

NFL DRAFT

Teams expected to get offensive in the first round
Page 24



NATION

Biden signs \$95B in aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan
Page 6



FACES

Olympian Kristi Yamaguchi gets her own Barbie
Page 18

▶▶ **Sigonella priest accuses chaplain of workplace retaliation** ▶▶ Page 8

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DOD says US pier for Gaza not started, but 'on track'

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Construction has yet to start on a temporary floating pier off Gaza's coast, but the Pentagon expects it will be ready to flow new aid into the war-torn Palestinian enclave in the coming weeks, the Defense Department's top spokesman said Tuesday.

All the Army and Navy troops needed to build the temporary dock and an 1,800-foot floating causeway from the Mediterranean Sea into northern Gaza have arrived in the region, Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder told reporters at the Pentagon. Even with construction of the makeshift port — known as a Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore, or JLOTS — not started, Ryder said the Pentagon was confident it would be operating "by the end of this month or early May."

The operation is meant to provide a new way to deliver badly needed aid into Gaza. The World Health Organization has warned some 2.3 million inhabitants face extreme hunger that could become a full-blown famine by next month amid the war launched by Israel in response to Hamas militants' surprise Oct. 7 assault on Israelis.

Ryder has said the JLOTS operation could deliver some 2 million meals per day to Gaza.

"All the necessary vessels are within the Mediterranean region and standing by ... to begin construction when we're given the order to do that," he said. "There is a process and procedure that will have to be followed ... and our planners have worked through the details of all the

SEE PIER ON PAGE 15



ROBB HILL/For The Washington Post

American University students on Tuesday staged a protest in Washington demanding the university divest from Israel, days after a student body passed a resolution calling for the school's administration to do so.

College campus chaos

University students across country intensify protests over war in Gaza

By NICK PERRY
AND KAREN MATTHEWS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Columbia University averted another confrontation between students and police early Wednesday, but the situation remained tense with campus officials saying it would continue talks with pro-Palestinian protesters for another 48 hours.

University President Minouche Shafik had set a midnight deadline to reach an agreement on clearing an encampment of protesters on campus but the school extended negotiations, saying it was making "important progress." Student protesters had committed to dismantling and removing a significant number of tents, the New York Ivy League university said in a statement.

On Wednesday morning, the encampment appeared calm and a little smaller than the previous day.

Standoffs also persisted at other universities across the country, including California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, where protesters this week used furniture, tents, chains and zip ties to block a building's entrance and barricade themselves inside. And

new student encampments continued to pop up, including at Brown University in Rhode Island.

Police first tried to clear the encampment at Columbia last week, when they arrested more than 100 protesters. But the move backfired, acting as an inspiration for other students across the country

SEE PROTESTS ON PAGE 10

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Rule expands overtime eligibility for salaried workers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Biden administration has finalized a new rule set to make millions of more salaried workers eligible for overtime pay in the U.S.

The move marks the largest expansion in federal overtime eligibility seen in decades. Starting July 1, employers will be required pay overtime to salaried workers who make less than \$43,888 a year in certain executive, administrative and professional roles, the Labor Department said Tuesday.

That cap will then rise to \$58,656 by the start of 2025.

Tuesday's news marks a significant jump from the overtime eligibility threshold of \$35,568, which was set under the Trump administration in 2019 — just three years after a more generous Obama-era effort was ultimately scuttled in court after facing pushback from some business leaders and Republican politicians.

Under the federal law, nearly all hourly workers in the U.S. are entitled to overtime pay after 40

hours a week. But many salaried workers are exempt from that requirement — unless they earn below a certain level.

The new rule also expands overtime eligibility for some highly-compensated workers. According to a Labor Department FAQ, the \$107,432 annual threshold for highly-compensated workers is set to increase to \$132,964 on July 1 and \$151,164 by the start of 2025.

The Labor Department estimates the rule will affect 4 million lower-paid salary workers.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (April 25)	\$1.04	Bahrain(Dinar)	.3770
British pound (April 25)	\$1.21	Britain (Pound)	.8038
Japanese yen (April 25)	150.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3706
South Korean won (April 25)	1335.00	China(Yuan)	7.2460
		Denmark (Krone)	6.9740
		Egypt (Pound)	47.9019
		Euro	.9351
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8328
		Hungary (Forint)	368.05
		Israel (Shekel)	3.7908
		Japan (Yen)	155.00
		Kuwait(Dinar)	.3080
		Norway (Krone)	10.9817
		Philippines (Peso)	57.72
		Poland (Zloty)	4.05
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3611
		South Korea (Won)	1375.52
Switzerland (Franc)	.9133		
Thailand (Baht)	37.05		
Turkey (NewLira)	32.5145		

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.39
30-year bond	4.73

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



TODAY IN STRIPES

- Classified 7
- Comics 17
- Crossword 17
- Faces 18
- Opinion 16
- Sports 18-24

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MILITARY

Japan's pilots flying fewer intercept missions

BY HANA KUSUMOTO
AND SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO—The number of flights Japanese fighter pilots made to intercept Chinese and Russian aircraft approaching Japan were down by 14% the past fiscal year, their lowest response in a decade, according to Japan's Ministry of Defense.

Data released Friday shows Japanese jets scrambled 669 times during Japanese fiscal year 2023, which ended March 31.

That's 109 fewer than the 778 scrambles Japanese pilots made the previous fiscal year and the

lowest total since fiscal 2013.

Fighters are still intercepting foreign military aircraft at a high rate, Japan's Joint Staff said in a statement released with the data.

There was only one violation of the country's airspace involving a Russian aircraft, according to the data, which did not offer further details.

"Since fiscal 2013, the number of scrambles continues to be at a high level, with over about 700 scrambles conducted every fiscal year, and military aircraft continue to be active around Japan," the release said.

Chinese aircraft were the most

likely to approach Japan, provoking 479 scrambles during the past fiscal year. That's down from 575 scrambles against Chinese aircraft the previous year.

Japanese pilots scrambled 174 times against approaching Russian planes in fiscal 2023, according to the Defense Ministry release. The lowest response in a decade, 150 flights, occurred the previous year.

In June, Chinese aircraft passed between the Japanese islands of Miyako and Okinawa, according to the release. In June and December, Chinese and Russian bombers carried out a joint patrol over the East China Sea and Sea of Japan.

In August, a Chinese drone flew for the first time between Japan's Yonaguni Island and Taiwan and over Sea of Japan, the release said.



Kihara

Defense Minister Minoru Kihara mentioned the flights at a news conference Friday.

"The Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces will continue to take all possible precautions to ensure vigilance and surveillance and take strict measures against airspace

violations," he said.

Russian aircraft have noticeably reduced their activity near Japan since 2021, said James Brown, an international affairs expert at Temple University's Japan campus.

"Russia is trying to maintain the pretense that its military capabilities in the Pacific are unaffected by the war in Ukraine," he said Tuesday.

"In reality, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has limited its ability to show force in east Asia since so much of its equipment and men have been chewed up in the Ukrainian meat grinder."

New chopper demoted after scorching White House lawn

BY TONY CAPACCIO
AND JENNIFER JACOBS

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The new presidential helicopter has been demoted to backup duty because Lockheed Martin still can't figure out how to keep it from scorching the White House's South Lawn.

The VH-92 Patriot is landing only on paved runways for now, flying missions with White House officials or Secret Service staff instead of carrying President Joe Biden. The problem is due to an issue first identified in 2018 — the helicopter's spinning rotors and engine exhaust sometimes scorch the grass where it lands.

With its emblematic "white top" paint job, Marine One — its designation when the president is on board — is as much a symbol of the U.S. presidency as Air Force One. Crowds of reporters and White House guests often gather to watch the president depart from its traditional takeoff spot on the South Lawn.

For the time being, the helicopter doing that job will remain the VH-3D Sea King, which like the VH-92 is built by Lockheed's Sikorsky unit.

Lockheed has so far delivered 20 VH-92 helicopters to the Marine Corps under the \$5 billion program, Lockheed spokeswoman Melissa Chadwick said.

She said the company believes it's found a fix and will start testing soon.

"We have been working in close collaboration with our customer and have an agreed upon landing zone solution with testing



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

Marine One with President Joe Biden aboard, top, a Sikorsky VH-3D Sea King with Marine Helicopter Squadron One, lands near a Sikorsky/Lockheed Martin VH-92 Patriot helicopter, bottom, at New Castle Air National Guard Base in Delaware, in November.

planned to validate and ensure the aircraft meets that specific operational requirement," Chadwick said.

According to a White House official, who asked not to be identified discussing private conversations, engineering and design work is underway to see if fixes can be made to prevent grass damage under hot environmental conditions when rotors are turning.

The current fleet of presidential helicopters

entered duty in 1975, a year after Richard Nixon resigned, walked across the South Lawn and waved the victory sign from the steps of Marine One in one of the defining images of his presidency.

Earlier plans for a replacement from Lockheed were canceled in 2009 after that program was plagued by soaring costs and delays.

The helicopter is operating under a White House Military Office-approved "phased

transition plan" during which "all respective offices are working diligently to ensure a smooth, safe, and timely transition from the traditional fleet to the VH-92A," the White House said in a statement.

The White House declined to say when the helicopter will be ready to carry Biden.

"Tasking for presidential support is at the discretion of the White House Military Office and upon successful completion of the ongoing commissioning program," it said. The transition to the new presidential helicopter "is an event-driven goal, not a time-driven one."

The Pentagon's annual test report released in January for the first time deemed the helicopter "operationally effective for all operations" after improvements were made to address another problem — this one with voice communication. That report was silent on the issue of grass scorching.

Nikolas Guertin, the Navy's assistant secretary for acquisition, told a congressional subcommittee last week the service is asking for about \$120 million to improve issues including "mission systems, maintainability, reliability" and obsolescent parts.

"These efforts include Mission Communications System hardware and software upgrades, distributed network communications, cockpit upgrades, extended-range, cabin noise reduction, aircraft performance enhancements, and improved rotor blades," Guertin said in a prepared statement. It also didn't mention concerns around scorching the South Lawn.

US: Iranian group used 'spearphishing' to hack defense contractors

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. is accusing four Iranians of hacking defense contractors and targeting military veteran job seekers, an indictment unsealed Tuesday said.

The indictment charges four hackers said to be part of a multi-year cyberwar campaign by Iran's military against more than a dozen U.S. companies, as well as the State and Treasury departments.

Hossein Harooni, Reza Kazemifar, Komeil Baradaran Salmani and Alireza Shafie Nasab were

members of a hacking organization working on behalf of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard from 2016 to 2021, the indictment filed in the southern district of New York said.

The four are all at large, and the State Department on Tuesday announced a \$10 million reward for information on their whereabouts.

The U.S. also levied sanctions against the four Iranians and two front companies based in Iran that are associated with them, the Treasury Department announced Tuesday.

"Today's charges pull back the curtain on an Iran-based company that purported to provide 'cybersecurity services' while in actuality scheming to compromise U.S. private and public sector computer systems," Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen said in a statement.

The hacking group's victims were primarily defense contractors cleared by the Pentagon and granted security clearances to access, receive and store classified information, a statement from the Justice Department said Tuesday.

The indictment did not identify the contractors.

The hackers used spearphishing tactics in which they tricked people into clicking on a link that would infect their computers with malware, the indictment said. The group also impersonated women to gain the confidence of employees at defense companies before getting them to click on the links.

In one instance, the group is said to have gained access to an administrator email account at a defense contractor and used it to create fake personas and send spear-

phishing emails to a different contractor.

One campaign by the group compromised more than 200,000 employee accounts, prosecutors said.

The government also accused the group of testing malware intended to target job seekers, with a focus on military veterans.

Wednesday's sanctions against the group are the latest in a series of blacklisting actions by the U.S. against Iran, which has been engaged in a shadow war in the Middle East with the United States and its allies in the region.

PACIFIC

Construction begins for hangar on Okinawa

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force's 33rd Rescue Squadron, based on Okinawa, is getting a new home to match its new rides.

Construction began April 17 on a new, 131,384-square-foot hangar at Kadena Air Base to replace an aging structure that's endured "decades of environmental corrosion," a spokeswoman for the 18th Wing, Master Sgt. Natasha Stannard, said by email Tuesday.

A Shinto priest performed a traditional Japanese purification ritual to start construction of the hangar, in which the rescue squadron's complement of new HH-60W Jolly Green II helicopters will be brought for upkeep and repairs.



RAYMOND GEOFFROY/U.S. Air Force

A Shinto priest performs a purification ritual with salt and sake for the 33rd Rescue Squadron's new hangar at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, on April 17.

The 33rd's helicopters are maintained by the 718th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Stannard

said.

The hangar will also house administrative offices, an aircraft

simulator and a wash rack, according to an April 18 news release from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

One of the newly arrived Jolly Green IIs, the replacement for the squadron's G model Pave Hawks, took its inaugural flight from Kadena on Feb. 27, according to Pacific Air Forces. The G models were in service at Kadena for 21 years. The new helos began arriving in January.

Nishimatsu Construction Co. Ltd. was awarded the \$125.75 million contract in February 2023 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The estimated project completion date is February 2027, Stannard said.

"The new facility is designed to meet modern construction stan-

dards such as the wind load requirements for typhoon winds on Okinawa," she said. "It will also be equipped with an HH-60W flight simulator to allow pilots to maintain their proficiency at any time."

The Jolly Green II is based on the UH-60M Black Hawk design with improvements to support combat rescue missions, including greater fuel capacity for extended range, improved defensive systems and sensors for survivability in hostile environments, according to the Lockheed Martin website.

The new hangar will enable the rescue squadron to train, plan and execute their mission in keeping the Air Force pararescue motto: "These things we do, that others may live," Stannard said.

Base on Guam is still removing trees nearly a year after typhoon

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

More than 250 dead trees and stumps — among the last reminders of a major typhoon that struck Guam last year — are slated for removal from Andersen Air Force Base in the coming months.

Typhoon Mawar passed just north of Guam as a Category 4 storm on May 24. It lashed the island with heavy rains and wind gusts of up to 167 mph, flooding low-lying areas and toppling trees.

After the storm passed, a team of 60 contractors and airmen spent 30,000 hours between May and July clearing out 1,000 trees that posed safety risks on Andersen, base spokeswoman 1st Lt. Ariana Wilkinson said by email Friday. A second phase began in March, with the goal of removing approximately 250 remaining dead trees and stumps.

"Now that all infrastructure and facilities are on a good path towards recovery, we can refocus our efforts on base improvements and

appearance," she said.

A team of 10 people should have the remaining stumps removed by the fall, Wilkinson added. So far, project workers have been "running full speed to remove, dispose and backfill 91 trees/stumps around base," she said.

The work is being done by the 36th Civil Engineering Squadron, the Pavement and Heavy Equipment and Grounds Maintenance shops and private contractor Pacific Federal Management Inc., Wilkinson said.

She was unable to provide an exact cost for the project as of Tuesday afternoon.

Base commander Brig. Gen. Thomas Palenske discussed the tree stumps with base residents in a Facebook post on April 15, and identified Pacific Federal Management as the company heading up their removal.

"It's amazing what you can accomplish if you are willing to throw \$300K at the problem," he replied to a comment on that post.



U.S. Air Force

A team from Pacific Federal Management Inc. removes tree stumps from a housing area at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, on Sunday.

Records from USASpending.gov show the Defense Department awarded Pacific Federal Management a contract on Dec. 7 for approximately \$360,000 in landscaping and groundskeeping services.

The contract lists Yiga, the northernmost village on Guam and home of Andersen, as the location

of the work. The project has a potential end date of Nov. 30.

Pacific Federal Management has been under contract for landscaping and groundskeeping services at Guam's military installations since November 2019, a contract that serves as the "parent award" for the December 2023

contract.

The island is also home to Naval Base Guam and the Marine Corps' Camp Blaz, which is still under construction.

The company has been paid more than \$64 million since November 2019, according to USASpending.gov.

Navy surveillance plane to join hunt for missing Japanese helo crews

By HANA KUSUMOTO
AND ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. Navy is sending an aircraft to help scour the Pacific for seven Japanese aviators missing since two helicopters crashed on Saturday, Defense Minister Minoru Kihara said this week.

A P-8 Poseidon patrol and surveillance plane will join the search for two SH-60 Seahawk

crews with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, he said at a press conference Tuesday. The helicopters went down during nighttime training about 370 miles south of Tokyo.

Kihara did not indicate when the Poseidon would begin its search. U.S. 7th Fleet spokeswoman Lt. Jamie Moroney acknowledged a request for comment Wednesday but was unable to provide an immediate response.

