country hostage” by “picking and choosing which programs and agencies they want to fund just because they don’t like this administration’s policies.”

“That’s not how it’s supposed to work,” Leavitt said. “They voted seven times against funding DHS, over partisan and political reasons.”

But House Armed Services Committee ranking member Adam Smith, D-Wash., on Sunday told “Fox News Sunday” that Republicans could have funded TSA by sending Trump the Senate measure — and could come back and do so at any point over the next two weeks.

“Why won’t (Speaker) Mike

Johnson allow a vote? Because, tell you something, if he allowed a vote, it would pass. All Democrats would vote for it. Eighty percent of Republicans would vote for it. And TSA and everything else would be funded,” Smith said.

He noted GOP members have boasted that their “big, beautiful” filibuster-proof budget reconciliation law provided new dollars for ICE, the same 2025 law from which Trump pulled to pay the TSA airport workers.

“And then they complain, ‘Well, yes, but we have to fund ICE,’” Smith said. “They complain we have to fund ICE out of one side of their mouth, and out of the other side of their mouth they say we’ve already funded ICE.”

Border czar: ICE may stay at airports after shutdown

New York Daily News

Border czar Tom Homan says Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents may stay at airport security checkpoints even after the partial government shutdown ends.

After President Donald Trump ordered Transportation Safety Administration airport screeners paid, Homan said ICE would remain deployed to checkpoints at several airports until things improve.

“We’re going to continue a nice presence there until the airports feel like they’re 100%,” Homan said.

“We’ll be there as long as they need us, until they get back to normal operations and feel like those airports are secure,” he added.

After weeks of rising chaos at U.S. airports, TSA agents said they received their first paychecks in weeks on Monday. Wait times at some TSA security bottlenecks, such as the airport checkpoints in Atlanta and

Houston, also improved significantly Monday.

LaGuardia’s Terminal B was still reporting up to 60-minute wait times by midday Monday, but terminals at John F. Kennedy and Newark international airports said lines were no more than 30 minutes.

TSA PreCheck lines were less than 10 minutes at all three hubs.

But Congress appears no closer to resolving the dispute over funding the Department of Homeland Security, which has stretched on for six weeks.

It’s unclear what legal basis DHS is relying on to pay the TSA agents without congressional approval or why they couldn’t have paid them all along.

Tens of thousands of TSA employees, along with some Coast Guard and Federal Emergency Management Agency workers, had been working without pay since DHS funding lapsed Feb. 14.

Swalwell: Trump, Patel seek to sway Calif. governor race

The Mercury News

U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell is accusing President Donald Trump of trying to interfere in the California governor’s race, following reports that FBI Director Kash Patel is pushing to release files related to a decade-old investigation into the congressman and a suspected Chinese spy that ultimately found no wrongdoing on the Democratic representative’s part.

According to a Washington Post report over the weekend, Patel recently sent agents to the FBI’s San Francisco office to redact the files before they are released. Bureau leaders have also discussed sending agents to China to see if the alleged spy has any harmful information on Swalwell, the report said.

At a news conference Monday morning in front of the Philip Burton Federal Building in San Francisco, Swalwell called the Trump administration’s reported actions an “effort to weaponize the FBI against the

president’s political enemies.”

In a tight governor’s race where a clear front-runner has yet to emerge, being targeted by Trump in a heavily Democratic state where the president is deeply unpopular could end up benefiting Swalwell’s campaign, according to Eric Schickler, a political science professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

“He needs to be seen by Democrats as the one who is going to take on Trump,” he told the Bay Area News Group. “I think there is some chance it would do that.”

It’s the latest salvo between the Trump administration and Swalwell, a vocal critic of the president who served as an impeachment manager in Trump’s second impeachment trial related to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The White House referred a request for comment to the FBI. The bureau couldn’t immediately be reached for comment.

Court to hear birthright citizenship case

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is set to hear arguments Wednesday about President Donald Trump's effort to redefine birthright citizenship, in a case experts said could confine Congress' power to define who is considered part of the nation.

The case turns on the president's executive order to disallow citizenship for children born in the United States to undocumented immigrant parents or those with temporary legal status, a major change to more than a century of legal precedent.

Much of the administration's legal argument in the case focuses on the 14th Amendment, which provides that all people

born in the U.S. and "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" are eligible to be citizens.

Children covered under the executive order don't meet that latter requirement for citizenship, the administration argues.

