

DOD: Plan to reopen strait is temporary

By MATTHEW ADAMS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. mission to protect commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz is temporary, and the ceasefire in the war with Iran is not over, the Pentagon said on Tuesday.

“Ultimately, this is a separate and distinct project, and we expected there would be some churn at the beginning,” Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said during a news conference at the Pentagon. “We said we would defend and defend aggressively, and we absolutely have.”

More than 22,500 mariners on more than 1,500 commercial ships are waiting to transit the strait, said Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Iran has fired at commercial vessels nine times, seized two container ships and attacked U.S. forces 10 times since the

ceasefire was announced last month, Caine said. He said the attacks all fall “below the threshold” for greater hostilities.

“Project Freedom is defensive in nature, focused in scope and temporary in duration. American forces won’t need to enter Iranian waters or airspace. It’s not necessary,” Hegseth said. “To Iran, let innocent ships pass freely.”

The secretary said this mission is separate from Operation Epic Fury, the name for the U.S. campaign against Iran, but he did not answer follow-up questions seeking clarity.

Iran launched multiple cruise missiles, drones and small attack boats at commercial ships and some U.S. Navy vessels, CENTCOM Commander Adm. Brad Cooper said in a news briefing on Monday.

Caine and Hegseth said the fast boats Iran used to try to attack the vessels were using

small arms, rifles or machine guns, but that Iran also fired small coastal cruise missiles at the ships.

The U.S. Navy is providing cover for commercial ships as part of Project Freedom, the effort announced Sunday by President Donald Trump to protect vessels moving through the strait and restore freedom of navigation. The operation comes as discussions to end the war with Iran remain underway.

Trump says the war could last another two to three weeks.

“We’ve taken out much of what we’d have to do, probably another two weeks, two weeks, maybe three weeks. And time is not of the essence for us,” the president told conservative political commentator Hugh Hewitt on Tuesday.

Cooper said there are ships from 87 countries in the Persian Gulf seeking passage through the strait, which has been vir-

tually blocked by Iran since joint Israeli-U.S. strikes began on Feb. 28.

Iran on Monday launched three attacks on the United Arab Emirates and one on Oman, Caine said.

“Thus far, today is quieter,” the chairman added.

Iranian officials on Tuesday accused the U.S. of violating the ceasefire and warned of it becoming bogged down in the war.

Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said a “new equation” in the strait is “in the process of being solidified,” in a post on X on Tuesday.

“We know full well that the continuation of the status quo is intolerable for America; while we have not even begun yet,” he added.

Since the war began, 13 American personnel have died and at least 402 have been wounded, according to Defense Manpower Data Center figures.

CENTCOM leader eyes return of Bahrain evacuees

By LARA KORTE

Stars and Stripes

Hundreds of U.S. military families who left Bahrain under drone and missile fire earlier this year may soon be headed back, but the timeline and the means for getting them there are still unclear.

U.S. Central Command head Adm. Brad Cooper told reporters on Monday that he’d like to see families return to Naval Support Activity Bahrain, which is home to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet.

“It’s my goal to get them back to Bahrain as soon as possible,” he said. “We did a little survey, and 90% of them want to get

back as quickly as they can.”

Dependents and other nonessential personnel on the island were evacuated shortly after the Feb. 28 start of Operation Epic Fury, the stalemated war against Iran. The relocation rush marked one of the largest movements of military families in recent years.

Two months later, the evacuees are still sheltering in safe havens in Europe and the U.S., living in temporary housing as the conflict in the Middle East drags on.

NSA Bahrain has been hit hard by Iranian fire since the war began, with the base and surrounding neighborhoods sustaining extensive damage.

CENTCOM hasn’t commented on or confirmed the state of its Bahrain facilities.

Cooper didn’t say what conditions would be necessary to begin a return, but tensions remain high. While a temporary ceasefire that began April 8 is still technically in effect, the U.S. and Iran have exchanged fire in recent days over the Strait of Hormuz.

Force protection issues are a serious driver in considerations of whether to allow families to accompany service members, said retired Vice Adm. John Miller, a former NAVCENT/5th Fleet commander.

But overall, the preference is to have family members re-

main in Bahrain because it allows service members to remain at the base for longer periods of time, he said.

“You gain continuity and gain expertise, and you gain a better understanding of the culture,” Miller said. “All of those things are important, and insofar as we can safely have families present, we want to continue to do that.”

Cooper did not provide a timeline for family members’ return to NSA Bahrain. Navy guidance issued May 2 suggests that the Pentagon is prepared to offer safe-haven entitlements for up to 180 days, meaning they would last until late August.

Navy fends off coordinated Iran attack

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Two Navy destroyers repelled a barrage of Iranian air and surface attacks this week to safely cross the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf, according to a news report.

The USS Truxtun and USS Mason, supported by Apache helicopters and other aircraft, faced Iranian missiles, drones and small fast-attack boats Monday in a coordinated attack, CBS News reported, citing unidentified U.S. officials.

Defensive measures underpinned by air support deterred each threat during the sustained attack, according to the CBS report.

Neither Truxtun nor Mason was struck during the assault, contrary to Iranian state media reports that said the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had hit an unidentified U.S. warship with two missiles.