The Poseidon will join about 10 ships and five other aircraft from the Self-Defense Force and Japan Coast Guard to comb the area where contact was lost with the helicopters, Kihara said. The search area, however, is steadily expanding over time due to the tides.

"In any case, we will carry out search and rescue operations with all our efforts to safely rescue all seven mission personnel

as soon as possible," he added.

The Self-Defense Force's oceanographic research ship JS Shonan is also joining the mission, bringing with it the capability to search underwater and identify exactly where the helicopters sank.

The helicopters, both assigned to Japan's Fleet Air Wing 22, went missing at 10:38 p.m. Saturday during an anti-submarine warfare drill alongside a third

helicopter about 170 miles east of Torishima in the Izu island chain.

Eight crewmembers were aboard the helicopters; one was found and confirmed dead Sunday.

The flight recorders have been recovered, and the defense ministry is analyzing them to determine the cause of the crash. There has been no indication of a mechanical malfunction, so far, Kihara said.

EUROPE

Vietnam combat veteran honored for decades of service in Bavaria

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Kenneth Aungst, a retired Army first sergeant, made a vow after narrowly surviving an early morning attack on Kontum Airfield in January 1968.

A platoon of North Vietnamese sappers infiltrated the base, killing six of Aungst's men, wounding more than a dozen and destroying 16 aircraft, he recalled while speaking at U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach last week.

The helicopter mechanic, now 87, was struck in the back of the head with shrapnel from an enemy grenade and was later asked to identify the bodies of his young troops.

"I made a promise to myself that I was going to make my life a positive life," he said. "If I make it out of here and get home to [my wife and daughter], I'm going to be a good guy."

Aungst, who has German residency through his wife, Marga, is considered a community icon in the greater Ansbach area for his volunteering efforts, and his dedi-

cation to soldiers and veterans.

He was honored by the 7th Army Training Command with its Good Neighbor Award at Tower Barracks in Grafenwoehr on Friday, along with nine German citizens for their support of the U.S.

Army and local community. He is the first American to receive the award, which is often given to local mayors and clergy.

"He is an outstanding partner with our unit," Col. Ryan Kendall, commander of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade at Ansbach, said after the ceremony. "As each command team cycles through, he's that thread of continuity with those (community) relationships."

Aungst grew up speaking Pennsylvania Dutch on a farm in Pine Grove, Pa., he recalled. Both of his parents, Eldoria and Roy, worked to support the war effort in World War II.

Aungst left a job at a leather tan-

nery to join the Army at 18.

In 1955, he arrived in Illesheim, Germany, straight out of basic training, he said. He met his wife at a guest house in Bad Windsheim. Wedding bells and a daughter, Barbara, soon followed.

During the first of three tours to Vietnam, Aungst helped evacuate the wounded in an air ambulance unit.

He served as a technical inspector for the 57th Assault Helicopter Company during the second, which included the attack on Jan. 10, 1968.

Retired Lt. Gen. Hubert Smith, then a captain, said Aungst saved numerous lives that night.

"We had guys who were in very bad shape," Smith said. "Ken immediately took charge."

He has always been deeply concerned about the welfare of others, Smith said.

Aungst retired to the Illesheim area in 1980. He worked as a shopette manager and later as postmaster for Storck Barracks.

He began to focus more on good deeds to keep his post-traumatic stress at bay.



KENNETH AUNGST/U.S. Army

Kenneth Aungst on a helicopter in Vietnam in 1962.

Aungst has provided snacks and coffee for COVID-19 vaccination drives and he's active with American Legion Post 1982. In the community, he's served as a point of contact for a program that brings together American families and foster children during the holidays. He also helps German widows get the benefits they're entitled to receive.

Helga Moser, community liaison for the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, said Aungst is her "go-to" person when organizing cross-cultural events. Aungst said the secret to his success is simple.

"Do what you can for other people," he said. "A smile from somebody's face and a thank you for what you did for them is all you got to have."

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WAR IN UKRAINE

Biden signs long-awaited \$95 billion aid package

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Wednesday signed the \$95 billion in foreign aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, ending months of political deadlock that saw the bill stall due to Republican opposition to arming Ukraine while Russia gained momentum on the battlefield.

“We rose to the moment. we came together and we got it done,” Biden said at a White House event to announce the signing. “Now we need to move fast, and we are.”

Senators approved the assistance package Tuesday in a 79-18 vote after the House this weekend passed a version of the legislation that allowed members to cast votes on aid to each country individually. The majority of House Republicans voted against continuing to help the Ukrainian military fight Russia’s invasion.

Most Senate Republicans rejected the isolationist stance of their colleagues in the House and stood in support of Kyiv.

“Take it from this senator, elected to this body alongside President [Ronald] Reagan: the conservative position is to believe in America, to invest in our military and to support freedom,” said Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the longest-serving Republican in congressional history.

The legislation contains \$60 billion for Ukraine, \$26 billion for Israel’s military as well as humanitarian aid for civilians in the Gaza Strip and other conflict zones and \$8 billion for Taiwan and other partners in the Indo-Pacific region to counter China.

Several members of the Democratic caucus objected to the package due to its aid for Israel, condemning the destruction and suffering caused by the Israeli cam-

paigned against Hamas militants in Gaza.

Much of the funds for Ukraine will go to the Pentagon to replenish American stockpiles of weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine, finance new purchases of weapons for Kyiv and pay for an intensified U.S. troop presence in Europe.

The bill also seeks the repayment of \$10 billion in economic assistance to the Ukrainian government, though it would also allow the forgiveness of the loans beginning in 2026.

Another measure would allow the selling of frozen Russian assets in the U.S. to finance Ukraine’s reconstruction.

Congress last approved a major tranche of funding for Ukraine in December 2022. The foreign aid package approved Tuesday was first requested by the White House in October and faced a tortuous path through Congress as Republicans resisted additional assistance for the Ukrainian war effort.

The Senate passed its own \$95 billion emergency aid legislation for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan in February after a deal pushed by Republicans to pair the bill with stricter immigration provisions unraveled amid criticism from former President Donald Trump.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., hesitated to bring the aid package up for a vote as hard-right Republicans threatened to oust him but he relented last week under mounting pressure to act. He broke up the legislation into several pieces to prevent Republican aversion to new Ukraine aid from tanking the entire bill.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called the House passage of the legislation “a watershed moment for the de-

fense of democracy.”

In remarks before the Senate vote Tuesday, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., denounced members of his party who “indulge the fantasy of pulling up a drawbridge” and turn their backs on a long-standing bipartisan commitment to project American values around the world.

“Dithering and hesitation have compounded the challenges we face. Today’s action is overdue, but our work does not end here,” he said. “Trust in American resolve is not rebuilt overnight. Expanding and restocking the arsenal of democracy doesn’t just happen by magic.”

A number of Senate Republicans flipped to support the aid package after voting against it in February.

Top national security officials raised alarm in recent weeks that Ukraine could lose without continued support from the United States. Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli, who leads U.S. European Command and is NATO’s supreme allied commander, warned of dire ammunition shortages and said Ukraine’s military will be outgunned 10 to one by Russia within weeks.

Cavoli said the U.S. provides Ukraine with “the most critical things on the battlefield”: artillery rounds and ground-based air defense. The biggest killer on the battlefield is artillery, he said, and should Ukraine run out, “they would run out because we stopped supplying.”

Russia has made territorial advances as aid stalled in Congress. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told lawmakers this month that the battlefield has shifted in Russia’s favor and Russian forces are making “incremental gains.”



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Joe Biden speaks before signing a \$95 billion Ukraine aid package that also includes support for Israel, Taiwan, and other allies, in the State Dining Room of the White House on Wednesday.

“We’re seeing the Ukrainians be challenged in terms of holding the line,” he said.

The aid package approved Tuesday will reauthorize the Pentagon to pull up to \$7.8 billion worth of supplies for Ukraine from its inventories. More than \$23 million will be spent on backfilling U.S. stockpiles.

Ukraine eagerly anticipated passage of the legislation, with members of the country’s parliament holding up American flags on Tuesday in a show of gratitude

for U.S. lawmakers who waved Ukrainian flags on the House floor this weekend.

Minutes after senators cast their votes, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine thanked lawmakers for finally marshaling the aid package across the finish line.

“This vote reinforces America’s role as a beacon of democracy and the leader of the free world,” he wrote on social media.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Pentagon to quickly send \$1B in weapons, equipment to Ukraine

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon on Wednesday announced new military aid for Ukraine, including air defense systems and artillery rounds, worth about \$1 billion after President Joe Biden quickly signed the legislation passed by Congress to move much needed weapons and equipment to forces trying to stop a surging Russian invasion.

“In the next few hours, we’re going to begin sending equipment to Ukraine for air defense munitions, for artillery, for rock-

et systems and armored vehicles,” Biden said.

The Pentagon hasn’t been able to provide Ukraine with more weapons or ammunition since its last aid package of \$250 million in December.

The U.S. was able to send \$300 million in weapons and ammunition in March after defense officials said the Pentagon was able to find cost savings in earlier Ukraine contracts and used that money to send more military aid to Ukraine.

Previous aid has been provided through presidential draw-down authorities, where equip-

ment is pulled from existing U.S. military stocks and sent to Ukraine on an emergency basis, or long-term assistance to procure weapons and munitions from the defense industry or partner countries for a later time.

With the latest package, the U.S. has provided nearly \$46 billion in aid to Ukraine since the Russian invasion in February 2022 that has stretched into its third year.

Items in the military aid package include:

- RIM-7 and AIM-9M missiles for air defense.

- Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.

- Small arms and additional rounds of small arms ammunition, including .50 caliber rounds to counter drones.

- Additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems.

- 155 mm artillery rounds.

- 105 mm artillery rounds.

- 60 mm mortar rounds.

- Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles.

- Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles.

- High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles.

- Logistics support vehicles.

- Tactical vehicles to tow and haul equipment.

- Tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided missiles.

- Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems.

- Precision aerial munitions.

- Airfield support equipment.

- Anti-armor mines.

- Claymore anti-personnel munitions.

- Demolitions munitions for obstacle clearing.

- Night vision devices.

- Spare parts, field equipment, training munitions, maintenance, and other equipment.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Aid will help Ukraine avoid defeat; victory is another matter

By JILL LAWLESS AND SAMYA KULLAB
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A big, new package of U.S. military aid will help Ukraine avoid defeat in its war with Russia. Winning will still be a long slog.

The arms and ammunition in the \$61 billion military aid package, which was signed Tuesday by President Joe Biden, should enable Ukraine to slow the Russian army's bloody advances and block its strikes on troops and civilians. And it will buy Ukraine time — for long-term planning about how to take back the fifth of the country now under Russian control.

“Ultimately it offers Ukraine the prospect of staying in the war this year,” said Michael Clarke, visiting professor in war studies at King's College London. “Sometimes in warfare you've just got to stay in it. You've just got to avoid being rolled over.”

The difference could be felt within days on the front line in eastern and southern Ukraine, where Russia's much larger army has been slowly taking territory



FRANCISCO SECO/AP

Residents walk past debris at Kyiv's Boychuk art academy that was damaged during Russian attacks in March.

against massively outgunned Ukrainian forces.

The aid approval means Ukraine may be able to release artillery ammunition from dwindling stocks that it has been rationing. More equipment will come soon from American stocks in Poland

and Germany, and later from the U.S.

The first shipments are expected to arrive by the beginning of next week, said Davyd Arakhamia, a lawmaker with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Servant of the People party.

But opposition lawmaker Vadym Ivchenko, a member of the Ukrainian parliament's National Security, Defense and Intelligence Committee, said logistical challenges and bureaucracy could delay shipments to Ukraine by two to three months, and it would be even longer before they reach the front line.

While details of the shipments are classified, Ukraine's most urgent needs are artillery shells to stop Russian troops from advancing, and anti-aircraft missiles to protect people and infrastructure from missiles, drones and bombs.

What's coming first is not always what front-line commanders need most, said Arakhamia. He said that even a military giant like the U.S. does not have stockpiles of everything.

“The logic behind this first

package was, you (the U.S.) finds our top priorities and then you see what you have in the warehouses,” Arakhamia said. “And sometimes they do not match.”

Hope for future breakthroughs for Ukraine still hangs on more timely deliveries of Western aid, lawmakers acknowledge.

Many experts believe that both Ukraine and Russia are exhausted by two years of war and won't be able to mount a major offensive — one capable of making big strategic gains — until next year.

Still, Russia is pushing forward at several points along the 600-mile front, using tanks, wave after wave of infantry troops and satellite-guided gliding bombs to pummel Ukrainian forces. Russia is also hitting power plants and pounding Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, which is only about 20 miles from the Russian border.

Ivchenko said the goal for Ukraine's forces now is to “hold the line” until the bulk of new supplies arrive by mid-summer.

Then, they can focus on trying to recapture territory recently lost in the Donetsk region.

“And probably ... at the end of summer we'll see some movement, offensive movement of the Ukrainian armed forces,” he said.

Some military experts doubt Ukraine has the resources to mount even small offensives very soon.

The U.S. funding “can probably only help stabilize the Ukrainian position for this year and begin preparations for operations in 2025,” said Matthew Savill, director of military sciences at the Royal United Services Institute, a think tank.

In the best-case scenario for Ukraine, the American aid will give commanders time to reorganize and train its army — applying lessons learned from its failed summer 2023 offensive.

It may also galvanize Ukraine's allies in Europe to increase aid.

“So this just wasn't about Ukraine and the United States, this really affected our entire 51-country coalition,” said U.S. Congressman Bill Keating, a Democrat who visited Kyiv on Monday as part of a four-member congressional delegation.

STARS AND STRIPES

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The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

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MILITARY

Sigonella priest accuses chaplain of reprisal

Rev. Frank Watts said he was singled out and had unfair treatment last year

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A priest who worked at Naval Air Station Sigonella for over a decade contends in a recent complaint filed with the Defense Department Inspector General that his impending dismissal is an act of reprisal by a military chaplain.

The Rev. Frank Watts submitted the complaint April 17, saying he was singled out for punishment and other unfair treatment over the last year. Those actions in turn led to the Sicily base's refusal to renew his contract, which expires May 31, he said.

Watts said he never was informed of the decision by NAS Sigonella's chaplaincy but learned about it through an email sent earlier this month by a base office responsible for contracts.

The chaplain whom Watts accuses of retaliating against him is on leave and wasn't immediately available to comment Wednesday. NAS Sigonella did not respond to a request to interview the chaplain.

A new contract for a priest "will be up for bid to those who are in-



FACEBOOK/NAS Sigonella Chapel

Rev. Frank Watts celebrates the New Year's Day Mass in 2023.

terested in serving the NAS Sigonella Catholic community," Lt. j.g. Andrea Perez, a base spokeswoman, said Wednesday. "Our goal is to avoid any lapse in support to our Catholic community."

The reprisal allegation stems from an April 2023 disagreement between Watts and the chaplain about control over, and spending, of Sunday offerings from parishioners, according to Watts.

The chaplain wanted to use some of those funds for a project that was incompatible with the Si-

gonella Catholic community's traditional charitable outreach, said Watts, who has served at Sigonella since 2013.

Watts said he challenged the chaplain's effort to control how contributions were spent. Not long after, he found himself being called into the chaplain's office on allegations of rule violations, such as failing to meet office hour requirements, he said.

Watts said he signed a couple of disciplinary write-ups, including one for allowing his wife to use his computer with his DOD identification card, or CAC, inserted while she did ministry volunteer work.

However, he did not sign others because they were false, Watts said.

Watts married while he was an Anglican clergyman, prior to his conversion in 2011. He served as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force from 2002 to 2011, according to a June 2013 story in Sigonella's *The Signature*.

The failure to renew his contract also may be related to questions he asked about falsification of financial records and abuse of authority, Watts said.

He made a separate complaint to the Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central Inspector General in Naples about those issues on April 12.

On Wednesday, the office said it

would not investigate the matter and would refer it to base commander Capt. Aaron Shoemaker, according to an excerpt of an email from the Naples IG's office that Watts shared with Stars and Stripes.

Subsequent emails from the contracting office to Watts said work performance issues were why his contract wasn't renewed, and that his contract no longer met the needs of the department.

Watts countered the work performance contention by citing his many years of service at the base. He celebrated 287 Masses in 2023, according to data he provided to Stars and Stripes. That same year, he also performed three baptisms, 12 first Communions and 10 confirmations, according to the data.

"I can prove I've been doing my contract," Watts said. "I have a 10-year-long record of performance."

NAS Sigonella confirmed that Watts' contract will end next month, adding that an option to renew it for a year won't be exercised.

Shoemaker will meet Thursday with Catholics in the base community to address concerns and questions, Perez said.

The contract for Sigonella's Catholic religious education program director also was allowed to lapse without renewal. Base officials didn't answer questions

about that decision.