A ruling in favor of the administration could redefine who can become a citizen without the say-so of Congress, which has already weighed in multiple times defining, and expanding, birthright citizenship through federal law.

That's surfaced in court filings from those challenging the executive order, who argue that decades of immigration law incorporated the commonly held understanding that everyone born in the United States was a citizen by birth, particularly

laws passed in 1940 and 1952.

Those laws, the challengers argue, included a centuries-old understanding of citizenship that dates to English common law, with certain specific exceptions, such as for the children of diplomats.

Trump signed the executive order to change birthright citizenship on his first day of his second term.

The order was soon challenged by states, expectant parents and civil rights groups, then temporarily blocked by multiple federal judges.

This is the second time the case has reached the justices. Last year, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Trump administration and restricted lower courts' ability to issue nation-

wide injunctions in the birthright citizenship cases.

Then, in July, a wave of courts considering the challenges ruled against the order again.

The justices are expected to issue a decision in the case, one of the most high profile of the second Trump administration, before the close of the term at the end of June.

The Trump administration in a court filing focused on 19th century debates around the 14th Amendment, as well as echoing the president's policy arguments about allowing the children of undocumented parents to obtain citizenship.

Ruling in favor of the Trump administration would require a whole swath of changes to federal and state governments.

Minnesota sued over transgender policies

The Minnesota Star Tribune

The battle between Minnesota and the Trump administration over the state's policies allowing transgender athletes to participate in sports and use locker rooms according to their gender identity has landed in federal court.

The Trump administration on Monday sued Minnesota's Department of Education and its State High School League, alleging their policies violate Title IX.

That federal civil rights law prohibits sex discrimination in schools that receive federal funds by creating "unfair competition," denying equal athletic opportunities and creating a "hostile educational environment."

"We will not allow girls to be denied equal opportunity and basic privacy," Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said in a statement. "Title IX is clear: schools

that accept federal funding must protect the rights, safety, and dignity of female students."

The suit alleges Minnesota's Department of Education receives just short of \$3 billion annually from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The move comes after months of back-and-forth between Minnesota and the Trump administration, which is pushing to ban transgender athletes from participating in sports. Similar lawsuits were filed last year against Maine and California.

Minnesota officials filed a preemptive lawsuit last April against the administration alleging the state's policies supersede President Donald Trump's executive orders defining two sexes — male and female. The lawsuit remains pending a ruling on the U.S. government's motion to dismiss the case.

'Conversion therapy' bans violate free speech, Supreme Court rules

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that state laws forbidding "conversion therapy" for minors violate the free-speech rights of licensed counselors.

Kaley Chiles, a licensed counselor in Colorado Springs, sued and argued the state's law violated her rights to free speech and the free exercise of religion. She said she does not seek to "cure" clients of same-sex attractions.

The court said Colorado's law violates the 1st Amendment. The free-speech ruling is likely to invalidate similar laws in California and 23 other states.

In an 8-1 decision, the justices said Colorado's ban on "talk therapy" may prevent Christian counselors from helping teens work through their feelings about sexual attractions or their gender identity.

State lawmakers passed the new measures in response to healthcare professionals who said that efforts to change a teenager's sexual orientation were ineffective and harmful.

But in cases like this, the law "censors speech based on viewpoint," said Justice Neil M. Gorsuch.

"Colorado may regard its policy as essential to public health and safety. Certainly, censorious governments throughout history have believed the same. But the 1st Amendment stands as a shield against any effort to enforce orthodoxy in thought or speech in this country. ... However well-intentioned, any law that suppresses speech based on viewpoint represents an "egregious" assault on both of those commitments," he wrote.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented alone in a 35-page opinion.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

State considers ban on new detention centers

IL SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois House is poised this session to vote on legislation that would prohibit federal immigration detention centers from being built within 1,500 feet of schools, parks, homes and other community spaces — a direct response to the clashes that erupted in Chicago and the suburbs last year during the Trump administration’s mass deportation operations.

The bill cleared the House Executive Committee last week on an 8-3 party-line vote and could soon be before the full House. If it passes there, it will need approval from the Senate.

Concerns grow over violent students

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Heightened concerns over student misbehavior, including assaults on school staff members, could lead to a partial rollback of Minnesota’s ban on suspending students in grades K-3.