That claim is false, U.S. Central Command said in a post to X, adding that “no U.S. ships have been struck.”

American forces continue to support Project Freedom, the U.S.-led initiative to protect commercial vessels transiting the strait, and enforce the blockade against Iranian ports, CENTCOM said.

The news came as CENTCOM commander Vice Adm. Brad Cooper told reporters during a call Monday that U.S. forces had defeated multiple Iranian attacks targeting commercial vessels and some Navy ships in the strait, a vital artery through which 20% of the oil and petroleum products consumed worldwide travels.

Apache and Seahawk helicopters were used in the sinking of six small Iranian boats, Cooper said of U.S. military operations on Monday.

In turn, the IRGC denied that any of its vessels had been hit,

saying five people were killed in U.S. attacks on two small cargo boats, the Iranian state news agency Tasnim reported Tuesday.

Cooper wouldn't say whether the mutual attacks brought an end to a ceasefire in effect since April 8.

But Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Tuesday that Iran's actions had fallen below a threshold marking a ceasefire violation.

The Iranian attacks were expected and the U.S. had defended against them aggressively, he said.

President Donald Trump will decide whether any further action by Iran rises to the level of a violation, Hegseth said during a Pentagon briefing with reporters. He advised Iran to be “prudent” in keeping its actions under that threshold.

Iran's attacks included the United Arab Emirates, which said Iranian drones were be-

hind a fire Monday in the Fujairah Oil Industry Zone, the country's largest oil storage facility. It was the first such assault since the ceasefire began, the New York Times reported Tuesday.

Two people were injured by an attack in neighboring Oman, according to the Times report, which cited an Omani state news agency that did not say who was responsible.

Meanwhile, the Danish shipping and logistics company Maersk said Monday that one of its ships had transited the strait under U.S. military protection, Turkish state news agency Anadolu reported.

“The transit was completed without incident, and all crew members are safe and unharmed,” Maersk said in a statement.

The vessel had been in the Persian Gulf since hostilities broke out Feb. 28, the statement said.

Pentagon picks 14 munitions as top production priorities

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The Department of Defense is pushing industry to ramp up production on 14 “critical” weapons — ranging from Patriot anti-missile interceptors to new low-cost cruise missiles, according to an internal memo.

The list includes radar-guided air-to-air AMRAAM missiles, air-dropped ship-killer LRASM missiles and two variants of Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The priority list was issued last week by the Munitions Acceleration Council (MAC), the Pentagon panel of senior leaders created in 2025 to prioritize weapons procurement and incorporate long-term defense industry commitments to cost and

quality control.

Most of the weapons have been used in Operation Epic Fury, the U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran. The need to replenish the thousands of missiles, bombs and other munitions used in the campaign is explicitly part of the reason for the list.

“These investments are vital to ensuring the department's ability to meet immediate and long-term munitions demands; replenish depleted stockpiles; support the operational needs of U.S. forces, allies and partners; reestablish deterrence; and meet long-term demand,” according to one budget document.

The “critical” list includes a dozen “legacy” munitions and two “emerging” munitions to be fast-tracked to troops.

The Pentagon will offer multi-year procurement deals that could stretch as long as seven years, according to the MAC document released by the Pentagon.

In exchange for the longer-term commitment that the Pentagon says will ensure less volatility in production rates on weapons programs, contractors will have to agree to stricter timelines and cover unexpected costs if production targets aren't met.

“We're making them put skin in the game, and we expect them to meet the ramp rates that they agree to,” said acting Pentagon comptroller Jay Hurst during a news briefing on April 21.

The more-than \$47 billion in

spending includes \$19.5 billion for “procurement disconnects” — making up for incremental costs in current spending. The totals released for each purchase don't add up because of rounding, the MAC said.

The two “emerging” priorities are for a Low Cost Hypersonic Strike Weapon and increased production of the long-range Precision Strike Missile Increment 1.

The memo lists \$326 million for the development and procurement of the low-cost hypersonic strike weapon; \$156 million for the Navy to procure 353 missiles, and \$130 million for the Pentagon to test and develop the Blackbeard-Ground Launch low-cost hypersonic strike missile.

La. election delay spawns action in courts

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court's decision last week invalidating Louisiana's congressional map has spawned a fast-moving set of court fights over the state's ongoing primary, as Gov. Jeff Landry seeks to halt the ongoing primaries to draw a new congressional map.

The Supreme Court ruled Louisiana should not have been forced to draw a congressional map with a second Black-majority district to comply with the Voting Rights Act. The following day, Landry postponed his state's May 16 primaries for the House, saying in part that elections should not proceed under an unconstitutional map.

Voters have challenged Landry's move in both state and fed-

eral court, as a different group of voters who brought the Supreme Court case, *Louisiana v. Callais*, asks the justices to speed up typically perfunctory actions after a decision.

In the federal challenge to Landry's order, which was assigned to a three-judge panel, voters argue the election cancellation violated their civil rights.

The judges have asked both sides to file arguments over how to handle the issues by Thursday, in an order that also said the panel and could call a hearing.

