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# USA TODAY

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## ELECTION 2024

# JD Vance redefines himself in debate

Trump's running mate leans into 'Midwest nice'

Rebecca Morin  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – For Republican JD Vance, Tuesday night's vice presidential debate was an opportunity for re-branding.

Vance presented himself as a candidate willing to work across the aisle. He focused on softening the GOP's stance on abortion and showcasing empathy for his Democratic opponent, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. There were few insults and elbows thrown.

The turn from Vance comes as his running mate, Donald Trump, and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris are locked in a razor-thin election and the Republican ticket is picking up ground in some key battleground states.

Vance appealed to voters through his biography, advocating for bipartisanship and limiting personal attacks against Walz.



Republican JD Vance speaks Tuesday to journalists after the CBS News vice presidential debate with Democrat Tim Walz. JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

Before answering the first debate question, Vance introduced himself to the public, "because I recognize a lot of Americans don't know who either one of us are."

The bestselling author noted he was raised in a working-class family and went to college on the GI Bill.

"I stand here asking to be your vice president with extraordinary gratitude for this country, for the American Dream that made it possible for me to live my dreams," he said.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., praised Vance's performance for sticking to the policies and the facts.

"JD was so good last night because he brought answers and solutions," Johnson said Wednesday on Fox News. "He showed his depth. And he came across as just being very reasonable and likable. I just thought he was at his best."

Ahead of the debate, Democrats labeled Vance as "weird," hit him for past comments about women who do not have children, and criticized his overly confident nature. He also was heavily criticized for spreading false rumors that Haitian migrants were eating pets in Springfield, Ohio, which caused turmoil and violence for the community.

"He seemed very slick," Democratic National Committee chair Jaime

See **VANCE**, Page 6A



Volunteers unload food and water Wednesday from a National Guard helicopter at Trinity of Fairview church in Fairview, N.C. Hundreds of people from inside and outside the disaster zone were helping the recovery. ANDREW NELLES/USA TODAY NETWORK

## Con artists on move to target the desperate, agencies warn

Michael Loria  
USA TODAY

More than 4,500 federal rescue and aid workers are headed to the areas smashed by Hurricane Helene. But U.S. prosecutors say another deluge of people is on the way: charlatans, opportunists and disreputable contractors looking to exploit the victims of the storm.

Federal, state and local officials have put out advisories this week warning hurricane victims – especially those who are desperate – to beware of people showing up at their door or calling them claiming they want to help. Defrauding of hurricane victims and the Federal Emergency Management Agency itself is a multimillion-dollar industry for criminals, according to experts, federal authorities and government warnings.

"Con artists and criminals may try to obtain money or steal personal information through fraud or identity theft after Hurricane Helene," FEMA officials warned Tuesday. "In some cases, thieves try to apply for FEMA

See **FRAUD**, Page 2A

# Miracles in the mud

Stories of kindness, heroism emerge from Helene's ruin

Christopher Cann and Phaedra Trethan  
USA TODAY

A son who journeyed 11 miles into the Blue Ridge Mountains to locate his parents. A pastor and a ragtag group of parishioners navigating collapsed roads to deliver aid to stranded residents. Strangers meeting online and coordinating searches for one another's missing loved ones.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, one of the worst storms the U.S. has seen in the modern era, residents across the devastated Southeast and elsewhere have showcased unshakable resolve, heroism and compassion.

Harrowing stories of rescues and treacherous hikes to find the many missing abound. And hundreds have turned out to assist in the recovery, chopping up tree limbs blocking roadways and delivering food to communities in need.

"We've had an amazing response,"

See **MIRACLES**, Page 3A



Paul McGinnis, left, pastor at Grace Chapel Foursquare Church in Forest City, N.C., huddles with survivors. "There are no words" to comfort people faced with such loss, he said. PROVIDED BY PAUL MCGINNIS

## Brace for the 'return of big hurricanes'

October, a historically active month, could kick off major storms. **3A**

# DOJ to review 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

Dale Denwalt and Minnah Arshad USA TODAY NETWORK



In the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, a white mob burned, looted and destroyed more than 1,000 homes. PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA

The U.S. Department of Justice announced it is launching a "review and evaluation" of the Tulsa Race Massacre in a long-awaited federal probe more than a century after one of the worst acts of racial violence in U.S. history.

The last two remaining survivors of the historic 1921 assault – Viola Fletcher ("Mother Fletcher") and Lessie Benningfield Randle ("Mother Randle") – have for years called on the federal government to examine the violent decimation of Greenwood, a thriving Black neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, referred to as "Black Wall Street."

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke said the federal report will honor the victims' legacies and hope it will help prevent their stories from being lost to history while noting there is "no expectation" that there are living perpetrators who could be criminally

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Iran launched missiles toward central Israel and Tel Aviv on Tuesday.  
AMMAR AWAD/REUTERS

# Tensions between Israel, Iran intensify after missile attack

Incident could spiral region into larger conflict

**Cybele Mayes-Osterman**  
USA TODAY

Israel has vowed revenge after Iran's missile attack on Tuesday, the latest development in what Iran said was a retaliation for Israel's airstrikes in Lebanon, where Hezbollah is based, and its killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

The White House said Iran would face "severe consequences." Other world leaders condemned its attack and warned it could spiral the region into a larger conflict.

Tensions between the two countries have intensified, raising concerns about a wider Middle East war. Here is what to expect and what could come next.

## What just happened with Israel and Iran?

Iran launched missiles into Tel Aviv and central Israel as residents hid in bomb shelters and explosions boomed across Jerusalem the day before the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah.

Israeli military spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said more than 180 ballistic missiles were fired from Iran. Most of the missiles were intercepted by Israel's defense systems, according to a spokesperson for the Pentagon. Two U.S. Navy destroyers also fired around a dozen interceptors.

One man was reported dead in Jericho in the West Bank. There were no other reports of casualties from the attack as of Wednesday.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed without evidence that 90% of the missiles had hit their targets.

Separately, six people, including the two gunmen, were killed in a shooting in Tel Aviv's Jaffa neighborhood on Tuesday.

## What happens next between Israel and Iran?

The region is bracing for Israel to strike back at Iran after Israel and the U.S. warned it would face consequences for the attack.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened that Iran would "pay" for the attack and that Israel is determined to "exact a price from our enemies."

"This evening, Iran made a big mistake – and it will pay for it," he said at a security cabinet meeting.

The U.S. has said it will support Israel's response. While monitoring the attack with his national security team on Tuesday, President Biden said he had directed the military to provide Israel with aid. A U.S. response "remains to be seen," he told reporters.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan said Tuesday after the strike, "We have made clear that there will be severe consequences for this attack, and we'll work with Israel to make that the case."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Wednesday that if Israel "does not stop its crimes, it will face harsher reactions."

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard said that if Israel hit back, Iran's response would be even "more crushing."

The country's general staff of the armed forces said in a statement that an Israeli response would result in Iran's "vast destruction" of Israeli infrastructure.

## What led up to the Iranian missile attack on Israel?

The Iranian attack came amid weeks of Israeli airstrikes on Lebanese territory and Hezbollah rocket launches toward northern Israel.

Earlier Tuesday, Israel launched a ground invasion of Lebanon as Israeli troops crossed over the border for the first time since 2006. Israel characterized the incursion as a "limited, localized and targeted" operation to target Hezbollah sites.

The military said Wednesday that regular infantry and armored units would add to its military presence in Lebanon. Hezbollah said its fighters were engaging with the Israeli army in the border town of Maroun al-Ras on Wednesday.

The Israeli airstrikes against Hezbollah ratcheted up after Israel's Sept. 17 and 18 pager and walkie-talkie attacks.

On Friday, Israel killed Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader, in an airstrike on Beirut.

CNN reported the attack was likely carried out using a U.S.-made 2,000-pound bomb.

## What does Hezbollah have to do with the Israel and Iran tensions

For almost a year, the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah has intensified firing of rockets into northern Israel. Tensions on that border have increased since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on Israel that killed 1,200 people. Israel responded by launching military strikes on Gaza that have killed about 40,000 Palestinians, according to the Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry.

U.S. officials are concerned that a ratcheting up of tensions could lead to a broader regional conflict in the Middle East and have been trying to negotiate a cease-fire.

## What were the reactions from other countries to the Iran missile strike on Israel?

Some world leaders condemned the attack and warned of the danger of escalation between Israel and Iran.

Other Western allies of Israel were quick to condemn the attack and reiterate their support for Israel. "I utterly condemn this attempt by the Iranian regime to harm innocent Israelis, to escalate this incredibly dangerous situation, and push the region ever close to the brink," U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Tuesday.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz condemned the attack "in the strongest possible terms" and urged de-escalation.

"Together with our partners, we will continue to work to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah," Scholz wrote on X.

China said it was deeply concerned about the attack and opposed the escalation of tensions and the "violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity."

# Fraud

Continued from Page 1A

assistance using names, addresses and Social Security numbers they have stolen from people affected by the disaster."

In North Carolina, which includes some of the regions hit hardest by Helene's flooding, the state's top federal prosecutor said this week that criminals are adding to an already historic disaster. At least 144 people died during Helene, and hundreds of homes have been destroyed.

"The impact of disasters affecting our citizens are not just from the events themselves but also from fraudsters who take advantage of disaster victims and good-hearted people who want to help those affected," said Sandra J. Hairston, U.S. attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina. "These criminals take advantage of victims before, during and after a natural disaster strikes, targeting people when they are most vulnerable."

Schemes include fake charities soliciting donations for disaster victims, fraudsters impersonating government officials doling out assistance, and sham businesses offering to help with recovery, Hairston said.

Attorneys general in several states are warning people to be wary of an onslaught of scammers who usually show up in the wake of natural disasters and who some say are already arriving after Helene tore through six states.

Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr urged people to be on the lookout for home repair fraud, charity fraud, imposter scams and price gouging.

"As we pray for the families of those who lost their lives and all Georgians affected by Hurricane Helene, our consumer protection division continues to actively monitor reports of potential home repair fraud and other storm-related scams," Carr said. "By doing research on a company or contractor, you can help to prevent one tragedy from leading to another."

Investigators are familiar with the schemes from previous natural disasters. The National Center for Disaster Fraud has received more than 220,000 complaints of fraud since its founding in 2005. FEMA has an entire office dedicated to detecting fraud and provides a web page where people can report scams.

To avoid being scammed, experts say, storm survivors should verify people are who they say they are and should be wary of anyone asking for sensitive information or money. Some cities, such as Jacksonville, North Carolina, have set up web pages describing the types of scams typically seen in the local area. They also provide phone numbers of agencies that can offer assistance to people who fear they might be the target of a scam.

Authorities in Hillsborough County, Florida, issued a set of tips on how to avoid falling for a sham contractor, adding, "If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is." Tips include:

- Ensure repairs are covered by insurance and have an insurance company evaluate the damage before arranging repairs.
- Obtain three written, itemized estimates for repairs.
- Never pay the full cost of the repairs up front and be wary of providing large deposits.

## Ideal environment for predators

Widespread power outages and the hundreds of billions of dollars in damage done by Helene have created ideal conditions for scammers, experts say.

"This is going to be a doozy in terms of scams," said Keith Tidball of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, the New York arm of a government-funded program that deploys educators and researchers to help with disasters. Helene is "just so widespread and destructive."

Power outages can make it difficult for people to verify people's identity or make sure a business is legit.

"They're certainly not getting good, smooth internet to check anything, and that's where these scammers go to exploit," Tidball said. "Unlicensed contractors are going to be showing up from all around. They'll be promising

quick repairs, quick service, probably quick cash up front, and a lot of people will get duped."

People living in areas where power has been restored also will be targeted by online scammers, he said, as well as through the mail in letters claiming to be from FEMA or insurance companies.

FEMA has worked over the decades to tamp down on disaster relief scams, but they remain a relentless problem. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a specially formed federal Katrina Fraud Task Force brought federal charges against 907 people in 43 federal judicial districts across the country. Katrina kicked off a new era of hurricane fraud, costing taxpayers up to \$2 billion in scams and government failure to spot them.

- Among those charged were:
- A pair of brothers who collected more than \$48,000 for a sham charity that purported to be connected to the Salvation Army.
  - A pastor who tried to steal a \$35,000 grant to repair his church for himself and using \$10,000 of a loan meant for repair to buy himself a Dodge Durango.
  - A conspiracy of eight people to bilk FEMA by submitting 70 fraudulent applications for assistance.

**"It's the most base form of exploitation and callous behavior. Your fellow human is distraught and you're going to go in and steal from them. It's kicking them while they're down to the nth degree."**

**Keith Tidball**  
Cornell Cooperative Extension,  
disaster education and research program

"These periods of trauma are such periods of vulnerability, and they're so adept at exploiting that," Tidball said. "It's the most base form of exploitation and callous behavior."

"Your fellow human is distraught and you're going to go in and steal from them. It's kicking them while they're down to the nth degree."

Lynne P. Klauer, a spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of North Carolina, said federal officials have not yet begun any investigations. She said the office wanted to put out a warning quickly, given how often schemes have emerged after hurricanes.

## FEMA itself is a target

The Justice Department charged more than 900 people with fraud related to hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Wilma, Gustav, Ike and other disasters, according to the FBI. Not long after, the National Center for Disaster Fraud was formed.

Cheating the government – mainly FEMA – out of money meant for disaster relief is another rampant form of fraud, past cases of disaster scams show. Other schemes include companies with local government contracts that don't live up to their obligations to do FEMA-funded work.

Fraud against FEMA became so rampant that the U.S. Office of Government Accountability in 2020 provided the disaster relief agency with recommendations on how it could avoid being scammed. The accountability office leveled other criticisms on FEMA, including that it did not educate local governments on how to report fraud.

Fraud received widespread attention after Katrina when federal investigators uncovered scammers submitting scores of applications for assistance on behalf of people who were not affected by the hurricane.

In its November 2006 issue, Fraud magazine, a publication for the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, wrote that hurricanes and other tragedies bring out the best – and worst – of human nature.

"We've seen an increase in national and man-made disasters. These tragedies have brought neighbors and nations together," the magazine wrote. "But catastrophic events are also a beacon for opportunistic predators and a magnet for various forms of deception for dishonest gain."

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# Brace for the ‘return of big hurricanes’

## October forecast looks like busy season goes on

Doyle Rice and Dinah Voyles Pulver  
USA TODAY

The 2024 Atlantic hurricane season entered its fifth month Tuesday, and experts are again taking stock of a deadly and puzzling season.

The year started with dire predictions of a hyperactive season, quickly followed by the explosive and record-breaking landfall of Beryl in early July. Then came an odd mismatch in Pacific and Atlantic activity and a later mid-season lull.

But now, with Hurricane Helene’s deadly and devastating rampage across the Southeast last week, any hope of a quiet hurricane season for the U.S. has been obliterated.

Unfortunately, there’s still plenty of the season still to go, and “October is historically an active month, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and off the U.S. Southeast coast,” said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane research scientist at the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School.

### Could Helene be a harbinger of other storms?

“I would say that Helene doesn’t really have any bearing on the rest of the

season’s forecast, but right now, large-scale conditions are highly conducive for tropical cyclone formation in the eastern Atlantic, and we’re seeing storms taking advantage of these conditions,” said Phil Klotzbach, a senior research scientist at Colorado State University. “We just released our latest two-week forecast, and we are calling for a very busy two weeks, due to Kirk, Invest 9IL (the wave behind Kirk) and potentially a system in the Northwest Caribbean/Gulf.”

Meteorologist Michael Lowry, a hurricane specialist at WPLG Local 10 in Miami, expects “to see a return of big hurricanes going into the first full week of October,” he wrote in his daily update on Tuesday.

### Big storms can happen in October

Using the storm names that have been retired since 1953 as a proxy for landfalling storms that had great impact, September has the most retired names, with 43, McNoldy said. August and October essentially are tied at 21 and 20, and only seven storm names have been retired from November storms.

However, it also is worth noting that October and November together have more retired storm names than June, July and August combined, he said. “So we must absolutely still be on alert for tropical cyclone threats in the remain-

der of hurricane season.”

It’s also important to remember that it doesn’t take a strong hurricane to cause a lot of damage, McNoldy said. “A slow-moving disorganized disturbance that maybe doesn’t quite become a tropical storm can unleash feet of rain over an area and create terrible flash flooding,” he said. “The rainfall threat from tropical systems has historically taken a back seat to the wind threat in people’s minds, despite being deadlier.”

### Kirk could affect US coastline next week

Although Kirk will be turning north and staying over the open Atlantic, long-period swell from the large hurricane could reach all the way to the U.S. Eastern Seaboard – from the Mid-Atlantic into coastal areas of the Northeast – by early to middle of next week, Lowry said.

Behind Kirk, Invest 9IL has been designated off the coast of Africa and will develop into a named storm over the next day or two.

Computer models show 9IL strengthening into a powerful hurricane next week but like Kirk, it should turn well east of the islands.

### High heat in the ocean

Ocean conditions are still primed to influence any potential disturbances

that appear.

“Everywhere in the tropical Atlantic still has record or near-record high ocean heat content, so there’s no shortage of fuel for whatever might form anywhere,” said the University of Miami’s McNoldy. While November can also be busy, the odds quickly decrease, he said.

### How accurate was the preseason forecast?

When compared with their preseason prediction, the 2024 season is likely to be quite a bit less active than forecast, Klotzbach said. Back in the spring, the Colorado State team predicted 23 named storms would form, of which 11 would be hurricanes.

“Of course, the colossal bust that was discussed a couple of weeks ago appears to be off of the table, given that Kirk is pretty much a sure-fire hurricane (and a likely major hurricane) and the tropical wave behind it has a really good chance of becoming a hurricane too.”

The forecast of hurricanes and major hurricanes may end up being accurate, depending on what happens with Kirk and other activity, but the number of named storms forecast will likely be much too large, he said.

But nothing can be ruled out yet. He pointed out that the hyperactive 2005 season had 11 named storm formations after Oct. 1.

## Miracles

Continued from Page 1A

said Paul McGinnis, the pastor at Grace Chapel Foursquare Church in Forest City, North Carolina, which has been transformed into a shelter for many who have lost power, homes and loved ones to Helene.

As soon as the storm passed, neighbors, residents in other counties and some who traveled out of state “just began showing up,” McGinnis said. The outpouring has provided crucial aid, but it also has acted as a resilient source of hope and inspiration in the wake of the storm.

Here are stories of those who have rushed to aid those in need:

### Churchgoers form relief team, deliver formula to baby

Cameron Bryson, a pastor in Dallas, North Carolina, received a call late Saturday night that Marion, a town about 1,400 feet high in the Appalachian Mountains, had been cut off by floodwaters and cracked roads.

The next morning, he assembled a group of 35 churchgoers, borrowed a parishioner’s pickup, filled it with food, water, gas and other supplies, and headed for Marion, an hour and a half drive from Dallas.

After some maneuvering around downed trees and snapped power lines, the group eventually came upon an impassable road, which forced a handful of them to make the rest of the journey on foot.

As the small group approached the first house, they heard a baby crying. To the door came a mother and father. When Bryson and the others started handing them food for their 5-month-old, the mother’s eyes welled up. They had run out of baby formula the night before.

“We just happened to have exactly what they needed,” Bryson said. “It was incredible.”

Since then, Bryson’s group has grown, and they – along with other church and local aid groups – have made several deliveries across the devastated towns in the southern Appalachians, where many remain stranded. Amid widespread communications blackouts, they have not had contact with the outside world since late last week.

### Son hikes 11 miles in mountains to find his parents

Sam Perkins had only one thing on his mind when he decided to trek through the utter devastation left behind by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina: Make sure his parents were safe.

Perkins was “drowning in worry” because he hadn’t heard from his parents in 48 hours after the storm’s landfall in Florida and other regions across the Southeast. By Saturday, he couldn’t wait any longer.

Perkins hiked 11 miles with 2,200 feet of elevation gain to reach his mother and father’s home in the mountains, Perkins sharing in a Facebook post. The home, according to Perkins, is nestled between an unincorporated community and a couple of towns halfway between



Pastor Stacey Harris thanks the state National Guard’s Marcus Wilkerson outside Trinity of Fairview church on Wednesday. ANDREW NELLES/USA TODAY NETWORK

Asheville and Boone.

“Little did I know that up there, Helene has demolished roads, homes and utility networks,” Perkins said. “This area is completely cut off from resources in every direction.”

After weaving his way across failing roads, deep mudslides and fallen trees, Perkins found that his parents were “thankfully OK but surrounded by devastation.”

“I have never been so relieved to see anyone OK,” Perkins wrote on Sunday.

### A place of worship becomes a home for the displaced

McGinnis, the pastor in Forest City, planned to feed hot dogs to the guests at his son Knox’s fifth birthday party Saturday. Instead, he has been feeding people whose lives have been upended by Helene. Some have lost homes; others have lost family members.

**“When you’re dealing with this, in the beginning you just let people talk. They just want to be heard.”**

Pastor Paul McGinnis

The church in Rutherford County, about 45 minutes from Asheville, has been home for McGinnis, his wife, Katie, and Knox since downed trees damaged their home. Forest City is one of several surrounding closely knit small communities, largely rural and with “lots of distant neighbors,” said McGinnis, who grew up in Rutherford County.

Most of the damage in the area is from high winds, which toppled trees, knocked out power and cut off streets, trapping people in their homes.

McGinnis said he has been worried about one member of his church in particular, 86-year-old Ray Cole, whose whereabouts are unknown. “We’re hoping and praying he’s been rescued and he’s in one of the shelters.”

Asked how he comforts people who have lost so much, McGinnis said: “In those moments, there are no words.”

“When you’re dealing with this, in the

beginning you just let people talk. They just want to be heard. It’s about being there with them in the presence of the Lord. ... It’s not just a day-to-day thing. It’s going to be months.”

### Couple find out mother is alive through security camera

Vignette Truett and her husband had tried everything they could think of to reach their family in the mountain suburb of Burnsville, North Carolina. Phone calls, emails and pleas on social media had gotten them nowhere. After four days, they were beginning to lose hope.

But around 8 p.m. Monday, they received the first sign of life from an unlikely source: a security camera.

While in their hotel room in Boone, a town about 50 miles northeast of Burnsville, Truett received a notification telling her movement was being recorded on a camera installed in their bedroom.

Through the spotty video, Truett could see her mother-in-law sitting on the bed, playing with her dog, Bou, and two cats, Zelda and Mittens.

“When we finally saw her and heard her voice, we started crying,” Truett said. She had worried that her mother-in-law, who has multiple sclerosis, had run out of medicine.

The camera has a chat feature and, after a few attempts, Truett was able to speak with her mother-in-law directly through the speaker.

“We spoke to her for about close to what felt like four hours, just hearing her and seeing her smile, seeing my dog whine,” Truett said. She and her husband planned to drive home through newly cleared roadways Tuesday.

### Man ascends mountain to find loved ones and a stranger

Carlton Gardner set out Monday morning to locate an aunt, uncle and his in-law’s family, who he hadn’t head from since Thursday. His relatives live in Pensacola, North Carolina, a neighborhood in the Blue Ridge Mountains, just south of Burnsville, that was devastated by the flooding.

With bottles of water, some food and a gallon of gas, he drove as far as he could before he got out and started hiking. As he ascended the mountainside,

Gardner spotted his mother-in-law on the side of the road. She, along with several of her sons and others, had decided to try to walk down the mountain after four days without rescue.

Gardner pressed on and found several relatives at their Pensacola home – the last people in his family who were unaccounted for. Though he was eager to let his mother know everyone was OK, he made one more stop at a stranger’s home.

Since the weekend, Gardner’s mother, Dona Gardner, had been active on Facebook pages where people shared the whereabouts of their missing loved ones. Scouring the groups for news about her own family, she came across a woman’s post that listed an address just a short walk from Dona Gardner’s relatives. Dona Gardner promised the woman her son would stop by the home.

Carlton Gardner did just that and discovered the woman’s loved ones were safe. He texted his mother, who then notified the woman.

“Everyone who has connections to those mountains knows, you check on your neighbors,” Dona Gardner said. “That’s just what everyone does.”

On Tuesday, Dona and her husband filled 30 gallons of gasoline to give to their relatives and share with residents throughout Pensacola as people chainsaw through trees blocking roadways and power their ATVs, the vehicle of choice for many in the highlands.

### FM radio becomes ‘a lifeline’ amid mass service outages

FM radio stations have provided residents who have no power or cell service uninterrupted news coverage of the crisis unraveling across the Southeast.

WNCW-FM, an NPR affiliate based in Spindale, North Carolina, is among the stations serving the region. Its signal stretches to parts of Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

“Our employees are everywhere,” said Joe Kendrick, the station’s director of operations and programming. “Communication is rough, travel is dicey,” he said, adding that the conditions have hampered efforts to report on the aftermath of Helene and its impact especially on western North Carolina.

The station, with a limited news staff, has teamed with other radio outlets to send reporters out to flooded areas. It has worked to be a conduit of information and resources for people, but it also offer some normalcy to those still staggered by the storm, playing music in between news and updates.

“We broadcast throughout the storm, amazingly,” Kendrick said. “We had a handful of people who here over the weekend either live on the air or working on other programming.”

FM radio, he and the team at WNCW know, is vital to communities cut off from other forms of communication, especially when the power is out and internet access, often spotty in rural areas anyway, is severed.

“It’s a lifeline,” he said. “One of our primary duties is to relay information. WNCW was created to give better information and service to this really remote region, and we keep that front and center in our minds all the time.”

Contributing: Amaris Encinas



# Abortions up in Ohio as patients hit the road

## Out-of-staters more than doubled amid rise

**Jessie Balmert**

State Bureau  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The number of out-of-state patients having abortions in Ohio more than doubled last year as the total number of abortions rose, according to abortion data released Tuesday.

Ohio reported 22,000 abortions in 2023 – a 19% increase from 2022, when a ban on most abortions was in effect for several months, according to the annual Ohio Department of Health report.

That number was boosted by 2,771 abortions from out-of-state patients – up from 1,287 abortions in 2022. The number of abortions for Ohio patients in 2023 (19,229) was down 4.5% from 2021 and 0.1% from 2020.

The data shows how Ohio became a destination for patients seeking abortions who live in states that banned or restricted abortion access. Abortion is illegal in Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia, among others.

“Every American deserves access to a trusted abortion provider in their own community, and when the government fails them by banning it in one state, it’s incredibly important for providers in neighboring states to step in and make sure care is accessible,” said Kellie Copeland, executive director of Abortion Forward.

**“When the government fails (Americans) by banning (abortion) in one state, it’s incredibly important for providers in neighboring states to step in and make sure care is accessible.”**

**Kellie Copeland**  
Executive director of Abortion Forward

But Ohio Right to Life President Mike Gonidakis was dismayed by the trend. “Ohio, sadly is becoming a destination state for aborting babies,” he said.

The report offers little insight into the impact of an abortion rights measure approved in November with 57% of the vote. That data will appear on the state’s next annual report for 2024.

But abortion providers say even more patients are coming to Ohio from other states because of the measure, Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio CEO Nan Whaley told The Cincinnati Enquirer.

In August, a Franklin County judge blocked a law that required patients to wait at least 24 hours after their initial appointment to have an abortion. The ruling freed up providers to offer same-day abortions.

### Who had abortions in Ohio last year?

The annual Ohio Department of Health report offers insights into who obtained abortions in the state. Here are some demographics from 2023:

- 49.8% of Ohioans who obtained abortions were Black, 42.2% were white, 4.7% were multiracial, 3% were Asian American and Pacific Islander, and 0.3% were Native American.
- 63.3% of abortions occurred before nine weeks’ gestation, 24.3% between 9 and 12 weeks, 10.4% between 13 and 18 weeks, 1.4% between 19 and 20 weeks and 0.6% after 21 weeks.
- 57.1% of Ohioans who obtained abortions were in their 20s, 31.2% were in their 30s, 5.9% were 18 or 19 years old, 3% were older than 40 and 2.7% were younger than 18.

### What types of abortions did Ohioans have?

The report also details the types of abortions in Ohio last year:

- 45.3% of abortions were medication abortions (9,974). The remaining procedures were surgical, and dilation and curettage were the most common method.
- Complications were rare, occurring in 121 of 22,000 abortions (0.55%).
- 118 abortions were listed as emergencies to save the pregnant patient’s life or irreversible impairment.

# ACLU sues, questions how feds would handle mass deportation

## Lawsuit puts spotlight on immigration policy

**Lauren Villagran**  
USA TODAY

The ACLU on Wednesday sued for information about the federal government’s capacity to massively detain and deport immigrants.

The lawsuit comes during an election season in which immigration has been central to the presidential campaign. Republican Donald Trump has promised a “mass deportation” of unauthorized immigrants, and Democrat Kamala Harris has pushed for tougher restrictions on asylum seekers.

“If a mass deportation and detention system ends up being established by a future administration, we have many concerns about how that could impact the civil rights and civil liberties of immigrants,” said Kyle Virgien, senior staff attorney at the ACLU’s National Prison Project.

In the complaint filed in the U.S. Southern District of New York, the ACLU claims the federal government spends billions each year to fund detention and deportation infrastructure, yet “much of the specific information about how this detention and deportation apparatus operates is unavailable to the public.”

The ACLU first sought documents under the Freedom of Information Act in August, but the requests went unanswered, Virgien said.

The lawsuit targets the Department of Homeland Security and agencies under its purview, including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Border Patrol, as well as the Department of Justice. USA TODAY reached out to Homeland Security and the Justice Department for comment on the lawsuit.

A mass deportation effort to remove 1 million people a year could cost \$88 billion annually, according to new research by the nonpartisan American Immigration Council. It could take 10 years to deport the unauthorized population in the U.S. and cost more than \$900 billion in total, the council said in its report.

Roughly 11 million unauthorized immigrants are living in the U.S., according to Pew Research Center estimates.

On its website, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, lists 91 detention facilities nationwide that it operates or uses, including federal “processing centers” and detention centers, as well as county jails, where apprehended immigrants may be held.

But a 2018 report by the American Immigration Council found that ICE relied on many more detention facilities. The group said ICE detained people at 630 sites and that “individuals detained by ICE were commonly held in privately

operated and remotely located facilities, far away from basic community support structures and legal advocacy networks.”

As of Sept. 8, ICE held 37,395 immigrants, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. Sixty percent of immigrants held in ICE detention had no criminal record, according to TRAC.

ICE states on its website that “detention is non-punitive” and that detention facilities owned or operated by ICE or by a state or local entity or government contractor “must comply with one of several sets of detention standards.”

Investigations by USA TODAY and others found inadequate medical care in detention, lack of access to legal representation and complications associated with detaining families.

The ACLU is seeking records that demonstrate the government’s capacity to detain, house and transport immigrants. The lawsuit asks for information on ICE’s maximum bed space, including under hotel contracts; DHS’ ability to transfer its personnel from one sub-agency to another; the department’s ground transportation capabilities, among other records.

If the next administration decides to increase immigrant detention and deportations, “we worry that there would be a lot of real problems with how it ramps up,” Virgien said.



**Shawn “Mickey” Stines arrives in Morgan County District Court on Tuesday for a preliminary hearing.** SCOTT UTTERBACK/USA TODAY NETWORK

## Video shown in Ky. sheriff’s hearing in killing of judge

**Lucas Aulbach**  
Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

WEST LIBERTY, Ky. – With former Letcher County Sheriff Shawn “Mickey” Stines in court Tuesday, attendees at a hearing about the killing of District Court Judge Kevin Mullins heard testimony about motive and saw footage of the shooting, which investigators said followed calls to the sheriff’s daughter.

The video clip was less than a minute long and did not include audio. In it, a man identified by police as Stines is shown firing multiple times at the judge behind his desk and then leaving the scene.

Supporters of the judge cried in court as the video was shown.

Stines, who last week entered an initial plea of not guilty, has been charged with murder in the shooting of Mullins, who was killed in his private chambers Sept. 19 inside the Letcher County courthouse in Whitesburg.

Kentucky State Police Detective Clayton Stamper testified the full video shows Stines using his own phone to make multiple calls, then using the judge’s phone to make a call. The shooting followed.

In testimony, Stamper said the calls were to Stines’ daughter. The phones have been sent to forensic teams for examination, Stamper said, though his daughter’s phone has not been examined. Stamper said the daughter’s phone number had been saved in the judge’s phone and was called before the shooting.

The two men went to lunch earlier in the day with multiple other people, Stamper said. The detective said a witness said that at one point Mullins asked Stines if they needed to meet privately, though the context was unclear. Stamper said witnesses were still being interviewed.

Stamper added Stines was “mostly calm” when he was interviewed after being taken into custody, though he didn’t offer a motive.

“Basically, all he said was ‘Treat me fair,’” the detective said.

When asked by defense attorney

Jeremy Bartley whether Stines said anything about “protecting his family” when he was taken into custody, Stamper said Stines made a comment that “They’re trying to kidnap my wife and kid.”

After the hearing, Bartley said more information will come as the investigation continues. He declined to speculate on a motive for the shooting outside of what was discussed in court.

“I left the hearing today with a lot of questions still unanswered myself,” he said, stressing that Tuesday’s discussion was just a preliminary hearing. “We hoped that there may be more light that would be shed on the preceding events.”

Bartley, in his first court appearance after being hired by Stines last week, said he has not seen the longer video but said he believes the moments that occurred before the shooting are “just as important as the portion we saw.” The full version should be viewed when the case advances to circuit court, he said.

Stines was joined by a public defender in last week’s video arraignment as Judge Rupert Wilhoit and Commonwealth’s Attorney Jackie Steele – who is prosecuting the case alongside state Attorney General Russell Coleman – pushed for him to retain an attorney.

Stines announced Monday that he was retiring from his position as sheriff. Gov. Andy Beshear had called for Stines to resign last week in a letter he sent the then-sheriff while in jail in Leslie County.

The shooting took place on Sept. 19 just before 3 p.m. Stines, who surrendered at the scene, has been accused of shooting Mullins in his private chambers while other courthouse workers were in the building. The two men were friends, local residents say, and Stines served as a bailiff in Mullins’ court for several years before being elected sheriff in 2018.

Wilhoit allowed the case to move forward to a grand jury at the conclusion of the hearing. Stines’ next court date has not been announced.

*Contributing: Rachel Smith*

## LA doctor attacked by men with bats before his death

**Natalie Neysa Alund**  
USA TODAY

A Los Angeles doctor killed outside the Southern California medical facility where he worked this summer claimed he was in fear of his life and had been attacked by several people with baseball bats in the days before his death, new details in the case show.

Physician Hamid Mirshojae, 61, was fatally shot Aug. 23 in the city’s Woodland Hills neighborhood, the Los Angeles Police Department previously reported.

“They came and they beat him with baseball bats,” one of Mirshojae’s colleagues who said they witnessed the assault told the Los Angeles Times. “They were some strangers that we didn’t know.”

According to the outlet, the employee requested anonymity out of concern for her safety.

Police confirmed the attack took place to The Times, which also reported that “Mirshojae told her he was in fear for his life” before his slaying.

Police Detective Christine Moselle said homicide detectives are aware of the baseball assault, the outlet reported, which remained “unsolved.”

The shooting, captured on camera, took place sometime before 6:15 p.m. in a parking lot outside his office at Warner Plaza Urgent Center on Topanga Canyon Boulevard, officials said.

Arriving officers, police reported, found the doctor suffering from a gunshot wound near his vehicle, and officials pronounced him dead at the scene.

According to the County of Los Angeles medical examiner, autopsy results found Mirshojae’s cause of death was a gunshot wound to the head, and his manner of death was homicide.

At the time of his death, Mirshojae lived in Encino, a neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley, with his wife and their infant baby.

### Doctor was in legal financial battle with wife before his death

Before his death, court records show, Mirshojae had been in a financial legal battle with his ex-wife, identified as Ahang Zarin Kelk.

The couple divorced in 2010, court filings show, but Kelk continued to work for her husband’s office until 2016.

Court documents filed in 2017 show Mirshojae sued his ex-wife for alleged fraud after she allegedly attempted to hide assets after they divorced.

According to court papers Mirshojae claimed his ex-wife transferred assets including a home she lived in to one of her family members after a judge awarded the doctor a settlement in a case.

Friends previously told KTLA-TV the victim’s new wife and baby were out of the country when he was killed.



# Fat Bear Week is back

Natalie Neysa Alund and Anthony Robledo USA TODAY

Fat Bear Week is back, and this year's contestants are a giant, fuzzy dream for the competition's 10th anniversary.

The initial Monday announcement was postponed until Tuesday following a gruesome attack captured on web cameras when one bear attacked and killed another one. However, the bracket was announced Tuesday celebrating the battle of the behemoths.

From chunky cuties to thick teddys, brown bears from Brooks River in Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska will compete during the beloved week that brings joy (or potentially terror) to humans across the world.

"Fat Bear Week satisfies your hunger for bears, salmon, and the other won-

ders of Katmai," said Katmai National Park Superintendent Mark Sturm "all with one bite."

After a summerlong effort, the hibernating bears reached peak fat and the single-elimination tournaments begins Wednesday. For each match-up, contestants vote for the bear they believe "best exemplifies fatness and success in brown bears," officials wrote on the contest website.

The bear with the most votes advances to the next round, with only one crowned Fat Bear Week champion. But which beauty will the internet crown as the 2024 fat bear king or queen?

Here's what to know about America's favorite beauty contest:

## Who are the 2024 Fat Bear Week contestants?

Below are the 2024 Fat Bear Week contestants:

### 909 Jr.

- Nearly 4 years old.
- Great social skills.
- Learned fishing techniques from her mother.

"She faces challenges in this competition that the older bears don't, so I think she should be recognized for that and for her double win," Naomi Boak from the Katmai Conservancy said.

### 519

- 3 years old.
- Has long lanky legs.
- Newly emancipated and separated from Bear 719.

"She's a great representative of the subadults this year and how quickly they can grow from these lanky little cubs into these kind of awkward looking teenage bears," Sarah Bruce with the Katmai National Park said.

### 128 Grazer

- 2023 Fat Bear Week champion.
- Highly defensive mother who delivered two first year cubs in 2024.
- In July, one of Grazer's cubs died after injured by 32 Chunk. Grazer showed courage when defending her cubs.

"Since then, Grazer and her surviving cub have continued to focus on their efforts to get back before winter, which appears to have paid off because they are both quite chubby," Fitz said. "Grazer is one of the most formidable successful and adaptable bears, although her story this year, demonstrates that even the most fearless mother bears experience hardship and loss."

### 903 Gully

- 8-year-old male.
- Nicknamed Gully for love of eating seagulls.
- Learned life lessons from 128 Grazer.

"Bear 903 is the definition of an A student," Boak said. "He's also figured out how to adapt to other kinds of circumstances and let's say take advantage of opportunities that other bears might not or probably never have."



909 PROVIDED BY T. CARMACK, K. GROSSMAN

### 909

- Daughter of 2018 February week champion Beadnose.
- Commonly seen catching salmon.
- Known for practicing self care.

"A lone female this summer, 909 experienced the greater independence and perhaps what humans would consider a lot of self care. She fished with skill and focus, traits that are reflected in the size of 909's waistline. Her skills, work ethic, and family legacy could be imparted on a new litter of cubs next year," Fitz said.

### 856

- Large male, approximately 22 years old.
- One of the largest bears in the river.
- Highly ranked within bear hierarchy.

"He's been knocked down, maybe a few pegs. He's still one of the fattest bears you will see on the river," Bruce said.



504 PROVIDED BY T. CARMACK, K. GROSSMAN

### 504

- A mother bear raising her second known litter.
- Identified in 2014.
- Her cubs have more time to grow large while 504 cares for them an extra year.

"One thing that is special about 504 and her current litter is that this family has remained together for four summers," Fitz said. "Most brown bear mothers separate from their cubs at the beginning of a cub's third or fourth summer so it's surprising that this family did not go their separate ways and are not living separate lives right now."

### 32 Chunk

- Observed devouring 42 salmon in 10 hours.
- One of the largest and most dominant bears.
- Distinctive scar across his muzzle.

"The only bear to challenge him was last year's Fat Bear Week champion, 128 grazer, who I think might be his greatest challenge in this competition as well," Bruce said.

### 151 Walker

- A former playful young bear, he has established dominance this year.
- Knows how to pack pounds with salmon.

"He's never won, but this year, he's throwing some punches with the big boys," Bruce said.

### 901

- Approximately 8 years old.
- Had her first litter last year but unfortunately it did not survive.
- Fat Bear Week 2022 runner-up.

"The knowledge that she gained may provide her with the memory and experience to keep a future litter of cubs safe," Fitz said.



164 PROVIDED BY T. CARMACK, K. GROSSMAN

### 164 Bucky

- Approximately 8 years old.
- Nicknamed Bucky because of a small indentation in his forehead.
- Considered for "social mastermind."

"I think of him as maybe the Thomas Edison of the Brooks," Boak said. "He's found a successful place to fish where no other bear has gone before, in the falls right under the lip."

## When is Fat Bear Week?

Fat Bear Week 2024 runs Oct. 2 through Oct. 8.

This year marks a decade since Fat Bear Week began. The annual contest started in 2014.

## Why was the Fat Bear Week bracket reveal delayed?

Competition officials announced Monday that the Fat Bear Week bracket reveal would be postponed after a gruesome incident between two bears at Alaska's Katmai National Park and Preserve.

"This morning an adult male bear attacked and killed another bear at Brooks River," resident naturalist Mike Fitz said during a live public program initially meant to announce the contestants for the competition. "The incident was witnessed live on the webcams."

Bear number 469, an adult male bear estimated to be 30 years old, attacked bear number 402, who is an older adult female while the two were in the water.

"We love to celebrate the success of bears with full stomachs and ample body fat in Fat Bear Week, but the ferocity of bears is real. The risks they face are real. Their lives can be hard, and their deaths can be painful," he added.

## Where is Fat Bear Week held?

The contest is held at Katmai National Park in the northern Alaska Peninsula in Bristol Bay Borough.

Its headquarters is on the edge of the park in King Salmon, about 290 miles southwest of Anchorage.

## How do I vote in Fat Bear Week?

All votes can be cast at [fatbearweek.org](http://fatbearweek.org).

Voters will select their bear, enter their email address and confirm they are not a robot.

## What bear won Fat Bear Week 2023?

Last year's champ was a female brown bear named 128 Grazer.

Nearly 1.4 million votes were cast from people in more than 100 countries.

It marked the first win for the mama spotted for years on the Brooks River at Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska. She has even earned a reputation among fellow bears as "a particularly defensive mother bear who has raised two litters of cubs," according to Fat Bear Week's website.

"She often preemptively confronts and attacks much larger bears – even large and dominant adult males – to ensure her cubs are safe," the site says.

Fat Bear Week is made possible through partnership among the National Park Service, Explore.org, and the Katmai Conservancy.

For more information, watch the live cams on [explore.org](http://explore.org).

Contributing: *Saman Shafiq, Eve Chen, Jordan Mendoza and Camille Fine, USA TODAY*

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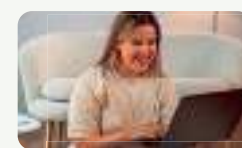
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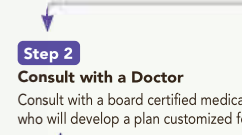
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# Two are sentenced in hazing death case

Former Penn State frat leaders will go to prison

Thao Nguyen  
USA TODAY

The former president and vice president of a defunct Penn State fraternity where a student died after consuming massive amounts of alcohol in a hazing ritual more than seven years ago will be sent to prison.

Brendan Young, 28, and Daniel Casey, 27, were sentenced Tuesday in Centre County Court to two to four months in prison followed by three years of probation and community service, according to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. The two will be eligible for work release.

Young and Casey each pleaded guilty in July to 14 counts of hazing and one count of reckless endangerment — all misdemeanors. Prosecutors said the charges were tied to a 2017 hazing incident when 19-year-old Timothy Piazza was found unresponsive after consuming large amounts of alcohol and “died days later as a result of multiple falls incurred subsequent to his intoxication.”

The two former fraternity leaders participated in and facilitated the hazing, according to prosecutors. Young was president of Beta Theta Pi fraternity, and Casey was vice president and pledge master at the time.

Young and Casey were the final two criminal defendants to be sentenced in the case, in which more than two dozen fraternity members were initially charged — some of them with involuntary manslaughter. Some of the most serious charges were dropped and others were thrown out by judges.

The case also sparked widespread outrage over frat culture and the problem of hazing rituals on college campuses, resulting in school policy reforms and a national anti-hazing campaign supported by Piazza's family.

“Our thoughts are with the Piazza family and everyone affected by this tragedy,” Pennsylvania Attorney General Michelle Henry said in a statement. “Nothing can undo the harm Tim suffered seven years ago.”

Piazza, an engineering student from New Jersey, died at a hospital on Feb. 4, 2017, two days after a hazing event at the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house. The teen was among 14 student pledges summoned to the fraternity house for a bid acceptance event.

A grand jury report released in May 2017 detailed the final hours of Piazza's life. On the evening of Feb. 2, security cameras at the fraternity recorded Piazza drinking large quantities of alcohol, including vodka and beer, as part of one of the fraternity's initiation rituals, known as “The Gauntlet.”

Footage then showed Piazza struggling throughout the night and falling multiple times. At one point, the report said, Piazza was on a couch, and fraternity members put a backpack full of books on his back to keep him from rolling over and choking on his vomit.

Piazza later fell down a flight of stairs at the fraternity house, but members did not seek treatment for him until the next morning, according to the report. Investigators determined that Piazza consumed at least 18 drinks in under two hours, and a doctor calculated that his blood-alcohol content when he fell down a flight of stairs was .28% to .36% — about four times the legal limit for driving.

Doctors concluded Piazza suffered traumatic brain injuries, including a fractured skull and a lacerated spleen. Piazza died as a result of “extremely reckless conduct” by fraternity members, aided by the permissive atmosphere fostered by Penn State's Interfraternity Council, the grand jury found.

Piazza's death prompted Penn State to adopt several policy changes for sororities and fraternities. The university also permanently banned its chapter of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity.

Prosecutors said the Piazza family was “instrumental” in the Pennsylvania Legislature passing the Timothy J. Piazza Anti-Hazing Law, which established stricter punishments for hazing and requires schools to maintain anti-hazing policies. The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office said the defendants could have faced harsher penalties “had that statute been in place.”

Contributing: John Bacon, USA TODAY; Suzanne Russell, MyCentral Jersey.com



JD Vance and Tim Walz greet each other Tuesday before squaring off at the vice presidential debate. JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

## Vance

Continued from Page 1A

Harrison told reporters after the debate Tuesday. “Every time JD opened his mouth, he said a lie.”

Vance throughout the debate at times appealed to working across the aisle, such as advocating for bipartisan work to address paid family and medical leave.

He also appeared to agree with Walz on certain issues and showcased empathy after the Minnesota governor said his teenage son, Gus, witnessed a shooting at a community center.

Vance immediately shook his head. When it was his turn to respond, he said, “Tim, first of all, I didn't know that your 17-year-old witnessed a shooting,” Vance said. “I'm sorry about that. Christ have mercy. It is awful.”

The biggest shift, however, was on abortion. Vance sought to soften the GOP's views on abortion, a key issue that Harris and Walz have leaned into in key battleground states.

Vance highlighted a story from a

woman he said was “very dear to me” who had an abortion because she was in an abusive relationship.

“I think that what I take from that, as a Republican who proudly wants to protect innocent life in this country, who proudly wants to protect the vulnerable, is that my party — we've got to do so much better of a job at earning the American people's trust back on this issue, where they frankly just don't trust us,” Vance said.

Trump said Tuesday that he would veto a national abortion ban if one reached his desk as president. The former president has praised the Supreme Court's ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade.

But Vance's performance Tuesday shows he hopes to change his image to appeal to a wider swath of voters who are still deciding whom to vote for in November.

### Trump, Harris in a dead heat

Vance's aim to improve his image comes as Trump and Harris are locked in a tight battle for the presidency.

Harris, who jumped into the race after President Joe Biden dropped out in

June, saw a bump after she was thrust to the top of the ticket. But Trump has since been making headway in battleground states like Arizona.

Trump is leading Harris by 6 percentage points in Arizona, 48%-42%, according to a USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll published last week.

In Michigan, another key state, Harris holds a 3-point lead over Trump, 48%-45%, according to another USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll.

Nationally, Harris holds a small lead over Trump, according to an Ipsos poll published Wednesday. Among likely voters, 48% said they would vote for Harris, and 44% said they would back Trump.

But with less than 35 days to go, it's unclear whether the running mates will play a role on how voters will cast their ballots.

Just 1% of viewers said the vice presidential debate made them change their mind about their vote, a CNN poll after the debate found. Thirteen percent said the debate made them reconsider but did not change their mind. And 86% said the debate had no effect on their choice of president.

Contributing: Haley Bemiller, USA TODAY Network

## Massacre

Continued from Page 1A

prosecuted for the massacre more than a century later.

“We acknowledge descendants of the survivors, and the victims continue to bear the trauma of this act of racial terrorism,” Clarke said. “Although a commission, historians, lawyers and others have conducted prior examinations of the Tulsa Massacre, we, the Justice Department, never have.”