At Ramsey Elementary in the Anoka-Hennepin School District, a third-grader punched Principal Denise Schnabel in the face, breaking her glasses and cutting her nose, and a second-grader tossed and broke apart furniture, requiring an entire wing of the building to be shut down.

Altogether, 142 classrooms in kindergarten through third grade in the state’s largest school district, have been cleared in 2025-26 due to students threatening the safety of others.

The suspension ban was approved in 2023 and was a major

win for advocates who long have pointed to suspensions’ disproportionate impact on minority students.

City denies request for data on 9/11 toxins

NY NEW YORK — New York City has denied another request for data about the toxins that swirled above Ground Zero after 9/11 — claiming nothing could be found — despite the discovery of 68 boxes worth of information on the subject just four months ago, the Daily News has learned.

Advocates for 9/11 survivors are again suing for the data, claiming city officials are playing hide and seek with people’s lives.

Attorney Andrew Carboy filed a new lawsuit against the city on Sunday, asking a judge to order the city to produce the records. A similar lawsuit against the city’s Department of Environmental Protection led to the agency coughing up 68 boxes worth of material on the subject, despite the city claiming for years it had nothing to share.

State to restrict smokable hemp items

TX AUSTIN — As new Texas restrictions on smokable THC products took effect March 31, some North Texas retailers say the changes could eliminate a large share of their inventory and increase operating costs.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has adopted new rules restricting certain smokable hemp products and other items containing THC-related compounds. The

changes also revise how THC levels are calculated and increase licensing requirements for businesses that manufacture or sell hemp products.

The updates focus on two key areas: expanding the definition of what qualifies as illegal THC products — including how compounds like THCA are measured — and raising licensing fees for retailers and manufacturers.

Near collision at Orange County airport

CA LOS ANGELES — A Black Hawk helicopter passed directly in front of a United Airlines passenger jet Tuesday as the plane was landing at John Wayne Airport, federal officials said.

The close call occurred around 8:40 p.m. as United Airlines Boeing 737, flying out of San Francisco, was approaching the Orange County airport and a Sikorsky helicopter “crossed in front of United’s flight path,” a Federal Aviation Administration spokesperson said in an email.

The two aircraft were within less than half a mile of each other horizontally at the time of the near-miss and about 500 feet apart vertically, according to data from Flightradar24.

Judge faces discipline over courtroom conduct

FL ORLANDO — An Orange County circuit court judge faces discipline after an investigation found he told public defenders to “shut up” and asked if a Black person had ever “chopped cotton,” according to court records filed with the Florida Supreme Court

this week.

Judge John E. Jordan violated the Code of Judicial Conduct for his “intemperate behavior and inappropriate commentary,” according to the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission, an independent body that investigates misconduct by state judges.

Jordan, who has served as a circuit judge since 2011, could face a public reprimand for his actions. He has admitted to his misconduct and expressed “deep regret,” according to the commission’s findings.

The second incident occurred almost four months later while Jordan was presiding over a plea hearing for a Black defendant.

At one point, Jordan asked the defendant or her great-uncle, who is also Black, if they had ever “chopped cotton.” Jordan also wondered out loud if he should order the defendant to “work the land” as part of her required 30 hours of community service, according to the investigation’s findings.

Man pardoned for riot running for supervisor

CA SACRAMENTO — A California man who was convicted of Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach-related charges and later pardoned by President Donald Trump is running for Madera County’s Board of Supervisors in the June primary election.

Benjamin Martin told The Sacramento Bee he is proud to have stood up for Trump. He said he is focused on his campaign for Madera County supervisor and is not dwelling on the past.

— From Associated Press

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Texas beats Michigan, heads to Final Four

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Texas coach Vic Schaefer was down on his knee already sharing a long and tight embrace with 5-foot-6 sparkplug guard Rori Harmon even as the final seconds were winding down in a rout that ensured them one more weekend together on the court.

After five years constantly around each other and another school record-tying 35-win season, the coach and player who don't want it to end yet are going to the women's Final Four for the second year in a row.

"I prayed for that a long time last night, to have that moment today with her," Schaefer said. "The kid has been so special. She's been the heart of really our team and program for a while."

Third-year starter Madison Booker had 19 points and seven rebounds and Harmon had 13 assists as Texas overwhelmed Michigan 77-41 in the Fort Worth Regional 3 championship game Monday night.

"There's so much hard work, tears, blood, sweat, adversity that we go through together," Harmon said of the hug. "When you get to a point like heading to the Final Four like that, it's just a really special moment."