In the state challenge, voters and voting rights groups argue in part the cancellation exceeds the governor's authority to invoke emergency power to stop elections because of a Supreme

Court ruling, rather than a natural disaster, public health or other safety emergency.

At the same time, a separate group of voters, the ones who successfully challenged the current map, asked the justices to fast-track the issuance of the decision — formally sending it back to a different three-judge panel so that the state could redistrict.

The three-judge panel in that case said in an order last week that the state would have three days to lay out its redistricting plans once the justices formally issue that decision.

The challengers in that case, similar to Landry, argue that the state should not conduct a primary election under a map that was already found to be unconstitutional.

The new federal challenge to Landry's decision to cancel the election could get to the Supreme Court in a test of how the justices will handle a redistricting effort so late before an election.

In December, the justices wrote that a lower court "inserted itself into an active primary campaign" by issuing a ruling invalidating Texas' map four months before the state's primary. In 2022, the justices blocked a lower court order mandating a new congressional map for Alabama three months before its primary.

In Louisiana, early voting had been set to start Saturday ahead of a May 16 primary. Ballots have already been sent to overseas and military voters, according to court records.

Secret Service shoots armed man near White House

Bloomberg News

A man was shot by Secret Service officers near the White House Monday afternoon after agents spotted him carrying a concealed firearm and he opened fire, according to the agency's deputy director.

Plainclothes surveillance agents patrolling the outer perimeter of the White House complex spotted what they de-

scribed as a visible outline of a firearm on the suspect and called in uniformed Secret Service police to make contact, Deputy Director Matt Quinn said at a briefing.

The suspect ran, drew a weapon and shot at the officers, who returned fire, striking him. He was taken to an area hospital. His condition was not disclosed.

A child bystander was also hit during the exchange and was taken to a hospital with non-life threatening injuries, Quinn said. Investigators believe the child was hit by the suspect, not by officers, though Quinn said the matter would be part of an ensuing investigation.

The shooting occurred less than two weeks after the Secret Service stopped an armed man

who rushed into a Washington gala attended by President Donald Trump and top administration officials.

Quinn pointed out that Vice President JD Vance's motorcade had driven through the area shortly before the shooting. He said there was no indication the suspect was targeting the motorcade, but that investigators would look into his intent.

Reconciliation bill to fund ICE, CBP, ballroom security

CQ-Roll Call

Two Republican-led Senate committees late Monday released legislative text to flesh out a nearly \$70 billion reconciliation package to fund immigration enforcement agencies at the Department of Homeland Security through the remainder of Trump's term.

The Senate Judiciary Committee text shows that panel's piece of the package would amount to nearly \$39.2 billion. A

separate title from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee would provide \$32.5 billion, though the two panels share overlapping jurisdiction over a \$2.5 billion flexible fund for Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin's office, bringing the total to about \$69.2 billion.

Under the combined package, Immigration and Customs Enforcement would receive about \$38.2 billion.

An additional \$7.45 billion would go toward ICE's Homeland Security Investigations unit. The group conducts criminal investigations into drug and weapons smuggling, human trafficking, cybercrime and potential terrorist activities.

Customs and Border Protection would get a little more than \$26 billion, including nearly \$22.6 billion for Border Patrol and other agency personnel, air and marine agents and field

support. There's an additional \$3.45 billion for border security technology and screening efforts.

Nearly \$1.5 billion would go to the Justice Department for terrorism prosecution, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Marshals Service, U.S. attorneys offices and the FBI, while the Secret Service would get \$1 billion for security upgrades related to the new White House ballroom project.

Billionaires pour money into wealth-tax fight

Bay Area News Group

Opponents of the proposed California Billionaire Tax Act ballot initiative say they have collected more than enough signatures to qualify two countermeasures that could weaken or block it, setting up a big-dollar November fight over further taxing the Golden State's richest residents that has divided Silicon Valley and the state's political class.

The billionaire tax, proposed by the Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West, would impose a one-time 5% levy on the net worth of California residents with more than \$1 billion in assets, with the money aimed at helping the state generate \$100 billion for healthcare in the face of federal cuts. The union said late last month that it had collected enough signatures to put the tax proposal before voters in November.

One of the countermeasures, the Retirement & Personal Sav-

ings Act, could effectively cancel out the billionaire tax if both measures passed and the savings measure received more votes. The proposal would ban retroactive taxes and new state taxes on personal assets.

Fighting against the tax proposal is a who's-who of billionaires, most from the Silicon Valley technology industry. The group has thrown tens of millions of dollars into advocacy group Building a Better California, which is seeking to put two initiatives on the November ballot that experts believe are intended to counter the proposed tax. Google co-founder Sergey Brin, who has opened his treasure chest to fight the tax proposal, has given another \$9 million to the group leading the battle, pushing his total spending to \$66 million, state records show.

Californians to Protect Retirement and Life Savings, backed by Building a Better California, said last week it had gathered 1.4

million signatures from eligible voters—874,641 valid signatures are needed to reach the ballot—and begun submitting them to state and county authorities.

Nathan Click, spokesman for Californians to Protect Retirement and Life Savings, said the proposed Retirement & Personal Savings Act was not a response to the billionaire tax proposal.