The announcement comes about three months after the Oklahoma Supreme Court dismissed a lawsuit from the remaining survivors seeking reparations. Survivors alleged that because of the massacre, they continued to face racially disparate treatment and city-created barriers to basic needs such as jobs, financial security, education, housing and justice.

“It only took 103 years, but this is a joyous occasion, a momentous day, an amazing opportunity for us to make sure that what happened here in Tulsa is understood for what it was: the largest crime scene in the history of this country,” Damarion Solomon-Simmons, lead attorney for the survivors, said at a news briefing Monday.

### Review launched under Justice Department cold case initiative

The Justice Department Civil Rights Division review of the Tulsa Race Massacre was launched under the authority of the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act, which Congress passed to seek justice for long-ignored victims of racial violence. The law allows the Justice Department to investigate deadly civil rights crimes that occurred before 1980.

Clarke said the department will examine witness accounts, historical research and documents, and analyze the massacre in light of current and 1921-era civil rights laws. The department will release a public report detailing its findings and conclusions, which is expected to be finalized by the end of the year.

“In the words of Ida B. Wells, one of this nation's most staunch antilynching advocates, “The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth



Tulsa Race Massacre survivors Viola Fletcher and her brother, Hughes Van Ellis, attend the Black Wall Street Legacy Festival in 2021. Fletcher, now 110, is the oldest known survivor. Ellis died last year at age 102. DOUG HOKE/USA TODAY NETWORK

upon them,” Clarke said. “We hope that official reports, which reflect the Justice Department's exhaustive efforts to seek justice, at bare minimum, prevent these victims and the tragic ordeals they endured from being lost to history.”

Clarke asked that anyone with evidence or materials related to the massacre that isn't already in a curated collection notify the Cold Case Division at ColdCase.CivilRights@usdoj.gov using the subject line “Tulsa Race Massacre.”

The Justice Department declined to provide additional information about the review and evaluation when reached by USA TODAY.

### What was the Tulsa Race Massacre?

In the early 1900s, the 40 blocks to the north of downtown Tulsa boasted 10,000 residents, hundreds of businesses, medical facilities an airport, and more. Then on May 31, 1921, a white mob descended on Greenwood — the Black section of Tulsa — burning, looting, and destroying more than 1,000 homes.

The massacre is reported to have started with an accusation that Dick Rowland, a 19-year-old shoe-shiner, assaulted a white female teenager on an elevator. Decades later, the 2001 Tulsa Race Riot Commission concluded,

Sarah Page, 17, was interviewed by police but made no allegations of assault.

Rowland was arrested, and white men went to the jail to demand that he be released to “face mob justice,” Clarke said. A fight broke out after members of the Black community showed up to protect Rowland from being lynched.

A mob then invaded Greenwood, looting and destroying businesses and homes.

Tulsa authorities deputized some white men, instructing them to “get a gun and get busy and try to get” a Black person, according to witness accounts and records at the time. The Oklahoma National Guard participated in mass arrests of nearly everyone living in Greenwood.

“Some suspect that the aim of the white mob was, all along, to appropriate the wealth of the Black community and that the allegations against Mr. Rowland were merely an excuse,” Clarke said.

The true death toll of the massacre may never be known, with the search for unmarked graves continuing more than a century later. Most historians who have studied the event estimate the death toll to be between 75 and 300 people.

Dale Denwalt reports for *The Oklahoman*; Minnah Arshad reports for USA TODAY.

Contributing: Camille Fine, USA TODAY



## OPINION

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## Vance exceeds expectations; Walz struggles



Ingrid Jacques  
USA TODAY

Former President Donald Trump wasted his debate last month with Vice President Kamala Harris.

That was Trump's opportunity to call out her numerous (and significant) flip-flops in front of a national audience – and more important to tie Harris to the failed economic and immigration policies of the current administration.

The only scheduled vice presidential debate Tuesday between GOP Ohio Sen. JD Vance and Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz was likely the last chance the two sides will have before the Nov. 5 election to make their case on this type of widely viewed platform, because Trump has said that he won't meet Harris for another debate.

Vance stepped in to make up for what Trump didn't do. He kept the heat on Harris and the fact that she's an integral part of the Biden-Harris administration.

Vance also surpassed my expectations. He came across as confident, relatable and well-versed on the issues, while Walz often appeared nervous and unsure of himself.

## Economy and immigration dominate voters' concerns

For months, voters have said that high prices and spiking illegal immigration are their top concerns.

And many Americans blame President Joe Biden and Harris as the occupants of the White House the past four years.

Border encounters surged during the Biden-Harris administration, and Harris' appointment as border czar early in her tenure as vice president proved an epic failure.

Thankfully, Walz and Vance kept the discussion on immigration away from the "eating pets" nonsense that Trump brought up at last month's debate – and which Vance has propagated on the campaign trail.

On the economy, Walz tried to defend Harris' big-government plans for housing, child care and other priorities that would add billions to the deficit – and do



Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, right, greet their wives after their vice presidential debate Tuesday in New York City. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

nothing to combat high costs.

Vance smartly brought the conversation back to how Harris *has been* in the White House and has failed to address inflation, and he reminded people about how, until the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy was strong under Trump.

Harris has tried mightily to distance herself from the inconvenient aspects of the Biden-Harris record, but it's hard when Biden says things like he did last week on "The View": "As vice president, there wasn't a single thing that I did that she couldn't do, and so I was able to delegate her responsibility on everything from foreign policy to domestic policy."

Vance kept reminding voters about that, too.

Regardless of who you may think won Tuesday, does it actually matter? I have my doubts.

The presidential race remains extremely close, and most voters have

made up their minds. Early voting has already started in several states.

In Michigan, considered one of the states that could decide the election, a recent USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll found Harris has a small lead (48% to 45%) over Trump, within the margin of error.

The survey also found that most people – 93% – have firmly made up their minds about who will get their vote.

Only 5% said it's possible they could change their mind.

## 'This is a turnout election'

"I don't believe there are any genuinely undecided voters at this point," Republican strategist Dennis Lennox told me ahead of the debate. "If you haven't made your mind up by now you won't be persuaded and won't show up to vote. This is a turnout election."

David Dulio, distinguished professor of political science at Michigan's Oakland University, also doesn't think the VP debate will make much of a difference. He said that since Harris got in the race, the polling has been "incredibly stable," including after Trump's lackluster performance in his debate with her.

That doesn't mean Tuesday's debate was meaningless, though.

It's the job of the running mates to make voters feel more comfortable voting for the candidate at the top, Dulio told me.

"Think of it as reinforcing a choice rather than tilting a choice," he said.

Under that standard, Vance succeeded in giving more of a boost to Trump than Walz did for Harris.

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## Trump upstages VP debate with insult to soldiers, whining



Rex Huppke  
USA TODAY

The most important takeaway from the vice presidential debate between Republican JD Vance and Democrat Tim Walz was this: Lunatic Donald Trump remains the GOP's presidential nominee, and he spent time before and during the debate again showing Americans how wildly unqualified he is to lead the country.

While Vance and Walz engaged in a largely respectful(ish) back-and-forth that likely did nothing to move the needle for American voters, Trump was spouting like a madman on his Truth Social site, repeatedly and childishly referring to Walz as "Tampon Tim."

Of the two CBS News moderators, Trump wrote: "Both young ladies have been extremely biased Anchors!"

At one point, he posted: "JD Vance just CRUSHED Tampon Tim with the FACTS. America was GREAT when I was President, and we will Make America Great Again after we win on November 5th!"

And then: "JD is doing GREAT – A different level of Intelligence from Tampon Tim!"

Trump called Walz "insane" and a "TOTAL JOKE!" and "Low IQ!"

## The VP debate was fine. But Trump's posts were unhinged.

Take a step back and think about what you just read.

A 78-year-old man who wants to be president of the United States wrote those things and publicly shared them.



An anti-Trump pin at Tuesday's protest outside the vice presidential debate in New York City. JASPER COLT/USA TODAY

Hours before the vice presidential debate, Trump was asked if he should have responded more strongly to a January 2020 attack by Iran on U.S. soldiers at a base in Iraq. More than 100 soldiers suffered brain injuries in the attack.

Trump said: "What does injured mean? You mean because they had a headache?"

That's reprehensible. For any normal candidate, it would border on career-ending. And, in the same answer, he said "there was nobody ever tougher on Iraq" when he clearly meant Iran.

At the same Milwaukee event, Trump spoke about the president of Iran but referred to him as Kim Jong Un, the North Korean dictator.

So, in a matter of hours, Vance's top-of-the-ticket running mate demeaned injuries suffered by U.S. troops, appeared incapable of remembering the names of foreign countries or leaders, and then sat around and posted insults like a snotty teenager on social media.

At the debate, Vance gave an Oscar-worthy performance in his role as "guy

**Vance's top-of-the-ticket running mate demeaned injuries suffered by U.S. troops, appeared incapable of remembering the names of foreign countries or leaders, and then sat around and posted insults like a snotty teenager on social media.**

trying to pretend his boss is normal." But even that fell apart near the end when the subject of certification of the 2020 election came up and the Republican vice presidential nominee was incapable of admitting Trump lost.

Walz asked Vance: "Did he lose the 2020 election?"

Vance non-responded: "Tim, I'm focused on the future. Did Kamala Harris censor Americans from speaking their mind in the wake of the 2020 COVID situation?"

To which Walz accurately said: "That is a damning non-answer."

Yeah, it's pretty damning. And the

very fact that Vance couldn't give a straight answer to the easiest question ever shows that his running mate – his boss – is a maniac.

Walz was clearly nervous in parts of the debate, and he is not the smooth talker Vance is, but none of what happened on that stage Tuesday night matters when compared with the madness of Trump.

It's easy to grow numb to his babbling bombast. It's easy for it to somehow seem normal, because it's coming from Donald Trump.

But there is nothing normal about him, and there's nothing normal about a guy like Vance who's willing to sell his soul to stand next to Trump, carrying his fetid water.

## Don't forget why Mike Pence wasn't on the debate stage

Perhaps the most powerful moment of the night for the Democratic vice presidential nominee was when he pointed out the elephant not in the room. Speaking of former Vice President Mike Pence, Walz said: "When Mike Pence made that decision to certify that election, that's why Mike Pence isn't on this stage."

Don't forget that. Vance is standing there because Trump's last vice president wants nothing to do with him, in part because Trump near got him hanged at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The vice presidential debate was whatever. But what matters is that before it and after, Trump was, as usual and as always, out of hand, insulting and insane.

Follow USA TODAY columnist Rex Huppke on X, formerly known as Twitter, @RexHuppke and on Facebook [facebook.com/RexIsAJerk](https://www.facebook.com/RexIsAJerk)





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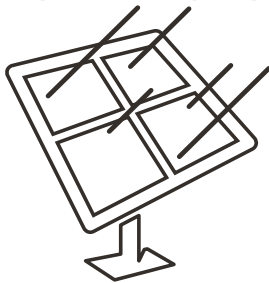
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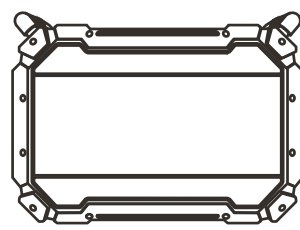


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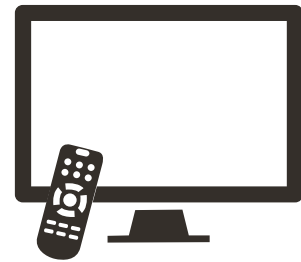
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## Housing fight in US comes to a head

Experts say Massachusetts battle, the latest volley in an age-old conflict, echoes the civil rights movement

**Andrea Riquier**  
USA TODAY

In a leafy suburb in a deep-rooted section of eastern New England, America's housing fissures are coming to a head.

Two years ago, the affluent, mostly white town of Milton, like several dozen others near it, was told by the Massachusetts state Legislature that it must take steps to allow more, and denser, housing. But by February, after Milton spent

thousands of dollars and countless hours of city staff's and elected officials time developing a plan, roughly 5,000 voters shot it down.

Days later, Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell filed suit to force Milton to comply, and on Oct. 7, a panel of judges will hear arguments. The Milton matter is specific to Massachusetts, but the questions it raises are familiar to communities across the country.

When housing is so scarce that it slips

out of reach of most people in the area, what is a community's responsibility to help? Should state government intervene, and if so, how far should it go?

For many progressive housing advocates, the impasse in Milton is just the latest volley in an age-old battle.

"This is the civil rights issue of our generation," said David Dworkin, president of the National Housing Conference. In Milton, Dworkin sees echoes of the Deep South protests in the 1950s — and the work of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1960s Chicago. "Zoning in America was developed and designed for racial segregation. This is not a subtle tool."

Thomas Silverstein, who runs fair

housing and community development efforts at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, agrees. "It has long been a focus of civil rights and fair housing litigation and advocacy to address affluent, often disproportionately white suburbs that are using their zoning powers to get out of providing their fair share of regional affordable housing, and also using their zoning powers in ways that disproportionately harm people of color," Silverstein said in an interview.

But Milton residents opposed to the zoning change say they're not against affordable housing. Their concern is the

**See HOUSING, Page 2B**

### MONEYLINE



DANIEL HIGGINS/USA TODAY NETWORK

#### BREYERS REACHES \$9M CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

U.S. customers who have bought Breyers Natural Vanilla ice cream over the past eight years may be eligible for cash payment in a settlement against the company. The lawsuit applies to customers in the U.S. who bought the ice cream between April 21, 2016 and Aug. 14, 2024, according to a news release from the Supreme Court of the State of New York. An \$8.85 million settlement has been reached in the class action lawsuit, which was filed against both Unilever United States, Inc., which owns Breyers, and advertiser Conopco, Inc., according to the lawsuit. According to the news release, the lawsuit alleges the ice cream was labeled "vanilla" as if its flavor came only from the vanilla plant when in reality, the product's flavor contained non-vanilla plant flavors. Conopco and Unilever United States, Inc. have agreed to create a settlement fund of \$8,850,000.

#### MORE THAN 180 SICKENED ON ROYAL CARIBBEAN SHIP

More than 180 people got sick in a gastrointestinal outbreak during a Royal Caribbean International cruise that ended Friday. Among 2,172 passengers on the Radiance of the Seas, 180 reported being ill along with three crew members, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Alaska sailing left from Vancouver, Canada, on Sept. 20, according to CruiseMapper. The news marks the second outbreak on Radiance of the Seas this year. Nearly 70 people were sickened with norovirus in April.

#### NTSB CHAIR REBUKES FAA OVER BOEING SAFETY ISSUE

The chair of the National Transportation Safety Board issued a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration administrator Tuesday saying the FAA did not seem to be taking seriously NTSB safety recommendations. The NTSB on Friday warned that a rudder control component on some Boeing 737 models could become non-functional in certain cold weather conditions. In response, the FAA said it had addressed the issue and was not aware of any affected parts being in service at U.S. airlines. Monday's letter from the NTSB chair suggests that the FAA was not doing all it could to address the issue and that it was inaccurate to say the part was not in service at U.S. carriers. NTSB chair Jennifer Homendy wrote, "I am disappointed that it does not appear that the FAA has initiated urgent actions to address the risk of jammed rudder controls in the 6 months since our preliminary report on this incident was issued."



## NO TICKET, NO PROBLEM

There are still ways to experience Universal Orlando without paying for the parks

**Eve Chen** USA TODAY

Like the gift shop you exit into on the way out from a ride, many Universal Orlando guests have to walk through the resort's CityWalk shopping, dining and entertainment complex to get to and from Universal Studios Florida and Islands of Adventure. That's because CityWalk sits right between the resort's main parking area and the parks. The only way around it is to take a water taxi or internal walking path from one of Universal's hotels.

But instead of considering it part of the journey, you may want to make CityWalk its own destination, because it's one of the best places to experience Universal without paying for a park ticket. Here's how and what else you can do around the Florida resort.

#### Is Universal CityWalk free?

Yes, admission to CityWalk is free. Here's what else you can do for free:

Pop into the Red Coconut Club for an immersive lounge experience and live performances during the resort's Mardi Gras, Halloween Horror Nights and

holiday celebrations. The club is usually open Thursdays through Sundays throughout the year, but during seasonal events, it gets a themed makeover and new name. It's now the Dead Coconut Club for Halloween. It was the Cursed Coconut Club for Mardi Gras, and it has been the Green and Red Coconut Club for the holidays.

Geek out over all the new things coming to the resort's new theme park at the Universal Epic Universe Preview Center. There's a big 3-D model map you can interact with using a free app on

**See UNIVERSAL, Page 2B**

**ABOVE: Most guests visiting Universal Orlando Resort have to walk through CityWalk to get to the parks.**

EVE CHEN/USA TODAY

## Port strike may impact Fed's future rate moves



More than 45,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association, including those who work at the Port of Wilmington, went on strike on Tuesday. It is the union's first strike since 1977. DAMIAN GILLETTO/USA TODAY NETWORK

**Howard Schneider**  
REUTERS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The COVID-19 pandemic's crushing blow to global supply chains also scarred U.S. Federal Reserve officials who thought the fallout from disrupted ports and backed-up container ships would cause only "transitory" inflation.

A strike by dockworkers on the U.S. East Coast and Gulf Coast that began Tuesday isn't expected to cause problems as deep or severe, but it still could cloud Fed policymakers' views and their sense of certainty about what's happening in the economy as they debate their next interest rate move ahead of the U.S. central bank's policy meeting Nov. 6-7.

"If it is short enough we will get through it," David Altig, executive vice president and chief economic adviser at the Atlanta Fed, said Sunday at a National Association for Business Economics

**See STRIKE, Page 2B**



## Universal

Continued from Page 1B

your smartphone. There are also free photo opps and souvenirs for sale.

Free live entertainment pop-ups are also available in CityWalk at certain times of year. Other live entertainment is available across CityWalk with dining.

### Is it worth going to Universal CityWalk?

Yes. You can spend an entire afternoon or evening in CityWalk for less than a park ticket.

One of the coolest things karaoke lovers can do is sing along to a live band with backup singers on stage at CityWalk's Rising Star. Or you can sing along from your seat to dueling piano performances at Pat O'Brien's. Live music is also available at Bob Marley – A Tribute to Freedom and Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville. All that entertainment is included with food or drink purchases.

Free live, local music is also available Friday and Saturday nights on the patio of Hard Rock Cafe Orlando, the largest Hard Rock Cafe in the world, but you'll have to pay for headliners like Luis Fonsi and Larry the Cable Guy at the indoor concert venue Hard Rock Live Orlando.

Of course, there are numerous dining venues without live entertainment, but plenty of fans, like steampunk-inspired Toothsome Chocolate Emporium & Savory Feast Kitchen, which is famous for its milkshakes, and Voodoo Doughnut, which always has a line but also offers mobile ordering.

Other activities include movie watching at Universal Cinemark, themed mini golf at Hollywood Drive-In Golf, and "Jurassic World" and "Back to the Future"-inspired escape rooms at Universal's Great Movie Escape. Movie tickets start at \$5 on Cinemark Movie Rewards Discount Tuesdays. Mini golf starts at \$19.99 for kids ages 3 to 9 and \$21.99 for guests ages 10 and up, with discounts available for military service members, seniors, AAA members and Universal Orlando Annual Passholders. Escape rooms start at \$39.99 per person, for all ages.

### What is included in Universal Orlando Resort?

Universal Orlando Resorts offers a range of perks for guests staying at its hotels, including up to an hour of early admission to select parks, certain pool



Guests sing along to "Sweet Caroline" at Pat O'Brien's in Universal CityWalk.

EVE CHEN/USA TODAY



Galaxy Bowl at Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort feels like stepping back in time.

PROVIDED BY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

hopping privileges, free resort transportation, and free delivery of in-park purchases to hotels. Royal Pacific, Hard Rock and Portofino Bay guests also get free Universal Express Unlimited passes that can dramatically cut waits for rides.

But you don't have to be an overnight guest to enjoy on-site activities like pop-up character appearances and bowling at Galaxy Bowl in Universal's retro-themed Cabana Bay Beach Resort. Bowling starts at \$18.50 per person, including shoe rental, and requires reservations.

On Saturday nights, Loews Royal Pacific hosts a full luau with live hula performances, fire dancing, music and

a Polynesian-inspired buffet. Tickets for Wantilan Luau start at \$45 per child ages 3 to 9 and \$99 for guests age 10 and up, including gratuity and parking.

There are also limited-time events like Harbor Nights at Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, Velvet Sessions and Velvet Unplugged at The Hard Rock Hotel, and Jake's Beer Dinners and Festivals at Loews Royal Pacific Resort, with varying prices.

Memorable dining experiences available year-round include Bar 17 Bistrot, the rooftop bar at Universal Aventura Hotel with sweeping views of Orlando, and Mama Della's Ristorante at Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, where strolling musicians serenade diners and take song requests.

### Is there any free parking at Universal Orlando?

Yes, on non-Halloween Horror Nights nights, self-parking in the main garage by CityWalk is free after 6 p.m., though subject to change.

Visitors going to see matinees at Universal Cinemark between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. may park free with the purchase of two movie tickets. You have to pay for parking up front but get reimbursed.

Guests dining at most full-service restaurants in Universal's resort hotels may park at the hotels free, for a limited window.

Otherwise, regular parking costs \$32 for the day in the main parking garage.

## Strike

Continued from Page 1B

conference in Nashville.

But he noted that one of the things helping hold inflation down right now is falling prices for goods, which could be at risk if the flow of imports stops for too long during the dockworkers strike.

"A reversal of those durable goods dynamics in terms of prices would not be a good thing, to say the least," for central bankers counting on weak goods prices to keep overall inflation anchored, Altig said.

Ports from Maine to Texas were shuttered after the International Longshoremen's Association called its first strike since 1977, putting thousands of workers on the picket line and stranding ships and containers at facilities central to the global economy. Many analysts expect the labor action to be short-lived, if only because the impact on commerce could be severe, putting pressure on both sides to reach agreement or, alternatively, for the White House to intervene.

It would likely take time for the issues flagged by Altig to become so pronounced they throw the Fed off track in its effort to return inflation to the central bank's 2% target, a fight officials feel is nearly won. Many businesses, particularly retailers looking ahead to the holiday season, bulked up inventories in anticipation of the strike and may have the goods on hand to meet demand.

### Possible distortions

Even a two-week strike would cover the days during which government officials conduct the survey for the October U.S. jobs report, possibly distorting one of the last key bits of information Fed policymakers will receive before their November meeting. The count of payroll jobs could be depressed and the unemployment rate pushed higher if port-related businesses lay off workers, though the striking workers themselves are not counted as unemployed.

"For the Fed this is complicating. There is not an obvious policy implication. It can be as disruptive and demand-destroying as it can be inflationary," with the potential to hit economic growth and consumer spending while also putting upward pressure on prices, Julia Coronado, president of MacroPolicy Perspectives, said on the sidelines of the business economics conference.

It may not matter for the November policy meeting and the likelihood that the Fed will cut rates by at least a quarter of a percentage point just days after the presidential election.

## Housing

Continued from Page 1B

scale of development being considered for their small community.

"I'm all for improving diversity in housing stock," said Denny Swenson, a long-time Milton resident who previously served on the town's planning committee. "I welcome it, I love to see it. This (litigation) is just a way for the developers to try to silence our town and other towns from saying we want better, more thoughtful zoning."

### Build, baby, build

The 2021 law at the heart of the dispute required communities served by the regional public transportation authority to adopt zoning laws allowing multi-family housing in certain areas of the towns. The law, the MBTA Communities Act, specified that municipalities that did not comply would lose access to several sources of funding provided by the state.

Milton's planning department staff spent much of 2023 working, with consultants, to develop new "zoning language" to be considered by the town's elected officials, according to the attorney general's filing. That December, the elected officials approved a bylaw allowing the zoning. But in February, when the bylaw was put to a referendum, it failed 54%-46%.

Among Milton residents that opposed the bylaw, most disagreed with the scale of development, Swenson said. The MBTA Communities Act required that the new zone accommodate more than 2,400 new housing units, she said – a big lift in a town of 24,000 where there's not much room to spread outward.

A representative for the state attorney general's office, however, told USA TODAY in an email that the law allowed communities a great deal of flexibility and local discretion. It does require a certain level of density in the zone, but specifies no particular minimum number of units be built.

Though residents were initially in discussion with state officials, once they

decided to hold the referendum, "there was no communication," Swenson said. "They were threatening punitive things but I thought we would be able to hit pause and try to work together. I do think it's surprising that citizens would be sued for disagreeing with the state."

Many Milton residents who oppose the law feel blindsided by the lawsuit, Swenson said. The legislation specified that a community not in compliance would lose access to funding, a tradeoff many residents were willing to make. "The executive branch cannot simply go in and legislate," she said.

In a February 2023 advisory reminding communities of the law's requirements, the state noted not only the possible loss of funds for those not in compliance with the original law but also the possibility of those municipalities being in violation of federal or state fair housing laws.

In a statement to USA TODAY, Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell said: "This mandatory law serves as an essential tool to address our housing affordability crisis by creating more zoning districts where more housing can be built. This is done through a collaborative process that gives municipalities considerable discretion over the location and size of the new zoning district."

The statement continued: "The Town of Milton submitted a bylaw to come into compliance with the MBTA Communities Law and had the full support of the state, until a group of private individuals called for a referendum that repealed that bylaw. My office is tasked with enforcing our laws, including this mandatory one, while always standing ready to assist any community working to come into compliance."

Joe Atchue, Milton's building commissioner, who is named in the attorney general's legal filings, and Nicholas Connors, Milton's assistant town administrator, did not respond to multiple emailed requests for comment for this story.

### What can the state do?

Much of the town's legal response, according to public documents, rests on

the idea that the attorney general has the ability to withhold funds only as specified in the MBTA Communities Act and that any steps beyond that would be overreach.

Legal experts interviewed for this story disagreed with that argument.

Though there are some nuances to individual state legal frameworks, broadly speaking, local communities exist at the pleasure of their states, Silverstein said, "It's sort of presupposed that states can force local governments to take particular actions or to forego taking particular actions."

In September, Massachusetts' Real Estate Bar Association, the principal professional association for Massachusetts real estate lawyers, filed a brief in support of the attorney general.

"The withholding of funds is not the only remedy – the attorney general has broad power to take actions to enforce statutes in the public interest of the Commonwealth," said one of the authors of the brief, Kathleen Heyer, in an interview with USA TODAY.

Notably, Heyer said, the statute did not require that anything be built or permitted – it simply sought to change the zoning bylaw of the town. "It was just changing what uses would be allowed and people still came forward in droves to say 'We don't want it. We'd rather forego these optional funds than comply with state law.'"

### A regional housing crisis

Many observers of the case also believe that towns like Milton have not only an obligation to abide by the law, but also a responsibility to pitch in with what has become a deep regional social crisis.

A brief filed in support of the attorney general by more than a dozen area housing nonprofits lays out the numbers: In 2024, the median sales price for a single-family home in Greater Boston is \$950,000, while the median rent in the area is \$3,940 a month. The majority of renters in Greater Boston are "rent-burdened," meaning they pay more than 30% of their income for rent.

The phrase "exclusionary zoning" is used by scholars, activists, government officials and others to refer to communi-

ties that make it impossible for certain populations to settle there. When zoning and other practices make single-family homes with yards the default, and those homes average over \$1 million, it excludes people of lower socioeconomic classes. Among other things, it effectively becomes unaffordable for many people who work in town to also live there.

"The people of exclusionary communities are freeloading," Dworkin said. "They are accepting all the benefits of all of the things that all the workers do, but they won't actually allow them to live anywhere near where they work."

### What next?

Beyond the questions of legality, many advocates wonder what happens next. What if Massachusetts prevails but no new housing gets built in Milton?

The attorney general's initial brief lays out a long history of attempts by the state to induce construction of more housing, to little avail.

A 2004 state law, for example, provided incentive payments to towns to create zoning districts near transit or in higher-density areas.

"As of May 2024, however, only 49 municipalities had created such a district, and only roughly 5,903 new units had actually been built or permitted in the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's ("MBTA") service area as a result," the brief notes.

The current housing shortage in Massachusetts is estimated to be at least 200,000 units, according to the affordable housing advocates' brief.

To Dworkin and others who view the case through a social justice lens, every little bit helps. "There is no magic wand here," he said. "We're going to solve this crisis 10 and 50 and 100 units at a time."

"The idea that they're pushing back and trying to resist change is sad, but it's not surprising," Silverstein said. "That resistance in a way actually sort of proves the point behind the law, which is that you actually need to have robust requirements instead of incentives if you want to get things done. The places that really have not been doing their fair share will continue to do so unless someone's really pushing."



# Eight US cities with the coziest fall vibes

Kathleen Wong

USA TODAY

With summer officially ending, fall travel is here. As the leaves transform into vibrant shades of yellow and orange and the aroma of pumpkin-everything fills the brisk air, fall invites you on cozy getaways.

To help travelers figure out the best destinations for an autumnal trip, BetMGM Casino has released a new ranking of the coziest U.S. cities.

The company pulled 18 cities from an existing list from Travel & Leisure and then went one step further to measure them against five fall-related factors: things to do, such as farmers markets and pumpkin patches; natural landscapes like lakes; the intensity of fall foliage color; average rainfall, according to WeatherSpark; and average temperature using data from the National Centers for Environmental Information.

Though the East Coast nearly swept the ranking, destinations in the South and Intermountain West still scored spots, making it easy for travelers from across the nation to book their fall escapes.

Read below for the ranking of the eight coziest U.S. cities for fall 2024:

## 8. Orlando, Florida

Orlando may seem like a curveball with its warm weather, but its theme parks make the city worth a visit in the fall. From Universal Orlando's Halloween Horror Nights to Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party at Walt Disney World, travelers can enjoy the parks in a way that's available only during the fall.

## 7. Denver

Denver, a city full of good food and outdoor fun, is especially enchanting in the fall. From pumpkin harvest festivals to turkey trots and beer festivals, travelers have their choice of autumn-themed festivities. Surrounded by pristine mountains and sprawling parks, the city is also ideal for seemingly endless leaf-peeping.

## 6. Virginia Beach, Virginia

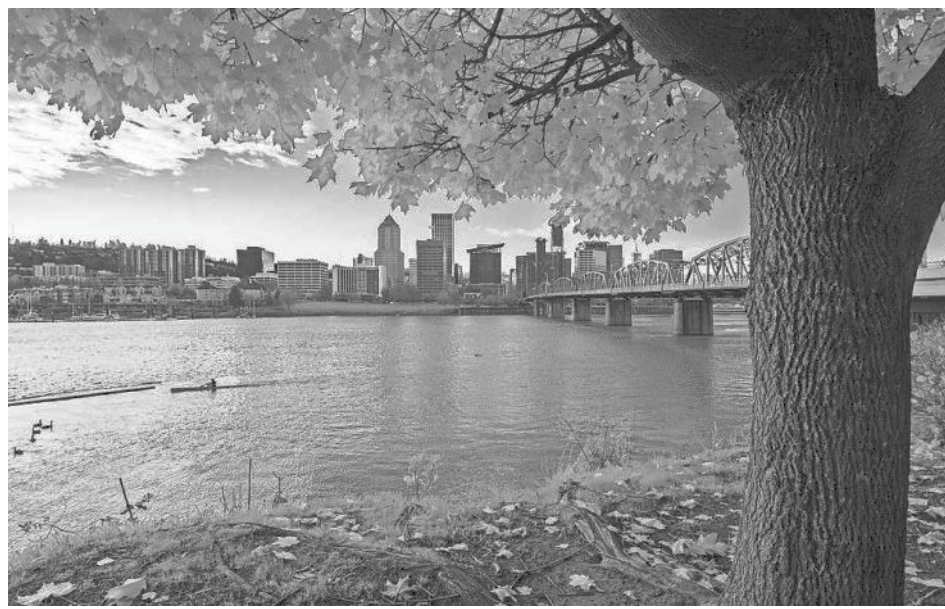
As fall approaches, Virginia Beach combines its charming coastal vibes with the fall season. The city celebrates autumn with oyster festivals, seasonal beers at local breweries, and pumpkin patches. There are also numerous places for leaf peepers, from First Landing State park to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Take a hike or bike ride to see the gorgeous leaves.

## 5. Portland, Oregon

Portland's natural beauty and food scene go full force in the fall. The city



A bronze statue of King Neptune is located in Virginia Beach, Va. JOE CHANSACK/SHUTTERSTOCK



View of Portland, Ore. overlooking the Willamette River on a fall afternoon.

JOSEMARIA TOSCANO/SHUTTERSTOCK

was found to have the most pumpkin patches in the ranking. As the air becomes a crisp 56 degrees, leaf peepers are beckoned to explore the outdoors, like at Multnomah Falls – the state's largest waterfall – and the myriad trails at Forest Park.

Seasonal foods are also abundant, like a Cider Festival and apple cider donuts.

## 4. Salt Lake City

Known for its pristine natural splendor, Salt Lake City is especially stunning in the fall when the mountains are painted in vibrant shades of yellows, reds and oranges. There are countless scenic drives and lakes, mountains and canyons to hike for leaf peeping. Then, take a rest at Fifth Water Hot Springs,

which also boasts gorgeous fall foliage.

## 3. Minneapolis

Minneapolis scored third on the ranking for having the second-most colorful fall foliage. Leaf-peep at one of the city's many green spaces, like Minnehaha Regional Park or River Parkway. The city is also home to pumpkin patches and apple orchards.

## 2. Boston

Boston comes alive in the autumn, with great places to leaf-peep right in its city center. From the Public Garden to Boston Common, Boston gets draped in seasonal colors, which make its historical architecture even more beautiful and charming. Of course, since you're in New England, you'll have to go apple picking or visit a fall festival.

## 1. Portland, Maine

Boasting the most colorful fall foliage from mid- to late October, Portland, Maine, scored the spot for the coziest city in the U.S. Take a hike or bike out to the abundant trails around the area, like at Cape Elizabeth or Camden Hills State Park, to take in the intense fall colors. Honestly, you could just drive around to take in the scenery.

# Time running out to book flights for Thanksgiving

Kathleen Wong

USA TODAY

Thanksgiving travel means spending quality time with loved ones, feeling grateful and, of course, navigating frantic airports.

Thanksgiving week is historically one of the peak travel times in the U.S. Last year, airports saw record-setting numbers, the busiest since the pandemic. For travelers, this means a chaotic, often stressful airport experience.

"Given the time of year, you're also facing potentially bad weather in terms of winter storms," Sally French, NerdWallet's travel expert, told USA TODAY in a statement.

"And holiday travel tends to draw an above-average rate of less experienced travelers, which just means things like airport security lines can be longer than ever."

With the best prices for domestic Thanksgiving flights typically around 45 days in advance or early October, it's about time to start booking your flight. If you haven't purchased it yet, there's still time to figure out how to avoid airports when they're at their most hectic.

"That said, Thanksgiving travel doesn't have to be a nightmare," French said. "By strategically planning your flight, you can avoid the massive crowds and save money."

Here are the best and worst days to fly for Thanksgiving travel, according to data by travel platforms NerdWallet and Hopper.



Thanksgiving week is historically one of the peak travel times in the U.S. Last year, airports saw record-setting numbers, the busiest since the pandemic.

DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

## What are the worst days to fly?

The days right before Thanksgiving and the Sunday ending the holiday weekend are the worst days to fly.

Historically, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving – Nov. 27 this year – is the busiest day for travelers heading to their destination. According to Hopper, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, Nov. 26, also will be crowded.

As travelers head home, Sunday, Dec. 1, will be the busiest at airports, both Hopper and NerdWallet found. To add insult to injury, it's also the most expensive travel day for the Thanksgiving period: Flights cost 45% more on average for domestic airfare, according to Hopper's 2024 Holiday Travel Outlook.

"Thanksgiving travel tends to be packed, and the Sunday after Thanksgiving, in general, is one of the worst days of the year to fly, period," French said. "In most years, it sets the record for busiest travel day of the year."

According to NerdWallet, it has been the busiest day of the year at TSA for the past three years. On that Sunday in

2023 alone, more than 2.9 million people went through U.S. security checkpoints.

## What are the best days to fly for Thanksgiving?

According to NerdWallet, the best days to fly for Thanksgiving are:

- Saturday, Nov. 23
- Monday, Nov. 25
- The holiday itself, Nov. 28

If you're flexible, Thanksgiving Day is actually the lowest-traffic travel day of the holiday period; only 1.5 million people passed through U.S. security checkpoints last year.

"If you take the first flight out, you might even land in time for Thanksgiving dinner anyway," French said. "Plus, flying on Thanksgiving Day is often less expensive than other travel days."

That flexibility may also save you some bucks. Out of the entire holiday week, domestic airfare for Thanksgiving Day will be the cheapest, clocking in at \$244 on average, according to Hopper's outlook.

# Over 340 Big Lots stores set to close in US

Fernando Cervantes Jr.

USA TODAY

Nearly 50 additional Big Lots stores are set to close across the United States as the retailer continues its bankruptcy process.

The retailer, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in September, plans to close more than 340 stores. Some of those stores may already have closed: More than 50 stores have been removed from the chain's online list of locations since July 2.

Store closures for the store form part of a sale agreement with an affiliate of Nexus Capital Management LP, according to a news release from Big Lots. The company also has filed motions in court seeking approval to continue to pay employees and benefits as well as payments to certain crucial vendors to continue business as usual.

## Where are the store closures?

Court filings from last month show 344 stores that Big Lots has chosen to close as part of its bankruptcy process.

Initially, four states – Idaho, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas – were not slated to see any closures. But new filings show that each of them will have locations close: Idaho, Oklahoma and New Mexico will see one closure each and Texas will have more than 15 stores closing across the state.

The only states not affected by Big Lots closures to this point are Delaware, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Rhode Island and West Virginia.



## 50★States

News from across the USA

**ALABAMA Montgomery:** Sixteen organizations have united to offer individual services for people who are unhoused under one roof. The Hub allows people who are homeless to seek help without traveling to multiple locations across town, said Ken Austin, who helps run the center.

**ALASKA Juneau:** A 40-year-old totem pole that had been living in the U.S. Forest Service office in Juneau was rededicated to a new home at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center over the weekend, KTOO reported.

**ARIZONA Glendale:** An Arizona man is facing a murder charge after authorities say he decapitated his mother before her own surprise birthday party on Friday.

**ARKANSAS Fort Smith:** The skies over Fort Smith will no longer be quiet as pilots from around the world learn how to fly the latest generation of jet fighters. Pilots from Poland, Finland, Germany, and Singapore will train in the F-35s, and some will train with the F-16. The training is part of the Foreign Military Sales the United States has with those countries.

**CALIFORNIA Sacramento:** California's governor signed into law Sunday legislation requiring certain insurance providers to cover costs for infertility treatment and in vitro fertilization, his office announced, and on Monday he approved a new state law that bars private, nonprofit colleges from using legacy or donor preferences in the admissions process.

**COLORADO Grand County:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife believed it had captured all of the Copper Creek wolf pack but recently discovered it had missed one. The state wildlife agency said it is attempting to capture an uncollared gray wolf believed to be a fifth Copper Creek pack pup, according to an agency news release.

**CONNECTICUT Stratford:** Police said four people were arrested after hundreds of cars participated in an illegal street takeover, WTNH reported.

**DELAWARE Dover:** The Delaware Office of Highway Safety is launching a new initiative to help make roads in Delaware safer for drivers, passengers and pedestrians. The campaign will spread across the state using a "hyperlocal" approach. The agency wants to meet people where they are in Delaware, including schools, bars and stores, to communicate more directly and personally with drivers in the state.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington:** District Dogs will be required to pay \$100,000 as well as make safety improvements after 10 dogs died in a flooding at the boarding facility in 2023, WUSA9 reported.

**FLORIDA Jacksonville:** The city will install a historic marker where Johnnie Mae Chappell, a Black woman, died in 1964 when a gunman in a carload of white men fired a deadly shot "not even knowing her name" solely because of her skin color.

**GEORGIA Atlanta:** Votes cast for third-party presidential candidates Cornel West, an independent, and Claudia De la Cruz, a socialist, will not be counted in Georgia after the state's Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that both candidates filed improper nominating petitions, and thus did not qualify to appear on the ballot.

**HAWAII Honolulu:** The state Department of Human Services announced that SNAP benefits in Hawaii is decreasing for the second year in a row, Hawaii News Now reported.

**IDAHO Boise:** Police said a Boise High School student is in custody and will face legal and school consequences after bringing an unloaded gun to school, KTVB7 reported.

**ILLINOIS Rockford:** Months after heavy summer storms pummeled Rockford neighborhoods with flood waters, city council is considering a \$120 million storm water master plan. The draft plan includes more than two dozen projects designed to reduce flood damage and another handful of projects meant to improve water quality.

**INDIANA South Bend:** About 400 contractors, politicians, business leaders and educators crowded into the Discovery Room at Century Center on Monday to officially welcome Amazon Web Services into the community. The event, which was called a ceremonial groundbreaking, included a large trowel of dirt where a variety of officials took turns posing with ceremonial shovels.

## HIGHLIGHT: KENTUCKY



Logan Robinson with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife releases a bucket of fish into the pond at Chickasaw Park on Sept. 25. MICHAEL CLEVINGER/USA TODAY NETWORK

**Louisville:** Officials stocked Chickasaw Park's newly renovated pond with more than 1,000 fish last week, hoping to turn the page on the pond's contaminated past. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources added young largemouth bass, channel catfish and other species to the pond, which is now larger and deeper. The fish will grow up to a catchable size within a year, said Dane Balsman, a fisheries biologist with the department. But it will take several years to confirm whether the pond's long-standing chemical contamination was purged when crews drained, dredged and renovated it over the past year.

**IOWA Des Moines:** Des Moines has shut down more than a dozen traffic cameras after state officials denied the city operating permits for the controversial automated enforcement devices that have raised the ire of many drivers.

**KANSAS Topeka:** Kansas will continue a 2021 program that wiped fees for state licensure, background check and fingerprinting for child care providers who are either seeking or renewing their licensure through next year, or until funds are depleted.

**LOUISIANA Tangipahoa Parish:** Law enforcement arrested a TikTok influencer in connection to the killing of a therapist whose body was found wrapped in a tarp along a highway over the weekend.

**MAINE Portland:** A nonprofit group is aiming to make a discontinued 26-mile rail corridor a part of a proposed multi-use 72-mile trail that would connect Portland, Lewiston-Auburn and Brunswick, News Center Maine reported.

**MARYLAND Baltimore:** Several Maryland libraries are among the institutions affected by a weekend fire in Baltimore that damaged the SAILOR network.

**MASSACHUSETTS Worcester:** The footprint of UMass Memorial Health, the largest nonprofit health care system in Central Massachusetts, just got bigger. UMass announced that it absorbed Milford Regional Medical Center including its Regional Physician Group. That means Milford Regional's 2,500 employees and providers are now formally part of the UMass Memorial Health system, swelling the ranks of that system's caregivers to more than 20,000.

**MICHIGAN Covert Township:** Holtec, the company wanting to reopen the Palisades nuclear reactor in Michigan, found corrosion cracking in steam generators "far exceeded" estimates, the U.S. nuclear power regulator said in a document published Wednesday. The administration of President Joe Biden finalized a \$1.52 billion conditional loan guarantee to the Palisades plant.

**MINNESOTA St. Paul:** Violence Free Minnesota's annual Homicide Report found that at least 40 people were killed as a result of domestic violence last year in the state, KARE11 reported.

**MISSISSIPPI Laurel:** Four of the Meyers quintuplets have been released from the neonatal intensive care unit at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and are home in Laurel.

**MISSOURI Springfield:** City Utilities is looking to expand its electric generation and battery storage by moving forward with financing up to \$280 million for two projects. To expand power generation, CU is looking to install three 50 megawatt gas turbines at the McCartney Generating Station. This part of the project is estimated to cost \$210 million, according to a news release. Once online, which is expected to be in February 2027, these turbines will be the utility's most efficient generators and will run on natural gas with a fuel oil backup.

**MONTANA Butte:** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks said an investigation is underway after a group of people were seen in a video joyriding side-by-side vehicles at a fishing access site in the Big Hole River in Melrose, KPAX reported.

**NEBRASKA Lincoln:** Nebraska Game and Parks launched The Parks in Full Color Campaign last month, which would bring EnChroma color-blindness kits to state parks, in an effort to help guests with colorblindness, KOLN reported.

**NEVADA Reno:** Traffic flowed on both sides of Reno-Tahoe International Airport's main roadway once more as the airport marked the completion of its Loop Road project. Airport and government officials were on hand Monday to celebrate the opening of Reno-Tahoe International's outer loop, the last portion of a roadway improvement project that started in October 2021.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE Concord:** The American Civil Liberties Union of New Hampshire and voting rights groups filed a federal lawsuit to challenge a new voter ID law in New Hampshire they say is among the "most restrictive" in the U.S.

**NEW JERSEY Trenton:** New Jersey's black bear population is still expanding despite the annual hunt, so some state lawmakers want to set tougher rules on a top culprit in human-bear encounters: bird feeders. State legislators advanced a bill that would impose new regulations on unintentional feeding of bears, whether through bird feeders, deer bait, pet food or other meals left for animals in the outdoors. Violators could be fined up to \$1,000 per offense. The proposal is working its way through the Legislature as the latest bear hunt approaches: Archery season in northwest New Jersey is Oct. 14 to 19.

**NEW MEXICO Santa Fe:** Police said a suspect is in custody after two bodies were found dead in a vehicle Monday night, KRQE reported.

**NEW YORK Albany:** Almost 2 million New York households are currently struggling to gain complete access to broadband internet service due to its cost, according to a report released by the New York State Department of Public Service. And while just over 97% of address points in New York are served by at least one high-speed internet service provider, the report says, programs to help New Yorkers more easily afford broadband internet are hitting speed bumps.

**NORTH CAROLINA Wilmington:** New Hanover County Schools came out of the last school year with an uphill trend as the district now has half as many low-performing schools as it did three years ago.

**NORTH DAKOTA Mountrail County:** The state Department of Mineral Resources reported that hundreds of barrels of produced water spilled near Ross on Friday due to equipment failure, KMOT reported.

**OHIO Columbus:** Crime reported at Ohio State University in 2023 improved over the previous year in most categories with two large exceptions, according to the latest Clery Act report.

**OKLAHOMA Barnsdall:** Barnsdall officials have learned the U.S. Department of Commerce has awarded the town a \$2.5 million grant through the Economic Development Administration to reconstruct a spillway at the Lake Waxhoma dam to encourage "business growth and resiliency."

**OREGON Newport:** Researchers have discovered new insights through drones on the acrobatic foraging techniques of gray whales off the Oregon Coast, according to Oregon State University's Marine Mammal Institute. For seven years, researchers have patrolled the area between Seal Rock and Depoe Bay by boat to spot the plume of water from a whale's surface breaching spout. The whales are part of the Pacific Coast feeding group of gray whales, according to Clara Bird, a researcher in the Marine Mammal Institute's Geospatial Ecology of Marine Megafauna Laboratory.

**PENNSYLVANIA Chambersburg:** Despite national headlines of steep enrollment declines across higher education, Wilson College is bucking the trend, having attained its highest total enrollment in the history of the institution.

**RHODE ISLAND Providence:** Gov. Dan McKee's job approval rating continues to sag, with only a little over a third of Rhode Islanders saying they approve of his job performance in a new poll from Salve Regina University's Pell Center.

**SOUTH CAROLINA Florence County:** Authorities said a Hanna-Pamplico High School student is in custody after threats were made on social media targeting the school, WBTW reported.

**SOUTH DAKOTA Pierre:** The fastest growing occupation through 2032 in South Dakota will be wind turbine service technicians, according to new projections from the state Department of Labor and Regulation, South Dakota Searchlight reported.

**TENNESSEE Nashville:** A newly launched coalition made up of 29 community partners across Nashville is taking aim at what it calls a child care crisis in Davidson County. The group, dubbed the Nashville Early Education Coalition, said nearly half of children who are infants up to 5 years old lack access to high-quality, affordable early childhood education.

**TEXAS Austin:** Math can be a difficult subject for students to grasp. Texas has the fourth-lowest numeracy level in the U.S., according to a study by Excel Champs.

**UTAH Duck Creek Village:** Officials said one person was killed after a semi truck rolled over in Kane County, KUTV reported.

**VERMONT Burlington:** A foundation led by a University of Vermont alumnus has donated \$15 million to the business school that bears his name to launch an undergraduate business co-op program for students to get working experience in leading companies in Vermont and beyond before they graduate, making them better prepared for their careers. The university's Grossman School of Business will become one of the few U.S. business schools with a major undergraduate business co-op program, according to a news release.

**VIRGINIA Richmond:** The Virginia Repertory Theatre announced that its \$600,000 fundraising goal has been reached thanks to more than 1,300 donors, as well as additional support from local businesses and foundations, WRIC reported.

**WASHINGTON Ashford:** A Washington-based Airman received an award for rescuing a woman who had a hiking accident in late August, the U.S. Air Force announced.

**WEST VIRGINIA Clarksburg:** Police said a man has been arrested after stabbing another man in the stomach with a sword, WDTV reported.

**WISCONSIN Milwaukee:** Downtown Milwaukee boasts business, social and cultural strengths, but its residential growth – a key economic driver – lags behind its peers. That's according to a new study commissioned by the Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District.