The Longhorns missed only one shot in the first quarter, quickly building a double-digit lead and maintaining control in the only regional final matching the top two seeds.

Justice Carlton added 15 points while Kyla Oldacre added 12 points and 11 rebounds for Texas (35-3), which built as much as a 40-point lead.

Schaefer, in his sixth season with the Longhorns, also took Mississippi State to back-to-back Final Fours in 2017 and 2018, and was a top assistant for Texas A&M's national title in 2012. He is the first coach to make multiple Final Fours with multiple teams.

The top-seeded Longhorns are going to their fifth Final Four overall, and the only other time they had made back-to-back appearances was their undefeated 34-0 national championship season in 1986 and semifinal loss the following season. Before last year's loss to South Carolina, they hadn't made it to the season's final weekend since 2003.

Next for Texas is Friday in Phoenix against UCLA (35-1), another top seed. It's a rematch against the only team to beat the Big Ten champion this season. The Bruins have won 29 in a row since a 76-65 loss to the Longhorns in the Players Era Championship on Nov. 26.

"We're not even thinking that far ahead. I want them to enjoy today, enjoy this moment. These times are not guaranteed," Schaefer said.

Olivia Olson and Mila Holloway each had 11 points for Michigan (28-7). The Wolve-

rines were in the Elite Eight for only the second time and haven't made it past that. They finished 22.8% (13 of 57) from the field in their lowest-scoring game of the season.

Fast start to big lead

Booker, an AP All-American forward, had bookend baskets in an early 10-0 Texas run that made it 12-2. In the middle of that, she made a nifty pass to Harmon, who made an equally impressive quick flip pass to 6-foot-4 Brea Cunningham inside for an easy basket. Cunningham had 11 points.

The Longhorns, who finished shooting 46.9% (30 of 64), made 11 of 12 shots in the first quarter for a 22-9 lead. Texas then missed 12 of its first 14 shots in the second quarter, including its top 3-point shooter Jordan Lee missing five from beyond the arc before Booker had consecutive baskets for a 34-21 halftime lead.

The Longhorns missed their first seven shots out of the break and their lead shrank to 11, but Harmon's 3-pointer snapped the skid, and they were off and running to Phoenix.

Texas had a 69-29 lead with just under 6 minutes left, right before Harmon came out of the game. Booker didn't even play at all in the fourth quarter.

The largest margin of victory in an Elite Eight game was UConn's 90-50 win over Florida State in 2010.

South Carolina defeats TCU to advance to semifinals

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Dawn Staley and South Carolina are back in a familiar place — the Final Four.

Joyce Edwards scored 24 points and Agot Makeer added 18 to help the Gamecocks beat TCU 78-52 on Monday night to advance to the national semifinals in the women's NCAA Tournament.

South Carolina (34-3) has now reached the Final Four in six straight years and won two national championships during that stretch. Staley has been at the helm for all of them, including the undefeated 2023-24 season.

"Super proud of this team, a lot of unknowns coming into the season. Our ranking and what people thought of us was off our history,"

Staley said. "We had too many holes, but I'm happy we were able to fill them and compete on the third weekend of the NCAA Tournament."

The top-seeded Gamecocks will face UConn in the Final Four in Phoenix on Friday night in a rematch of last season's national championship game.

This was the first time South Carolina had really been challenged in the NCAA Tournament. The Gamecocks came into the game averaging nearly 100 points a game in their first three contests and were winning by an average of 45 points.

South Carolina has so many offensive weapons making it tough to guard. TCU (32-6) did a good job on the Gamecocks guards, but had no answer for Edwards and

Makeer. Edwards also had 12 rebounds and three blocks.

The pair scored the first 12 points of the fourth quarter to blow an eight-point game wide open. South Carolina outscored the Horned Frogs 29-11 in the fourth.

The Gamecocks trailed 22-18 early in the second quarter before going on a 17-5 run to close the half. Edwards had the first six points of the spurt and hit a jumper with 3 seconds left to close the quarter and make it 35-27.

TCU hung around in the third quarter and cut its deficit to 47-39 on Olivia Miles' layup with 1:26 left. She immediately went down and grabbed her left calf. The senior All-American guard was on the ground under the basket for a minute before getting up and go-

ing over to the area behind the bench where trainers worked on the calf.

Miles missed the rest of the quarter, but was back for the start of the fourth.