"Californians deserve to know that their hard-earned savings will be there when they need them," Click said.

University of California, Riverside political science professor Shaun Bowler said the proposal is aimed at killing the billionaire tax. He said there aren't current proposals to add a new tax to everyday Californians' net worth, despite ads for the proposal that refer to people's pensions, retirement plans, and savings.

"It's campaigning," Bowler said. "Lots of campaigns these days mislead and misrepresent."

Click declined to comment on

the suggestion of misrepresentation.

Passing the signature threshold does not suggest a ballot measure would win if it made the ballot, Bowler said.

"It tells us that there's a lot of money being spent to qualify it," Bowler said. "It doesn't tell us whether or not it's going to pass."

The fight has exposed sharp political divisions in California and Silicon Valley. Democratic Rep. Ro Khanna and Tom Steyer, the billionaire hedge fund founder turned environmentalist and philanthropist now running for governor, support the tax proposal.

Opponents, including Gov. Gavin Newsom, San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan — also running for governor — and Ethan Agarwal, a Democratic primary challenger to Khanna, say it would drive rich people out of California, reducing the state's tax revenue, and putting a chill on innovation and entrepreneurship.

Optimistic Dems add 8 House seats to 'Red to Blue' effort

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The House Democratic campaign arm is adding eight more candidates in competitive districts — including several locked in messy primaries — to its list of contenders eligible for additional resources.

The "Red to Blue" program provides a glimpse into how the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee views the House battleground and the candidates the party believes will resonate with voters in the run-up to the midterm elections.

The committee released its initial list of a dozen challengers in February. The additions reflect Democrats' rising optimism of flipping the House, emboldened by a political climate that appears increasingly inhospitable to Republicans, who are defending a razor-thin majority.

The additions to this year's program include former TV journalist Marlene Galán-Woods, who's making her second bid in Arizona's open 1st District; physician and state Assembly Member Jasmeet Bains in California's 22nd; and state Sen. Joe Baldacci in Maine's 2nd. Each faces at least one primary opponent.

Two Pennsylvania Democrats were also added to the program: firefighter and union leader Bob Brooks, who is part of a crowded field of Democrats competing in the 7th District, and Bucks County Commissioner Bob Harvie in the 1st District.

Army veteran Jessica Killin in Colorado's 5th District and a pair of Texans, Tejano singer Bobby Pulido in the 15th District and Bexar County Sheriff's deputy Johnny Garcia in the 35th, round out the updated list.

Florida redistricting map approval draws quick suit

Tampa Bay Times

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday signed into law the congressional map his office created.

Within hours, opponents filed a lawsuit.

DeSantis' plan could add four more U.S. House seats for the Republican Party. It also threatens to dismantle Florida's Fair Districts Amendment, a voter-approved part of the constitution adopted in 2010.

"Signed, Sealed, and Delivered," DeSantis said on social media, attaching a photo of the new districts.

The governor's signature comes one week after his office first unveiled its proposal. Fox News received an exclusive, red-and-blue party-coded map before lawmakers did.

Lawmakers approved the governor's proposal after two days of a redistricting-focused special session.

Democrats decried what they said was a violation of Florida's constitution and a ploy to appease President Donald Trump, who has pushed red states to redraw their maps to keep GOP control of Congress.

Florida now joins the about half-dozen states that have redrawn their maps after Trump's push, either in favor of Republicans or in favor of Democrats.

DeSantis' signature puts the new districts in place for the 2026 midterms.

But a lawsuit filed Monday by the Equal Ground Education Fund and a group of 18 Florida voters asks the court to strike the map down.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officials launch probe into Sloth World deaths

FL ORLANDO — Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier confirmed Friday that a criminal probe is underway into the deaths of sloths at Sloth World, a planned International Drive attraction that will not open after animals languished and perished in warehouses owned by the company in Orlando.

The criminal investigation is being led by the Orange-Osceola State Attorney’s Office with assistance of a statewide prosecutor with expertise in “animal welfare law,” who will consider possible charges, including those under Florida’s animal cruelty laws, Uthmeier said in a letter Friday.

The probe comes as state Rep. Anna Eskamani, D-Orlando, and animal rights groups called for a criminal investigation into the deaths of at least 32 sloths imported by Sloth World from Guyana and Peru.

Officers could lose badges over shooting

CA LOS ANGELES — In a first, California’s police accreditation body is weighing whether to strip two LAPD officers of their license to carry a badge over a controversial shooting.

The officers, José Zavala and Julio Quintanilla, shot and killed a suicidal man armed with a knife in 2021. A civilian advisory board for the Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training, or POST, determined there was “clear and convincing evidence” that Zavala and Quintanilla used excessive force on the man, Margarito Lo-

pez Jr., who didn’t appear to pose a danger to anyone other than himself. Members of the panel recommended the officers’ certifications be suspended or revoked outright.

The final decision will be made by the full commission, which is expected to take up the case next month. If POST rules against the officers, they still can appeal to an administrative law judge.

On Dec. 18, 2021, Lopez’s sister called 911 because she was afraid her 22-year-old brother might hurt himself. LAPD officers confronted Lopez outside his apartment building in Historic South Central.