**WYOMING Cheyenne:** Six counties received a disaster designation after wildfires burned more than 600,000 acres this summer, Casper Star-Tribune reported.

From USA TODAY Network and wire reports





Top: Heisman hopefuls Travis Hunter of Colorado (left) and Ashton Jeanty of Boise State (right). Above: Alabama QB Jalen Milroe and head coach Kalen DeBoer. PHOTOS BY IMAGN IMAGES

## For Sanders' next act, keep eye on his luggage



**Blake Toppmeyer**  
SEC Columnist  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Deion Sanders' luggage sure looks swanky.

Louis Vuitton, he called it, and it comes with a nice set of wheels.

The stars whom Sanders packed up and brought with him from Jackson State to Colorado proved they can excel anywhere. Travis Hunter and Shedeur Sanders helped Coach Prime answer the question of whether he can win at this level.

He can, and he has.

"I'm so excited," Sanders said Saturday after his team's 48-21 victory over Central Florida that put Colorado in a tie atop the Big 12 standings. "You have no idea."

So, here's the next question now that we know Sanders passes muster.

Can he sustain success at Colorado? Does he even have that desire?

Sanders operates as if he plans to live out of his suitcase rather than unpack and set down roots.

Yes, I know he said he plans to coach Colorado for at least 10 seasons and that he doesn't desire an NFL job. He also once said God called him to coach Jackson State, and he pledged on "60 Minutes" to "change the perspective of HBCU football." He did that, briefly, until someone else called. Colorado was on the line. He gathered his luggage and jetted off.

And I don't blame Sanders a bit for accepting a better job and a bigger paycheck, but there's what you say, and there's what you do.

And Sanders' actions make him a flight risk.

Check out Colorado's recruiting class. It ranks dead last in the Big 12 in the 247Sports Composite. Only eight prospects are committed to the class. He's recruiting (or not recruiting, rather) like a guy who plans to vamoose.

Because, Sanders has plenty to sell, if he had the appetite for recruiting. He's 8-9 at Colorado, including 4-1 this season.

If you don't think that's applaudable, you've forgotten the rubbish bin this program lived in before Sanders' arrival. Colorado joined Northwestern as the nation's worst Bowl Subdivisions programs in 2022. Colorado hired Sanders to spice things up. Has he ever.

Which makes Colorado's stalled recruiting all the more noteworthy. Sanders shouldn't struggle selling his vision to high school prospects.

Sanders lived out of the transfer portal the past two years. His strategy fared better than many expected it would.

A star quarterback like Shedeur who can pass and run remains a great equalizer. Sanders' son taking the snaps puts a spiffy coat of varnish on this team.

And, to Prime's credit, he improved the defense.

But, how long can he sustain this?

Shedeur Sanders and Hunter will head to the NFL after this season. Transfers of their ability are more the

See TOPPMEYER, Page 7C

# First month kicks off with weekly surprises

Tide, Longhorns, Buckeyes excel while Seminoles stumble

**Paul Myerberg**  
USA TODAY

The expanded College Football Playoff has already shaped the regular season, deeply impacting the perspective on losses while broadening the number of teams still in contention for the national championship.

That's the biggest takeaway from the opening month of the 2024 season, which has otherwise followed a fairly predictable script.

That's true near the top, at least. Alabama has remained a powerhouse in the transition from Nick Saban to new coach Kalen DeBoer. Texas has built on last year's breakthrough to rise to the top of the US LBM Coaches Poll. Ohio State has seamlessly inserted new quarterback Will Howard into the lineup to stand as the clear favorite in the Big Ten.

But there have been plenty of sur-

prises of note. Colorado is on track for at least six wins and a bowl berth under Deion Sanders. Indiana has stormed out to one of the best starts in program history. On the flip side, Florida State is building a case for being counted among the biggest duds in Power Four history.

With a long way to go until we crown this season's national champion, USA TODAY Sports looks back at the opening month of the regular season.

### Best team: Alabama

Alabama inches ahead of Texas on the back of Saturday night's victory against Georgia. The Longhorns have a strong case built on a road win against Michigan to open the season and a solid start to SEC play against Mississippi State. But owning the best win of any team in the Football Bowl Subdivision gives the Crimson Tide the edge.

### Most improved team: Miami

Miami has rocketed to the top of the ACC after a middling start under coach Mario Cristobal. There are several factors at play – increased depth and dramatically improved pass defense, to name two – but the biggest spark has come from the addition of quarterback Cam Ward.

### Heisman Trophy leader: Travis Hunter, Colorado

Hunter had a touchdown grab and an interception in Saturday's blowout of Central Florida, and no one was surprised. With the Buffaloes climbing toward bowl eligibility, Hunter has the reputation, notoriety and production to win the Heisman and be seen as one of the top individual performers in

See FIRST MONTH, Page 7C

# Rookie QB phenom Daniels has special connection with team legend

Doug Williams was in the process of watching video of Jayden Daniels – who else? – earlier this week when he took a break to share some quarterback-on-quarterback insight.

The legend on the phenom. This promises to be good stuff.

"He's always poised. He's always thinking," Williams told USA TODAY Sports. "When you watch him, you know his mind is moving. He's never under pressure, mentally. Even if he



**Jarrett Bell**  
Columnist  
USA TODAY

misses a guy, he finds a way to get some positive yards with his legs. But he doesn't just use his legs to run. When you see him come out of the pocket, I can promise you he's looking downfield.

He's just composed, man.

"It's hard to imagine this with a young guy with four starts under his belt ... It's almost like he's been here before."

With Daniels heading into Sunday's game against the Cleveland Browns as one of the NFL's most remarkable storylines from the first month of the season – he has ignited the Washington Commanders (3-1) to three consecutive

See BELL, Page 7C



**Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels celebrates the road win Sunday against the Cardinals in Arizona.** MARK J. REBILAS/IMAGN IMAGES





Rickie Fowler hasn't played since the British Open in mid-July and returns this week to the PGA Tour at the Sanderson Farms Championship in Jackson, Mississippi. BARBARA GAUNTT/THE (JACKSON) CLARION LEDGER

## Fowler looks to 'shake some rust off'

Cameron Jourdan

Golfweek | USA TODAY NETWORK

It has been a while since Rickie Fowler has played golf.

Three months ago and on a different continent, Fowler finished 71st in the British Open Championship at Royal Troon. Since then, he hasn't played any competitive golf, but he does have a new addition to his family.

He and wife Allison welcomed their second daughter, Nellie, in early August.

"I've definitely enjoyed being able to help out as much as possible, and going from one to two, you can kind of do the one together versus – obviously Allison is on top of all of Nellie's stuff as well as Maya, but she can't be in two places at once," Fowler said.

One of the areas Fowler said he has stepped up in? The kitchen, where he said he has made a few good briskets recently.

"I feel like the cooking game went to another level," Fowler said. "I felt like I was decent before, but my wife and I used to cook a lot together, and having a little one that she kind of had to be on duty at all times with, that put a lot more of the cooking duties on me."

On the golf course, Fowler is setting

up for a busy October. He will play three of the next four weeks, making stops at the Shriners Children's Open and Zozo Championship in Japan later this month. But first, he's playing the Sanderson Farms Championship, the second tournament of the PGA Tour's eight-event fall schedule.

Fowler admitted he'll try to shake off some rust, though he hopes there's not too much to get rid of. The tournament wasn't originally on Fowler's schedule – he has never played at The Country Club of Jackson – but he decided to head to Mississippi thanks to the reputation the course and tournament had earned from fellow PGA Tour players.

"I guess the last month and a half or so I've gotten back more into working on the game and getting ready to come here," he said. "It was odd packing, back to life on the road. Typically traveling with the family, it made more sense to come solo."

Last season wasn't the best for Fowler. He missed out on the FedExCup Playoffs, and he sits 108th in the FedExCup standings. His status isn't in the air for next year thanks to his victory at the Rocket Mortgage Classic in 2023, but that's why he's trying to find his groove heading into next year.

Part of that process is some new

equipment in the bag. He's testing out a DF3 putter from L.A.B., which is in the bag for the first time, as is a Taylor-Made mini-driver, which is replacing his 3-wood.

"Ultimately we're all trying to get better, as am I, and see if there's little things we can piece together to continue to move forward," Fowler said.

"The putter I've been doing some testing with for I guess almost two months now. I wouldn't be putting something into play if I didn't think there was a real potential benefit."

Fowler has enjoyed being home the last couple of months and spending time with Allison and their new family of four. He said older daughter Maya has been great as a big sister, even when she does test the limits of what dad and mom let her get away with.

But golf never left his mind, and he's ready to find his groove and start preparing for a strong 2025. That process begins Thursday.

"It feels good to have that time off, kind of refresh, rebuild a bit," Fowler said. "Excited to come back out. It was definitely a different feeling packing and getting ready to come here versus just going to another tournament. It kind of feels a little bit like a fresh start."

### PGA TOUR

#### Sanderson Farms Championship

Course: The Country Club of Jackson (Miss.). Yardage: 7,461. Par 72.

Golf Channel coverage (EDT): Thursday, 4-7; Friday, 4-7:30; Saturday, 4-7; Sunday, 3:30-6:30.

#### STAT

**\$500** That's how much money Sanderson Farms defending champion Luke List and Henrik Norlander are donating per birdie this weekend to the Red Cross in their hometown of Augusta, Georgia, to help out with relief from Hurricane Helene.

#### Keep an eye on ...

- **Matt McCarty.** He earned a three-victory promotion on the Korn Ferry Tour this summer and is making his first start as a PGA Tour member, skipping this week's Korn Ferry Tour Championship. He locked up the No. 1 spot in the points list. He won three times in six Korn Ferry Tour starts over the summer.

- **Rickie Fowler.** Making his first start since the British Open, Fowler added the Sanderson Farms Championship to his schedule to shake off the rust and test out some new equipment in his bag, including a new putter. Fowler is looking for his first win since the 2023 Rocket Mortgage Classic after a down year in 2024.

- **Ben Griffin.** Last year Griffin held a three-shot lead going into the final round before falling in a five-man playoff to List. This year he returns to The Country Club of Jackson still in search of his first Tour win and also a boost into the Aon Next 10, sitting at 61 in the FedExCup standings. Nos. 51-60 after the FedExCup Fall get into the first two signature events of 2025.

#### Tee times

Golf Channel coverage on Thursday (4-7 p.m. ET) will highlight the following groupings: Matt McCarty making his Tour debut alongside Matt Kuchar and Harris English (1:34 p.m. ET); and PGA Tour winners Rickie Fowler, Jhonattan Jaeger and Lucas Glover (1:45 p.m. ET).

On Friday (4-7:30 p.m. ET), three winners from 2024 in Nick Dunlap, Peter Malnati and Stephan Jaeger will look to add another trophy to their case (1:34 p.m. ET). Then, past Sanderson Farms champions Luke List and Mackenzie Hughes as well as Procore Championship winner Patton Kizzire (1:45 p.m. ET) will tackle The Country Club of Jackson.

## Lynx stifle Sun in Game 2 to even series

Field Level Media | Reuters

Courtney Williams scored 17 points to help the Minnesota Lynx beat the Connecticut Sun 77-70 in Game 2 on Tuesday night in Minneapolis to even their WNBA semifinal series.

Williams was one of three Lynx players to score in double figures as they tied the best-of-five series at 1-1. Alanna Smith scored 15 points and Kayla McBride added 11.

Minnesota won despite Napheesa Collier making a season-low three field goals. The WNBA Defensive Player of the Year finished with nine points, 12 rebounds, five assists and four blocks.

"We felt like we gave one up on our home court. We don't want to be that team," McBride said. "I thought we had a great game. Yeah, (Collier) struggled from the floor, but everything she does for us is so important. ... Just gritty, man."

For the Sun, who will host Game 3 on Friday in Uncasville, Alyssa Thomas had 18 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists. DeWanna Bonner added 17 points, six rebounds and five steals, while Marina Mabrey had 15 points and DiJonai Carrington scored 14.

Connecticut had won seven straight games in Minnesota before this defeat.

"Minnesota came out and they were the aggressor tonight. They wouldn't let us get into our offense; they responded to every run that we had," Sun coach Stephanie White said. "It's a series for a reason. We got to go home and regroup and get ready for Friday."

The Sun led by a point early in the second quarter when Mabrey opened the frame with a 23-foot 3-pointer. But after the Lynx snatched the lead back thanks to an 8-2 run, Connecticut never tied the score again.

Minnesota's lead grew to 15, its largest advantage of the day, midway through the fourth quarter.

## Two-time defending WNBA champs on brink of elimination

Scooby Axson

USA TODAY

NEW YORK – Rinse. Repeat – the New York Liberty are one victory away from redemption and a return trip to the WNBA Finals.

Sabrina Ionescu scored 24 points, including the go-ahead jumper with 1:15 left, leading four players in double figures as the Liberty pushed the Las Vegas Aces to the brink of elimination, taking a commanding 2-0 lead with an 88-84 victory in the best-of-five WNBA semifinals on Tuesday.

Game 3 is Friday night in Las Vegas. The Liberty used a 15-4 second-quarter run and the same formula that earned them a 10-point victory in Game 1. They perfected it on Tuesday.

After New York built a 10-point third-quarter lead, the Aces began to chip away slowly and finally tied the score at 81 when Alysha Clark's corner 3 hit nothing but nylon with 1:31 remaining. But Ionescu nailed the game-winning basket seconds later.

The Aces had a chance to tie the score, but the ball went out on the sideline with 10 seconds left. Initially ruled Aces ball, a Liberty challenge turned the ball over to them, leading Ionescu to hit two free throws to seal the win.

Still smarting from a four-game defeat in last year's Finals, a familiar scenario played out in the Liberty's fifth straight win over their rivals this season. Clutch shooting by Ionescu, untimely turnovers for Las Vegas, and defensive breakdowns that led to easy buckets allowed another sold-out Barclays Center crowd – with plenty of celebrities in the stands – to get into the game.

"Being up 2-0 is great," said Ionescu, who added nine rebounds, five assists and made at least three 3-pointers in her sixth straight game. "We haven't won anything. We did what we were supposed to. This isn't what we came



Sabrina Ionescu led the Liberty with 24 points in their Game 2 victory.

WENDELL CRUZ/IMAGN IMAGES

to do. We are a hungry group. We battled, they came out swinging. We got big stops when we needed to.

"We don't take them lightly, and we grinded out a good win."

Brenna Stewart, who scored 34 points in Game 1, scored 15 points, with eight assists and seven rebounds. Jonquel Jones had 14 points, and Courtney Vandersloot scored 12 points off the bench.

The Aces shot out to an eight-point first-quarter lead, with Clark scoring eight of the team's first 10 points. But there were signs of trouble brewing,

starting when guard Kelsey Plum picked up her second foul just two minutes into the game. Plum scored only six points after leading the Aces in scoring with 24 in Game 1.

Three minutes into the second quarter, Liberty forward Kayla Thornton drove right around Plum for an easy layup. Aces head coach Becky Hammon immediately called timeout and gave her team an animated tongue-lashing on the bench.

Hammon left plenty of additional scorn for her players (and the officials) as the Aces allowed New York to shoot 55% en route to a 46-40 deficit, capped by two long 3-pointers from Ionescu. There were nine lead changes in the first half.

The Aces had no answer for New York's inside game, allowing 44 points in the post, and their 13 turnovers led to 22 Liberty points.

League MVP A'ja Wilson had 24 points, seven rebounds and four assists for Las Vegas, which had five players in double figures. Jackie Young scored 17, Chelsea Gray added 14, and Tiffany Hayes had 10 off the bench.

The Aces have a tough hill to climb. There is no precedent for a WNBA team overcoming a 2-0 deficit in any best-of-five postseason series. If they can win both games at home, they will become only the second team to even force a Game 5.

"We have neither lost or won a championship. Nothing has been won tonight," Hammon said after the game, per ESPN's Alexa Philippou.

"Let there be no doubt, we're in for a war," Hammon added.

The availability of Aces starting center Kiah Stokes is also unknown after she left in the third quarter with a concussion sustained while trying to chase down a loose ball. She stayed down on the court for a few minutes and did not return after being helped to the locker room.



## NFL MVP RANKINGS

## Unlikely veteran and rookie QBs now 1-2

Safid Deen  
USA TODAY

The NFL MVP race is heating up after the first month of the season, and there's at least two standout candidates at the top of our rankings.

Detroit Lions quarterback Jared Goff had an MVP performance in Week 4, completing all 18 of his passes to fuel six touchdown drives in a 42-29 win over the Seattle Seahawks.

But it wasn't enough to crack our MVP list just yet.

The two starting quarterbacks at the top of our list have led their teams to surprising starts and even outplayed big-name candidates.

They hold the top spots in our MVP rankings after Week 4:

**5. Baltimore Ravens  
QB Lamar Jackson, stock up**

Jackson scored a touchdown and threw for two more in the 35-10 win over the Buffalo Bills. He was 13 of 18 for 156 yards and rushed for 54 yards on "Sunday Night Football," so not earth-shattering by any means. His running back Derrick Henry, who had 199 rushing yards in the win, certainly set the pace.

It may not be the stats we're used to seeing from the reigning, two-time MVP, but leading the Ravens to a blow-out win over the Bills on prime time is the perfect recipe to get noticed. It also sets the stage to see if Jackson can stay in the MVP discussion this season.

**4. Kansas City Chiefs  
QB Patrick Mahomes, stock even**

Mahomes has relied on his defense tremendously during the first month of the season, including Sunday's 17-10 win over the Los Angeles Chargers, who were held scoreless after the first quarter.

Mahomes executed two touchdown drives to secure the win, including a 54-yard score to rookie Xavier Worthy. He also reignited his connection with star tight end Travis Kelce, who had seven catches for 89 yards.

But the right knee injury to leading receiver Rashee Rice will make a difference in how much Mahomes must carry the offense if the Chiefs plan to three-peat this season.

**3. Buffalo Bills QB Josh Allen,  
stock down**

Allen was our top pick for MVP in Week 3, after he torched the Arizona Cardinals, Miami Dolphins and Jacksonville Jaguars for 14 touchdowns. But the Bills could only muster one touchdown drive against the Baltimore Ravens last weekend. Allen was 16 of 29 for



Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels runs upfield past Cardinals linebacker Zaven Collins on Sunday at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona.

PATRICK BREEN/IMAGN IMAGES

180 yards and got roughed up in the process after a strip sack in Baltimore.

More important, the Bills' playmakers need to continue maturing and show their reliability if Buffalo is going to make a deep playoff run. Allen and the Bills must rebound quickly with a matchup on the road against C.J. Stroud and the Houston Texans in Week 5.

**2. Washington Commanders  
QB Jayden Daniels, stock up**

Daniels' stock saw the highest rise on this list and, with a look at his stats, you can argue he's even deserving of the top spot. But we'll keep him at No. 2 for the time being.

The Commanders became the first team since at least 2000 to score on every drive during the past two games outside of kneel downs.

Daniels has led the Commanders on more scoring drives (23) than he's thrown incompletions (19). He's scored more touchdowns than the likes of Ja'Marr Chase, Breece Hall, Tyreek Hill and CeeDee Lamb in the first month of the season.

Daniels leads the league with an 82.1 completion percentage, is fifth with a 73.4 QBR and has scored four of the team's league-leading 10 rushing touchdowns.

The Commanders are third in the

NFL with 30.3 points per game, and Daniels is showing no signs of slowing down.

**1. Minnesota Vikings  
QB Sam Darnold, stock up**

Sam Darnold is the NFL's leader with 11 touchdown passes, a 118.9 passer rating and a 4-0 record as the Vikings new starter.

After victories over preseason Super Bowl contenders including the San Francisco 49ers and Texans, Darnold boosted his early MVP case again by leading the Vikings to a crucial NFC North win over the Green Bay Packers last weekend.

Darnold led four touchdown drives in the first half, and the vaunted Vikings defense withstood a 22-point fourth quarter by the Packers to secure the win.

The Vikings are second behind the Bills and New Orleans Saints with 14 total touchdowns scored this season thanks to Darnold, who could be a lock for at least NFL Comeback Player of the Year if he doesn't wind up with the MVP award this season.

It's an incredible turnaround for Darnold, the No. 3 pick in the 2018 draft who was casted away by the New York Jets, made stops with the Carolina Panthers and 49ers, before finding a home in Minnesota this season.

NFC South duo  
battle for first  
on TNF stageSafid Deen  
USA TODAY

"Thursday Night Football" features an NFC South rivalry with aspiring playoff teams in Week 5.

Kirk Cousins and the new-look Atlanta Falcons will host Baker Mayfield and the first-place Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta at 8:15 p.m. EDT on Amazon Prime Video.

Both teams enter the game after victories Sunday: The Falcons beat the New Orleans Saints in a 26-24 thriller, while the Buccaneers dominated the Philadelphia Eagles at home 33-16.

The NFL schedule makers have been kind to Atlanta (2-2), who will host their third consecutive home game and fourth overall. But the Falcons needed kicker Younghoe Koo to make a career-best 58-yard field goal to secure the Week 4 win and avoid a 0-3 start at home.

Meanwhile, Mayfield rebounded from Tampa Bay's bad loss to the Denver Broncos with 347 yards passing and three touchdowns (two passing, one rushing) to help the Buccaneers start 3-1 this season under third-year coach Todd Bowles.

Mayfield is second in the NFL with eight touchdown passes and sixth with 984 yards passing despite being one of the most sacked quarterbacks (15) through four games. Mayfield also has two rushing touchdowns this season and continues to be a reliable starter for the Buccaneers, who lost in the second round of the playoffs last year to the Detroit Lions.

Cousins hasn't been as productive with four touchdown passes, four interceptions and 216.0 yards per game (17th in NFL) as he progresses after an Achilles injury last season.

The veteran signed a four-year, \$180 million deal in the offseason before the Falcons selected Michael Penix Jr. with the eighth overall pick in the draft.

While star receivers Mike Evans and Chris Godwin are doing their part with three touchdown catches each, Buccaneers rookie running back Bucky Irving has been more reliable on the ground than incumbent starter Rachaad White to start the season.

Irving has six fewer carries (35 vs. 41) but has gained 203 yards rushing while White has 115 yards and no touchdowns.

White, however, has more total yards (248 versus 237) from catching 14 passes for 133 yards out of the backfield, showing the Buccaneers might just have a dynamic 1-2 punch on their hands instead of a running back controversy.

## Even in second year, Freeze under pressure to win now



**Matt Hayes**  
Columnist  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The best part about it, the absolute best part about this small town, cut-throat bubble of a world, is Auburn really is The Loveliest Village on the Plains.

But slithering beneath that bucolic setting of genuine community and cooperation, that Norman Rockwell painting of Americana, lies the beast of envy.

Always feeding, never satiated. "You can feel it every single day," former Auburn football coach Terry Bowden once told me.

Hugh Freeze is feeling it now. Just like Bryan Harsin and Gus Malzahn and Gene Chizik and Tommy Tuberville and, do I really need to continue?

There's a reason envy is one of the seven deadly sins.

Whatever Alabama can do, we can and should do better. Money is no object, nor are self-humiliation and degradation.

Wasn't that long ago that Auburn ran off Harsin because tailback Tank Bigsby forgot to stay inbounds to help run out the clock on an upset of You Know Who. In Harsin's first year.

Not long after that self-inflicted and painful loss, Harsin suddenly wasn't "a fit" – and vicious rumors about off-field improprieties sprung up on the cesspool of Twitter months before Year 2 began.

Wasn't that long ago that Auburn ran off the one guy who beat Alabama coach Nick Saban more than any other. Now Malzahn is living the good life in Florida as coach at UCF, or as he says, "living where you vacation."

Chizik was fired two years after winning a national championship.



Hugh Freeze, who has a .632 winning percentage in his 12th year as a college head coach, is at .444 at Auburn with an 8-10 record. JOHN REED/IMAGN IMAGES

Tuberville was fired a year after beating Alabama – the source of Auburn's never-ending and destructive envy – in six consecutive games.

So if you think Auburn won't pull the trigger on Freeze after two seasons – or in the middle of Year 2 – you obviously haven't been following along.

If you think power brokers at Auburn (see: deep-pocket boosters who have run the joint for decades) care about public opinion, or the scorn that comes with so many knee-jerk decisions, you haven't been following along.

If you think buyout money is an obstacle, let me walk you through a field of green prettier than farmland on the outskirts of the Loveliest Village.

Auburn paid Tuberville \$5.08 million to not coach after the 2008 season.

Auburn paid Chizik \$7.5 million to not coach after the 2012 season.

Auburn paid Malzahn \$21.45 million

to not coach after the 2020 season.

Auburn then paid Bryan Harsin \$22.25 million to not coach after the 2022 season.

If you think Auburn is going to balk at another \$21.125 million to make Freeze go away – according to USA TODAY coaching contract guru Steve Berkowitz – you obviously haven't been following along.

It's Auburn, where anything that can happen more than likely will.

It really isn't so much that Freeze has botched the quarterback position (he has), or that he hasn't been the offensive revelation Auburn expected (he hasn't). Or that he blamed players, which frankly, I have no problem with – especially in this age of player earning and free movement.

It's that once fat-cat boosters believe Alabama is out of reach for (choose your coach), it's time for change. It

doesn't matter what it costs.

After six wins in Year 1 under Freeze included the unspeakable sin of fourth-and-31 against Alabama, Year 2 began with the joyous departure of Nick Saban from Alabama.

*Ding, dong, the witch is dead!*

Then the Auburn quarterbacks couldn't stop throwing the ball to the other team. The Tigers lost to Cal after Payton Thorne threw four interceptions, lost to Arkansas after Thorne and Hank Brown threw four more and lost to Oklahoma last weekend after Thorne threw a pick-six with Auburn leading by three with four minutes remaining.

All three games, all nine interceptions, played out in the Loveliest Village, in front of a loyal, passionate fan base at Jordan-Hare Stadium that begrudgingly accepts the fat-cat booster mechanisms in place because, son of a gun, they just want to beat *Aladamnbama*.

In that sense, Auburn is not unlike every other major college football program. We don't want to know what's in the tailgate casserole, we just know what it tastes like when everything is clicking.

They also see the hard, cold truth of reality when Alabama, four games into the tenure of new coach Kalen DeBoer, is again playing like the best team in college football.

It's a carousel of self-destruction at Auburn that never stops, the only constant an uncomfortable phone call every few years to super-agent Jimmy Sexton – who, at this point, should be on retainer.

The beast of envy is alive and well in the Loveliest Village on the Plains.

Always feeding, never satiated.

*Matt Hayes is the senior national college football writer for USA TODAY Sports Network. Follow Hayes on X @MattHayesCFB.*



# Back in playoffs after 2023 flop, Padres feel they're 'a real team now'



**Bob Nightengale**  
Columnist  
USA TODAY

PHOENIX — The San Diego Padres look around, make sure no one's eavesdropping, and talk in hushed tones.

They don't mention names of the individual players, they don't belittle their former manager, and they stop themselves before fully expressing their deepest sentiments.

Instead, they drop subtle hints, roll their eyes and let you interpret their feelings any way you want.

They say it still hurts to talk about — but it's also cathartic, reminding them how far they've come.

A year ago they were easily baseball's most underachieving team.

This year the Padres might be MLB's most complete team with an honest-to-goodness chance to win their first World Series championship.

"There was a lot of selfishness and a lot of division amongst the group last year," Padres starter Joe Musgrove confided to USA TODAY Sports last weekend. "I don't think you can point a finger at one specific person, but we didn't really play to the demands of the game. There's plenty of times we had a simple job to do — maybe not simple because nothing is simple at this level — but a very clear job that big league hitters should be able to do. We just didn't have the approach. Nobody was happy doing the little things, so we weren't even looking to do that."

The Padres, with the third-largest payroll in baseball and loaded with more stars than anyone, were an epic failure, going 82-80 and missing the playoffs in 2023.

After more than \$100 million in losses and owner Peter Seidler passing away in November, the ownership group decided to shed about \$90 million from the player payroll.

General manager A.J. Preller had no choice but to trade one of the game's most talented players in outfielder Juan Soto. The Padres let 2023 National League Cy Young pitcher Blake Snell and All-Star closer Josh Hader walk away in free agency. They didn't have enough money to bring back veterans Seth Lugo, Michael Wacha and Nick Martinez.

"I don't think any of us knew quite what to expect," outfielder Fernando Tatis Jr. said. "I know the expectations weren't as high, but we still had talent here."

The Padres have become player agents' worst nightmare. They are winning after cutting their payroll by nearly 40%, with owners taking notice and reminding their GMs of the Padres' success.

"I hear that a lot," Preller said. "I'm not sure we're making too many people happy. It's just something we had to do."

They entered the postseason as the NL's top wild-card team (93-69 believing they have the team to win the first World Series title in the franchise's 56-year history. The Padres took a first step Tuesday, defeated Atlanta 4-0 in the opener of their best-of-three NL series. San Diego went for the clincher Wednesday at home; a deciding third game, if necessary, would be Thursday (7 p.m. EDT, ESPN), also in San Diego.

"We're learning from experiences, sharing experiences with each other," Musgrove said. "It's just a really fun group, man. A lot of the fun is because of the confidence we have. There's not really any holes in our game. We feel like we have all the tools to beat anybody."

This was the kind of success the Padres envisioned a year ago. They had an abundance of riches, entering the season widely acclaimed as perhaps the team to beat.

They instead became an embarrassment, a team that didn't spend a day over .500 from May 10 until the last weekend of the season, going 9-23 in one-run games and 2-12 in extra-inning games.

It wasn't a case of just bad luck. It was rotten chemistry. There was more back-stabbing, finger-pointing and name-calling than a presidential debate. There were whispers of the friction between stars Manny Machado and Soto, and the different clubhouse factions, coupled with the open hostilities between Preller and manager Bob Melvin.

"To me, personally, (Soto) was definitely never the problem," shortstop Xander Bogaerts said. "We just never played up to the abilities that we had. I don't want to point fingers on what the problem was, honestly. Some people



Padres outfielder Fernando Tatis Jr., right, hit a two-run homer against the Braves on Tuesday. DENIS POROY/IMAGN IMAGES

might want to point out specific people, but that wasn't the case.

"We just didn't play the way we know we could, and this year we are. A year can make a big difference. Like in Boston, we won the World Series in 2013. The next year we were in last place. This stuff that happens in baseball."

Still, it was unfathomable how ordinary they were.

"Guys were disappointed and frustrated, two words that were very, very high up on our daily list," Bogaerts said. "Not being able to win in extra innings, or comeback wins. When we needed a win, we couldn't. I mean, it was tough. Real tough."

## 'Our offense is a machine'

This team, with 19 new players from a year ago, is a living, breathing example of playing the game the way it's supposed to be played. The Padres put the ball in play more than any other team. They strike out less than any other team. They lead the major leagues in extra bases taken on singles and doubles.

Instead of swinging for the fences and worrying about their personal stats, they routinely move runners over, laying down the second-most bunts in the league.

This selflessness is reflected in the difference in comeback victories, going 10-2 in extra innings and 22-19 in one-run games this season. A year ago they were an MLB-worst 25-42 in games decided by two or fewer runs. This year they were an MLB-best 40-25.

"Guys are willing to do what it takes and hit the ball the other way," Musgrove said. "We've got plenty of guys who can slug here, but you'll see those same guys who can slug, hitting the ball the other way and moving runners over. It may not be pretty for you, but that's your job. So those things get celebrated. Last year it didn't seem like anybody was happy about getting the job done because it didn't provide them a lot of praise."

"Not to say it was all on the hitting side, because there was plenty of that (stuff) on the pitching side, too. But that's the biggest difference I've noticed. Now our offense is a machine, man."

A year ago this was a team that would get down and have no chance of coming back. They were 8-33 in games they lost a lead last year, compared to 31-22 this year. They won 33 games in which they were tied or trailed in the eighth inning or later, compared to 18 victories a year ago.

The Padres led all of baseball with a .263 batting average. They also swing and miss less than any team in baseball, with the fewest strikeouts.

"We're playing the game the right way," Tatis said. "We're stringing hits together now instead of everybody going up there trying to hit a 450-foot homer. We know we have the lineup that we can put together four, five six hits in a row, and can create havoc on the bases."

Said infielder Jake Cronenworth: "We had more talent a year ago, but we're a better team this year. We don't try to do too much. We just keep the line moving, trusting each other."

Rivals have raved all season about the Padres' new style of baseball, rarely beating themselves and doing the little things necessary to win.

"They're very, very connected and understand what their roles are," Arizona Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "They're putting bunts down to get guys in scoring position. They're winning a lot of close games. And that tells me they're prepared."

The biggest reason for the turnaround, the Padres players say, is new manager Mike Shildt. He carries around a manual from legendary St. Louis Cardinals player development instructor George Kissell and has preached fundamentals and attention to detail since he was hired in November.

"Shildt runs as tight a ship as I've been around," Musgrove said. "But it's fun, though. I don't mean to say that in like a strict, and a tight-ass kind of way. He just runs a really good team."

Shildt, 56, who managed the Cardinals for four years, credits his players and lauds the efforts of Preller, who traded away 15 minor leaguers to acquire the reinforcements they needed. They grabbed Chicago White Sox ace Dylan Cease just before their season opener in South Korea, traded for three-time batting champion Luis Arraez on May 4, and then cleaned up at the trade deadline by grabbing three relievers in Tanner Scott, Jason Adam and Bryan Hoeing.

"It's amazing what our GM did," Tatis said. "Everything we needed, we got. Look at the guys who helped us in the Juan Soto trade, too."

The Padres acquired Soto at the trade deadline in 2022 with dreams of grandeur, but he could never lead them to where they wanted to go. When they decided to move him during the winter to the New York Yankees, the Padres were given a five-player package of pitcher Michael King, prospects Drew Thorpe, Jhonny Brito and Randy Vasquez and veteran catcher Kyle Higashioka.

King, made a full-time starter for the first time in his career, became an instrumental member of the rotation, going 3-9 with a 2.95 ERA, striking out 201 in a career-high 173 ⅓ innings. Higashioka had a career-high 17 homers and told everyone on the bench last Saturday night in the ninth inning that he'd hit the game-winning homer. He delivered with a two-run shot — "Hey, who wants to play extra innings this time of year?"

There was Cease, who could be in the top three in NL Cy Young voting, going 14-11 with a 3.47 ERA, striking out 224 batters in 189 ⅓ innings.

Arraez, who had a four-hit game in his debut with the Padres, never stopped hitting after his arrival, and won his third consecutive batting title with three different teams, hitting .314.

Veteran Jurickson Profar, 31, who signed a one-year, \$1 million contract after the start of spring training in February, was supposed to be an insurance policy. He instead became the team's MVP in the first half and finished the season hitting .280 with a career-high 24 homers and 85 RBIs.

And maybe the biggest surprise of all was the emergence of rookie sensation Jackson Merrill. Merrill, who two years ago was playing 15-game seasons in high school in Baltimore, hit .294 with 24 homers, 90 RBIs and a .826 OPS.

"Nothing against Paul Skenes," Shildt said, "but we're not here without Jackson. He's meant everything to us. He was just a joy to watch."

Now, here they are, ready to embark on a deep October run, and perhaps even reunite with the Yankees for a rematch of the 1998 World Series.

"We obviously have a smaller payroll than we did last year," Preller said, "but we still have star power. We're just very well balanced. The pitching last month has been exceptional. And we got guys in the bullpen that can shut down a game every night."

He also has a manager he gets along with.

"Mike and his group have preached a consistent message and getting guys to play together," Preller said. "That's why this team has played well. We're a really smart baseball IQ group, and I think that's been a focus from Day 1. Mike wanted to bring that out."

"Playing solid, fundamental baseball may be boring, but, hey, it helps you win games."

The style certainly has earned the affection of Padres fans. Boring or not, the Padres drew a franchise-record 3.314 million fans, selling out 54 times.

"I've always been on the East Coast," King said, "so I certainly wasn't expecting anything like this. I was coming to a 'small market' and thought they might have some nice little crowds, but, oh, man. You go out to play against a bad opponent on a random Tuesday, and the place is sold out. So, I can't wait to see what it's going to be like in the playoffs."

Considering the way the Padres have been playing since July 20, going 43-19 with a 19-8 home record in the second half, Petco Park could be busy for another month.

"These guys are playing to win, they're playing it right," Shildt said, "and they're having fun."

The combination may seem simple, but as the Padres discovered last year, it can get awfully complicated.

"We're a real team now," Musgrove said. "Everybody's bought in. We have that togetherness. We have that energy and momentum now. That can take you a long way."

Seidler, in the final year of his life, used to love to say, "One year soon, the baseball gods will smile on the San Diego Padres and we will have a parade."

"The celebration will be both on land and on sea," Seidler said 10 months ago, "and also in the heavens above."



# Alabama rises to top seed in College Football Playoff bracket projection

Paul Myerberg  
USA TODAY

Georgia falls out of the top spot in the USA TODAY Sports College Football Playoff bracket projection but stays inside the 12-team field after dropping the thriller at Alabama.

The win is enough to vault the Crimson Tide to No. 1, given the strong probability the playoff selection committee puts the eventual SEC champion as the highest-ranked seed.

Coming out of a 28-0 hole to take the lead late in the fourth quarter Saturday night makes this a strong loss for the Bulldogs. Looking down the line, one-loss Georgia would reach the SEC championship game with a chance to secure a top-four seed; in that case, the Bulldogs would be in the field regardless of what happens in a possible rematch with the Tide.

The odds of a playoff berth get fuzzi-er when you add another loss, though. That Alabama's offense was able to find flaws against an unfailingly elite defense – the Tide gained 547 yards after the Bulldogs had allowed 606 yards through three games – could spell real trouble for Georgia in three enormous SEC matchups against No. 1 Texas, No. 4 Tennessee and No. 12 Ole Miss.

While currently in the bracket, the Bulldogs have to button things up defensively and get quarterback Carson Beck back on track to avoid a second playoff miss in two years. The first four teams out of the field include two from the SEC in Missouri and Ole Miss along with Notre Dame and Michigan.

## Projecting the 12-team field

### Campus sites (Dec. 20 or 21)

- 5-Texas vs. 12-UNLV
  - 8-Penn State vs. 9-Clemson
  - 10-Tennessee vs. 7-Georgia
  - 11-Iowa State vs. 6-Oregon
- ### Quarterfinals
- Fiesta Bowl, Dec. 31
  - 5-12 winner vs. 4-Kansas State
  - Sugar Bowl, Jan. 1
  - 8-9 winner vs. 1-Alabama
  - Rose Bowl, Jan. 1
  - 10-7 winner vs. 2-Ohio State
  - Peach Bowl, Jan. 1
  - 11-6 winner vs. 3-Miami (Fla.)
- ### Semifinals
- Orange Bowl, Jan. 9
  - Fiesta and Sugar winners
  - Cotton Bowl, Jan. 10
  - Rose and Peach winners
- ### Championship game, Jan. 20
- Orange and Cotton winners

There are obvious front-runners in three of the Power Four leagues as the regular season reaches October. Alabama is atop the SEC. Ohio State leads the Big Ten. Miami stays in front in the



Alabama quarterback Jalen Milroe outruns Georgia defensive back Joenel Aguero during the first quarter Saturday at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

WILL MCLELLAND/IMAGN IMAGES

ACC after surviving a serious scare against Virginia Tech.

But the Big 12 remains very hard to predict. Kansas State was in the lead before losing at BYU. Utah took over before Saturday's loss to Arizona. The Utes really need quarterback Cam Rising to get back into the starting lineup.

Another team that has quietly surged up the rankings is Iowa State. The Cyclones have a very strong non-conference win at Iowa but have yet to dig into the meat of Big 12 play. In fact, they may stay off the radar until later in the year, with games against the Utes and Kansas State to end the regular season.

For now, Kansas State's convincing win against Oklahoma State moves the Wildcats back into the top spot while Iowa State replaces Utah as an at-large team.

Lurking outside the field are plenty of contenders from power leagues: Southern Cal, Missouri, Michigan, LSU, Notre Dame and even Ole Miss after last week's loss to Kentucky. Missouri is the unbeaten among this group but there are enough games in front of all of them to win their way into the field.

## Four teams to watch

### SMU

Now 4-1 after a blowout of Florida State, SMU is exceeding early expectations as new members of the ACC. A huge, must-win matchup at Louisville comes this Saturday. A victory there

would put the Mustangs on the path to the conference title game, especially given that they miss Miami and Clemson during the regular season.

### Indiana

Chew on this: Indiana is 5-0 for the first time since the program last won the Big Ten and reached the Rose Bowl in 1967. With Northwestern, Nebraska, Washington and Michigan State ahead, the Hoosiers are in position to climb the playoff rankings before playing Michigan and Ohio State in early November.

### Boise State

UNLV earned the top spot in the Group of Five after obliterating Fresno State with a new quarterback, Haje-Malik Williams, in place of Matthew Sluka. But Boise State can't be ignored after a 45-17 win against previously unbeaten Washington State. The Broncos go to UNLV on Oct. 25 in what may be the biggest game of the regular season in the Group of Five.

### Army and Navy

Both service academies are 4-0 for the first time since 1945, with each already posting three wins in American Athletic play to rank atop the early conference standings. Navy has been particularly good on offense, ranking fifth nationally in yards per play, fifth in rushing yards per game and ninth in scoring. Army has won every game by at least 17 points.

## WEEK 6 TV GAMES

Times p.m. Eastern Daylight and subject to change; viewing outlet info via NCAA.com

### Thursday

Texas State at Troy | 7 | ESPN  
Sam Houston at UTEP | 9 | CBSN

### Friday

New Hampshire at Harvard | 7 | ESPN+  
Jacksonville State at Kennesaw State | 7 | CBSN  
Houston at TCU | 7:30 | ESPN  
Michigan State at Oregon | 9 | Fox  
Syracuse at UNLV | 9 | FS1

### Saturday

UCLA at Penn State | Noon | Fox  
Missouri at Texas A&M | Noon | ABC/ESPN+  
SMU at Louisville | Noon | ESPN  
Purdue at Wisconsin | Noon | BTN  
UMass at Northern Illinois | Noon | CBSN  
Boston College at Virginia | Noon | ACC Network  
Pitt at North Carolina | Noon | ESPN 2  
Wake Forest at North Carolina State | Noon | The CW Network  
Navy at Air Force | Noon | CBS  
Army at Tulsa | Noon | ESPN  
Bryant at Brown | Noon | ESPN+  
Princeton at Columbia | Noon | ESPN+  
Central Connecticut at Yale | Noon | ESPN+  
Tulane at UAB | 1 | ESPN+  
Delaware at Monmouth | 1 | FloSports  
UAlbany at Cornell | 1 | ESPN+  
Central Connecticut at Yale | 1 | ESPN+  
Drake at Valparaiso | 1 | ESPN+  
Marist at Davidson | 1 | ESPN+  
Morehead State at Butler | 1 | FloSports  
Stetson at St. Thomas (Minn.) | 1  
Penn at Dartmouth | 1 | ESPN+  
St. Francis (Pa.) at Delaware State | 1 | ESPN+  
Lincoln (Pa.) at Morgan State | 1 | ESPN+  
Norfolk State at Sacred Heart | 1 | ESPN+  
Long Island at Duquesne | 1 | TBD  
Lafayette at Fordham | 1 | ESPN+  
Holy Cross at Colgate | 1 | ESPN+  
East Carolina at Charlotte | 1 | ESPN  
Buffalo State at Mercyhurst | 1 | NEC Front Row  
Western Michigan at Ball State | 2:00 | ESPN+  
Rhode Island at Hampton | 2 | FloSports  
North Carolina A&T at Richmond | 2 | FloSports  
Austin Peay at West Georgia | 2 | ESPN+  
Tennessee State at Lindenwood | 2 | ESPN+  
Indiana State at Youngstown State | 2 | ESPN+  
Furman at The Citadel | 2 | ESPN+  
Wofford at Western Carolina | 2:30 | ESPN+  
South Carolina State at Tennessee Tech | 2:30 | ESPN+  
Southeast Missouri State at Eastern Illinois | 3 | ESPN+  
Gardner-Webb at UT Martin | 3 | ESPN+  
Weber State at Montana | 3 | ESPN+  
South Dakota at Murray State | 3 | ESPN+  
Florida A&M at Alabama State | 3 | ESPN+  
Arkansas-Pine Bluff at Alcorn State | 3 | HBCU GO  
VMI at Samford | 3 | ESPN+  
Virginia Lynchburg at Texas Southern | 3 | SWAC Digital Network  
Auburn at Georgia | 3:30 | ABC/ESPN+  
Iowa at Ohio State | 3:30 | CBS  
Ole Miss at South Carolina | 3:30 | ESPN  
Indiana at Northwestern | 3:30 | BTN  
Temple at UConn | 3:30 | CBSN  
Virginia Tech at Stanford | 3:30 | ACC Network  
Appalachian State at Marshall | 3:30 | ESPN+  
Miami (Ohio) at Toledo | 3:30 | ESPN+  
Bowling Green at Akron | 3:30 | ESPN+  
East Carolina at Charlotte | 3:30 | ESPN  
Villanova at Stony Brook | 3:30 | FloSports  
Chattanooga at East Tennessee State | 3:30 | ESPN+  
North Dakota at North Dakota State | 3:30 | ESPN+  
Rutgers at Nebraska | 4 | FS1  
West Virginia at Oklahoma State | 4 | ESPN 2  
North Carolina Central at Campbell | 4 | FloSports  
Central Arkansas at Abilene Christian | 4 | ESPN+  
Western Illinois at Charleston Southern | 4 | ESPN+  
Northern Colorado at Montana State | 4 | ESPN+  
UC Davis at Portland State | 4 | ESPN+  
Presbyterian at San Diego | 4 | ESPN+  
Alabama at Vanderbilt | 4:15 | SEC Network  
Utah Tech at North Alabama | 5 | ESPN+  
Northern Arizona at Idaho | 5 | ESPN+  
South Dakota State at Northern Iowa | 5 | ESPN+  
Alabama A&M at Jackson State | 5 | ESPN+  
William & Mary at Towson | 6 | FloSports  
Colorado State at Oregon State | 6:30 | The CW Network  
Clemson at Florida State | 7 | ESPN  
Utah State at Boise State | 7 | Fox  
Old Dominion at Coastal Carolina | 7 | ESPN+  
South Alabama at Arkansas State | 7 | ESPN+  
James Madison at UL Monroe | 7 | ESPN+  
Louisiana at Southern Miss | 7 | ESPN+  
McNeese at Houston Christian | 7 | ESPN+  
Texas A&M-Commerce at SE Louisiana | 7 | ESPN+  
Illinois State at Southern Illinois | 7 | ESPN+  
Prairie View A&M at Incarnate Word | 7 | ESPN+  
Tennessee at Arkansas | 7:30 | ABC  
Michigan at Washington | 7:30 | NBC  
Southern Cal at Minnesota | 7:30 | BTN  
Baylor at Iowa State | 7:30 | Fox  
Nevada at San Jose State | 7:30 | truTV  
UCF at Florida | 7:45 | SEC Network  
Duke at Georgia Tech | 8 | ACC Network  
Kansas at Arizona State | 8 | ESPN 2  
Hawaii at San Diego State | 8 | CBSN  
Tarleton State at Southern Utah | 8 | ESPN+  
Idaho State at Cal Poly | 8 | ESPN+  
Northwestern State at Stephen F. Austin | 8 | ESPN+  
Texas Tech at Arizona | 10 | Fox  
Miami (Fla.) at Cal | 10:30 | ESPN

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### NOTICES

#### LEGAL NOTICES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: This notice has important information about the case for creditors, debtors, and trustees, including information about the meeting of creditors and deadlines.

**FINANCIAL BUSINESS AND CONSUMER SERVICES, INC.** has filed for Chapter 7 Relief under the Bankruptcy Code in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania Bankruptcy Court at CASE NO. 24-13029 on August 29, 2024.

The filing of the case imposed an automatic stay against most collection activities. This means that creditors generally may not take action to collect debts from the debtor or the debtor's property. For example, while the stay is in effect, creditors cannot sue, assert a deficiency, repossess property, or otherwise try to collect from the debtor. Creditors cannot demand repayment from debtors by mail, phone, or otherwise. Creditors who violate the stay can be required to pay actual and punitive damages and attorney's fees.

**CHRISTINE C. SHUBERT** has been appointed as the Chapter 7 Trustee. Her address is 821 Wesley Avenue, Ocean City, NJ 08226 and her email is: [christine.shubert@comcast.net](mailto:christine.shubert@comcast.net)

**PROOF OF CLAIM DEADLINE IS: December 2, 2024**

**GOVERNMENT PROOF OF CLAIM IS: February 25, 2025**

A proof of claim is a signed statement describing a creditor's claim. A proof of claim form may be obtained at [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov) or any bankruptcy clerk's office. If you do not file a proof of claim by the deadline, you might not be paid on your claim. To be paid, you must file a proof of claim even if your claim is listed in the schedules that the debtor filed.

**MEETING OF CREDITORS: October 28, 2024 at 12:00 pm.** Creditors may attend, but are not required to do so. Location: the 341 Meeting of Creditors will be conducted by Zoom. Zoom Meeting ID: 2198413740 and passcode 3206599493. If you would like to participate, please email the Trustee at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at [christine.shubert@comcast.com](mailto:christine.shubert@comcast.com). The meeting may be continued or adjourned to a later date. If so, the date will be on the court docket.