Alicia Fabbri, a civilian worker at the base, said she is concerned about the lack of transparency in the decision not to renew Watts' contract. Base officials have not explained to her and other parishioners the reasoning behind the decision, she said.

In addition, the possibility that Mass services may be reduced from five weekly to just one is troubling, as is the potential for youth programs to be disrupted, she said.

The congregation has 30 to 40 children, some of whom are preparing for their first Communion or looking forward to attending summer camp.

"To me, that plainly communicates you are not familiar with the needs of the Catholic community," said Fabbri, who also filed an IG complaint alleging that Watts was subjected to discrimination and retaliation. "We are not just a Sunday-only congregation."

A gap in services jeopardizes the mission readiness of the base, Fabbri said, adding that the remote location and high operating tempo make an assignment at NAS Sigonella challenging for service members and civilians alike, she said.

"Without religious and spiritual support, it's very difficult," she said. "I don't know that we could stay here without that."

20th anniversary tribute honors 3 USS Firebolt service members

BY SHANNON RENFROE
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Hundreds of service members and senior military officials gathered at Naval Support Activity Bahrain on Wednesday to mark 20 years since a Persian Gulf suicide bombing killed three people aboard the patrol ship USS Firebolt.

Seven crew members set out from the Firebolt in an inflatable boat on April 24, 2004, to inspect fishing dhows lurking around protected Iraqi oil terminals in the Persian Gulf.

Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan Bruckenthal, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pernaselli and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Watts were killed when an explosive on one of the fishing boats detonated.

Four crew members risked their lives by swimming toward the victims and trying to save them.

Vice Adm. George Wikoff, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet, delivered remarks that linked the tragedy 20 years ago to current

events in the Middle East.

"Even as we speak, sailors, not unlike these three brave men, are facing down anti-ship ballistic missiles in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden or boarding suspect vessels trafficking illegal narcotics or arms in the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Gulf," Wikoff said. "Like the heroes of the Firebolt, they sail unflinchingly into harm's way, knowing there's no such thing as a routine mission."

Former Firebolt crew members from over the years came to pay their respects Wednesday and talked about the impact of that day.

"Ceremonies are always humbling, especially if you have done some of the operations that caused this tragedy," said Master Chief Petty Officer Raul Valladares.

In 2022, the ship was decommissioned and transferred to Bahrain's navy, which renamed it the *Jenan*.

The ship transfer reflected the close military ties between the U.S. and Bahrain, which recently signed a comprehensive joint security agreement.



Vice Adm. George M. Wikoff, commander of U.S. 5th Fleet, speaks at the USS Firebolt.

"That little ship has been through a lot, just from commissioning to deploying, drug interdictions in South America and homeporting in Bahrain," Valladares said.

"I was sad to see it decommissioned," he added. "But it was humbling to see it go to a host nation in use and not just go out to sea and become target practice at the next multinational exercise."



PHOTOS BY SHANNON RENFROE/Stars and Stripes

Sailors are reflected in a memorial that honors the sacrifices of three service members. Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan Bruckenthal, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pernaselli and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Watts were killed in a 2004 attack during a routine patrol in the Persian Gulf.



Stars and Stripes

The USS Firebolt, a U.S. 5th Fleet coastal patrol ship, in the Persian Gulf in 2014.

NATION



ALBERTO MARIANI/AP

Second-grade students select their meals during their lunch break in the cafeteria at an elementary school in Scottsdale, Ariz.

USDA updates rules for school meals that limit added sugars for first time

Associated Press

The nation's school meals will get a makeover under new nutrition standards that limit added sugars for the first time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday.

The final rule also trims sodium in kids' meals, although not by the 30% first proposed in 2023. And it continues to allow flavored milks — such as chocolate milk — with less sugar, rather than adopting an option that would have offered only unflavored milk to the youngest kids.

The aim is to improve nutrition

and align with U.S. dietary guidelines in the program that provides breakfasts to more than 15 million students and lunches to nearly 30 million students every day at a cost of about \$22.6 billion per year.

"All of this is designed to ensure that students have quality meals and that we meet parents' expectations," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told reporters.

The limits on added sugars would be required in the 2025-26 school year, starting with high-sugar foods such as cereal, yogurt and flavored milk. By the fall of 2027, added sugars in school

meals would be limited to no more than 10% of the total calories per week for breakfasts and lunches, in addition to limits on sugar in specific products.

Officials had proposed to reduce sodium in school meals by as much as 30% over the next several years. But after receiving mixed public comments and a directive from Congress included in the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bill approved in March, the agency will reduce sodium levels allowed in breakfasts by 10% and in lunches by 15% by the 2027-28 school year.

Casey, McCormick to face each other as nominees in Pa.'s US Senate race

By MARC LEVY
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Democratic Sen. Bob Casey and Republican challenger David McCormick will face each other in Pennsylvania's high-stakes U.S. Senate contest this fall, as Tuesday's primary election put the men on track for a race that is expected to cost hundreds of millions of dollars and help decide control of the Senate next year.

Casey and McCormick won their respective party primary contests after they were uncontested and now enter what is likely to be a grueling, expensive and hard-fought 2024 general election campaign that culminates in the Nov. 5 vote.

Casey, seeking his fourth term, is perhaps Pennsylvania's best-known politician and a stalwart of the presidential swing state's

Democratic Party — the son of a former two-term governor and Pennsylvania's longest-ever serving Democrat in the Senate.

McCormick is a two-time Senate challenger, a former hedge fund CEO and a Pennsylvania native who spent \$14 million of his own money only to lose narrowly to celebrity heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz in 2022's seven-way GOP primary. Oz then lost to Democratic Sen. John Fetterman in a pivotal Senate contest.

This time around, McCormick has consolidated the party around his candidacy and is backed by a super PAC that's already reported raising more than \$20 million, much of it from securities-trading

billionaires.

McCormick's candidacy is shaping up as the strongest challenge to Casey in his three reelection bids. McCormick has worked to shore up support in the GOP base, and on Tuesday night hammered his message at his election night gathering in Pittsburgh that Casey is a do-nothing senator.

"We're now turning to the general election and here's the truth: Pennsylvania deserves better than Bob Casey, you deserve better," McCormick said. "Bob Casey's defining achievement in his political life, 30 years in political office, has been to be the son of Bob Casey Sr. That is what defines his political career."



Casey



McCormick

Push on diversity program limits gains momentum

By DAVID A. LIEB
Associated Press

A conservative quest to limit diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives is gaining momentum in state capitals and college governing boards, with officials in about one-third of the states now taking some sort of action against it.

Tennessee became the latest when the Republican governor this week signed legislation that would prohibit banks and other financial institutions from considering a customer's participation — or lack thereof — in "diversity, equity and inclusion training" or "social justice programming."

That came shortly after the Democratic governor in Kansas allowed legislation to become law without her signature that will prohibit statements about diversity, equity or inclusion from being used in decisions about student admissions, financial aid or employment at higher education institutions.

Last week, Iowa's Republican-led Legislature also gave final approval to a budget bill that would ban all DEI offices and initiatives in higher education that aren't necessary to comply with accreditation or federal law. The measure expands upon a directive last year from the Iowa Board of Regents to eliminate DEI staff positions.

Republican lawmakers in about two dozen states have filed bills seeking to restrict DEI initiatives this year. They are countered by Democrats who have sponsored supportive DEI measures in about 20 states. Altogether, lawmakers have proposed about 150 bills this year that would either restrict or promote DEI efforts, according to an Associated Press analysis using the legislation-tracking software Plural.

Higher education institutions and many businesses have long devoted resources to improving diversity and inclusivity.

More recently, conservative groups began raising concerns that DEI initiatives are promoting an agenda that elevates racial or gender identity over individual merit.

Since 2022, about half a dozen conservative or libertarian organizations have offered model measures to state lawmakers to eliminate DEI offices or prohibit the use of DEI criteria in training programs or employment, academic and financial decisions.

Christopher Rufo, a senior fel-



JOHN HANNA/AP

Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging sign at the University of Kansas campus on April 12, in Lawrence, Kan.

low at the Manhattan Institute and an architect of the movement, said in a recent article that the ultimate goal is to "abolish DEI in all American institutions."

The acronym DEI "has now been weaponized," said Paulette Granberry Russell, president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. "And it's taking us, unfortunately, back to a time that failed to acknowledge the inequities that persist today based on discriminatory practices."

The Race and Equity Center at the University of Southern California has launched a "National DEI Defense Fund." Among other things, it provides free professional development courses where publicly funded DEI training has been banned.

Republican-led Florida and Texas last year became the first states to adopt broad-based laws banning DEI efforts in higher education. Universities in Texas have since eliminated more than 100 DEI-related jobs and Florida universities also have been shedding positions.

Earlier this year, Republican governors in Alabama and Utah signed laws restricting diversity, equity and inclusion efforts not only in higher education but also in K-12 schools and throughout state government.

GOP governors in Idaho and Wyoming also signed legislation this year restricting the use of state funds for DEI efforts at higher education institutions.

Other bills signed into law in Idaho and GOP-led Indiana prohibit the use of DEI statements in employment and admissions decisions at public colleges and universities.

A similar bill barring mandatory DEI statements in higher education passed Wisconsin's Republican-led legislature but got vetoed by the Democratic governor.

NATION

High court weighs state's abortion ban

Justices appear to be skeptical that laws conflict

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Conservative Supreme Court justices appeared skeptical Wednesday that state abortion bans that took effect after the sweeping ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade* violate federal health care law, even during some medical emergencies.

The case marks the first time the Supreme Court has considered the implications of a state ban since the nationwide right to abortion was overturned. It comes from Idaho, which is among 14 states that now ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy with very limited exceptions.

While members of the high court's conservative majority expressed concern about pregnant patients' ability to get emergency care in the state, it was unclear whether any were swayed by the Biden administration's argument.

The Justice Department says abortions must be allowed in emergencies that seriously threaten a woman's health under a federal health care law that requires hospitals accepting Medicare to provide emergency care regardless of patients' ability to pay.



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

Anti-abortion and abortion-rights activists rally outside the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

"How can you impose restrictions on what Idaho can criminalize, simply because hospitals in Idaho have chosen to participate in Medicare?" said Justice Samuel Alito, who wrote the decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Justices on the high court's liberal minority, meanwhile, raised sharp questions about whether Idaho's law was putting women's

health at risk.

"Within these rare cases, there's a significant number where the woman's life is not in peril, but she's going to lose her reproductive organs. She's going to lose the ability to have children in the future unless an abortion takes place," Justice Elena Kagan said.

The Biden administration argues that even in states where

abortion is banned, federal health care law says hospitals must be allowed to end pregnancies in rare emergencies where a patient's life or health is at serious risk.

Idaho contends its ban has exceptions for life-saving abortion but allowing it in more medical emergencies would turn hospitals into "abortion enclaves." The state argues the Biden adminis-

tration is misusing a health care law that is meant to ensure patients aren't turned away based on their ability to pay.

The Supreme Court has allowed the Idaho law to go into effect, even during emergencies, as the case has played out. It makes performing an abortion a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

Dueling protests were taking shape outside the court before the start of arguments on Wednesday. "Abortion saves lives," read signs displayed by abortion rights supporters. Opponents displayed a sign that read, "Emergency rooms are not abortion clinics."

Doctors have said Idaho's abortion ban has already affected emergency care. More women whose conditions are typically treated with abortions must now be flown out of state for care, since doctors must wait until they are close to death to provide abortions within the bounds of state law.

Meanwhile, complaints of pregnant women being turned away from U.S. emergency rooms spiked after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, according to federal documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Anti-abortion groups blame doctors for mishandling maternal emergency cases. Idaho argues the Biden administration overstates health care woes to undermine state abortion laws.

Protests: Universities struggle to balance freedom of speech, protecting campus safety

FROM PAGE 1

to set up similar encampments and motivating protesters at Columbia to regroup.

Students protesting Israel's war with Hamas are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies enabling its monthslong conflict. Dozens have been arrested on charges of trespassing or disorderly conduct. Some Jewish students say the protests have veered into antisemitism and made them afraid to set foot on campus.

The reprieve at Columbia came hours before Republican U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson planned to visit and meet with Jewish students to address antisemitism on college campuses.

Columbia said it had agreed with protest representatives that only students would remain at the encampment and they would make it welcoming, banning discriminatory or harassing language.

Elsewhere, at the University of Minnesota, Democratic U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar attended a protest late

Tuesday, hours after nine protesters were arrested on the campus when police took down an encampment in front of the library. Hundreds had rallied in the afternoon to demand their release.

Omar's daughter was among the demonstrators arrested at Columbia last week.

Also Tuesday night, police arrested over 200 protesters blocking traffic in Brooklyn, near the home of Sen. Chuck Schumer, during a non-college demonstration demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The protest was organized by Jewish Voice for Peace on the second night of Passover.

At Cal Poly Humboldt, protesters chanted, "We are not afraid of you!" before officers in riot gear pushed into them at the building's entrance, video shows. Student Peyton McKinzie said she was walking on campus Monday when she saw police grab one woman by the hair and another student with their head bandaged for an injury.

"I think a lot of students are in shock about it," she said.

Three students were arrested, according to a statement from the school, which shut down the campus through Wednesday. Students had occupied a second campus building Tuesday.

Students at some protests were hiding their identities. At an encampment of about 40 tents at the heart of the University of Michigan's campus in Ann Arbor, almost every student wore a mask, which was handed to them when they entered.

Student protesters declined to identify themselves to reporters, saying they feared retribution by the university. Organizers of the protest said some students who had participated in prior protests at Michigan had been doxxed and punished. But some students passing by shouted at the protesters to remove their masks and show their faces.

The upwelling of demonstrations has left universities struggling to balance campus safety with free speech rights. Many long tolerated the protests, but are



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Students protest at an encampment outside the Kresge Auditorium on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on Tuesday, in Cambridge, Mass.

now doling out more heavy-handed discipline, citing safety concerns.

At New York University this week, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody and all had been released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges.

More than 40 protesters were arrested Monday at an encampment at Yale University.

Harvard University in Massachusetts has tried to stay a step

ahead of protests by locking most gates into its famous Harvard Yard and limiting access to those with school identification.

Literature doctoral student Christian Deleon said he understood why the Harvard administration may be trying to avoid protests but said there still has to be a place for students to express what they think.

"We should all be able to use these kinds of spaces to protest, to make our voices heard," he said.

STARS AND STRIPES

MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

A Beautiful Mindset

Military children, like Mikayla, have a lot to teach us. We all could benefit from her positive example and begin our days in gratefulness and appreciation.



...As a military child, sometimes I ask my self why we keep moving and moving but I answer my own question and I realized that Im so lucky. Im a lucky girl because ... of my dad's profession. Yes! he is a souldier and yes, we move a lot but we travel in a nice place too. We had a chance to see beautiful places and learned lots of different cultures. We even taste different kinds of delicious foods and most of all I meet lots of friends. Being a military child is a challenging. I just remind my self that a beautiful day begins with a beautiful mindset. When I wake up, I take a second and see what privilege I have. Im so grateful and thankful that Im alive and healthy. I have a complete family and the moment I start to realized that life is a blessing. I assure myself it will start to feel like one time spent appreciating is time worth living. I pray to God that all the military kids will be blessed together with their families and be protecting by their each angels all the time, so that wherever the army takes us it will be alright. Just be strong, be patient and have faith. **Everythings gonna be alright.** Military child is awesome!



Mikayla L. / Netzaberg Elementary School

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MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Many of the military kids at **SHAPE Middle School** in Belgium come from other countries. While their languages may be different, their experiences are familiar.

život vojského dieťaťa zo Slovenska

Simon H.

Being a military child is tough and sometimes makes times rough

But in the end, it comes with benefits, gives you the experience with different cultures and friends.

I miss my friends, I miss the times sitting next to my best friend.

I might never go to school with them, but in the end, they're still there.

The experience just gets better and better. It's really hard at the beginning but later on, you start to get to know people, your teachers, and the environment plus you get to experience American culture as a European student.

So in the end you will realize that it was the best experience, I realized that I had an experience that 90% of students in Slovakia won't have.

يركس عل ل فطال هايح Bisan A

I am Bisan and I will talk about my experience as a military child. It is my first time coming to a country other than my country. It is a unique experience because I have had many experiences on this journey as a military child. There is also a different language and customs than mine in Belgium. There are different traditions, cultures, schools, teachers, and completely different people from my own country, but there is something completely different: the changeable weather.

Życie Dziecka Wojskowego

Blanka S.

