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Pentagon's \$715B budget looks to future

By COREY DICKSTEIN
AND CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon on Friday unveiled a \$715 billion budget request for fiscal year 2022, asking Congress for the Defense Department's largest-ever investment in developing next-generation weaponry that top defense officials cite as necessary to maintain military advantages over China and Russia.

President Joe Biden's first Pentagon budget request places an emphasis on the future battlefield, with the Defense Department primarily focused on China, which seeks military parity with the United States in the coming years, said Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The 2022 budget request represents an essentially flat budget, seeking an increase in funds of 1.6% more than the 2021 Pentagon budget, moving some money used for current readiness in recent years to prepare for a future fight.

"It strikes an appropriate balance between preserving present readiness and future modernization, but it is biased toward the future operating environment and readiness," Milley told House lawmakers during a hearing Thursday. "We are trying right now to put down payments on investments that are going to pay huge dividends 5, 10, 15 years from now for a future force that will be able to compete successfully with any adversary out there, to include China."

The 2022 budget request asks for more than \$112 billion for research, development, testing and evaluation, a roughly 5% boost over the Pentagon's 2021 RDT&E budget, which had been its largest-ever in that portfolio focused on future weaponry. That money will be spent largely on the development and procurement of hypersonic missiles, artificial intelligence and autonomous capabilities, microelectronics, and space and cyber technology, which Milley and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin labeled critical to future combat operations.

The budget proposal would also provide U.S. troops and Defense Department civilian workers a 2.7% pay raise, earmark \$617 million toward hardening military installations against the impacts of climate change, spend some \$500 million on coronavirus

pandemic-related efforts, and set aside \$30.7 million to identify and address extremism in the ranks.

The request is smaller than the initial estimated Pentagon budget request for 2022 drafted during former President Donald Trump's administration, which would have sought about \$722 billion, matching calls from Republicans for at least 3-5% yearly growth in Defense Department funding. Liberal lawmakers, meanwhile, have called on Biden to slash Pentagon funding to pay for domestic programs, setting up a possible funding showdown as Congress drafts its version of the Pentagon's next budget.

The top Republicans on the Senate and House Armed Services Committees blasted Biden's proposal as "wholly inadequate," vowing they would fight to boost the Pentagon's topline for 2022.

Austin told lawmakers on Thursday that the budget released Friday "funds the right mix of capabilities" to ensure current operations around the world and prepare for potential conflict with a near-peer or peer power in the coming years.

Austin said the Biden administration's first budget is reflective of the current world for the U.S. military — in which fewer troops are serving in longstanding combat operations in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq. To that end, Austin proposed ending the use of the Defense Department's long-held wartime coffers, known as Overseas Contingency Operations funds. The 2022 budget proposal would roll those funds, such as about \$69 billion in OCO funding for 2021, into the base budget request for the first time since 2002.

The change comes after Biden in April directed the full withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by Sept. 11, a process military officials said last week was already about 25% completed. Only a few thousand troops remain on the ground in Iraq and Syria, where they primarily serve to train local forces fighting the remnants of Islamic State.

Lawmakers for years have criticized OCO money as a "slush fund" for Pentagon officials to skirt mandatory budget caps imposed by Congress in the last decade. Those caps have since expired, giving Austin even

more leeway to make the change that he called "long overdue."

Among the initiatives once paid for with OCO funds, the Pentagon proposed more than doubling its new Pacific Deterrence Initiative to \$5.1 billion in 2022. The PDI, which began in 2021 when Congress approved \$2.2 billion, is meant to directly check Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific region by working and training with allies and forward deploying troops and weapons. It is modeled off the Pentagon's efforts to thwart Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, known as the European Deterrence Initiative, which began in 2014.

As the U.S. military moves further away from active combat operations toward working to deter the potential for high-level conflict, Austin's budget calls for some older weapons programs to be retired and for a modest reduction in total troop strength.

Among those labeled for partial cuts totaling about a \$2.8 billion savings, according to the Pentagon, are the Air Force's A-10 attack jet and the Navy's littoral combat ship. The budget proposes cutting 42 A-10s and four LCSs, all of which had yet to reach the Navy's fleet.

The budget would fund a total force of 2,145,900 troops across all the services, including the National Guard and reservists, a cut of about 5,300 troops. The largest cuts would come from Navy and Marine Corps, which would lose 2,200 and 2,700 active-duty troops, respectively. The budget also calls for 1,000 fewer active-duty soldiers and a cut of 800 active-duty airmen. The Space Force would grow by about 2,000 guardians.

In all, the 2022 budget would provide a \$172.9 billion budget for the Army, a \$163.9 billion budget for the Navy, a \$47.9 billion budget for the Marine Corps, a \$195.3 billion budget for the Air Force, and a \$17.5 billion budget for the Space Force.

It would purchase 85 F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft and 12 F-15EX fighter jets. It would also buy eight new Navy ships: two Virginia class attack submarines, two fleet ocean tugs, an Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer, a Constellation-class guided-missile frigate, a John Lewis-class replenishment oiler and an ocean surveillance ship.

