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# STARS AND STRIPES

stars.com

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## Telework deal in Spain for US military spouses lacking in clarity

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — A recent agreement allowing U.S. military dependents in Spain to work remotely for American companies while maintaining important treaty protections requires more detail to assure employers, advocates say.

The pact, reached in June, lacks specificity on legal, tax and other obligations that U.S. companies need to hire family members and others living with U.S. military service members or Defense Department civilians serving overseas, they say.

This agreement “appears to be in the spirit of providing clarity; however, it’s lacking in critical details that would actually deliver that clarity,” said Beth Conlin, who chairs the board of the Military Spouse Chamber of Commerce and serves as a Blue Star Families adviser.

The document allows dependents of American military service members and DOD civilian workers to work remotely for U.S. companies without affecting protections afforded them through the NATO Status of Forces Agreement.

Those protections include entry and departure, driving privileges, housing and other benefits while living in a host nation.

The same accommodation would be made for dependents accompanying Spanish forces in the U.S., according to an undated letter sent by the U.S. Embassy in Madrid to the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation.

U.S. officials say the agreement expands employment opportunities and advances a priority of President Joe Biden’s administra-



PHOTOS BY BAZ RATNER/AP

Israeli soldiers work on tanks in a staging area in northern Israel near the Israel-Lebanon border on Tuesday.

# Iran launches attack on Israel



Israeli army tanks maneuver in a staging area in northern Israel near the Israel-Lebanon border.

## Jerusalem and US have warned of severe consequences if Tehran fires missiles

By AAMER MADHANI,  
JULIA FRANKEL  
AND BASSEM MROUE  
*Associated Press*

JERUSALEM — Iran said it fired dozens of missiles into Israel on Tuesday, a sharp escalation of the monthslong conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed militias Hezbollah and Hamas. There were no immediate reports of casualties as Israel ordered residents to head to bomb shelters and as air raid sirens sounded across the country.

A series of window-shaking explosions were heard in Tel Aviv and near Jerusalem, though it was not immediately clear whether the sounds were from missiles landing or being intercepted by Israeli defenses, or both.

Israel and the United States have warned there would be severe consequences in the event of an attack on Israel from Iran, which backs the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. President

SEE ISRAEL ON PAGE 11

SEE SPAIN ON PAGE 6

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Epic Games sues Google, Samsung over settings

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Video game maker Epic Games sued Google and Samsung on Monday, accusing the tech companies of coordinating to block third-party competition in application distribution on Samsung devices.

At issue is Samsung's "Auto Blocker" feature, which only allows for apps from authorized sources, such as the Samsung Galaxy Store or Google Play Store, to be installed. The feature is turned on by default but can be changed

in a phone's settings. The tool prevents the installation of applications from unauthorized sources and blocks "malicious activity," according to Samsung.

In a lawsuit filed in San Francisco federal court — Epic's second against Google — the company said Auto Blocker "is virtually guaranteed to entrench Google's dominance over Android app distribution." Epic, developer of the popular game "Fortnite," filed the lawsuit to prevent Google from "negating the long overdue prom-

ise of competition in the Android App Distribution Market," according to the complaint.

"Allowing this coordinated illegal anti-competitive dealing to proceed hurts developers and consumers and undermines both the jury's verdict and regulatory and legislative progress around the world," Epic Games said.

Google did not respond to a request for comment. Samsung said it "actively fosters market competition, enhances consumer choice, and conducts its operations fairly."

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Oct. 2)	\$1.08	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8464
British pound (Oct. 2)	\$1.30	Thailand (Baht)	32.55
Japanese yen (Oct. 2)	138.00	Turkey (NewLira)	34.2097
South Korean won (Oct. 2)	1271.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.3290		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3511		
China (Yuan)	7.0291		
Denmark (Krone)	6.7438		
Egypt (Pound)	48.2311		
Euro	0.9041		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7746		
Hungary (Forint)	359.97		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7515		
Japan (Yen)	143.54		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3055		
Norway (Krone)	10.6003		
Philippines (Peso)	56.22		
Poland (Zloty)	3.88		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7519		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2877		
South Korea (Won)	1324.50		

(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.)

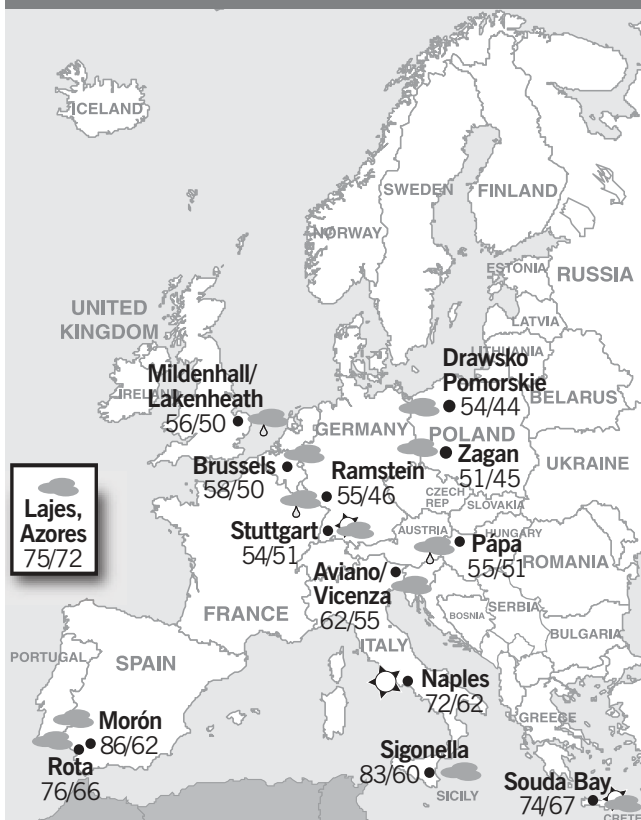
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.00
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00
Federal funds market rate	4.83
3-month bill	4.64
30-year bond	4.12

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



#### WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



#### THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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## MILITARY

# Former Dutch leader takes NATO reins

## Rutte replaces Stoltenberg, pledges to keep up Ukraine aid

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Leadership of the 32-nation NATO alliance changed hands Tuesday for the first time in a decade as former Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte took the helm of a military bloc facing security challenges unrivaled since the Cold War era.

Rutte replaced Jens Stoltenberg, who for 10 years led NATO's efforts to rebuild itself to counter a renewed threat from Russia.

Stoltenberg also guided the U.S.-led alliance during the White House tenure of Donald Trump, whose frequent criticism of the alliance created uncertainty about the future of American commitment to NATO, which the country started in the aftermath of World War II.

Moments after taking on the title of NATO secretary-general, Rutte faced questions about how he would deal with Trump should the Republican nominee return to the White House next year.

"I'm not worried," Rutte said. "I will be able to work with both (candidates) whatever the outcome of the election."

For any NATO chief, the most critical part of the job is managing the alliance's relationship with the United States.

Rutte's reputation for having a deft diplomatic touch was likely a factor in his selection by members to replace Stoltenberg, who himself was referred to at times by NATO insiders as the "Trump whisperer."

Rutte showcased some of those diplomatic skills during the 2018

NATO summit, in which there were concerns that Trump was poised to withdraw the U.S. from the security bloc.

During a crisis meeting of heads of state, Rutte was said to have realized that the key was to give Trump credit for calling out allies for their lack of defense spending and demanding more spending in the future. Past U.S. presidents had done the same for decades, though in more diplomatic terms.

On Tuesday, Rutte restated that Trump deserved credit.

"He was the one pushing us to spend more," Rutte said.

For NATO members, defense spending started inching up after Russia's 2014 armed takeover of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and picked up momentum during Trump's time in office.

Those expenditures have only accelerated since then, with Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine pushing allies to spend even more.

Meanwhile, 23 of NATO's 32 countries hit the benchmark that called for members to spend at least 2% of their gross domestic product on military matters by 2024. A decade ago, only three hit the mark.

Besides questions about defense spending and the outcome of the upcoming U.S. election and what effect that could have on NATO operations, the alliance is grappling with immediate threats on its periphery.

With no end in sight to Russia's war in Ukraine, the NATO chief will need to carry on efforts to fine-tune defense plans for high-



NATO

**New NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, right, shakes hands with his predecessor Jens Stoltenberg after taking the helm of the alliance at a ceremony at its headquarters in Brussels on Tuesday.**

er numbers of alliance troops to be able to defend territory on short notice.

"Over this decade, we have implemented the biggest reinforcement of NATO, our collective defense, in a generation, with a higher readiness, more troops in the eastern part of the alliance," Stoltenberg said Tuesday.

During his tenure, the alliance saw the addition of four new member countries: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Finland and Sweden.

The longtime neutrality of the two Nordic states quickly ended in response to the 2022 invasion as both chose to seek NATO membership, a change that was almost unthinkable just a few years before.

NATO also is playing a larger role in coordinating military assistance for Ukraine, which until recently was spearheaded by the United States.

"We have gone from only providing marginal support to Ukraine back in 2014 to now providing massive support ... and NATO coordinating the support to Ukraine with a new command in Germany," Stoltenberg said.

Rutte said maintaining allied support for Ukraine will be one of his main efforts.

"We have to make sure that Ukraine prevails as a sovereign, independent, democratic nation," Rutte said.

Rutte also addressed the consequences of not supporting Ukraine in referring to the 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, which took off from Amsterdam and was shot down over eastern Ukraine.

Nearly 300 people, including 196 Dutch nationals, were killed when a Russian-made anti-aircraft missile downed the aircraft.

"I know from personal experience ... how the conflict in Uk-

raine is not contained to the front lines," Rutte said.

As Ukraine struggles to blunt Russian advances, Kyiv is pushing allies for permission to use Western-supplied weapons to hit targets against military sites deeper in Russia.

Rutte said such strikes are legitimate.

"Ukraine is fighting a war of self-defense ... and as we know, according to international law, this right does not end at the border," he said.

Still, mindful of his role as NATO's chief dealmaker, he said he was in no position to demand allies permit such strikes. So far, the Biden administration has been reluctant to greenlight Kyiv's request.

"This is for the individual allies in their relationship with Ukraine (to decide)," Rutte said. "But obviously this is an important debate."

## Video shows Russian jet buzzing American F-16 near Alaska

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Russian fighter jet zooms dangerously close to an American F-16 near Alaska in a dramatic video posted online Monday.

The Russian Su-35 flew in a manner that was "unsafe, unprofessional and endangered all," Air Force Gen. Gregory Guillot, commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, wrote Monday in a post on X. The conduct was "not what you'd see in a professional air force."

The post was accompanied by a short video taken Sept. 23 from the point of view of the American F-16 fighter jet that was buzzed while flying within the Alaskan Air De-



North American Aerospace Defense Command

**On Sept. 23, a Russian Su-35 flew in a manner that was "unsafe, unprofessional and endangered all," Air Force Gen. Gregory Guillot said Monday in a post on X.**

fense Identification Zone.

The identification zone is air-

space beyond a nation's territorial boundary over which it maintains

air traffic control for the sake of national security.

With the Russian jet's wings tipped vertically, the aircraft comes up from behind the F-16 and whisks past the left side of the American jet, which immediately rocked to its side, the 15-second video shows.

On Sept. 14, NORAD tracked a pair of IL-38 surveillance aircraft that crossed the Alaskan zone.