For more than 10 minutes, officers shouted at Lopez to drop his 6-inch butcher knife, according to a report by then-Police Chief Michel Moore and POST’s investigation.

When Lopez suddenly jumped to his feet and took four steps in the direction of officers, one shot him with a 40-millimeter round, which is designed to incapacitate people without killing them. Almost simultaneously, Zavala and Quintanilla fired their guns.

Airplane hits light pole, truck, then lands safely

NJ NEWARK — A United Airlines flight hit a light pole and a truck on the New Jersey Turnpike as it was coming in for a landing at Newark Liberty International Airport on Sunday afternoon, sending the truck driver to the hospital with minor injuries, authorities said.

Despite the collision, the aircraft en route from Italy landed safely, and none of the 221 passengers or 10 crew members on-

board were injured, a spokesperson for the airline said.

Wild dashcam footage from the truck, a tractor-trailer carrying baked goods, shows the interior of the cab in the moments before and after the collision, as the driver appears to notice the rapidly descending plane just before impact.

Shoppers possibly exposed to measles

MD BALTIMORE — Shoppers and employees at a Hyattsville shopping center were potentially exposed to measles on April 24, health officials say, when a Washington resident confirmed to have measles visited.

In addition to several locations in the nation’s capital, including parts of Dulles International Airport and several buses, the measles patient also stopped at the New Hampshire Business Center in Hyattsville. Anyone else who was there between the hours of noon and 6:30 p.m. that day may have been exposed, according to a Friday news release from the Maryland Department of Health.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that can remain in the air for up to two hours after someone with an infection breathes, coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread by droplets and by touching infected surfaces, according to MDH.

Eight arrested as ICE detains man at hospital

NY NEW YORK — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents brought a man they had detained to a Brooklyn hospital, sparking a chaotic protest in

which nine people were arrested, police said Sunday.

Video of the scene shows ICE agents dragging a man outside Wykoff Heights Medical Center in Bushwick, where a large crowd of protesters quickly gathered, about 10:35 p.m. Saturday. ICE agents arrested Chidozie Wilson Okeke, a Nigerian man “with previous arrests for assault and drug criminal drug possession” who agents said had overstayed his visa, ABC7 New York reported.

Water plan announced for dwindling Colorado River

CA LOS ANGELES — With the Colorado River’s giant reservoirs declining toward critically low levels, negotiators for California, Arizona and Nevada announced Friday that they have agreed on a water-saving plan for the next two years.

Representatives of the three states said in a written statement that their plan aims to “stabilize the Colorado River through 2028.” It will require larger cuts in water use than they had offered previously in talks with other states and the federal government.

“We’re putting forward additional measurable water contributions for the system,” said JB Hamby, the chairman of California’s Colorado River Board. “Without that, the system will continue to decline.”

The states’ negotiators said their plan identifies more than 3.2 million acre-feet of water cutbacks through 2028, building on their previous proposal. They announced Friday night that they had sent their proposal to the Trump administration.

— From wire reports

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Edwards returns early, helps Wolves top Spurs

Associated Press

Anthony Edwards announced to the San Antonio Spurs he had returned — not that anyone in the sold-out Frost Bank Center needed to be told.

The Minnesota guard made an unexpected return 10 days after hyperextending his left knee, leading the Timberwolves to a 104-102 victory Monday night in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals.

After hitting his first 3-pointer with 1:27 remaining in the first quarter, Edwards turned to the San Antonio bench and screamed “I’m back! I’m back!”

They were already fully aware.

The four-time All-Star had 18 points, including 11 in the final quarter, as Minnesota held on to hand the Spurs just the second loss in their past 17 series openers at home.

“That’s kind of who he is,” San Antonio guard Dylan Harper said. “Superstar in this league. He’s going to come back and have games like that even though he hasn’t played for a little bit.”

Edwards, who averaged 36.7

points, 4.0 assists and 3.0 rebounds in three games against the Spurs this season, has stated previously that he enjoys competing against San Antonio star Victor Wembanyama.

They had another duel in Game 1.

Wembanyama had 11 points, 15 rebounds and set an NBA postseason record with 12 blocked shots.

The Spurs cut the deficit to 104-102 on a steal by Devin Vassell and layup by Dylan Harper with 31 seconds remaining. Following a miss by the T-wolves’ Julius Randle, Julian Champagne couldn’t connect on a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

“We have to be better,” Wembanyama said. “It shows up on the stat sheet. We need to figure out before 48 hours what we can do better and I’ve got no doubt that we will. I trust us.”

Randle finished with 21 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota. Harper scored 18 points and Champagne and Stephon Castle had 17 each for San Antonio.

“I don’t think me coming back was because of nothing they got going on,” Edwards said. “It was

more so I want to be out there with my brothers. Yeah, just that simple.”

Edwards was expected to miss at least the first two games of the series, but the 6-foot-4 guard expedited his rehabilitation to play in the opener. He was cleared to play 90 minutes before the scheduled tipoff Monday night when Wolves coach Chris Finch simply said: “He’s in.”