Being a Military child is hard, especially when nobody knows what it feels like. A lot of people don't get it, since they don't have to start a whole new life every few years. It's confusing and hard, and I get it. The anxiety that every military kid goes through is so sad. I do like having new friends, learning new languages, new personalities, and new everything but it's so scary and sad but at the same time so exciting and interesting. I wish everyone would know how it feels to be a military brat. So many questions and so many answers. The curiosity of these people from these different schools/countries is amusing. I look them into their eyes, listening to every word they say. I answer these questions so easily. It's fascinating that these people don't know about my country or how it feels like to be a military brat. I'm so grateful for being a military child and that we have our month that people know about, but I feel so much sadness. It's like I do not have much time left to do the things I want in this country. Time is going too fast, and I hate it. I wish the people that left, never left. I wish that the people I miss were there where I am. I love going to new places and learning about other countries, but it's still depressing that I have to leave everything behind, but one thing I know. I am a military child from Poland, and I will always love it.

Military Child experience.

Igancio P.

Culture, faces, country, language, that's what I see all the time that I need to change city or country. I'm Ignacio and I'm a military child of Spain. The life of a military child is very cool and horrible. Change friends, change school or even country. Most people don't know but even changing from city to city in your own country is difficult. In Spain it is not normal to spend just 3 years in one country and then 3 years in another. You can be 2 years trying to find a good friend and in the 3rd you finally find a friend. But that will be your last year with him because next year you are moving again to another place. The worst part is when you finally find the place that you like and you want to be. You need to move and again the same way 3 years to move again far away from your friends and finally. There are good opportunities in life to learn languages, culture, and new ways of life. There are opportunities that will never happen again. My friends in Spain will never think of being in a country far away from yours. With people from Italy, America, Canada, Greece, and Eslovenia. The life of a military child has good and bad opportunities, Thanks for reading. I.P.R.

Far From Türkiye

Derin C.

Different years, different places, different people,
Far away from school, friends, and home.

Think about the future from now,
But don't forget to live your life here and now.

New cultures, new friends, new home,
New school, new language, new land.
But it is the same for everyone,
Who shares the same destiny with you.

Hard to leave your friends, family, country
Only for a few years, then you will be gone like others.

Later on, you will live the same things,
But maybe in your home country, maybe a foreign country.

That is how the life goes,
With cons and pros.
Think about feature now,
But do not forget to live your life here and now.

Η ζωή μου ως στρατιωτικό παιδί

Georgios M.

I like being a military kid. Sure it's hard to move every 2-3 years, leaving friends behind, but I still can have contact with them. There have been times when I didn't want to leave my friends and my home, but I had no choice. Funnily enough, my favorite place to live was near the border of Greece and Turkey and it was chaotic. But it was pretty fun, too. Now I am in Belgium and it's good here, too. I don't know very much French or English so it was a bit hard in the start but now it's fine.

One of the things I really don't like about being a military kid is that I have to leave my friends every two to three years or vice versa. I have cried sometimes for that but I don't have a choice.

But there are good things too. I visit places that my peers cannot (sadly) and I get a lot of fun and interesting experiences. This is my first time outside my country so it was a bit scary. But I can visit almost all of Europe.

Being a military kid can be tough but you will get a lot of unforgettable experiences.

Vida De Un Nino militar

Nerea S.

Hello, I'm from Spain, many people ask what happens when you move. People ask that all the time but because they don't know how difficult it is for you to change your life because your father needs to work. After all, when you are there you don't know what you are going to find, how people will treat you, or how they will accept you as you are. But when you make friends in Belgium or the United States or all countries is an amazing experience. You are going to move, when your friends need to return to their countries and you will be like when you started because they go and leave, but you are alone without anyone to play with, or with whom to have a good time, with whom to have pajama parties or even go to amusement parks. But anyway, some things are good like you make more friends or you learn more than you know after. I always need to move to another country or city, and all this because I'm a military child.

Latvian military child's life.

Sandis N.

My life has become a lot more interesting and also hard. My whole life I have lived in Latvia, and then suddenly I moved. Right now I'm living in Belgium and it is harder than in my own home country; everybody speaks a different language than me, and the language is not easy, it's hard, and there are only 9 or fewer Latvian families where I live. It is not like Italians or Spanish people where they are a lot and they can socialize more. The fact that I had to move away from my friends also is not easy. I'm still not used to the different time zones, I have a trippy feeling about it. The school is much much different than the school in my home, the grading system is a lot different than my home country's school, like 40% in my country is still passing, the periods are way shorter like 40 minutes and the passing periods are 10-15 minutes long. They also teach everything way faster than in Latvian schools, but the teachers are more strict. Overall the experience is a lot different than in my own home country school.

аскер бала болу кандай сезим

Baiat E.

Being a military child is great because you can meet new people and experience great things that are different from the country I am from Kyrgyzstan and different people and places for example in Kyrgyzstan the land is pretty dry and in some places, there is mini desert's and there are a lot of mountains however in Belgium there are no mountains and it rains too much and also people have different lifestyles and cities have different architecture and you can experience which other people won't experience.

View more entries at militarychild.stripes.com

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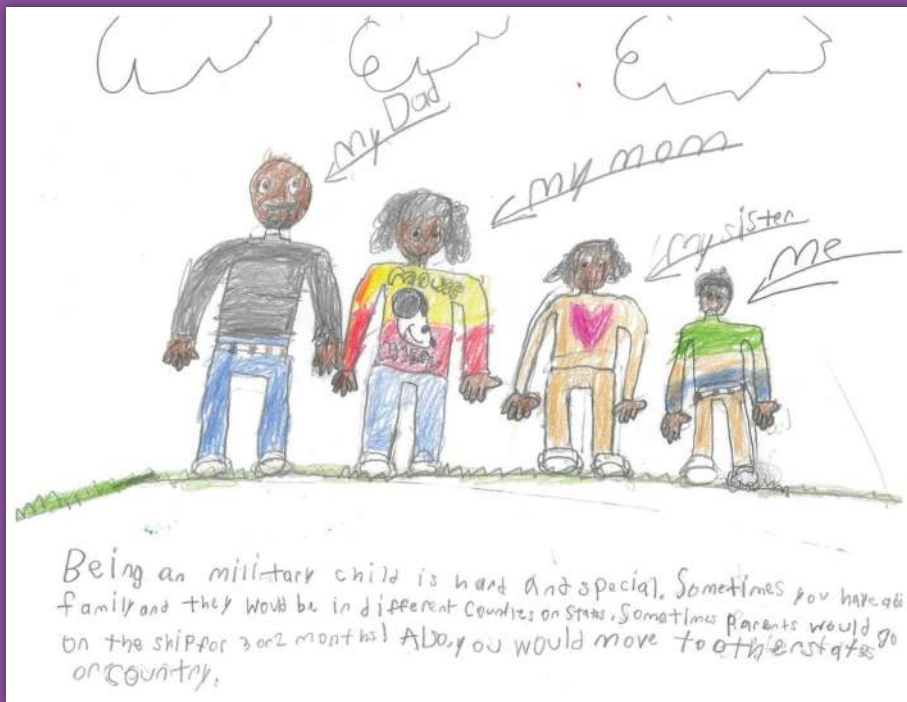
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MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Balancing Changes

The average military child moves six to nine times before graduating high school. They can rely on installation resources and support from the wider 'military family' to help them handle the ups and downs that come with frequent change.



David B. / Sullivans Elementary School

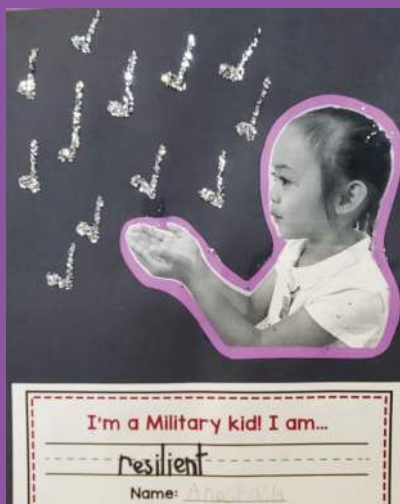
Change in Mind

Maria B. / Sullivans Elementary School

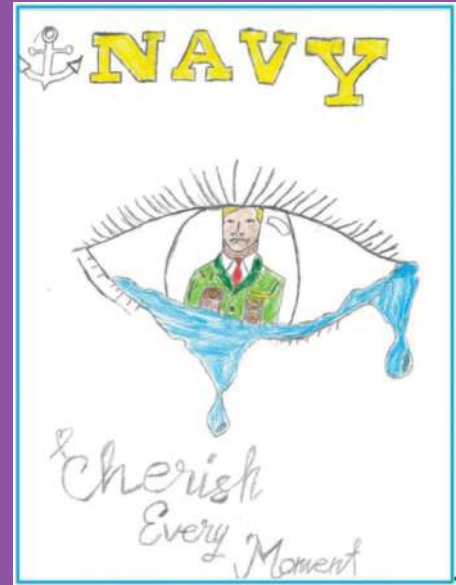
Last year this same thing
Perspectives will always change
Now I know that change.

Last year's perspective
Without swim, not knowing it
Moving, now grateful

More friends, now knowing
Sadness yet some excitement
Perspective will change



Anastasia / Andersen Elementary School



Ethan / M. C. Perry High School

Ang Buhay Ko Sa Pilipinas

Eli N. / Mendel Elementary School

I am the one who sees the kind, wrinkled face of my dad's mom, my grandmother,

Nanay Jo, in the Philippines.

I am the one who hears the creaky sounds as I'm going up and down the stairs of

Nanay Jo's house, in the Philippines.

I am the one who touches the rails as I go up and down the stairs, in the Philippines.

I am the one who tastes sinigang with spinach, potatoes, carrots and meat which I think

is beef, hot with the first sip. Also, I taste tocino, a type of pork with a nice flavor and chewy sometimes, in the Philippines

I am the one who smells the cold air at night under the bug nets while sleeping, in the Philippines.

I am the one who hopes to return to my grandmother's house again, in the Philippines.

Who am I?

Six Thousand Miles

Christopher S. / Yokota High School

Traveling the world

Never staying in one place

Friendships come and go

Six thousand miles apart

Family was left behind

WORLD

UN seeks probe of mass graves at Gaza hospitals

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations called Tuesday for “a clear, transparent and credible investigation” of mass graves uncovered at two major hospitals in war-torn Gaza that were raided by Israeli troops.

Credible investigators must have access to the sites, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters, and added that more journalists need to be able to work safely in Gaza to report on the facts.

Earlier Tuesday, U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk said he was “horrified” by the destruction of the Shifa medical center in Gaza City and Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis as well as the reported discovery of mass graves in

and around the facilities after the Israelis left. He called for independent and transparent investigations into the deaths.

“Hospitals are entitled to very special protection under international humanitarian law,” Türk said. “And the intentional killing of civilians, detainees and others who are ‘hors de combat’ (incapable of engaging in combat) is a war crime.”

U.S. State Department spokesman Vedant Patel on Tuesday called the reports of mass graves at the hospitals “incredibly troubling” and said U.S. officials have asked the Israeli government for information.

The Israeli military said its forces exhumed bodies that Palestinians had buried earlier as part of its search for the remains of hostages captured by Hamas during its Oct. 7

attack that triggered the war. The military said bodies were examined in a respectful manner and those not belonging to Israeli hostages were returned to their place.

The Israeli military says it killed or detained hundreds of militants who had taken shelter inside the two hospital complexes, claims that could not be independently verified.

The Palestinian civil defense in the Gaza Strip said Monday that it had uncovered 283 bodies from a temporary burial ground inside the main hospital in Khan Younis that was built when Israeli forces were besieging the facility last month.

The issue of who could conduct an investigation remains in question. For the United Nations to conduct one, one of its major bodies would have to authorize it, Dujarric said.

Pier: Operation is expected to include 1,000 US troops

FROM PAGE 1

things one would expect [but] we’re on track at this point to implement that operational capability” in the coming weeks.

Ryder did not say Tuesday precisely how long it would take troops to build the port once construction begins.

President Joe Biden first announced the JLOTS operation would begin to bolster U.S. efforts to deliver aid to Gazans on March 7 during his State of the Union speech. One day later, Ryder said the JLOTS would be operational within about 60 days.

The Army last month sent four ships from the 7th Transportation Brigade at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., toward the Mediterranean to spearhead the operation.

The Navy also deployed two ships to help in the construction of the pier. One of those ships, the USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo was

forced to return to the United States last week after suffering an engine room fire. That incident does not appear to have altered the Pentagon’s planned timeline for the pier’s construction, according to Ryder on Tuesday.

Ryder also said while U.S. Navy boats would help shuttle aid from the pier “several miles offshore” to the causeway, only non-governmental organizations were expected to deliver aid packages into Gaza via “non-military trucks.” The Pentagon has insisted U.S. military forces would not set foot in Gaza as part of the operation, and it has turned to the Israeli Defense Forces to ensure security of the aid operation.

The operation is expected to include about 1,000 American troops.

Ryder said the new port would be able to accept military and civilian ships carrying aid once it is operational.

5 military horses run amok in London after getting spooked

Associated Press

LONDON — Five military horses spooked by noise from a nearby building site bolted during routine exercises on Wednesday near Buckingham Palace, unseating four riders and causing chaos as they galloped loose through central London streets and collided with vehicles during the busy morning rush hour.

It is believed the chaos erupted when the horses from the Household Cavalry, which were conducting an extended exercise for an upcoming military parade, became alarmed by the sound of concrete falling off a moving walkway at a construction site in Belgravia, a swanky neighborhood just to the west of the palace.

Five of the seven horses ran off with four soldiers thrown off. Three of them were hospitalized with injuries.

The riderless horses then ran through main roads in central London, hitting vehicles and stunning commuters as they headed to work. The horses were all captured shortly after and are undergoing medical tests.

Witnesses saw one of the loose animals crashing into a taxi waiting outside the Clermont Hotel nearby, shattering windows. Another of the animals crashed into a tour bus,

smashing the windshield.

Pictures and videos shared widely across social media showed two of the horses — one white, one black — running at speed down Aldwych, in between London’s historic financial center and the busy West End theater district.

The white horse’s face and legs were soaked in blood. A British Army spokesperson was not able to confirm what caused the injury.

Megan Morra, who was on her way to work, told the BBC that she saw the striking image of the white horse with a head injury.

“There was a lot of blood,” she said. “I was a bit distressed to be honest, looking at the poor horse.”

The horses are from the Household Cavalry, the ceremonial guard of the monarch and a regular feature of state functions in London.

“All of the horses have now been recovered and returned to camp,” an army spokesperson said. “A number of personnel and horses have been injured and are receiving the appropriate medical attention.”

The London Ambulance Service said it treated four people across three separate incidents in the space of 10 minutes after the horses ran amok around 8:30 a.m.



JORDAN PETTIT/AP

Two horses bolt through the streets of London near Aldwych, on Wednesday.

Blast near ship off Yemen may mark a new attack by Houthis

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A ship near the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait saw an explosion in the distance Wednesday, marking what may be a new attack by Yemen’s Houthi rebels through the crucial waterway for international trade.

The explosion, reported by the British military’s United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center, comes after a relative lull from the Houthis after they

launched dozens of attacks on shipping in the region over Israel’s ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the blast, but suspicion fell on the group as they’ve repeatedly targeted ships in the same area. It typically takes the Houthis several hours before acknowledging their assaults.

The explosion happened some

80 miles southeast of Djibouti in the Gulf of Aden.

“The master of a merchant vessel reports an explosion in the water a distance from the vessel,” the UKMTO said. “Vessel and crew reported safe. Authorities are investigating.”

The private maritime security firm Ambrey separately reported the apparent attack.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping,

seized one vessel and sank another since November, according to the U.S. Maritime Administration.

Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a U.S.-led airstrike campaign in Yemen and shipping through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has declined because of the threat. American officials have speculated that the rebels may be running out of

weapons as a result of the U.S.-led campaign against them and firing off drones and missiles steadily in the last months.

The Houthis have said they would continue their attacks until Israel ends its war in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others hostage.

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OPINION

Trump is being persecuted, but for real misdeeds

BY RAMESH PONNURU

Special to *The Washington Post*

Of course Donald Trump is being persecuted.

That's not to say that he is innocent of all charges, or to deny that the prosecutors — and the millions of Americans rooting for them — are partly motivated by their conviction that he is a serial lawbreaker. But he wouldn't be facing all of these charges all at once if he were not a serious contender for president.

This point is most obvious when it comes to the least compelling case against Trump, the one that Alvin Bragg is leading in New York. Bragg campaigned for his job as Manhattan district attorney on a platform that included prosecuting Trump. He is now employing what even liberal commentators have described as a "creative interpretation of New York state law" to make good on that promise. His case relies on the word of Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen, an admitted liar. (This is, admittedly, a pitfall for any lawman who goes after Trump: When a man routinely associates with low-lives to do scummy things, he has a built-in defense against the main witnesses.)