In July, U.S. and Canadian fighter jets intercepted two Russian bombers and two Chinese bombers flying about 200 miles off the coast of Alaska, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters July 25.

In response to Russian and Chinese air forays into the Arctic re-

gion, the Alaska-based 11th Airborne Division last month deployed three Army units to the Aleutian Islands, about 1,200 miles west of Anchorage.

Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Hilbert, commander of the 11th Airborne, described the deployment of soldiers to Shemya Island as a show of force.

"As the number of adversarial exercises increases around Alaska and throughout the region, including June's joint Russian-Chinese bomber patrol, the operation to Shemya Island demonstrates the division's ability to respond to events in the Indo-Pacific or across the globe, with a ready, lethal force within hours," Hilbert said in a Sept. 13 statement.

## PACIFIC

# South Korea shows off arsenal at parade

## Seoul unveils weapon it says is capable of taking out North Korea's leadership

By DAVID CHOI  
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea, during its Armed Forces Day parade on Tuesday, unveiled a weapon it says is capable of taking out North Korea's leadership. Meanwhile, a U.S. B-1B Lancer made a rare flight over the capital.

Roughly 5,000 South Korean troops — many armed and equipped for various environments — marched in downtown Seoul, which closed its streets to accommodate tens of thousands on hand to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the military's founding.

South Korea used the event to unveil its latest intermediate-range ballistic missile, the Hyunmoo-5. Seoul has described the missile as a retaliatory weapon to strike at leaders in Pyongyang in the event of war.

The missile appears capable of carrying a warhead of over 8 tons, Yang Uk, a research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

The missile's transporter erector launcher can move all 18 of its wheels at a roughly 45-degree angle and drive diagonally for greater mobility, Yang said.

About 250 U.S. soldiers also marched in the parade. Two Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons and four A-10 Thunderbolt IIs were scheduled to fly over Seoul but were canceled due to inclement weather in the afternoon, 7th Air Force spokeswoman Rachel Buitrago said by phone Tuesday.

The Lancer, capable of carrying



An Air Force B-1B Lancer flies over South Korea's capital.

the largest payload of any Air Force bomber, passed over the parade route for the first time.

A pair of Lancers from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, last flew over the capital in October 2017 during the Seoul International Aerospace & Defense Exhibition.

North and South Korean leaders traded barbs as troops and heavy equipment paraded on Tuesday.

North Korean vice defense minister Kim Kang Il described the display as a "bluffing military demonstration" and that Pyongyang is prepared to make "fresh action plans ... and carry them out," according to a statement in the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Kim said his country is "keenly watching the frequent deployment of U.S. strategic assets and their traces on the Korean Peninsula," according to KCNA.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol in a speech prior to the parade's start thanked the U.S. and South Korean militaries for "protecting our country and its people with thoroughness and

precision."



PHOTOS BY LUIS GARCIA/Stars and Stripes

A South Korean transporter erector launcher carrying a Hyunmoo-5 missile is paraded in Seoul for Armed Forces Day on Tuesday.

"When the North Korean communists started the Korean War ... our military fought bravely and shed blood to protect the free [South Korea]," he said. "Even now, they stand firm against the constant threats and provocations from North Korea, carrying out the important mission of safeguarding the nation and its people."

Yoon also warned that if North Korea "attempts to use nuclear weapons, it will face the resolute and overwhelming response of our military and the [U.S.-South Korea] alliance.

"That day will be the end of the North Korean regime," he said.



About 250 U.S. soldiers marched through downtown Seoul during South Korea's Armed Forces Day parade.

## Navy's only laser-equipped destroyer en route to Japan

By ALEX WILSON  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy's only guided-missile destroyer equipped with a directed energy weapon is on its way to join the U.S. 7th Fleet in Japan.

The USS Preble left its former homeport of San Diego on Sept. 22 bound for Yokosuka, where it will take the place of the USS Benfold. That warship, meanwhile, will relocate to Everett, Wash., U.S. Pacific Fleet announced Thursday.

The Preble is the only U.S. warship outfitted with the High-Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance, or HELIOS, system. It can counter small watercraft or drones and is able to collect long-range intelli-

gence, according to manufacturer Lockheed Martin's website.

HELIOS remains in the at-sea testing phase and will continue testing while homeported in Yokosuka, Task Force 70 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Seth Koenig told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

"Deploying the most capable surface ships, such as USS Preble, and superior technology forward ensures the United States is best able to honor our security commitments to Japan and support a free and open Indo-Pacific," he wrote.

The Benfold departs a year short of the Navy's decade limit on overseas deployments for warships. It arrived in October 2015 as one of the most advanced destroyers in the service.

Koenig declined to comment on

when the Benfold will depart or when the Preble will arrive, citing security concerns.

Ship swaps are relatively routine for the Navy, and the service over the past decade has regularly reassigned its most advanced vessels to the Indo-Pacific, which the Pentagon continues to view as an important theater due to actions by China, North Korea and Russia.

"It has been more than four years since Preble last operated in 7th Fleet," the ship's skipper, Cmdr. Paul Archer, said in the news release. "But Preble today is markedly different than the ship that last left 7th Fleet. Armed with the U.S. Navy's most capable combat system suite, this crew is well-trained and hungry to take our cutting-edge warship west to

support national strategic objectives."

HELIOS works with the Preble's Flight IIA Aegis Combat System — the Navy's command-and-control suite aboard guided-missile destroyers — and uses the ship's power rather than traditional ammunition, according to Lockheed Martin.

"HELIOS enhances the overall combat system effectiveness of the ship to deter future threats and provide additional protection for Sailors, and we understand we must provide scalable solutions customized to the Navy's priorities," Rick Cordaro, vice president of Lockheed Martin Advanced Product Solutions, said in an Aug. 18 news release.

Lockheed Martin in March 2018 received a \$150 million con-

tract with options up to \$942.8 million to develop, manufacture and deliver two HELIOS suites to the Navy.

Systems such as HELIOS offer significant strategic advantages, including a low cost per shot, faster and more precise targeting, the ability to counter "radically maneuvering missiles," and the ability to graduate from detection and interference to disabling damage, according to an Aug. 26 report on shipboard lasers from the Congressional Research Service.

Challenges, however, include line of sight limitations, atmospheric and weather interference, hardened targets and the potential for collateral damage, including damage to human eyesight, according to the report.

## MILITARY

# Claims against Army over sex abuse cases at \$90M

## Three more men file complaints seeking \$5M each for failing to protect patients from misconduct

BY GARY WARNER  
AND ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Three more men filed complaints against the Army seeking \$5 million each for failing to protect patients from misconduct by a military doctor facing a court-martial in one of the largest sexual abuse cases in the service's history.

Army Maj. Michael Stockin, 38, is scheduled for a court-martial in January on charges that he sexually abused 41 patients at Madigan Army Medical Center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, which is 50 miles south of Seattle. He is scheduled to plead guilty in an agreement with the Army, according to online court records, though the service and Stockin's attorney have not said to which charges the agreement applies.

Stockin, an anesthesiologist and pain specialist, is accused of 47 counts of abusive sexual contact and five counts of wrongfully viewing another person's private area. If convicted of all charges, Stockin could face a maximum penalty of more than 300 years in prison.

The doctor is no longer seeing patients but is not in pretrial confinement as he awaits his court-martial, according to the Army and court documents.

The three new complaints filed last week are among 18 administrative complaints about Stockin submitted under the Federal Tort Claims Act. Each claim asks for \$5 million in compensation, for a total of \$90 million to date. Under federal law, an agency can be sued in federal court only after complaints are filed and rejected.

"Our civil case is separate and apart from the criminal case, but I will say that if Dr. Stockin pleads guilty, my clients will be grateful to see him held accountable in the criminal case," said Christine Dunn, an attorney with Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight, a Washington, D.C., law firm representing the 18 complainants. "But from our perspective, the Army is also at fault here, and we hope that the Army will ultimately take responsibility for its role in allowing it to happen."

The Army declined to comment on the complaints filed, citing them as pending litigation.

Each claim filed with the Army follows a similar narrative and was written under pseudonyms. The service members and veterans — all men — accused Stockin

of asking them to remove their clothes and then touching their genitalia under the guise of medical treatment.

The contact was not medically necessary, Dunn said.

One man wrote he went in for neck and back pain and Stockin asked him to disrobe and fondled his groin area.

"I was confused why Dr. Stockin did not examine any other parts of my body, including my back," the man wrote in the complaint.

He blamed the Army, which he said "owed a duty of care" to patients at Madigan. He said he was instructed to see Stockin after February 2022, which is after the Army has said it barred Stockin from seeing patients.

"The Army breached that duty by negligently hiring and negli-

gently supervising Dr. Stockin," he wrote. "The Army's negligence directly caused me to be sexually assaulted by Dr. Stockin."

Another man wrote of a similar experience and said it left him with severe anxiety regarding doctor appointments, including those for his children.

Stockin joined the Army in 2013 and was stationed at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and he was deployed to Iraq. He was transferred to Lewis-McChord in July 2019.

Army prosecutors and criminal investigators said they have launched inquiries into whether Stockin had abused patients at his earlier posts, but none have been reported.

## Army reservists lied about performing funeral ceremonies, stole \$100K

BY JULIA MARNIN  
*Tribune News Service*

A Louisiana man is the latest former U.S. Army reservist to plead guilty in a fraud scheme that scammed the Army out of more than \$100,000, federal prosecutors said.

He is one of seven defendants charged in January 2021 in connection with lying about performing honors ceremonies at military funerals, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

The man sought reimbursement for purported military honors ceremonies that he never performed between November 2013 and August 2016 — and stole \$11,378.27, court documents show. At the time, he was stationed as a corporal at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

A staff sergeant, who is a co-defendant in the case and worked at the base as an Army pay technician, submitted fraudulent payment requests for the man, according to court documents.

Now, the man has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit theft of government funds, the U.S. Attorney's Office said in a Sunday news release.

He's agreed to repay the Army the same amount prosecutors said he stole as part of his plea agreement. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 13, 2025, according to prosecutors.

The man's defense attorney

didn't immediately respond to McClatchy News' request for comment Monday.

For active-duty soldiers, retired service members and veterans who have died, families can request military funeral honors, such as the folding of the U.S. flag, to be performed during services, prosecutors said.

The staff sergeant who submitted the man's fraudulent requests for reimbursement also submitted payment requests for himself and five other former Army reservists for military funeral honors that never happened, according to the indictment.

He was accused of stealing \$18,825.83 for himself, the indictment shows.

He pleaded guilty to count one of the indictment — conspiracy to commit theft of government funds — in October 2023 and is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 5, according to court records.

Four other defendants pleaded guilty to the same charge and have been sentenced to terms of probation, court records show. They were also ordered to pay restitution as part of their sentences.

Two of these defendants worked for the New Orleans Police Department when they were indicted, according to prosecutors.

A jury trial is set for Feb. 24 for a seventh former Army reservist who previously pleaded not guilty to all counts against him, according to court records.



EDWIN WRISTON/U.S. Army

## Helicopter steals show at Girls in Aviation Day

An all-women air crew from the West Virginia National Guard participated in the 3rd annual Girls in Aviation Day held at the Robert C. Byrd National Aerospace Education Center, in Clarksburg, W.Va., on Sept. 28. The air crew piloted their "unmanned" UH-60M Blackhawk helicopter to the event, landing to the cheers and applause of hundreds of young girls and teens who came to the event meant to inspire and expose young girls to the broad range of career opportunities in the aviation industry.