“He loves to play the game,” Finch said. “We dodged a bullet when it happened. He’s done an incredible job. Our medical staff has done an unbelievable job of getting him to this point. And he was super motivated by the fact that we were able to get that first series. I think that was kind of a little bit of an inspiration for him, too, just gave him something to work towards.”

Edwards suffered a bone bruise, in addition to hyperextending his left knee, on April 25 during Game 4 of Minnesota’s opening-round series against Denver.

“I think I got the best physical therapist in the world with David Hines,” Edwards said of the

Timberwolves’ vice president of medical operations and performance. “So just trusting him and working through all the pain that I felt throughout the first two days, three days, and just getting in the pool, running on it. Band work. Just a lot of resistance. So, yeah, he got me right.”

Edwards did not start, but played 25 minutes off the bench, including 9:52 in the final quarter.

“Everybody in the arena is against us,” Edwards said. “Yeah, I think that’s the best thing about it. You start on the road, everybody got on pink, blue and whatever color shirts there is, chanting ‘Go Spurs Go,’ and doing all that. I’m with Minnesota. I got Minnesota back at all times.”

“I’m out there with my brothers and we’re going to war.”

It was uncertain if Edwards will start Game 2 on Wednesday or if his minutes restriction will be lifted, but he is ready regardless.

“I felt great,” Edwards said. “I don’t think I’m limited at all. And just whatever coach needs from me.”

Brunson keeps Knicks rolling in Game 1 rout of 76ers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jalen Brunson scored 27 of his 35 points in the first half and the New York Knicks emphatically added to a historic postseason roll by overwhelming the Philadelphia 76ers 137-98 on Monday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

New York became the first team in NBA history to win three straight postseason games by at least 25 points, continuing a wave that began midway through the first round against Atlanta by shooting 63% from the field and leading by 40 points.

“We’re playing well, but it doesn’t mean anything if we can’t find a way to get three more wins,” Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns said. “So we’ve just got to stick to the task at hand.”

OG Anunoby added 18 points on 7-for-8 shooting, while Towns and Mikal Bridges both had 17, with Towns adding six rebounds

and six assists in just 20 minutes.

After trailing 2-1 against the Hawks, New York has won four straight games by a total of 135 points. The Knicks are the first team since detailed play-by-play began in 1996-97 to lead three straight playoff games by at least 30 points, according to Sportradar.

Brunson said New York’s focus and attention to detail have been better since it fell behind.

“Yes, it’s turned into obviously big wins, but those attention to detail things are going to help us in the close ones as well,” Brunson said.

Game 2 is Wednesday night before the series shifts to Philadelphia, with Joel Embiid already pleading with 76ers fans not to sell their tickets to Knicks fans when it does.

But Philadelphia didn’t exactly give its fans much reason to want to keep them Monday.

Paul George scored 17 points for the Sixers.

Embiid shot just 3 for 11 for his 14 points and Tyrese Maxey had just 13, not making his first basket until five minutes into the second quarter.

Philadelphia had just one full day off after winning in Boston on Saturday night to complete the NBA’s 14th comeback from a 3-1 deficit. But the 76ers looked more like the team that lost twice by 32 points in the first four games to fall into that deficit.

New York had a much easier first round, finishing with one of the easiest games in NBA playoff history. The Knicks crushed Atlanta 140-89 on Thursday in Game 6, setting a postseason record by building a 47-point halftime lead.

There were long stretches Monday that looked similar.

“They were obviously picking us apart, moving a lot better than we were,” Philadelphia coach Nick Nurse said.

Hall's OT goal gives Canes 2-0 series lead

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Taylor Hall slipped the puck past Dan Vladar at 18:54 of overtime to help the Carolina Hurricanes beat the Philadelphia Flyers 3-2 on Monday night, taking a 2-0 lead in their second-round series in the NHL playoffs.

Hall took a short feed from Sean Walker and carried the puck in on the left side before being knocked to his knees near the top of the crease. But Hall hopped up as Jackson Blake battled for the loose puck, corralled it and beat Vladar to cap a night that saw Carolina fall behind 2-0 quickly for its first deficit of the postseason.

Afterward, Hall said he didn't even realize he had fallen down until he watched a replay afterward.

"When you score in overtime, it seems like parts of your memory

kind of go," Hall said, adding later: "I was in another time zone there for a second."

The series shifts to Philadelphia for Thursday's Game 3.

Seth Jarvis had the third-period goal that forced overtime for the Hurricanes, while Nikolaj Ehlers also scored. Frederik Andersen finished with 34 saves to help them improve to 6-0 in the postseason.

Still, this one was anything but easy compared to the smothering first-period that paved the way to a 3-0 win in Monday's Game 1. Flyers coach Rick Tocchet had talked about the need for his players to react quicker against Carolina's aggression and speed, and carry the puck more into the tough areas of the ice.

Philadelphia did that early, with Jamie Drysdale and Sean Couturier scoring in a 39-second span of the first period. And the

Flyers outshot the Hurricanes 15-8 in the overtime in a much more assertive showing, but Philadelphia couldn't beat Andersen again after that flurry in the first 5 minutes.

Vladar had 40 saves, including twice stopping Carolina's Eric Robinson on second-period breakaways. He also got a timely bit of help in that period from Travis Sanheim, who cleared a loose puck that had slipped behind Vladar in the crease to deny the Hurricanes a tying score.