But even the most solid case against Trump, special counsel Jack Smith's indictment of him over his obstinate post-presidential possession of government documents, bears the marks of political selectivity. It's true that President Joe Biden was

quicker to turn over his own illegally retained classified documents than Trump was. That difference justifies charging Trump with obstruction. It doesn't justify charging Trump, but not Biden, for violating the Espionage Act.

Smith has been seeking to try his election-interference case against Trump before the election — but he refuses to say so openly in his legal filings, because it would be improper for prosecutorial decisions to turn on the political calendar. The cheer section for these prosecutions is less inhibited, feverishly speculating about the potential electoral impact of the cases and picturing the orange man in an orange jumpsuit.

Trump isn't just playing the victim. He is a victim of unfair, law-bending prosecution.

When we think about political persecution, however, we typically have in mind someone who has done nothing wrong but challenge the powerful. That's not the picture here: In each of these cases, Trump's underlying conduct is indefensible. That fact helps to explain the widespread support for the legal campaign against Trump. His efforts to stay in power after losing the 2020 election, especially, were despicable.

It's natural to assume that they must also have been illegal, especially given that they culminated in a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol. Sen. Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader from Kentucky, made that assumption in his speech opposing conviction

in Trump's second impeachment trial: He said that the courts could handle Trump's post-election conduct even if the Senate did nothing.

What that assumption missed is that offenses against the constitutional order, even serious ones, don't always coincide with violations of criminal statutes. Even Smith has refrained from charging Trump with inciting the Capitol riot. He might be morally responsible, but that does not mean he is legally responsible, and our free-speech jurisprudence rightly insists on the distinction. The Senate's failure to hold Trump accountable created a demand for it to be done by institutions less well-suited for the job.

For the worse part of a decade now, we have been stuck in an ugly pattern in which Trump's misconduct calls forth abusive or unfair responses from his opponents. Millions of Americans now think that Biden is trying to retain power by putting his main opponent in jail. That's not the complete story: Trump did try to steal the election, he almost certainly broke laws about classified documents, and prosecutors have reasons beyond partisanship to pursue him. But it's truer than we should be comfortable with, which is why prosecutors should have trod more lightly than they have.

Ramesh Ponnuru, a contributing columnist for *The Washington Post*, is the editor of *National Review* and a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Absolute presidential immunity threatens national security

BY LOUIS E. CALDERA, GEORGE W. CASEY JR., THAD ALLEN, DEBORAH LEE JAMES, CARLTON FULFORD, CRAIG MCKINLEY, SEAN O'KEEFE AND JOHN JUMPER

Special to *Stars and Stripes*

A commander in chief who is exempt from the rule of law risks cascading harms to American democracy, national security and our leadership in the world. Those are the stakes as the Supreme Court considers whether the president is absolutely immune from criminal prosecution.

Those stakes are why we, along with 11 of our fellow retired four-star officers and service secretaries, submitted a brief to the Supreme Court. We appreciate the significance of military leaders speaking from experience on such matters, and decided to do so precisely for that reason: to ensure the justices fully appreciate the dangers of elevating the president above the law.

Civilian control of the military and the rule of law are bedrock democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution. The framers sought to balance a need for a standing peacetime military establishment with ensuring it could not be used as an instrument of domestic tyranny. Twenty-two of the 39 signers of the Constitution were veterans of the Revolutionary War, and it is inconceivable that they intended for the commander in chief to be held to a different standard than the troops he commands. As we wrote in our brief, "From the Founding to the present day, a steadfast commitment to these principles has successfully guided us through two world wars and numerous other conflicts; provided the stability needed for our democratic republic to flourish; and ensured that the military has the capacity to defend our nation by being trained to fight and win its wars. [Former

President Donald Trump's] theory of presidential immunity from criminal prosecution is an assault on these foundational commitments."

We know firsthand that trust between political leaders and career uniformed military leaders is central to effective civilian control of the military and order in the ranks. That trust would be fatally undermined if the court grants the president an unprecedented carveout in the rule of law.

The president sits atop the military chain of command as the elected commander in chief, but his orders are transmitted by appointed civilian leaders to uniformed leaders who ultimately rely on enlisted service members to carry them out — without regard for politics or personal beliefs. Yet these service members also have a duty to disobey unlawful orders or else face criminal prosecution themselves. The importance of the underlying principle — that "just following orders" is not a defense to having committed crimes, even during war — was perhaps most poignantly illustrated during the Nuremberg trials following World War II as the Allied powers sought to impose accountability for Nazi atrocities.

Freeing a president from accountability under our criminal justice system — as absolute immunity would do — would threaten all of these principles by increasing the likelihood that a president would force service members to choose between following the president's unlawful orders or following their duty to disobey all unlawful orders. Military personnel would continue to be legally accountable, even as they serve a president who is not. Inevitably, chaos and division across the ranks would follow.

Along the way, an unconstrained president issuing unlawful orders would undermine public confidence in the military, both in and

out of the ranks, and drag our armed forces into the partisan political mud. It would undermine the key principle of military leadership to lead by example. This would all in turn impact morale, our continued viability as a democratic republic, and our standing as a leader and defender of the world's democracies.

This is particularly so in the context of a criminal prosecution involving a sitting president's unprecedented attempt to overturn a free and fair election amid a transition of power — a period of significant national security risk. For the court to wave through presidential action for personal partisan benefit that cannot be squared with the national interest would grant future authoritarian-minded presidents license to inflict lasting harms on our democracy with impunity.

And if the world sees that a president accused of leading a conspiracy to prevent a peaceful transfer of power cannot even be made to stand trial, much less be held accountable for crimes he may have committed, our example of self-government will be far less compelling.

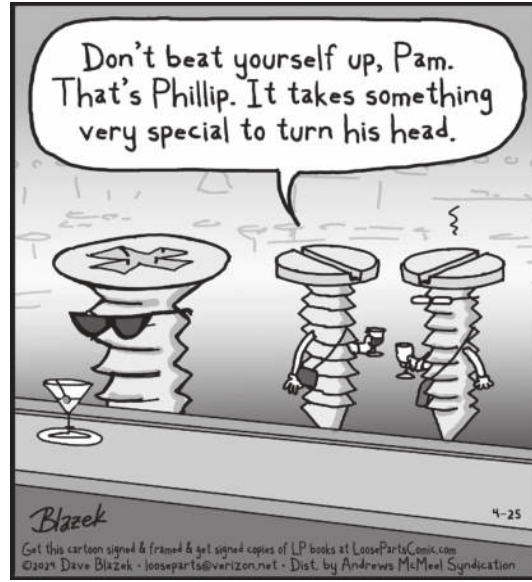
There is far more than a former president's future on the line. American democracy, its security, and its credibility, both at home and abroad, are on the line as well.

George W. Casey Jr., a retired general, served as the 36th chief of staff of the Army. Louis E. Caldera served as the 17th secretary of the Army. Thad Allen, a retired admiral, served as the 23rd commandant of the Coast Guard. Carlton Fulford, a retired general, served as deputy commander in chief of the U.S. European Command. Deborah Lee James served as the 23rd secretary of the Air Force. Craig McKinley, a retired general, served as the 26th chief of the National Guard Bureau. Sean O'Keefe served as the 69th secretary of the Navy. John Jumper, a retired general, served as the 17th chief of staff of the Air Force. They are members of Count Every Hero, a nonpartisan initiative of retired admirals and generals and former service secretaries whose work focuses on promoting the importance of a strong democracy to national security; promoting civic literacy and civic participation; and protecting the voting rights of active-duty servicemembers, veterans and their families.

Bizarro

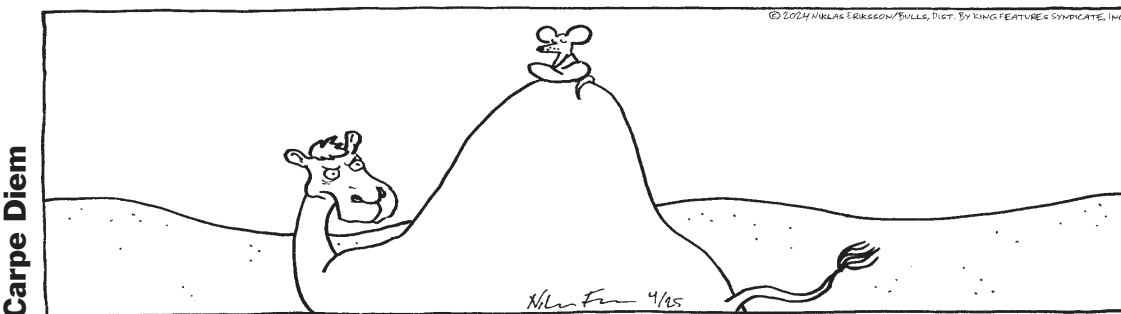
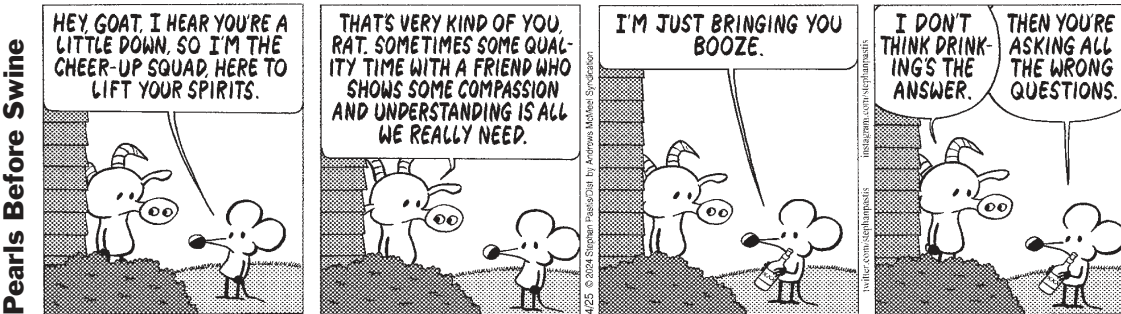
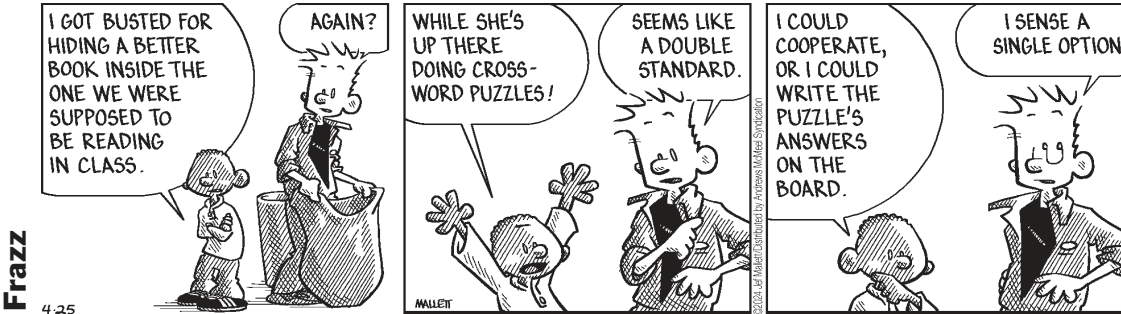


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbered squares.



- ACROSS: 1 Run for fun, 4 Mumbai dress, 8 '— the night before ...', 12 Citric beverage, 13 — -friendly, 14 'Oops!', 15 Possessive case, 17 1492 vessel, 18 Capote nickname, 19 Reacted to pollen, 21 Ravel piece, 24 Santa's aide, 25 Actor Vigoda, 26 Caribou's kin, 28 Moon-related, 32 Platter, 34 'What's the —?', 36 Country singer McCann, 37 Bar legally, 39 Cagers' gp., 41 Asian holiday, 42 Snooze, 44 Escapee's cry, 46 Stuffed Italian pasta, 50 Acapulco gold, 51 Grand tale, 52 Male sex hormone, 56 Composer Bartok, 57 Turner or Fey. DOWN: 1 Binge, 2 Poem of praise, 3 Most tame, 4 Surgeon's stitch, 5 'Do — say!', 6 Guns the engine, 7 Peace goddess, 8 Melodic, 9 Brainiac, 10 Top-notch, 11 Roe provider, 16 Fury, 20 Right angle, 21 Ordered, 22 Kimono ties, 23 Vintage, 27 Family, 29 Element No. 7, 30 Sheltered, 31 Assess, 33 Funnel-shaped agency, 35 Justice Dept., 38 Kung — chicken, 40 Unprincipled, 43 Dish, 45 To and —, 46 Ms. McEntire, 47 Pinnacle, 48 Repulsive, 49 Monogram pt., 53 Crime lab evidence, 54 Inventor Whitney, 55 Part of NIMBY.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Answer grid for the previous puzzle with words like CAN, SAUL, CATE, HIE, AMMO, OGLE, etc.

4-25 CRYPTOQUIP
QZYO ETNGDGPM GA XTAQTPPTA
ERJ VJGCOJK PR POXHRJTJGDM
DOTCO NTJK TAV PJZNLK:
NOAPJTD HTJLGAY.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN THE TWO POOL SHARKS PREPARING TO PLAY DERIDED EACH OTHER, WERE THEY TRASH-CHALKING?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals A

FACES

Living the doll dream

Olympian Kristi Yamaguchi 'tickled pink' to inspire Barbie

By **TERRY TANG**
Associated Press

Like many little girls, a young Kristi Yamaguchi loved playing with Barbie. With a schedule packed with ice skating practices, her Barbie dolls became her "best friends."

So, it's surreal for the decorated Olympic figure skater to now be a Barbie girl herself.

"It's a huge, huge honor. I think a lot of pride comes along with it, not just recognizing the Olympic achievement, but also being recognized during AAPI Month and following in the footsteps of some incredible women that I idolize — Anna May Wong, Maya Angelou and Rosa Parks," Yamaguchi told The Associated Press. "It's hard to see me put in the category with them."

Yamaguchi, who became the first Asian American to win an individual figure skating gold medal, at the 1992 Winter Olympics, has been immortalized as a doll for Barbie's "Inspiring Women Series," Mattel announced Wednesday. The release is timed for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, in May.

This isn't Yamaguchi's first doll depiction. In the '90s, touring show Stars on Ice put out a line of dolls modeled after notable skaters. The Barbie version is a lot more detailed.

Mattel duplicated everything the then 20-year-old medalist wore at the Olympics in Albertville, France: the sparkling black-and-gold brocade outfit designed by Lauren Sheehan, the gold hair ribbon and even a red-and-white bouquet like Yamaguchi held atop the podium.

Yamaguchi said both she and Sheehan are "just so tickled pink."

She also is happy with the doll's visage.

"It looks like me for sure. You know, the eyes and just the shape of the face. And then, of course, the hair, for sure. I mean, it has the bangs that are the '90s," Yamaguchi said, chuckling.

She appreciates that the doll's release comes on the high heels of the blockbuster

"Barbie" movie last year. Her daughters, ages 18 and 20, are fans of the Oscar-nominated film. Their initial reaction to their mother being a Barbie? Disbelief.

"When they found out I was getting a doll, they were kind of flabbergasted and being like, 'What? Like Mom, like how do you qualify? But that's way too cool for you,'" Yamaguchi said.

When Yamaguchi became a household name in the '90s, most Asian American children were growing up feeling like toys-aren't-us kids. If you were an Asian parent looking for an Asian doll in the U.S., you likely turned to independent mail-order companies or waited until you were visiting your country of heritage.

Since then, the toy market has evolved somewhat with big companies like Mattel diversifying and independent entrepreneurs filling the void. Two Asian doll lines — Jilly Bing and Joeydolls — launched within the past year, one by an Asian American mother and the other by an Asian Canadian mother. Both could not find dolls that looked like their daughters.

Sapna Cheryan, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington who served a year on Mattel's Barbie Global Advisory Council in 2018, said Asian Americans have long dealt with two stereotypes: the model-minority whiz kid or the perpetual foreigner. Toys can help dispel those myths, and instead signal acceptance and inclusivity.

Dolls modeled after real people can get people talking about their human counterparts. Cheryan applauded Barbie's choice of Yamaguchi.

"There are so many Asian American athletes but they're just not propped up in a way that athletes of other racial groups are," said Cheryan, who researches cultural stereotypes and their impact on race and gender disparities. "Having a match in terms of racial identification or gender or both," she said, is important in creating effective role models for kids.



MATTEL/AP

Kristi Yamaguchi poses with Mattel's Barbie doll based on the figure skater.