## Large anti-war protest expected outside Army's Europe headquarters Thursday

BY BRADLEY LATHAM  
*Stars and Stripes*

WIESBADEN, Germany — Commuters driving to the U.S. Army base that is home to the service's headquarters for Europe and Africa could be in for a delay Thursday resulting from preparations for an afternoon anti-war protest.

Up to 500 demonstrators are expected to gather outside Clay Kaserne from noon to 5 p.m. that day, city of Wiesbaden spokesman Ralf Munser said Tuesday.

A follow-on march around the

installation and demonstration outside the main gate may last until 8 p.m., U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden said in a Facebook post Tuesday.

As early as Wednesday night, city crews could start setting up barriers, blocking the right-hand lane of the installation's access road. The lane closure could snarl traffic Thursday morning, according to the garrison's statement.

There may be a larger than normal German police presence outside Clay Kaserne's main gate throughout Thursday, the Army

command said.

Although the demonstration is expected to be peaceful, the garrison is reminding its members not to get involved or interact with the demonstrators. Drivers are urged not to prolong any delays by rubbernecking as they pass the protest.

Thursday is a German federal holiday marking the anniversary of the country's 1990 reunification.

Stars and Stripes reporter Marcus Kloeckner contributed to this report.

## MILITARY

## CENTCOM confirms attack on US in Syria

BY ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. base in eastern Syria was recently struck by rocket fire, in what appeared to be the latest militant attack on American forces in the country since the Israel-Hamas war erupted nearly a year ago.

No personnel were injured in the early morning attack Thursday at Mission Support Site Euphrates, in which one rocket hit the base, U.S. Central Command said Monday. There were no injuries to personnel and there was no significant damage to the installation, the command said.

It wasn't clear Tuesday what group launched the strike.

Confirmation of the attack, at least the second on the installation since July, came after U.S. forces completed targeted strikes last month in Syria that killed 37 terrorists, including senior leaders of the Islamic State and Hurras al-Din, an al-Qaida affiliate, CENTCOM announced Sunday.

Those actions were carried out Sept. 26 and Sept. 24, the command said. More than 2,000 U.S. service members are deployed to Iraq, and an additional 900 to Syria as part of a coalition fighting to prevent a resurgence of ISIS.

On Aug. 9, eight U.S. service members were treated for traumatic brain injury and smoke inhalation following a drone attack on Rumalyn Landing Zone near Syria's northeastern border with Turkey and Iraq.

A few weeks prior to that, a single rocket was launched against



EMMA SCEARCE/U.S. Army Reserve

**U.S. Army National Guard soldiers participate in a live-fire exercise in northeastern Syria in April 2024. American and coalition forces at Mission Support Site Euphrates in eastern Syria were targeted by a rocket attack on Sept. 26, with one striking the base.**

Mission Support Site Euphrates. Militants also launched two rockets the same day in a separate attack aimed at al Asad Air Base in western Iraq.

There were no injuries or damage in either attack. But four U.S. service members and an American contractor were injured when two rockets struck al Asad Aug. 5.

Last week's attack on U.S. forces in Syria comes as fighting escalates in the Middle East and the threat of a wider regional conflict looms.

On Tuesday, the Israeli military launched a ground invasion into southern Lebanon after killing

many of Hezbollah's top leaders in a series of airstrikes designed to cripple the militant group.

Iran responded in retaliation to the killing with dozens of missiles fired into Israel late Tuesday, according to The Associated Press.

Hezbollah began attacking Israel on Oct. 8, a day after its ally Hamas invaded Israel from Gaza.

On Monday, the Pentagon announced that the U.S. is sending thousands of troops to the Middle East to boost the security of American forces already in the region and support the defense of Israel if necessary.

American personnel in Iraq and

Syria have come under more than 175 drone and rocket attacks over the past year.

Last month, American forces assigned to al Asad and Baghdad International Airport started a transition to another base in northern Iraq as part of an agreement with that will end the mission in the country, The Associated Press reported Saturday.

An unspecified number of U.S. forces will stay in Iraq in some measure to support counter-ISIS operations in Syria through 2026, AP said.

CENTCOM on Monday also confirmed the downing of another

MQ-9 Reaper drone in Yemen, calling it "the latest example of malign and reckless behavior by the Iranian-backed Houthis that threatens regional stability."

Houthi rebels claimed Monday that they had shot down the \$30 million drone with a surface-to-air missile. Two more U.S. drones were shot down in September.

On Friday, the Pentagon announced that U.S. Navy ships had intercepted a barrage of Houthi missiles and drones launched into the shipping lanes of the Red Sea. No U.S. ships were hit in the attack, and no American military personnel were injured, officials said.

U.S. and coalition forces have patrolled the vital waterway in response to Houthi attacks on commercial ships that began in November.

The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group remains in the Gulf of Oman. The group includes the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and the destroyers USS John S. McCain and USS Daniel Inouye, USNI News reported last month.

The beefed-up U.S. presence in the region also includes the Wasp Amphibious Ready Group on duty in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Four U.S. destroyers also are deployed to the eastern Mediterranean, according to USNI.

Meanwhile, the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group departed its homeport in Norfolk, Va., on Sept. 23 for a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, which includes the Eastern Mediterranean.

## Spain: Military spouses left uncertain of their working status with new agreement

FROM PAGE 1

tion to recruit, hire and retain military-connected spouses.

"It answers a long-standing call of the nearly 7,000 service members and their families posted in Spain," the U.S. Embassy in Madrid said Monday.

But ambiguity is leaving some military spouses, such as Kate Jordan, holding the bag when it comes to keeping their jobs or getting hired by a U.S. company.

Initially, Jordan's multinational American employer was keen to keep the mom of two working when her active-duty husband received orders to Naval Station Rota earlier this year.

But company officials reviewed the agreement and subsequently determined that Jordan wouldn't be able to stay on the payroll while the family was living overseas.

The company's structure re-

quired that Jordan be reassigned to its office in Spain, a change not addressed by the agreement, she said.

"I'm starting from scratch yet again," said Jordan, who ultimately quit her job in August. "And I didn't want to do that because I thought that I had established something. I thought I'd be able to just keep doing my job and that would be that."

Many military spouses living overseas quit their jobs or choose not to pursue telework opportunities in the U.S., fearing unintended consequences from giving up their SOFA status to seek or maintain employment.

That means losing income that often substantially contributes to families' well-being, pushing some to the brink of poverty, a Stars and Stripes investigation last year found.

In Germany, spouses can work remotely for their American employers in most cases. Bahrain, Japan and South Korea also allow telework.

But other countries, such as Belgium, prohibit military spouses from obtaining employment other than jobs at their overseas bases unless they give up their SOFA status.

Last year, an agreement between the U.S. and Italy reversed more than a decade of policy that forced thousands of spouses of military personnel, Defense Department civilians and Pentagon contractors in Italy to choose between continuing their careers or giving up their SOFA rights and protections.

"The 'exchanging of letters' that happened with Italy is still the (gold) standard of the type of clarity that we and private-sector em-



NATHAN CARPENTER / U.S. Navy

**An aerial photo of Naval Station Rota, Spain in 2022. A recent agreement with Spain allows U.S. military dependents in the country to work remotely for American companies while maintaining Status of Forces Agreement treaty protections.**

ployers need," Conlin said.

Deborah Braddy thought she'd have to give up her remote job when her husband received orders for NS Rota in January but was hopeful she could keep working for a DOD contractor as a result of the agreement.

Since then, her employer determined that vagueness in the document about labor laws and tax implications makes direct employment inadvisable, she said.

The company suggested she could work for them through an-

other business that specializes in filling remote jobs for employers. Braddy is going through that process now and is confident she eventually will be successful in getting back to work.

Despite the hurdles, Jordan and Braddy are grateful for the agreement and its implications for military spouses who have long struggled with the career and financial impacts of frequent moves.

"You feel seen and you feel heard and that you're not alone," Braddy said.

## NATION

# Recovery crews working hard to aid battered NC

Associated Press

SWANNANOA, N.C. — Rescuers fanned out across the mountains of western North Carolina on Tuesday in search of anyone still unaccounted for since Hurricane Helene's remnants caused catastrophic damage to the Southeast, with the death toll nearing 140 people.

Many who lived through the deadly storm were left without electricity or any way to reach out for help. Some cooked food on charcoal grills or hiked to high ground in the hopes of finding a signal to call loved ones.

The devastation was especially bad in the Blue Ridge Mountains, where at least 40 people died in and around the city of Asheville, a tourism haven known for its art galleries, breweries and outdoor activities.

Just outside the city, in the small community of Swannanoa, reced-

ing floodwaters revealed cars stacked on top of others and trailer homes that had floated away during the storm. Roads were caked with mud and debris and pockmarked by sinkholes.

Exhausted emergency crews worked around the clock to clear roads, restore power and phone service, and reach those still stranded by the storm, which killed at least 139 people in six states. Nearly half of the deaths were in North Carolina, while dozens of others were in South Carolina and Georgia.

Search and rescue crews from all levels of government were deployed throughout western North Carolina. Federal agencies, aid groups and volunteers worked to deliver supplies by air, truck and even mule train.

President Joe Biden was set to survey the devastation in the region Wednesday.



MIKE STEWART/AP

Debris is seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, on Monday, in Asheville, N.C.

The North Carolina death toll included one horrific story after another of people trapped by floodwaters or killed by falling trees. A courthouse security officer died after being submerged in his truck. A couple and a 6-year-old boy waiting on a rooftop to be rescued drowned when part of their home collapsed.

Rescuers did save dozens of other people, including an infant and two others who were stuck on the top of a car in Atlanta.

Search crews around Asheville

first focused on those who were especially vulnerable, using helicopters to get past washed out bridges or hiking to isolated homes.

"We've been going door to door, making sure that we can put eyes on people and see if they're safe," said Avril Pinder, the county manager for Buncombe County, which includes Asheville. "We know that there are places that are still hard to access."

The storm unleashed the worst flooding in a century in North Carolina. Rainfall estimates in some

areas have topped more than 2 feet since Wednesday, and several main routes into Asheville were damaged or blocked by mudslides. That includes a 4-mile section of Interstate 40 that was heavily damaged.

Across Georgia, Helene's inland path knocked out power and shattered lives from Valdosta to Augusta, where a line of cars waiting to get water Tuesday wrapped around a shopping center and stretched at least a half-mile down the road.

## Over 6,200 National Guard troops respond to Hurricane Helene

By ROSE L. THAYER  
Stars and Stripes

More than 6,200 National Guard troops from a dozen states are responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which made landfall last week as a category 4 storm and has left more than 100 people dead.

The active-duty military also is contributing to response and rescue efforts by providing personnel, equipment and access to its installations in the region as staging areas.

Hurricane Helene hit Thursday in Florida's Big Bend region with wind speeds up to 140 mph before storming across the southeast U.S. and dumping multiple feet of rain in some locations.

In its wake, the hurricane destroyed infrastructure, created widespread flooding and cut off power to millions.

At least 121 deaths in six states have been attributed to the storm, according to The Associated Press.