Tocchet felt more energy from his Flyers — in their first postseason since 2020 — in the aftermath of the Game 1 loss.

"I thought the young guys competed," he said. "I'm really proud of these guys. They just made the play at the end, that's it."

Ehlers' one-timer on the power play got Carolina on the board in the first. Then Ehlers fed a trail-

ing Jarvis to beat Vladar from the right side midway through the third period, ultimately forcing OT.

It was a penalty-filled night with the teams combining to go 2 for 13 with the man advantage, which derailed either team from getting in much of a 5-on-5 rhythm and leaving Vladar and Andersen to come up with big stops the entire night.

"Goaltending was not the issue tonight for any team," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

Philadelphia played a second straight game without regular-season goals leader Owen Tippett due to an undisclosed injury, while Carolina defenseman Alexander Nikishin took warmups but didn't play as he continues his recovery from a concussion suffered in the clinching game of the first-round sweep of Ottawa.

Knights score late to top Ducks in second-round opener

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Ivan Barbashev and Vegas played on after a disputed no-call, and his goal off a terrific pass from Pavel Dorofeyev with 4:58 left put the Golden Knights ahead for good in their 3-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks on Monday night in the opener of their second-round playoff series.

Game 2 in the best-of-seven Western Conference series is Wednesday night in Las Vegas.

Barbashev took advantage after officials did not call icing, which didn't sit well with Anaheim coach Joel Quenneville. It was Barbashev's pass from behind the red line to teammate Jack Eichel, who was battling the Ducks' Jackson LaCombe for the puck, that linesman Bevan Mills waved off for icing.

Officials declined to comment to a pool reporter.

"Clearly, I disagreed with the call," said Quenneville, who said he did not receive an explanation

from the officials. "Their guy stopped skating, which really made me annoyed."

Golden Knights coach John Tortorella said he couldn't see the play from his spot behind the bench. Barbashev kept skating once no call was made as Anaheim players appeared to slow up.

"I tried to put the puck deep and I thought I saw Jack on the far side going deep and I thought for a second he (beat LaCombe) and that's why they waved it off," Barbashev said. "Jack put pressure on him, they turned it over and Pav made a great play."

Vegas' Brett Howden extended his goal streak to a career-best four games, his fifth during that span. Mitch Marner, who assisted on Howden's goal early in the second period, added a 162-foot empty-net goal with 6 seconds left, and Carter Hart stopped 33 shots for the Golden Knights.

Mikael Granlund scored for the Ducks, and Lukas Dostal made 19 saves.

Vegas prevailed despite being outshot 34-22.

"They were the better team tonight," Tortorella said. "I thought as the game went on, we started finding our game, but we couldn't find it completely. ... It's a find-a-way league. We found a way to win, and I'm certainly not going to apologize for the win."

The Golden Knights' penalty kill continued to shine, extending their stretch to 14 straight without giving up a goal by keeping Anaheim off the scoreboard on four chances. The Ducks converted 8 of 16 power plays in the first round against Edmonton. Vegas is 19 of 20 on penalty kills.

Golden Knights center William Karlsson, out since sustaining a lower-body injury Nov. 8 against Anaheim, returned to the lineup. The crowd roared when Karlsson was shown on the video board after taking the ice less than three minutes into the game.

The Ducks dominated the early action, outshooting Vegas 11-6 in

the first period and then controlling the puck to open the second. But the Golden Knights scored first with their first shot on goal in the second when Marner made a pinpoint pass from the right circle to Howden, who scored easily from the left side of the net.

It didn't appear the lead would last long when Anaheim top-line center Leo Carlsson made a dazzling spin move to set up LaCombe with an open net. LaCombe, however, inexplicably passed up the shot for a pass, and Vegas avoided what appeared would be a sure Ducks goal.

Just as time was starting to run out on Anaheim in the third, it didn't waste its next opportunity. LaCombe made up for his previous gaffe by walking in on Hart before delivering a pass to Granlund, who was open in the right circle and scored at 13:57.

The tie didn't last long, with Dorofeyev passing to Barbashev to put the Golden Knights ahead 2-1 just 65 seconds later.

Yankees rout Orioles, tribute Sterling

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Judge put New York ahead in the first inning with his 14th home run as part of a four-RBI night, and the Yankees routed the Baltimore Orioles 12-1 on Monday for a four-game sweep and their 14th win in 16 games.

The win came on the night New York honored longtime radio broadcaster John Sterling, who died at 87 earlier that day and had called games for 36 years before retiring after the 2024 season. Following the final out, Sterling's familiar call of "Ballgame over! Yankees win! Thee Yankees win!" was played over the ballpark's public-address system. Judge is hoping it will become a new tradition after every home victory.

"I think it'd be a nice little tip of the cap to John and what he meant — so much to this franchise and this fan base. I think it would be pretty cool," Judge said after the game.

Judge drove a hanging, full-count knuckle-curve from Shane Baz (1-3) into the New York bullpen in right-center for a 2-0 lead and added a two-run single in a six-run eighth off Lou Trivino, who made his Baltimore debut. Cody Bellinger had three RBIs, including a two-run triple off Trivino.