Navy fleet won't reach 300 ships under proposal for 2022 budget

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy will not reach 300 ships for another year despite continued pressure for a bigger fleet as service officials make advanced capabilities such as unmanned vessels and hypersonic weapons a priority to remain competitive with China, according to its proposed budget for fiscal year 2022.

The Navy does plan to procure eight new warships in 2022, though overall shipbuilding funds will drop by 3% from last year to \$22.6 billion. Still, the service will add two ships to its total from the 2021 budget, bringing the fleet size to 296 — the same size it was under the fiscal year 2020 budget.

“Eight ships a year is not going to get to a 355-ship Navy,” Rear Adm. John Gumbleton, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for budget, told reporters at the Pentagon on Friday. “That said, we’re consistent with last year’s request of eight ships.”

The new ships include two Virginia-class, nuclear-powered attack submarines, two fleet ocean tugs, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, a Constellation-class frigate, a John Lewis-class replenishment oiler, and an

ocean surveillance ship, according to the proposed budget.

At the same time, the service seeks to decommission two Ticonderoga-class cruisers, a dock landing ship, four littoral combat ships and 12 MK VI patrol boats from coastal riverine squadrons.

Though the shipbuilding budget fell, the service’s overall budget of nearly \$163.9 billion would increase \$965 million from 2021’s.

With a request of more than \$22.6 billion for research, testing, development and evaluation — up 12.4% from last year — the Navy’s budget follows the theme of the Pentagon’s overall budget strategy, calling for increased focus on innovation and investing in next-generation weapons development.

One key area of research and development investment is in unmanned vessels, with \$375.6 million wanted for unmanned surface vessels and \$290.6 million for unmanned undersea vehicles. In the air, the unmanned carrier-launched airborne surveillance and strike program is funded at \$268.8 million.

The Navy’s aircraft budget also took a hit, dipping more than 15% from last year’s budget to \$16.5 billion. The request covers 107

aircraft, including 20 additional F-35C and 17 F-35B Lightning IIs, five E-2D Advanced Hawkeyes and six KC-130J Hercules transport aircraft.

The move to prioritize other areas above building the fleet comes as China has “rapidly grown its navy from 262 to 350 ships” and prepares to launch its third aircraft carrier in 2023, the Navy said.

“The department continues to innovate in distributed maritime operations, enhanced by investments in platforms, hypersonic weapons and unmanned capabilities,” Gumbleton said.

The proposal diverts from a January shipbuilding plan by former President Donald Trump’s administration, which called for a 4.1% budget increase to reach 355 ships within a decade. Congress in its 2018 National Defense Authorization Act required the Navy to achieve a 355-ship fleet “as soon as practicable.”

“It’s all about not having a hollow force, making sure we’re ready today, modernizing for tomorrow and then the investment for the future,” Gumbleton said. “And with this topline allocated, this is the right blend to do that.”

Marines to cut 2,700 from enlisted force

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The active-duty force of the Marine Corps would shrink by about 1.1% under its 2022 budget proposal as the service continues to redesign itself to meet rising threats posed by China, according to budget materials released Friday.

While the service’s \$47.9 billion proposed budget is up \$2.8 billion from fiscal year 2021, it would cut 2,700 active-duty Marines as the service “is vigorously redesigning the force for naval expeditionary warfare in actively contested spaces,” according to the budget documents.

The cuts would come entirely from enlisted forces, which are set to drop from 159,716

troops to 156,650, according to the Marine Corps. The service aims to add 366 officers in the new budget for a total of 21,850.

“The reduction of active-duty end strength is part of the larger effort to modernize the Marine Corps by divesting of legacy capabilities, such as tanks, bridging and law enforcement, along with a reduction of surge capacity, with the intent of investing in modernization,” the service said in the budget materials.

The change aligns with the Force Design 2030, a modernization effort announced in March 2020 that aims to transition the Marine Corps from a force focused on large-scale amphibious and sustained ashore operations to one optimized to support naval expeditionary campaigns.

To assist in the transition, the service is asking for \$3 billion in procurements, which would include funds for ground-based anti-ship missiles and high-mobility artillery rocket system programs and the purchase of 613 joint light tactical vehicles and 92 amphibious combat vehicles, according to the budget materials.

“We prioritize investments in force-design programs that underwrite Marine Corps expeditionary nature and ability to contribute as a part of a larger naval campaign, including key efforts like long-range fires, sensors and network modernization,” Rear Adm. John Gumbleton, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for budget, told reporters at the Pentagon on Friday.

Army's budget proposal drops \$3.6B

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

The Army's proposed spending plan for fiscal year 2022 is about \$3.6 billion less than last year's budget, though service officials said Friday that the drop in funds will have no impact on their top priorities or quality-of-life services for soldiers.

"This budget puts people first, maintains force readiness and continues the irreversible modernization momentum to develop next-generation capabilities to fight and win now and [in the future]," said Christopher Lowman, senior official performing the duties of the undersecretary of the Army.