As of Monday morning, nearly 3,900 members of the Florida National Guard were working with hundreds of tactical vehicles and boats and 11 helicopters to perform emergency response missions in dozens of counties throughout the state, according to state and military officials.

Troops there have rescued more than 150 people and at least 56 animals, while also clearing more than 1,000 miles of roads. The Guard has distributed thousands of cases of water, Meals, Ready to Eat, bags of ice, and tarps.

Other activations included about 1,500 Guard members in Georgia, nearly 600 in South Carolina, about 130 in Tennessee and nearly 50 in Virginia.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp spoke Monday about conditions in his state and some of the lives lost, including a firefighter responding to a call, and three separate instances where trees fell on homes. One falling tree took the life of a mother and her 1-month-old twin boys, he said.

Troops on Monday continued to help clear roads of debris and downed trees so that supplies and utility workers could reach remote areas, Georgia officials said.

North Carolina was hit hard with flooding in the western region of the state.

More than 700 Guard members were activated and received additional support from Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Ohio, New York, South Carolina and Florida, according to the Pentagon.

"Across the region, National Guardsmen are supporting state and local response efforts," Sabrina Singh, the Pentagon's deputy press secretary, said Monday.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said Sunday that the state's Guard was airlifting supplies to some of the hardest-hit portions of the state, including the city of Asheville, where the water system was compromised.

U.S. Northern Command, which is responsible for defense and civil-support missions, sent one unit to Nashville to offer support staff to local officials and another to Orlando to help with federal search-and-rescue coordination, the Pentagon said.

The staging of federal units was underway Monday at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany and Robins Air Force Base, both in Georgia, and Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

The Civil Air Patrol, an Air Force unit that assists in emergency public service missions, was activated to conduct disaster response and damage assessment in North Carolina and South Carolina, according to the Pentagon.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is providing emergency power planning and response teams to Georgia, as well as

teams to inspect dams, levees and bridges in Tennessee and Kentucky.

Army engineers were also tasked with assessing local water

systems across the southeast where boil water notices were issued, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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## NATION

# Trump, Harris venture into a political storm

## Candidates take care reacting to Helene damage

By **CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR., ISAAC ARNSDORF AND MAXINE JOSELOW**  
*The Washington Post*

VALDOSTA, Ga. — The two candidates for president ventured carefully into the politics of Hurricane Helene on Monday, with Vice President Kamala Harris canceling West Coast campaign stops to attend a storm briefing in Washington and former President Donald Trump delivering remarks from a Georgia city battered by the storm.

Trump blasted the administration's response as inadequate during a trip to severely damaged Valdosta, Ga., while Harris gave remarks at the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Washington, aiming to reassure the public that the administration was acting decisively, but sensibly, in the storm's wake.

"I plan to be on the ground as soon as possible — as soon as possible without disrupting any emergency response operations, because that must be the highest priority and the first order of business," Harris said.

Harris plans to visit Georgia on Wednesday and survey the devastation in North Carolina in the coming days, according to aides who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the travel plans, *The Associated Press* reported Tuesday.

After Georgia, Harris plans to continue with scheduled campaign visits to Wisconsin and Michigan later this week, with the North Carolina trip coming sometime after that, AP reported.

Echoing remarks by President Joe Biden earlier in the day, she said the administration had marshaled more than 3,300 federal employees, who would stay in the worst affected



DOUG MILLS, THE NEW YORK TIMES/AP

**Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump is briefed by local officials about the damage from Hurricane Helene in Valdosta, Ga., on Monday.**

areas in the weeks to come. "Our nation is with you," she said, backdropped by FEMA employees. "And President Joe Biden and I and all of the folks behind us are with you."

As people in the affected areas were still reeling from the onslaught of a hurricane that killed more than 100 people, with more than 600 still unaccounted for and communities devastated in six states, the politics of a bitter campaign seeped into the conversation. North Carolina and Georgia are battleground states coveted by both parties in the presidential election.

And as waterlogged communities took their first steps to recovery, the competing campaigns made dueling decisions about where to position their candidates. Trump, in the middle of the desolation, faulted Harris for fundraising during the storm and for being absent in the areas hardest hit by Helene. Harris and other Democrats took subtle digs at Trump, saying politicians should keep themselves — and their large security footprints — away from the most severely damaged places, freeing up first responders to restore services and save lives.

Biden also announced that on

Wednesday he would visit North Carolina, home to some of the hardest hit communities. He added that he would travel to Georgia and Florida "as soon as possible" to survey the damage there.

Natural disasters, and hurricanes in particular, have a history of playing into national elections, and the response to them is often seen as a measure of the competence of the administration in power. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 contributed to broad dissatisfaction with the administration of President George W. Bush, and Republicans lost control of the House and the Senate the following year.

Trump quickly sought to make an issue out of the hurricane over the weekend, saying Harris "ought to be down in the area" affected by Helene. He reiterated that message Monday after appearing in Valdosta with the Christian humanitarian relief organization Samaritan's Purse, suggesting he was filling a hole in the federal government's response.

"The federal government is not being responsive. [Elected officials are] having a very hard time getting the president on the phone," Trump said. "He won't get on, and of course the vice president, she's out some



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

**Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at FEMA headquarters, on Monday, in Washington.**

place campaigning, looking for money."

Trump also suggested, without evidence, that North Carolina's Democratic governor was not helping the Republican areas of that hard-hit state.

At Monday's White House press briefing, Karine Jean-Pierre pushed back against Trump's assertion that the Biden-Harris administration was being unresponsive to state leaders, recounting statements Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, made at a news conference in Georgia.

"[The President] just said, 'Hey, what do you need?' And I told him, you know, we got what we need," Kemp said. "We'll work through the federal process. He offered and if there's [other] things you need just to call him back directly, which I appreciate that."

The vice president spent the weekend on a West Coast campaign swing, raising \$55 million at a pair of California fundraisers. Later, she announced she would cancel other campaign events to return to Washington and attend the FEMA briefing.

Meanwhile, her campaign criticized Trump's remarks at a rally in

Walker, Mich., where he said of those affected by the storm: "If we were there, we'd be helping you. You'll be okay."

KamalaHQ, the Harris campaign's X account, shared video of that comment with its roughly 1.3 million followers, suggesting that the former president was downplaying a deadly disaster.

"You'll be okay," the tweet read, along with a parenthetical note: "(Dozens of deaths have already been reported)."

As president, Trump faced criticism for his handling of major hurricanes. In 2018, he casually tossed rolls of paper towels into a crowd in San Juan, Puerto Rico, after the island was devastated by Hurricane Maria a year earlier.

In Valdosta, Trump praised the emergency response, and the support of Samaritan's Purse, after receiving a briefing from FEMA and the National Guard.

"As you know, our country is in the final weeks of a hard-fought national election, but in a time like this, when a crisis hits, when our fellow citizens cry out in need, none of that matters," Trump said outside a damaged furniture store. "We're not talking about politics now."

## Man accused of attempting to kill Trump pleads not guilty to new charges

By **STEPHANY MATAT AND ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**  
*Associated Press*

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — A man who authorities say spent 12 hours camped outside Donald Trump's golf course before Secret Service spotted him with a rifle pleaded not guilty on Monday to federal charges including attempted assassination.

Ryan Wesley Routh appeared briefly in the federal court in West Palm Beach days after a grand jury handed down a five-count indictment stemming from the second attempt on Trump's life since July.

Routh entered the courtroom handcuffed in a tan jumpsuit and

waved his hands at reporters gathered to watch the proceedings. His lawyers declined to comment after the hearing.

The assassination attempt was thwarted when a member of his Secret Service protective detail spotted Routh's rifle barrel protruding through the golf course fence line, ahead of where Trump was playing, authorities say. The agent fired in the direction of Routh, who sped away and was arrested in a neighboring county.

Routh did not fire any rounds and did not have Trump in his line of sight, officials have said. He left behind a digital camera, a backpack, a loaded SKS-style rifle with a scope

and a plastic bag containing food.

Prosecutors have said that he had written of his plans to kill Trump in a handwritten note months before his Sept. 15 arrest in which he referred to his actions as a failed "assassination attempt on Donald Trump" and offered \$150,000 for anyone who could "finish the job." That note was in a box that Routh had apparently dropped off at the home of an unidentified witness months before his arrest.

Monday's hearing was held before a magistrate judge. But further proceedings will be overseen by U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon, who was appointed to the bench by Trump and was also assigned to the

criminal case accusing the former president of illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

Cannon generated intense scrutiny for her handling of Trump's criminal case, which she dismissed in July — a decision now being appealed by special counsel Jack Smith's team.

Routh's arrest came two months after Trump was shot and wounded in the ear in an assassination attempt during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. The Secret Service has acknowledged failings leading up to that shooting but has said that security worked as it should have to thwart a potential attack in Florida.

Routh was initially charged in a criminal complaint only with gun offenses before prosecutors pursued additional charges before a grand jury. Prosecutors will often quickly bring the first easily provable charges they can and then add more serious charges later as the investigation unfolds.

Other charges he faces include illegally possessing his gun in spite of multiple felony convictions, including two charges of possessing stolen goods in 2002 in North Carolina. He's also accused of having a weapon with a serial number that was obliterated and unreadable to the naked eye, in violation of federal law.



## NATION

# White House holds to tough asylum limits

By **REBECCA SANTANA**  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration said Monday it is making asylum restrictions at the southern border even tougher, as it's increasingly eager to show voters uneasy over immigration that it is taking a hard stance on border security.

The new rules, which toughen restrictions announced in June, bar migrants from being granted asylum when U.S. officials deem that the southern border is overwhelmed.

Under the previous rules, the U.S. could restrict asylum access when the number of migrants trying to enter the country between the official border crossings hit 2,500 per day. The daily numbers had to average below 1,500 per day for a week in order for the restrictions to be lifted.

The version rolled out Monday says the daily numbers will have

to be below 1,500 for nearly a month before the restrictions can be lifted. And the administration is now counting all children toward that number, whereas previously only migrant children from Mexico were counted.

These changes, which go into effect on Tuesday, will make it much more difficult to lift the restrictions and allow people entering the country between the official border crossings eventually to apply for asylum in the U.S.

But the restrictions implemented in June have never been lifted because the numbers of border encounters have never gotten low enough for long enough, raising the question of why the administration felt the need to make them even tougher now. The seven-day average has gotten down to about 1,800 migrant encounters per day, the Department of Homeland Security said.

A senior administration official



JAE C. HONG/AP

**A vehicle drives along the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border wall in Nogales, Ariz., on June 25.**

said Monday that the longer timeline was necessary to make sure that drops in immigration are sustained and not due to a one-time event. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to brief reporters about the tighter restrictions before they were made public.

Immigration advocates had harshly criticized the restrictions announced in June, saying the administration was slashing away at vital protections for people fleeing persecution.

Many weighed in Monday, saying that by making the rules even tougher the administration was sending people back into danger and not living up to its humanitarian obligations.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association said the new rule is effectively an asylum ban and that the exceptions aren't as substantive as the administration has made them out to be. The group said at the current rates of border crossings the asylum restrictions would be in place indefinitely.

"It is imperative that our nation have safe, orderly, and efficient processes at the border that also ensure fair and humane treatment of asylum seekers. The consequences of denying asylum to someone who is being persecuted can literally be a matter of life or death," the organization's president, Kelli Stump, said.

The U.N. refugee agency said it had "profound concern" about the changes and that blocking asylum access violates international refugee law and "the humanitarian principles to which the United States has long been a leader."