Mets 4, Rockies 2: Carson Benge homered leading off the

sixth inning for New York's first hit against Tomoyuki Sugano (3-2), and the visiting Mets beat skidding Colorado in a game moved up three hours to avoid potential wet weather.

Mark Vientos added a two-run single for New York, which is 3-1 on a nine-game trip after losing 17 of 20 overall. Benge also saved a run with a diving catch in center field.

Red Sox 5, Tigers 4: Payton Tolle (1-1) pitched seven innings of two-run ball with eight strikeouts, Jarren Duran hit a three-run home run and visiting Boston used a five-run seventh inning to beat Detroit.

Aroldis Chapman pitched a hitless ninth for his seventh save of the season and 374th of his career.

Rays 5, Blue Jays 1: Ryan Vialde hit a three-run homer in the first inning, Taylor Walls added a two-run single in the sixth and host Tampa Bay beat Toronto.

The Rays have won four straight games and 10 of their last 11.

Phillies 1, Marlins 0: Bryce Harper had a homer, double and single, Aaron Nola worked six strong innings and visiting Philadelphia beat Miami.

Adolis García had two hits for the Phillies, who took three of four games from the Marlins and improved to 6-1 under interim manager Don Mattingly.

Royals 6, Guardians 2: Michael Wacha needed only 79 pitches to get through seven strong innings and Bobby Witt Jr. homered to spark a four-run fourth as host Kansas City beat Cleveland.

Jac Caglianone also went deep for the surging Royals, who have won four in a row and eight of 10. Nick Loftin delivered a two-run single with two outs in the fourth to give Kansas City a 4-2 lead.

Cardinals 6, Brewers 3: Kyle Leahy pitched 5½ innings of one-run ball, Iván Herrera drove in three runs and host St. Louis beat Milwaukee.

Leahy (4-3) struck out five and walked two while giving up six hits. Riley O'Brien recorded the final two outs and earned his 10th save of the season.

Dodgers 8, Astros 3: Kyle Tucker homered and drove in two runs against his former team to lead visiting Los Angeles to a win over Houston.

Yoshinobu Yamamoto pitched six strong innings and Alex Freeland homered and tied a career high with three hits to help the Dodgers to their second straight win following a four-game skid.

Cubs 5, Reds 4: Pinch-hitter Michael Conforto capped a two-run ninth inning with a solo homer, and host Chicago rallied to beat Cincinnati for its sixth straight victory.

Seiya Suzuki hit a 455-foot home run for the NL Central leaders, who improved to 23-12 with their 16th win in 19 games. The Cubs have won 12 in a row at home, the team's best streak at Wrigley Field since a 14-game run in 2008.

White Sox 6, Angels 0: Mune-taka Murakami hit his 14th homer and Miguel Vargas also went deep as visiting Chicago beat Los Angeles.

Murakami's two-run blast in the fourth inning kept the Japanese rookie tied with Yankees slugger Aaron Judge for the major league lead in home runs. Murakami also hit his first double of the season in the sixth, singled and scored in the eighth, finishing 3 for 4 with two RBIs and three runs scored.

Giants 3, Padres 2: Trevor McDonald (1-0) pitched seven innings of one-run ball with eight strikeouts in his season debut and host San Francisco beat San Diego.

Casey Schmitt hit his fifth home run, Luis Arraez had two doubles and scored twice while Rafael Devers drove in two runs to help the Giants win in their return to Oracle Park after an 0-6 road trip.

Mariners 5, Braves 4: J.P. Crawford hit a go-ahead two-run homer and host Seattle rallied from four runs down to beat Atlanta.

Tigers' Skubal needs elbow surgery, likely to miss 2-3 months

Associated Press

DETROIT — Two-time American League Cy Young Award winner Tarik Skubal will have surgery to remove loose bodies from his elbow after being scratched from Monday's start against the Boston Red Sox.

Detroit Tigers manager A.J. Hinch told reporters that the left-hander felt discomfort in his elbow Sunday, less than a week after an injury scare against the Atlanta Braves. The 29-year-old un-

derwent tests that showed the loose bodies. The surgery hadn't yet been scheduled as of Monday.

There is no immediate timetable for his return, though similar injuries usually require a two-to-three month recovery period. The phrase "loose bodies" often refers to pieces of bone or cartilage that break off and float in the joint space, though the specifics of Skubal's case are unclear.

"From my understanding, you

just go take it out," Skubal told MLB.com. "I think length of the rehab is probably just getting your spring training buildup up again, getting your volume up. But the procedure itself I think is pretty simple as far as what I've been explained."

Skubal pitched for the United States in the World Baseball Classic this spring but was careful with his workload, throwing in just one game before returning to spring training with Detroit. He

won a record salary arbitration case in February and is being paid \$32 million this season, far exceeding the team's \$19 million offer.

Skubal initially felt pain in his elbow last week against Atlanta but stayed in the game. He rubbed his left arm after a 2-2 pitch to Matt Olson, drawing a visit from a trainer and Hinch. Skubal threw one warmup pitch, decided he was OK and struck out the side to end his night.