"I'm doing better now. just dealing with some cramping stuff, preventing my movement a little bit," Miles said.

She came into the game averaging a triple-double in the NCAA Tournament, but finished with 18 points, three rebounds and six assists.

TCU was trying to reach its first Final Four and has now been eliminated in the Elite Eight in consecutive seasons. Coach Mark Campbell welcomed 10 new players this season, once again taking advantage of the transfer portal.

Penguins top Islanders in crucial East game

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Anthony Mantha had two goals and an assist, Rickard Rakell scored twice and the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied to defeat the New York Islanders 8-3 on Monday night in a crucial game in the competitive Eastern Conference playoff race.

Pittsburgh trailed 3-1 midway through the second period before scoring four times in less than 6½ minutes to take over. The Penguins' seventh goal on their 28th shot eight minutes into the third chased Ilya Sorokin, who was done in by porous defense in front of him and relieved by backup David Rittich.

Pittsburgh with the regulation victory leapfrogged New York into second place in the Metropolitan Division, 90 points to 89. The Penguins have eight games left in the regular season compared to seven for the Islanders, who could find themselves outside a spot as early as Tues-

day night depending on results of their next game and others in contention in the East.

Returning from a one-game injury absence, Sidney Crosby was one of 15 skaters on his team to register a point in a significant bounce back from losing at home to Dallas without him Saturday. Longtime running mate Evgeni Malkin missed a fourth consecutive game and is considered day to day.

Maple Leafs 5, Ducks 4 (OT): John Tavares redirected a shot from Morgan Rielly into the net with five seconds left in overtime to lift visiting Toronto to a come-from-behind victory over Anaheim.

The Maple Leafs overcame a 3-1 deficit with three goals in the third period, including Rielly's snap shot from the high slot that beat Ducks goalie Ville Husso stick-side to give Toronto a 4-3 lead with three minutes left in regulation.

But Leo Carlsson, who hob-

bled to the locker room after taking a hard hit and falling to the ice in the first minute of the third, gathered a loose puck near the left circle and flicked a shot past Leafs goalie Anthony Stolarz to make it 4-4 with 1:39 left.

Avalanche 9, Flames 2: Nazem Kadri scored twice on the power play against his former team as part of a 26-shot, five-goal first period and host Colorado cruised over Calgary.

The 26 shots is tied for second-most in a period in franchise history. The Avalanche finished with 49 shots — tied for their season high — as they increased their lead to eight points over Dallas in the race for the NHL's top mark.

Jack Drury kicked off the scoring spree 2:31 into the game, followed by back-to-back power play goals from Kadri over a 66-second span. Captain Gabriel Landeskog and Parker Kelly also added goals before the first-

period horn sounded.

Sharks 5, Blues 4: Adam Gaudette scored with 21 seconds left, Alexander Wennberg and Macklin Celebrini each had two goals and an assist, and host San Jose beat St. Louis to snap the Blues' three-game winning streak.

On the rush, Gaudette flicked a wrist shot from near the left faceoff spot that trickled between the legs of goalie Joel Hofer.

The Sharks (34-31-7) currently have 75 points — tied with Seattle and two behind Nashville for the final Western Conference wild card. Los Angeles has 76 points, while St. Louis (31-31-11) has 73.

Golden Knights 4, Canucks 2: Adin Hill made 22 stops and host Vegas opened the John Tortorella era with a win over Vancouver.

Evander Kane and Brock Boeser scored for the Canucks, while Kevin Lankinen made 29 saves.

SGA scores 47, leads Thunder to outlast Pistons in OT

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 47 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Detroit Pistons 114-110 in overtime on Monday night.

The reigning league MVP, and strong candidate to repeat, made 12 of 19 field goals and 21 of 25 free throws. He extended his NBA record for consecutive games with at least 20 points to 136.

Oklahoma City became the first team in the league to win 60 games this season, and it's the first time the Thunder have won at least that many in back-to-back seasons. Their 15th win in 16 games kept them two games ahead of the San Antonio Spurs atop the Western Conference standings.

OKC looked sluggish against Eastern Conference-leading Detroit, which was missing four of its five regular starters. Cade Cunningham remained out with a collapsed lung. All-Star Jalen Duren was out with a right knee injury and Tobias Harris and Duncan Robinson were out with right hip injuries.

Heat 119, 76ers 109: Tyler Herro scored 30 points, Bam Adebayo finished with 23

points and 16 rebounds, and host Miami used a 14-0 run in the final moments to rally past Philadelphia.