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas pushed back on suggestions that the updated rules amounted to an asylum ban. He said there were exceptions built into the rule for people who qualify and pointed to other programs such as an online appointment app the U.S. has that allows people to come to the U.S. and seek asylum.

"We have not cut off our asylum system," the secretary said.

## Jimmy Carter and his hometown in Georgia honor him turning 100

By **BILL BARROW**  
**AND CHARLOTTE KRAMON**  
*Associated Press*

ATLANTA — Jimmy Carter reached his 100th birthday Tuesday, the first time an American president has lived a full century and the latest milestone in a life that took the son of a Depression-era farmer to the White House and across the world as a Nobel Peace Prize-winning humanitarian and advocate for democracy.

Living the last 19 months in home hospice care in Plains, the Georgia Democrat and 39th president has continued to defy expectations, just as he did through a remarkable rise from his family peanut farming and warehouse business to the world stage. He served one presidential term from 1977 to 1981 and then worked more than four decades leading The Carter Center, which he and his wife Rosalynn co-founded in 1982 to "wage peace, fight disease, and build hope."

"Not everybody gets 100 years on this earth, and when somebody

does, and when they use that time to do so much good for so many people, it's worth celebrating," Jason Carter, the former president's grandson and chair of The Carter Center governing board, said in an interview.

"These last few months, 19 months, now that he's been in hospice, it's been a chance for our family to reflect," he continued, "and then for the rest of the country and the world to really reflect on him. That's been a really gratifying time."

The former president was born Oct. 1, 1924, in Plains, where he has lived more than 80 of his 100 years. He is expected to mark his birthday in the same one-story home he and Rosalynn built in the early 1960s — before his first election to the Georgia state Senate. The former first lady, who was also born in Plains, died last November at 96.

At the White House, the front lawn is being decorated with a display of large lettering declaring "Happy Birthday President Car-



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

**Former President Jimmy Carter teaches Sunday School class at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., on Aug. 23, 2015.**

ter" and the number 100. Carter has asked President Joe Biden to eulogize him at his state funeral when the time comes. Biden was a young Delaware senator in 1976 and was the first sitting senator to endorse Carter's campaign.

The Carter Center on Sept. 17 hosted a musical gala in Atlanta to celebrate the former president with a range of genres and artists, including some who campaigned with him in 1976. The event raised more than \$1.2 million for the center's programs and will be broadcast Tuesday evening on Georgia Public Broadcasting.

## Prosecutors: Fake online pharmacies sold deadly counterfeit pills instead

*Associated Press*

A network of illegal drug sellers based in the U.S., the Dominican Republic and India packaged potentially deadly synthetic opioids into pills disguised as common prescription drugs and sold millions of them through fake online drugstores, federal prosecutors said Monday.

At least nine people died of narcotics poisoning between August 2023 and June 2024 after consuming the counterfeit pills, according to an indictment unsealed in federal court in Manhattan.

The indictment charges that the leader of the enterprise, Francisco Alberto Lopez Reyes, orchestrated the scheme from the Dominican Republic, directing co-conspirators to set up dozens of online pharmacies that mimicked legitimate e-commerce sites.

The sites lured customers into buying synthetic opioids — in some cases methamphetamine — disguised as prescription drugs such as Adderall, Xanax and oxycodone.

The counterfeit pills were sold

to tens of thousands of Americans in all 50 states and to customers in Puerto Rico, Germany and Slovenia, U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said at a news conference announcing the indictment.

"The websites the defendants made and the pills they distributed looked very real," he said. "But they were not."

Williams said 18 people including Lopez Reyes have been charged with crimes including participating in a narcotics trafficking conspiracy resulting in death.

It was not clear whether Lopez Reyes had a lawyer who could comment. No attorney was listed in online court records.

Authorities said the fake pills were manufactured in New York using fentanyl smuggled from Mexico.

Members of the enterprise ran basement pill mills in the Bronx and Manhattan, where they used custom molds to press powdered narcotics into pills at rates of up to 100,000 pills every 12 hours, prosecutors said.

## NATION

# Judge strikes down Georgia ban on abortions

BY KATE BRUMBACK  
AND JEFF AMY  
*Associated Press*

ATLANTA — A Georgia judge on Monday struck down the state's abortion law, which took effect in 2022 and effectively prohibited abortions beyond about six weeks of pregnancy.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney wrote in his order that the law violates Georgia's Constitution, finding that "liberty in Georgia includes in its meaning, in its protections, and in its bundle of rights the power of a woman to control her own body, to decide what happens to it and in it, and to reject state interference with her health care choices."

When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 and ended a national right to abortion, it opened the door for state bans.

Thirteen states now bar abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with some exceptions. Georgia was one of four where bans begin after about the first six weeks of pregnancy — often before women realize they're pregnant.

McBurney's ruling would allow abortions through at least 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Kara Murray, a spokesperson for Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr, said he would immediately appeal to the state supreme court. The state high court earlier reversed a separate ruling by McBurney that had struck down the law on different grounds and could put Monday's ruling on hold pending an appeal.

"We believe Georgia's life act is fully constitutional," Murray said.

The bans have been felt deeply in the South because many people live hundreds of miles from states

where abortion procedures can be obtained legally. If the Georgia ruling stands, it could open new avenues to access abortion not only in Georgia, but for people in nearby states.

Georgia's law was passed by state lawmakers and signed by Republican Gov. Brian Kemp in 2019 but it was initially blocked from taking effect until the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which had protected the right to an abortion for nearly 50 years.

Kemp has in the past tried to soften its political impact by trying to focus on the health of mothers. Monday, he attacked the ruling.

"Once again, the will of Georgians and their representatives has been overruled by the personal beliefs of one judge," Kemp said in a statement. "Protecting the lives of the most vulnerable among us is one of our most sacred responsibilities, and Georgia will continue to be a place where we fight for the lives of the unborn."

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, called the ruling "ridiculous."

"This judge is an activist judge who is ignoring higher court rulings to do what he wants," she said in an interview. "And I don't think it's going to stand."

Monica Simpson, executive director of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, celebrated the ruling.

"Since we've seen these direct attacks here in the South, in particular, on abortion access, we have been in a deep defensive posture for a really long time," she said. "It feels like our work has not been in vain."



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Dockworkers strike in front of an entrance to a container terminal near Boston Harbor, Tuesday in Boston.

## Dockworkers go on strike that could reignite inflation, cause shortages

BY TOM KRISHER  
AND TASSANEE VEJONGSA  
*Associated Press*

PHILADELPHIA — From Maine to Texas, dockworkers at 36 ports across the eastern U.S. are now on strike for the first time in decades. And the work stoppage could snarl supply chains — leading to shortages and higher prices if it stretches on for more than a few weeks.

Workers began walking picket lines early Tuesday in a strike over wages and automation, even though some progress had been reported in latest contract talks. The contract between the ports and about 45,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association expired at midnight.

The strike also comes just weeks before next month's tight presidential election, and could become a factor if there are shortages impacting voters.

In early picketing, workers outside the Port of Philadelphia walked in a circle and chanted "No work without a fair contract." The union, which is striking for the first time since 1977, had message

boards on the side of a truck reading: "Automation Hurts Families: ILA Stands For Job Protection."

Local ILA president Boise Butler said workers want a fair contract that doesn't allow automation of their jobs.

Shipping companies made billions during the pandemic by charging high prices, he said. "Now we want them to pay back. They're going to pay back," Butler said.

He said the union will strike for as long as it needs to get a fair deal, and it has leverage over the companies.

"This is not something that you start and you stop," he said. "We're not weak," he added, pointing to the union's importance to the nation's economy.

At Port Houston, at least 50 workers started picketing around midnight local time carrying signs saying "No Work Without a Fair Contract." The U.S. Maritime Alliance, which represents the ports, said Monday evening that both sides had moved off of their previous wage offers. But no deal was reached.

The union's opening offer in the talks was for a 77% pay raise over the six-year life of the contract, with President Harold Daggett saying it's necessary to make up for inflation and years of small raises. ILA members make a base salary of about \$81,000 per year, but some can pull in over \$200,000 annually with large amounts of overtime.

Monday evening, the alliance said it had increased its offer to 50% raises over six years, and it pledged to keep limits on automation in place from the old contract. The alliance also said its offer tripled employer contributions to retirement plans and strengthened health care options.

The union wants a complete ban on automation. It wasn't clear just how far apart both sides are.

In a statement early Tuesday, the union said it rejected the alliance's latest proposal because it "fell far short of what ILA rank-and-file members are demanding in wages and protections against automation." The two sides had not held formal negotiations since June.

## Biden greenlights \$567 million in additional military aid for Taiwan

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The White House has authorized more than a half-billion dollars in extra military assistance for Taiwan amid ongoing tensions with China over the future of the island democracy.

In a Monday memo, President Joe Biden delegated authority to Secretary of State Antony Blinken to draw "up to \$567 million in defense articles and services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training, to

provide assistance to Taiwan."

The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 requires the United States to provide Taiwan with weapons "of a defensive nature."

The latest aid is a significant upgrade from the \$345 million Biden announced in July 2023. That package included man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS, intelligence and surveillance capabilities, firearms and missiles.

It comes amid ongoing tension over Taiwan, which Chinese Pres-

ident Xi Jinping has vowed to reunify with the mainland, by force if necessary.

Beijing routinely sends military aircraft across the Taiwan Strait, forcing the island's military to scramble fighters to intercept the threat.

On Sept. 5 and 6, for example, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense reported 19 Chinese military aircraft, including fighters, drones and helicopters, approaching the island.

Meanwhile, the U.S. and its al-

lies routinely steam through the 110-mile-wide strait that separates Taiwan from the mainland. On Wednesday Japanese, Australian and New Zealand warships made such a transit.

Beijing views those passages as provocative and regularly condemns them as support for Taiwan. China does not consider the strait an international waterway.

Biden has said U.S. troops would defend Taiwan if China invaded, although walk-backs by his staff suggest a deliberate policy of

strategic ambiguity meant to deter conflict by leaving the possibility of U.S. intervention uncertain.

The latest aid package is higher than ever and authorizes Blinken to take weapons from U.S. stockpiles to assist the island, Ming-Shih Shen of Taipei's Institute for National Defense and Security Research told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

The aid won't impact arms sales to Taiwan and may boost Taiwan's military strength before Biden leaves office, Shen said.

## NATION

## Israel: Shelter in place orders sent to phones, announced on TV

## FROM PAGE 1

Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris monitored the attack on Israel from the White House Situation Room.

Israeli army spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said the country's air defense system was fully operational, detecting and intercepting threats. "However, the defense is not hermetic," he said.

Orders to shelter in place were sent to Israelis' mobile phones and announced on national television.

Iran took responsibility for launching dozens of ballistic missiles at Israel. The claim was made in a statement read aloud on state television.

In its statement, Iran referenced Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Revolutionary Guard Gen. Abbas Nilforushan, both killed in an Israeli airstrike last week in Beirut. It also mentioned Ismail Haniyeh, a top leader in Hamas who was assassinated in Tehran in a suspected Israeli attack in July. It warned this attack represented only a "first wave," without elaborating.