All documents filed in the case may be inspected at the bankruptcy clerk's office at the address listed below or through PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records at [www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov)). Additionally, information on this case, the 341 meeting, the Bar Date and other important case information can be found online on the Stretto Website at <https://cases.stretto.com/FB/CS> and on the website for the Court at <https://www.pasb.uscourts.gov/>. Trustee's counsel has established an email at [EB@CSINCC.com](mailto:EB@CSINCC.com) and a telephone number at 215-299-2120 to address creditor questions.

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### NOTICES

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Sourcewell, a State of Minnesota local government unit and service cooperative, is requesting proposals for Auction Services with Related Solutions to result in a contracting solution for use by its Participating Entities.

Sourcewell Participating Entities include thousands of governmental, higher education, K-12 education, nonprofit, tribal government, and other public agencies located in the United States and Canada.

A full copy of the Request for Proposals can be found on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal <https://proportal.sourcewell-mn.gov>

Only proposals submitted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal will be considered.

Proposals are due no later than **November 14, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. Central Time**, and late proposals will not be considered.

#### Request for Proposal (RFP)

Purchasing Cooperative of America (PCA) is a national public procurement cooperative working with a public agency to provide Requests for Proposals for response by Vendors who can provide the following Products/services to public sector entities:

- 1) RFP OD-414-24 Custodial Supplies, Equipment, and Related Items;
- 2) RFP OD-415-24 Prefabricated Self-Cleaning Public Restrooms;
- 3) RFP OD-416-24 LED Indoor & Outdoor Signs;
- 4) RFP OD-417-24 Transportation & Extradiation Services for Inmates;
- 5) RFP OD-418-24 Motivational Speaking and Coaching Services.

Vendors are invited to respond electronically to RFPs through the PCA website portal at [www.pcamerica.org/solicitations](http://www.pcamerica.org/solicitations).

Proposals are due by 11:00 AM CT on Tuesday, October 29, 2024. Direct inquiries to Elaine Nichols, Director, at 844-722-6374.

#### Request for Proposal (RFP)

E&I Cooperative Services, Inc. invites the submission of sealed proposals for:

**RFP#E100338-2024 for Library Furnishings, Storage Solutions, and Installation.**

Proposals are due by 1:00 PM ET on Wednesday, November 6th, 2024.

Respondents must submit their RFP response using E&I's Electronic Sourcing Solution which is accessible via <https://www.eandi.org/contract-finder/rfp-development/>.

E&I does not accept hard copy submissions or submissions through any other medium other than its Electronic Sourcing Solution.

**E&I is committed to developing mutually advantageous business relationships with minority, women, disabled, and veteran-owned businesses.**

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Sourcewell, a State of Minnesota local government unit and service cooperative, is requesting proposals for Copiers, Printers, and Multi-Function Devices with Related Supplies, Accessories, and Services to result in a procurement solution for use by its Participating Entities.

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Only proposals submitted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal will be considered.

Proposals are due no later than **November 21, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. Central Time**, and late proposals will not be considered.

#### The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS)

has posted procurement solicitations at [www.tips-usa.com](http://www.tips-usa.com) for the following categories:

- 241001 - Job Order Contracting
- 241002 - Interpreting, Translation, and Multi-Lingual Goods and Services
- 241003 - International Electrical Testing Association (NETA) Certified Electrical Testing

The proposal is due and will be opened on **November 15, 2024, at 3:00 pm local time.**

Call 866-839-8477 for problems with the website or questions.

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SCOREBOARD

ODDS

Odds available as of print deadline.

NFL

Thursday

Table with columns: FAVORITE, LINE, O/U, UNDERDOG. Row: ATLANTA 1.5, 43.5, Tampa Bay

Sunday

Table with columns: FAVORITE, LINE, O/U, UNDERDOG. Rows: MINNESOTA 2.5, 40.5, NY Jets; CHICAGO 4, 42.5, Baltimore; Buffalo 1, 47.5, JACKSONVILLE; NEW ENGLAND 3, 46, WASHINGTON; DENVER 3, 44.5, Cleveland; LAS VEGAS 3, 36.5, Las Vegas; SAN FRANCISCO 7.5, 49.5, Arizona; GREEN BAY 3.5, 48, LA RAMS; SEATTLE 6, 43.5, NY GIANTS; PITTSBURGH 2.5, 43, Dallas

Monday

Table with columns: FAVORITE, LINE, O/U, UNDERDOG. Row: KAN. CITY 5, 42.5, New Orleans

College Football

Thursday

Table with columns: FAVORITE, LINE, O/U, UNDERDOG. Rows: Texas State 14, 57.5, TROY; Sam Houston 10.5, 50, UTEP

Friday

Table with columns: FAVORITE, LINE, O/U, UNDERDOG. Rows: Jacksonville St. 14.5, 48.5, KENNESAW ST.; TCU 16.5, 49.5, Houston; UNLV 6.5, 59.5, Syracuse; OREGON 24, 52.5, Michigan St.

Saturday

Table with columns: FAVORITE, LINE, O/U, UNDERDOG. Rows: Army 11, 51, TULSA; Navy 10, 35, AIR FORCE; TEXAS A&M 2, 48.5, MISSOURI; N. ILLINOIS 17.5, 44, Umass; VIRGINIA 1, 51.5, Boston Coll.; LOUISVILLE 7, 57, smu; Pittsburgh 2.5, 64.5, N. CAROL.; NC STATE 5, 55, Wake Forest; WISCONSIN 14, 46.5, Purdue; PENN STATE 27.5, 44.5, ucla; Tulane 14.5, 55.5, UAB; W. Michigan 9.5, 56.5, BALL STATE; East Carolina 9, 47, CHARLOTTE; UCONN 16.5, 50, Temple; GEORGIA 24.5, 52.5, Auburn; Ole Miss 9.5, 53.5, S. CAROL.; MARSHALL 3, 58, Appalachn St.; Bowling Green 15, 51, AKRON; TOLEDO 6.5, 44, Miami (OH); Virginia Tech 8.5, 49.5, STANFORD; Indiana 13.5, 41.5, N'WESTERN; OHIO ST. 19.5, 44.5, Iowa; OKLA. ST. 4, 65.5, W. Virginia; NEBRASKA 7, 41, Rutgers; Alabama 23, 55.5, VANDRIBILT; OREGON ST. 10.5, 47.5, Colorado St.; BOISE STATE 26.5, 66, Utah State; CSTL CAROL. 6, 54.5, Old Dominion; South Alabama 3, 62, ARK. STATE; James Madison 16.5, 48, LA.-MONROE; Louisiana 14.5, 57.5, STHRN MISS; Clemson 14.5, 47, FLORIDA ST.; SAN JOSE ST. 7, 48.5, Nevada; Tennessee 13.5, 60, ARKANSAS; IOWA STATE 12, 46, Baylor; WASHINGTON 3, 41, Michigan; usc 8.5, 51.5, MINNESOTA; ucf 3, 62, FLORIDA; SAN DIEGO ST. 2.5, 48, Hawaii; ARIZONA ST. 3, 50, Kansas; GA. TECH 7.5, 54.5, Duke; Miami (FL) 10, 55, CAL; ARIZONA 6, 64, Texas Tech

Wednesday's Games

Table with columns: Detroit 5, Houston 2, Tigers advance; Kansas City at Baltimore; N.Y. Mets at Milwaukee; Atlanta at San Diego

Thursday's Games

Table with columns: Kansas City (Wacha 13-8) at Baltimore (TBD), 4:08 p.m., if necessary; Atlanta (Lopez 8-5) at San Diego (Cease 14-11), 7:08 p.m., if necessary; N.Y. Mets at Milwaukee (TBD), 8:38 p.m., if necessary

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

Table with columns: East, West, North, South, West. Rows: Buffalo 3, 1, 0, 750, 122, 83; N.Y. Jets 2, 2, 0, 500, 76, 62; New England 1, 3, 0, 250, 52, 87; Miami 1, 3, 0, 250, 45, 103; Pittsburgh 3, 1, 0, 750, 75, 53; Baltimore 2, 2, 0, 500, 106, 88; Cleveland 1, 3, 0, 250, 66, 87; Cincinnati 1, 3, 0, 250, 102, 104; Houston 3, 1, 0, 750, 79, 94; Indianapolis 2, 2, 0, 500, 85, 85; Tennessee 1, 3, 0, 250, 79, 90; Jacksonville 0, 4, 0, 000, 60, 109

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Table with columns: East, West, North, South, West. Rows: Washington 3, 1, 0, 750, 121, 102; Dallas 2, 2, 0, 500, 97, 104; Philadelphia 2, 2, 0, 500, 96, 96; N.Y. Giants 1, 3, 0, 250, 60, 84; Minnesota 4, 0, 0, 1000, 116, 59; Detroit 3, 1, 0, 750, 104, 82; Chicago 2, 2, 0, 500, 77, 75; Green Bay 3, 1, 0, 250, 104, 89; Tampa Bay 3, 1, 0, 750, 97, 78; Atlanta 2, 2, 0, 500, 75, 85; New Orleans 2, 2, 0, 500, 127, 70; Carolina 1, 3, 0, 250, 73, 129; Seattle 3, 1, 0, 750, 102, 85; San Francisco 2, 2, 0, 500, 103, 82; Arizona 1, 3, 0, 250, 96, 106; L.A. Rams 1, 3, 0, 250, 75, 115

Thursday's Game

Tampa Bay at Atlanta, 8:15 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Table with columns: N.Y. Jets vs Minnesota at London, 9:30 a.m.; Carolina at Chicago, 1 p.m.; Baltimore at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.; Buffalo at Houston, 1 p.m.; Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.; Miami at New England, 1 p.m.; Cleveland at Washington, 1 p.m.; Las Vegas at Denver, 4:05 p.m.; Arizona at San Francisco, 4:05 p.m.; Green Bay at L.A. Rams, 4:25 p.m.; N.Y. Giants at Seattle, 4:25 p.m.; Dallas at Pittsburgh, 8:20 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 7

New Orleans at Kansas City, 8:15 p.m.

Atlanta

Table with columns: W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: Atlanta 8, 13, 10, 34, 41, 45; D.C. United 8, 13, 10, 34, 46, 63; Nashville 8, 14, 9, 33, 31, 47; New England 9, 17, 4, 31, 33, 60; Chicago 7, 16, 9, 30, 37, 55

Western Conf.

Table with columns: W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: LA Galaxy 17, 7, 7, 58, 63, 46; Los Angeles FC 15, 8, 7, 52, 54, 41; Real Salt Lake 14, 7, 10, 52, 62, 47; Colorado 15, 11, 5, 50, 58, 53; Seattle 14, 9, 8, 50, 46, 34; Houston 13, 9, 9, 48, 43, 34; Vancouver 13, 9, 8, 47, 50, 41; Minnesota 13, 12, 6, 45, 53, 48; Portland 12, 10, 9, 45, 64, 54; FC Dallas 10, 14, 7, 37, 50, 52; Austin FC 9, 13, 9, 36, 34, 44; Saint Louis 7, 11, 13, 34, 46, 58; Sporting KC 8, 17, 3, 31, 50, 61; San Jose 5, 23, 3, 18, 37, 72

Wednesday, Oct. 2

Table with columns: Inter Miami CF at Columbus; Cincinnati vs NY City FC at Harrison; NY Red Bulls at Toronto FC; Chicago at Charlotte FC; Philadelphia at Orlando City; CF Montreal at Atlanta; New England at Houston; D.C. United at Nashville; Minnesota at Real Salt Lake; LA Galaxy at Colorado; Saint Louis at Los Angeles FC; FC Dallas at San Jose; Austin FC at Portland; Seattle at Vancouver

Saturday, Oct. 5

Table with columns: Inter Miami CF at Toronto FC, 4 p.m.; Philadelphia at Columbus, 7:30 p.m.; D.C. United at New England, 7:30 p.m.; CF Montreal at Charlotte FC, 7:30 p.m.; Minnesota at Vancouver, 7:30 p.m.; NY Red Bulls at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.; Orlando City at Cincinnati, 7:30 p.m.; Houston at Saint Louis, 8:30 p.m.; Los Angeles FC at Sporting KC, 8:30 p.m.; Seattle at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.; Austin FC at LA Galaxy, 10:30 p.m.; Real Salt Lake at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 6

Nashville vs NY City FC at Harrison, 4 p.m.; FC Dallas at Portland, 7 p.m.

NWSL

Table with columns: W, L, D, Pts, GF, GA. Rows: Orlando 16, 0, 6, 54, 40, 13; Washington 15, 5, 2, 47, 44, 25; NJ/NY Gotham 13, 4, 5, 44, 27, 17; Kansas City 12, 3, 7, 43, 47, 29; North Carolina 11, 3, 2, 35, 31, 24; Chicago 9, 11, 2, 29, 23, 31; Portland 8, 10, 4, 28, 31, 32; Bay 9, 12, 1, 28, 26, 33; Louisville 6, 9, 7, 25, 30, 30; San Diego 5, 10, 7, 22, 19, 26; Angel City 6, 12, 4, 22, 26, 37; Houston 5, 12, 5, 20, 23, 36; Utah 5, 14, 3, 18, 15, 34; Houston 4, 13, 5, 17, 15, 35

Friday's Games

Chicago at Houston, 7 p.m.; Angel City at Seattle, 7 p.m.

Saturday's Games

San Diego at North Carolina, 7 p.m.; Utah at Portland, 7 p.m.; Bay at NJ/NY Gotham, 7:30 p.m.; Kansas City at Louisville, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Washington at Orlando, 5 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

WEDNESDAY'S TRANSACTIONS

FOOTBALL

National Football League: CLEVELAND BROWNS - LB Nathaniel Watson Activated from the Practice Squad.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS - K Spencer Shadrer practice squad deletion. RB Trent Penix practice squad addition.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League: COLORADO AVALANCHE - C Matthew Stienburg Sent to minors Colorado-AHL. RW Jason Polin Sent to minors Colorado-AHL. G Trent Miner Sent to minors Colorado-AHL. RW Jason Megna Released. LW Jere Innala Sent to minors Colorado-AHL. RW Jean-Luc Foudry Sent to minors Colorado-AHL. D Sean Brehens Sent to minors Colorado-AHL. D Calle Rosen Waived. D Jack Ahan Waived. RW Matthew Phillips Waived.

MONTREAL CANADIENS - LW Lucas Condotta Sent to minors Laval-AHL. LW Luke Tuch Sent to minors Laval-AHL.

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING - LW Dylan Duke Called up from minors from Syracuse-AHL.

MLB WILD-CARD PLAYOFFS



Tigers second baseman Andy Ibanez drives in three runs with a double during the eighth inning Wednesday against the Astros. THOMAS SHEA/IMAGN IMAGES

Ibanez plays Tigers hero in stunning rally, sweep

Jeff Seidel Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

Pop the champagne. Spray some more beer. The young, surprising Detroit Tigers are celebrating once again.

They stunned the Houston Astros on Wednesday, coming from behind with a 5-2 victory at Minute Maid Park, winning the wild-card series and advancing to the best-of-five American League division series versus the No. 2 seed Cleveland Guardians.

Game 1 is Saturday in Cleveland (1:08 p.m. EDT, TBS).

It's the continuation of a two-month-long magic carpet ride for this young team that just swept the Astros, a team that had advanced to the AL championship series seven seasons in a row.

This time everything turned in the top of the eighth inning.

The score was 2-2 and the bases were loaded with two outs. Tigers manager A.J. Hinch turned to Andy Ibanez to face Josh Hader, the Astros talented closer. Ibanez came out swinging, fouling off three pitches.

Then, Ibanez ripped a triple into the left field corner, clearing the bases and giving the Tigers a stunning lead, 5-2. Sean Guenther handled the end of the seventh and eighth.

And Will Vest got the save thanks, in part, to Parker Meadows, who made a leaping catch in the ninth.

The game was full of drama and hold-your-breath moments, most happening with the Astros at the plate.

It started in the first inning when Jose Altuve crushed a ball down the third base line. But Zach McKinstry went hard to his right, scooped it up, planted and fired across the field, bouncing the ball to Spencer Torkelson, who stretched perfectly for the out.

Or the time Brant Hurter was pitching in the fourth inning, and Bregman, a free agent this winter, crushed a 92 mph sinker to center field. But Meadows tracked it down in front of the wall.

Or later in the inning, when Pena batted with two guys on and one out. But Hurter got him to hit into a tailor-made double play.

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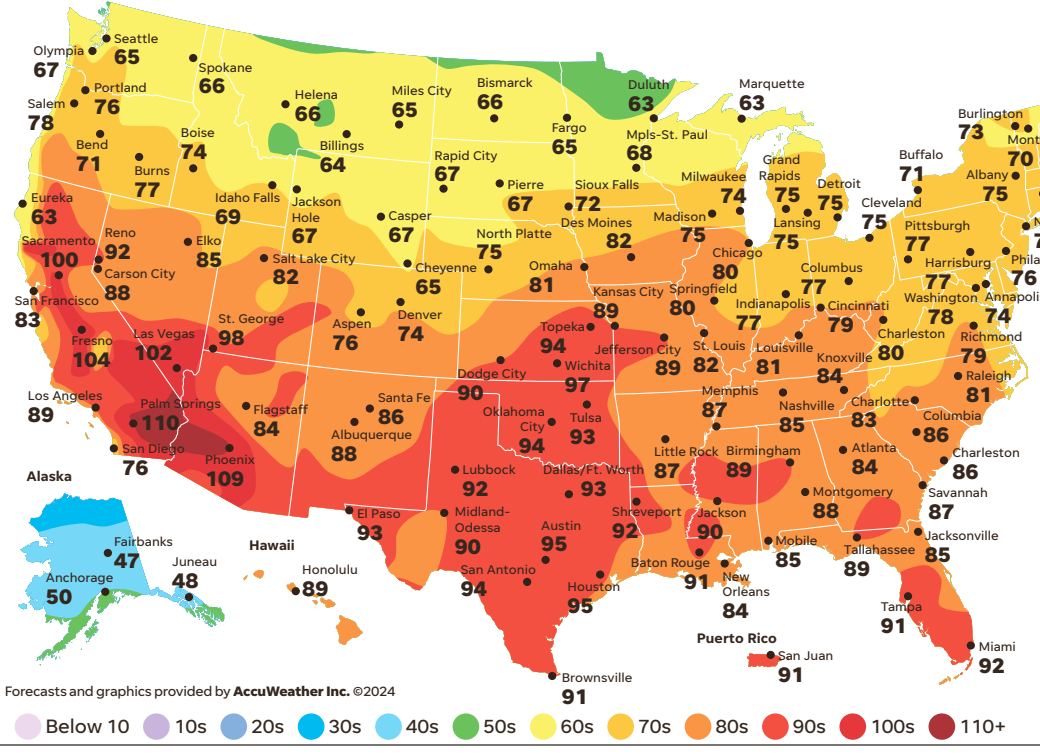
TODAY'S FORECAST

A few showers will affect the immediate Louisiana Gulf Coast today as heavier rain and steadier rain and thunderstorms linger just offshore over the Gulf of Mexico. A spotty thunderstorm can rumble through the central and eastern Florida Peninsula.

Thunderstorms can be more numerous over the western Florida Peninsula but also primarily reserved for the afternoon hours. Much of the nation will be dry, but a spotty shower can affect the central and southern Appalachians. Luckily, this rain will not be heavy or widespread enough to exacerbate any ongoing flooding.

After days of dreary weather, at least some sunshine will return to the mid-Atlantic. More record-challenging heat will bake the Desert Southwest, with some all-time October records potentially being broken.

TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES



AccuWeather

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PRECIPITATION FORECAST

T-storms Rain Snow Ice/mix



EXTREMES

Note: For contiguous 48 states through 3 p.m. ET yesterday. HOTTEST: 100° Blythe, Calif. COLDEST: 26° Gould, Colo.

TOP TRAVEL CITIES

Table with columns: City, Day, Weather, AQI. Rows: ATLANTA, BALTIMORE, BOSTON, CHARLOTTE, CHICAGO, DALLAS/FT. WORTH, DENVER, DETROIT, HONOLULU, HOUSTON, LAS VEGAS, LOS ANGELES, MIAMI, MPLS-ST. PAUL, NEW ORLEANS, NEW YORK, ORLANDO, PHILADELPHIA, PHOENIX, SALT LAKE CITY, SAN DIEGO, SAN FRANCISCO, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

U.S. CITIES

Table with columns: City, Today, Fri. Rows: Akron, Ohio 75/53F, 75/53P; Albany, N.Y. 73/54P, 76/57P; Albuquerque 88/61F, 87/61F; Allentown, Pa. 73/53F, 74/58F; Amarillo, Texas 93/53S, 88/59S; Anaheim, Calif. 88/62S, 86/61S; Anchorage, Alaska 50/42C, 49/41F; Aspen, Colo. 76/38S, 77/39S; Atlantic City, N.J. 71/58P, 72/62P; Augusta, Ga. 87/64S, 82/63P; Austin, Texas 95/65S, 96/64P; Bakersfield, Calif. 103/73S, 100/72S; Baton Rouge, La. 91/73S, 86/71F; Billings, Mont. 64/41S, 85/49S; Birmingham, Ala. 89/69P, 81/66S; Bismarck, N.D. 66/38P, 75/54W; Boise, Idaho 74/51P, 87/47S; Buffalo, N.Y. 71/54P, 73/53P; Burlington, Vt. 73/55P, 75/57P; Cedar Rapids, Iowa 80/49P, 77/50S; Charleston, S.C. 86/68S, 83/70P; Charleston, W.Va. 80/56F, 81/56S; Cheyenne, Wyo. 65/38S, 79/53S; Cincinnati 79/55S, 80/57S; Cincinnati 79/55P, 75/53P; Colorado Springs 81/45S, 77/54S; Columbia, S.C. 86/66S, 82/66P; Columbus, Ohio 77/54F, 81/54P; Corpus Christi, Texas 92/69S, 91/72F; Dayton, Ohio 78/54P, 80/54P; Daytona Beach, Fla. 88/75F, 85/75S; Des Moines, Iowa 82/52S, 77/55S; Duluth, Minn. 63/37P, 64/46S; Durham, N.C. 79/61P, 77/62F; El Paso, Texas 93/64S, 92/64S; Fairbanks, Alaska 47/30S, 48/34P; Flagstaff, Ariz. 84/42S, 82/44S; Fargo, N.D. 65/41P, 74/57S; Fort Myers, Fla. 93/75F, 90/75F; Fort Smith, Ark. 92/60S, 94/63S; Fort Wayne, Ind. 78/47P, 78/48S; Fresno, Calif. 104/69S, 102/68S; Grand Rapids, Mich. 82/52S, 69/48C; Green Bay, Wis. 74/49S, 67/44S; Greensboro, N.C. 78/63P, 77/61S; Greenville, S.C. 83/65P, 79/60S; Harrisburg, Pa. 77/59F, 77/62F; Hartford, Conn. 75/53P, 76/57F; Indianapolis 77/53P, 79/55S; Ithaca, N.Y. 71/54P, 73/60P; Jackson, Miss. 90/68P, 87/71P; Jacksonville, Fla. 85/71S, 84/71S; Jefferson City, Mo. 89/57S, 86/59S; Kansas City, Mo. 89/57S, 79/57S; Key West, Fla. 88/82S, 87/81C; Knoxville, Tenn. 84/65S, 81/61S; Laredo, Texas 95/70S, 95/70P; Lexington, Ky. 79/59S, 84/60S; Lincoln, Neb. 83/48S, 81/57S; Little Rock, Ark. 87/59S, 91/64S; Long Beach, Calif. 82/63P, 82/64S; Louisville, Ky. 81/59S, 84/59S; Lubbock, Texas 92/58S, 90/59S; Madison, Wis. 75/52C, 70/46S; Manchester, N.H. 74/51P, 78/57F; Memphis, Tenn. 87/65S, 88/65S; Milwaukee 85/74S, 69/56P; Mobile, Ala. 85/74P, 79/71F; Modesto, Calif. 103/65S, 98/68S; Montgomery, Ala. 88/70P, 78/67P; Myrtle Beach, S.C. 80/67S, 78/67P; Nags Head, N.C. 75/65P, 77/65P; Nashville, Tenn. 85/65S, 85/63S; Newark, N.J. 75/59P, 77/62P; New Haven, Conn. 73/57P, 74/60P; Norfolk, Va. 76/63P, 77/63P; Oakland, Calif. 86/60S, 85/58P; Oklahoma City 94/61S, 93/60S; Omaha, Neb. 81/48S, 79/57S; Palm Springs, Calif. 110/82S, 107/82S; Pensacola, Fla. 83/74C, 78/71F; Pierre, S.D. 67/41P, 76/58W; Pittsburgh 77/52F, 80/52S; Portland, Maine 66/51P, 80/55S; Portland, Ore. 76/49P, 61/50S; Providence, R.I. 70/52P, 72/58F; Raleigh, N.C. 81/62P, 80/63F; Rapid City, S.D. 87/42S, 85/61F; Reno, Nev. 92/54S, 88/54S; Richmond, Va. 79/61P, 79/62F; Rochester, N.Y. 74/51P, 75/55P; Sacramento, Calif. 100/63S, 95/61S; San Antonio 94/68S, 95/72S; San Jose, Calif. 100/69S, 96/65P; Santa Fe, N.M. 86/53S, 82/52S; Sarasota, Fla. 92/75F, 89/76F; Savannah, Ga. 87/69S, 83/69P; Scottsdale, Ariz. 106/75S, 108/75S; Shreveport, La. 92/62S, 94/70S; Sioux Falls, S.D. 72/41S, 73/75S; South Bend, Ind. 77/51P, 72/50C; Spokane, Wash. 66/42S, 66/40P; Springfield, Mo. 88/57S, 88/62S; Springfield, Ill. 80/50S, 81/52S; St. Louis 82/58S, 82/62S; St. Petersburg, Fla. 91/76F, 88/76F; Syracuse, N.Y. 75/53F, 76/55P; Tallahassee, Fla. 89/73C, 86/71F; Tampa, Fla. 91/76F, 89/74F; Toledo, Ohio 76/48P, 77/52P; Topeka, Kan. 94/57S, 83/59S; Tucson, Ariz. 104/71S, 104/75S; Tupelo, Miss. 89/66S, 87/63P; Tulsa, Okla. 93/62S, 92/62S; Virginia Beach, Va. 75/64P, 76/63P; Wichita, Kan. 97/59S, 87/60S; Wilmington, Del. 76/57P, 77/60F; Winston-Salem, N.C. 80/65P, 79/62S; Worcester, Mass. 70/54P, 73/56F; Beijing 72/45S, 70/47S; Buenos Aires 66/55S, 70/59C; Cancun, Mexico 87/78F, 87/78F; Dubai, UAE 100/86S, 101/86S; Frankfurt 58/47P, 59/42P; Hong Kong 83/71P, 84/73C; Istanbul 74/63S, 80/67H; Jerusalem 81/60S, 82/62S; Johannesburg 72/44S, 74/45S; London 62/46S, 63/47P; Mexico City 70/54S, 71/57F; Montreal 71/53S, 71/53P; Moscow 70/52P, 57/49P; Mumbai, India 91/79T, 90/78T; Paris 59/44P, 62/42S; Rio de Janeiro 80/72P, 74/68S; Rome 72/59S, 70/55S; Seoul 72/51S, 76/51P; Singapore 88/78S, 87/71F; Sydney 69/53P, 72/60C; Toronto 74/51P, 70/50P; Tokyo 77/73T, 86/72W



## First month

Continued from Page 1C

college football history.

### Heisman Trophy dark horse: Ashton Jeanty, Boise State

Jeanty's numbers are impossible to ignore. Through four games, he's put up 845 yards on 10.3 yards per carry with 13 touchdowns, including 192 yards and three scores in the Broncos' 37-34 loss at Oregon. Jeanty had 259 yards and four touchdowns against Washington State, and that wasn't even his best game of the first month – that would be the 267 yards and six scores he posted in the opener against Georgia Southern.

### Best coach: Kalen DeBoer, Alabama

Replacing Nick Saban will go down as the toughest task for a first-year coach in decades. DeBoer has run with the opportunity. Alabama's offense has been spectacular and could be even better as the team gets more comfortable in his scheme, meaning that win against Georgia could be just the start of a special season for the Crimson Tide.

### Best first-year coach: Curt Cignetti, Indiana

DeBoer would work here as well, obviously, but Cignetti deserves some heavy praise after leading Indiana to the program's first 5-0 start since 1967. That doubles as the program's last Big Ten championship and Rose Bowl berth. Though matching that achievement still seems very unlikely, the Hoosiers could head into November as an at-large playoff contender.

### Biggest surprises: Army and Navy

Both 4-0 for the first time since 1945, Army and Navy are turning back the



Florida State running back Roydell Williams is tackled by Georgia Tech's Trenilyas Tatum and Kyle Efford. TOM MAHER/IMAGN IMAGES

clock and rising up the rankings in the Group of Five. The Midshipmen have a very good win against Memphis and have been terrific on offense, ranking in the top nine nationally in yards per game, yards per carry and scoring. Army has won every game by at least 17 points. It's possible the schools could meet in the American Athletic title game and then in their annual showdown one week later.

### Biggest disappointment: Florida State

The Seminoles have landed with a distinct thud on the heels of last year's ACC crown and playoff near miss. Sandwiching an ugly win against Cal are losses to Georgia Tech, Boston College, Memphis and SMU, the latter a 42-16 decision that leaves the Seminoles in position to miss bowl play entirely. The transfer portal that was so good to Flori-

da State and coach Mike Norvell turned out to be unable to overcome so many critical personnel losses from last season's team.

### Biggest upset: Northern Illinois 16, Notre Dame 14

Northern Illinois went into South Bend as roughly a four-touchdown underdog but shocked Notre Dame in a result that could easily leave the Fighting Irish out of the playoff. Worse yet for the Irish, the Huskies have since dropped games against Buffalo and North Carolina State. The good news for Notre Dame is that it has rebounded with three consecutive wins and still has playoff hopes if it can avoid another slip-up.

### Best game: Alabama 41, Georgia 34

Alabama led 28-0 not long into the

second quarter but had to survive an epic comeback that briefly put Georgia in front before the Tide regained the lead in the final two minutes. This type of competitive road loss isn't too bad for Georgia's playoff candidacy, though you have to wonder about the state of the Bulldogs defense and the play of quarterback Carson Beck heading into games against Texas, Tennessee and Ole Miss.

### Coach on the hot seat: Billy Napier, Florida

Napier's tenure is so doomed that the conversation has shifted to who Florida will hire as his replacement. An even 2-2 after one month, the Gators are only now running into the fiercest part of this season's schedule. Here's what comes next: Central Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Texas, LSU, Mississippi and Florida State. Bowl eligibility seems like an uphill climb.

### Best freshman: Ryan Williams, Alabama

You have to remind yourself that Williams is only 17 years old. Not that he plays like a teenager. Williams has 16 receptions for 462 yards for an FBS-best 28.9 yards per grab to go with six touchdowns, none better than the acrobatic catch and run to carry the Tide past Georgia. Another freshman receiver of note is Ohio State's Jeremiah Smith, who has matched expectations with 19 catches for 364 yards and five touchdowns.

### Best transfer: Cam Ward, Miami

Ward has been the missing piece for the Hurricanes and one of the most impactful transfers of the NIL era. The Washington State transfer leads the FBS with 18 touchdowns and ranks fourth with 11.1 yards per attempt while adding 146 yards on the ground. Miami is currently the favorite in the ACC and it's all down to Ward's dynamic play.

## Toppmeyer

Continued from Page 1C

exception than the rule.

The portal provides valuable tire patches for a program stranded on the shoulder, and coaches who ignore transfers live foolishly. But, building a program almost exclusively out of the portal becomes a high-wire act. You can't miss a step.

Signing and developing elite linemen remains the engine behind championship programs. Prime knows this. If there's one thing he isn't, it's dumb.

I don't think it's that Sanders can't recruit. Mostly, I think he just doesn't want to, because why recruit to a place where you don't plan to be?

If Sanders hears another calling after this season, Colorado will have received



Coach Deion Sanders leads Colorado onto the field before the season opener Aug. 29 against North Dakota State. After going 27-6 at Jackson State, he is 8-9 with CU, including 4-1 this season. RON CHENOY/USA TODAY SPORTS

the full Prime experience.

Sanders magnetized eyeballs to a program that starved for attention. His presence helped ensure Colorado didn't get left behind in realignment. And it's no coincidence Colorado's admissions applications surged after his first season.

Sanders put the university in the spotlight, and he made Colorado football fun, and college students like having fun.

And when he packs his luggage and listens for a voice from on high, Colorado would do well to go hire the next Sanders, except that won't be possible, because Coach Prime can't be duplicated.

Blake Toppmeyer is the USA TODAY Network's national college football columnist. Email him at [BToppmeyer@gannett.com](mailto:BToppmeyer@gannett.com) and follow him on X @btoppmeyer.

## Bell

Continued from Page 1C

victories in spectacular fashion, posted the highest completion rate (82.1%) during any four-game stretch for an NFL quarterback since at least 1950 (minimum 100 passes) and put himself in the pole position for Offensive Rookie of the Year honors – Williams sounds as upbeat about this development as the most rabid D.C. football fan.

Yes, "PTI" Tony, the bandwagon, driven by Daniels, is filling up again. Lord knows, this battered franchise – which dropped its racist team name in 2020 – needed Daniels to come along to lead the makeover for a new era.

Yet for Williams, 69, who made history in 1988 as the first Black quarterback to start and win a Super Bowl, it is deeper than that.

That's why he sounds like a proud uncle, too.

"It means a lot to me because of where we come from," said Williams, the Super Bowl 22 MVP. "You hate to say it's because he's a young, African American man, but to see him doing what he's doing because of yesteryear, to be in the same building, watching him every day, to me, that's a plus, man. It does my heart great just to be here."

Williams need not explain anything about his cultural pride for Daniels. Sure, roughly half the starting quarterbacks in the NFL are African American. But during Williams' heyday, there were barely any. When Warren Moon came into the NFL in 1984 with the Houston Oilers, he was the league's only Black quarterback. Williams, at that time, toiled in the USFL. And when Williams landed on the big Super Bowl stage, his race was cast as the biggest storyline.

And let's not forget that way before Williams, Washington was the last NFL franchise to break the so-called color line and have a Black player.

Think Daniels has tapped Williams as a walking resource to learn about such history? Not quite.

"He hasn't," Williams said, "but you know what I believe? He hasn't said it with his words, but he's shown it with his actions."

During pregame warmups at Arizona on Sunday, Daniels threw the football around as he wore a T-shirt emblazoned with Williams' image. It was another example of how the 23-year-old pays homage to the in-house legend. Before his preseason debut in August, Daniels strolled into MetLife Stadium rocking a No. 17 Williams throwback jersey.

"He has shown so much respect to me," Williams said. "It warms my heart. There's no way I can't give it back to him."

During the final minute of the 42-14 blowout at Arizona (in which Daniels passed for 233 yards and a touchdown, plus rushed for 47 yards and a score), Williams embraced the young quarterback on the sideline and whispered an encouraging message in his ear.

It was a classic image that was made for TV, history books and for, well, going viral on the internet. My USA TODAY colleague, Mike Freeman, tweeted it out, with this suggestion: "Put this in the Louvre."

The symbolism is striking, but for Williams and Daniels, it's personal. After all, Daniels' mother, Regina Jackson, was one of the dozens of people who texted Williams the image of the viral moment with her son.

"You know what it is? I've known Jayden for a while," Williams said of the sideline snapshot. "It's just a carryover of respect, from a standpoint of what

he's given me and what I've given him. It's good to be in the same building with a young guy like Jayden, who don't have no diva in him. You know what I mean?"

"For me, I'm just a guy that he can lean on and talk to – not about football, because he's got a bunch of coaches. I don't talk to him about that. I just tell him to keep doing what he's doing."

Williams and Daniels met in 2018. Daniels was at Arizona State (where he played for three seasons before transferring to LSU and winning the Heisman Trophy) and attended a panel discussion about the history of Black quarterbacks. Williams was joined on that panel by James "Shack" Harris and Marlin Briscoe, who in 1968 became the first Black starting quarterback in modern pro football.

"Who'd ever thought back then that I'd be in the same building with this young man every single day?" Williams said. "I wouldn't have."

Interestingly, Washington's new regime, headed by coach Dan Quinn and general manager Adam Peters, brought Williams back into the fold in the football operations this year after he was pushed aside by the previous regime headed by Ron Rivera. Williams kept a job but was relegated to non-football projects while working under team president Jason Wright. Years ago, when Bruce Allen served as GM, Williams had a significant role in the personnel department.

He's elated to be back on the football side, officially as the senior adviser to the general manager. He said from the moment Quinn became the new coach, the vibe changed.

"It wasn't somebody threatened by whoever's in the building, compared to the last regime," Williams said, undoubtedly taking a shot at Rivera. "That's how Dan, the ownership (head-

ed by Josh Harris) and Adam looked at it: Why not have Doug around here?"

In his new role, Williams breaks down video to analyze personnel, meeting regularly with Peters and assistant GM Martin Mayhew to share his insights.

He's not involved deeply with the coaching but raves about the versatility that offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury has employed in calling the game plans to support Daniels. Quinn, he added, has done much to keep the hoopla in check.

"He lets everybody know: We ain't made it yet," Williams said.

Williams knows. Football seasons – and careers – have their twists and turns. He's encouraged that the rookie has his head on straight and has exhibited a tremendous work ethic. He's also won over teammates and, well, balled out.

"He's been incredible," Williams said. "You're reluctant to crown him, but you can't help but notice what has transpired over the last four weeks. I think he realizes it, too. That's the good part about it."

Given where Washington's franchise has been and what Daniels could represent, the expectations for this new chapter are obviously enormous. It figures that Williams can help the rookie deal with it.

"It's early," he said. "You don't want to put no pressure on the kid. You want him to play football. You don't even want to bring it to his attention. You don't even want to talk about it. We've still got a long way to go."

"The fans are excited, and they've got a reason to be excited. But if you work in the football office here, that's what you try to protect against."

Which is clearly a good problem for the Commanders to have about now.



# Biles' future could include Olympics



**Nancy Armour**  
Columnist  
USA TODAY

**Nancy Armour**  
USA TODAY

MILWAUKEE – Simone Biles wants to go to another Olympics. A Winter Olympics.

The 27-year-old hasn't made any decisions about her gymnastics career or competing at the Los Angeles Games in 2028. Biles does know she's going to take a break when her Gold Over America Tour – GOAT, get it? – wraps up in November, and she is looking forward to doing things she's never had time to before.

Cooking is a new passion. She's got a restaurant, "Taste of Gold," opening soon at Houston Intercontinental Airport. She and her husband, Chicago Bears safety Jonathan Owens, are planning trips.

And after having lunch in Paris with skiing great Mikaela Shiffrin, Biles would like to attend a Winter Olympics.

"It's a little bit daunting because, for 20 years, I've only done gymnastics. To be real, that's the only thing I know that I'm good at, because of the hours that I've put in," Biles told USA TODAY Sports. "So it is nice to explore other avenues. That's really exciting, because you never know where life will take you. To have that time to explore is such a blessing."

So, too, being able to celebrate her success.

Biles has said the Rio Olympics, where she won four gold medals and a bronze, were something of a blur. They were her first Games, and she was 19. The Tokyo Olympics, postponed a year until 2021, were more of a nightmare. Friends and family weren't able to attend because of COVID restrictions, and Biles developed a case of "the twisties" that forced her out of much of the competition.

But Paris allowed Biles a chance to have the full experience. Her family was in the stands as she won four more medals, three of them gold. Even Owens was



Olympic gold medal gymnast Simone Biles throws out the ceremonial first pitch before a game between the Royals and Astros on Aug. 30 in Houston.

THOMAS SHEA/IMAGN IMAGES

there for the team and all-around finals after the Bears gave him permission to miss a few days of training camp. Biles stayed in the Olympic Village and was able to go to other events after gymnastics was done.

Now her tour is packing arenas across the country, with fans young and old eager to see Biles and her fellow

gymnasts in person. The cast includes Jordan Chiles and Jade Carey, fellow Olympians in both Tokyo and Paris. Josc Roberson and French Olympian Melanie de Jesus dos Santos, both of whom trained with Biles and Chiles in Houston, are also part of the show.

Biles also included male gymnasts in the show this time. Brody Malone, Fred-

erick Richard and Paul Juda, who helped the U.S. men win their first Olympic medal since 2008, are joined by Tokyo Olympians Shane Wiskus and Yul Moldauer.

"This one is just electric. Everyone has such great energy," Biles said. "A lot of people are still on highs from the Olympics, from their success. So it just feels so much different (from 2021)."

With much of the country still under COVID restrictions then, both crowd sizes and the gymnasts' interactions with the fans were limited. And because of Biles' experience in Tokyo, the show centered around themes of mental health and being confident.

While those messages are still present in the current show – in one number, some of the nasty messages Biles got in Tokyo are flashed on the giant video board. In another, each of the Olympians is asked how they've gotten to where they are or how they've overcome challenges – this year's tour is much more of a spectacle.

"It's a celebration, and that's what we wanted to do," Biles said. "And you can tell everyone's having a good time."

The two-hour show is filled with (mostly) upbeat songs, lively dance numbers and light shows. The gymnastics are watered down from what the athletes would do in competition, but the audience at the Fiserv Forum on Saturday night didn't care.

They shrieked when they heard Chiles' floor music from Paris, laughed at Wiskus doing a wolf turn on the balance beam and oohed and aahed as the guys performed on the high bar and pommel horse.

And unlike in 2021, the gymnasts got to interact with fans when they weren't performing. Ellie Black, a four-time Olympian from Canada, slapped hands with fans in the lower rows after finishing her part in one number. The cast took selfies and signed autographs after the show was over.

"After this Olympics, everyone kind of has been relishing and like, 'OK, this is what we did in Paris. Let's celebrate this for as long as possible, till we look forward for the next goal,'" Biles said.

She doesn't know what that is yet. But she's looking forward to finding out.



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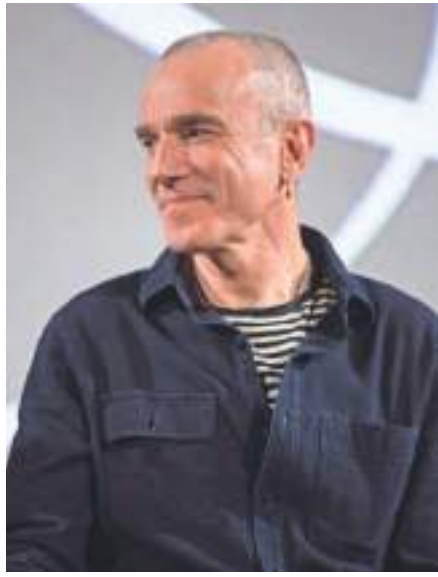
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On and off screen, cast members speak their minds and get ready for Season 15. **Page 2D**

Libraries and bookstores nationwide are joining forces to enforce "the right to read." **Page 4D**

### LIFELINE



JOHN PHILLIPS/GETTY IMAGES FILE

#### MAKING WAVES DANIEL DAY-LEWIS

Daniel Day-Lewis is back on the call sheet. The three-time Oscar winner, who abruptly retired in 2017, is returning to acting to star in "Anemone," a movie directed by his son Ronan Day-Lewis. The script was co-written by the 67-year-old actor and Ronan, and "explores the intricate relationships between fathers, sons and brothers, and the dynamics of familial bonds," according to Focus Features. This will be Day-Lewis' first role since "Phantom Thread." Sean Bean, Samantha Morton, Samuel Bottomley and Safia Oakley-Green also star.



#### IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY WHO'S CELEBRATING TODAY

Ayo Edebiri is 29. Tessa Thompson is 41. Neve Campbell is 51.

#### HOROSCOPE | SANCTUARY More: [www.sanctuaryworld.co](http://www.sanctuaryworld.co)

**Aries** (March 21-April 19). Dredging up the past? Hurt people hurt people as the moon conflicts Mars. Make sure you're not one of them!

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20). You refuse to acknowledge a problem as the moon clashes with Mars. How long can you ignore the obvious?

**Gemini** (May 21-June 21). Going after what you desire? What's the rush? Take precautions as the moon clashes with Mars. Reckless acts will backfire.

**Cancer** (June 22-July 22). As the moon and Mars clash, you'll show them who's boss! But is your confidence real or an act?

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22). Emotional outbursts? The moon's clash with Mars forces repressed feelings of anger and disappointment out into the open.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Defending your integrity? Find ways to stand up for yourself without putting others down.

**Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Refusing to negotiate? As the moon clashes with Mars, nobody wants to get on your bad side!

**Scorpio** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Feeling persecuted? You give someone a piece of your mind as the moon clashes with volatile Mars.

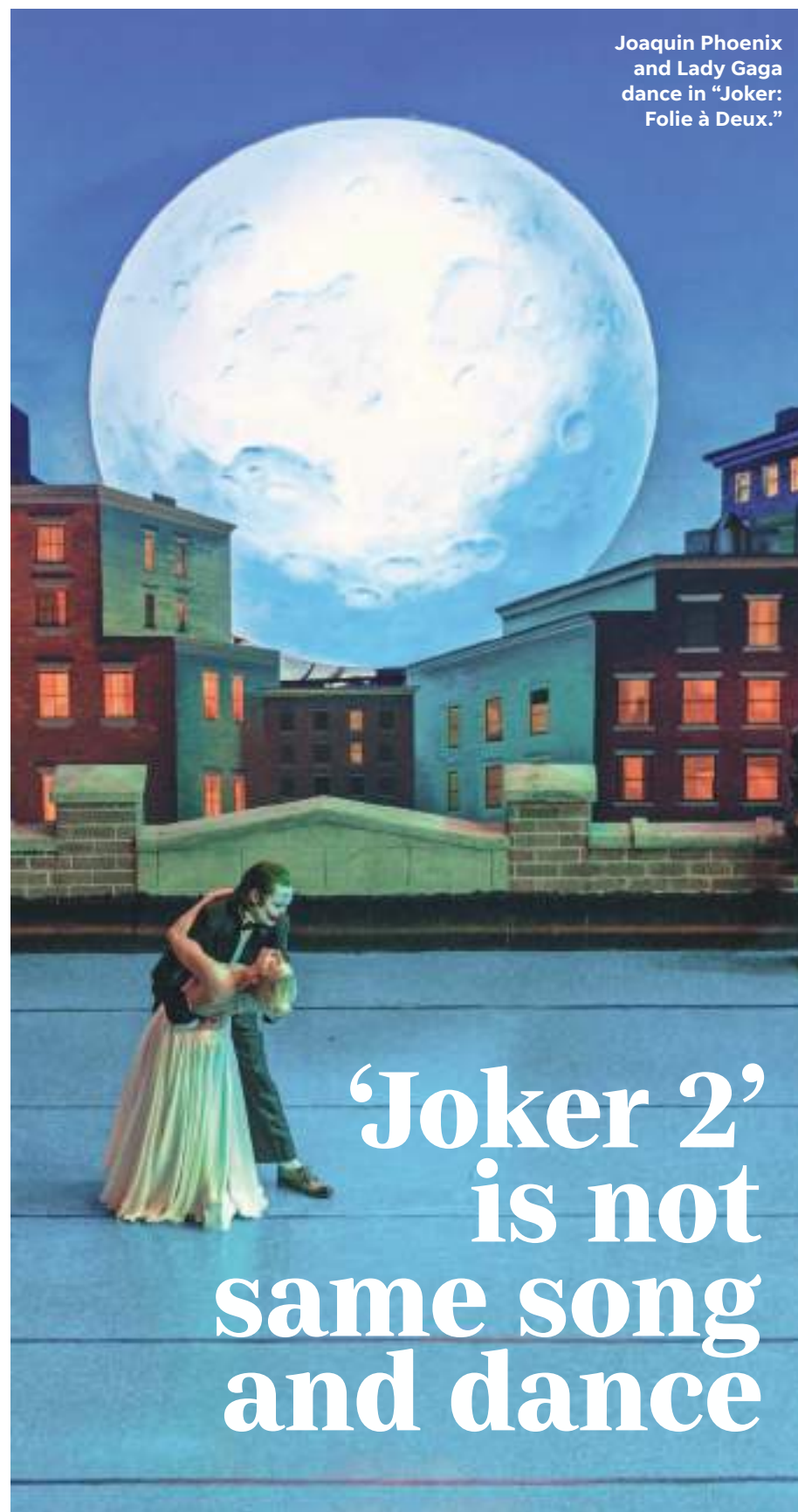
**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Trying to maintain the upper hand? As the moon and Mars clash, ego clashes aren't in your best interest.

**Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Reading too much into a situation? Keep your eyes on the prize as the moon meets Mars. Cooperation, not competition!

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Keeping yourself occupied? You're in an angsty mood as the moon and Mars clash. Channel that energy constructively!

**Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20). Taking a risk? Weigh the pros and cons of a bold move as the moon and Mars clash.