At \$172.9 billion, the Army was the only military service to release a smaller budget proposal Friday within the overall Defense Department spending request of \$715 billion, which is an increase of 1.6% from last year. Defense officials attributed the Army's smaller budget, in part, to the reduc-

tion of costs caused by the drawdown in Afghanistan.

The Army also expects to have 1,700 fewer soldiers in 2022, with an end strength of 1,010,500 troops. Yet, the service is requesting an increase of \$1.2 billion to support personnel. That money will fund a pay raise, retirement compensation reform and recruiting and retention incentives.

Soldiers would see increases in pay by 2.7%, basic allowance for housing by 3.1% and basic allowance for sustenance by 2.3%, according to a presentation of the proposal from Maj. Gen. Paul Chamberlain, director of the Army budget. The proposal also increases funding for child care by expanding access to the Army Fee Assistance Program and continues efforts to attract and retain high-quality child care providers. Army civilian workers also would see a 2.7% pay raise.

Areas of the Army budget taking cuts include operations and maintenance, pro-

urement, research, development, testing and evaluation, military construction and family housing construction.

Despite the cuts, Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told House lawmakers Thursday that the Army budget properly funds its six modernization priorities — long-range precision fires, next-generation combat vehicles, future vertical lift, network, air and missile defense and soldier lethality.

The Army also looks to spend less money buying aircraft, missiles and ammunition, according to the budget overview. It requested \$249 million more than last year for weapons and tracked combat vehicles, which includes upgrades for the Abrams main battle tank, Bradley infantry fighting vehicle and Stryker combat vehicle.

Chamberlain said the Army eliminated or reduced more than 240 programs and "freed up billions for modernization efforts."

USAF seeks to cut dozens of aircraft, invest in future

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force seeks a slight funding boost in its \$156.3 billion budget request for fiscal year 2022 unveiled Friday, which officials said made tough choices to divest from workhorse aircraft to fund the service's future weapons programs.

The budget proposal seeks about a 2.3% increase from 2021 levels, but it would cut some 200 aircraft and about 800 active-duty troops to boost spending on the development of critical new technology, including hypersonic missiles and next-generation nuclear weapons. The Air Force request was rolled out Friday alongside the Pentagon's proposed \$715 billion fiscal year 2022 budget, which top officials said focused primarily on ensuring the United States retains its military advantage through the coming decades over an increasingly capable China.

"The Department of the Air

Force faces increasing budget pressure based on growing costs of sustainment for current and aging force structure, continuous combat operations and long-deferred modernization," Maj. Gen. James D. Peccia III, the Air Force's deputy assistant secretary for budget, said Friday at the Pentagon. "It is essential to [cut] aging, costly and less-than-capable legacy systems, so we can deliver and direct resources toward the capabilities needed for future competition."

The budget proposes cutting 42 A-10 Thunderbolt II attack jets, 48 F-15C/D Eagle and 47 F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter jets, 20 C-130 Hercules transport planes, four E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, or JSTARS, command and control aircraft, 18 KC-135 Stratotankers and 14 KC-10 tankers, and 20 RQ-4 Global Hawk intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance drones.

Space Force requests \$2B increase to expand

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Space Force is requesting a \$2 billion budget increase to continue its growth in fiscal year 2022, with funding primarily going to support the research and development of capabilities needed to deter threats in space and protect assets.

The 2022 spending proposal for Space Force, the military's newest service branch that is entering its second year of existence, was presented Friday as part of the Air Force budget request.

The Air Force included \$17.4 billion for Space Force within its overall \$173.7 billion proposal for fiscal year 2022. That's up 13.1% from fiscal year 2021.

Similar to last year, about 65% of the budget, or \$11.3 billion, will go to research, development, testing and evaluation. Operations and management will get \$3.4 billion, with the remaining \$2.8 billion going to

procurement.

With the research budget up \$725 million this year, the service will invest in protecting space assets, fielding new capabilities, protecting the joint force from adversary use of space capabilities in conflict, and building combat-effective digital service.

About \$132 million would go toward the Next-Gen Overhead Persistent Infrared missile warning system.

With procurement funds, the Space Force would use \$341 million to buy five space launch vehicles. It would also purchase two GPS III space vehicles and increase technical support with \$64 million. This would allow for enhanced on-orbit management.

Remaining funds support the acquisition of spacecraft and terminals, ground control systems, launch services, and related communications security and training products.

At gym, Biden touts vaccine progress

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — President Joe Biden started the Memorial Day weekend by visiting a rock climbing gym in northern Virginia as the state lifted all COVID-19 distancing and capacity restrictions at private businesses and much of the nation pushes toward a greater sense of normalcy.

Biden sought to use the stop on Friday at Sportrock Climbing Centers — an 18,000-square-foot space of climbing and bouldering walls, a gym, and yoga studios — to celebrate progress made as the country looks to turn the corner on the coronavirus pandemic,

which has killed more than 593,000 Americans and 3.5 million people worldwide.

The president, who later paid tribute to the armed forces with an address at an Air Force base elsewhere in Virginia, used the day to thank Americans who have already received vaccinations — about 51% of Americans are now fully vaccinated — and again urged Americans who haven't to get their shot.