The air raid alerts in Israel came a day after Israel said it had begun limited ground operations against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire pounded southern Lebanese villages where people were ordered to evacuate, and Hezbollah militants responded by firing a barrage of rockets into Israel. There was no immediate word on casualties as fighting intensified and concerns of a wider regional war grew.

A senior White House official warned of "severe consequences" should Iran launch a ballistic missile against Israel. U.S. ships and aircraft are positioned in the region to assist Israel in the event of an attack from Iran. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence.

Hagari also warned of consequences if Iran fired missiles into Israel.

He urged the public to stay close to sheltered areas. "The Iranian strike could be widespread," he said.

Iranian officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

Iran launched an unprecedented direct attack on Israel in April, but few of its projectiles reached their targets. Many were shot down by a U.S.-led coalition, while others apparently failed at launch or crashed in flight.

While Hezbollah denied Israeli troops had entered Lebanon, the Israeli army announced it had also carried out dozens of ground raids into southern Lebanon going back nearly a year. Israel released video footage purporting to show its soldiers operating in homes and tunnels where Hezbollah kept



HASSAN AMMAR/AP

Firefighters extinguish a fire in a building that was hit during an Israeli airstrike in Bir Hassan, Beirut, Lebanon, on Tuesday.



OHAD ZWIGENBERG/AP

Police officers take cover as a siren sounds a warning of incoming rockets fired from Lebanon, in central Israel, on Tuesday.

weapons.

If true, it would be another humiliating blow for Iran-backed Hezbollah, the most powerful armed group in the Middle East. Hezbollah has been reeling from weeks of targeted strikes that killed its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and several of his top commanders.

On Tuesday morning, Israel warned people to evacuate to the north of the Awali River, some 36 miles from the border and much farther than the Litani River, which marks the northern edge of a U.N.-declared zone intended to serve as a buffer between Israel and Hezbollah after their 2006 war.

The border region has largely emptied out over the past year as the two sides have traded fire. But the scope of the evacuation warn-

ing raised questions as to how deep Israel plans to send its forces into Lebanon.

An Israeli airstrike hit a residential building near Beirut Tuesday, causing damage but with no immediate reports of casualties. The strike appeared to hit an apartment about 100 meters from the Iranian Embassy.

Anticipating more rocket attacks from Hezbollah, the Israeli army announced new restrictions on public gatherings and closed beaches in northern and central Israel. The military also said it was calling up thousands more reserve soldiers to serve on the northern border.

An Associated Press reporter saw Israeli troops operating near the border in armored trucks, with helicopters circling overhead, but could not confirm ground forces

had crossed into Lebanon.

Ahead of the Israeli announcement of an incursion, U.S. officials on Monday said Israel had described launching small ground raids inside Lebanon as it prepared for a wider operation.

Neither the Lebanese army nor a U.N. peacekeeping force that patrols southern Lebanon have confirmed that Israeli forces entered. The U.N. force said a cross-border operation would be a violation of Lebanese sovereignty.

Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif dismissed what he said were "false claims" of an Israeli incursion. He said Hezbollah is ready for "direct confrontation with enemy forces that dare to or try to enter Lebanon."

Hagari claimed troops were conducting "localized ground raids" on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon to ensure Israeli citizens could return to their homes in the north.

"We're not going to Beirut," he said.

Israel has said it will continue to strike Hezbollah until it is safe for citizens to return. Hezbollah has promised to keep firing rockets into Israel until there is a cease-fire in Gaza.

He said Israel had carried out dozens of small raids inside Lebanon since Oct. 8, when Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel after the outbreak of the war in Gaza.

Hagari said Israeli forces had crossed the border to collect information and destroy Hezbollah infrastructure, including tunnels

and weapons. Israel has said Hezbollah was preparing its own Oct. 7-style attack into Israel. It was not immediately possible to confirm those claims.

An Israeli military official said troops participating in the latest incursion were within walking distance of the border, focused on villages hundreds of yards from Israel. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with military regulations, said there had been no clashes with Hezbollah fighters.

The Israeli military was accused of lying to media in 2021 when it released a statement implying ground troops had entered Gaza. The military played down the incident as a misunderstanding, but well-sourced military commentators in Israel said it was part of a ruse to lure Hamas into battle.

The Israeli military official said Hezbollah had launched rockets at central Israel, setting off air raid sirens and wounding a man. Hezbollah said it fired salvos of a new kind of medium-range missile at the headquarters of two Israeli intelligence agencies near Tel Aviv.

The Israeli military official said Hezbollah had also launched projectiles at Israeli communities near the border, targeting soldiers without wounding anyone.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel shortly after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into Israel ignited the war in Gaza. Israel has launched retaliatory airstrikes and the conflict has steadily escalated. In recent weeks Israel has unleashed a punishing wave of airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon.

Hagari said the U.N. Security Council resolution that ended the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war had not been enforced and that southern Lebanon was "swarming with Hezbollah terrorists and weapons."

That resolution called for Hezbollah to withdraw from the area between the border and the Litani River and for the Lebanese army and U.N. peacekeepers to patrol the region. Israel says those and other provisions were never enforced. Lebanon has long accused Israel of violating other terms of the resolution.

The military statements indicated Israel might focus its ground operation on the narrow strip along the border, rather than launching a larger invasion aimed at destroying Hezbollah, as it has attempted in Gaza against Hamas.

Hezbollah and Hamas are close allies backed by Iran, and each escalation has raised fears of a wider war in the Middle East that could draw in Iran and the United States, which has rushed military assets to the region in support of Israel.

## WORLD



SAKCHAI LALIT/AP

A rescuer inspects a bus that caught fire, carrying young students with their teachers, in suburban Bangkok, on Tuesday.

## School bus catches fire outside Bangkok

Associated Press

BANGKOK — A bus carrying young students with their teachers caught fire in suburban Bangkok on Tuesday, with more than 20 of those on board feared dead, officials and rescuers said.

The bus was carrying 44 passengers from central Uthai Thani province for a school trip in Ayutthaya and Nonthaburi provinces, Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungruengkit told reporters at the scene.

Videos posted on social media showed the entire bus engulfed in fire with huge plumes of black smoke pouring out as it stood on the side of the road. Bodies were still inside the bus hours after the fire.

The students on the bus were reported to be in elementary and junior high school.

Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said officials could not yet confirm the number of fatalities because they had not finished investigating the scene. He said the driver survived but appeared to

have fled and could not yet be found.

Anutin had earlier said 25 were feared dead, but Piyalak Thinkaew, a rescuer of the Ruamkanyu Foundation told reporters later that two more survivors had been found, reducing the number of those still missing to 23 — three teachers and 20 students.

Rescuers and officials were able to access the bus hours after the fire was put out. Piyalak said they were still unable to identify the bodies, most of which were found in the middle and back seats, leading them to assume that the fire started at the front of the bus.

Thai media reports and rescuers said the bus was heading to Nonthaburi when the fire started around noon in Pathum Thani province, a northern suburb of the capital.

A rescuer at the scene told Suriya that the fire likely started after one of the tires exploded and the vehicle scraped against a road barrier.

## Japan's new premier vows to push strong defense under US alliance

Associated Press

TOKYO — The newly elected Japanese prime minister pledged Tuesday night to stick to the vital Japan-U.S. alliance amid growing tension in the region while calling for it to be more equitable. This comes as the new premier tries to boost a slow economy and regain public trust ahead of a national election later this month.

Shigeru Ishiba was chosen as head of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party last week, a ticket to the top job as his party's coalition controls parliament. He replaced Fumio Kishida, who stepped down earlier Tuesday to pave the way for a fresh leader after scandals dogged his government.

The new prime minister — who was always viewed as an outsider by his party — immediately formed his Cabinet with a strong emphasis on defense and several security experts onboard. With only a couple of female ministers, the majority, including Ishiba, are unaffiliated with factions led and controlled by party heavyweights.

Speaking to reporters at the prime minister's office for the first time following a palace ceremony, Ishiba called for stronger military cooperation with like-minded partners. He has been vocal about his wish to form a NATO-like alliance in the region.

He said that one of his policy's main goals was “to protect Japan”

as “the security environment surrounding us is the toughest since the end of World War II,” adding he will adhere to the Japan-U.S. alliance as “the lynchpin” in bolstering his country's defense and diplomacy.

Ishiba renewed his proposal of a more equal Japan-U.S. security alliance, including joint management of U.S. bases in Japan and having Japanese Self-Defense Force bases in the United States, which would require a revision of the bilateral status of forces agreement, a move seen as a big challenge. He said he hadn't assigned the matter to his Cabinet as an urgent task. “But I will not give up and will steadily work on it.”

## Assange: Pleaded 'guilty to journalism' for freedom

Associated Press

STRASBOURG, France — WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said Tuesday that he was freed after years of incarceration because he “pled guilty to journalism.”

Assange gave evidence of the impact of his detention and conviction to the legal affairs and human rights committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. The Parliamentary Assembly includes lawmakers from 46 European countries.

A group of supporters, holding a banner that said “Thank you, Julian” greeted Assange as he stepped out of a van smiling and raising his fist in defiance along with his wife, Stella, and WikiLeaks editor-in-chief, Kristinn

Hrafnsson.

“Assange is free! We are here. The world is with you,” one supporter shouted before Assange entered the Council of Europe building for his first public address since his release from prison in June.

“I am not free today because the system worked,” Assange said. “I am free today after years of incarceration because I pled guilty to journalism.”

He added: “I pled guilty to seeking information from a source. I pled guilty to obtaining information from a source. And I pled guilty to informing the public what that information was.”

Assange was released in June after five years in a British prison after he pleaded guilty to obtain-



PASCAL BASTIEN/AP

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange raises his arms as he arrives at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, eastern France, on Tuesday.

ing and publishing U.S. military secrets in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that concluded a drawn-out legal saga.

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STARS AND STRIPES

# WORLD

## Likely Russian strike hits market in southern Ukraine

*Associated Press*  
 KYIV, Ukraine — An apparent Russian artillery strike hit a market in the southern Ukraine city of Kherson on Tuesday, killing at least six people and wounding three others, authorities said, on a morning when Ukrainians across the country were observing a minute's silence for their military and war dead.

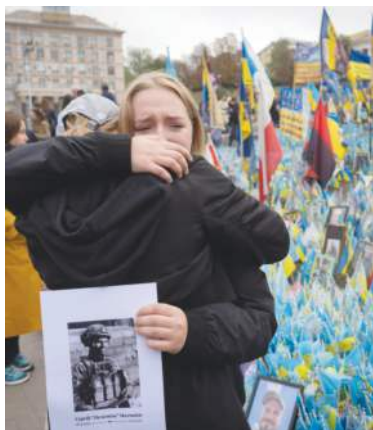
The strike happened as shoppers made their way between stalls at the city center market, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said.

He published a video showing the blurred corpses of people in civilian

clothes lying near a stall with tomatoes and other vegetables.

Ukraine's General Prosecutor's Office said the strike was "most likely" carried out by Russian artillery and hit near a public transport stop.

The attack came on the same morning as Ukraine celebrated Defenders' Day, an annual public holiday that honors the country's armed forces, veterans and war dead. Across Ukraine, traffic stopped and pedestrians came to a halt at 9 a.m. to commemorate those defending Ukraine and those who have sacrificed their lives for the country.



EFREM LUKATSKY/AP

People react during a nationwide minute of silence in memory of fallen soldiers on Defenders' Day in Independence Square in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday.