### MOVIES



Joaquin Phoenix and Lady Gaga dance in "Joker: Folie à Deux."

## Two Oscar winners step out and step lively to fuel an unusual love story in 'Folie à Deux'

**Bryan Alexander** USA TODAY

LOS ANGELES – Lady Gaga recalls finding mountains of inspiration for a twisted Joker love story while driving through Big Sky Country in late 2022 with her boyfriend, Michael Polansky. ● Polansky, a San Francisco entrepreneur, is not the Joker here, of course. Gaga, 38, doesn't even try to hide the sizable diamond engagement ring from her now-fiancé during an interview. But the Wyoming and Teton Range road trip was awesomely illuminating for her role as Harley Quinn, the infamous love interest to Joaquin Phoenix's DC archvillain in the wildly anticipated sequel to 2019's "Joker."

"So Michael, my fiancé, and I were driving around some of the most beautiful mountains in the world," Gaga says. "And I was thinking, 'Can you believe that this woman says to (the Joker) that 'We're gonna build a mountain together'? And I completely believe she believes that. It's a complete fantasy."

It's a dark illusion at the core of "Joker: Folie à Deux" (in theaters Friday), a warped love story and uncon-

ventional supervillain musical starring two of the most electrifying and eccentric Oscar-toting actors in Hollywood. Don't go looking for Batman battles or gleeful crime capers to subvert the power duo of Joker (mentally disturbed loner Arthur Fleck) and Harley Quinn (fellow mental patient Lee Quinzel).

See **JOKER**, Page 2D



Arthur Fleck (Phoenix) and Lee Quinzel (Lady Gaga) share a bad romance in "Joker: Folie à Deux." PHOTOS PROVIDED BY NIKO TAVERNISE/WARNER BROS.

### NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL

## Jolie went all in to find her voice for opera movie

**Patrick Ryan**  
USA TODAY

NEW YORK – Before she could play an opera legend, Angelina Jolie had to find her voice.

The A-lister threw herself into new movie "Maria," undergoing seven months of rigorous vocal training to embody Greek opera star Maria Callas in the upcoming Netflix film.

When Jolie first signed on, "I thought, 'Oh, I'll pretend-sing and I'll get through this,'" she recalled Sunday during a post-screening Q&A at the movie's New York Film Festival premiere. "Then it was very clear to me that you can't pretend opera, and then I was scared."

The film is directed by Pablo Larraín, who helped guide Natalie Portman and Kristen Stewart to best actress Oscar nominations playing Jacqueline Kennedy (2016's "Jackie") and Princess Diana (2021's "Spencer"), respectively. "Maria" is the ending of a trilogy for the director, who imagines all three women as caged birds breaking free.



For her new Netflix movie, Angelina Jolie transforms into opera star Maria Callas. PROVIDED BY PABLO LARRAÍN/NETFLIX

A fan of opera since childhood, Larraín was intrigued by the idea that Callas frequently died onstage at the end of her productions, but she had no fear of death in her personal life. As the film depicts, she lived a secluded existence in her final years and often resisted medical attention. She died in 1977 at age 53 of a heart attack, after struggling with substance abuse and the loss of her voice.

Initially, Larraín envisioned Callas as a more "tragic" figure. But "when Angie came in, she brought something that I immediately accepted: This sense of stoicism," he said. "I would say, 'Could you be broken here?' And she would say, 'No, I think she's stronger than that.' So we built this character who, even going through the darkest times, is always in command. She's never a victim."

"Maria" flashes between Callas' last days and younger years, tracing how her mother pushed her into show business and how she was silenced by her longtime partner, Aristotle Onassis (Haluk Bilginer), who later left her for Jackie Kennedy. Despite Callas' suffering, Jolie imbues her with a crackling wit and a diva-like yearning to be adulated.

"When I see someone who's so full of self-pity or giving up, it doesn't move me in the same way," Jolie, 49, explained. "She would try to pull herself together and move forward. I wanted this to be about what an extraordinary artist she was – she was a fighter and a deeply feeling, emotional person."

That unflagging spirit helped inform Jolie's vocal performance in the movie. The Oscar winner's voice is mixed with real recordings of Callas. But it was important to Larraín that she was singing live on set, in order to ensure that her movements and breathing would mimic those of a trained prima donna.

"For anybody here who hasn't sung at the top of their lungs, it's a crazy

See **JOLIE**, Page 2D



## TELEVISION

## The 'Real Housewives of New York City' get real

Anika Reed

USA TODAY

NEW YORK – What you see is (mostly) what you get on “The Real Housewives of New York City.”

At least for the Bravo reality show's stars Sai De Silva, Jessel Taank and Ubah Hassan, picking up from where the OG “RHONY” stars (composed at times of Ramona Singer, Luann de Lesseps, Sonja Morgan, Bethenny Frankel and Dorinda Medley) left off in 2021's Season 13 of the series.

Last year's Season 14 (with a revamped cast) saw the new, more diverse group of women, rounded out by Jenna Lyons, Erin Lichy and Brynn Whitfield. And Tuesday's Season 15 premiere (9 EDT/PDT) welcomes newbies Rebecca Minkoff and Racquel Chevremont.

The Bravo-fication of the women is palpable: Even though each was accomplished and good looking before starring on the show, they're no longer the first-season reality rookies. Somehow glossier and subtly even more put together, the ladies say they now understand the game.

Taank calls the show “the best mirror.”

“I thought I was the sweet little Indian girl that no one could hate!” Taank, 41, says with a laugh. “And then, of course, you see yourself, and I'm like, ‘OK, maybe I do sound a little bit brat-ish.’”

“I didn't know what to expect, really,” says De Silva, a former mommy blogger-turned-fashion influencer. “I do think that people found my honesty very jarring, instead of refreshing.” The Brooklyn-bred star's nonchalant approach didn't land exactly as planned, but it pushed De Silva to “deliver the message a little bit differently.”

Taank, a fashion publicist and founder of e-commerce platform Oushq, senses her British perspective might have initially rubbed American audiences the wrong way. “I was very shocked. I was watching the first episode (of Season 14) on my couch, and I thought I was doing just fine, and (husband) Pavit (Randhawa) was on Twitter, and he was like, ‘People don't like you.’ And I was like, ‘Oh, my God.’”



Ubah Hassan, Jessel Taank, and Sai De Silva from Bravo's “Real Housewives of New York,” snap a selfie on set ahead of the interview about the release of Season 15 of the reality series. EMMA ROSE MILLIGAN FOR USA TODAY

“I'm still very much my honest, transparent self, but at the same time, I don't live my life for how others perceive me,” says De Silva, 43. “I am what I am. So take it or leave it.”

Hassan, 41, still finds it difficult to balance real life with the job of creating a reality TV show, which the group filmed weekly from Tuesdays to Saturdays. In her modeling career, “none of us have our family here, so people I work with have become kind of my family, friends,” she says. But in the Bravo world, “I still don't know how to check in and check out.”

In typical New York fashion, there's slight chaos as the three co-stars gather for an interview. Taank is the last to arrive, but it's not really her fault: The U.N. General Assembly is causing gridlock traffic in the city, to the point where De Silva hopped out of her car and onto the subway while Hassan hoofed it a couple blocks from hers.

It's another regular day for the wom-

en, who've bonded over motherhood, childhood hardships and disdain for Catch, and brawled over sunglasses, digs at their husbands and private flights.

Taank, who shared her IVF journey on camera, calls the show a “huge responsibility”: “I know so many women would want to be in our shoes.”

“I wish I could scream so loud for everyone to understand, it's only 45 minutes!” Hassan says.

“They cannot show everything. ... So there's a lot of things that you guys are not seeing yet,” that producers discarded or added to make viewers “question” what's happening.

The three seemingly are close, having moved beyond being “co-workers” in their first season and into an actual working friendship.

“I definitely felt like co-workers last season, where we clock in and (cast-mates) are getting on our nerves. But this year it's a lot different.”

How long it'll last is yet to be determined: The Season 15 premiere teases a blow-up fight between Hassan and Whitfield, as well as infighting between Lyons and Lichy and surprising closeness between De Silva and Taank, who disagreed all last season. The ladies sidestep the current status of everyone's friendships.

“I think we're good,” says De Silva, then quickly qualifying the statement: “I'm under the impression that we're good.”

“If there's certain emotions or feelings, maybe before I would be afraid to express them and I wouldn't know how to tread, but I think we're all a little bit more comfortable to express how we're truly feeling,” says Taank, who adds this season features “less walking on eggshells, and more expressing how you actually feel.”

All relationships are under the microscope when the reality-TV cameras are on. Hassan says she “wanted to share my relationship” with now-boyfriend Oliver Daschel, the Connecticut man whose concealment caused last season's finale argument with Whitfield. “I wanted to talk about it, but I really couldn't, because I was like, I don't know this guy. I'm in this public space.”

Hassan says her married co-stars come “as a package,” a different scenario than navigating dating someone new. “It's not like some of us trying to hide a relationship because it's so new, right? That was a little difficult.”

“There's a lot of character development this season,” says De Silva. “We bonded in different ways that we didn't last year. ... It's just going to be very genuine friendships that will be able to translate on camera very well. The tension is definitely there between friends, and that happens automatically,” she says, teasing, “but you're going to have to stick around to find out exactly how that happens.”

## How to watch 'RHONY' Season 15

The new season of “The Real Housewives of New York City” airs on Bravo (9 EDT/PDT), with episodes airing Tuesdays. Fans also can stream the next day on Peacock.

## Joker

Continued from Page 1D

## No 'Batman.' No bank robberies. So what is 'Joker 2' about?

They didn't fess up to it at the time, but Phoenix and director/producer/co-writer Todd Phillips had long privately discussed a sequel to their R-rated “Joker.” This was ensured when the first film went on to earn \$1 billion at the worldwide box office, 11 Oscar nominations and two wins – including for Phoenix's Arthur, who is arrested but celebrated as the Joker by the end of the chaotic origin story. Yet, the follow-up was never going to be a comic-book money grab or what Phoenix, 49, calls “traditional.”

“We didn't want to just carry on from the first film like, he's the Joker now, so now we're going to see him out there robbing banks,” Phoenix says. “There wasn't going to be any of that.”

Phillips and Phoenix started talking about a relationship Joker-style.

“And what happens when somebody falls in love with the image that you project? There was something ripe about that,” Phoenix says. “Because even once he's arrested in the original, Arthur is above everything. He's like, there are jokes happening inside me that you're never, ever going to get.”

“Folie à Deux” is set three years later, after a TV movie about the Joker's original killing spree, and Arthur is over the mass adoration of his hideously made-up Joker persona. Phoenix got his inspiration by imagining the real daily life of the '70s rock band Kiss.

“Did you ever think, how about Gene Simmons from Kiss? Where 20-year-olds are painting their faces, putting on platform shoes, all rock 'n' roll,” Phoenix says, laughing. “But what happens when you're in your 40s and like, ‘I don't want to put the makeup on anymore’? I just started laughing about that. Todd and I were like, maybe that's the beginning of something.”

In “Folie à Deux,” the daily toll of life in the violent offenders wing of Arkham State Hospital – with daily medications and the oppressive watch of soul-crushing guards – has extinguished Arthur's flame. If Arthur looked thin in the original “Joker” as a result of Phoenix's 52-pound weight loss, it's even more apparent in the second movie. Arthur shuffles out of his cell, seemingly more emaciated, all jutting shoulder bones on



Joaquin Phoenix and Lady Gaga are a villainous supercouple in the sequel. PROVIDED BY NIKO TAVERNISE/WARNER BROS.

his exposed back.

“That was the first day of shooting, and I was very, very low,” Phoenix says. “I definitely was thinner than I was on the first one.”

“That's not CG, that's just his body,” Phillips says of the shoulders. “We talked about him not losing the weight again. Because I didn't want him to be unhealthy, quite frankly. But he just thought, ‘No, Arthur has to look a certain way.’ It was really important to him. If Arthur was a bum before, now he's a real bum.”

## After 'Joker' success, stars were shooting under a 'microscope'

Arthur's despondent perspective changes immediately upon meeting Lee in “Folie à Deux” (a French term that describes a psychiatric syndrome in which two people share the same delusional disorder). The pop icon and actress (“A Star Is Born”) had emerged as the clear choice once Phillips and Phoenix decided the film would be a fantasy musical, an idea which had roots in Arthur's famed stair and bathroom dances in “Joker.”

Phillips says the downsides of directing two cultural luminaries like Phoenix and Gaga (real name Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta) was the swarming paparazzi and fan expectations.

“It was not easy, but not because of their personalities,” Phillips says. “When we made the first ‘Joker,’ nobody knew what the hell we were making. It was all under the radar. Suddenly, especially after you invite Lady Gaga in,

you're under a microscope.”

Gaga hit the ground belting a Teton-prompted cover of “Gonna Build a Mountain,” which appears on her new “Harlequin” album and also inspired an elaborate dream waltz for the budding screen couple that devolves into a nightmare dance.

“It was exciting because I brought the scene idea to Todd and Joaquin,” Gaga says.

“It starts in the spirit of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. I thought the most wild thing that these two could imagine about themselves is being the picture of health and happiness.

“But then it falls apart. The waltz is broken, so are they.”

The sequel rolls into a sensational, televised Joker trial of the century and Arthur reverts to his wisecracking, garishly face-painted self, urged on by the similarly transformed Harley Quinn. But that's the peak comic-book fare. The singing of standards to the camera and the dancing shows the commitment level to the unusual musical.

Obviously, Gaga lives in this world and even had to put the brakes on her voice to make Lee's amateur singing realistic.

“Walk the Line” star Phoenix, who took tap lessons at age 8, also has song-and-dance experience. But each large-scale number required enough weeks of training that Phillips feels the need to point out about Phoenix: “There's no CGI, there's no face replacement, there's no stand-in for this dude.”

A full-on Joker tap dance interlude required two hours of training each day “for months” with choreographer Michael Arnold, Phoenix says, “and then it's in the movie for like 27 seconds. But, obviously, it's very complex.”

During the training, Arnold introduced Phoenix to the expert tap “toe stand” move, balancing on the toe tips.

“I went to do it, and I just stopped,” Phoenix says. “I didn't want to break my ankle.”

Yet, when he was alone, without pressure, Phoenix found he could pull off the move. Shooting the scene with a belting Gaga on the piano, he felt inspired to let the toe stands rip.

“I think it was just like the energy of seeing Stefani, like the veins were bulging in her neck as she was screaming,” Phoenix says. “I was like, ‘Well, I've got to try it on film, even if I fall.’ So I threw them in. And I couldn't believe I did them. Me and Stefani just got caught up in the spirit.”



Angelina Jolie learned to sing in Italian for the biopic “Maria.”

PROVIDED BY PABLO LARRAÍN/NETFLIX

## Jolie

Continued from Page 1D

thing to do,” Jolie said. “We never do it; we never know what it's like to be fully in your body at your fullest sound. It's such an extraordinary thing to feel as a person, to know what you've got inside of you. I'm very lucky I had all these teachers and people supporting me to say, ‘Let's hear your full voice.’ It really meant a lot to me as a person.”

Jolie was supported at Sunday's premiere by three of her kids – Maddox, 23, Pax, 20, and Zahara, 19 – as well as Broadway director Danya Taimor, who collaborated with the actress on this year's Tony-winning musical “The Outsiders.” “Maria” may well land Jolie her third Oscar nod, after winning for 1999's “Girl, Interrupted” and getting nominated for 2008's “Changeling.”

The film opens in theaters Nov. 27, before streaming on Netflix Dec. 11.

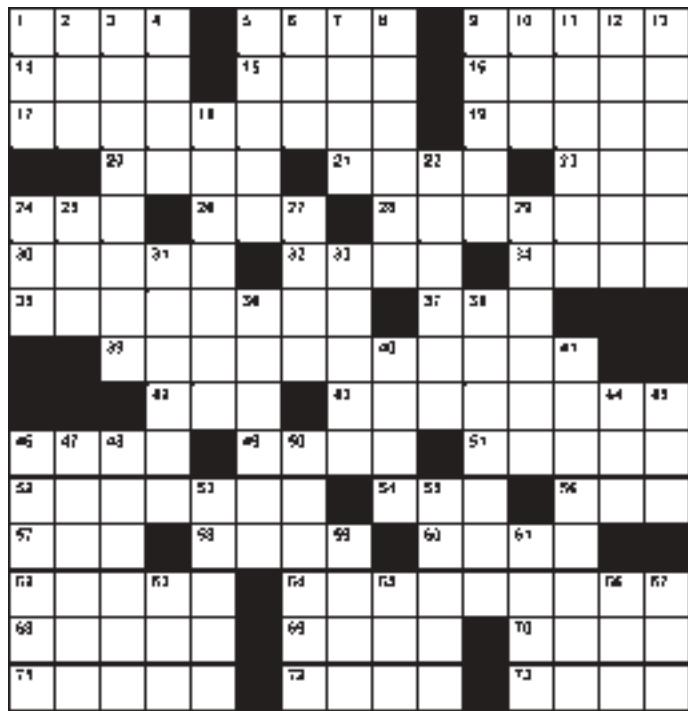


USA TODAY CROSSWORD

EDITED Amanda Rafkin  
BY Margi Stevenson

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

- ACROSS
- 1 Withdraw from, like a class
  - 5 Recipe amts.
  - 9 World-weary state
  - 14 Not yours
  - 15 Be the coolest
  - 16 Blow some cash
  - 17 Documentary narration
  - 19 Swap
  - 20 Capital city that gives out the Nobel Peace Prize every year
  - 21 Stop on a \_\_\_\_\_
  - 23 Something "spilled" by a gossip
  - 24 Last day of the weekend (Abbr.)
  - 26 Police alert, for short
  - 28 "I'm not kidding"
  - 30 Chilean mountain range
  - 32 Depose
  - 34 Brings to a close
  - 35 50-50 flip at the start of a football game
  - 37 Singer Janis
  - 39 Title shared by folks like Justin Timberlake and Justin Bieber
  - 42 Rocks at the bar
  - 43 Most gravelly
  - 46 The "D" in DJ
  - 49 Pageant accessory
  - 51 Rub out
  - 52 California home to Disneyland and Disney California Adventure
  - 54 Actress Thurman
  - 56 Anderson Cooper's channel
  - 57 Pigpen
  - 58 No, in German
  - 60 \_\_\_ of Man
  - 62 Bank job
  - 64 Competitions in "Step Up" and "You Got Served"
  - 68 Ewoks' home planet
- ANSWERS: Call 1-900-988-8300, 99 cents a minute; or, with a credit card, 1-800-320-4280.



© Andrews McMeel 10/3

- 69 Yelp symbol
  - 70 Certain
  - 71 Showing no emotion
  - 72 Like some orders
  - 73 Narrow opening
- DOWN
- 1 Patty and Selma's workplace on "The Simpsons"
  - 2 Christ the Redeemer's city
  - 3 Classic chip accompaniment to Disneyland and Disney California Adventure
  - 4 Bench press targets, for short
  - 5 Girl Scout group
  - 6 Ford Explorer, e.g.
  - 7 Asked earnestly
  - 8 Calligraphic flourishes
  - 9 "Sun Mad" artist Hernandez
  - 10 "Fresh Air" airtel
  - 11 Straighten up
  - 12 Like Count Dracula or Frankenstein's monster
  - 13 Perfect examples
  - 17 Golden-\_\_\_\_\_
  - 19 Yak
  - 20 Fellow player
  - 22 Fit, as food
  - 24 Cup handles
  - 25 Dove's cry
  - 26 Scratch
  - 28 Glossy coating
  - 32 Woodwind instrument
  - 33 Seize
  - 35 Pair
  - 36 Juicy fruit
  - 37 Seashore
  - 38 Smile broadly
  - 39 Fuss
  - 40 Sheriff's star
  - 41 Yearn for
  - 42 On edge
  - 44 Car pin
  - 45 Badly
  - 46 Ship's company
  - 47 Prepared for impact
  - 50 Big mess
  - 54 Cafe au \_\_\_\_\_
  - 55 Prefix between milli- and nano-
  - 59 Org. that Sweden joined in 2024
  - 61 Team disappointment
  - 63 O'Shea Jackson Jr., to Ice Cube
  - 65 Pester persistently
  - 66 The "F" of TGIF (Abbr.)
  - 67 "Game, \_\_\_\_\_, match!"
  - 27 Pear variety
  - 29 French impressionist of note
  - 31 Improve
  - 33 Target market for apps
  - 36 Infant's bodysuit
  - 38 Pacify
  - 40 Island northwest of Molokai
  - 41 Serene
  - 44 ID that might help determine benefits
  - 45 Bowling pin count
  - 46 Counterparts of dots, in Morse code
  - 47 Purpose
  - 48 Tie the knot
  - 50 Surrounded by
  - 53 Contest submission

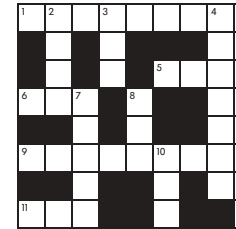
Wednesday's Answer



10/2

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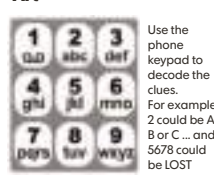
TXTPERT



- Across
- 1. 24766476
  - 5. 736
  - 6. 767
  - 9. 72468464
  - 11. 628
- Down
- 2. 4256
  - 3. 645
  - 4. 6668243
  - 7. 77468
  - 8. 748
  - 10. 465

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Today's theme Art



10/2

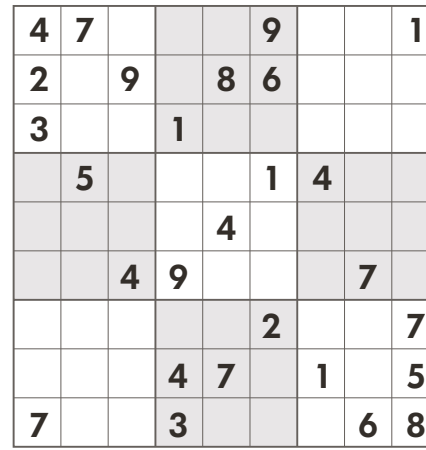
Numbers

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).



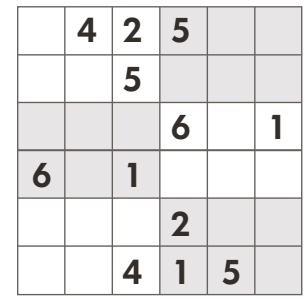
10/3

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★★★

SUDOKU FUSION ON YOUR PHONE puzzles.usatoday.com

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Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x2 box contains the numbers 1 through 6 (no repeats).



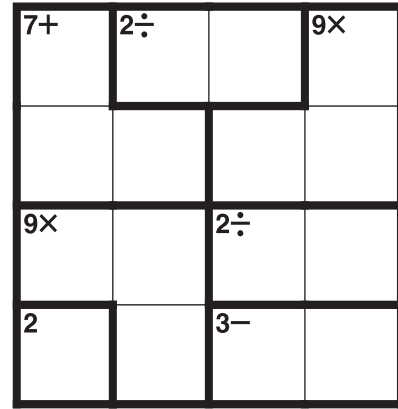
DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★★★

Wednesday's Answers

8	1	9	5	7	6	2	4	3
2	3	4	9	1	8	5	6	7
7	5	6	2	4	3	9	8	1
1	8	3	7	6	5	4	9	2
6	7	5	4	9	2	1	3	8
4	9	2	8	3	1	7	5	6
5	6	8	1	2	4	3	7	9
9	4	1	3	8	7	6	2	5
3	2	7	6	5	9	8	1	4

10/2

KENKEN



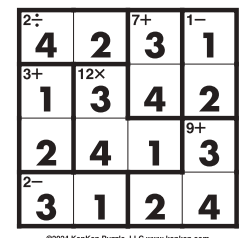
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1. Each row and column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 (easy) or 1 through 6 (challenging) without repeating.

2. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.

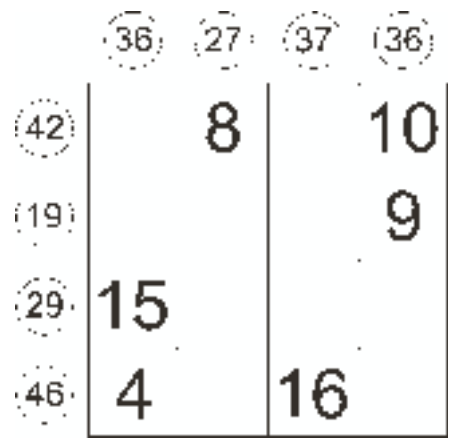
3. Freebies: fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



KUBOK 16

By Davide Coppo Difficulty: HARD



Solution to Wednesday's puzzle

15	9	1	4
3	2	5	12
8	10	6	16
14	11	13	7

Enter the missing numbers from 1 to 16 without repetitions so that the sum of the four numbers in each row and column is the same as the corresponding circled number.

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Words

WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

- Find and Circle:
- Six facial expressions
- Five five-letter mammals
- Three words with ZZ in the middle
- Superhero: \_\_\_ Woman
- Fourth Greek letter

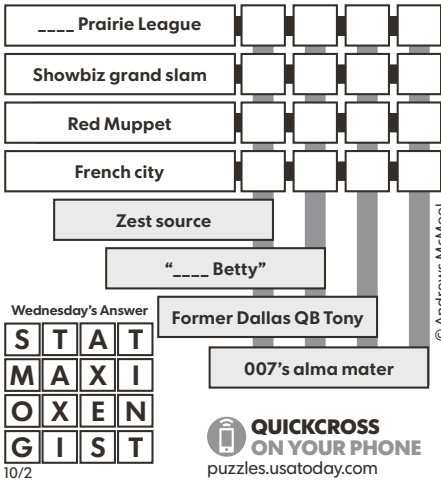
Wednesday's answer: OTTOMAN ARMOIRE HUTCH TABLE CHAIR SOFA DESK / PARAGUAY URUGUAY BOLIVIA BRAZIL PERU / SYRUP LEAF TREE / EIGHT / TRUE



QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes

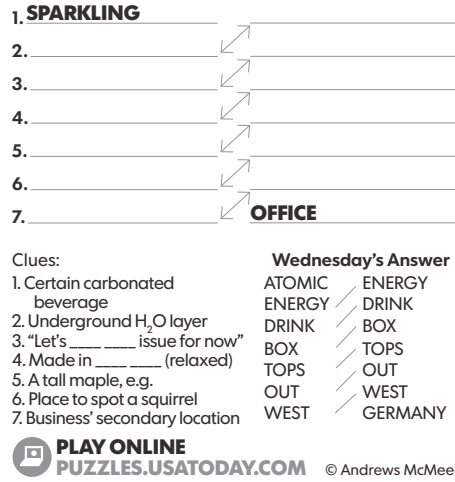
10/3



UP & DOWN WORDS

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt

10/3



DON'T QUOTE ME

Poet Maya Angelou talks about talent.

Rearrange the words to complete the quote.

LIKE TALENT UNDERSTAND USE WE \_\_\_\_\_ IS \_\_\_\_\_ ELECTRICITY. \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T \_\_\_\_\_ ELECTRICITY. WE \_\_\_\_\_ IT.

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each word. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES SOLUTIONS

- 1 like a large spoonful (7)
- 2 hardens steel (7)
- 3 former "SNL" star David (5)
- 4 entries (8)
- 5 partner of Stills and Nash (6)
- 6 like ancient ruins in Belize (5)
- 7 without a topper (10)

AD HEA NG SBY ADE  
RW YAN SP HE TE  
RE MP MA PI CRO  
ERS ED AYS DOO BA

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MCWAA  
SUHEO  
DEGWTI  
SEGITD

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHIMP OOMPH (Answers tomorrow)  
Answer: After not being allowed in, the rabbit was — HOPPING MAD

BONUS CROSSWORD

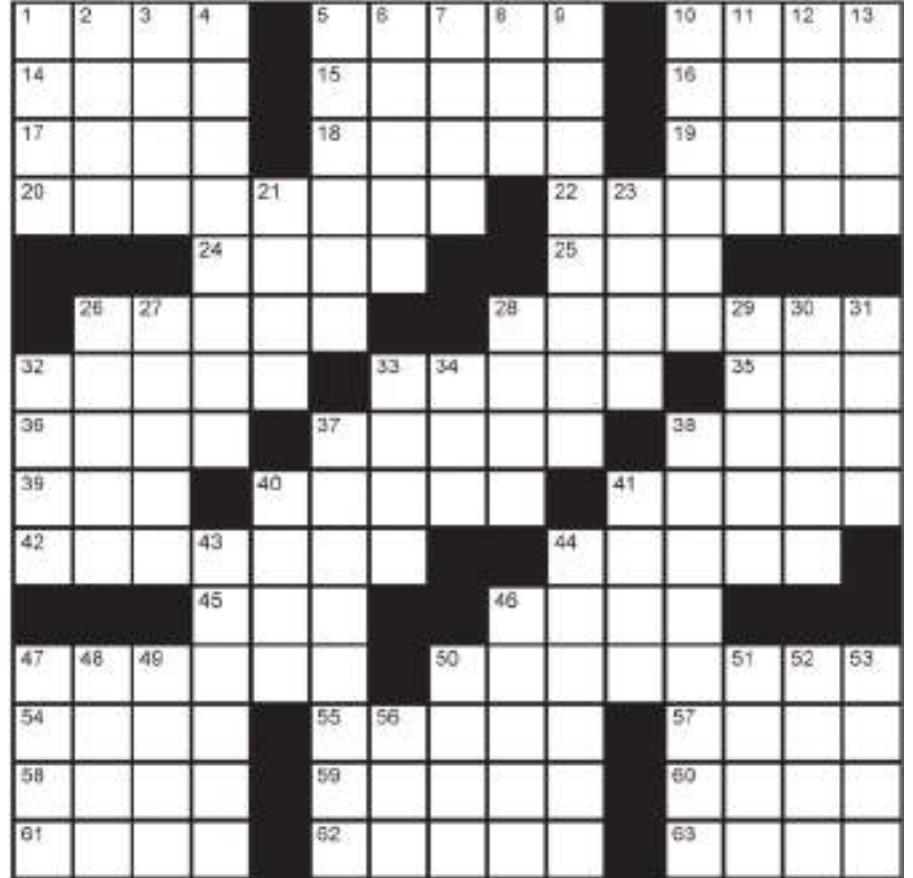
- ACROSS
- 1 Field's yield
  - 5 Jack who ate no fat
  - 10 L.A. team
  - 14 — and hearty
  - 15 24 sheets of paper
  - 16 Diva's song
  - 17 Golden-\_\_\_\_\_
  - 18 No later than
  - 19 Yak
  - 20 Fellow player
  - 22 Fit, as food
  - 24 Cup handles
  - 25 Dove's cry
  - 26 Scratch
  - 28 Glossy coating
  - 32 Woodwind instrument
  - 33 Seize
  - 35 Pair
  - 36 Juicy fruit
  - 37 Seashore
  - 38 Smile broadly
  - 39 Fuss
  - 40 Sheriff's star
  - 41 Yearn for
  - 42 On edge
  - 44 Car pin
  - 45 Badly
  - 46 Ship's company
  - 47 Prepared for impact
  - 50 Big mess
  - 54 Cafe au \_\_\_\_\_
- DOWN
- 1 Gabfest
  - 2 Fury
  - 3 Genus of olives
  - 4 Pass completely through
  - 5 Public space
  - 6 Kicks
  - 7 Ceremony
  - 8 — Ben Canaan
  - 9 On-air show
  - 10 Allotted amount
  - 11 Bedouin
  - 12 Grinding machine
  - 13 "For Pete's —!"
  - 21 Labyrinth
  - 23 Town
  - 25 Move smoothly
  - 27 Hershey
  - 28 Container for flowers
  - 29 Perfect
  - 30 Sophisticated
  - 31 "— improvement"

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED



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- 32 Custard
- 33 Mount Olympus dwellers
- 34 Disreputable paper
- 37 Witches' pot
- 38 Bully
- 40 Tree trunk
- 41 Sci. branch
- 43 Triumphant one
- 44 Vestiges
- 46 Onion relative
- 47 Shapeless mass
- 48 Not common
- 49 — -de-camp
- 50 Narrow opening
- 51 Enticement
- 52 "— go brag!"
- 53 Auctioneer's cry
- 56 The "1"





USA TODAY BEST-SELLING BOOKS BOOKLIST.USATODAY.COM

Rank this week Rank last week

		TITLE/AUTHOR	PUBLISHER	GENRE	C
1	n/a	Counting Miracles/Sparks, Nicholas	Random House	Women	F
2	1	Fourth Wing/Yarros, Rebecca	Entangled: Red Tower Books	Fantasy - Action & Adventure	F
3	n/a	Intermezzo/Rooney, Sally	Farrar, Straus and Giroux	Literary	F
4	n/a	Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Wrath of the Triple Goddess/Riordan, Rick	Disney Hyperion	Action & Adventure - General	F
5	n/a	The Small and the Mighty: Twelve Unsung Americans Who Changed the Course of History, from the Founding to the Civil Rights Movement/McMahon, Sharon	Thesis	American Government - General	NF
6	n/a	Hunting Adeline/Carlton, H D	Zando	Romance - Contemporary	F
7	3	The Book of Bill/Hirsch, Alex	Hyperion Avenue	Humorous - General	F
8	13	The Journey of Leadership: How Ceos Learn to Lead from the Inside Out/Srinivasan, Ramesh	Portfolio	Organizational Behavior	NF
9	n/a	The Child Catcher: A Fight for Justice and Truth/Bridge, Andrew	Regalo Press	Life Stages - Adolescence	NF
10	5	Confronting the Presidents: No Spin Assessments From Washington to Biden/O'Reilly, Bill	St. Martin's Press	General	NF
11	n/a	All the Presidents' Money: How the Men Who Governed America Governed Their Money/Gorman, Megan	Regalo Press	Finance - Wealth Management	NF
12	n/a	Truths: The Future of America First/Ramaswamy, Vivek	Threshold Editions	Political Ideologies - Conservatism & Liberalism	NF
13	19	Bluey: Little Library 4-Book Box Set/Penguin Young Readers Licenses	Penguin Young Readers Licenses	Social Themes - Friendship	F
14	9	Somewhere Beyond the Sea/Klune, TJ	Tor Books	Fantasy - Romantic	F
15	42	The Wild Robot/Brown, Peter	Little, Brown Books for Young Readers	Animals - Bears	F
16	14	You're My Little Baby Boo/Edwards, Nicola	Silver Dolphin Books	Family - General (see also headings under Social Themes)	F
17	n/a	Playground/Powers, Richard	W. W. Norton & Company	Literary	F
18	n/a	Bluey: Awesome Advent Book Bundle/Penguin Young Readers Licenses	Penguin Young Readers Licenses	Media Tie-In	F
19	n/a	I'm Starting to Worry About This Black Box of Doom/Pargin, Jason	St. Martin's Press	Humorous - General	F
20	29	The Pumpkin Spice Café/Gilmore, Laurie	One More Chapter	Romance - Workplace	F
21	n/a	The Most Boring Book Ever/Sanderson, Brandon	Roaring Brook Press	Humorous Stories	F
22	26	A Court of Thorns and Roses/Maas, Sarah J.	Bloomsbury Publishing	Fantasy - Epic	F
23	n/a	Pucking Sweet/Rath, Emily	Kensington Publishing Corporation	Romance - New Adult	F
24	2	Something Lost, Something Gained: Reflections on Life, Love, and Liberty/Clinton, Hillary Rodham	Simon & Schuster	Personal Memoirs	NF
25	11	Good Energy: The Surprising Connection Between Metabolism and Limitless Health/Means, Casey	Avery Publishing Group	Longevity	NF

		TITLE/AUTHOR	PUBLISHER	GENRE	C
26	18	Knight Owl (Caldecott Honor Book)/Denise, Christopher	Christy Ottaviano Books-Little Brown and Hachette	Social Themes - Friendship	F
27	n/a	Construction Site: Garbage Crew to the Rescue!/Rinker, Sherri Duskey	Chronicle Books	Stories in Verse (see also Poetry)	F
28	25	The Edge/Baldacci, David	Grand Central Publishing	Thrillers - Suspense	F
29	n/a	Blessed, Donald J. Trump, and the Spiritual War: How the Battle for the Soul of This Country Began with One Word/Unanue, Bob	Post Hill Press	Commentary & Opinion	NF
30	n/a	Goldfinch/Kennedy, Raven	Bloom Books	Fantasy - Romantic	F
31	n/a	What in the World?: A Southern Woman's Guide to Laughing at Life's Unexpected Curveballs and Beautiful Blessings/Morgan, Leanne	Convergent Books	Women	NF
32	15	Experiencing the American Dream: How to Invest Your Time, Energy, and Money to Create an Extraordinary Life/Matson, Mark	Wiley	Personal Success	NF
33	33	The Women/Hannah, Kristin	St. Martin's Press	Women	F
34	10	We Solve Murders/Osman, Richard	Pamela Dorman Books	Mystery & Detective - General	F
35	12	Here One Moment/Moriarty, Liane	Crown Publishing Group (NY)	Women	F
36	31	You're My Little Pumpkin Pie/Marshall, Natalie	Silver Dolphin Books	Social Themes - Emotions & Feelings	F
37	n/a	The Most Wonderful Crime of the Year/Carter, Ally	Avon Books	Women	F
38	n/a	Spooky Lakes: 25 Strange and Mysterious Lakes That Dot Our Planet/Rutherford, Geo	Abrams Books for Young Readers	Curiosities & Wonders	NF
39	n/a	Got Your Answers: The 100 Greatest Sports Arguments Settled/Hembekides, Paul	Hyperion Avenue	Reference	NF
40	38	The Housemaid/McFadden, Freida	Grand Central Publishing	Psychological	F
41	8	Haunting Adeline/Carlton, H D	Zando	Romance - Contemporary	F
42	41	Demon Copperhead: A Pulitzer Prize Winner/Kingsolver, Barbara	Harper Perennial	Literary	F
43	40	The Life Impossible/Haig, Matt	Viking	Literary	F
44	n/a	Pass the Plate: 100 Delicious, Highly Shareable, Everyday Recipes: A Cookbook/Gelen, Carolina	Clarkson Potter Publishers	Methods - Quick & Easy	NF
45	67	Dog Man: The Scarlet Shedder: A Graphic Novel (Dog Man #12): From the Creator of Captain Underpants/Pilkey, Dav	Graphix	Humorous Stories	F
46	36	Tell Me Everything/Strout, Elizabeth	Random House	Literary	F
47	37	It Starts With Us/Hoover, Colleen	Atria Books	Women	F
48	35	The Reset Mindset: Get Unstuck, Focus on What Matters Most, and Reach Your Goals Faster/Zenker, Penny	Amplify Publishing	Organizational Behavior	NF
49	n/a	Targeted: Beirut: The 1983 Marine Barracks Bombing and the Untold Origin Story of the War on Terror/Carr, Jack	Atria Books	Military - United States	NF
50	44	It Ends With Us/Hoover, Colleen	Atria Books	Women	F

WHAT AMERICA'S READING® The book list appears every Thursday. You also can find it at [booklist.usatoday.com](http://booklist.usatoday.com). Each week, USA TODAY collects sales data from booksellers representing a variety of outlets: bookstore chains, independent bookstores, mass merchandisers and online retailers. Using that data, we determine the 150 top-selling titles of the week.

BOOKS

# Book sanctuaries are growing along with book bans

Clare Mulroy  
USA TODAY

More than 10,000 books were banned in public schools during the 2023-2024 academic year, according to a new PEN America report. American Library Association data shows that while the country saw a decrease in the first eight months of 2024, the number of bans and challenges still exceeds that of 2020, when the increase started.

Book banning, which the ALA defines as restricting access to material by removing temporarily or indefinitely, has been the subject of debate in courts and classrooms, libraries and living rooms.

It has prompted a wave of advocacy. Banned Books Week is one such initiative, and librarians in "book sanctuaries" are standing in solidarity with school libraries facing challenges and bans from politicians and parents alike.

## Libraries set up 'book sanctuaries' to protect the right to read

Though protesting is central to much of the fight against book banning, some libraries are taking quieter, equally impactful steps.

In 2022, the Chicago Public Library declared itself a book sanctuary or "a physical or digital space that actively protects the freedom to read." Book sanctuaries can exist in classrooms, libraries, coffee shops, bookstores and personal collections. Among other things, they collect banned or challenged books and make them available.

Chicago has a decadeslong history of fighting book banning. It was the first public library in the country to issue an intellectual freedom statement in 1936, even before the ALA's Library Bill of Rights. It even housed the ALA when it was first established, says Chris Brown, Chicago Public Library commissioner.

"As these book challenges were on the rise, we were really at a moment (of) reflecting on our history and our core values and realizing that we want to remind everyone what we stand for," Brown says.

From there, the movement cascaded. Libraries around the country reached out to Chicago. Today there are more than 4,000 book sanctuaries throughout the

U.S.

Hoboken Public Library became the first book sanctuary in New Jersey in 2023 after it hosted a banned-book readathon, which prompted social media attacks, most from outside the community. Taking a stand as a book sanctuary was a way to "uplift the majority statement," says library director Jennie Pu. The community saw overwhelming support, she says. Later, the entire city declared itself as a Book Sanctuary City.

"This declaration to the world, saying, we don't censor, we don't ban books. In fact, we actively collect books and stories that are being banned," Pu says.

The majority of Americans don't support banning books. One ALA survey of nearly 1,500 voters and public school parents found that 71% oppose removing books from public libraries, including a majority of Democrats, Republicans and independents. A 2023 NPR poll found similar numbers across party lines.

## Book sanctuaries see broad community support

In Kentucky, Paris-Bourbon County Library declared itself a "First Amendment library" after one family challenged 102 books in a short period. Most of the titles related to the experiences of marginalized people. Removing them would have been "antithetical to everything that I believed in," director Mark Adler told USA TODAY.

He waited until a board meeting to make his decision – if the community was OK with the removal, he would resign. If they opposed the challenges, he would "stay and fight for them."

Those opposed to book removals outnumbered supporters by the hundreds.

"We had people across the political spectrum, we have people from both of the major parties on (the board) and they were highly supportive. They don't feel anybody has the right to tell somebody else what to read, and certainly not to tell somebody else's children what to read," Adler says.

Recent legislation across the US allows removal and objection to school library titles containing sexual content, even if that content is not pornographic. Some have used that provision to challenge titles containing mention of sexual



Hoboken Public Library's display. PROVIDED BY HOBOKEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

violence or an LGBTQ+ person or relationship.

According to the American Library Association, 47% of the 4,240 unique book titles targeted for censorship in 2023 were about or by LGBTQ+ people and people of color.

"Our collections have to be diverse and be a reflection of our society we live in, meaning you can't just have one kind of viewpoint represented," Pu says. Book sanctuaries "provide at least some baseline protection so a librarian can do our job and curate a thoughtful, diverse collection of all kinds of voices."

Even in Texas, a state with the second-highest number of book bans, the Harris County Public Library system felt an outpouring of support when it declared itself and its branches a book sanctuary.

Though being a book sanctuary doesn't provide any legal guardrails, it helps the staff feel comfortable doing their jobs without the threat of retaliation. It's also a comfort to know the Commissioner's Court, the local governing body, supports the right to read in Harris County, says director Edward Melton.

"We thought initially this would be treading into some shark-infested water – it really hasn't been that experience," he says.

Since adopting the resolution last

year, Harris County has fully embraced the fight against book banning. The county authorized a mural downtown protesting book bans. It has hosted concerts and book talks for Banned Books Week.

Chicago has seen similar support. A year after the public library declared itself a book sanctuary, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed a bill making Illinois the first state to outlaw book banning.

## 'A fundamental right'

Much of the book banning debate gets lost in semantics, Melton says. He approached the question by going back to basics. When he uses the phrases "intellectual freedom" and "censorship," he says people connect the dots about what's really happening.

Similarly, that's why Adler and the Paris-Bourbon County Library opted for the phrase "First Amendment library."

"I don't care what your background is, what you're interested in reading," Adler says. "If you're interested or have some drive to learn about something, my responsibility as a librarian is to help you find your material."

Before becoming a book sanctuary, Melton recommends librarians first have a conversation with local government officials to cut above the other politically charged language they may have heard.

"In America, no one wants to be censored. Everyone wants to be able to have intellectual freedom in terms of choosing what they read or choosing what information they consume," Melton says. "It's a fundamental right people really embrace. So if you start talking about taking away someone's intellectual freedom, that's when the community really gets up in arms."

And though the libraries are on the front lines, Brown says, anyone can get involved. For influencers, it could be making a video about banned books. For cafes and bookstores, it could be displaying frequently challenged titles.

"The more we have voices pointing out the importance of this that aren't necessarily working in the field, the more it sends a message that this is an important issue and this is something that affects people."

Contributing: Anna Kaufman



# NATION & WORLD EXTRA

INSIDE

Biden, Harris tour parts of Southeast ravaged by Helene. 5NN

## Filing shows Trump's 2020 plan

Details claims ex-president tried to overturn election

Andrew Goudswaard  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Prosecutors said Donald Trump was acting outside the scope of his duties as president when he pressured state officials and then-Vice President Mike Pence to try to overturn his 2020 election defeat, in a court filing

made public on Wednesday.

The 165-page filing is likely the last opportunity for prosecutors to detail their case against Trump before the Nov. 5 election given there will not be a trial before Trump faces Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris.

The filing is meant to keep the federal criminal election subversion case



Smith

Prosecutors working with Special Counsel Jack Smith laid out a sweeping account of Trump's conduct following the 2020 election, much of which has

already been made public through news reports, findings from the House committee that investigated the Capitol riot or the indictment obtained by Smith in the case.

It includes an allegation that a White House staffer heard Trump tell family members that "it doesn't matter if you won or lost the election. You still have to fight like hell."

See TRUMP, Page 6NN

### CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## ISRAEL STRIKES HEART OF BEIRUT

As one-year anniversary of fighting approaches forces suffer deadliest day on Lebanese front

Timour Azhari and Ari Rabinovitch  
REUTERS

BEIRUT – Israel bombed central Beirut in the early hours of Thursday, killing at least six people, after its forces suffered their deadliest day on the Lebanese front in a year of clashes against Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

Israel said it conducted a precise air strike on Beirut. Reuters witnesses reported hearing a massive blast, and a security source said it targeted a building in central Beirut's Bachoura neighborhood close to parliament, the nearest Israeli strikes have come to Lebanon's seat of government.

At least six people were killed and seven wounded, Lebanese health officials said. A photo being circulated on Lebanese WhatsApp groups, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed a heavily damaged building with its first floor on fire.

Three missiles also hit the southern suburb of Dahiyeh, where Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed last week, and loud explosions were heard, Lebanese security officials said. The southern suburbs came under more than a dozen Israeli strikes on Wednesday.

See ISRAEL, Page 7NN

Smoke clouds erupt during an Israeli airstrike on Khiam, southern Lebanon, on Wednesday. Israel said eight soldiers were killed in ground combat in south Lebanon as its forces thrust into its northern neighbor.

AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



## DHS says AI could influence November election

Ted Hesson  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – The U.S. sees a growing threat of Russia, Iran and China attempting to influence the Nov. 5 elections, including by using artificial intelligence to disseminate fake or divisive information, according to an annual U.S. threat assessment released on Wednesday.

Russian "influence actors" have amplified stories about migrants entering the U.S. in an attempt to stoke discord, according to the Department of Homeland Security report, and have used generative AI to create fake websites that appeared to be authentic U.S.-based media outlets.

Iran has become "increasingly aggressive in its foreign influence efforts," the report said. In one example, Iranian actors posed as activists online to encourage protests over the conflict in Gaza, DHS said.

The U.S. is gearing up for a close presidential election between Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, and Republican former President Donald Trump that could further inflame partisan tensions and offer opportunities for foreign adversaries to try to disrupt the democratic process.

The DHS assessment anticipates Russia, Iran and China "will use a blend of subversive, undeclared, criminal, and coercive tactics to seek new opportunities to undermine confidence in U.S. democratic institutions and domestic social cohesion."

Domestic violent extremists pose another serious threat, according to the report. Trump already has been the target of two alleged assassination attempts.

The report said it expects domestic extremists to attempt violent actions "with the intent of instilling fear among voters, candidates, and election workers, as well as disrupting election processes."

Among those actors, lone offenders or small cells motivated by grievances related to race, religion, gender or anti-government views pose the biggest threat, the report said.

## 'Midwestern nice' debate gives voters a break

Running mates add diversity to polarized presidential tickets

Stephanie Kelly  
REUTERS

NEW YORK – Americans who watched the vice presidential debate between Democrat Tim Walz and Republican JD Vance were in for a big surprise: a cordial tone and an emphasis on ideas the two have in common.

Walz, who is Vice President Kamala

Harris' running mate, and Vance, who is former President Donald Trump's vice presidential pick, shared what might be called a "Midwestern nice" approach to Tuesday night's more than 90-minute discourse.

They shook hands at the start and lingered afterward to introduce their wives. It was a welcome relief for some U.S. voters unhappy with the tenor of politics in the run-up to the Nov. 5 election.