"All over the country we've gone from pain and stagnation of a long dark winter to an economy on the move," Biden said. He added, "Americans of every party,

race, creed have come together and rolled up their sleeves — literally — and done their part."

This year, the long holiday weekend that marks the unofficial start to summer comes at a moment when the federal government and state governments are relaxing masking and social distancing rules now that a majority of Americans are vaccinated and more people are looking to return to their pre-pandemic routines.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam lifted coronavirus-related restrictions on capacity and social distancing in the state on Friday.

He had already lifted Virginia's indoor mask mandate for fully vaccinated people on May 15 for most indoor settings, though businesses can still require masks if they want to.

The visit came as Biden is pressing Republican lawmakers to back a massive infrastructure bill — something that the White House is pitching as a salve for an economy as the U.S. turns the corner on the worst public health crisis in more than a century.

"The American people are more ready to come together, I believe, than the Congress and the elected people," Biden said.

June election bill a test case for ending filibuster

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pressure is mounting on Democrats to end the practice of requiring 60 votes to move legislation through the Senate if they hope to advance President Joe Biden's agenda.

Earlier Friday, Republicans blocked a bill that would have established a commission to investigate the deadly Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Fresh off the defeat, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer set up a June vote on another crucial priority — an elections overhaul bill that confronts restrictive new voting laws emerging in several key states after Donald Trump's loss in the 2020 presidential election to Biden.

The ambitious elections bill has been seen as a defining test case for changing the Senate

filibuster rules that require the 60-vote hurdle in the evenly split chamber. Democrats see the legislation as a vital step toward protecting voting systems, but Republicans are unlikely to give it much support.

The stunning GOP rebuke of the proposed bipartisan commission on the Capitol riot, on a 54-35 vote, accelerated the argument, showing Democrats — and perhaps the broader public — how intense partisan loyalties are likely to make it difficult for Biden's party to strike bipartisan compromises on elections reforms, infrastructure or other parts of his agenda.

"We have seen the limits of bipartisanship," Schumer told reporters at a news conference after the vote. "Everything's on the table."

Overhauling the filibuster would require the support of a majority of senators, but not

all Democrats are ready to do so. Two centrists, Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, are holdouts against any efforts to alter the filibuster, preferring to stick with the current practice, which typically requires bipartisan compromise.

The bill headed for a vote, the For the People Act, is vast, tackling a range of interrelated issues that Democrats say will protect the vote and curb special interests. Republicans say it is too broad of a federal reach into state and local election systems.

It would mandate early voting, same-day registration and other long-sought changes that Republicans reject. The measure would also require dark money political groups to disclose anonymous donors. A version has already been approved in the House.

Texas sheriff's office fires 11 after probe into inmate's death

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Eleven employees with a Texas sheriff's office have been fired and six others suspended following the February death of an inmate who was hit multiple times in the head by detention officers, authorities announced Friday.

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said he was "very upset and heartbroken" about what a three-month investigation into the death of 23-year-old Jaquarea Simmons found. Medical examiners had ruled Simmons' death a homicide from injuries to his

head.

"We have a duty to protect those in our care and that didn't happen," Gonzalez said.

A sheriff's office internal affairs investigation concluded Simmons had three fights with detention officers on Feb. 16 when the jail had lost power and water pressure during the state's deadly winter storm.

The first use of force against Simmons took place that morning after he had clogged the toilet of his jail cell and officers responded to clean it.

Later that night, a detention officer hit

Simmons in the face after he had thrown his meal tray at the officer and charged at him, according to authorities. When more officers were called in to take him for a medical evaluation, they hit him multiple times in the head, said Major Thomas Diaz, who led the internal affairs investigation.

The officers who were fired or suspended were found to have violated various policies, including using excessive force, failing to document the use of force, not intervening when a fellow officer used force and making false statements to investigators, Diaz said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Yearbooks recalled after student cited Hitler book

NY CAMBRIDGE — A New York high school is recalling copies of its yearbook because a graduating senior listed Adolf Hitler's autobiography as his favorite book within its pages.

Cambridge Junior-Senior High School stopped distributing the yearbook two days after it had started when it came to their attention that a student had cited "Mein Kampf" as his favorite book, the Times Union reported.

The school is asking students to return the about 40 copies of the yearbook already distributed.

Mountain climber alive, in critical condition after fall

AK DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE — A Canadian climber was in critical condition after falling nearly 1,000 feet while climbing Denali, in Alaska, park officials said.

A statement from Denali National Park and Preserve identified the climber as Adam Rawski, 31, of Burnaby, British Columbia. According to the statement, climbers saw an un-roped climber take a tumbling fall of nearly 1,000 feet from Denali Pass.

The climber was taken to an Anchorage hospital in critical condition, the statement said.

Man charged with killing parakeet in pet shop

MI ALLEN PARK — A man faces criminal charges for allegedly stomping

a parakeet to death inside a Detroit-area pet shop.

Ali Chehade, 22, of Dearborn, was arraigned on third-degree animal killing, the Wayne County prosecutor's office said.