AP



MATTEL/AP

Left: Yamaguchi performs her free skate Feb. 21, 1992, at the Winter Olympic Games in Albertville, France. Right: Mattel's Kristi Yamaguchi Barbie doll. Yamaguchi became the first Asian American to win an individual gold medal for figure skating.

Celine Dion harbors hopes of performing on stage again

Las Vegas Review-Journal

Celine Dion has objectives as she battles Stiff Person Syndrome.

"I want to be the best I can be," Dion says in an interview in the new edition of Vogue France. "My goal is to see the Eiffel Tower again!"

A return to live performance, someday, is also motivating the superstar resident of Lake Las Vegas. But while Dion is steadfast in her dedication to recover from the rare neurological condition, she's less certain of when she will be able to return to the stage.

"I can't answer that ... Because for four years I've been saying to myself that I'm not going back, that I'm ready, that I'm not ready," Dion says in the Q&A piece. "As things stand, I can't stand here

and say to you: 'Yes, in four months.' I don't know. ... My body will tell me."

Dion says she has not beaten the disease.

"It's still within me and always will be. I hope that we'll find a miracle, a way to cure it with scientific research, but for now I have to learn to live with it," the 56-year-old superstar says of the condition, for which there is no cure.

"I don't just want to wait. It's morally hard to live from day to day. It's hard, I'm working very hard and tomorrow will be even harder," she says. "Tomorrow is another day. But there's one thing that will never stop, and that's the will. It's the passion. It's the dream. It's the determination."

Dion announced she suffered



TNS

Illness has kept Canadian singer Celine Dion, shown in 2019, from performing since 2022.

from SPS in December 2022, halting her plans at Resorts World and also her "Courage" world tour. Recently she has made several public appearances, announcing Taylor Swift as the Grammy Award-winner for Album of the Year on Feb. 4 in Los Angeles.

'Wednesday' spawns publishing bonanza

Penguin Random House is teaming with Amazon MGM Studios on a series of books based on "Wednesday," the Emmy-winning hit about young Wednesday Addams of Addams Family fame.

The publisher announced on Wednesday (of course) that the series will debut this summer, with upcoming releases including an all-ages coloring book, a young adult novelization of the show's first season and a Wednesday Addams cookbook, which includes the recipe for the pitch-black "Wednesday's Woeful Waffles."

"Our eclectic program includes something for readers of all ages — from a Little Golden Book to cookbooks to tarot cards — and offers fans of the series new ways to enjoy their favorite show during the wait between seasons," Chris-



RANDOM HOUSE BOOKS/AP

"I Am Wednesday (a Little Golden Book), left, and "Wednesday Official Coloring Book" are upcoming releases based on the wildly popular Netflix show.

topher Angelilli of Random House Children's Books said in a statement.

"Wednesday," with Jenny Ortega in the title role, premiered on Netflix in 2022 and soon became one of its most popular English-language programs, with billions of global views. Netflix renewed "Wednesday" for a second season, but the starting date has been not been announced.

From The Associated Press

SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

TENNIS

Madrid Open

Tuesday At Caja Magica Madrid
Purse: Euro 7,877,020
Surface: Red clay
Men's Singles Qualification

Lukas Klein (22), Slovakia, def. Thiago Agustín Tirante (5), Argentina, 6-3, 6-3.
Brandon Nakashima (4), United States, def. Camilo Ugo Carabelli (17), Argentina, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (6).

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Includes Inter Miami CF, New York, Cincinnati, Columbus, Toronto FC, Philadelphia, Atlanta, NYFC, Charlotte FC, CF Montréal, D.C. United, Orlando City, Chicago, Nashville, New England.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Includes LA Galaxy, Vancouver, Real Salt Lake, Colorado, Minnesota, Houston, LAFC, Austin FC, St Louis City, Sporting KC, Portland, Seattle, FC Dallas, San Jose.

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday's games

LA Galaxy at Austin FC
Colorado at Cincinnati
CF Montréal at Columbus
Seattle at D.C. United
Charlotte FC at New York City FC
Miami at New England
Vancouver at New York
Toronto FC at Orlando City
Real Salt Lake at Philadelphia
Atlanta at Chicago
Houston at FC Dallas
Sporting Kansas City at Minnesota
San Jose at Nashville
Portland at Los Angeles FC

Saturday, May 4

Minnesota at Atlanta
Portland at Charlotte FC
Philadelphia at D.C. United
New York at Miami
Cincinnati at Orlando City
Los Angeles FC at San Jose
FC Dallas at Toronto FC
New England at Chicago
St Louis City at Houston
CF Montréal at Nashville
Sporting Kansas City at Real Salt Lake
Austin FC at Vancouver

Sunday, May 5

Colorado at New York City FC
LA Galaxy at Seattle

NWSL

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Includes Kansas City, Washington, Chicago, North Carolina, Orlando, Louisville, Angel City, Bay FC, Portland, San Diego, Gotham FC, Houston, Seattle, Utah Royals FC.

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's games

Orlando at Washington
Kansas City at Angel City

Saturday's games

Seattle at North Carolina
Houston at Utah Royals FC
Portland at Chicago
Bay FC at San Diego

Sunday's games

Louisville at Gotham FC

Wednesday, May 1

North Carolina at Orlando
Washington at Chicago
Portland at Bay FC

Friday, May 3

Angel City at Utah Royals FC
San Diego at Seattle

Saturday, May 4

North Carolina at Gotham FC
Washington at Portland

Sunday, May 5

Kansas City at Houston
Louisville at Orlando
Chicago at Bay FC

PRO HOCKEY

PWHL

Table with columns: GP, W, L, OW, OL, Pts, GF, GA. Includes x-Toronto, Montreal, Minnesota, Ottawa, Boston, New York.

Teams awarded three (3) points for a regulation win, two (2) points for an overtime or shootout win, one (1) point for an overtime or shootout loss, and zero (0) points for a regulation time loss, x-clinched playoff position

Toronto 3, Montreal 2, OT
Boston 2, New York 1
Ottawa 4, Minnesota 0
Wednesday's games
Boston at Ottawa
New York, at Montreal
Saturday, April 27
Montreal at Ottawa
Boston at Minnesota
Sunday, April 28
Toronto at New York
Tuesday, April 30
Ottawa at New York

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Sent RHP Paul Sewald to Reno (PCL) on a rehab assignment.
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Recalled OF Heston Kjerstad from Norfolk (IL). Optioned C David Banuelos to Norfolk.
BOSTON RED SOX — Reinstated OF Tyler O'Neil from the 7-day IL. Placed C Tyler Heineman on the 10-day IL, retroactive to April 22. Agreed to terms with RHP Adam Smith on a minor league contract.
CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Sent LHP Sam Hentges to Columbus (IL) on a rehab assignment.
MINNESOTA TWINS — Sent RHP Jhoan Duran to St. Paul (IL) on a rehab assignment.
NEW YORK YANKEES — Sent 2B D.J. LeMahieu to Somerset (EL) on a rehab assignment.
SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated RHP Collin Snider from the 15-day IL and optioned him to Tacoma (PCL).
TEXAS RANGERS — Reinstated C Jonah Heim from the family/bereavement list and RHP Jonathan Hernandez from the 15-day IL. Optioned C Sam Huff and RHP Owen White to Round Rock (IL). Sent RHP Josh Sborz to Frisco (TL) on a rehab assignment. Agreed to terms with RHP Johnny Cueto on a minor league contract.
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Sent RHP Paul Sewald to Reno (PCL) on a rehab assignment. Acquired INF Sergio Alcántara from Pittsburgh for cash considerations and optioned him to Reno. Claimed LHP Joe Jacques off waivers from Boston and optioned him to Reno. Released INF Jace Peterson. Placed RHP Merrill Kelly on the 15-day IL, retroactive to April 20. Placed RHP Miguel Castro on the 15-day IL, retroactive to April 21. Recalled LHPs Andrew Saalfrank, Tommy Henry and RHP Justin Martinez from Reno. Placed LHP Kyle Nelson on the 15-day IL.
CHICAGO CUBS — Placed RHP Kyle Hendricks on the 15-day IL. Designated 1B Garrett Cooper for assignment. Placed LHP Drew Smyly on the 15-day IL, retroactive to April 22. Recalled LHP Luke Little, 1B Matt Mervis and RHP Hayden Wesneski from Iowa (IL).
CINCINNATI REDS — Reinstated LHP Sam Moll from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Casey Legumina to Louisville (IL).
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Sent RHP Blake Treinen to Oklahoma City (PCL) on a rehab assignment.
NEW YORK METS — Reinstated RHP Max Kranick from the 15-day IL and optioned him to Syracuse (IL).
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Sent RHP Luis F. Ortiz to Clearwater (FSL) on a rehab assignment.
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Optioned RHP Landon Rouse to Sacramento (PCL).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Selected the contract of RHP Jacob Barnes from Rochester (IL). Placed LHP Robert Garcia on the 15-day IL, retroactive to April 21.
DESIGNATED INF/OFF Jake Alu for assignment. Sent C Keibert Ruiz to Harrisburg (EL) on a rehab assignment.
BASKETBALL
Women's National Basketball Association
MINNESOTA LYNX — Signed Fs Camryn Taylor, Mimi Collins and G Quinesha Lockett to training camp contracts.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
NFL — Reinstated Philadelphia CB Isaiah Rodgers from suspension for violating NFL's gambling policy.
ATLANTA FALCONS — Placed QB Matt Ryan on the retired list.
CINCINNATI BENGALS — Re-signed QB Jake Browning to a two-year contract through the 2025 season and QB Logan Woodside to a one-year contract.
DENVER BRONCOS — Agreed to terms with CB Patrick Surtain on a fifth-year option.
HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed LB Jacob Phillips to a one-year contract.
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Re-signed LB Jack Cochrane to a one-year contract extension.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Activated CB Isaiah Rodgers from the suspended list.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
ARIZONA COYOTES — Announced the retirement of RW Jakub Voracek.
BOSTON BRUINS — Recalled D Mason Lohrei from Providence (AHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Agreed to terms with RW Jimmy Snuggerud on a three-year, entry-level contract.
PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Agreed to terms with G Ivan Fedotov on a two-year contract extension.
WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Recalled D Hardy Haman-Aktell from Hershey (AHL).
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
MLS — Fined LA Galaxy D Eriq Zavaleta an undisclosed amount for failing to leave the field in a timely manner in a match on April 21 against San Jose. Officially warned LA Galaxy and head coach Greg Vanney for violating the mass confrontation policy for the first time this season. Fined LA Galaxy Ds Mauricia Cuevas and Julian Aude, M Gaston Grugman and F Gabriel Pec undisclosed amount for inciting and/or escalating a mass confrontation.
INTER MIAMI CF — Signed M Matias Rojas to a contract through the 2024 season.
NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION — Acquired D Xavier Arreaga from Seattle Sounders FC in exchange for a 2025 international roster slot and \$75,000 in general allocation money (GAM) if certain performance metrics are met. Signed G Aljazz Ivacic to a contract through the 2025 season. Waived G Jacob Jackson.
VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC — Acquired D Giuseppe Bovalina via transfer from A-League side Adelaide United FC and signed him to a contract through 2026.
National Women's Soccer League
HOUSTON DASH — Acquired D Tarciane in transfer from Serie A Corinthians for an undisclosed fee.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Southern California's Reggie Bush smiles while posing with the Heisman Trophy that was presented to him on Dec. 10, 2005.

BRIEFLY

Heisman returned to '05 winner Bush

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Reggie Bush has been reinstated as the 2005 Heisman Trophy winner more than a decade after Southern California returned the award following an NCAA investigation that found he received what were impermissible benefits during his time with the Trojans, the Heisman Trust announced Wednesday.

"We are thrilled to welcome Reggie Bush back to the Heisman family in recognition of his collegiate accomplishments," said Michael Comerford, president of The Heisman Trophy Trust. "We considered the enormous changes in college athletics over the last several years in deciding that now is the right time to reinstate the Trophy for Reggie. We are so happy to welcome him back."

Bush had won the trophy awarded to the top player in college football after amassing more than 2,000 yards from scrimmage and scoring 18 touchdowns in 2005. His 784 first-place votes were the fifth most in Heisman history.

The Heisman Trust has returned the trophy to Bush and the replica to USC. Bush will be invited to all future Heisman Trophy ceremonies.

NFL investigation won't impact Falcons' draft

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — The NFL's investigation of the Atlanta Falcons' possible violation of tampering policies before signing quarterback Kirk Cousins won't conclude before this week's NFL Draft.

For Falcons general manager Terry Fontenot, that means the team won't lose any draft picks this year as he looks to build around Cousins.

"The league has been very communicative with us and through-

out the whole process," Fontenot said Tuesday.

"I really appreciate them. We've obviously cooperated and provided them all the information. Again, not really any update from our end. We'll just continue to cooperate and control what you can control as we get ready for this draft. We're excited moving forward."

Newgarden disqualified as IndyCar race winner

Team Penske suffered a humiliating disqualification Wednesday when reigning Indianapolis 500 winner Josef Newgarden was stripped of his victory in the season-opening race for manipulating his push-to-pass system.

Penske teammate Scott McLaughlin, who finished third in the opener on the downtown streets of St. Petersburg, Fla., was also disqualified. Will Power, who finished fourth at St. Pete, was not penalized but docked 10 points.

Additionally, all three Penske entries were fined \$25,000 and forfeited all prize money associated with the race. Power has not been accused of any wrongdoing.

Roger Penske owns the race team, the IndyCar Series and Indianapolis Motor Speedway, host of the Indy 500.

"Very disappointing," Penske said in a text message to The Associated Press. "I am embarrassed."

The reverberations were immediate throughout the paddock. The disqualifications gave the victory to Pato O'Ward, who finished second. It is the first win for McLaren's IndyCar team since 2022.

Although Newgarden is accused of cheating in the March 10 opener, IndyCar said the manipulation wasn't discovered until Sunday.

NFL DRAFT

Attack: Teams looking for more offense than just QBs

FROM PAGE 24

second-year pro Aidan O'Connell and could stay put to take the best player available and still end up with Penix or Nix later.

"There's really no consensus boards, at least since I've been in the league," Raiders GM Tom Tellesco said. "You've got 32 different teams that look at things 32 different ways. So our ranking may be different than other rankings, so I don't know if there's necessarily a top three and a next two or a next three. ... It's going to be a little bit different for everybody, depending on what you're looking for."

Wide receivers are a hot commodity with Marvin Harrison Jr., Malik Nabers and Rome Odunze not only considered among the top five potential picks, but the best players in the entire draft.

"I think you could make a case the three highest-graded players in this draft are the three receivers," NFL Network draft analyst Daniel Jeremiah said.

Brian Thomas Jr., Adonai Mitchell and Troy Franklin round out the six wideouts in the AP's mock first round. Other potential first-round picks include Ladd McConkey and Xavier Legette. It's such a deep class of receivers that teams could wait to snag an eventual starter on Day 2 or even Day 3.

Protecting the quarterback is critical to a team's success, so there's always an emphasis on offensive linemen, especially tackles.

Joe Alt is the consensus top lineman and is expected to be a top-10 pick. J.C. Latham, Olumuyiwa Fashanu, Taliese Fuaga and Troy Fautanu could go in the top 20. Amarius Mims, Graham Barton, Tyler Guyton and Jordan Morgan are also in the mix. Jackson Powers-Johnson is the top interior lineman in the draft.

"They're all really talented," Jeremiah said. "When you look at that top group of guys, really I would say you're talking about Alt, Fashanu, Fuaga, Latham. I would think those are pretty unanimous, whatever order you have them, those are kind of the top four guys."

For teams looking at defense, the draft has several talented edge rushers and cornerbacks. The AP's mock draft has four players at each of those positions going in the first round, along with two interior defensive linemen.

Edge rushers Dallas Turner, Laiatu Latu, Jared Verse and Chop Robinson, cornerbacks Quinyon Mitchell, Terrion Arnold, Nate Wiggins and Kool-Aid McKinstry, and defensive tackles Byron Murphy and Jer'Zhan Newton are among the best defensive players.

Many teams prioritize edge rushers, and Turner is expected to be the first defensive player selected — possibly by Atlanta at No. 8.

Only once in the past 57 years have the first seven picks all been offensive players. That happened in 2021.

"When you look at the history of drafts, you can look at a lot of times like, 'OK, we really need a pressure player, so make sure you get that,'" Falcons GM Terry Fontenot said. "But we can look back at drafts where someone reached on a pressure player and left some really good football players on the board at other positions."

"It's a strong draft. We're going to be staring at some really good players at eight, or whether we're up a little bit or whether we're back a little bit, and that's the excitement. We're wide open."