Pelle Larsson added 20 points and a career-high 10 rebounds for the Heat (40-36), who kept some realistic hope of getting out of the play-in tournament range — or at least getting into one of the top two spots and therefore assuring itself two chances of making the playoffs — alive with the win. Miami is ninth in the Eastern Conference, in a virtual tie with No. 8 Orlando.

Hawks 112, Celtics 102: Onyeka Okongwu and Jalen Johnson each scored 20 points, and three days after losing to Boston on the road, Atlanta responded with a win over the Celtics. It was the Hawks' 13th consecutive home win.

A tightly contested first half with 10 ties and nine lead changes ended at 54-all as Nickeil Alexander-Walker hit a 27-foot 3-pointer to seal the first half. Atlanta carried that momentum into the third quarter, outscoring Boston 36-22 to take a 14-point lead at the beginning of the fourth quarter.

Cavaliers 122, Jazz 113: Evan Mobley and Donovan Mitchell each scored 34 points and visiting Cleveland used a late fourth-quarter

surge to beat Utah.

Mobley set a season-high for points, including eight dunks, and also had 16 rebounds and three blocks. The 7-footer capped the decisive 14-1 run with a three-point play that made it 117-106 with 3:14 remaining.

Spurs 129, Bulls 114: Victor Wembanyama had a season-high 41 points and 16 rebounds while collecting the fastest double-double in NBA history, and host San Antonio won its ninth straight, defeating Chicago.

Wembanyama had 10 points and 10 rebounds in his first 8 minutes, 31 seconds on the court, collecting his 10th rebound 1:55 into the second quarter. Jim Washington of the St. Louis Hawks had a double-double in nine minutes against the New York Knicks on March 6, 1966.

Lakers 120, Wizards 101: LeBron James had 21 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds, Austin Reaves added 19 points and nine assists, and host Los Angeles rolled over Washington.

Suns 131, Grizzlies 105: Devin Booker scored 36 points on 16-of-24 shooting, Jalen Green added 21 points and visiting Phoenix beat Memphis.

Nats rout Phillies behind 17-hit effort

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Seven Washington batters had at least two hits, including Joey Wiemer, who tied a Major League Record for most consecutive plate appearances with reaching base to start a season, and the Nationals defeated the Philadelphia Phillies 13-2 on Monday night.

Wiemer legged out an infield single in the first inning and had a base hit up the middle in the fourth, tying a record by reaching base 10 consecutive times to start the season, set by Toronto's Carlos Delgado in 2002.

Wiemer's first hit was originally called out by first base umpire Marvin Hudson, but was overturned after a challenge by Washington. Philadelphia manager Rob Thomson was ejected by Hudson after the video review for arguing that the play should have still ended the inning because even though Hudson called Wiemer out, the Phillies continued the play and threw the ball home where catcher Rafael Marchán tagged Drew Millas, who was trying to score from second on the play.

Wiemer's streak ended in the fifth inning when he grounded out.

The Nationals rapped out 17 hits, mostly dink-and-dunk singles as they only had three doubles and none of their hits exceed 100 mph, according to StatCast. José Tena led the team with three hits and Luis García Jr. drove in three runs.

Royals 3, Twins 1: Kansas City used home runs by Kyle Isbel and Isaac Collins to defeat Minnesota on an unseasonably warm day in front of a sellout crowd of 39,320 in the Royals' home opener. The temperature at first pitch was 85 degrees.

Kris Bubic (1-0) picked up the win for Kansas City. He allowed one run on two hits in six innings. John Schreiber pitched the ninth for his first save.

Reds 2, Pirates 0: Chase Burns allowed one hit in five in-

nings for his first major league win, leading host Cincinnati over Pittsburgh. Burns (1-0) walked three and struck out seven, including Jared Triolo with two on and two outs in the fourth.

Elly De La Cruz singled leading off the fourth against Braxton Ashcraft (0-1) for the Reds but was thrown out trying to steal second. Sal Stewart walked, took third on a single by Eugenio Suárez and scored on a sacrifice fly by Spencer Steer. Suárez scored on a triple by Will Benson to cap the scoring in a third straight win for Cincinnati.

Diamondbacks 9, Tigers 6: Corbin Carroll hit a three-run homer and had four RBIs, Michael Soroka became the fourth pitcher in Arizona history to throw an immaculate inning and the host Diamondbacks roughed up Detroit.