Allen Park pet shop owner Michael Simms said a man came in upset and wanted a \$30 refund for a parakeet.

In an encounter recorded on store surveillance video, the man grabbed the bird's cardboard box, threw it to floor and stomped on it before leaving.

Firetruck crashes into building, leaving 5 injured

PA PHILADELPHIA — Four firefighters and one civilian were injured when a Philadelphia Fire Department firetruck crashed into a building after a collision with another vehicle.

The firetruck had left a nearby fire station and had its lights and siren on as firefighters headed to a report of a house fire in North Philadelphia, according to an emailed police incident report. The truck collided with a car and was propelled into the building at 7th Street and Girard Avenue, police said.

WPVI-TV in Philadelphia reported four firefighters who were on the truck and a woman who had been in another car involved in the collision were treated for injuries, according to Assistant Fire Chief Charles Walker.

Skydiver's parachute tangles in power lines

CA LAKE ELSINORE — A Southern California skydiver suffered minor injuries when his parachute be-

came tangled in power lines, authorities said.

The mishap in Lake Elsinore left the man dangling about 30 feet above the ground, Cal Fire/Riverside County said.

A Southern California Edison crew was called in to help with the rescue and remove the parachute from the lines. The skydiver was taken to a hospital for treatment of lower extremities injuries.

Students, adult storm classroom, attack teen

NC GREENSBORO — Eight people stormed a high school classroom and attacked a teen in an incident thought to have stemmed from an earlier fight at a school bus stop, a North Carolina sheriff's office said.

The Guilford County Sheriff's Office said a female student helped the group get inside Southern Guilford High School and lead them to an upstairs classroom, news outlets reported. The sheriff's office described the group as six students and two adults and say they assaulted the student, 14, who suffered facial injuries.

The group ran away and was stopped in the parking lot, authorities said.

Officials investigating endangered seal deaths

HI HONOLULU — Federal and state officials in Hawaii are investigating the suspicious deaths of two endangered monk seals on the island of Molokai.

The seals were found dead on the west side of Molokai, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser report-

ed.

Examinations revealed that both died as a result of human-inflicted trauma, wildlife officials said.

Ex-officer charged with stealing and selling ammo

SC GAFFNEY — A former police officer in South Carolina stole ammunition from his department and sold it to a gun range, state police said.

Theodore Robert Martin, 33, was arrested and charged with breach of trust with fraudulent intent and misconduct in office, according to warrants from the State Law Enforcement Division.

Martin took and sold less than \$2,000 worth of ammunition from the Gaffney Police Department's armory, according to the warrants.

Woman enters zoo's monkey enclosure

TX EL PASO — The El Paso Zoo planned to press charges against a woman who was caught on video trying to feed spider monkeys after climbing into their enclosure.

The exhibit is enclosed by a low fence and has a moat as an added barrier because spider monkeys can't swim and are afraid of the water, according to the El Paso Times.

Zoo staff found out about the trespass through a social media video that shows the woman attempting to feed two monkeys. The zoo did not name the woman or detail the charges they plan to bring against her.

—From wire reports

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Deadline deals pay off in NHL playoffs

Associated Press

Just when the New York Islanders got finished with Jeff Carter lighting it up against them with Pittsburgh, they face another significant trade deadline pickup in Taylor Hall and the Boston Bruins.

The Islanders might not even be in the second round if not for a trade to get Kyle Palmieri and Travis Zajac from New Jersey. The Bruins also needed Mike Reilly arguably as much as Hall in the first round after their blue line was hit with injuries.

From Hall and Reilly to Palmieri and Zajac and David Savard with the Tampa Bay Lightning, trade deadline acquisitions big and small are already paying major dividends in the NHL playoffs. As Stanley Cup-winning defenseman Ken Daneyko pointed out, "Obviously you hope for this when you make deadline acquisitions."

"Sometimes you try and do too much, sometimes you're trying not to step on anyone's toes," said Winnipeg's Paul Stastny, who was a deadline addition for the Jets in 2018. "You were brought in here for a reason, and it's not to change the game. Sometimes it's tough because you know some guys might get moved around the lineup a little bit, but you try not to worry about that."

Daneyko, now an NHL Network analyst, called Hall a "perfect fit" with the Bruins. Hall, the 2018 Hart Trophy winner as league MVP, scored two goals in five games of the first round against Washington — the same number he had in 37 games with lowly Buffalo before the trade to Boston.

One of those goals tied the score with 2:49 left in Game 2, which showed the Bruins how Hall could perform in important moments after never winning a seven-game series previously in his NHL career.

"A lot of things in life are about adjust-

ments," Hall said. "In the playoffs, you have to play hard, you have to play physical, you have to do all those things, but you also have to make plays and you also have to play with calm and composure."

The Bruins can also play with more confidence thanks to Hall, who gives them secondary skill behind the "Perfection Line" of Brad Marchand, Patrice Bergeron and David Pastrnak. Hall has slid in on David Krejci's left wing perfectly.