Every personnel boss says the same until they're on the clock.



BUTCH DILL/AP

As he showed in three seasons at Georgia, tight end Brock Bowers (19) is a dynamic receiver who can create separation, make contested catches and create big plays after the catch, along with being an effective blocker.

Debate over tight end value clouds Bowers' prospects

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

Evaluating Brock Bowers the player is a fairly straightforward assignment.

As he showed in three seasons at Georgia, Bowers is a dynamic receiver with the ability to create separation, make contested catches and create big plays after the catch, along with being a more than capable blocker.

Bowers is widely considered one of the top 10 players in Thursday's NFL Draft, but because he plays the lower-premium position of tight end, there is much more uncertainty about how high he will get drafted.

While there could be teams in the top 10 willing to make the rare investment in a tight end, there is also the distinct possibility Bowers slips in the first round as teams prioritize high-value positions like quarterback, wide receiver, pass rusher, tackle or cornerback. Bowers is currently favored to be drafted outside the top 10, according to BetMGM Sportsbook.

"He is tough. He is easy to grade. I mean, when you watch him, he's super easy to grade. He is one of the best 10 players in the draft," said NFL Network draft analyst Daniel Jeremiah, who compared Bowers to All-Pro George Kittle and praised his tenacity, speed, ability to create separation and run after the catch.

"The challenge is then figuring out where does he go in the draft, and I think when you look around the league and you see most of these

top tight ends that have come on day two or even beyond that, teams are now saying, 'OK, we can find that other tight end. Maybe we don't get the top guy, but we can get a really, really good player who might end up being the top guy without having to pay that premium.'"

Of the top 15 tight ends in receptions last season, only four were first-round picks with only Buffalo rookie Dalton Kincaid and Cleveland's David Njoku doing it for the team that drafted them. Five others were picked on the second day of the draft, with six more going the final day.

In all, 12 tight ends have been taken in the first round of the past 15 drafts with only one of those players — Atlanta's Kyle Pitts — generating even one 1,000-yard receiving season. Njoku is the only one of seven first-round tight ends from 2014-20 to get a second contract with his team. The last draft with a first-round tight end who became a first-team All-Pro was 2003 with Dallas Clark of the Indianapolis Colts.

The question is if Bowers can be the outlier in a class that has no other tight ends projected to go in the first round of the draft.

In three seasons at Georgia, he caught 175 passes for 2,538 yards in 40 games and scored 31 total touchdowns — five of them coming as a runner as the Bulldogs did whatever they could to get the ball in his hands.

"He's not a tight end. He's a multiple option player," said ESPN draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr., who ranked Bowers as the seventh-best player in the draft. "You can put

him in the backfield, slot, wing, outside, any which way, fullback, H-back. You can do anything you want with Brock Bowers. So he is not a tight end, he's just an offensive weapon."

Many of the top tight ends in the NFL have been picked on days two and three of the draft, including 2013 third-rounder Travis Kelce, 2017 fifth-rounder Kittle and even Sam LaPorta, who lasted until the second round last year for Detroit.

The payoff has been mostly underwhelming for the first-rounders, with none of those players earning first- or second-team All-Pro honors in their careers, including the three top-10 picks.

Eric Ebron lasted only four seasons in Detroit after being picked in 2014 with the 10th selection, 2019 No. 8 pick T.J. Hockenson elevated his game after being traded by the Lions to Minnesota midway through his fourth, and Pitts has yet to make a big impact in his first three seasons after being drafted fourth overall in 2021 by Atlanta.

Pitts' lack of production the past two years with 81 catches for 1,023 yards could provide a cautionary tale for teams interested in using a high pick on Bowers.

"Kyle Pitts is as talented as any tight end that I have ever evaluated," Jeremiah said. "You're still dependent on the position of the quarterback, so depending on what you can get out of him. That coupled with the money difference, the savings you get by taking a premiere position in the top 10, it's tough to place him to know how high he is going to go."



MICHAEL CATERINA/AP

Notre Dame offensive tackle Joe Alt runs a drill during NFL pro day workouts in South Bend, Ind., on March 21.

NHL PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

First Round

(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Carolina 2, N.Y. Islanders 0

Carolina 3, N.Y. Islanders 1
 Carolina 5, N.Y. Islanders 3
Thursday: at N.Y. Islanders
Saturday: at N.Y. Islanders, **AFN-Sports2, 8 p.m. Saturday CET; 3 a.m. Sunday JKT**
x-Tuesday, April 30: at Carolina
x-Thursday, May 2: at N.Y. Islanders
x-Saturday, May 4: at Carolina
Florida 2, Tampa Bay 0
 Florida 3, Tampa Bay 2
Tuesday: Florida 3, Tampa Bay 2, OT
Thursday: at Tampa Bay
Saturday: at Tampa Bay, **AFN-Sports2, 11 p.m. Saturday CET; 6 a.m. Sunday JKT**
x-Monday: at Florida
x-Wednesday, May 1: at Tampa Bay
x-Saturday, May 4: at Florida
Boston 1, Toronto 1
 Boston 5, Toronto 1
 Toronto 3, Boston 2
Wednesday: at Toronto
Saturday: at Toronto, **AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT**
Tuesday, April 30: at Boston
x-Thursday, May 2: at Toronto
x-Saturday, May 4: at Boston
N.Y. Rangers 2, Washington 0
 N.Y. Rangers 4, Washington 1
Tuesday: N.Y. Rangers 4, Washington 3
Friday: at Washington, **AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m. Saturday CET; 8 a.m. Saturday JKT**
Sunday: at Washington, **AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Monday CET; 9 a.m. Monday JKT**
x-Wednesday, May 1: at N.Y. Rangers
x-Friday, May 3: at Washington
x-Sunday, May 5: at N.Y. Rangers
WESTERN CONFERENCE
Winnipeg 1, Colorado 1
 Winnipeg 7, Colorado 6
Tuesday: Colorado 5, Winnipeg 2
Friday: at Colorado, **AFN-Sports2, 4 a.m. Saturday CET; 11 a.m. Saturday JKT**
Sunday: at Colorado, **AFN-Sports2, 8:30 p.m. Sunday CET; 3:30 a.m. Monday JKT**
Tuesday, April 30: at Winnipeg
x-Thursday, May 2: at Colorado
x-Saturday, May 4: at Winnipeg
Edmonton 1, Los Angeles 0
 Edmonton 7, Los Angeles 4
Wednesday: at Edmonton
Friday: at Los Angeles
Sunday: at Los Angeles, **AFN-Sports2, 4:30 a.m. Monday CET; 11:30 a.m. Monday JKT**
x-Wednesday, May 1: at Edmonton
x-Friday, May 3: at Los Angeles
x-Sunday, May 5: at Edmonton
Vancouver 1, Nashville 1
 Vancouver 4, Nashville 2
Tuesday: Nashville 4, Vancouver 1
Friday: at Nashville
Sunday: at Nashville, **AFN-Sports2, 11 p.m. Sunday CET; 6 a.m. Monday JKT**
Tuesday, April 30: at Vancouver
x-Friday, May 3: at Nashville
x-Sunday, May 5: at Vancouver
Vegas 1, Dallas 0
 Vegas 4, Dallas 3
Wednesday: at Dallas
Saturday: at Vegas, **AFN-Sports2, 4:30 a.m. Sunday CET; 11:30 a.m. Sunday JKT**
Monday: at Vegas
x-Wednesday, May 1: at Dallas
x-Friday, May 3: at Vegas
x-Sunday, May 5: at Dallas

Predators pull even with Canucks

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Filip Forsberg scored a goal and had an assist, and the Nashville Predators beat the Vancouver Canucks 4-1 on Tuesday night to level their best-of-seven playoff series at 1-1.

Anthony Beauvillier — a former Canuck — also had a goal and an assist for the Predators, Colton Sissons and Kiefer Sherwood had goals, and Juuse Saros made 17 saves.

Nikita Zadorov scored for a Vancouver team that struggled to get shots on net and experienced a series of unlucky bounces.

Nashville coach Andrew Brunette liked the way his Predators put their bodies on the line, blocking 31 shots.

“I think that’s maybe something we learned from Game 1 a little bit,” Brunette said. “Maybe we weren’t as committed to the pain and tonight (we were), with the blocked shots and the things that we did sacrificing our body. So we learned and we’re still growing. We’re not where we want to be, but we’re getting better and today was a good step.”

Zadorov said the Canucks may be able to take something from the way their opponents played.

“They’re super desperate, they’re laying out for every puck, they’re trying to block with their faces. So that’s what maybe we can learn from them in that particular thing,” he said. “It’s hard to win. I mean, it’s playoff hockey. It’s a long series. There’s no panic in the room.”

The Canucks were playing



DARRYL DYCK, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Canucks' Dakota Joshua collides with Nashville Predators goalie Juuse Saros during the third period of Game 2 of their first-round playoff series Tuesday in Vancouver, British Columbia. Nashville won 4-1.

without All-Star goalie Thatcher Demko, who was ruled out with an undisclosed injury. He is “week-to-week,” Canucks coach Rick Tocchet said after the game.

Casey DeSmith took over in net and stopped 12 of 15 shots, but he got off to a poor start.

Forsberg sent a long shot flying from inside the blue line and Beauvillier, stationed above the hash marks, deflected it in past an out-of-position DeSmith to put the

Predators up 1-0 just 1:14 into the game.

Beauvillier started the season in Vancouver before the Canucks dealt him to the Blackhawks to shed salary in November. Chicago then sent the left-winger to Nashville in exchange for a fifth-round draft pick in March.

“I was fortunate enough to be in on three great organizations this year, starting here and then bounced to Chicago,” Beauvillier

said. “And that’s what you live for, that’s why you play hockey. You want to compete for the Stanley Cup and play meaningful hockey.”

The Canucks had three power plays in the first period but struggled to get shots on net.

Elias Pettersson came close to tying the score on a man advantage late in the opening period.

Both teams went 0-for-4 on the power play.

ROUNDUP

Rangers hold off Capitals to take 2-0 series lead

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Rangers withstood the strong bounce-back effort they anticipated from the Washington Capitals and held on to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

Vincent Trocheck and Mika Zibanejad each had a goal and an assist and the Presidents’ Trophy-winning Rangers beat the scrappy Capitals 4-3 Tuesday night.

“I expected that tonight, the way it played out, physical and some attitude and directness inside of the game,” New York coach Peter Laviolette said. “I thought our guys responded well. It was a hard-fought game.”

Jack Roslovic and K’Andre Miller also scored for the Rangers, and Erik Gustafsson and Alexis Lafreniere each had two assists. Igor Shesterkin stopped 22 shots.

New York has had goals from eight players in the first two



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

The Capitals' John Carlson, left, and Alex Ovechkin spar with the Rangers' Ryan Lindgren during Game 2 Tuesday in New York.

games of this series.

“It’s been there all year,” Zibanejad said. “Obviously when you come to these type of games we

talk about needing everyone and everyone has been stepping up, playing their roles and contributing.”

New York, seeking its first Stanley Cup championship in 30 years, has won four straight and 12 of its last 15 games.

Tom Wilson had a goal and an assist, and Connor McMichael and Dylan Strome also scored for the Capitals. Charlie Lindgren finished with 23 saves.

Panthers 3, Lightning 2 (OT): Carter Verhaeghe lifted a backhand just under the crossbar 2:59 into overtime, and host Florida beat Tampa Bay for a 2-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

It was the fifth OT winner in Verhaeghe’s career, coming on a play where Matthew Tkachuk got the puck to Anton Lundell — who found Verhaeghe. He waited for Tampa Bay goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy to commit, then put the puck over him to end it.

Sam Bennett, who left with an injury in the second period when he appeared to get hit by team-

mate Brandon Montour’s slap shot, and Vladimir Tarasenko scored for Florida. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 21 shots, including some highlight-reel saves.

Avalanche 5, Jets 2: Artturi Lehkonen had a goal and an assist and visiting Colorado scored four goals in the second period in a win over Winnipeg to tie the first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

Miles Wood, Zach Parise, Josh Manson and Valeri Nichushkin also scored for the Avalanche. Alexander Georgiev made 28 saves for Colorado, a bounce-back effort after allowing seven goals on 23 shots in the series opener.

David Gustafsson and Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 27 of 31 shots.

Game 3 of the best-of-seven series is scheduled for Friday night in Denver.

MLB

ROUNDUP

Fried throws shutout in Braves' win

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Max Fried pitched a three-hitter for Atlanta's first nine-inning complete game since 2022, Adam Duvall had a two-run homer and the Atlanta Braves blanked the Miami Marlins for the second night in a row, 5-0 on Tuesday.

After a rough start to the season, Fried (2-0) looks like himself again. It took just 1 hour, 54 minutes for the left-hander to mow down the hapless Marlins, who have gone 20 innings without a run.

"I was just trying to get back to being who I am," Fried said. "Get ground balls, be on the attack."

Fried retired only two hitters in his first start of the season, giving up three runs at Philadelphia before he was lifted, and surrendered 10 hits and seven earned runs in 4⅓ innings in his next appearance vs. Arizona.

Since then, the left-hander has beaten the Marlins twice, giving up just one earned run in 15⅓ innings, and lowered his ERA to 4.97 after it stood at 40.50 after his first outing.

"I was looking in the seventh inning and his pitch count was where it should be in the fifth," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "I had a good feeling he could go nine."

The left-hander used his slider more than he had all season, conceding that "it's a really good pitch that I had forgotten about a little bit." The strategy worked to near-perfection as he needed only 92 pitches — 69 of them strikes — to dispatch the free-swinging Marlins.

Fried fanned six and didn't walk anyone in the major leagues' fourth complete game this season.

Pirates 2, Brewers 1: Andrew McCutchen led off the bottom of the first with a home run for the second straight game, Bailey Falter took a shutout into the eighth inning and host Pittsburgh beat Milwaukee.

McCutchen hit the first pitch of Tobias Myers' major league career down the left-field line for his 12th career leadoff homer and his 100th long ball at PNC Park. McCutchen is 5-for-8 in two games since manager Derek Shelton moved him to the top of the batting order, boosting his average from .173 to .233.

Tigers 4, Rays 2: Riley Greene went deep twice for his first multi-homer game, Mark Canha added a homer and visiting Detroit beat Tampa Bay.

The Tigers have won the first two of the three-game set and have won four of their last five games.

Guardians 4, Red Sox 1: Tyler Freeman and Bryan Rocchio had



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Braves pitcher Max Fried delivers in the ninth inning against the Miami Marlins on Tuesday in Atlanta. Fried threw only 92 pitches, gave up just three hits and struck out six in a complete-game shutout.

RBI in the seventh inning when his team finally scored against Tanner Houck, and José Ramírez homered as host Cleveland kept up its scorching start with a win over Boston.

Houck (3-2) threw a three-hit shutout against the Guardians last week. He held them scoreless for six more innings before Freeman hit a run-scoring single and Rocchio added a sacrifice fly off reliever Brennan Bernardino.

Reds 8, Phillies 1: Elly De La Cruz hit a two-run home run, Christian Encarnacion-Strand went 3-for-4 with two RBIs and host Cincinnati ended Philadelphia's seven-game winning streak.

Cincinnati's Santiago Espinal also had three hits, including a solo homer in the eighth inning, his first since July 29. Fernando Cruz (1-1) pitched ⅔ of an inning in relief.

Yankees 4, Athletics 3: Anthony Rizzo snapped a lengthy power drought with a two-run homer that capped a four-run first inning, and host New York held on for a win over Oakland.

Giancarlo Stanton had a go-ahead double against Paul Blackburn (2-1) in the bottom half of the first and Rizzo hit his second home run of the season and his first since April 7. He had just one extra base hit in 54 at-bats between homers.

Dodgers 4, Nationals 1: Shohei Ohtani hit a 450-foot homer to the second deck in right field in his first trip to Nationals Park, and vis-

iting Los Angeles beat Washington.

Ohtani's sixth homer of the season was the hardest-hit of his career at 118.7 mph. It was also the hardest-hit home run for a Dodgers player in the Statcast era, which began in 2015. The solo shot in the ninth inning off Matt Barnes made it 4-1 after pinch-hitter James Outman and Miguel Rojas drove in runs an inning earlier to put Los Angeles ahead.

Royals 3, Blue Jays 2: Bobby Witt Jr. delivered the go-ahead double in the fifth inning after a costly error by first baseman Vladimir Guerrero Jr., and Kansas City's bullpen shut down visiting Toronto the rest of the way for the victory.

Chris Stratton (2-1) minimized the damage when he inherited a bases-loaded jam from Michael Wacha in the fifth. He also took care of the sixth before John Schreiber handled the seventh, and James McArthur breezed through the eighth and finished the ninth for his fifth save of the season.