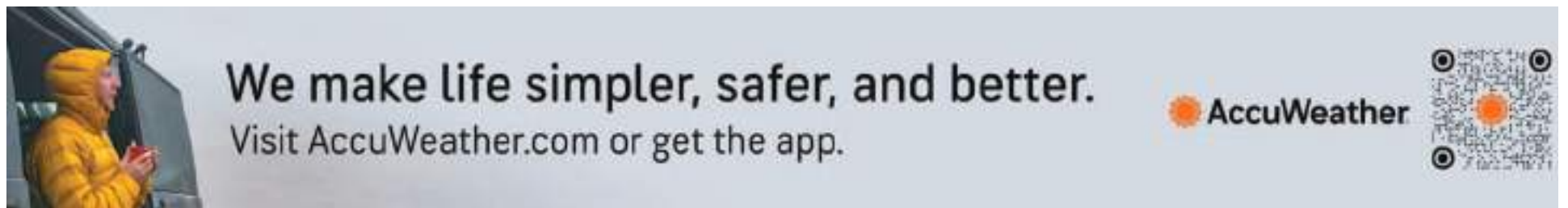
"So refreshing to have a normal debate for once," wrote Robert Rubin-Beman

See DEBATE, Page 6NN



Usha Vance, left, wife of Ohio Sen. JD Vance, and Gwen Walz, wife of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, join the vice presidential candidates on stage after the conclusion of Tuesday's debate in New York. MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS

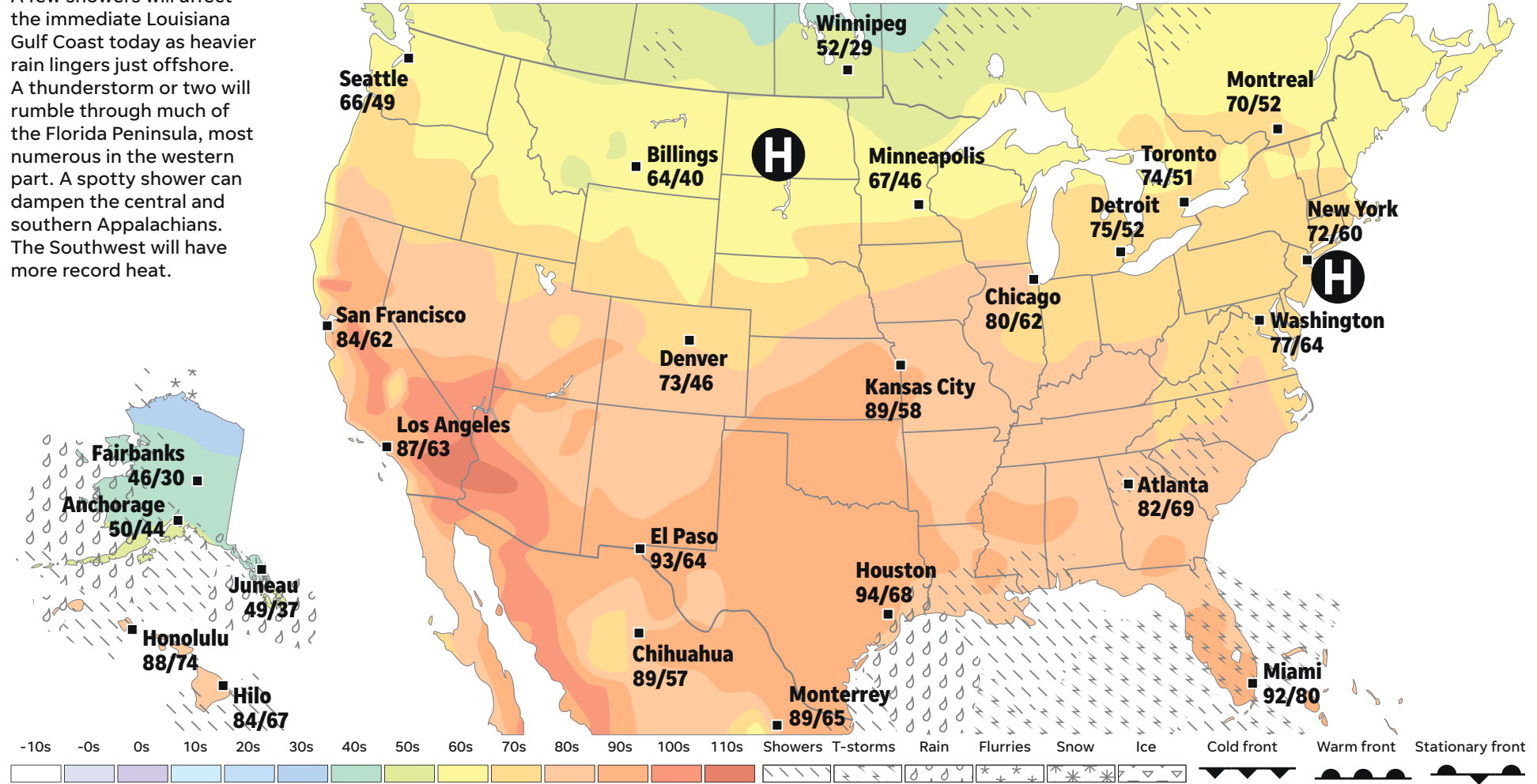




**NATIONAL SUMMARY**

A few showers will affect the immediate Louisiana Gulf Coast today as heavier rain lingers just offshore. A thunderstorm or two will rumble through much of the Florida Peninsula, most numerous in the western part. A spotty shower can dampen the central and southern Appalachians. The Southwest will have more record heat.

In the digital e-edition, you can click anywhere on the US map to get up-to-date forecasts, radar, MinuteCast® and more. Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation for Thursday. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



**WEDNESDAY EXTREMES**

**NATIONAL** (for the 48 contiguous states)  
**High:** 110 at Palm Springs, CA  
**Low:** 16 at Yellowstone N.P., WY  
**Precip:** 0.23" at Cocoa Beach, FL

**INTERNATIONAL** (excludes Antarctica)  
**High:** 110 at Palm Springs, USA  
**Low:** 4 at Batagay, Russia  
**Precip:** 6.85" at Sittwe, Myanmar

**TODAY IN HISTORY**

On Oct. 3, 1979, Connecticut's first recorded October tornado struck north of Hartford. The twister killed three, injured 500 and caused over \$200 million in damage in the area around Bradley International Airport.

**WEATHER TRIVIA™**

**Q:** What is the record low temperature for the lower 48 states in October?

A: -46 on Oct. 30, 2019, in Peter Sinks, UT.

**NATIONAL CITIES THURSDAY**

City	High/Low/W	Air Quality	City	High/Low/W	Air Quality	City	High/Low/W	Air Quality	City	High/Low/W	Air Quality
Aberdeen, SD	65/37/pc	37	Evansville, IN	80/55/s	57	Levittown, PA	77/55/pc	52	Rochester, NY	74/50/pc	37
Abilene, TX	93/65/s	57	Fall River, MA	72/53/pc	40	Lincoln, IL	81/51/s	55	Rockford, IL	79/54/pc	50
Accomac, VA	74/58/pc	30	Farmington, NM	88/47/s	77	Louisville, KY	79/60/s	61	Ruidoso, NM	81/49/s	66
Adrian, MI	77/48/pc	53	Fayetteville, NC	82/62/pc	44	Lubbock, TX	92/58/s	57	Salem, OR	78/47/s	51
Akron, OH	75/53/pc	51	Fond du Lac, WI	73/52/s	47	Manitowoc, WI	70/54/s	37	Salina, KS	91/55/s	55
Alamogordo, NM	92/55/s	68	Fort Myers, FL	92/76/t	37	Mansfield, OH	76/51/pc	51	Salinas, CA	96/62/pc	94
Alexandria, VA	77/62/pc	53	Fort Smith, AR	91/60/s	63	Marshall, NC	80/60/pc	42	Salisbury, MD	76/56/pc	34
Alliance, OH	76/49/pc	51	Framingham, MA	74/51/pc	42	Marshfield, WI	67/42/s	57	San Angelo, TX	93/60/s	57
Amarillo, TX	93/53/s	55	Freeport, IL	78/52/pc	46	Massillon, OH	77/52/pc	52	Sarasota, FL	91/75/t	71
Ames, IA	80/47/s	59	Fremont, OH	78/52/pc	52	McLean, VA	76/60/pc	52	Savannah, GA	86/71/s	48
Anderson, SC	82/67/s	47	Fort Collins, CO	73/41/s	67	Melbourne, FL	88/76/t	34	Sheboygan, WI	71/57/s	39
Appleton, WI	74/48/s	42	Gadsden, AL	86/66/s	47	Memphis, TN	85/65/s	68	Shelby, NC	82/65/pc	44
Asheville, NC	78/62/pc	43	Gainesville, FL	90/72/c	45	Middletown, NY	73/49/pc	50	Sherman, TX	96/62/s	67
Ashland, OH	76/51/pc	52	Galesburg, IL	81/56/pc	50	Milford, MA	72/51/pc	43	Shreveport, LA	92/62/s	65
Athens, GA	84/66/pc	50	Gastonia, NC	82/65/pc	44	Milwaukee, WI	73/57/pc	44	Silver City, NM	90/57/s	64
Augusta, GA	86/64/s	47	Glen Rose, TX	95/62/s	73	Monroe, MI	75/49/pc	52	Sioux Falls, SD	70/40/s	104
Austin, TX	95/65/s	60	Gonzales, LA	87/73/sh	44	Monroe, LA	89/65/s	64	Somerset, PA	73/53/pc	51
Bartlesville, OK	95/57/s	68	Great Falls, MT	63/41/s	49	Montgomery, AL	88/71/pc	48	Somerville, NJ	76/53/pc	52
Battle Creek, MI	75/51/pc	51	Green Bay, WI	73/46/s	39	Muncie, IN	78/49/pc	51	South Bend, IN	77/51/pc	54
Bedford, IN	76/52/s	51	Greenville, SC	82/66/pc	48	Murfreesboro, TN	86/62/s	46	Spartanburg, SC	81/64/pc	53
Binghamton, NY	69/51/pc	41	Hackensack, NJ	74/58/pc	53	Naples, FL	92/76/t	36	Springfield, IL	80/51/s	64
Bluffton, SC	84/71/sh	45	Hagerstown, MD	75/60/pc	50	Nashville, TN	85/65/s	51	Springfield, MO	88/58/s	73
Bremerton, WA	65/43/pc	51	Hattiesburg, MS	90/70/pc	54	Neptune, NJ	71/59/pc	50	St. Augustine, FL	85/76/sh	41
Brockton, MA	72/51/pc	39	Henderson, KY	80/53/s	52	New Bedford, MA	71/52/pc	39	St. Cloud, MN	65/35/c	127
Brownwood, TX	93/62/s	62	Hendersonville, NC	77/60/pc	44	New Bern, NC	81/63/pc	31	St. George, UT	98/62/s	53
Burlington, IA	82/57/s	52	Herkimer, NY	74/49/pc	42	New Philadelphia, OH	78/49/pc	51	Staunton, VA	74/59/pc	36
Burlington, NC	78/62/pc	33	Hillsdale, MI	75/47/pc	52	Newark, OH	79/47/pc	52	Stevens Point, WI	70/42/s	42
Burlington, VT	73/52/pc	29	Holland, MI	71/51/pc	49	Newton, NJ	73/51/pc	51	Stockton, CA	104/63/s	98
Cambridge, OH	79/49/pc	51	Holland, MI	71/51/pc	49	New York, NY	72/60/pc	55	Stroudsburg, PA	73/52/pc	52
Camdenton, MO	89/57/s	49	Houma, LA	83/74/sh	40	Norwich, CT	71/49/pc	37	Stuart, FL	89/78/t	35
Canandaigua, NY	73/50/pc	43	Howell, MI	75/49/pc	52	Ocala, FL	90/73/t	43	Sturgis, MI	75/49/pc	52
Canton, OH	76/52/pc	52	Hutchinson, KS	95/55/s	51	Oklahoma City, OK	93/62/s	75	Tallahassee, FL	89/74/c	51
Carlsbad, NM	91/58/s	74	Hyannis, MA	67/54/pc	38	Opelousas, LA	91/69/sh	53	Thibodaux, LA	83/73/sh	40
Chambersburg, PA	76/59/pc	51	Indianapolis, IN	77/53/pc	52	Oshkosh, WI	72/50/s	41	Topeka, KS	93/58/s	61
Cherry Hill, NJ	77/56/pc	53	Iowa City, IA	81/54/pc	51	Palm Beach, FL	90/81/t	34	Tuscaloosa, AL	89/69/pc	54
Cincinnati, OH	78/55/s	50	Ithaca, NY	71/49/pc	46	Palm Springs, CA	111/81/s	88	Utica, NY	71/48/pc	39
Clarksville, TN	82/60/s	47	Jackson, MS	90/69/pc	64	Panama City, FL	86/73/c	51	Ventura, CA	71/60/pc	71
Clarksburg, WV	75/47/pc	52	Jackson, TN	85/60/s	54	Pekin, IL	82/55/s	50	Victorville, CA	102/62/s	84
Columbus, OH	78/53/pc	51	Jacksonville, FL	85/73/sh	47	Pensacola, FL	85/73/c	55	Vineland, NJ	77/52/pc	50
Corning, NY	74/48/pc	51	Jacksonville, NC	81/62/pc	31	Peoria, IL	82/57/s	57	Visalia, CA	103/61/s	114
Corpus Christi, TX	92/70/s	64	Kent, OH	75/49/pc	52	Petersburg, VA	79/59/pc	35	Washington, DC	77/64/pc	52
Daytona Beach, FL	88/76/t	40	Kewanee, IL	81/56/pc	53	Phoenix, AZ	109/80/s	95	Watertown, SD	63/38/pc	104
Deming, NM	93/59/s	69	Keyser, WV	78/57/pc	50	Port Huron, MI	74/48/pc	44	Wausau, WI	68/40/s	40
DeRidder, LA	90/67/pc	57	Kinston, NC	81/60/pc	35	Portsmouth, NH	72/53/pc	37	Waynesboro, PA	76/60/pc	51
Des Moines, IA	81/53/s	50	Knoxville, TN	83/66/s	44	Poughkeepsie, NY	75/53/pc	40	White Plains, NY	73/56/pc	44
Detroit, MI	75/52/pc	52	Lafayette, IN	78/49/pc	52	Providence, RI	70/53/pc	39	Wichita Falls, TX	98/63/s	61
Devils Lake, ND	59/40/s	29	Lafayette, LA	91/73/sh	54	Pueblo, CO	87/42/s	50	Wilmington, DE	75/57/pc	52
Dover, NH	71/49/pc	33	Lakeland, FL	90/75/t	45	Quincy, MA	72/54/pc	46	Wilmington, NC	82/64/pc	32
El Paso, TX	93/64/s	76	Lansing, MI	75/50/pc	51	Redding, CA	99/60/s	76	Wisconsin Rapids, WI	71/43/s	47
Elmira, NY	74/48/pc	50	Las Cruces, NM	92/59/s	70	Reno, NV	92/55/s	66	Wooster, OH	77/48/pc	51
Erie, PA	71/54/pc	43	Lebanon, PA	76/55/pc	53	Ravenna, OH	75/48/pc	52	Worcester, MA	71/55/pc	44
Eugene, OR	76/44/s	51	Leesburg, FL	90/74/t	41	Richmond, IN	76/49/pc	52	York, PA	77/58/pc	53

Air Quality Index: 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous

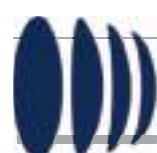
**INTERNATIONAL CITIES**

City	Thursday High/Low/W	Friday High/Low/W	City	Thursday High/Low/W	Friday High/Low/W	City	Thursday High/Low/W	Friday High/Low/W	City	Thursday High/Low/W	Friday High/Low/W
Acapulco	84/77/t	83/76/r	Cape Town	86/54/pc	91/57/pc	La Paz	63/38/sh	63/34/pc	San Jose	78/65/t	81/66/r
Addis Ababa	72/54/sh	73/53/pc	Caracas	88/75/s	88/75/t	Lagos	84/77/r	83/77/t	San Salvador	80/68/t	83/70/t
Algiers	80/59/sh	78/60/t	Casablanca	82/67/pc	81/65/pc	Lima	69/60/c	69/60/pc	Santiago	79/50/c	80/49/pc
Amman	84/63/s	88/64/s	Colombo	89/80/t	88/81/t	Lisbon	77/64/c	76/66/pc	Sao Paulo	69/58/sh	66/56/c
Amsterdam	59/42/pc	60/40/s	Copenhagen	58/44/s	58/44/s	London	61/45/s	62/47/pc	Sarajevo	66/58/r	71/50/r
Ankara	77/45/s	81/44/s	Damascus	86/52/s	91/54/s	Madrid	78/51/s	77/51/pc	Shanghai	75/61/c	78/69/pc
Asuncion	80/57/s	89/71/s	Dublin	58/52/pc	60/55/c	Manila	91/79/pc	89/79/t	Singapore	88/77/sh	88/77/t
Athens	81/67/s	84/72/s	Geneva	58/49/pc	56/44/s	Mexico City	71/56/sh	70/60/r	Stockholm	52/33/s	54/38/pc
Auckland	63/47/pc	64/53/pc	Guatemala City	74/63/t	76/62/t	Milan	60/55/r	62/47/sh	Sydney	68/54/pc	73/61/pc
Baghdad	94/71/pc	95/69/pc	Hanoi	87/70/pc	88/70/pc	Mombasa	88/71/r	87/74/s	Taipei	79/74/r	87/76/r
Bangkok	88/77/pc	90/78/s	Harare	76/50/s	75/48/pc	Montevideo	62/46/s	69/52/c	Tegucigalpa	82/66/t	85/66/t
Beijing	73/45/s	71/47/s	Havana	88/75/sh	89/75/t	Montreal	70/52/s	71/53/pc	Tehran	85/61/s	82/60/s
Beirut	83/72/s	84/73/s	Helsinki	53/42/s	53/45/s	Moscow	70/50/pc	56/48/pc	Tokyo	78/74/t	86/70/c
Belgrade	68/62/r	68/51/c	Hong Kong	84/73/pc	86/74/c	Nairobi	79/57/pc	81/61/pc	Toronto	74/51/pc	70/50/c
Berlin	56/48/sh	59/44/sh	Jakarta	93/77/t	94/78/sh	New Delhi	96/80/s	95/80/s	Tunis	90/67/pc	81/64/pc
Bogota	68/47/sh	67/50/sh	Jerusalem	80/60/s	82/62/s	Panama City	88/74/t	88/74/t	Vancouver	58/49/pc	57/49/r
Brussels	56/40/pc	59/39/s	Johannesburg	72/42/s	73/43/s	Paris	59/43/pc	62/41/s	Vienna	58/48/c	53/49/sh
Bucharest	76/54/c	79/60/pc	Kabul	82/60/s	82/59/s	Port-au-Prince	95/74/s	95/75/s	Warsaw	56/48/c	55/48/c
Budapest	57/53/sh	57/50/r	Khartoum	104/83/s	104/82/s	Rio de Janeiro	79/72/pc	74/68/sh	Yerevan	67/49/s	70/49/s
Buenos Aires	65/55/s	70/59/c	Kyiv	69/55/c	66/60/c	Riyadh	104/82/s	100/80/pc	Zagreb	55/49/r	55/47/r
Cairo	86/71/s	87/69/s	Kingston	90/78/t	90/79/t	Rome	73/60/sh	69/56/sh	Zurich	56/46/pc	52/43/sh

Denotes possible travel delays Thursday

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.





## NEED TO KNOW

## Hoping for a thaw

Freedom of information advocacy group Reporters Without Borders once concluded that Bulgarian media mogul and political boss Delyan Peevski embodied the "corruption and collusion between media, politicians, and oligarchs."

Many Bulgarians agree. Around a decade ago they took to the streets to protest against Peevski's role in politics due to his unsavory relationship with former Prime Minister Boyko Borisov. The U.S. has also slapped sanctions on Peevski for corruption.

"Peevski has significant control over the judiciary and the security services and Mr. Borisov has old sins that he is afraid (will be punished) if there are real working courts and prosecutors," another former prime minister, Kiril Petkov, told Politico. "So Borisov brings the votes and Peevski guarantees that the current institutions do not pose risks."

Borisov has now distanced himself from Peevski due to the latter's unpopularity, reported Radio Free Europe. Longtime leaders of Peevski's Movement for Rights and Freedoms party, which traditionally represents the Turkish minority in the country, have also expressed anger at Peevski's moves to kick them out so he can solidify control of the party.

These changes come after the election in June that resulted in yet another political impasse, when Bulgarian President Rumen Radev rejected then-interim Prime Minister Goritsa Grancharova's proposed government choice for interior minister, Kalin Stoyanov – a Peevski ally – Balkan Insight explained.

Radev has now scheduled a new vote for Oct. 27. No one is expected to win a clear majority.



## THE WORLD BRIEFLY

## Getting back to African roots

Benin has approved a law that would allow the descendants of African slaves taken to the Americas to become citizens of the small West African nation, a move that comes as the country grapples with its own role in its history of slavery, Bloomberg reported Tuesday.

According to the new law, which was passed by the legislature last month, any person who can trace their ancestry back to a victim of the transatlantic slave trade and who is not a citizen of another African country "may acquire Beninese citizenship by recognition."

Applicants can provide a variety of documentation as proof, including a DNA test confirming sub-Saharan African lineage. The applicant can also transfer their Beninese citizenship to their descendants.

Many European traders bought captives from African middlemen in what was then known as the Kingdom

of Dahomey. The port city of Ouidah in modern-day Benin was one of the region's largest slave trading hubs between the 18th and 19th centuries, where more than a million men, women and children were captured and put onto ships headed toward the Americas, including the United States and Brazil.

"Our brothers and sisters of the Diaspora, uprooted by force during the dark days of the transatlantic slave trade, must find their place once again within the African community," Benin's Foreign Minister Olushegun Adjadi Bakari said Saturday in an address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Over the past few years, Benin has explored its transatlantic slave-trading history, building museums and memorial sites to document its complicated past.

In neighboring Ghana, which also contains the remnants of European slave trading posts, more than a hundred African Americans have been granted citizenship since 2019, including the iconic musician Stevie Wonder earlier this year.

## DISCOVERIES

## The bubbles of life found in sea

Scientists recently discovered a small "scuba-diving" lizard species in Costa Rica's jungles that can elude predators by diving underwater.

Meet the water anole, a semi-aquatic creature about the size of a pencil that can stay underwater for at least 20 minutes, according to a new study.

These lizards don't have gills, but they can form a small air bubble on top of their heads to stay underwater to avoid becoming a snack.

"Anoles are kind of like the chicken nuggets of the forest," researcher and study co-author Lindsey Swierk said in a statement. "Birds eat them, snakes eat them."

Swierk and her colleagues described the lizard's bubble-making mechanism and its functional role in a new paper – the lizard has special skin that allows air bubbles to form and remain in place.

They discovered this after experiments in which they took a group of anoles and separated them into two groups: One group was covered with a substance that prevented the formation of bubbles, while the control group was left untreated.

The team then tested how many bubbles each group would form and how long they could "rebreath" underwater. Not surprisingly, the control group could stay below the surface 32 percent longer than the lizards with the anti-bubble coating.

"This is really significant because this is the first experiment that truly shows the adaptive significance of bubbles," Swierk noted.

Researchers are now exploring whether the lizards are using the bubbles as a "physical gill" – to breathe underwater just like some insect species do.

# Amid ongoing war, Jewish pilgrims celebrate New Year in Ukraine

Sergiy Karazy  
REUTERS

UMAN, Ukraine – Huge crowds of Israeli ultra-Orthodox Jews celebrated the Jewish New Year in the Ukrainian city of Uman on Wednesday, as unfazed by news of Iranian missiles raining on Israel as they were by the risk of Russian attacks on Ukraine during their visit.

Tens of thousands of followers of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th century, gather in Uman every year to honor the rabbi, who chose the Ukrainian city as his resting place and was buried there in 1810.

This year's Rosh Hashanah coincided with a sweeping ballistic missile attack on Israel by Iran, a potentially dangerous new phase in the war triggered by the Hamas-led assault on Israel last October.

But the news from home did not dampen the euphoric mood in Uman, about 125 miles south of Kyiv, where the streets were filled with the sound of chants and rhythmic clapping.

"Everyone is good because we have God. That's it, there's nothing to worry about," said one of the visitors, who gave only his first name, Israel.



A young Jewish pilgrim prays along a street close to the tomb of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov on Tuesday in Uman, Ukraine. Pilgrims are in the city for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. ANATOLII STEPANOV/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

More than 30,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews arrived in Uman for Rosh Hashanah, according to the United Jewish Community of Ukraine. Another 14,000 were unable to reach the city, some of them because Iran's attack thwarted

their travel plans.

Asked whether they had any concerns about the threat from Russia, which has been hitting Ukraine with missiles, drones and bombs as part of its full-scale invasion launched in

"I feel bad (about the Iranian attack) but God has chosen us and saved us."

Avihai  
Jewish pilgrim in Ukraine

2022, pilgrim after pilgrim said they had none.

"Ukraine is safer than Israel. If you want a safe place, you come to Ukraine," said Akiva, who did not wish to give his surname, joking that the distance from Uman to the Russian border was greater than the entire length of Israel.

He said he had called relatives back home when he heard about the Iranian missiles.

"I called, but in the bomb shelter there was no reception. So after they got out of the bomb shelter, we called up. They were good, perfect," he said.

Several of the fervently religious visitors said they believed God was protecting the Jewish people, whether in Israel or in Ukraine.

"I feel bad (about the Iranian attack) but God has chosen us and saved us," said Avihai, who also did not give his surname.

# Pope Francis hosts Synod of Bishops meeting

## Pontiff defends giving lay Catholics voting power

Joshua McElwee  
REUTERS

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis opened a global Catholic summit on Wednesday with a warning that delegates should not seek to foist pet agendas onto the assembly, an apparent attempt to prevent discussions bogging down in divisive issues such as women's ordination.

At a Mass in St. Peter's Square to open the event, known as a Synod of Bishops, he told the hundreds of cardinals, bishops and lay people taking part

not to treat their contributions at the month-long summit as "agendas to be imposed".

"Otherwise we will end up locking ourselves into dialogues among the deaf, where participants seek to advance their own causes or agendas without listening to others."

The Vatican summit, which aims to chart the future of the Catholic Church and includes 368 voting members from more than 110 countries, drew fierce censure from the pope's conservative critics at an earlier session last year.

The critics expressed particular concern about plans to discuss blessings for same-sex couples and to allow women

to be deacons – Church ministers who are ordained like priests but cannot celebrate Mass.

Francis, 87, told the delegates Wednesday they should be "ready even to sacrifice (their) own point of view in order to give life to something new."

At the summit's first working session, Francis appeared to respond to conservative Catholics who last year sharply criticized some of his recent reforms of the synod.

One major change involved the gathering's membership.

In past decades, synod sessions mainly had cardinals, bishops and priests as full voting members. But last year Francis introduced reforms to in-

crease the number of lay members, and included women as full voting members for the first time. Nearly 60 women are voting members again in 2024.

The pope told synod members he "acted in continuity" with a series of major reforms undertaken by the Church in the 1960s, which emphasized the role of all Catholics in the global institution.

Also included in this year's synod are 16 "fraternal delegates" from other Christian denominations, who attend as observers. Discussions at the gathering take place largely behind closed doors.

The 2024 assembly is scheduled to vote on a final document on Oct. 26.



# Dockworker union talks stalled

**Biden presses port employers, saying 'it's time' for them to bargain**

**Doyinsola Oladipo and David Shepardson**  
REUTERS

NEW YORK – A strike by 45,000 dockworkers halting shipments at East and Gulf Coast ports entered its second day on Wednesday with no negotiations currently scheduled between the two sides, sources told Reuters.

The lack of progress is raising concerns among those reliant on shipments that the disruption could be prolonged.

The International Longshoremen's Association union strike has blocked goods from food to automobile shipments across dozens of ports from Maine to Texas, which analysts warn will cost the economy billions of dollars a day.

The Biden administration has put pressure on U.S. port employers to raise their offer to secure a deal with dockworkers to end the strike.

"They made incredible profits, over 800% profit since the pandemic, and the owners are making tens of millions of dollars from this," Biden told reporters Wednesday. "It's time for them to sit at the table and get this strike done."

Economists have said the strike will not initially raise consumer prices as



**A port worker participates in a strike Wednesday at the Portsmouth Marine Terminal in Virginia.**

JOSE LUIS GONZALEZ/REUTERS

companies accelerated shipments in recent months for key goods. However, a prolonged stoppage will eventually filter through, with food prices likely to react first, according to Morgan Stanley economists.

Packaged food maker Conagra bought ingredients ahead of time and

has been working with suppliers for months to prepare for the strike, CEO Sean Connolly said Wednesday. "If it becomes a protracted issue, it will be a bigger issue for everybody," he said.

More than 38 container vessels were backed up at U.S. ports by Tuesday, compared with just three on Sunday before the strike, according to Everstream Analytics.

Crock-Pot maker Newell Brands has hundreds of containers filled with items manufactured in Asia arriving at West Coast ports this week after being rerouted from the East Coast two to three months ago.

The company said that there is a "little bit of a backup" at West Coast ports but that they're still operating at full capacity.

The ILA, which represents 45,000 port workers, launched its strike on Tuesday after negotiations with the United States Maritime Alliance for a new six-year contract collapsed. The union is seeking a \$5-per-hour wage hike each year over six years.

"The companies need to put forward an offer that's going to get the workers to the table," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said Wednesday. "We actually think the parties economically are not as far apart from each other as they may think."

The USMX said on Wednesday that they are focused on resuming negotiations, but they "cannot agree to precon-

ditions to return to bargaining."

The strike, the ILA's first major stoppage since 1977, affects 36 ports – including New York, Baltimore and Houston – that handle a range of containerized goods ranging from bananas to clothing to cars. The walkout could cost the American economy roughly \$5 billion a day, JP Morgan analysts estimate.

Retailers accounting for about half of all container shipping volume said they have been implementing plans to minimize the effect of the strike as they head into the winter holiday sales season.

Isaac Larian, CEO of MGA Entertainment, which makes Bratz brand dolls, said about 10% to 15% of holiday season toys haven't been delivered to the United States yet, but otherwise inventories should be well stocked. He said he is more concerned about spring 2025, as products need to be shipped in November or December, dates that would be endangered if the strike lingers.

The National Retail Federation on Wednesday called on Biden's administration to use its federal authority to halt the strike, saying the walkout could have "devastating consequences" for the economy.

"The longer the strike action goes on and the longer it takes the U.S. government to intervene, the deeper the damage will be to the economy and the longer it will take for ocean supply chains to recover," said Peter Sand, chief analyst at shipping data company Xeneta.

## Port strikes disrupt hamburger supplies, frozen seafood

**Tom Polansek and P.J. Huffstutter**  
REUTERS

CHICAGO – Striking dockworkers are preventing imports of beef that restaurants and retailers increasingly rely on to make hamburgers due to limited domestic supplies, traders and industry members said.

The labor strike blocks everything from shipments of automobiles to containers filled with Guatemalan bananas and Italian wine from loading or unloading at dozens of ports from Maine to Texas. Along with beef, imports of seafood and U.S. exports of chicken are being disrupted.

Even short-term disruptions to shipments could snarl the broader food supply chain, according to experts and food importers. If the strike stretches out, the result will be either shortages of some

food products, price inflation or both, they said.

"From a supply-chain standpoint, this is a nightmare," said Jason Miller, interim chair of Michigan State University's department of supply chain management.

The beef sector could see ripple effects if the strike disrupts imports for more than a week, industry members said.

U.S. beef supplies tightened after a severe drought and high grain prices prompted ranchers to sell off their cattle, shrinking the nation's herd to the lowest level in decades.

The decline in cattle numbers led to soaring beef prices and a flurry of cheaper imports. Beef imports from Australia jumped 72% through July this year, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data. Imports from New

Zealand and Brazil have also increased.

In anticipation of the strike, suppliers to U.S. grocers and fast food restaurants ramped up imports of frozen lean beef that is mixed with domestic supplies to make hamburger meat, three industry members said.

Dan Sorbello, who imports beef into the ports of Philadelphia and Houston, said he unloaded containers from vessels more quickly than normal ahead of the strike to make sure he could take possession of the meat and distribute it.

"We've got ourselves maybe a week's worth of lifeline," said Sorbello, principal for Sorbello Refrigerated Services.

PanaPesca USA LLC, which imports and exports seafood, also stocked up on extra supplies of squid and shellfish to meet its customers' needs ahead of the strike, said chief commercial officer Eric Buckner.

The strike could increase costs for fast food restaurants if it persists more than a week, said Bob Chudy, a consultant for companies that import beef.

Beef importers could face demurrage fees if the strike persists, costs that may be passed on to consumers, analysts said. Shipments of refrigerated fresh meat, which can be used in restaurant dishes like fajitas, risk spoiling, they said.

For the chicken industry, the strike is also ill-timed, said Matt Busardo, commodity information firm Expana's team lead for U.S. poultry.

Domestic demand is waning as consumers switch to eating cold-weather meals like pot roast and chili, instead of grilling chicken, he said. The sector relies on ports such as Savannah, Georgia, to export leg quarters and drumsticks to countries such as Angola and Cuba.

## Oil supply boom lessens reaction to Mideast war

**Georgina McCartney and Liz Hampton**  
REUTERS

HOUSTON – The oil industry and markets have had a muted reaction to growing conflict in the Middle East, a sign of just how well stocked oil supplies are as U.S. output grows and OPEC+ prepares to lift production.

Oil benchmark Brent jumped 5% on Tuesday after Iran, a key producer and member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, attacked Israel in retaliation for its campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The price of Brent settled on Tuesday only 2.6% higher at \$73.56, however, broadly in line with last week's levels. Oil futures settled up just 34 cents on Wednesday after the U.S. reported a large build in oil stocks.

The U.S. is pumping some 13.4 million barrels per day of oil and its output is anticipated to climb to a record 13.49 million bpd by the end of the year, according to U.S. government data. Meanwhile, OPEC and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, which has been focused on cutting production since 2022, is set to start raising output later this year.

In the past, such escalating conflict in oil-producing regions of the world would have been expected to have a bigger and lasting impact on prices. But there is enough supply and concerns about soft demand to buffer the market from those events.

"In this new world of U.S. shale being the dominant global oil producer, it seems that the 'fear premium' no longer exists to the same extent," said Rhett Bennett, the CEO at Black Mountain Energy, which has operations in the Permian basin and Western Australia.

"This diversity of supply from domestic sources, combined with healthy spare capacity within OPEC, is trans-

lating into the market feeling insulated from a dramatic supply shock – regardless of perpetual Middle East flare-ups," Bennett added.

Global crude supplies have yet to be disrupted by the war in the Middle East and Iran-aligned Houthi rebel attacks on vessels in the Red Sea.

As a result of its years of production cuts, OPEC+ has a sizable spare capacity and this has limited the upside for prices from escalating conflict in the Middle East, analysts have said, as other producers could in theory compensate for supply disruptions.

The International Energy Agency estimates OPEC+ spare production capacity at 5.7 million bpd, nearly 6% of oil consumption, with Saudi Arabia accounting for 54% of the buffer. This is more than Iran's production of 3.4 million bpd.

The price of Brent fell 17% in the third quarter and 9% in September, its largest monthly decline since November 2022, in part due to downward revisions to OPEC's global demand growth outlook. West Texas Intermediate was down 16% for the quarter and 7% for the month to \$68.17 a barrel.

"The U.S. has so much production, it is a strategic cushion," said Dan Pickering, chief investment officer at Pickering Energy Partners. "I think the supply and demand equation is unchanged, even though the risks of the supply and demand equation are changing."

While oil may draw some immediate support from the developing conflict in the Middle East, it is unlikely to spur U.S. operators to quickly ramp up production, said Pickering and other shale oil executives.

"It's too soon to weigh these events against actions OPEC may or may not take to affect supply," said Michael Oestmann, the CEO of Tall City Exploration, a producer in Midland, Texas.

## S&P 500 nearly flat as more jobs data awaited

**Caroline Valetkevitch**  
REUTERS

NEW YORK – The S&P 500 ended little changed on Wednesday, with technology shares gaining but investors nervous about Middle East tensions and more U.S. labor data due this week.

Nvidia shares rose 1.6%, helping to lift the S&P 500 technology index. However, Tesla shares fell 3.5% after the electric carmaker reported third-quarter vehicle deliveries below estimates.

Investors monitored Mideast news after Israel and the U.S. vowed to strike back following Iran's attack on Israel on Tuesday. President Joe Biden said on Wednesday he would not support any Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear sites in response to its missile attack and urged Israel to act "proportionally."

Data released early on Wednesday showed U.S. private payrolls increased more than expected in September, further evidence that the labor market is not deteriorating. Investors remained focused on September nonfarm payrolls data due on Friday, while U.S. jobless claims data is due Thursday.

"We have the jobs report Friday, and then earnings season starts at the end of next week," said Michael O'Rourke, chief market strategist at JonesTrading in Stamford, Connecticut.

"We're near all-time highs, and we know we have a friendly Fed out there. Before they push stocks to another round of new highs, investors want to hear some positive commentary from companies. People like that the Fed is very dovish and they are just waiting for another reason to push prices higher."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 39.55 points, or 0.09%, to 42,196.52; the S&P 500 gained 0.79 points, or 0.01%, to 5,709.54; and the

Nasdaq Composite edged up 14.76 points, or 0.08%, to 17,925.12.

The market ended September with strong gains after the Federal Reserve kicked off its monetary policy easing cycle with an unusual 50-basis-point rate cut to shore up the jobs market. The S&P 500 is up 19.7% for the year so far.

Odds of a quarter-percentage-point rate reduction at the Fed's November meeting are at 65.7%, up from 42.6% a week ago, the CME Group's FedWatch Tool showed.

JPMorgan Chase and other big banks will kick off S&P 500 third-quarter earnings season on Oct. 11.

A strike by 45,000 dockworkers halting shipments at U.S. East Coast and Gulf Coast ports entered its second day on Wednesday with no negotiations scheduled between the two sides, sources told Reuters.

The dockworkers' strike is costing the economy roughly \$5 billion per day, JPMorgan analysts estimated.

Among declining shares, Nike dropped 6.8% after the athletic footwear and apparel maker withdrew its annual revenue forecast just as a new chief executive is set to take charge.

Shares of Humana Inc. fell 11.8% after the health insurer said it expected enrollment in its top-rated Medicare Advantage plans for those aged 65 and above to decrease for 2025.

Declining issues outnumbered advances on the NYSE by a 1.18-to-1 ratio; on Nasdaq, a 1.09-to-1 ratio favored decliners.

The S&P 500 posted 27 new 52-week highs and two new lows; the Nasdaq Composite recorded 80 new highs and 133 new lows.

Volume on U.S. exchanges was 11.81 billion shares, compared with the 12.05 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days.



# Biden, Harris go to Southeast to view Helene devastation

**President: 1,000 troops being deployed to aid with response, recovery**

**Trevor Hunnicutt, Jeff Mason and Stephanie Kelly**  
REUTERS

RALEIGH, N.C. – President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris visited South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia on Wednesday to see first hand the devastation wrought in the Southeast by Hurricane Helene, which has killed at least 160 people.

Biden landed in Greer, South Carolina, where he was met by South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, Sen. Lindsey Graham and North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, among others, before boarding Marine One for an aerial tour of the region.

From the helicopter, Biden could see the grim devastation brought to parts of North Carolina, including Asheville and Chimney Rock. Over the Asheville metropolitan area, homes were smashed to bits, with the damage greatest near rivers, reporters in a trailing helicopter observed.

Many of the people living in the area remained cut off from contact with the outside world, even as the U.S. president passed overhead.

In Asheville's River Arts District, set alongside the French Broad River, the receding floodwaters left behind chaos. Rescuers continue to scour the state's mountains for survivors.

"You can see homes that have moved clearly from one side of the river down the river to another side," Biden said in Raleigh, North Carolina, before an operational briefing. "And I can only imagine what it's like to have been in one of those homes."

"It's going to cost billions of dollars to deal with this storm and all the communities affected," Biden said.

Harris, meanwhile, was briefed in Augusta, Georgia, alongside Georgia Sen. Jon Ossoff and Rep. Rick Allen. She joined Augusta Mayor Garnett Johnson to survey the city's Meadowbrook neighborhood.

"There is real pain and trauma that has resulted because of this hurricane and what has happened in terms of the aftermath of it," Harris said, adding that she had spoken with a community member whose daughter lost her husband.

"We are here for the long haul," Harris said. "There's a lot of work that's going to happen." Rebuilding will be extremely costly and take years, U.S. officials say.

Former President Donald Trump, a Republican running against Harris in this year's presidential election, has falsely claimed that Biden, a Democrat, has been unresponsive to the hurri-



**Vice President Kamala Harris hands food out Wednesday at a community center in Augusta, Ga. She toured storm damage in an Augusta neighborhood alongside elected officials from the state.** BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



**President Joe Biden arrives at Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport in South Carolina on Wednesday.** EVELYN HOCKSTEIN/REUTERS

cane's destruction, an allegation local officials deny.

"In a moment like this, we put politics aside," Biden said in Raleigh. "There are no Democrats, Republicans, there are only Americans. And our job is to help as many people as we can, as quickly as we can and as thoroughly as we can."

Before leaving Washington, Biden directed up to 1,000 active-duty troops to help with response and recovery efforts. Almost 6,000 members of the National Guard are deployed across the six states affected by the storm, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said.

Search-and-rescue teams have conducted nearly 1,500 structural evaluations and hundreds of rescues and evacuations, Mayorkas said.

Biden also approved on Wednesday requests from Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp and North Carolina's Cooper for federal funds for debris removal and emergency protective measures for three months and six months, respectively.

Biden will head to Georgia and Florida on Thursday, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said.

More than \$10 million has been provided directly to those affected by the

storm, Jean-Pierre said.

More than 4,800 people from across the federal workforce have been deployed to help in recovery efforts, along with 8.8 million meals, more than 7.4 million liters of water and 150 emergency power generators, said Mayorkas.

Still, the Homeland Security secretary said federal funding may not be enough should another hurricane hit.

"We are meeting the moment, but that doesn't speak about the future," Mayorkas said. "We are expecting another hurricane hitting. ... FEMA does not have the funds to make it through the season."

More than 1.1 million homes and businesses were still without power in the Southeast and Midwest on Wednesday, according to data from PowerOutage.us.

In total, the storm knocked out service to around 5.5 million customers, predominantly in the Southeast. Helene's winds, rain and storm surge killed more than 160 people.

Duke Energy reported about 287,732 customers still without power in South Carolina and 234,375 in North Carolina, according to PowerOutage.us. The energy provider said on Tuesday it had restored power to around 1.6 million customers in the Carolinas and expected to restore the majority of remaining outages by Friday night.

## CIA expands recruitment of foreign informants

**Jonathan Landay**  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – The CIA on Wednesday launched a new drive to recruit informants in China, Iran and North Korea, adding to what it says has been a successful effort to enlist Russians.

The premier U.S. spy agency posted instructions in Mandarin, Farsi and Korean on its accounts on X, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn and the dark web on how to contact it securely, a CIA spokesperson said in a statement.

"Our efforts on this front have been successful in Russia, and we want to make sure individuals in other authoritarian regimes know that we're open for business," the spokesperson said, adding that the CIA was adapting to increased state repression and global surveillance.

A Mandarin-language video posted to YouTube featuring only written instructions advised individuals to contact the CIA via its official website using trusted encrypted VPNs.

"Your safety and well-being is our foremost consideration," it said.

It asked for individuals' names, locations, and contact details not associated with their real identities, along with information that could be of interest to the CIA, cautioning that responses were not guaranteed and could take

time.

Liu Pengyu, a Chinese embassy spokesman, accused the U.S. of waging "an organized and systematic" disinformation campaign against China and said that "any attempts to drive a wedge between the Chinese people and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) or to weaken their close bond will inevitably fail."

The Russian embassy and Iran's U.N. mission did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The CIA's thirst for intelligence has grown as China expands cooperation with Russia and Iran and flexes its regional military muscle.

Russia, China, Iran and North Korea are known within the U.S. intelligence community as "hard targets" – countries whose governments are difficult to penetrate.

The U.S. also is grappling with Iran's conflict with Israel, its nuclear program, its growing links with Russia and its support for militant proxies.

North Korea's nuclear weapons program is another U.S. intelligence target, along with what U.S. officials say are Pyongyang's arms supplies to Moscow for the war against Ukraine, an allegation that Moscow and Pyongyang deny.

The CIA began recruiting Russians in 2022 by posting Russian language texts on its social media accounts on how to contact the agency securely, followed by videos in 2023.

## Doctor pleads guilty in death of 'Friends' star

**Lisa Richwine**  
REUTERS

LOS ANGELES – One of two California doctors who were among the five people charged in the overdose death of "Friends" star Matthew Perry pleaded guilty on Wednesday to illegally distributing the drug ketamine.

Dr. Mark Chavez, of San Diego, entered the plea during an appearance in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. He could face up to 10 years in prison at his sentencing, which was scheduled for April.

Another physician charged in the case, Dr. Salvador Plasencia, has pleaded not guilty, as has co-defendant Jasveen Sangha, who authorities said was an illicit supplier of the drug and was known as the "ketamine queen." The pair are scheduled to go on trial in March.

Perry's live-in personal assistant, Kenneth Iwamasa, who admitted to injecting Perry with the drug, and the alleged middleman who said he obtained ketamine from Sangha, have already pleaded guilty to charges they faced.

Authorities said Plasencia purchased ketamine from Chavez, and in text messages to Chavez discussing the amount to charge Perry for the drug wrote: "I wonder how much this moron will pay."

In court on Wednesday, Chavez, 54, stood at a podium and answered "yes,

your honor" to a series of questions.

The defendant admitted to obtaining ketamine with a fraudulent prescription written for another patient and that he knew the drug was intended for Perry.

He also acknowledged providing ketamine, a short-acting anesthetic, to Plasencia, and that he understood it should only be administered under medical supervision with proper safety equipment nearby.

According to court documents, Plasencia administered ketamine to Perry at the actor's home and supplied vials that were injected by the assistant. Plasencia's lawyer has said his client properly prescribed and administered ketamine to Perry.

Perry, 54, died last year from "acute effects" of ketamine and other factors that caused him to lose consciousness and drown in his hot tub, according to a December autopsy report.

The actor had publicly acknowledged decades of substance abuse, including during the years he starred as Chandler Bing on the hit 1990s television sitcom "Friends."

Chavez pleaded guilty under an agreement with prosecutors, who offered him lesser charges for his assistance in their case against Plasencia and Sangha.

Chavez has relinquished his medical license and remains free on bond until his sentencing.



## NATION &amp; WORLD BRIEFS

**FDA says Lilly's weight-loss drugs no longer in shortage**

Eli Lilly's weight-loss drug Zepbound and diabetes drug Mounjaro are no longer in shortage, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website showed on Wednesday.

Mounjaro has been on the FDA's shortage list since late 2022, while Zepbound was added to the list in April this year.

Surging demand for Mounjaro and Zepbound has led Lilly to invest billions of dollars in boosting their production. Danish drugmaker Novo Nordisk, which makes rival drugs Ozempic and Wegovy, is also working to ramp up supply to meet unprecedented demand.

**Tesla discontinues sales of most affordable Model 3 variant in US**

Tesla's most affordable Model 3 compact sedan was no longer available for order in the U.S., according to the EV maker's website on Wednesday.

The Model 3 Standard Range Rear-Wheel Drive, priced at \$38,990, uses lithium iron phosphate battery cells sourced from China.

Tesla's Model 3 Long Range Rear-Wheel Drive is now its most affordable offering in the United States, priced at \$42,490.

**Trump campaign says it raised more than \$160M in September**

WASHINGTON – Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign, together with the Republican Party, raised more than \$160 million in September and closed the month with \$283 million cash on hand, the former president's campaign said Wednesday.

The figures marked a 23% rise from the \$130 million the campaign had said it raised in August.

Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential campaign and the Democratic Party raised \$361 million in August. Her election campaign also raised \$55 million during two events this past weekend, a campaign official said Sunday.

Democrats' official September figures are yet to be released by the Harris campaign.

**Labor board hits Amazon with complaint over its drivers**

Amazon.com has been accused by a labor board of illegally refusing to bargain with a union representing drivers employed by a contractor, the agency announced on Wednesday.

The complaint from the National Labor Relations Board claims that Amazon is a so-called "joint employer" of drivers employed by the contractor, Battle Tested Strategies, and used a series of illegal tactics to discourage union activities at a facility in Palmdale, California.

BTS drivers voted to join the International Brotherhood of Teamsters union last year, becoming the first Amazon delivery contractors to unionize.

The NLRB in a complaint issued on Monday said Amazon broke the law by terminating its contract with BTS after the drivers unionized, without first bargaining with the Teamsters.

In a statement, Amazon spokesperson Eileen Hards said the NLRB did not include many of the Teamsters' claims in its complaint, showing that the union was "misrepresenting the facts."

**Solar eclipse creates 'ring of fire' over Easter Island, Patagonia**

HANGA ROA, Easter Island – The moon blotted out most of the sun across the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday afternoon, giving just a few specks of land an impressive annular "ring of fire" eclipse.