"Since they got Taylor Hall it's really put everybody on the right seat on the bus, I think, for their team," Islanders coach Barry Trotz said Friday. "It has given them (a) second line that is a threat, and night in and night out it can be a gamechanger at times for them."

Much like Carter was a difference-maker with four goals for the Penguins, Islanders star Mathew Barzal called Hall a "game-breaker" New York must keep an eye on. The same goes on the other side for Palmieri, who scored the first-round Game 1 overtime winner and added a key goal in the series clincher.

Zajac, the other player the Islanders got from the Devils for a first-round pick, had been a healthy scratch until an injury opened the door for him to play Game 5 against Pittsburgh. Of course he picked up an assist on the winning goal.

"If we didn't have a Palmieri or a Zajac, we'd be in one (a hole) a little bit," Trotz said. "We'd be getting deep into our depth."

The Bruins would be in trouble without Reilly after losing defensemen Jeremy Lauzon, Jakub Zboril and Kevan Miller to injury. Reilly called it "some kind of tough luck" — but it's also a playoff lesson that a contender can't have too many defensemen.

The Lightning figured that out on the way

to hoisting the Cup last year, filtering players in and out amid injuries. They paid the price of a first-round pick this year to get rugged, big-minute defenseman David Savard from Columbus at the deadline.

Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said facing Savard in the playoffs the past two seasons gave them "a firsthand look of him and what he can do." The same goes for Toronto getting ex-Blue Jackets captain Nick Foligno, whose absence after the first two games against Montreal has hurt.

Savard didn't play a leading role in the Lightning getting past Florida. But Daneyko said Savard is "going to have a bigger impact as these playoffs go along because of his size, because of his experience." Tampa Bay is counting on that in a bid to repeat.

"It's just one of those things that the more you play with a new group of faces, the better and better you get just because you start to understand guys' tendencies and understand where they're going to be on the ice," said forward Blake Coleman, who was one of the Lightning's 2020 deadline pickups. "Savvy's a guy that we love having in our room and another guy that I expect to get better and better as we go."

Not every trade worked out as planned: Anthony Mantha was ineffective for the Capitals, and Sam Bennett had as many suspensions as goals for the Panthers. And some deals long before the deadline worked out OK, like Winnipeg adding Pierre-Luc Dubois, who was a big part of a sweep of Edmonton.

"To try to get to know the systems, watch the team play, I think it was really important to get that time," Dubois said. "I think it was really helpful for me to be here at that time and not necessarily two, three weeks, a month before the playoffs started."

Janmark has hat trick in Vegas' Game 7 victory

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Mattias Janmark had scored just one goal since being acquired by Vegas at the trade deadline from Chicago.

He tripled that Friday night with his first career hat trick in what might have been the most important home playoff game in the Golden Knights' four-year history, a 6-2 victory over the

Minnesota Wild in Game 7 of their opening-round series.

"It's what every player dreams of, to score in a Game 7," Janmark said. "To win a Game 7 and to score a hat trick, it's hard to believe that it's going to happen to you, but today, bounds were going in.

"It's a dream come true, for sure."

Nic Hague, Max Pacioretty

and Zach Whitecloud also scored for Vegas, which hosted a Game 7 for the first time after losing in San Jose in 2018 and defeating Vancouver in Edmonton last year. It was also the first time the Knights clinched a playoff series at home.

Marc-Andre Fleury, playing in his eighth career Game 7, made 19 saves to earn his 85th playoff victory in front of an an-

nounced crowd of 12,156. Fleury is three playoff wins shy of tying Billy Smith and Ed Belfour for fourth in NHL history.

"It was a ton of fun," said Hague, the only Vegas skater in the lineup who hadn't played in a Game 7. "The building was rocking, which is always awesome. But it was on another level tonight. A little nervous at the start. Boy, was that a fun game."

Tatum scores 50, leads Celtics past Nets

Associated Press

BOSTON — Bottled up in Brooklyn, Jayson Tatum came home and showed off an array of drives, step-back jumpers and three-pointers.

When Tatum was done, he had one of the best playoff games in Celtics history — and the Nets had themselves a series.

Tatum scored a playoff career-high 50 points to carry Boston to a 125-119 victory on Friday night that cut Brooklyn's lead to 2-1.

"It's just one of those nights," Tatum said. "A tough shooting night the first game and I didn't get to play much the last game because I got poked in the eye."

In an emotionally charged atmosphere with the fans booing and chanting at Kyrie Irving every time he was involved in some-

thing, Tatum became the sixth player in franchise history to score 50 points in a playoff game.

"We had a lot of guys step up tonight around Jayson being special," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said.

After scoring 50 points in Boston's play-in tournament victory, Tatum struggled in the two games in Brooklyn but steadied the Celtics in Game 3 after the Nets shot out to a quick 15-point lead.

"There's nothing like playing at home in front of your home crowd," he said.

He joined John Havlicek, Isaiah Thomas, Ray Allen, Sam Jones and Bob Cousy as Boston players with 50 points in a playoff game.