Mariners 4, Rangers 0: Logan Gilbert allowed only two hits pitching into the seventh inning, Julio Rodriguez hit his first homer and visiting Seattle beat Texas, knocking the World Series champion out of first place for the first time this season.

Gilbert (2-0) struck out six and walked four while throwing 100 pitches over 6⅓ innings. It was the franchise-record 11th game in a row for the Mariners to have their starter pitch at least five innings

and allow two earned runs or less.

Twins 6, White Sox 5: Alex Kirilloff hit a two-out, game-ending single after Byron Buxton led off the ninth inning with a tying homer, and host Minnesota beat major league-worst Chicago.

Chicago joined Cincinnati in 2022, Detroit in 2003, the St. Louis Browns in 1936 and the Cleveland Spiders in 1899 as the only teams to start 3-20. The 1988 Baltimore Orioles began 1-22.

Diamondbacks 14, Cardinals 1: Pavin Smith hit a grand slam and drove in a career-high six runs to help visiting Arizona to a win over St. Louis.

Christian Walker and Kevin Newman also homered for Arizona, which leads the majors with 148 runs.

Cubs 7, Astros 2: Mike Tauchman hit his first two homers of the season, and host Chicago took a five-run first-inning lead in a win that dropped Houston 10 games under .500 for the first time since 2016.

Rockies 7, Padres 4: Brendan Rodgers hit a go-ahead grand slam in a five-run fourth inning, and host Colorado beat San Diego for just its second win in 10 games.

Giants 5, Mets 1: Logan Webb pitched eight strong innings and extended his scoreless streak to 19 as host San Francisco beat New York.

Angels 7, Orioles 4: Mike Trout hit his first leadoff home run since 2012, and host Los Angeles defeated Baltimore to snap a five-game losing streak.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	16	8	.667	—
Baltimore	15	8	.652	½
Boston	13	11	.542	3
Toronto	13	11	.542	3
Tampa Bay	12	13	.480	4½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	17	6	.739	—
Detroit	14	10	.583	3½
Kansas City	14	10	.583	3½
Minnesota	9	13	.409	7½
Chicago	3	20	.130	14
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	12	11	.522	—
Texas	12	12	.500	½
Los Angeles	10	14	.417	2½
Oakland	9	15	.375	3½
Houston	7	17	.292	5½

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	16	6	.727	—
Philadelphia	15	9	.625	2
New York	12	11	.522	4½
Washington	10	12	.455	6
Miami	6	19	.240	11½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	14	8	.636	—
Chicago	14	9	.609	½
Cincinnati	13	10	.565	1½
Pittsburgh	13	11	.542	2
St. Louis	10	14	.417	5
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	14	11	.560	—
San Diego	13	13	.500	1½
Arizona	12	13	.480	2
San Francisco	12	13	.480	2
Colorado	6	18	.250	7½

Tuesday's games

Atlanta 5, Miami 0
Pittsburgh 2, Milwaukee 1
Detroit 4, Tampa Bay 2
Cleveland 4, Boston 1
Cincinnati 8, Philadelphia 1
N.Y. Yankees 4, Oakland 3
L.A. Dodgers 4, Washington 1
Kansas City 3, Toronto 2
Seattle 4, Texas 0
Minnesota 6, Chicago White Sox 5
Arizona 14, St. Louis 1
Chicago Cubs 7, Houston 2
Colorado 7, San Diego 4
San Francisco 5, N.Y. Mets 1
L.A. Angels 7, Baltimore 4

Wednesday's games

Arizona at St. Louis
N.Y. Mets at San Francisco
Baltimore at L.A. Angels
Boston at Cleveland
Philadelphia at Cincinnati
Milwaukee at Pittsburgh
L.A. Dodgers at Washington
Detroit at Tampa Bay
Oakland at N.Y. Yankees
Miami at Atlanta
Chicago White Sox at Minnesota
Houston at Chicago Cubs
Toronto at Kansas City
Seattle at Texas
San Diego at Colorado

Thursday's games

Milwaukee (Peralta 2-0) at Pittsburgh (Keller 2-2)
Philadelphia (Wheeler 1-3) at Cincinnati (Martinez 0-0)
Boston (Bello 3-1) at Cleveland (McKenzie 2-2)
Chicago White Sox (Soroka 0-3) at Minnesota (Ober 1-1)
Toronto (Berríos 4-0) at Kansas City (Ragans 0-2)
Houston (Verlander 1-0) at Chicago Cubs (Assad 2-0)
Seattle (Castillo 1-4) at Texas (Heaney 0-2)
San Diego (Vásquez 0-1) at Colorado (Hudson 0-4)
L.A. Dodgers (Yamamoto 1-1) at Washington (Gore 2-1)
Oakland (Wood 0-2) at N.Y. Yankees (Cortes 1-1)

This date in baseball

April 25

1995 — Major League Baseball returns after a 257-day players' strike as the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Florida Marlins 8-7.

1997 — The Seattle Mariners' Ken Griffey Jr. hits his 250th home run.

2017 — Trea Turner hits for the cycle and drives in a career-high seven runs, helping Washington to a 15-12 win over Colorado.

NBA

PLAYOFF ROUNDUP

McDaniels, T-wolves take 2-0 lead on Suns

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Jaden McDaniels scored 25 points for a career best in the playoffs and spearheaded another stifling defensive performance by the Minnesota Timberwolves in a 105-93 victory over the Phoenix Suns to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round series on Tuesday night.

Mike Conley and Rudy Gobert each had 18 points for the Wolves to offset a smothering of Anthony Edwards by the Suns, who held him to 15 points on 3-for-12 shooting after allowing him 33 in the opener.

The teams head to Phoenix for Game 3 on Friday night. Minnesota has held a 2-0 series lead only one other time in franchise history, against Denver in the first round in 2004 en route to a 4-1 series victory.

“Everyone down the list has shown they’ll be willing to do whatever it takes to sacrifice whatever it is for betterment of the team,” said Karl-Anthony Towns, who had 12 points.

Devin Booker scored 20 points, and Kevin Durant added 18 for the Suns, who failed to get their high-octane offense in gear.

“When they’re scoring on us and we’re not getting the right stops, we can’t not be



ABBIE PARR/AP

Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker lays on the floor after a Suns turnover in the second half of Game 2 of a first-round playoff series against the Timberwolves on Tuesday.

organized offensively,” Suns coach Frank Vogel said. “We had too many possessions like that.”

Pacers 125, Bucks 108: Pascal Siakam scored 37 points and visiting Indiana overcame another fantastic first-half perfor-

mance from Damian Lillard to beat Milwaukee and tie their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

Indiana snapped a 10-game playoff losing streak that began with a Game 7 loss to Cleveland in a first-round series in 2018.

Two nights after scoring all 35 of his points in the first half of the Bucks’ 109-94 Game 1 victory, Lillard had 26 by halftime Tuesday and finished with 34.

Lillard didn’t get enough help with two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo out due to a strained left calf.

Mavericks 96, Clippers 93: Luka Doncic scored 32 points and visiting Dallas overcame the return of superstar Kawhi Leonard to beat Los Angeles and tie their Western Conference first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

Leonard had 15 points and seven rebounds in 35 minutes of his first game since March 31. He hadn’t played or had any contact practices during that stretch because of inflammation in his surgically repaired right knee.

Kyrie Irving added 23 points for the Mavs, who led most of the game two days after they trailed by 29 points in a 109-97 loss.

NBA: Maxey was fouled twice before late turnover

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Philadelphia’s Tyrese Maxey was fouled twice before his turnover that led to the go-ahead 3-pointer by Donte DiVincenzo in the New York Knicks’ victory over the 76ers in Game 2, the NBA determined Tuesday.

In its Last 2 Minutes report, the league also said 76ers coach Nick Nurse twice attempted to call timeouts that were “neither recognized nor granted by the officials” during the possession.

The furious 76ers planned to file a grievance regarding the officiating after falling into a 2-0 hole in the series following the Knicks’ 104-101 victory on Monday night. But on Tuesday — speaking on TNT after being revealed as the league’s Most Improved Player this season — Maxey offered perspective.

“It is what it is. It happened. We’ve got to let it go,” Maxey said. “We can’t dwell on it now. If we dwell on it, then in a couple days we’ll be down 0-3. We don’t want to be down 0-3. We know that we can still win this series. We’re going to go out there and prove that to everybody, not just ourselves. It starts today, letting that go. And then tomorrow at practice, and when the ball goes up on Thursday be the tougher team — not just physically, but mentally as well.”

The 76ers led by five points before Jalen Brunson’s 3-pointer with 27 seconds remaining. The

76ers attempted to inbound the ball to Maxey, who was swarmed by both Brunson and Josh Hart. Maxey fell to the court and Hart grabbed the ball.

But the NBA said Brunson first grabbed Maxey’s jersey, preventing the All-Star guard from catching the pass cleanly. The league ruled that Hart then made lower body contact that caused Maxey to fall.

Both plays were indicated as incorrect non-calls.

The league determined that Hart took the ball away from Maxey with a clean steal.

Nurse attempted to call timeout before the ball was passed in, then again after Maxey had fallen, which may have been too late.

“The timeout request is simultaneous to Hart making contact with the ball and (Philadelphia) not having possession,” the report said.

Nurse said after the game that he did not receive an explanation for not getting the timeout.

Sixers center Joel Embiid used an expletive after the game in saying the officiating had been unacceptable for missing the attempted timeout and the foul.

“I mean, we still had chances to win the game,” Maxey said Tuesday night. “I got my layup blocked and we missed a 3 at the end to tie. We can’t dwell on that. We can’t leave the games in other people’s hands. We’ve got to go out there and take it.”

NBA scoreboard

First Round
(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)

Eastern Conference
Milwaukee 1, Indiana 1
Milwaukee 109, Indiana 94
Tuesday: Indiana 125, Milwaukee 108
Friday: at Indiana, **AFN-Sports, 11:30 pm.**
Friday CET, 6:30 a.m. Saturday JKT
Sunday: at Indiana
Tuesday, April 30: at Milwaukee
x-Thursday, May 2: at Indiana
x-Saturday, May 4: at Milwaukee
Boston 1, Miami 0
Boston 114, Miami 94
Wednesday: at Boston
Saturday: at Miami
Monday: at Miami
x-Wednesday, May 1: at Boston
x-Friday, May 3: at Miami
x-Sunday, May 5: at Boston
Cleveland 2, Orlando 0
Cleveland 97, Orlando 83
Cleveland 96, Orlando 86
Thursday: at Orlando
Saturday: at Orlando
x-Tuesday, April 30: at Cleveland
x-Friday, May 3: at Orlando
x-Sunday, May 5: at Cleveland
New York 2, Philadelphia 0
New York 111, Philadelphia 104
New York 104, Philadelphia 101
Thursday: at Philadelphia, **AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Friday CET, 8:30 a.m. Friday JKT**
Sunday: at Philadelphia
x-Tuesday, April 30: at New York
x-Thursday, May 2: at Philadelphia
x-Saturday, May 4: at New York

Western Conference
Dallas 1, L.A. Clippers 1
L.A. Clippers 109, Dallas 97
Tuesday: Dallas 96, L.A. Clippers 93
Friday: at Dallas, **AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Saturday CET, 9 a.m. Saturday JKT**
Sunday: at Dallas
Wednesday, May 1: at L.A. Clippers
x-Friday, May 3: at Dallas
x-Sunday, May 5: at L.A. Clippers
Denver 2, L.A. Lakers 0
Denver 114, L.A. Lakers 103
Denver 101, L.A. Lakers 99
Thursday: at L.A. Lakers, **AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. Friday CET, 11 a.m. Friday JKT**
Saturday: at L.A. Lakers
x-Monday: at Denver
x-Thursday, May 2: at L.A. Lakers
x-Saturday, May 4: at Denver
Oklahoma City 1, New Orleans 0
Oklahoma City 94, New Orleans 92
Wednesday: at Oklahoma City
Saturday: at New Orleans
Monday: at New Orleans
x-Wednesday, May 1: at Oklahoma City
x-Friday, May 3: at New Orleans
x-Sunday, May 5: at Oklahoma City
Minnesota 2, Phoenix 0
Minnesota 120, Phoenix 95
Tuesday: Minnesota 105, Phoenix 93
Friday: at Phoenix, **AFN-Sports, 4:30 a.m. Saturday CET, 11:30 a.m. Saturday JKT**
Sunday: at Phoenix
x-Tuesday, April 30: at Minnesota
x-Thursday, May 2: at Phoenix
x-Saturday, May 4: at Minnesota

76ers’ Maxey tops White for Most Improved Player

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Tyrese Maxey was sixth in the Most Improved Player voting two years ago, a tribute to the jump he made between his first and second seasons in the NBA.

Voters thought the jump he made from his third year to his fourth was even more impressive.

Philadelphia’s All-Star guard on Tuesday night was named the league’s most improved this season. Maxey’s scoring rose for the third consecutive year, and he finished the regular season averaging 25.9 points, 6.2 assists, 3.7 rebounds and 1.0 steals per game — all career bests.

It’s not uncommon for players to see their numbers soar when given a new role, but that wasn’t the case with Maxey. Consider: two years ago, he averaged 17.5 points, 4.3 assists, 3.2 rebounds and 0.7 steals in 35.3 minutes per game. This year, he topped all those numbers and averaged only 2.2 more minutes per contest.

“It feels great,” Maxey said on the TNT broadcast where the award was announced. “Somebody like myself, who prides myself on putting in a lot of work and outworking people and finding ways to get 1% better every single time I step in the gym, it feels good for that to come to light, honestly.”

Maxey edged Chicago’s Coby White in the voting. Houston’s Alperen Sengun was third. White averaged 19.1 points, 4.5 rebounds



CHRIS SZAGOLA/AP

Tyrese Maxey averaged 25.9 points, 6.2 assists, 3.7 rebounds and 1.0 steals per game — all career bests.

and 5.1 assists per game — all career highs. Sengun averaged 21.1 points, 9.3 rebounds, 5.0 assists and 1.2 steals in 32.5 minutes per game — also all career highs.

Maxey got just over half of the first-place votes and that pushed him just past White. Players got five points for a first-place vote, three for second and one for third. Maxey finished with 319 points to White’s 305, but White appeared on 91 ballots compared with 79 ballot appearances for Maxey.

Sengun finished with 92 points for third.

The awards were selected by a panel of 99 reporters and broadcasters who cover the league. Their ballots were due last week before the start of the play-in tournament. NBA awards take only the regular season into consideration.

SPORTS



All tied up

Predators top Canucks to even series at one apiece » **NHL playoffs, Page 21**

NFL DRAFT

Focusing on the attack

Record number of offensive players could be selected in opening round

By **ROB MAADDI**
Associated Press

The NFL Draft will be offensive.

We're not talking about hurt feelings. This draft has the potential to set a record for most offensive players selected in the first round.

No draft has seen more than 19 players on offense chosen in the first round. That happened three times, most recently in 2009.

Many draft experts are predicting more than 20 offensive players will go in the first round and some have up to 25.

The AP's final mock draft had 22 going in the first round, including 10 offensive linemen, six wide receivers, five quarterbacks and one tight end.

Quarterbacks get the most attention, of course. Caleb Williams is ticketed for the Chicago Bears with the No. 1 pick.

Beyond him, there are plenty of questions. The Washington Commanders need a franchise QB and will choose from Jayden Daniels, the 2023 Heisman Trophy winner,

and Drake Maye at No. 2. J.J. McCarthy's stock has soared since leading Michigan to a national championship and he could end up in the top five, with some analysts even putting him ahead of Daniels and Maye.

Michael Penix Jr. and Bo Nix are in the second tier, but could end up drafted in the latter part of the opening round.

"The quarterback position is a hard position to evaluate and I'd say with the history of the draft, there's guys that hit and there's guys that don't," Arizona Cardinals general manager Monti Ossenfort said. "There's a lot of

things that go into what makes a good quarterback, not only on field but off the field, and I think that's why that position is such a challenging evaluation for a lot of people in the game."

The Las Vegas Raiders own the 13th pick, so they'd have to move up to secure one of the top four guys. They enter the draft with veteran Gardner Minshew and

SEE ATTACK ON PAGE 20



Maye



PHOTOS BY EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ, LEFT, AND MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ, ABOVE/AP

Left: LSU's Jayden Daniels kisses the Heisman Trophy after winning the award Dec. 9 in New York. Above: Southern California's Caleb Williams won the Heisman the previous year. Both quarterbacks are expected to be picked high in the NFL Draft's first round in which a record 20 or more offensive players could be taken.



Wolves go up 2-0 in series against Suns » NBA playoffs, Page 23