## Mexico to swear in 1st female president

By **MARÍA VERZA,**  
**MEGAN JANETSKY**  
 AND **MARK STEVENSON**  
*Associated Press*

MEXICO CITY — Claudia Sheinbaum will take the oath of office Tuesday as Mexico's first female president in more than 200 years of independence, promising to protect an expanded social safety net and fight for the poor like her predecessor, but facing pressing problems.

The 62-year-old scientist-turned-politician will receive a country with a number of immediate challenges, foremost among them stubbornly high levels of violence, a sluggish economy and hurricane-battered Acapulco.

Sheinbaum romped to victory in June with nearly 60% of the vote, propelled largely by the sustained popularity of her political mentor, former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

He took office six years ago declaring "For the good of all, first the

poor," and promising historical change from the neoliberal economic policies of his predecessors. Sheinbaum promised continuity from his popular social policies to controversial constitutional reforms to the judiciary and National Guard rammed through during his final days in office.

Despite her pledge of continuity, she is a very different personality.

"López Obrador was a tremendously charismatic president and many times that charisma allowed him to cover up some political errors that Claudia Sheinbaum will not have that possibility of doing," said Carlos Pérez Ricart, a political analyst at Mexico's Center for Economic Research and Teaching. "So, where López Obrador was charismatic, Claudia Sheinbaum will have to be effective."

He is not leaving her an easy situation.

Her first trip as president will be to the flood-stricken Pacific coast resort of Acapulco.

## Inflation falls in Europe, could speed rate cuts

*Associated Press*  
 FRANKFURT, Germany — Inflation in the 20 countries that use the euro fell to 1.8% in September, below the European Central Bank's target of 2% for the first time in more than three years as falling energy prices give consumers relief from a burst of inflation that at one point reached into

double digits. Tuesday's official figure coupled with an anemic growth outlook could pave the way for faster interest rate cuts from the ECB, which has already trimmed rates twice.

Inflation fell from 2.2% in August, according to European Union statistics agency Eurostat.

The last time inflation hit the ECB's 2% goal was in June 2021 when it was 1.9%.

Economists have started to consider the possibility of a rate cut at the bank's Oct. 17 meeting. A few weeks ago, the expectations were that the central bank would wait until December before lowering borrowing costs again.

# STARS AND STRIPES

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The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market




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# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Man who shot 2 outside synagogues gets 35 years

**CA** LOS ANGELES — A California man charged with shooting and wounding two Jewish men as they left synagogues in Los Angeles last year was sentenced Monday to 35 years in prison, federal prosecutors said.

The February 2023 shootings raised fears among the city's Jewish community after officials said the victims were targeted because they wore clothing that identified their faith, including black coats and head coverings. Both men survived.

Jaime Tran, 30, pleaded guilty in June to two counts of hate crimes with intent to kill and two counts of discharging a firearm during a crime of violence, the U.S. Attorney's Office said in a statement. Tran told law enforcement that he looked online for a "kosher market" and decided to shoot someone nearby, according to an FBI affidavit.

Tran had a "history of antisemitic and threatening conduct," the affidavit said, citing a review of emails, text messages and unspecified reports.



MARK VANCLEAVE/AP

## Shelter-in-place lifted for over 90K after chemical fire

**GA** CONYERS — Authorities on Monday night ended a shelter-in-place order for more than 90,000 people east of Atlanta following a weekend chemical plant fire that sent a massive plume of dark smoke into the Georgia sky and led to complaints about a strong chemical smell and haze.

The smell had spread to Atlanta by Monday, prompting firefighters to use detectors to check the air quality in various parts of the city, Mayor Andre Dickens said.

The Rockdale County Emergency Management Agency lifted the shelter-in-place order and the evacuation zone after Environmental Protection Agency readings for the area showed things were safe. It said businesses could operate as normal on Tuesday.

Closer to the source of the fire, officials said chlorine, a harmful irritant, had been detected in the air from the fire at the BioLab plant in Conyers, Ga., the Rockdale County government said in a statement Monday. The plant is about 25 miles southeast of downtown Atlanta.

## WeightWatchers CEO abruptly leaves role

**NY** NEW YORK — WW International announced Friday that CEO Sima Sistani would leave her role effective immediately. Tara Comonte, a WeightWatchers board member and former Shake Shack executive, was made interim chief executive.

The New York-based weight loss company didn't reveal the motivations behind the abrupt decision, but it noted that Comonte would step into the role of CEO at a time when the company is "focused on improving its operational and fi-

## House fit for a Prince

Costumes from Prince's performances, various Prince memorabilia and other 1980s-themed accessories await guests at the newly-renovated Purple Rain House listed on Airbnb in Minneapolis.

ancial performance."

WeightWatchers, which was founded more than 60 years ago, has struggled some recently. Its latest earnings reports showed slipping profits and costs racked up from restructuring efforts. Its stock has also plummeted over time. WW shares are down more than 90% over the last year; now trading as a penny stock, they closed at about 83 cents on Friday.

Sistani joined WeightWatchers as CEO more than two years ago. During her tenure, she led the company's recent moves into the prescription drug weight loss business — particularly with the \$106 million acquisition of Sequence, now WeightWatchers Clinic, a telehealth service that helps users get prescriptions for drugs like Ozempic, Wegovy and Trulicity.

## Registered voter denied ballot settles for \$20K

**MI** HOLTON TOWNSHIP — A community in western Michigan has agreed to a \$20,000 settlement in a lawsuit by a woman who was turned away from her polling place in 2022 despite registering online to vote, her attorneys said Monday.

Ashleigh Smith made many trips to her polling place in Muskegon County but was told that her address wasn't turning up in an electronic roster of voters and that she wouldn't be given a ballot Nov. 8, 2022.

By the evening, Holton Township Clerk Jill Colwell-Coburn told Smith "she was sorry but that there was nothing more she could do," the lawsuit alleged.

Smith said she had a voter registration receipt and a sticker to put on her driver's license to show her new address. Her attorneys said she could have been given a provisional ballot, which would have given local officials a few days to try to clear up the problem.

## Financial adviser indicted in tax shelter arrangement

**MS** GULFPORT — A Florida financial adviser has been indicted in an alleged scheme to promote and operate an illegal tax shelter through which he stole some of his clients' funds, federal prosecutors said Friday.

Stephen T. Mellinger III, of Delray Beach, Fla., conspired with several others to defraud the Internal Revenue Service in 2013 by promoting an illegal tax shelter, according to the indictment returned Wednesday by a federal grand jury in Gulfport, Miss., and unsealed Thursday.

Mellinger was charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States, aiding in the preparation of false tax returns, conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering and money laundering. If convicted of all charges, he could be sentenced to up to 68 years behind bars.

## Movie armorer conviction upheld in 'Rust' shooting

**NM** SANTA FE — A New Mexico judge Monday upheld an involuntary manslaughter conviction against a movie armorer in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer by Alec Baldwin on

the set of the Western film "Rust."

Armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed asked a court to dismiss her conviction or convene a new trial, alleging that prosecutors failed to share evidence that could have cleared her.

Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer in her written order noted that the armorer's attorneys did not establish that there was a reasonable possibility that the outcome of the trial would have been different had the evidence been available to Gutierrez-Reed.

The judge also rejected a request from Gutierrez-Reed that she be released from custody, saying it was moot because the request for a new trial was denied.

## Professor suspended one year for comments on race

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — The University of Pennsylvania law school said it is imposing a one-year suspension at half-pay and other sanctions along with a public reprimand on a tenured professor over her comments about race in recent years.

The university said Professor Amy Wax — who has questioned the academic performance of Black students, invited a white nationalist to speak to her class and suggested the country would be better off with less Asian immigration — will also lose her named chair and summer pay in perpetuity and must note in public appearances that she speaks for herself, not as a university or law school member. The university has not, however, fired her or stripped her of tenure.

Wax told the New York Sun after

the announcement that she intends to stay at the school as a "conservative presence on campus." She called allegations of mistreatment of students "totally bogus and made up" and said her treatment amounted to "performance art" highlighting that the administration "doesn't want conservatives like me on campus."

## Women get \$300M after alleged doctor sex abuse

**VA** RICHMOND — A jury has ruled in favor of three women who alleged they were sexually abused while patients at a Virginia children's hospital, awarding them a total of \$300 million in damages.

The jury in Richmond Circuit Court on Friday awarded each woman \$60 million in compensatory damages and \$40 million in punitive damages, WTVR-TV reported.

A total of 46 former patients sued the Cumberland Hospital for Children and Adolescents in New Kent, which treats vulnerable children, and Dr. Daniel Davidow, the hospital's longtime medical director. In this first trial, the three former patients alleged that Davidow inappropriately touched them during femoral pulse exams.

Davidow's attorney, Bob Donnelly, told the jury during opening statements that Davidow "unequivocally denies" the sexual assault allegations. Donnelly said the femoral pulse exam conducted by Davidow dates back to the 1960s and 1970s and is a "standard examination."

From The Associated Press

## FACES

# ‘Perfect Couple’ stars raise profiles

Meghann Fahy and Eve Hewson’s ‘overnight success’ has been more than a decade in the making

By ALICIA RANCILIO  
Associated Press

**M**eghann Fahy and Eve Hewson, two of the stars of Netflix’s whodunit “The Perfect Couple,” have news for you if you want to call them breakouts: They’ve been working in this business for more than a decade.

Fahy made her TV debut in 2009 in an episode of “Gossip Girl.” Hewson’s first big film role was in 2011’s “This Must Be the Place.” They do concede that it’s recent TV roles — “The White Lotus” for Fahy and “Bad Sisters” for Hewson — that have led to new frontiers of opportunity.

Susanne Bier, who directed “The Perfect Couple,” says Fahy and Hewson are “going to be big stars.”

“They certainly have proper, profound star quality, both of them in very different ways,” Bier says. “Both are incredibly creative, incredibly smart, and also have a impressive insight as to who they are. You can be a great actor or actress and not necessarily really know who you are yourself. And they do.”

Hewson, 33, whose dad is U2 frontman Bono, may have grown up in a famous family but she’s now in demand in her own right. She will next be seen in Season 2 of “Bad Sisters” in November. She’s in Noah Baumbach’s next film, with Adam Sandler, George Clooney and Riley Keough. She’s also been cast in Steven Spielberg’s next production and will star opposite Murray Bartlett in a racing series for Hulu.

Fahy, 34, is in production on a limited series with Julianne Moore and Milly Alcock called “Sirens,” written by Molly Smith Metzler (“Maid”) for Netflix. She also has two films in the can with Josh O’Connor (“The Crown,” “Challengers”) and Bran-



JAE C. HONG/AP

**Meghann Fahy, left, and Eve Hewson pose for a portrait to promote the miniseries “The Perfect Couple” on Sept. 4 in Los Angeles. The show is streaming on Netflix.**

don Sklenar (“It Ends With Us”).

The actors spoke candidly with The Associated Press about this phase of their careers. This interview has been condensed for clarity and brevity.

**AP: You’ve both had popular, zeitgeisty TV shows in recent years. TV fans are particularly passionate. Have you experienced any interesting interactions with fans?**

**Hewson:** It’s actually really fun to experience because even when we were in Cape Cod shooting “The Perfect Couple,” I would

go to the local shop to get my groceries and little old ladies would follow me down the aisle and be like, “Excuse me. Are you that girl from that ‘Sisters’ show?” Who knew that they were watching it? It doesn’t change my life, so it doesn’t bother me, but when someone comes up to me and says that they love the show, especially when it’s someone unexpected, I’m like, “Oh, cool.”