"He was just locked in mentally," teammate Marcus Smart said. "We're going up against a juggernaut of a team. Like I said be-

fore, the world knows it and we know it. It's not going to be easy. You can't lay down, you can't take a step back. You have to be able to press forward and that's what we did tonight."

It was Irving's first game in front of the Celtics' fans since he left via free agency in 2019.

James Harden led Brooklyn with 41 points, Kevin Durant had 39 and Irving finished with 16 on 6-for-17 shooting.

"They made shots tonight, especially Tatum," Durant said. "He hit some tough ones over us. I don't think he made anything easy."

Boston shot 50.6%, including 16-for-39 on threes after shooting just 39.7% overall in the first two games.

Young delivers, Hawks take 2-1 series lead over Knicks

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Trae Young wanted to make a big impression in his first trip to the playoffs.

It's going just as he planned.

Shaking off an ugly spitting incident at Madison Square Garden, Young dazzled in the first home playoff game of his career, scoring 21 points and dishing out 14 assists to lead the Atlanta Hawks to a 105-94 victory over the New York Knicks in Game 3 of their opening-round series Friday night.

"I feel like I've prepared my whole life for these days, these moments," he said.

Spurred on by a raucous crowd of 15,743, by far the largest of the season in Atlanta, the Hawks pulled ahead 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

Game 4 is Sunday in Atlanta.

This one was tight through much of the first half, but the Hawks closed the second quarter on a Young-powered, 22-5 run that sent the arena into an uproar.

"He doesn't really have a weakness," Atlanta interim coach Nate McMillan said. "He takes what the defense gives him. He does a good job finding the open man when the defense collapses in the paint. When they don't, he's attacking and finishing at the rim."

In Game 1, Young hit the winning basket to silence the crowd at Madison Square Garden's first playoff contest since 2013. He shined again during the spurt that es-

entially decided the most lopsided game of the series, having a hand in 18 of the 22 points.

Young scored five points himself, hitting a three and a step-back jumper, but spent most of his time scooting around the court, creating for teammates.

"It feels great," Young said "This is my first experience at home in the playoffs. I'm looking forward to having a lot more of these."

The Hawks led 58-44 at the half. The Knicks never got the margin below double figures over the final two quarters. During Game 2 in New York, a Knicks fan spit on Young as he was inbounding the ball during the fourth quarter of a tight contest — one of three incidents in a matter of hours at NBA arenas across the country, renewing calls for increased security and other measures to deal with unruly fans.

A total of five fans in New York, Philadelphia and Utah were banned from games for their misbehavior.

With Young spreading the wealth, the Hawks put their depth to good use. Seven players scored in double figures, including Collins with 14 points after he was held scoreless in Game 2 while dealing with foul trouble.

Meanwhile, Knicks All-Star Julius Randle had another tough night and was serenaded constantly with chants of "Overrated! Overrated! Overrated!"

Clippers spoil Mavs' party, get back in series

Associated Press

DALLAS — Don't count out Kawhi Leonard, Paul George and the Los Angeles Clippers just yet.

Not even a raucous party atmosphere and big early Dallas lead in Luka Doncic's home playoff debut could keep the Clippers from getting back in a first-round series after a two-game flop in LA.

Leonard scored 36 points and George had 22 of his 29 points in the first half to help Los Angeles recover from another slow start in a 118-108 victory Friday night. Dallas takes a 2-1 series lead into Game 4 on Sunday night.

"It's just adversity," said George, who combined with Leonard to make 24 of 35 shots as LA finished at 58%. "You've got to deal with adversity. We didn't get down on ourselves. We just stayed positive. We rallied. We toughed it out. We just stuck to our principles, kept playing."

Doncic fed the frenzy of 17,705 fans, more than three times the size of any crowd in a season that started with an empty arena, by making his first four shots, three of them three-pointers, on his way to a playoff career-high 44 points as the Mavs took a 30-11 lead.

The Clippers' 14-0 run erased most of the deficit before the end of the first quarter, and George gave his team its first lead on a three-pointer in the second quarter as it answered two losses at home to start the series.

Grossman's HR rallies Tigers in 10th

Associated Press

DETROIT — Robbie Grossman hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the 10th inning to give the Detroit Tigers a 3-2 victory over the New York Yankees on Friday night.

The Yankees took the lead in the top of the inning when automatic runner Aaron Judge came home from third on a passed ball. Justin Wilson (1-1) retired the first two Detroit batters in the bottom half, but on a full count, Grossman sent a high drive that cleared the fence in left field.

Rougned Odor homered and had four hits for the Yankees, who dropped a bizarre game that also included a three-ball walk for New York hitter Gio Urshela.

Bryan Garcia (1-1) won in relief for Detroit.

Each starting pitcher — Gerrit Cole for New York and Casey Mize for Detroit — was a former No. 1 overall draft pick. Mize, the top pick in the 2018 draft, allowed a run and five hits in five innings. He struck out seven with no walks.

Cole was picked first overall by Pittsburgh in 2011. He allowed a run and six hits in six innings.