Only Easter Island and a small area near the southern tip of Chile and Argentina witnessed an annular eclipse, lasting just a few minutes.

An annular eclipse happens when the moon is too far away from Earth to completely blot out the sun, like a total eclipse, creating a dark silhouette surrounded by a bright ring of light called an antumbra, or more casually, a "ring of fire."

As the sun darkened over the island on Wednesday afternoon, people gathered outdoors, chanted, played music, and wore special eyewear to catch a glimpse of the eclipse.

An estimated 175,000 people live in the path of the eclipse's annularity, giving far-flung residents and eclipse-chasing tourists a stunning view.

The southern half of South America, along with parts of Antarctica and Hawaii, saw a partial eclipse according to a map plotted out by NASA.

– Reuters



**Then-President Donald Trump speaks during a rally on Jan. 6, 2021. Trump has pleaded not guilty to four criminal charges accusing him of a conspiracy to obstruct the congressional certification of the election, defraud the U.S. out of accurate results and interfere with Americans' voting rights.** JIM BOURG/REUTERS FILE

## Trump

Continued from Page 1NN

Trump has pleaded not guilty to four criminal charges accusing him of a conspiracy to obstruct the congressional certification of the election, defraud the U.S. out of accurate results and interfere with Americans' voting rights.

Much of the filing focuses on Trump's dealings with then-vice president and running mate Mike Pence, who Trump tried to pressure into using his official role overseeing Congress's Jan. 6, 2021, certification of the election results to overturn his defeat.

Prosecutors allege that when a White House aide told Trump, who was watching news coverage of the riot on TV, that Pence had been taken to a secure location, Trump responded "so what?"

Prosecutors said they did not plan to use that interaction at trial given the Supreme Court's immunity ruling.

Pence was identified by name throughout the filing. The names of many other members of Trump's administration, allies and state officials he targeted are blacked out, though details of their locations and actions make their likely identities clear.

The filing shows instances of Trump privately mocking the claims his allies were publicly making on his behalf. For

instance, during a phone call with an unidentified lawyer who appears to be Sidney Powell, Trump put her on mute and called her claims "crazy," the filing said.

It also alleges that on Jan. 1, 2021, Trump warned Pence that people "are gonna hate your guts" and "think you're stupid" if he didn't block certification of Democratic President Joe Biden's win.

Trump spokesperson Steven Cheung blasted the disclosures, saying, "This entire case is a partisan, Unconstitutional Witch Hunt that should be dismissed entirely, together with ALL of the remaining Democrat hoaxes."

Trump has rejected this case and multiple other criminal prosecutions he faced this year as politically motivated attempts to prevent him from returning to power.

The filing presents a detailed narrative of the evidence prosecutors intend to use if the case goes to trial, accusing Trump of plotting even before the election to declare victory prematurely, replacing his campaign legal team when they allegedly would not support allegations of voter fraud and attempting to "manipulate" Pence into aiding his effort to hold onto power.

The filing provides details of conversations with senior officials in Trump's administration including Pence and White House chief-of-staff Mark Meadows, who appeared before the grand jury during the investigation.

Prosecutors submitted the court filing on Thursday, but U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan had to approve proposed redactions before it was made public.

Trump's lawyers opposed allowing Smith to issue a sweeping court filing laying out their evidence, arguing it would be inappropriate to do so weeks before the election. They have argued the entire case should be tossed out based on the Supreme Court's ruling.

Prosecutors included with the court filing snippets of witness interviews, grand jury testimony and evidence collected from search warrants during the investigation.

Chutkan is reviewing that material and may make public redacted versions of those documents, though Trump's attorneys have until Oct. 10 to raise objections to that.

If Trump wins the election, he is likely to direct the Justice Department to drop the charges.

Prosecutors also highlighted a Twitter post that Trump sent during the Capitol riot saying Pence "didn't have the courage to do what should have been done" during the congressional certification of the election.

Prosecutors said that post "was not a message sent to address a matter of public concern and ease unrest; it was the message of an angry candidate upon the realization that he would lose power."

## Debate

Continued from Page 1NN

from Orlando, Florida, on X. "No incoherent rambling or trying to get a soundbite ... I can't wait for Trump to leave politics so we can go back to this."

Walz, who is Minnesota's governor, and Vance, the junior senator from Ohio, both hail from the Midwest, a region that prides itself on a wholesome and neighborly attitude.

Each offers a geographic diversity to his presidential ticket with Harris hailing from the West Coast and Trump from the East Coast.

While the candidates disagreed sharply on issues such as abortion, climate change, the economy, immigration and taxes, they kept the tone polite and largely avoided personal attacks on each other, focusing instead on Harris and Trump.

"Now, Tim just mentioned a bunch of ideas," Vance said during a discussion on housing availability in the U.S. "Now some of those ideas I actually think are halfway decent, and some of them I disagree with."

Molly Bentley, a 42-year-old nurse who studied global geography under Walz, attended a Minnesota debate watch party with alumni of Mankato West High School, where Walz formerly taught.

Walz's performance reminded her of sitting in his classroom 20-something years ago, she said. "He respectfully disagreed with JD Vance. He said, 'Hey you're right on this,' and then he built on it."

Bentley added that was exactly what he would have done as a teacher when two "16-year-old hotheads" were butting heads.

The tone was a far cry from Harris and Trump's presidential debate in September, during which Harris, 59, put Trump on the defensive over his



**Even during the most fundamental disagreement between Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and Ohio Sen. JD Vance, highlighted by a question on whether Vance would challenge this year's election results, neither man raised his voice.** KEVIN WEXLER/NORTHJERSEY.COM

2020 election loss and other issues. Trump, 78, responded with falsehood-filled retorts.

Vance, 40, and Walz, 60, were showing smart political instincts, some analysts said.

"Both sides were trying to appeal to the few undecided voters," Jeremi Suri, professor of public affairs and history at the University of Texas at Austin, said of Tuesday's debate. "Both sides were trying to look like they could act reasonably."

This year's presidential cycle has been dogged by political division and intense rhetoric, two assassination attempts against Trump and the former president's sometimes racist and sexist attacks against Harris.

While Vance and Walz debated,

Trump repeatedly referred to Walz on social media as "Tampon Tim," a nickname mocking a law Walz signed as governor that requires schools to supply pads, tampons or other products for "all menstruating students" in restrooms, language meant to include trans students.

Even during the most fundamental disagreement between Walz and Vance, highlighted by a question on whether Vance would challenge this year's election results, neither man raised his voice.

Walz said he and Vance were "miles apart" on the issue, and turned to Vance and said, "Did he (Trump) lose the 2020 election?"

Vance replied "Tim, I'm focused on the future."



## CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

# Biden: 'No' to striking Iranian nuke sites

Says Tehran 'off course,' more sanctions coming

Trevor Hunnicutt, Matt Spetalnick and Jasper Ward  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Joe Biden said on Wednesday he would not support any Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear sites in response to its ballistic missile attack and urged Israel to act "proportionally" against its regional arch-foe.

"We'll be discussing with the Israelis what they're going to do, but all seven of us (G7 nations) agree that they have a right to respond but they should respond proportionally," Biden told reporters before boarding Air Force One.

Some analysts said Israel's response would likely be sharper than when Iran launched missiles and drones at Israel in April, suggesting this time it could target Tehran's nuclear or oil facilities. Other experts expected the U.S. to try again to moderate Israel's response in an effort to avoid a regional war.

Asked whether he would back Israel striking Iranian nuclear sites as it has long threatened, Biden told reporters: "The answer is no."

Biden said more sanctions would be imposed on Iran and he would speak soon with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Obviously, Iran is way off course," he said.

Israeli officials have told U.S.



"We'll be discussing with the Israelis what they're going to do, but all seven of us (G7 nations) agree that they have a right to respond but they should respond proportionally," President Joe Biden told reporters Wednesday.

EVELYN HOCKSTEIN/REUTERS

counterparts they are still finalizing targets, timing and means for a response to Iran's missile attack, according to a person in Washington familiar with the discussions.

Israel may not feel compelled to strike back immediately, given its success in thwarting the Iranian attack. But it is unlikely to wait for long out of concern a retaliatory move would lose effectiveness as a deterrent if delayed, the U.S. source said.

Unlike in the aftermath of the Iran's

April attack, the U.S. is not pressing Israel to refrain from retaliation but wants Israel to carefully consider potential consequences first, the source said.

Iran's missile attack escalated tensions in the region, where the Biden administration has for months led intense negotiations on a ceasefire in the nearly year-old Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and regularly predicted one was imminent.

Biden, in the waning months of his term, already faces sharp criticism at home and abroad for staunch U.S. mil-

itary support of Israel, as does his vice president and the Democrats' presidential candidate, Kamala Harris.

At a virtual event hosted by Washington-based think tank Carnegie Endowment on Wednesday, Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell repeated the U.S. view that Tehran's move was "deeply irresponsible" and there must be a "return message."

But with the Middle East on a "knife's edge," the U.S. is concerned about "an even broader escalation" that could imperil both Israeli and U.S. strategic interests, he said.

"I think we tried to underscore our support for some of the actions that Israel has taken," he added. "We have real wariness about an extended or substantial ground set of operations in Lebanon."

Israel has long considered Iran's nuclear program an existential threat, though Tehran has insisted it is not seeking a nuclear weapon. Iran's nuclear facilities are spread over many locations, some of them deep underground.

Iran agreed to restrictions on its nuclear activities under a U.S.-led international deal in 2015. That pact fell apart after then-President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out in 2018.

Iran has been expanding its uranium enrichment program ever since, reducing the so-called "breakout time" it would need to produce enough weapons-grade uranium for a nuclear bomb to a matter of weeks from at least a year under the 2015 accord.

## G7 leaders hopeful for diplomatic solution

Italy releases statement condemning attacks

Angelo Amante  
REUTERS

ROME – Group of Seven leaders expressed "strong concern" on Wednesday over the crisis in the Middle East but said a diplomatic solution was still viable and a region-wide conflict was in no one's interest, a statement said.

Italy holds the rotating presidency of the club of major Western economies and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni hosted a leaders' call a day after Iran launched a barrage of missiles at Israel, heightening fears of regional war.

Meloni

An Italian government statement said the leaders condemned Tehran's attack and agreed to "work jointly to promote a reduction in regional tensions."

The statement made reference to the implementation of United Nations resolutions 2735 – backing a three-phase plan for a Gaza cease-fire and the release of hostages held by Hamas – and 1701, which halted the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in south Lebanon.

"Expressing strong concern over the escalation in recent hours, it was reiterated that a region-wide conflict is in no one's interest and that a diplomatic solution is still possible," it added.

Along with Italy, the G7 comprises the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany and Japan.

Meloni has urged the U.N. Security Council to consider strengthening the mandate of its UNIFIL peacekeeping force in Lebanon "in order to ensure the security of the Israel-Lebanon border".

Italy has contributed more than 1,000 soldiers to the mission.

Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani denied Italian media reports that the government was considering pulling its forces out of the area for security reasons.

"We have assessed all the possibilities ... There is no decision to withdraw the Italian contingent from UNIFIL," he told a news conference. But he said it would be "foolish" not to have an evacuation plan ready if the situation deteriorated.

## US resident killed amid fighting in Lebanon, family friend says

Kanishka Singh and Andrea Shalal  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – A U.S. resident from Dearborn, Michigan, has been killed in Lebanon, the American government said on Wednesday, with the man's friend and neighbors saying he died in an Israeli airstrike.

"We are deeply saddened by the death of Kamel Ahmad Jawad and our hearts go out to his family and friends. His death is a tragedy, as are the deaths of many civilians in Lebanon," a White

House spokesperson said.

Earlier in the day, a State Department spokesperson, when asked about reports of an American's death in Lebanon, said: "It's our understanding that it was a legal permanent resident, not an American citizen (who got killed in Lebanon) but we obviously offer our sincerest condolences to the family."

Israel's recent military campaign in Lebanon has killed hundreds, wounded thousands and displaced over a million. Israel says it is targeting Iran-backed

Hezbollah militants.

Jawad's friend, Hamzah Raza, and local Dearborn groups said on social media that Jawad was killed in an Israeli air strike and called him "one of the kindest and most generous humans."

Reuters was unable to confirm the circumstances of Jawad's death.

Washington has faced criticism in some quarters for its support of its ally Israel, which is also waging a war in Gaza, including in Dearborn where there is a large Arab American population.

## Israel

Continued from Page 1NN

A day after Iran fired more than 180 missiles into Israel, Israel said on Wednesday eight soldiers were killed in ground combat in south Lebanon as its forces thrust into its northern neighbor.

The Israeli military said regular infantry and armored units joined its ground operations in Lebanon on Wednesday as Iran's missile attack and Israel's promise of retaliation raised concerns that the oil-producing Middle East could be caught up in a wider conflict.

Hezbollah said its fighters engaged Israeli forces inside Lebanon. The movement reported ground clashes for the first time since Israeli forces pushed over the border on Monday. Hezbollah said it had destroyed three Israeli Merkava tanks with rockets near the border town of Maroun El Ras.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a condolence video, said: "We are at the height of a difficult war against Iran's Axis of Evil, which wants to destroy us."

"This will not happen because we will stand together and with God's help, we will win together," he said.

Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli air raids killed at least 46 people in the south and center of the country over the past 24 hours.

Iran said on Wednesday its missile volley – its biggest ever assault on Israel – was over barring further provocation, but Israel and the United States promised to hit back hard.

Hezbollah said it repelled Israeli forces near several border towns and also fired rockets at military posts inside Israel.

The paramilitary group's media chief Mohammad Afif said those battles were only "the first round" and that Hezbollah had enough fighters, weapons and ammunition to push back Israel.



People mourn Tuesday after seeing the bodies of victims killed in attacks on Gaza City, Gaza Strip. Medics said at least 22 Palestinians were killed in the city.

OMAR AL-QATTAAI/ AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Israel's addition of infantry and armored troops from the 36th Division, including the Golani Brigade, the 188th Armoured Brigade and 6th Infantry Brigade, suggested that the operation might expand beyond limited commando raids.

The military has said its incursion is largely aimed at destroying tunnels and other infrastructure on the border and there were no plans for a wider operation targeting the Lebanese capital Beirut to the north or major cities in the south.

Nevertheless, new evacuation orders were issued for around two dozen towns along the southern border, instructing inhabitants to head north of the Awali River, which flows east to west some 37 miles north of the Israeli frontier.

Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 65 Palestinians overnight, including in a school sheltering displaced families, medics said, as Israeli tanks advanced in areas of Khan Younis in the south of the enclave.

Israeli tanks carried out a raid on several areas in eastern and central Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, before partially retreating, leaving at least 40 people killed and dozens wounded, according to the official Voice of Palestine radio and Hamas media.

In Gaza City, at least 22 Palestinians

were killed, the medics said. One Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced families in Gaza City killed 17 people, while another hit the Al-Amal Orphan Society, which also houses displaced persons, killing at least five others, the medics said.

Later on Wednesday, an Israeli strike on a school sheltering Palestinian displaced families in Nuseirat in central Gaza killed three people and wounded 15, medics said. The Israeli military said the strike was aimed at Hamas militants operating from a command center embedded in the compound that had previously served as the 'Nuseirat Girls' School.

It accused Hamas of exploiting civilian facilities and population for military purposes, a tactic Hamas denies using.

The escalation came after Iran launched a salvo of ballistic missiles at Israel on Tuesday in retaliation for Israel's campaign against Tehran's Hezbollah allies in Lebanon, and Israel vowed a "painful response" against its enemy.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, locked in nearly a year of war with Israel, celebrated as they watched dozens of rockets en route to Israel. Some of those rockets fell in the Palestinian enclave after being intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome missile defences, but caused no human losses, witnesses said.



# SPORTS **EXTRA**

GOLF PGA TOUR

## List thinks of his home hit hard by Helene

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Luke List is in Jackson, Miss., this week to defend his title at the Sanderson Farms Championship, but his mind is on his adopted hometown of Augusta, Ga., and the other parts of the Southeast hit by Hurricane Helene.

List planned to fly from Augusta to Jackson on Monday, but with the storm approaching late last week he opted to head to Mississippi sooner.

"On my level I feel for all the people in Florida and South Carolina and North Carolina, but directly the people of the CSRA (Central Savannah River Area) in Augusta where I live," List said. "It's pretty devastating really to not only see it but experience it, a place you call home. It's really sad."

"My thoughts are directly with all the people I call friends and family at home and hoping everybody stays safe still."

List said he and Swede Henrik Norlander, also an Augusta resident, are going to donate \$500 per birdie they make this week to the Red Cross there.

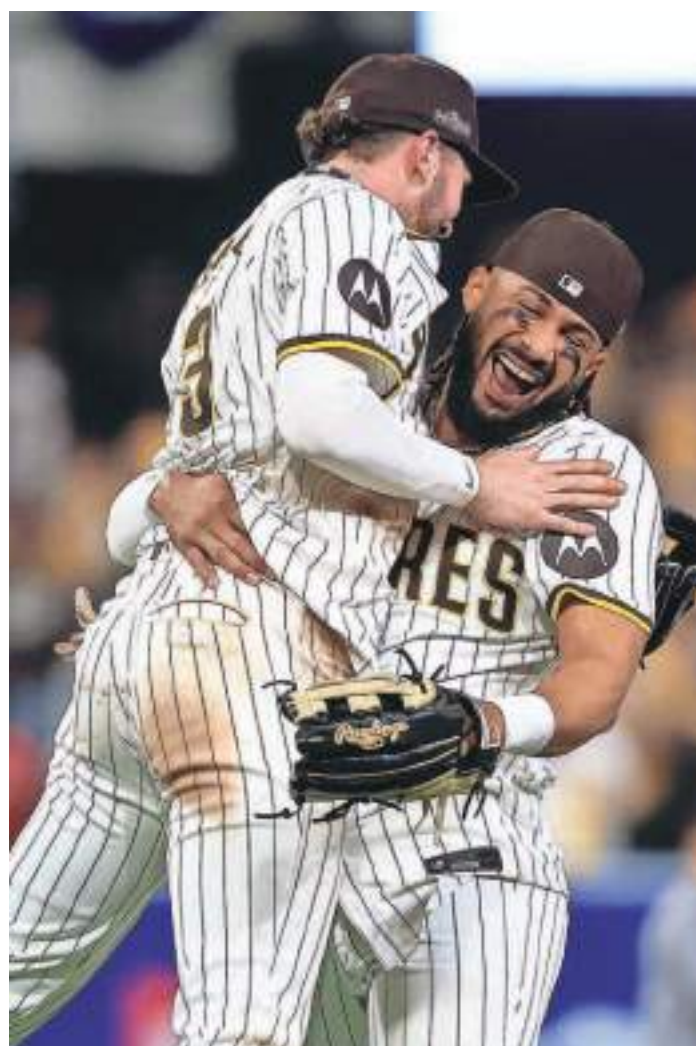
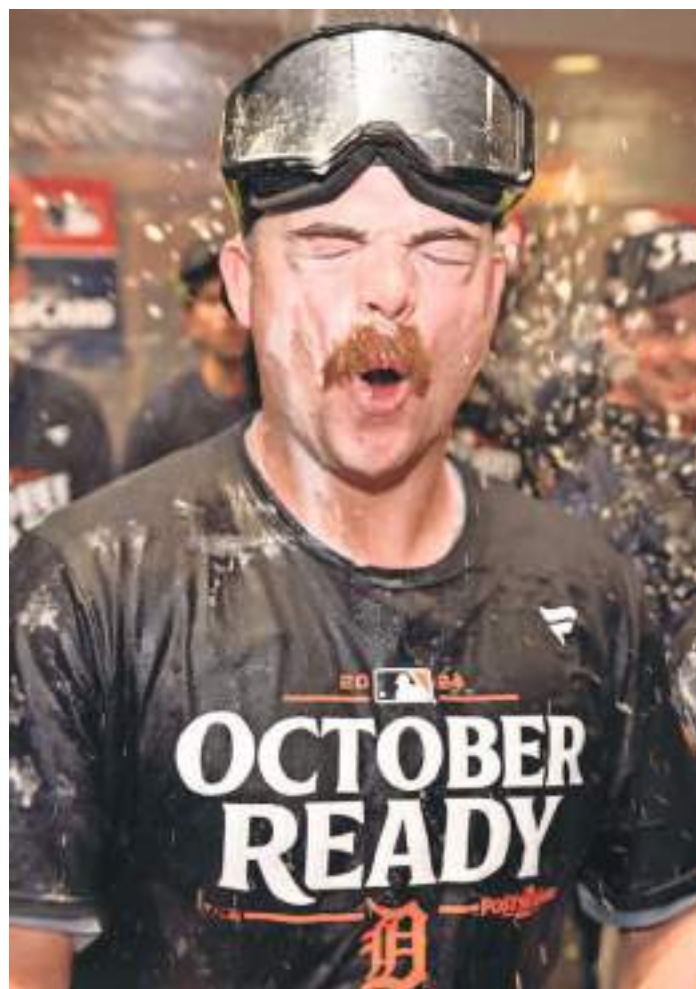
"Henrik came over early, as well," List said. "He drove from Augusta to Jackson with his family. Obviously when you have young children, just keeping them safe and out of harm's way is the biggest priority, so we were kind of - I think we were on the same page as far as we need to give back in any way we can. Obviously, there's a lot of people that are in privileged positions to give back, and I feel like that's always kind of called upon in that, especially in hard times like that."

See GOLF, Page 7NS



Luke List swings during the Sanderson Farms Championship Pro-Am on Wednesday in Jackson, Miss. LAUREN WITTE/CLARION LEDGER

MLB PLAYOFFS



Clockwise from top left: Tigers catcher Jake Rogers celebrates with teammates after defeating the Astros on Wednesday. Members of the Royals celebrate after defeating the Orioles. The Padres' Jackson Merrill (3) and Fernando Tatis Jr. celebrate Wednesday in San Diego.

GETTY IMAGES AND IMAGN IMAGES PHOTOS



## 3 SWEEPS & A GAME 3

Tigers, Royals, Padres advance to 2nd round; Brewers avoid elimination

- Andy Ibanez produced a pinch-hit, two-out, three-run double and the Detroit Tigers capped a stunning sweep of their AL wild-card series with a 5-2 comeback win over the Houston Astros.
- Bobby Witt Jr. delivered the go-ahead RBI and five Kansas City relievers protected the lead to secure a 2-1 win over the Baltimore Orioles and send the Royals to the AL Division Series.
- Kyle Higashioka homered and Manny Machado and Jackson Merrill added two RBIs apiece to help the San Diego Padres clinch their NL wild-card series with a 5-4 victory over the Atlanta Braves.
- Garrett Mitchell lined a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth inning as Milwaukee Brewers rallied for a 5-3 victory over the New York Mets to even their NL wild-card series.

COVERAGE, 4-5NS



Buccaneers quarterback Baker Mayfield drops back to pass against the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday in Tampa, Fla. NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/IMAGN IMAGES

NFL BUCCANEERS AT FALCONS, 8:15 P.M. ET, PRIME VIDEO

## Bucs visit Falcons in NFC South battle

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

The host Atlanta Falcons and rival Tampa Bay Buccaneers will be battling for first place in the NFC South on Thursday in an important early-season matchup.

The winner between Atlanta (2-2) and Tampa Bay (3-1) will own the division's top spot after the franchises meet for the 62nd time. The Bucs lead 31-30.

Tampa Bay, which has won six of the past eight meetings, vies to strengthen its NFC South lead in pursuit of its fourth consecutive division crown. The Buccaneers rebounded from a poor showing in Week 3, a 26-7 home loss to the Denver Broncos, with a convincing 33-16 win over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday. Baker Mayfield threw for 347 yards and a pair of touchdowns, while Mike Evans turned in his best showing

of the season, hauling in eight catches for 94 yards and a score.

Ahead of a short week, Tampa Bay coach Todd Bowles is preparing for a new-look Atlanta team.

"They're different offensively and defensively," Bowles said of the Falcons. "They're playing faster and they're playing with a lot more confidence. They've added quite a few new guys and they've got a lot of talent over there. They can beat you a bunch of different ways, so we've got to be on our P's and Q's."

One of the aforementioned "new guys" is Atlanta quarterback Kirk Cousins, who threw for 344 yards and two touchdowns in a loss to Bowles and Tampa Bay last year as a member of the Minnesota Vikings.

"(Kirk) is a good football player,"

See NFL, Page 2NS



## NFL

## NOTEBOOK

## Dolphins' Hill not interested in being traded

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Tyreek Hill appeared mighty frustrated during the Miami Dolphins' loss to the Tennessee Titans on Monday night but he asserted Wednesday that he remains highly committed to staying in South Florida.

Unfounded speculation arose about Hill's future and the star receiver was stunned Wednesday to hear trade rumors involving him were being tossed around.

Hill made it clear that he is happy with the Dolphins, who have started 1-3 and are averaging an NFL-low 11.3 points per game.

"I'm just focused on right here and right now," Hill told reporters. "We've got a beautiful team here and I want to be a part of it. We've got a great situation here, my family loves it, I enjoy it, the weather's great, the fans are great. So, we've got a beautiful situation here, man ... We all know the NFL is a business. Whatever happens, happens."

"Moving forward, I would love to be here - I love being here."

The Miami offense has been hampered since losing standout quarterback Tua Tagovailoa to a concussion in Week 2 and his return remains uncertain.

In Monday's 31-12 home loss to the previously winless Titans, Hill caught four passes for just 23 yards, and Miami had just 184 yards as a team.

In Week 1 with Tagovailoa, Hill caught seven passes for 130 yards and one touchdown. In the ensuing three games, he has 10 receptions for 87 yards and no scores.

The dropoff came with Skylar Thompson as the starter in Week 3 and recently signed Tyler Huntley running the show in Game 4.

Hill was seething at the turn of events in the second half on Monday, but coach Mike McDaniel said any competitive-nature frustration is fine with him.

"I would expect him to be visibly upset at somebody," McDaniel said. "He's a leader and he wanted to do everything that he could to make sure the result wasn't that. Within the locker room there's a lot of guys challenging each other, and we get an opportunity to see what we're made of, for sure."

## Dolphins OLB Phillips out for season

For the second straight year, Miami Dolphins outside linebacker Jaelan Phillips has suffered a season-ending injury.

Phillips, 25, announced on social media that the knee injury he sustained in Monday night's 31-12 loss to the Tennessee Titans will require reconstructive surgery.

Last season ended similarly for Phillips, who tore his right Achilles tendon in a Week 12 game against the New York Jets.



Dolphins receiver Tyreek Hill runs with the ball during Monday's game against the Tennessee Titans in Miami Gardens, Fla. JASEN VINLOVE/IMAGN IMAGES

## Browns RB Chubb practices for first time since Sept. 2023

Nick Chubb suited up for practice with the Cleveland Browns for the first time since September 2023.

"Nick's working through injuries and rehabbing, you're always excited when they're back in pads," coach Kevin Stefanski said. "Nick has been here every day so not far from what we're doing, not far from what we're thinking about. He's in every meeting. He's here very early. This is just the next natural progression for him."

Chubb and running back Nyheim Hines, both rehabbing knee injuries, are returning to practice with a 21-day window to be activated by the Browns. They've pushed each other in rehab and workouts, training sessions and film study since graduating to straight-line sprints early in training camp.

Both Chubb and Hines were listed as limited in Wednesday's practice.

The next steps are the trickiest to predict and the Browns plan to follow the lead of their medical team and the individual players to determine when - and if - either is part of the plan by November.

## Report: Jets, Saints top WR Adams' wish list

Bourbon Street and the Big Apple are the places Davante Adams prefers to land if the Las Vegas Raiders decide to trade their star receiver, ESPN reported.

The New Orleans Saints and the New York Jets - both featuring familiar quarterbacks - reportedly top the wish list if the Raiders choose to make a deal.

Saints signal-caller Derek Carr was Adams' teammate at Fresno State and with the Raiders in 2022. The Jets' Aaron Rodgers threw passes to the six-time Pro Bowler for eight seasons with the

Green Bay Packers from 2014-21.

Other teams with reported interest in Adams, 31, include the Dallas Cowboys and Pittsburgh Steelers. Kansas City is not interested despite the injury to Rashee Rice, according to ESPN.

Adams missed Sunday's game with a hamstring injury as the Raiders (2-2) defeated the Cleveland Browns, 20-16.

Through the first three games this season, he caught 18 of 27 targets for 209 yards and one touchdown.

## Vikings open practice window for Hockenson

The Minnesota Vikings will open the 21-day practice window for Pro Bowl tight end T.J. Hockenson on Friday.

Head coach Kevin O'Connell said that Hockenson is ahead of guard Dalton Risner, who remains on the physically unable to perform list.

Hockenson is not a candidate to be added to the 53-man roster or be active for Week 5, when the Vikings (4-0) play the New York Jets (2-2) in London. Minnesota has a bye Week 6.

The Vikings have 21 days to activate Hockenson with the hope he can play as soon as Week 7 against the Detroit Lions.

Risner, who re-signed with the Vikings in May, dealt with a back injury in August and was placed on the PUP list. He started 11 games for the Vikings last season.

Hockenson began the season on the PUP list. He tore the ACL and MCL in his right knee on Dec. 24 in a 30-24 loss to the Lions.

## Commanders open practice window for QB Mariota

The Washington Commanders opened the 21-day practice window for backup quarterback Marcus Mariota.

Mariota has missed the first four weeks of the season while nursing a pectoral injury. Rookie Jayden Daniels, the No. 2 overall pick of the 2024 NFL draft, has led the Commanders to a 3-1 start in his absence. Jeff Driskel has been Daniels' primary backup.

Mariota, 30, signed a one-year, \$6 million contract with Washington in the offseason.

## Giants WR Nabers (concussion) misses practice

New York Giants standout rookie wide receiver Malik Nabers is still in the "early stages" of the concussion protocol and missed Wednesday's practice.

Giants head coach Brian Daboll said the team is taking a day-to-day approach with Nabers, the team's top offensive weapon through four games. He will have to go through the five phases of the protocol in order to play when the Giants (1-3) visit the Seattle Seahawks (3-1) on Sunday.

Giants running back Devin Singletary (groin) also missed practice.

Nabers was injured late in last Thursday's loss to the Dallas Cowboys.

## Pats C Andrews (shoulder) needs surgery, likely out for season

New England Patriots center David Andrews will have shoulder surgery, sending him to injured reserve and likely ending his season, coach Jerod Mayo said Wednesday.

"First word I would say is toughness," Mayo said. "It's definitely a huge loss."

Andrews, 32, had been weighing whether to have the procedure now or at the end of the season because he also wanted to play in 2025, MassLive.com reported.

He was injured on the first offensive drive for the Patriots (1-3) on Sunday at San Francisco and replaced by veteran Nick Leverett in the 30-13 loss to the 49ers.

"It's tough," said quarterback Jacoby Brissett, who previously played with Andrews in New England in 2016. "That one hurt me. (He's) one of the key reasons why I wanted to come back here."

## Report: Cowboys WR Cooks (infection) to miss Week 5

Dallas Cowboys starting wide receiver Brandin Cooks will not play in Sunday's game at Pittsburgh and could miss more time because of an infection in his right knee, ESPN reported.

The infection followed a medical procedure Cooks had on the knee while remaining in New York after the Cowboys' 20-15 victory over the Giants last Thursday, per ESPN.

In four starts for the Cowboys (2-2), Cooks has nine receptions on 19 targets for 91 yards and one touchdown.

He caught 54 passes for 657 yards and eight TDs in 16 games (15 starts) in his first season with Dallas in 2023.

## NFL

Continued from Page 1NS

Bowles said.

"We played him last year in Minnesota, but he's in a different offense this time. He's got a lot more weapons now than he had with just Justin Jefferson and a couple of guys there. He knows how to play the game; he runs the offense well. He knows where to go with the ball and how to get rid of the ball, so he presents a great challenge."

It's also a new-look sideline in Atlanta, as first-year coach Raheem Morris has taken over. However, Bowles is no stranger to what a Morris-led team will look like.

"(Raheem) grew up in the next town over from me in New Jersey, so I know him very well," Bowles said. "He's a heck of a coach and an outstanding guy. He's going to bring a lot of fire to those guys, and they'll be ready to play. ... It'll be a tough battle."

Aside from reuniting with his New Jersey counterpart, Morris will have many ties to his opponent on Thursday.

Morris served as a defensive assistant in Tampa Bay from 2002 to 2005 and then again in 2007 and 2008, before compiling a 17-31 record as the Buccaneers' coach from 2009 to 2011.

Before his hiring in Atlanta, Morris was the defensive coordinator for the Los Angeles Rams, where Mayfield rejuvenated his career in 2022.



Falcons quarterback Kirk Cousins throws the ball against the New Orleans Saints on Sunday in Atlanta. BRETT DAVIS/IMAGN IMAGES

"I've got so much respect for Baker from when we had him in L.A., and he got a chance to revitalize what he had lost a little bit," Morris said. "I think Baker is going to do whatever it takes to try

to win that football game. Right now, he's found a nice formula of getting the ball out of his hands, keeping the completions up. He's got some really good wideouts that he can get the ball to who

can catch and run. If you can find a way to take away some of those things, and kind of force the issues or bad habits, I think that's the way you have to defend Baker."

Atlanta is coming off a 26-24 win over the New Orleans Saints, in which Younghoe Koo blasted a 58-yard game-winning field goal with two seconds left. The Falcons are in the middle of a stretch of facing a division opponent in three straight games. They travel to Carolina next week.

The Bucs on Wednesday ruled out All-Pro safety Antoine Winfield Jr. (foot) as well as right tackle Luke Goedeke (concussion), defensive tackle Calijah Kancey (calf) and wide receivers Jalen McMillan (hamstring) and Trey Palmer (concussion). Standout wide receiver Mike Evans (knee/calf) was a limited participant on Wednesday, as were offensive tackle Tristan Wirfs (knee) and defensive lineman William Gholston (knee).

Nose tackle Vita Vea (knee), who was limited on Monday and Tuesday, was a full participant on Wednesday. Bowles said linebacker SirVocea Dennis (shoulder) will be placed on injured reserve.

For Atlanta, linebacker Troy Andersen was a no-show at practice on Monday and Tuesday with a knee injury. He led Atlanta with 10 tackles and had a pick-six Sunday vs. New Orleans. Running back Bijan Robinson (hamstring), offensive tackle Kaleb McGary (knee) and receiver Ray-Ray McCloud (ankle) were limited on Monday and Tuesday.



## WNBA NOTEBOOK

## Griner joins Unrivaled offseason league

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Unrivaled Basketball, a new 3-on-3 league for WNBA players in their offseason, announced Wednesday that All-Star center Brittney Griner is the 24th player in the fold.

The 30-player league is starting in January, with all games played in Miami over a 10-week span on a 60-foot court. The women will be divided into six teams of five players.

The pro league, launched by WNBA All-Stars Breanna Stewart and Napheesa Collier, could serve as an at-home alternative for players who traditionally have spent the WNBA offseason playing overseas to supplement their pay.

In addition to Stewart, Collier and Griner, the league also will feature Chelsea Gray, Arike Ogunbowale, Jewell Loyd, Kelsey Plum, Rhyne Howard, Kahleah Copper, Jackie Young, Angel Reese, Dearica Hamby, Kayla McBride, Marina Mabrey, Satou Sabally, Allisha Gray, Natasha Cloud, Skylar Diggins-Smith, Rickea Jackson, Courtney Vandersloot, Brittney Sykes, Shakira Austin, DiJonai Carrington and Tiffany Hayes.

UConn star Paige Bueckers reportedly will be playing in the league. WNBA Rookie of the Year Caitlin Clark of the Indiana Fever, however, reportedly will take a break from basketball this offseason.

Griner, who will be 34 on Oct. 18, is a nine-time All-Star, six-time All-WNBA and was the Defensive Player of the Year in 2014 and 2015. The Mercury won the league championship in her second season in 2014.

She averaged 17.8 points, 6.6 rebounds, 2.3 assists, 0.5 steals and 1.5 blocks in starting all 30 regular-season games in 2024. Phoenix was swept in the first round of the playoffs by the Minnesota Lynx. She averaged 17 points, 5.5 rebounds and two blocks in the two games.

Soccer stars Alex Morgan and Megan Rapinoe, retired NBA stars Carmelo Anthony and Steve Nash, five-time PGA champion Michelle Wie West, UConn women's basketball coach Geno Auriemma, Cleveland Cavaliers general manager Koby Altman and actor Ashton



Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner, right, drives to the basket against Sparks center Li Yueru during a Sept. 17 game at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. KIRBY LEE/IMAGN IMAGES

Kutcher are among the investors in the new league.

#### Sparks F Hamby wins Sportsmanship Award

Forward Dearica Hamby of the Los Angeles Sparks won the 2024 Kim Perrot Sportsmanship Award, the WNBA announced on Wednesday.

Hamby, 30, is a first-time recipient of the award, named for the late Kim Perrot, who succumbed to cancer in August 1999 after helping the Houston Comets win the WNBA title in 1997 and 1998.

The award is given annually to a WNBA player who displays ethical behavior, integrity and fair play on the court — the ideals of sportsmanship.

"I am incredibly grateful to be recognized with the Kim Perrot Sportsman-

ship Award," said Hamby said. "This is especially meaningful at this point in my career because it represents values that go beyond winning and to be recognized for that means a lot to me. Being on this list alongside some of the most highly respected players in our league is truly humbling."

In her 10th season, Hamby averaged career highs in points (17.3), rebounds (9.2) and assists (3.5) per game. Starting all 40 games, she earned her third All-Star selection while leading the Sparks in points and rebounds.

Hamby, who was the WNBA's Sixth Player of the Year in 2019 and 2020, received 12 votes, finishing ahead of Las Vegas Aces forward Alysha Clark (nine), Connecticut Sun forward Brionna Jones (eight), Minnesota Lynx forward Napheesa Collier (six) and Washington

Mystics guard Ariel Atkins (six).

#### Dream dismiss head coach Wright

The Atlanta Dream parted ways with head coach Tanisha Wright on Wednesday after three seasons.

The Dream posted a 15-25 record this season and were swept in the first round of the playoffs for the second straight year. The New York Liberty provided the honors this week with a pair of home victories over Atlanta.

"Tanisha was an important contributor in our efforts to rebuild the Dream, and we want to thank her for her hard work and dedication to the Dream over the last three seasons and wish her the best in the future," said Dan Padover, Dream general manager and executive vice president.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Texas not planning to play 2 QBs as Ewers eyes return

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

With Quinn Ewers on pace to return from his abdominal injury in the Longhorns' next game, don't expect to see Arch Manning on the field, despite the backup's 2-0 record in Ewers' absence, according to Texas coach Steve Sarkisian.

"When I was a starter, I never wanted the backup coming in the game, even for a play," Sarkisian told reporters Wednesday on an SEC teleconference call. "And I remember my senior year of college, I had been banged up and coaches wanted to run a quarterback draw. And they called the play and I scored a touchdown. So I've got respect for a guy that's a starting quarterback and the rhythm that is needed to play with, so no that's not something I've ever entertained."

Manning went 26-of-31 passing (83.9 percent) for 324 yards in a 35-13 win over Mississippi State on Saturday, a week after a 51-3 home blowout over Louisiana-Monroe in the first start of his college career.

After suffering an abdominal strain that knocked him out of a 56-7 win over UTSA on Sept. 14, Ewers is reportedly on target to return on Oct. 12 when the No. 2 Longhorns (5-0, 1-0 SEC) face archrival Oklahoma for the first time in the Southeastern Conference.

Ewers reportedly practiced with the first team Tuesday, with the Longhorns on a bye before their big SEC showdown in Norman with the No. 19 Sooners.

"He's just rehabbing as he has been. I think he's been making steady progress one day to the next, which is a good sign," Sarkisian told reporters Tuesday. "We haven't had any setbacks. It's been steady progress. I think he's getting stronger and more comfortable and more confident, and so we'll just kind of stay the course with that."

Sarkisian had already made clear his desire to have Ewers back at the starting position as soon as possible, saying after Saturday's win over the Bulldogs, "We need Quinn back because he's our quarterback, and he's our leader."



Texas quarterbacks Arch Manning, left, and Quinn Ewers warm up ahead of the Longhorns' spring game on April 20. SARA DIGGINS/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

## NBA NOTEBOOK



Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic shoots the ball against the Celtics in Game 5 of the NBA Finals on June 17 in Boston. PETER CASEY/USA TODAY SPORTS

## Mavericks star Doncic nursing left calf injury

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Dallas Mavericks superstar guard Luka Doncic is nursing a left calf contusion and will be re-evaluated in one week, the team announced Wednesday.

Per the Mavericks, Doncic sustained the injury during workouts this week.

Doncic, 25, is a five-time First Team All-Pro selection. In 400 career regular-season games, he has averages of 28.7 points, 8.7 rebounds and 8.3 assists per contest.

He outdid those numbers in 2023-24, leading the league in scoring with 33.9 points per game and adding a career-high 9.8 assists to go with 9.2 rebounds per game. Despite the injuries, he played in 22 postseason games, averaging 40.9 minutes, 28.9 points, 9.5 rebounds and 8.1 assists.

The Mavericks open the preseason against the visiting Memphis Grizzlies on Monday.

#### Vogel joins Mavericks coaching staff as consultant

Four-time head coach Frank Vogel has joined Jason Kidd's coaching staff

in Dallas as a consultant, the Mavericks head coach said.

"It took a lot of begging," Kidd said, according to the SteinLine, "but he was talked into it and I'm happy he said yes."

Vogel was fired as head coach of the Phoenix Suns in May after just one season.

#### Clippers sign 'ultimate glue guy' G Mann to extension

Los Angeles Clippers guard Terance Mann signed a contract extension, the team announced Wednesday.

Financial terms were not disclosed by the Clippers, however multiple media outlets reported it was a three-year, \$47 million extension.

"We place tremendous value on the competitiveness, consistency, durability and hard work that T Mann continues to demonstrate year after year," said Lawrence Frank, Clippers' president of basketball operations.

"Since we drafted him in 2019, T Mann has turned himself into the ultimate glue guy, a two-way player who takes tough assignments and hits big shots"



# MLB PLAYOFFS

AL WILD CARD TIGERS 5, ASTROS 2 (DETROIT WINS SERIES 2-0)

## Tigers pull off shocking sweep of Astros

MK Bower  
FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

HOUSTON – Andy Ibanez produced a pinch-hit, two-out, three-run double in the top of the eighth inning and the Detroit Tigers capped a stunning sweep of their American League wild-card series with a 5-2 comeback victory over the Houston Astros in Game 2 on Wednesday.

With their two-game sweep, the Tigers advanced to the AL Division Series to face the Cleveland Guardians, with Game 1 set for Saturday in Cleveland. Detroit finished 6-7 against the AL Central champions this season.

After Houston scratched across a pair of runs in the bottom of the seventh to secure a 2-1 lead, the Tigers fashioned a response against Astros reliever Ryan Pressly. Kerry Carpenter and Matt Vierling delivered back-to-back, one-out singles before Pressly (0-1) uncorked a wild pitch that plated Carpenter with the tying run. Pressly departed following his two-out walk to Colt Keith.

The Tigers kept the rally going against Astros closer Josh Hader, who walked Spencer Torkelson to load the bases. Ibanez, hitting for Zach McKinstry, lined a 1-2 sinker into the left field corner to score Vierling, Keith and Torkelson and supply Detroit with a three-run lead.

Six pitchers followed Tigers opener Tyler Horton, with the first three – Brennan Hanifee, Brant Hurter and Beau Brieske – combining with Horton to keep the Astros scoreless through six.



The Detroit Tigers' Andy Ibanez drives in three runs with a triple against the Astros during the eighth inning Tuesday in Houston. THOMAS SHEA/IMAGN IMAGES

Sean Guenther (1-0) and Will Vest worked the final 2⅓ innings, with Vest recording the save with a perfect ninth.

“If you can switch the psyche and maybe take a tick of the pride and ego out of it, anything’s possible,” Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said of his players buying into playing flexible roles. “You can make decisions that put guys in a position to be successful. Who knows what we’re going to do.”

“One of our things that we pride ourselves in is that we’re unpredictable and

our players buy into that leading to success. When you find some success, you win a couple series. You perform on the highest stage. That strengthens that belief that we’re going to try to chase every strength we can.”

Astros right-hander Hunter Brown was exceptional in his first postseason start.

He retired the first five batters he faced and was poised to complete two perfect frames before Jose Altuve threw wide of first base after a routine ground-

er by Torkelson. The Astros had their streak of seven consecutive ALCS appearances snapped and dropped their seventh consecutive postseason game at Minute Maid Park.

Scoreboard for Detroit 5, Houston 2. Includes team statistics (AB, R, H, BI, BB, SO, Avg.) and individual player stats.

a-reached on a failed fielder's choice for McCormick in 7th. b-ran for Singleton in 7th. c-singled for Heyward in 5th. d-singled for Carpenter in 9th. e-doubled for McKinstry in 8th.

Box score for Detroit vs Houston, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

Inherited runners: Brieske 1-1, Guenther 2-2, Abreu 1-1, Hader 2-0. HBP: Caratini 2. WP: Pressly. Umpires: HP-Baker, 1B-Little, 2B-Maquez, 3B-Rehak, LF-Valentine, RF-Randazzo. T: 2:55. A: 40,824 (41,168).

AL WILD CARD ROYALS 2, ORIOLES 1 (KC WINS SERIES 2-0)



The Kansas City Royals' Bobby Witt Jr. hits a single against the Orioles in Game 2 of a wild-card series on Wednesday in Baltimore. TOMMY GILLIGAN/IMAGN IMAGES

## Witt, Royals sweep Orioles out of playoffs

Tanner Malinowski  
FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

BALTIMORE – The superstar of Kansas City’s first playoff team since its 2015 World Series squad, Bobby Witt Jr. said this year’s Royals entered the post-season aiming to create their own October legacy.

After two games, they’ve taken the first step.

Witt delivered the go-ahead RBI for the second straight day and the Kansas City bullpen protected the lead to secure a 2-1 win over the Orioles on Wednesday and send the Royals to the American League Division Series.

Kansas City swept the best-of-three wild-card series after winning Tuesday’s opener 1-0. The Royals now face the top-seeded New York Yankees in a best-of-five round. Game 1 is Saturday at New York.

“I think it’s the start of something special,” Witt said. “Like I keep saying, we didn’t come this far just to come this far, so we’re going to keep getting after it.”

Witt plated Tuesday’s winning run with a two-out single in the sixth inning. He delivered in the same fashion Wednesday.

Kansas City put runners on the corners with two outs in the sixth and the game tied at 1. Yennier Cano relieved Cionel Perez (0-1) to face Witt, who legged out a run-scoring infield grounder toward the middle.

The Royals’ bullpen took it from there.

After Angel Zerpa (1-0) came into the

game in the fifth inning, he and John Schreiber pitched the bottom of the sixth before Schreiber and Sam Long worked through the seventh. Kris Bubic handled the eighth, and Lucas Erceg worked the ninth for his second save.

Scoreboard for Kansas City 2, Baltimore 1. Includes team statistics and individual player stats.

Box score for Kansas City vs Baltimore, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

Box score for Kansas City vs Baltimore, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

a-struck out for O’Hearn in 6th. b-ran for Pham in 8th. c-grounded into a fielder’s choice for Massey in 8th. d-ran for Melendez in 7th.

Box score for Kansas City vs Baltimore, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

Inherited runners: Zerpa 3-3, Webb 1-1, Cano 2-1, Dominguez 1-1. HBP: Perez, Isbel, Westburg. Umpires: HP-May, 1B-Lentz, 2B-Miller, 3B-Rackley, LF-Moore, RF-Additon. T: 3:04. A: 38,698 (45,971).

NL WILD CARD BREWERS 5, METS 3 (SERIES TIED 1-1)

## Brewers use late surge to draw even with the Mets

Jim Hoehn  
FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

MILWAUKEE – Garrett Mitchell lined a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth inning and rookie Jackson Chourio homered twice as Milwaukee Brewers rallied for a 5-3 victory over the New York Mets on Wednesday to even their National League wild-card series at one win apiece.

The Brewers will host the deciding game of the best-of-three series on Thursday.

Chourio, who went deep in the first inning, opened the eighth with a 398-foot solo homer to right-center off Phil Maton (0-1) to tie it 3-3. Willy Adames singled with two outs, and Mitchell then lined the next pitch over the wall in center.

Devin Williams, who converted 14 of 15 save chances during the regular season, preserved the win with a perfect ninth. Joe Ross (1-0) got the victory with 1½ scoreless innings of relief.

The sixth-seeded Mets, who did not secure a postseason berth until winning the first game of a makeup doubleheader at Atlanta on Monday, scored two unearned runs in the second to go up 3-1. Milwaukee pulled within 3-2 in the fifth.

Milwaukee had lost six consecutive postseason games and was 1-10 in playoff games beginning with a defeat in Game 7 of the 2018 NL Championship Series to the visiting Los Angeles Dodgers.

New York capitalized on a Brewers

error in the second inning. Starling Marte reached on a one-out grounder when pitcher Frankie Montas dropped the routine toss from first baseman Rhys Hoskins while covering the bag. Tyrone Taylor and Francisco Alvarez followed with back-to-back singles to score Marte.