The 28-year-old Soroka (1-0) gave up four hits over five scoreless innings — and the fifth was a gem. The right-hander struck out Javier Báez, Kerry Carpenter and Gleyber Torres on nine straight pitches, blowing a 95 mph fastball past Torres on the ninth one to tie a career high with 10 strikeouts.

Mariners 2, Yankees 1: Cal Raleigh hit a walk-off RBI single down the right-field line as host Seattle beat New York.

Raleigh, who was not in the Mariners' starting lineup after starting the season 2 for 15 with 10 strikeouts, came through when he ripped a cutter from New York reliever Paul Blackburn (0-1). It was Raleigh's second RBI of the season.

Rangers 5, Orioles 2: Jack Leiter struck out eight in six strong innings and Jake Burger drove in two runs to lead visiting Texas over Baltimore.

Leiter (1-0) had a stretch of five straight strikeouts and appeared to have a sixth for the second out in the fifth, but Colton Cowser won an ABS challenge on a called third strike and turned it into a base hit. Blaze

Alexander singled and Gunnar Henderson had a two-out single to cut it to 4-2 before Leiter struck out Pete Alonso to end the inning with runners at the corners.

White Sox 9, Marlins 4: Miguel Vargas hit a grand slam and drove in a career-high six runs, Austin Hays hammered a three-run shot and visiting Chicago beat Miami for its first win this season.

Tristan Peters and Pereira each had two hits for the White Sox. Munetaka Murakami went 1 for 5 with a single, ending his home run streak at three games.

Braves 4, Athletics 0: Host Atlanta scored three runs in the first inning off a double from Matt Olson and a single from Mauricio Dubón in a win over the Athletics.

Bryce Elder (1-0) pitched six innings and gave up five hits with five strikeouts and a walk.

Cubs 7, Angels 2: Edward Cabrera pitched six shutout innings, Ian Happ hit a solo homer and host Chicago beat Los Angeles.

Cabrera allowed one hit and walked one in his Cubs debut, delighting the crowd of 36,702 on a picturesque night at Wrigley Field. The 6-foot-5 right-hander was acquired in a January trade with Miami.

Rays 3, Brewers 2: Nick Fortes hit a tiebreaking two-out double off Trevor Megill in the ninth inning as visiting Tampa Bay edged Milwaukee.

Megill (0-1) retired the first two batters he faced and had a 1-2 count on Jonny DeLuca before walking him. Fortes sent a first-pitch fastball into the gap in right-center to bring home DeLuca.

Rockies 14, Blue Jays 5: Troy Johnston hit a two-run homer, Ezequiel Tovar had three hits and three RBIs, and visiting Colorado won for the first time this season by routing Toronto.

After losing three straight one-run games in a weekend

sweep at Miami, the Rockies thumped the previously undefeated Blue Jays to avoid the first 0-4 start in team history. Colorado is 2-11 all-time in Toronto.

Mets 4, Cardinals 2: Bo Bichette had a hit and drove in two runs, sparking visiting New York over St. Louis.

Clay Holmes (1-0) pitched 5½ innings, allowing two runs on four hits and three walks. He struck out five. Carson Benge and Jorge Polanco each had two hits for the Mets.

Astros 8, Red Sox 1: Lance McCullers Jr. pitched seven innings for the first time since 2022 and Jose Altuve hit two of host Houston's four home runs to help the Astros beat Boston.

McCullers (1-0), who missed the 2023 and '24 seasons with injuries, allowed four hits and a run with nine strikeouts in his season debut. The home crowd gave the longtime Houston pitcher a nice ovation as he left the mound after his best start in years.

Giants 3, Padres 2: Harrison Bader connected against Walker Buehler for San Francisco's first home run this season and the visiting Giants held off a late rally by San Diego to give rookie manager Tony Vitello his first victory.

Ryan Walker was one strike from closing a two-hit shutout when he allowed a two-run homer to Jackson Merrill. Walker then got Xander Bogaerts to ground out to finish the combined three-hitter for a save.

Guardians 4, Dodgers 2: Parker Messick tossed six scoreless innings and visiting Cleveland broke the game open with three runs in the seventh inning to beat Los Angeles, spoiling the two-time World Series champions' perfect start.

The Dodgers' offense mostly went cold, with Shohei Ohtani, Kyle Tucker, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman combining to go 3-for-16.