Athletics 3, Angels 1: Jed Lowrie scored the tiebreaking run in the seventh inning after left fielder Justin Upton bobbled Matt Chapman's single, Bob Melvin tied the Oakland record for managerial wins and the host Athletics beat Shohei Ohtani and Los Angeles.

Ohtani walked Lowrie on four pitches leading off the seventh and then walked Mitch Moreland. Chapman followed with a soft single to left that Upton struggled to pick up, allowing Lowrie to score easily. Seth Brown added an RBI single.

Elvis Andrus had two hits to help Oakland to its third straight win.

Ohtani (1-1) allowed three earned runs and

three hits but had control problems late. He walked four and hit Mark Canha with a pitch.

Giants 8, Dodgers 5: Left fielder Mike Tauchman reached over the wall to rob Albert Pujols of a walk-off home run in the bottom of the ninth inning as San Francisco broke through in the 10th to win at Los Angeles.

Dodgers pinch-hitter Austin Barnes hit a three-run homer with two outs in the ninth to make it 5-all.

LaMonte Wade Jr. hit a go-ahead single in 10th off Kenley Jansen (0-2). Evan Longoria added a two-run double.

Tyler Rogers (1-0) got the win despite giving up Barnes' homer. Jarlin Garcia got his first save since he was a Marlins minor leaguer in 2011.

Buster Posey hit a three-run homer in the eighth that gave the Giants a 5-2 lead.

Cubs 1, Reds 0: David Bote homered, Adbert Alzolay wriggled out of several jams while pitching into the sixth inning and host Chicago beat Cincinnati.

Bote homered leading off the fifth to spoil Reds starter Vladimir Gutiérrez's major league debut. The Cubs managed just three hits and won for the 10th time in 12 games.

Alzolay (3-4) threw 103 pitches in 5½ innings and gave up five hits, struck out six and walked three. Craig Kimbrel earned his 12th save in 14 chances.

Blue Jays 11, Indians 2 (7): Hyun Jin Ryu regained his control after a rough first inning battling strong winds and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. and Joe Panik drove in three runs apiece, leading Toronto to a win at Cleveland in a game called in the bottom of the seventh.

The game was played in winds gusting to 45 mph throughout, and a steady, blowing rain made conditions miserable.

Panik had four hits and Santiago Espinal also had three RBIs for the Blue Jays.

Red Sox 5, Marlins 2 (5½ innings): Alex Verdugo hit a three-run homer, J.D. Martinez drove in two runs with a double and host Boston beat Miami in a game called after 5½ innings because of rain.

Adam Ottavino slogged through a soggy top of the sixth before umpires suspended play. After a delay of 1 hour, 25 minutes, the game was called, with Ottavino getting his second save.

Royals 8, Twins 3: Whit Merrifield had two hits and three RBIs, Kris Bubic had another strong start and Kansas City won at Minnesota.

Merrifield had a two-run double in a five-run seventh inning as the Royals' offense broke out after scoring five total runs during a three-game series at Tampa Bay.

Mariners 3, Rangers 2: Kyle Lewis doubled and scored Seattle's first run, then hit a two-run opposite-field homer an inning later that proved to be the difference to send visiting Texas to its 10th straight road loss.

The Mariners have followed up a six-game losing streak by winning four of five.

Padres 10, Astros 3 (11): Fernando Tatis Jr. and Tommy Pham homered, then each had an RBI in a seven-run 11th inning that sent San Diego to a win at Houston.

The Padres improved to an MLB-best 7-0 in interleague play this season. The Astros have lost five of six overall.

Cardinals 8, Diamondbacks 6: Tyler O'Neill hit a two-run homer for the second straight night, Nolan Arenado added a solo shot and visiting St. Louis dealt Arizona its 12th straight loss.

The Cardinals never trailed, jumping to a 4-0 lead in the first. Paul Goldschmidt had a sacrifice fly, Yadier Molina added an RBI double and O'Neill's homer easily cleared the left field wall.

Open-wheel racing has healed from its bitter split

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Michael Andretti hears the line repeatedly.

Yes, he's led more Indianapolis 500 laps than any driver who never reached victory lane. He also knows it's a title that could have been avoided if the Championship Auto Racing Teams series and the Indy Racing League hadn't parted ways in 1996, splitting American open-wheel racing in two.

For Andretti, it came with a heavy price. He

missed five 500s in the prime of his career — five chances to end the dreaded Andretti curse. And he, like so many other drivers, had no choice. The big teams and big sponsors all went to CART and the top drivers followed in a bitter, 12-year divorce that nearly ruined the sport.

"I felt cheated," Andretti said. "I lost five years of winning the race in my prime. It's a disappointing feeling."

Today, the remnants of those forgettable

days barely make a ripple in Gasoline Alley.

Friendly drivers revel in laughter and jokes. Series officials are trying to grow the sport. The controversial rule that guaranteed IRL regulars 25 of the 33 starting spots in the 500 ended long ago, and Tony George, who was at the forefront of the split as speedway president, is no longer associated with IndyCar. His family sold Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the series to Roger Penske in January 2020. George did not respond to an interview request.