Scoreboard for Milwaukee 5, N.Y. Mets 3. Includes team statistics and individual player stats.

Box score for Milwaukee vs N.Y. Mets, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

Box score for Milwaukee vs N.Y. Mets, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

a-flied out for Acuna in 9th. b-ran for Sanchez in 6th.

E: Montas. 2B: Turang (3). HR: Chourio 2 (2), Mitchell (1). RBI: Lindor (1), Nimmo (1), Alvarez (1), Chourio 2 (3), Perkins (1), Mitchell 2 (2). CS: Mitchell (1). SB: Marte (1). SF: Lindor, Perkins.

Box score for Milwaukee vs N.Y. Mets, showing IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA for both teams.

Inherited runners: Megill 1-1, Ross 1-1. HBP: Nimmo. HBB: Payamps (1). Balk: Megill (1). Umpires: HP-Segal, 1B-Carapazza, 2B-Porter, 3B-Estabrook, LF-Miller, RF-Tosi. T: 2:43. A: 40,350 (41,700).



The Brewers' Garrett Mitchell hits a two-run home run during the eighth inning of Wednesday's game against the Mets. MARK HOFFMAN/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL



## MLB

NL WILD CARD PADRES 5, BRAVES 4 (SAN DIEGO WINS SERIES 2-0)

## Padres ride 5-run inning to sweep of Braves

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Kyle Higashioka homered and Manny Machado and Jackson Merrill added two RBIs apiece during a five-run second inning to help the San Diego Padres clinch their National League wild-card series with a 5-4 victory over the visiting Atlanta Braves on Wednesday night.

Fernando Tatis Jr. reached base four times on three hits and a walk for fourth-seeded San Diego, which wrapped up the best-of-three series in two games. Luis Arraez and Merrill had two hits for the Padres.

Michael Harris II had three hits, including a two-run homer, for the fifth-seeded Braves.

The Padres will open the NL Division Series on Saturday against the top-seeded Dodgers in Los Angeles.

Atlanta moved within 5-4 in the eighth when Orlando Arcia led off with a single against Jason Adam and Harris homered to center on the next pitch.

But Adam got the next three batters out and Robert Suarez retired the Braves in order in the ninth.

Padres right-hander Joe Musgrove departed after 3⅓ innings with right elbow tightness.

San Diego held a 5-1 advantage when Musgrove exited. He struck out four, walked none, and gave up one run and one hit.

Bryan Hoeing finished the at-bat to Matt Olson after Musgrove left to end the fourth inning and pitched ⅓ innings to get the victory. Hoeing gave up a homer to Jorge Soler in the fifth.



The Padres' Kyle Higashioka hits a home run during Game 2 of a wild-card series against the Atlanta Braves on Wednesday in San Diego. DENIS POROY/IMAGN IMAGES

Atlanta's Max Fried was torched for five runs and eight hits over two innings. He struck out two and walked none.

Fried got hit in the hip by a liner in the first inning. Braves manager Brian Snitker said during an in-game interview that Fried was bothered by the injury.

After being shut out in Game 1, the Braves scored in the first inning when

Harris led off the game with a double, moved to third on Ozzie Albies' groundout and scored on Marcell Ozuna's sacrifice fly.

But with two outs in the second, the Padres strung together six straight hits while scoring five runs off Fried.

Higashioka got the outburst started by slamming a 1-2 fastball over the wall in left-center.

He also homered in Tuesday's 4-0

victory.

Arraez followed with a single and Tatis and Profar each reached on infield singles to load the bases.

Machado was up next. He had fallen to 1-for-17 all-time against Fried after striking out with two on in the first inning. This time, however, he lined a two-run double to left to give the Padres a 3-1 lead.

San Diego 5, Atlanta 4										
ATL	100	010	020	-	4	6	0			
SD	050	000	00x	-	5	10	0			
<b>Atlanta</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>BB</b>	<b>SO</b>	<b>Avg.</b>			
Harris II cf	4	2	3	2	0	0	.625			
Albies 2b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.125			
Ozuna dh	3	0	1	1	0	1	.286			
Olson 1b	4	0	0	0	0	0	.125			
Soler rf	3	1	1	1	1	0	.286			
Laureano lf	4	0	0	0	0	2	.000			
Urschela 3b	3	0	0	0	0	1	.000			
a-d'Arnaud ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.200			
Murphy c	3	0	0	0	0	2	.000			
Arcia ss	3	1	1	0	0	1	.167			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>				
<b>San Diego</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>BB</b>	<b>SO</b>	<b>Avg.</b>			
Arraez dh	5	1	2	0	0	0	.333			
Tatis Jr. rf	3	1	3	0	1	0	.667			
Profar lf	4	1	1	0	0	0	.143			
Machado 3b	4	1	1	2	0	2	.143			
Merrill cf	4	0	2	2	0	0	.429			
Bogaerts ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	.000			
Solano 1b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.143			
Cronenworth 2b	4	0	0	0	0	3	.000			
Higashioka c	3	1	1	1	1	0	.400			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>				

a-was announced for Urschela in 9th.  
**2B:** Harris II (1), Machado (1), Merrill (1). **3B:** Merrill (1). **HR:** Harris II (1), Soler (1), Higashioka (2). **RBI:** Harris II (2), Ozuna (1), Soler (1), Machado (2), Merrill (2), Higashioka (3). **SF:** Ozuna. **Runners left in scoring position:** Atlanta 1 (Olson), San Diego 4 (Bogaerts, Cronenworth). **RISP:** San Diego 3 for 11.

Atlanta										
IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA			
Fried L, 0-1	2.0	8	5	5	0	2	45	22.50		
Lee	1.2	1	0	0	0	0	19	0.00		
Hernandez	2.1	1	0	0	1	3	42	0.00		
Johnson	1.0	0	0	0	0	13	0.00			
Jimenez	1.0	0	0	0	1	35	0.00			
San Diego										
IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA			
Musgrove	3.2	1	1	1	0	4	44	2.45		
Hoeing W, 1-0	1.1	1	1	1	0	1	27	6.75		
Estrada H, 1	0.2	2	0	0	0	0	23	0.00		
Scott H, 1	1.1	0	0	0	1	2	24	0.00		
Adam H, 2	1.0	2	2	2	0	1	17	9.00		
Suarez S, 1	1.0	0	0	0	0	14	0.00			

**Inherited runners:** Hernandez 1-1, Scott 2-2. **Umpires:** HP-Cuzzi, 1B-Visconti, 2B-Iassogna, 3B-Wegner, LF-Bacchus, RF-Ceja. T: 2:45. A: 47,705.

## COMMENTARY

## Never forget lessons of Rose, the ballplayer

Jason Williams

Columnist

Cincinnati Enquirer

USA TODAY NETWORK

I'm lost on the baseball field Monday evening, cellphone on silent, fully immersed in coaching my 8-year-old son's fall team.

Practice ends. Lots of text messages.

*Pete died.*

*Hit King dead.*

So what. So (bleeping) what.

And then I softened up, even teared up, on the 20-minute drive home. Why do I love baseball?

Why do I love coaching baseball?

Why is "play hard" one of the three goals of every team I coach? Why did I *always* play hard in sports as a kid? Why did I not give up on playing basketball when I was cut my junior year of high school?

And how did always hustling shape me even to this day?

Pete Rose.

He's the answer to all those questions.

It's OK to still be pissed off at Pete for gambling on the game and never actually regretting it.

It's OK to still be a critic of Charlie Hustle, as I've been in my columns for several years. And it's OK to still believe he should never be inducted into the Hall of Fame for committing baseball's cardinal sin.

Pete Rose, the person, is hard to forgive and easy to forget. He remained a degenerate gambler to his dying day, and there's no need to rehash all the other problems he had.

Pete Rose, the ballplayer, should never be forgotten.

Don't let Pete's sins rob you of what he meant to a generation of baseball fans.

What he meant to all those children of the '60s, '70s and '80s who didn't have any athletic ability. Pete told us he'd "walk through hell in a gasoline suit to play baseball" and then slide head first with reckless abandon. Pete taught us if we always worked hard and played hard, we had a chance to achieve greatness.

Pete was my entry into baseball. He is why I grew up loving the Cincinnati Reds.

He is why I collected baseball cards.

I had his poster on my bedroom wall, alongside Larry Bird's and Bernie Kosar's. (Notice the pattern of unathletic guys who made it to the top mostly on hard work and sheer determination.) Pete is why I convinced my parents, neither of whom were baseball fans, to take me to my first Reds game in 1986. Perhaps Rose was even my intro-



Reds legend Pete Rose speaks during a pregame ceremony in June 2017 for the unveiling of his bronze statue outside Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati. Rose died Monday at the age of 83. SAM GREENE/CINCINNATI ENQUIRER FILE

## Coroner: Rose died of natural causes

Pete Rose died of natural causes, the Clark County (Nev.) coroner's office announced Tuesday, a day after baseball's all-time hit king died at age 83 at his home in Las Vegas.

The statement from coroner Melanie Rouse identified the causes as "hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease with a significant condition of diabetes mellitus."

Hypertension is better known as high blood pressure. Atherosclerosis is hardening of the arteries due to a build-up of plaque, per the Cleveland Clinic's website.

One day before he died, Rose attended a collectibles show in Nashville, where he was photographed in a wheelchair, alongside former Cincinnati Reds teammates Ken Griffey Sr., Tony Perez, George Foster and Dave Concepcion.

— Field Level Media

duction to Cincinnati and why I live here today and love it.

My first memory of the Reds was sitting in the living room of our house nestled in the rolling hills of southeast Ohio watching 4,192. I was 10. My dad was in his recliner. My mom was on the couch.

I was sitting on the floor. My two little brothers were in bed. That fundamentally sound, opposite-field, line-drive into left-center. I jumped to my feet.

Dad told me to keep it down, so I wouldn't wake up my brothers. I remember my mom quietly shouting: "Wow!"

Broadcaster Ken Wilson's call remains fresh in my mind.

*There it is. Rose has eclipsed Cobb. That's number four thousand, one-hundred and ninety-two.*

A West Side guy from a working class family who always played hard

and grew up to play for his hometown team.

And not just any team, but the storied Cincinnati Reds. That's one helluva dream come true. If Pete Rose can do it, maybe, just maybe, I can, too.

That was the hope he gave a small-town kid.

That was the hope he gave any kid, no matter where they were from or what their socioeconomic status was.

Always work hard.

Always play hard.

And good things will happen. It's one of the biggest lessons of my childhood, courtesy of none other than Peter Edward Rose, the ballplayer.

It took his death to reflect on Rose's positive impact.

I had lost sight of that side of Pete years ago.

It'll mean a little more when I tell the kids to "play hard" before the next game.

## NOTEBOOK

## Season over for Mets RHP Blackburn

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

New York Mets right-hander Paul Blackburn has been ruled out for the rest of the season due to ongoing issues from a spinal fluid leak, manager Carlos Mendoza announced Wednesday.

Blackburn was first placed on the 15-day injured list with a bruised hand on Aug. 25. The Mets shut him down in mid-September after the leak was discovered. At the time, the Mets said they didn't believe it to be a long-term problem.

The Mets had hoped he could rejoin the team in the postseason, but Mendoza said Wednesday it's "safe to say" that Blackburn is done for 2024.

## Blue Jays make Mattingly full-time bench coach

The Toronto Blue Jays are moving Don Mattingly to more of a "traditional role" of full-time bench coach for the 2025 season, general manager Ross Atkins told reporters on Wednesday.

Mattingly was Toronto's offensive coordinator this past season.

"He's excited about that opportunity to impact us and (manager John Schneider) in a different way and a bigger way," Atkins said at his end-of-season news conference.

"We think the world of Donnie. He's been incredible and open-minded to change as well."

Atkins also announced that the team parted ways with hitting coach Guillermo Martinez and that field coordinator Gil Kim and assistant pitching coach Jeff Ware will not return to the major league team in 2025.

## Last-place Pirates fire batting, bullpen coaches

The Pittsburgh Pirates fired three coaches on Wednesday, including batting coach Andy Haines and bullpen coach Justin Meccage.

The changes come after the Pirates finished last in the National League Central with a 76-86 mark.

The team also parted with strength and conditioning coach Adam Vish.

## Twins fire four coaches after late-season hitting slump

The Minnesota Twins parted ways with hitting coaches Rudy Hernandez and David Popkins, assistant hitting coach Derek Shomon and assistant bench/infield coach Tony Diaz on Wednesday.



## SOCCER

## MLS ROUNDUP

## Swiderski powers Charlotte into playoffs

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Karol Swiderski scored two goals and provided an assist during Charlotte FC's three-goal first half in what became a 4-3 victory against the visiting Chicago Fire on Wednesday.

The result allowed Charlotte (12-11-9, 45 points) to clinch an Eastern Conference playoff berth.

Junior Urso and Liel Abada also scored for Charlotte, which has collected seven points in its last three matches.

Charlotte FC, a franchise in its third season, has reached its highest point total and will play beyond the regular season for the second year in a row.

Swiderski has five goals in eight matches this season. This was the first time in 2024 that he scored more than once, though he now has six two-goal outings across his three MLS seasons. He had been Charlotte's top goal-scorer in each of the past two seasons.

**D.C. United 4, Nashville 3**

Gabriel Pirani scored twice in second-half stoppage time and D.C. United rallied from a two-goal deficit to stun host Nashville SC.

After star Christian Benteke's league-leading 22nd goal on 76 minutes got D.C. United (9-13-10, 37 points) within 3-2, Pirani kept the visitors' playoff chances alive by scoring through traffic from the center of the box in the fourth minute of added time.

Three minutes later, Pirani got the ball, nearly unmarked in the box, then floated it over the head of Nashville goalkeeper Joe Willis for the seemingly improbable winner.

Alex Muyl scored on either side of halftime while Hany Mukhtar had a goal and an assist for Nashville (8-15-9, 33 points), which now sees its playoff hopes on life support.

After falling 1-0 at New England in its previous match, Nashville wasted no time opening the scoring Wednesday. Anibal Godoy flipped the ball into the box, and a well-positioned Muyl fired the ball along the pitch into the D.C. net in the sixth minute.

**NY Red Bulls 4, Toronto 1**

Emil Forsberg scored from the penalty spot and had an assist in his first start since he was sidelined with a foot injury in June, leading the visiting New York Red Bulls to a win over Toronto FC.

Lewis Morgan also scored from the spot for his team-leading 13th goal and had two assists for the Red Bulls (11-7-14, 47 points), who had not earned an MLS win since before the Leagues Cup break began in late July.

John Tolkin scored in between the penalties and Elias Manoel added late insurance as the visitors ensured they would finish no lower than seventh in the Eastern Conference.

Prince Osei Owusu pulled a goal back from the spot for Toronto (11-18-4, 37 points), which dropped to ninth in the East, the conference's last playoff spot. The Reds will play their regular-season finale on Saturday without Italian star Federico Bernardeschi, who was sent off for a second yellow-card foul and will have to serve a suspension against Inter Miami.

Forsberg made his return from injury as a second-half substitute in the Red Bulls' 5-1 defeat to New York City FC on Saturday. On Wednesday, he was in manager Sandro Schwarz's starting lineup for the first time since June 1.

**Miami 3, Columbus 2**

Lionel Messi scored twice and Drake Callender made a late penalty kick save when Inter Miami held on for a victory over the host Crew to clinch the Supporters' Shield in a battle of heavyweights.

Callender dove to his right to stop Cucho Hernandez from tying it 3-3 in the 84th minute after Hernandez had beaten him earlier in the match from the spot.

Messi stunned the sellout crowd with goals in the 45th minute and fifth minute of first-half stoppage time to give Miami (20-4-8, 68 points) what seemed like a comfortable lead.

But the Crew (16-6-9, 57 points) got a goal from Diego Rossi in the 46th minute before a defensive blunder gifted Miami's Luis Suarez his 18th goal to make it 3-1 in the matchup of the top teams in the Eastern Conference.

Hernandez converted a penalty in the 61st to cut the deficit to 3-2 but just two minutes later, Crew defender Rudy



Chicago Fire FC's Tobias Salquist (14) attempt to block a shot by Charlotte FC forward Karol Swiderski on Wednesday in Charlotte, N.C. JIM DEDMON/IMAGN IMAGES

Camacho was sent off after his second yellow.

**NYCFC 3, Cincinnati 2**

Alonso Martinez scored in the 65th minute and Santiago Rodriguez converted a penalty kick 10 minutes later as New York City Football Club earned consecutive victories for the first time in nearly three months by holding on for a victory over visiting FC Cincinnati in Harrison, N.J.

NYCFC (13-11-8, 47 points) and has scored eight times in winning consecutive contests for the first time since June 28 to July 3 after surviving 16 minutes of stoppage time in the second half. Cincinnati (17-10-5, 56 points) fell to 2-6-2 in its past 10 MLS contests since a 6-1 rout of Inter Miami on July 6.

Martinez gave NYCFC a 2-0 lead at the end of a stellar counterattack that started when Rodriguez stole the ball from Luca Orellano. Rodriguez easily moved up the field and connected with a streaking Martinez, who slipped past defender Miles Robinson and finished it off with a right-footed shot from outside the box that landed in the upper right corner.

After sitting out Saturday's 5-1 rout of the New York Red Bulls due to yellow-card accumulation, Rodriguez then scored on his fourth penalty kick in as many tries this season.

After Andres Perea drew a foul when he was tripped by Ian Murphy and following the video review, Rodriguez drilled a penalty kick into the upper right corner as goalkeeper Roman Celentano dove to his left.

**Austin 1, Portland 0**

Daniel Pereira scored his first MLS goal since 2022 and Austin FC remained mathematically alive for the MLS Cup Playoffs with a victory at the Timbers.

Brad Stuver made 10 saves to keep his and Austin's eighth clean sheet of the season and pull the Verde within six points of ninth-place Portland with two matches to play.

Even if Austin (10-13-9, 39 points) won its last two matches and Portland (12-11-9, 45 points) lost its last two, the Verde's chances of surpassing the Timbers for that ninth-place spot and final Western Conference wild-card berth are remote; Austin would also have to overturn what is currently an 18-goal deficit in goal differential to Portland.

Portland's Evander failed to register a goal or an assist for the first time in 12 matches, as the Timbers were shut out at home for the first time all season.

It wasn't for lack of chances: The hosts led 26-7 in shots and 11-1 in efforts on target, but saw a 10-match home unbeaten run snapped on a night victory could've vaulted the Timbers into seventh and out of the wild-card places.

**San Jose 3, Dallas 2**

Hernan Lopez recorded a brace and the Earthquakes eliminated FC Dallas from playoff contention with a home victory.

Jeremy Ebobisse also scored for the MLS-worst Earthquakes (6-23-3, 21 points), who halted a five-match winless streak (0-4-1).

Daniel made three saves, including stopping a penalty kick by Dallas' Jesus Ferreira in the 89th minute. The save became more crucial when FC Dallas pulled within one a minute later on a header by Sebastien Ibeagha.

Alan Velasco also scored a goal for FC Dallas (10-15-7, 37 points), who saw their Western Conference postseason hopes stomped out despite maintaining possession for 58.3 percent of the match.

Jimmy Maurer made one save for Dallas, which had a 17-10 edge in shots.

**LA Galaxy 3, Colorado 1**

Riqui Puig scored twice and Gabriel Pec logged a goal and two assists to help the Los Angeles Galaxy earn a win against the Rapids in Commerce City, Colo.

The win helped the Galaxy (18-7-7, 61 points) tighten their hold on first place in the Western Conference.

The sixth-place Rapids (15-12-5, 50 points) lost consecutive matches for the first time since May 29 and June 1.

Pec tied it 1-1 in the 50th minute. After beating defender Andreas Maxso in a footrace in the box, he directed the ball toward Joseph Paintsil on the far side, but the ball never reached Paintsil, instead rolling into the left corner of the net.

Eight minutes later, Puig put Los Angeles ahead 2-1. Pec fed Puig at the top of the box, and the Spaniard fired a shot into the right side past a diving Zack Steffen.

**Seattle 3, Vancouver 0**

Georgi Minoungou scored his first MLS goal as the Sounders defeated the host Whitecaps in a Cascadia Cup clash.

Albert Rusnak had a goal and two assists, Paul Rothrock also tallied and Jordan Morris had a pair of assists for the Sounders (15-9-8, 53 points), who moved into third place in the Western Conference. Goalkeeper Stefan Frei made three saves while posting the clean sheet.

Vancouver (13-10-8, 47 points) played without captain Ryan Gauld for a second consecutive match because of a knee injury. The Whitecaps finished the match with 10 men after Fafa Picault was issued a second yellow card by referee Chris Penso in the 88th minute.

The Sounders opened the scoring in the 14th minute. Rusnak's corner kick from the right wing was headed toward the far post by Morris. Minoungou, a 22-year-old rookie from the Ivory Coast, was there to knock the ball into the net with his right thigh from a yard out.

The Sounders put the match away with a pair of goals two minutes apart midway through the second half.

**Montreal 2, Atlanta 1**

Josef Martinez capped a two-goal performance against his former team by tallying in the 76th minute, lifting visiting CF Montreal to a victory over Atlanta United.

Martinez, a 2018 MLS MVP who played six seasons with Atlanta, converted a set piece to open the scoring in the 43rd minute. He answered Daniel Rios' tally by splitting a pair of defenders and depositing Tom Pearce's cross just inside the near post.

Martinez's fifth goal in three matches boosted his team-leading total to 10 on the season and 115 in his career, moving him past Ante Razor for seventh place in MLS history.

Pearce and Kwadwo Opoku each notched an assist and Jonathan Sirois made six saves for Montreal (9-13-10, 37 points), which extended its unbeaten run to five matches (4-0-1).

Rios scored late in first-half stoppage time and Brad Guzan turned aside one shot for Atlanta (8-14-10, 34 points), which saw their winless stretch extend to five matches (0-2-3).

**Orlando 2, Philadelphia 1**

Facundo Torres broke a scoreless deadlock – setting a club record for all-time goals in the process – and Duncan

McGuire added an insurance goal as Orlando City won its second straight match, beating the Union in Orlando, Fla.

Luis Muriel assisted on both goals as Orlando (14-11-7, 49 points), which qualified for the MLS Cup Playoffs with a win over FC Dallas on Saturday, won for the fifth time in six matches.

Philadelphia (9-13-10, 37 points) saw its three-match unbeaten streak (2-0-1) end.

Torres's goal came in the 57th minute, as his shot from the left side of goal from a Muriel pass inside the box deflected off Union goalkeeper Andre Blake and into the net.

It was Torres's club-record 45th goal with Orlando across all competitions, passing Cyle Larin. It was also his team-high 14th of the season and his sixth in as many matches.

**Houston 2, New England 1**

Erik Sviatchenko's curling shot off a pass from Coco Carrasquilla in the 68th minute was the deciding goal as the playoff-bound Dynamo defeated the visiting Revolution in a late-season interconference clash.

The Dynamo (14-9-9, 51 points) have clinched a spot in the postseason and climbed to fifth place in the West with two matches to play. Houston is just one place and one point from hosting a first-round playoff series.

New England (9-18-4, 31 points) is still eligible for a playoff spot in the East but heads to the weekend in 14th place in the conference, six points behind Toronto for the final wild-card spot with five other teams to pass and a game in hand.

The Revolution produced the game's initial scoring chance when Bobby Wood's shot from the center of the box in the 10th minute was stopped by Houston goalkeeper Steve Clark. The Dynamo responded in the 24th minute as Sebastian Kowalczyk tested New England keeper Aljaz Ivacic from close in the penalty area but the Revolution's keeper was up to the task.

Houston pressed the attack early in the second half, with shots on goal in the 48th minute by Ezequiel Ponce and a minute later by Erik Sviatchenko that were both turned away by Ivacic.

**LAF 1, St. Louis 0**

Denis Bouanga's goal in first-half stoppage time led Los Angeles FC to a victory over visiting St. Louis City.

The Black and Gold (16-8-7, 55 points) have now won back-to-back MLS matches after a 2-1 victory over FC Cincinnati last Saturday, which snapped a stretch of five league matches without a victory.

With the win, LAF remains undefeated against St. Louis City (3-0-1). The Black and Gold sit six points behind the first-place Los Angeles Galaxy in the race for the top spot in the Western Conference. LAF has three matches remaining while the Galaxy have two.

St. Louis (7-12-13, 34 points), eliminated from MLS Cup playoff contention, saw its two-match win streak halted.

Olivier Giroud thought he'd doubled LAF's lead in the 55th minute, chipping the ball past keeper Benjamin Lundt and putting a strike into the open goal, but it was ruled that Giroud started from an offside position.

**Minnesota 0, Salt Lake 0**

Dayne St. Clair made four saves for his third consecutive clean sheet as Minnesota United and Real Salt Lake battled to a draw in Sandy, Utah.

It was the sixth clean sheet of the season in 24 starts for St. Clair, who missed a chunk of the season while with the Canadian team at Copa America.

The draw kept eight-place Minnesota United (13-12-7, 46 points) one point ahead of the Portland Timbers in the Western Conference, which would give the Loons home-field advantage for a first-round MLS Cup playoff match.

Zac MacMath finished with three saves for fourth-place Real Salt Lake (14-7-11, 53 points), who drew for their third straight match. It also marked the fourth straight draw between Minnesota United and Salt Lake.

RSL, who had allowed 11 goals in their previous four matches, held the Loons without a shot on goal and just three shot attempts in a scoreless first half. Minnesota's lone scoring chance came in the 28th minute when Carlos Harvey broke down the right wing and booted a right-footed shot into the right side of the net.



# GOLFTHISWEEK

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## PGA TOUR

### Tour heads to Mississippi

The Presidents Cup is now in the rearview mirror, and it's time for the PGA Tour to head to Jackson, Mississippi, for the 2024 Sanderson Farms Championship.

International Team member Mackenzie Hughes — the Canadian went 1-3-0 at the biennial bash — is one of the betting favorites at The Country Club of Jackson, sitting at +2200 (22/1). Keith Mitchell is +2000 to win after his 12th-place finish at the Procore Championship last month. He has missed the cut in three straight appearances at the Sanderson Farms.

Other names in the field include Rickie Fowler, Nick Dunlap, Maverick McNealy, Harris English and Matt Kuchar.

Defending champion Luke List has eight missed cuts over his last nine Tour starts.

### Who to watch

**Adam Svensson:** The Canadian finished the 2024 regular season with a T-7 finish at the Wyndham Championship and tied for 13th at the Procore Championship in September to open the FedEx Cup Fall. At last year's Sanderson Farms, Svensson tied for 16th.

**Stephan Jaeger:** He captured his first career Tour win earlier this season at the Texas Children's Houston Open, besting world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler by a shot. The German has had some success at The CC of Jackson over the last three years, finishing T-25 (2023), T-30 (2022) and T-26 (2021). His elite distance off the tee — 27th in driving distance (308.8) — will come in handy around the John Fought design.

**Henrik Norlander:** He has loved himself some CC of Jackson. He lost in a playoff last year, tied for 24th in 2022 and finished T-4 in 2021 and 2020. So, getting him at 60/1 is a steal. In early September, Norlander tied for eighth at the DP World Tour's European Masters. And despite a T-61 finish at the Procore Championship, Norlander played well. A 6-over final round sent him tumbling down the leaderboard.

— Riley Hamel

## LPGA TOUR

### Retirements piling up in 2024

Ally Ewing's surprise retirement news on Wednesday is just the latest in a long list of players who have made similar announcements this year. Here's a list of players who formally announced their decisions to step away from full-time golf on the LPGA in 2024:

**Catriona Matthew:** The most decorated Scot to ever play the LPGA said goodbye at the Old Course in her 30th and final appearance at the AIG Women's British Open. The winningest Scot in tour history won four times on the LPGA and posted 104 top-10 finishes.

**So Yeon Ryu:** South Korea's Ryu, 34, played her final event on the LPGA at the Chevron Championship, an event she won in 2017. The two-time major champion spent 19 weeks as World No. 1.

**Angela Stanford:** Stanford kicked off 2024 with a big goal: Become the first woman to make it to 100 consecutive major championship appearances.

**Mariajo Uribe:** Uribe set a goal of making it to the Paris Olympics and played on the LET to get there. The Colombian made the decision that Paris would be her final event, and she flirted with winning a medal in the process.

**Laura Davies:** Dame Laura Davies was slated to make her final LPGA appearance at the Old Course in August, but the World Golf Hall of Famer didn't think her game was up for the task and opted not to compete. The 60-year-old had teed it up in the past 43 consecutive British Opens.

**I.K. Kim:** After 18 years of professional golf, 36-year-old I.K. Kim announced her retirement after playing one last round over the Old Course at the AIG Women's British Open. Kim told good friend R&A Chief Martin Slumbers after the round.

**Amy Olson:** The 32-year-old told husband Grant when they were dating that she planned to play on tour for 10 years and then wanted to focus on family.

**Lexi Thompson:** One of the most popular players on tour for more than a decade, Thompson announced earlier this year at the U.S. Women's Open that 2024 would be her last full-time season on tour.

**Gerina Mendoza:** In July, Mendoza posted on Instagram that she was stepping away from playing full-time on the LPGA.

— Beth Ann Nichols

## COLLEGE/AMATEUR

### Beck wins US Mid-Amateur

Last year, Evan Beck made it into the championship match of the U.S. Mid-Amateur but lost. This year, there was no doubt.

Beck, the 34-year-old from Virginia Beach, Virginia, topped Bobby Massa 9 and 8 on Thursday at Kinloch Golf Club in Manakin-Sabot, Virginia. He became the first medalist or co-medalist since 2014 to take home the title, and the victory comes with plenty of perks. With the win, Beck earns an exemption into the 2025 U.S. Open at Oakmont Country Club and a likely invitation to the 2025 Masters. He also has an excellent opportunity to make the Walker Cup team for the 50th edition at Cypress Point in California, as well, as the top-ranked American mid-amateur in the World Amateur Golf Ranking.

"It's pretty sweet," Beck said. "I've always dreamt of winning one of these. It's incredible that it happened so close to home. To get all the way there and come up short (twice) is gut-wrenching. To be able to push through and prove that you can do it to yourself, more than anything, it's pretty awesome."

### Johnny Miller's grandson heading to Augusta

Nicklaus Miller has a name with 20 major championships between them. The grandson of World Golf Hall of Famer and two-time major champion Johnny Miller also has a first name for World Golf Hall of Famer and 18-time major champion Jack Nicklaus.

"We named him Nicklaus, not Nicholas, but Jack Nicklaus, and Miller, so he's got, I'm always behind Jack so I'm 2nd place but the bottom line is, he's got the right stuff," said Johnny to the local ABC affiliate in Utah two years ago.

The 12-year-old from Provo, Utah, is proving to be a chip off the old block and living up to his lofty pedigree — he's already a scratch golfer. He'll have a chance to do something his grandfather never could quite do: win at Augusta National.

Nicklaus's father, Todd, the director of golf at Brigham Young University, said his son has been trying to qualify since he was seven or eight years old and had made it to the finals at Chambers Bay, where the winner advances to the National Final, before but this will be his first appearance at Augusta National.

— Cameron Jourdan and Adam Schupak



Luke List hits from the 12th tee during the first round of the Charles Schwab Challenge on May 23 in Fort Worth, Texas. RAYMOND CARLIN III/USA TODAY SPORTS FILE

## Golf

Continued from Page 1

Before List left town, he joined his neighbors in cutting five downed trees to clear a street in their neighborhood. He "came to the clear conclusion" that his area is not going to have power or water for some time.

"That's humbling in its own right, just tugging trees," List said. "My neighbor had a Jeep, and we were pulling big logs from the trees off the road and just doing the best we could to band together, and getting a tree off a neighbor's yard, and that's everybody. Everyone is dealing with that in their own right. In a sense it was great to see everybody come together, but in a sense it almost felt like that's what you have to do in that moment."

Last October, List made a birdie on the first extra hole to win a five-man sudden death playoff against Ben Griffin, Scott Stallings, Norlander and an-

other Swede, Ludvig Aberg, now one of the highest-ranked golfers in the world.

Winning that tournament, the second of his PGA Tour career, guaranteed List a two-year exemption on tour. That means he's not sweating out the FedEx Cup Fall worried about keeping his card, but at No. 78, he does have something to play for.

Players who finish the fall Nos. 51-60 qualify for the first two signature events of 2025, the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and the Genesis Invitational.

"I've spoken on this, how important the fall is," List said. "Obviously everyone watches the FedEx Cup Playoffs, and that's amazing for all the top guys, but for the majority of us out on tour having this opportunity to not only keep your card or to vie for a win to get in majors or try to get in those elevated events, it's just an opportunity to get some confidence and keep your career going. I think some of the best storylines have come from the fall, and I continue to believe that it's really important for the tour to have these events."

## TENNIS ROUNDUP

# Alcaraz tops Sinner in an epic final in Beijing

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

No. 2 seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain rallied to defeat No. 1 Jannik Sinner of Italy 6-7 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3) to capture his fourth title of the season Wednesday at the China Open in Beijing.

The three-hour, 21-minute battle was the longest match in the history of the ATP 500 tournament and improved Alcaraz's record to 3-0 against his rival in 2024 — also winning at Indian Wells and the French Open.

Sinner, the defending champion, had won 18 of his past 19 tiebreaks and jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the third-set tiebreak before Alcaraz ripped off seven straight points to claim the trophy.

Alcaraz finished with 55 winners and 59 unforced errors, compared to 31 and 46 for Sinner. Alcaraz now owns a 6-4 lead in their head-to-head series.



Carlos Alcaraz poses with the trophy after defeating Jannik Sinner to win the men's final at the China Open on Wednesday. LINTAO ZHANG/GETTY IMAGES

### Shanghai Masters

Frenchman Gael Monfils overpowered Bosnia's Damir Dzumhur 6-4, 6-3 to advance to the second round of the ATP 1000 tournament in China.

The 38-year-old Monfils hammered 22 winners and saved seven of eight break points in the 81-minute victory and will next face No. 22 seed Sebastian Baez of Argentina.

Other first-round winners included Japan's Taro Daniel, Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena and Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, France's Arthur Cazaux and Arthur Rinderknech, Italy's Fabio Fognini, Canada's Denis Shapovalov, China's Juncheng Shang and American qualifier Zachary Svajda.

Poland's Hubert Hurkacz is the defending champion but withdrew due to a knee injury. World No. 1 Jannik Sinner of Italy is the No. 1 seed.

### Women China Open

Top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka cruised into the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over No. 18 Madison Keys in just 65 minutes in Beijing.

It is the 10th consecutive WTA Tour quarterfinal for the Belarusian star. The reigning U.S. Open champion has tied her personal best with 15 consecutive wins — dropping only one of 31 sets over that span.

Sabalenka improved her record to 4-1 against Keys by winning 84 percent of the points on her first serve (26 of 31) and converting five of seven break chances. Sabalenka finished with 14 winners and only eight unforced errors.

Sabalenka also won 15 consecutive matches from 2020-21, a stretch that included her first Grand Slam title at the 2021 Australian Open.

Up next for the World No. 2 is unseeded Czech Karolina Muchova, who defeated Spain's Cristina Bucsa 6-2, 6-0 in 69 minutes. Bucsa won only one of the 18 points against the first serve of Muchova, who never faced a break point.

Muchova is 2-1 against Sabalenka, winning their last two encounters.

Also moving on to the final eight is No. 5 seed Qinwen Zheng of China, who rallied past No. 34 Amanda Anisova for a 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 win. Zheng will meet No. 17 seed Mirra Andreeva of Russia, who rolled to a 6-1, 6-3 defeat of No. 31 Magda Linette of Poland.



NASCAR COMMENTARY

# Busch's 3 best tracks to keep record streak alive

**Samuel Stubbs**  
FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Kyle Busch has never had such a tumultuous season of NASCAR Cup Series competition.

Even when he misses the playoffs, suffers a championship hangover or doesn't have the speed he's used to having, he has always managed to win at least one race.

The closest Busch has ever been to going winless in a Cup Series season was in 2020, when he didn't win until an incredibly weird playoff race at Texas that ended on a Wednesday. That race was the 34th of the season, and Busch came extremely close to seeing his streak vanish.

Four years later, Busch is now the sole record holder for the most seasons in a row with at least one victory at 19. However, 2024 has thrown so many curveballs at the two-time champion that it's beginning to feel normal to see him make mistakes.

At Kansas on Sept. 29, Busch was leading with 33 laps to go – until he got into the wall while trying to put Chase Briscoe a lap down, sending his No. 8 Chevy spinning. A 19th-place finish was small consolation for a driver who has been put through the wringer this season.

With six races remaining in the season, here are the three tracks where Busch, 39, has the best chance to win for the first time since June 2023.



**NASCAR driver Kyle Busch waves to fans during driver introductions on Sept. 15 in Watkins Glen, N.Y.**

SEAN GARDNER/GETTY IMAGES

26th-place finish. Busch is a previous winner at Las Vegas, and the No. 8 team has found some speed at the intermediate tracks as of late. The intangibles are also on his side – Las Vegas is Busch's home track, and there would be no better venue for him to break the longest winless drought of his career than Sin City.

### Phoenix (Nov. 10)

Phoenix was none too kind to Busch in March – he spun multiple times and finished 22nd – but don't underestimate the powers of motivation. If Busch fails to win over the next five weeks, he'd enter Phoenix on a 56-race winless streak with only the one-mile championship venue left to keep his streak going. Busch is dangerous enough from a talent perspective, but when motivated, he ascends to new levels of speed. His team won't be a favorite to win the race, but if any driver can pull a rabbit of his hat in the desert, it's Busch.

### Talladega (Oct. 6)

The Cup Series' next race may just be the one Busch is most likely to win. Busch won at the track in April of 2023, and while superspeedway racing is wildly unpredictable, Busch has been very fast on the drafting tracks so far in 2024. If Busch isn't collected in "The Big One," look for him near the front of the field when the chips are down.

### Las Vegas (Oct. 27)

Busch was running solidly inside the top-five at Las Vegas in March before issues on pit road relegated him to a

## SCOREBOARD



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Odds available as of print deadline.

**NFL**

FAVORITE	Thursday LINE O/U	UNDERDOG
ATLANTA	1.5 43.5	Tampa Bay

**Sunday**

FAVORITE	LINE O/U	UNDERDOG
MINNESOTA	2.5 40.5	NY Jets
CHICAGO	4 42.5	Carolina
Baltimore	2.5 51	CINCINNATI
Buffalo	1 47.5	HOUSTON
JACKSONVILLE	3 46	Indianapolis
NEW ENGLAND	1 35.5	Miami
WASHINGTON	3 44.5	Cleveland
DENVER	3 36.5	Las Vegas
SAN FRANCISCO	7.5 49.5	Arizona
Green Bay	3.5 48	LA RAMS
SEATTLE	6 43.5	NY Giants
PITTSBURGH	2.5 43	Dallas

**Monday**

FAVORITE	LINE O/U	UNDERDOG
KAN. CITY	5 42.5	New Orleans

**College Football**

FAVORITE	Thursday LINE O/U	UNDERDOG
Texas State	14 57.5	TROY
Sam Houston	10.5 50	UTEP

**Friday**

FAVORITE	LINE O/U	UNDERDOG
Jacksonville St.	14.5 48.5	KENNESAW ST.
TCU	16.5 49.5	Houston
UNLV	6.5 59.5	Syracuse
OREGON	24 52.5	Michigan St.

**Saturday**

FAVORITE	LINE O/U	UNDERDOG
Army	11 51	TULSA
Navy	10 35	AIR FORCE
TEXAS A&M	2 48.5	Missouri
N. ILLINOIS	17.5 44	UMass
VIRGINIA	1 51.5	Boston Coll.
LOUISVILLE	7 57	snu
Pittsburgh	2.5 64.5	N. CAROL.
NC STATE	5 55	Wake Forest
WISCONSIN	14 46.5	Purdue
PENN STATE	27.5 44.5	ucla
Tulane	14.5 55.5	UAB
W. Michigan	9.5 56.5	BALL STATE
East Carolina	9 47	CHARLOTTE
UCONN	16.5 50	Temple
GEORGIA	24.5 52.5	Auburn
Ole Miss	9.5 53.5	S. CAROL.

MARSHALL	3 58	Appalchn St.
Bowling Green	15 51	AKRON
TOLEDO	6.5 44	Miami (OH)
Virginia Tech	8.5 49.5	STANFORD
Indiana	13.5 41.5	N'WESTERN
OHIO ST.	19.5 44.5	Iowa
OKLA. ST.	4 65.5	W. Virginia
NEBRASKA	7 41	Rutgers
Alabama	23 55.5	VANDRIBILT
OREGON ST.	10.5 47.5	Colorado St.
BOISE STATE	26.5 66	Utah State
CSTL CAROL	6 54.5	Old Dominion
South Alabama	3 62	ARK. STATE
James Madison	16.5 48	LA-MONROE
Louisiana	14.5 57.5	STHRN MISS
Clemson	14.5 47	FLORIDA ST.
SAN JOSE ST.	7 48.5	Nevada
Tennessee	13.5 60	ARKANSAS
IOWA STATE	12 46	Baylor
WASHINGTON	3 41	Michigan
usc	8.5 51.5	MINNESOTA
ucf	3 62	FLORIDA
SAN DIEGO ST.	2.5 48	Hawaii
ARIZONA ST.	3 50	Kansas
GA. TECH	7.5 54.5	Duke
Miami (FL)	10 55	CAL
ARIZONA	6 64	Texas Tech

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### All times Eastern

### MLB

#### Wild Card Playoffs (Best-of-3)

**Tuesday's Scores**

Detroit 3, Houston 1
Kansas City 1, Baltimore 0
N.Y. Mets 8, Milwaukee 4
San Diego 4, Atlanta 0

#### Wednesday's Games

Detroit 5, Houston 2, Detroit wins series 2-0
Kansas City 2, Baltimore 1, Kansas City wins series 2-0
Milwaukee 5, N.Y. Mets 3
San Diego 5, Atlanta 4, San Diego wins series 2-0

#### Thursday's Games

N.Y. Mets (Quintana 10-10) at Milwaukee (Myers 9-6), 8:38 p.m.
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### NFL

#### American Conference

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	3	1	0.750	122	83
N.Y. Jets	2	2	0.500	76	62
New England	1	3	0.250	52	87
Miami	1	3	0.250	45	103

#### North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	3	1	0.750	75	53
Baltimore	2	2	0.500	106	88
Cleveland	1	3	0.250	66	87
Cincinnati	1	3	0.250	102	104

#### South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	3	1	0.750	79	94
Indianapolis	2	2	0.500	85	85
Tennessee	1	3	0.250	79	90
Jacksonville	0	4	0.000	60	109

Kansas City	4 0 0	1.000	92	72
L.A. Chargers	2 2 0	0.500	68	50
Denver	2 2 0	0.500	62	55
Las Vegas	2 2 0	0.500	78	97

#### National Conference

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	3 1 0	0.750	112	102	
Dallas	2 2 0	0.500	97	104	
Philadelphia	2 2 0	0.500	86	96	
N.Y. Giants	1 3 0	0.250	60	84	

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Minnesota	4 0 0	1.000	116	59	
Detroit	3 1 0	0.750	104	82	
Chicago	2 2 0	0.500	77	75	
Green Bay	2 2 0	0.500	104	89	

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	3 1 0	0.750	97	78	
Atlanta	2 2 0	0.500	75	85	
New Orleans	2 2 0	0.500	127	70	
Carolina	1 3 0	0.250	73	129	

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	3 1 0	0.750	102	85	
San Francisco	2 2 0	0.500	103	82	
Arizona	1 3 0	0.250	96	106	
L.A. Rams	1 3 0	0.250	75	115	

#### Thursday's Game

Tampa Bay at Atlanta, 8:15 p.m.
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#### Sunday's Games

N.Y. Jets vs Minnesota at London, 9:30 a.m.  
Carolina at Chicago, 1 p.m.  
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.  
Buffalo at Houston, 1 p.m.  
Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.  
Miami at New England, 1 p.m.  
Cleveland at Washington, 1 p.m.  
Las Vegas at Denver, 4:05 p.m.  
Arizona at San Francisco, 4:05 p.m.  
Green Bay at L.A. Rams, 4:25 p.m.  
N.Y. Giants at Seattle, 4:25 p.m.  
Dallas at Pittsburgh, 8:20 p.m.

#### Monday, Oct. 7

New Orleans at Kansas City, 8:15 p.m.

#### NFL Leaders

##### Quarterbacks

Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int	
Stroud, Hou	139	94	1054	6	2
Burrow, Cin	134	95	978	7	1
Mahomes, KC	121	83	904	6	5
Minshew II, LV	123	87	877	3	3
Jackson, Bal	108	72	858	5	1

##### Rushers

Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	
Henry, Bal	80	480	6.0	871	5
Taylor, Ind	72	349	4.8	297	4
Dobbins, LAC	56	342	6.1	61	2
Jackson, Bal	41	308	7.5	25	2
Stevenson, NE	65	267	4.1	18	2

##### NFC

Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int	
Smith, Sea	159	115	1182	4	4
Purdy, SF	122	84	1130	5	2
Prescott, Dal	149	96	1072	6	2
Goff, Det	124	88	1015	5	4
Mayfield, TB	129	91	984	8	2

##### Rushers

Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	
Mason, SF	91	447	4.9	25	3
Barkeley, Phi	73	435	6.0	651	4
Kamara, NO	80	362	4.5	17	5
Jacobs, GB	71	329	4.6	34	0
Jones, Min	64	321	5.0	39	1

### WNBA

#### Playoffs (best-of-5)

#### Tuesday's Games

N.Y. Liberty 88, Las Vegas 84, Liberty lead series 2-0

#### Minnesota 77, Connecticut 70, Series tied 1-1

#### Friday's Games

Minnesota at Connecticut, 7:30 p.m.  
N.Y. Liberty at Las Vegas, 9:30 p.m.



**Team 23XI owner Michael Jordan watches a video board as driver Bubba Wallace races on Sept. 1 in Darlington, S.C.**

JASEN VINLOVE/USA TODAY SPORTS

# Jordan leads antitrust lawsuit against NASCAR

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Michael Jordan's 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports filed an antitrust lawsuit against NASCAR and its CEO Jim France on Wednesday.

Their lawsuit filed in the Western District of North Carolina in Charlotte accuses the stock car series and the France family of using anti-competitive practices to prevent fair competition in the sport.

"We share a passion for racing, the thrill of competition, and winning," the two teams said in a joint statement. "Off the racetrack, we share a belief that change is necessary for the sport we love. Together, we brought this antitrust case so that racing can thrive and become a more competitive and fair sport in ways that will benefit teams, drivers, sponsors, and, most importantly, fans."

Examples of anti-competitive practices listed in the lawsuit include NASCAR's acquisition of a majority of the premier racetracks, the purchase of the competing series ARCA, policies prohibiting teams from participating in races outside of NASCAR, and forcing teams to buy supplies from NASCAR-selected companies.

"No other major professional sport in North America is run by a single fam-

ily that enriches themselves through these kinds of unchecked monopolistic practices," read the press release from 23XI and Front Row.

At the heart of the lawsuit is NASCAR's revenue-sharing charter agreement that was established in 2016. Both teams have refused to sign a renewal of the charter system, citing "unfair terms" and demanding a larger share of the pot.

The teams said their lawsuit is seeking treble damages for the "anti-competitive terms that teams have been subject to under the 2016 charter agreement."

Jordan, veteran driver Denny Hamlin and Curtis Polk founded 23XI Racing in 2020. Owner Bob Jenkins and Front Row Motorsports have been racing full-time since 2005.

"Everyone knows that I have always been a fierce competitor, and that will to win is what drives me and the entire 23XI team each and every week out on the track," said Jordan, a member of the basketball Hall of Fame. "I love the sport of racing and the passion of our fans, but the way NASCAR is run today is unfair to teams, drivers, sponsors, and fans."

"Today's action shows I'm willing to fight for a competitive market where everyone wins."

### SOCCER

#### MLS Eastern Conference

W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
Inter Miami CF	20	4	8	68	72	47
Columbus	16	6	9	57	62	36
Ryland practice squad deletion.	17	10	5	56	55	44
Orlando City	14	11	7	49	55	47
NY City FC	13	11	8	47	51	46
NY Red Bulls	11	7	14	47	52	45
Charlotte FC	12	11	9	45	41	37
CF Montreal	10	12	10	40	46	62
Houston FC	11	18	4	37	40	60
Philadelphia	9	13	10	37	59	50
D.C. United	9	13	10	37	50	66
Atlanta	8	14	10	34	42	47
Nashville	8	15	9	33	34	51
New England	9	18	4	31	34	62
Chicago	7	17	9	30	40	59

#### Western Conference

W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
LA Galaxy	18	7	7	61	66	47
Los Angeles FC	16	8	7	55	55	41
Seattle	15	9	8	53	49	34
Real Salt Lake	14	7	11	53	62	47
Houston	14	9	7	49	46	35
Colorado	15	12	5	50	59	56
Vancouver	13	10	8	47	50	44
Minnesota	13	12	7	46	53	48
Portland	12	11	9	45	64	55
Austin FC	10	13	9	39	35	44
FC Dallas	10	15	7	37	52	55
Saint Louis	7	12				