**Fahy:** It’s not happening so much to me that it feels like a huge imposition or anything. I feel like I’ve been really lucky. A lot of the people that I’ve met who have been a

fan of “The White Lotus,” or whatever, they’re really sweet people. And, I think, part of why we do this is because we want to tell stories that people can connect to and play out scenarios for themselves. So I think it’s always really nice.

**What’s it like to now be a part of conversations about whom to watch?**

**Fahy:** Part of it feels really nice because you work really, really, really hard for a really long time — maybe that’s not how it happens for a lot of people — but I feel like we’ve both been doing this for a minute. So, of course, it feels really good. But I try not to, like, dwell on any of it. I try to acknowledge it and be like, “Oh, that’s so nice.” And then just kind of keep going.

**Hewson:** You hear so many stories of people who were like, “I walked into my first audition and I just became a star.” Or, there’s this element of being an actor where people don’t want to tell you how hard they work. They want it to look like it’s really easy. But we’ve been doing this for a long time. People just don’t really tell those stories. It’s usually about the one that was found on the street.

**Fahy:** Yeah. You took 15 years to become an overnight success.

**Do you notice you’re now treated differently by people in the industry?**

**Fahy:** Yeah, but I always think that nobody ever knows who I am. It’s always very embarrassing. I embarrass myself in those moments. I don’t always feel like I fit in those rooms.

**Hewson:** What’s nice is, I’ve spent so long going into a room and people just being like, “OK,” and act like they’re just not getting it. I know at least like I have work that people understand, what I’m doing a little bit more so they get me as an actor.

**Fahy:** It’s like a different level of respect.

## New this week: Coldplay, an unhinged Charlie Puth, ‘Salem’s Lot’

Associated Press

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

### Movies

■ As if being a mother in the 1930s Dust Bowl wasn’t stressful enough, Sarah Paulson and her children are living in fear of a sinister presence in “Hold Your Breath.” Coming to Hulu on Thursday, this psychological thriller from Karrie Crouse and Will Joines co-stars “The Bear’s” Ebon Moss-Bachrach as a mysterious character who arrives at their home amid worries over a murderous drifter at large. On top of all of this, her daughter becomes obsessed with a storybook fable about The Grey Man, who comes into people’s homes as if made of dust and, when breathed in, turns his victims into villains.

■ Speaking of “The Bear,” the new Blumhouse film “House of Spoils” leans into the horror element of opening a restaurant (albeit on a remote estate with a haunting presence, two things Carmy has yet to deal with). Oscar-winning “West Side Sto-

ry” actor Ariana DeBose plays the ambitious chef at the center of Bridget Savage Cole and Danielle Krudy’s film, which also features Barbie Ferreira (“Euphoria”) and Arian Moayed (“Succession”). “House of Spoils” arrives Thursday on Prime Video.

■ Writer-director Gary Dauberman adapts Stephen King’s “Salem’s Lot” in a new film coming to Max on Thursday. Lewis Pullman, of “Top Gun: Maverick,” stars as a man who comes back to his small Maine town to try to finish his book, but unfortunately that town is being terrorized by a vampire. It’s so far divided critics, but the author seems pleased. In February, King wrote on X that, “I’ve seen the new SALEM’S LOT and it’s quite good. Old-school horror filmmaking: slow build, big payoff.”

■ Netflix also has the Sundance breakout “It’s What’s Inside,” coming Friday, in which a reunion of college friends turns into a nightmare with the arrival of a suitcase and a strange game.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

### Music

■ There’s nothing worse than a self-serious pop star, and thankfully, Charlie Puth

appears to know that more than most. In a new Roku channel mockumentary titled “The Charlie Puth Show,” the “See You Again” singer stars as a fictionalized version of, well. Expect A-list cameos, too, for this parodic take on the cultural zeitgeist.

■ Coldplay’s expansive alt-contemporary rock fills stadiums around the world; on record, they turn a simple sing-along phrase into a soaring mantra. The repetitive “la la la” on “feelslikeimfallinginlove” is evidence enough, or the chorus on the stuffed “WE PRAY,” which features Little Simz, Burna Boy, Elyanna and TINI. Both appear on the band’s 10th studio album, “Moon Music.” They’ve cornered the market on Earth; where else would they head?

■ Finneas, the second-youngest person to win two Oscars (just behind his sister and principal collaborator, Billie Eilish), is gearing up to release his second solo album, “For Cryin’ Out Loud!” Most are likely familiar with his production work, less so his own ambitious material — luckily, it’s not too late to dive into the dreamy pop-rock of “Cleats,” or the funky, frustrated title track, “For Cryin’ Out Loud!”

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

### Television

■ Season 2 of NBC’s hit series “Found,” starring Shanola Hampton, kicks off Thursday. Hampton plays Gabi Mosely, a woman who survived kidnapping and a lengthy imprisonment as a teen. She now runs a firm that specializes in finding missing people — particularly Black and brown people who normally don’t get the media coverage that a missing white person receives. In the first season, Mosely harbored a big secret that she had taken her former kidnapper (Mark-Paul Gosselaar) captive and was keeping him in her basement. In this season, he’s escaped. Episodes also stream on Peacock.

■ Movie and television studios love a franchise where they can make sequels and bank on dollars at the box office a la “Deadpool & Wolverine.” The new comedy series “The Franchise” follows the behind-the-scenes mayhem of filming a movie in an unpopular franchise. It stars Himesh Patel, Aya Cash, Billy Magnussen, Richard E. Grant and Daniel Brühl. The series premieres Sunday on HBO and streams on Max.

— Alicia Rancilio

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## OPINION

## Who will follow Amazon back into the office?

BY HEATHER LONG

*The Washington Post*

Amazon chief executive Andy Jassy just became the latest high-profile boss to insist that workers in the head office return to their desks five days a week, most weeks (with exceptions for problems at home, work travel and the occasional need to work with zero distractions). (Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns *The Washington Post*.) The announcement sparked shock and outrage among many Amazon employees — and a wider fear that this could herald a rethink of remote work at other companies. In reality, it does signal a turning point for American workers.

The best job market of many people's lifetime is over. Going forward, workers and job seekers will have less bargaining power in most industries, and this will affect their pay and perks. But it doesn't mean that there will be a rush to follow Amazon's lead. Five-day mandates run the risk of backfiring, because star workers will be given an excuse to look for new jobs.

Jassy believes that getting workers back together full time is necessary to maintain office culture and enhance productivity. Research on working from home shows that the jury is still out. Mark Ma, an associate professor of business administration at the University of Pittsburgh, has studied this issue extensively. He told me, "Five days a week in the office is unnecessary for productivity."

It's true that fully remote work — where an employee isn't coming into the office at all — has mixed results. Some studies find that working from home all the time is less productive, but much of this research was conducted during the pandemic, when parents had children at home distracting them. Other studies, including one that tracked call center workers pre-pandemic, have found that fully remote workers are 13% more productive.

In any case, the ideal scenario for most "office jobs" is a hybrid approach that allows workers to be at home on some days and in the office on others. Hybrid work has not been found to impair productivity. Many workers are able to get more done on days they are at home because they don't waste an hour or more commuting. It's also worth pointing out that return-to-office mandates have not been found to boost a company's financial performance.

There is one thing that five-day mandates typically accomplish: They make workers angry enough to leave. "If you need a bunch of people to quit, this is what you do," said Jose Maria Barrero, an assistant professor at Mexico Autonomous Institute of Technology's business school and one of the leading experts at WFH Research. Often, it is the most talented workers who leave, because they can easily find jobs elsewhere.

For now, Amazon is in the minority. Only a handful of companies — including Boeing, UPS, Chase and Tesla — have attempted fully in-office policies for corporate workers. The vast majority of Fortune 100 companies have hybrid work arrangements. In August, 27.5% of work days in the United States were done remotely, which amounts to one or two days a week at home. This percentage has stayed roughly the same for the past two years, suggesting that hybrid work has become the new normal. The reason is simple: It's a great recruitment and retention tool.

Workers love having flexibility. The ability to work from home has enabled them to exercise more, spend more time with their kids and do more laundry. They are using the time they would have spent commuting on leisure pursuits, which makes for happier, more loyal employees. On employment websites, a sizable share of job seekers start by looking exclusively for remote or hybrid, said Nick Bunker, research director at Indeed Hiring Lab.

The experts I spoke with agreed on one sensible recommendation for CEOs: Embrace hybrid work and let managers decide which days the whole team should be in the office. What frustrates employees is when they trek into the office only to sit at a computer when they could have done the same at home. People want to come in for meetings, special collaborations and networking. The research on hybrid working underscores how important it is to use people's time wisely.

New Starbucks CEO Brian Niccol is a good barometer of what top bosses are saying — and doing — about work arrangements. "We're all adults here," Niccol told employees last month, according to Bloomberg. "You need to figure out where you need to be to get your job done, then do that." Starbucks has a three-day in office requirement and Niccol is allowed to work remotely if he wants.

Still, the leverage in the employer-employee relationship is clearly shifting. In the hot job market of 2022 and 2023, applicants had the upper hand. Companies aggressively raised pay and offered more flexibility, whether it was hybrid arrangements or the option to work part time. This helped draw people back into the labor market, especially mothers, and there's real concern that women might feel they have to quit if they lose all flexibility. The hiring rate has fallen to its lowest level since 2014 (the tech sector was one of the first to pull back on hiring), and companies are already dropping pay for some positions.

With this recalibration, raises and bonuses are likely to get skimpier. But as long as Nvidia — the hottest company on the planet — keeps allowing workers to be fully remote, other companies will struggle to move entirely in the opposite direction.

Heather Long is a Washington Post columnist. She was U.S. economics correspondent from 2017 to 2021 and a member of the editorial board from 2021 to 2024.

## Logical to take Trump both seriously and literally

BY JOHN M. CRISP

*Tribune News Service*

Salena Zito, writing for *The Atlantic* in September 2016, may have been the first to describe, in a triumph of pithy efficiency, why Donald Trump is able to survive and thrive despite provocative statements that would endanger the career of nearly any other politician: "When he makes claims like this, the press takes him literally, but not seriously; his supporters take him seriously, but not literally."

I thought of this expression last week when Trump, speaking at a rally in Pennsylvania, made a stunningly provocative statement that is easily unnoticed in a forest of many others. Trump said it should be illegal for citizens to criticize the Supreme Court: "These people should be put in jail the way they talk about our judges and justices, trying to get them to sway their vote, sway their decision."

Should we take this statement seriously or literally?

A MAGA acquaintance told me not to take this statement "seriously." He also may have meant not to take it "literally," either. In other words, Trump doesn't seriously or literally intend to throw citizens in jail for criticism of the court, which would be a clear violation of the First Amendment.

According to this way of thinking, Trump's threat of jail time for critics is rhetorical, similar to saying that critics of the court should be

hung up by their toes or given 50 lashes with a horsewhip. After all, this threat echoes the familiar rallying cry of the 2016 campaign, "Lock her up," and nothing came of that.

In other words, nothing to worry about.

Still, one of the things that Trump supporters say that they like about him is that he says what he means and means what he says, which, if true, should give pause to anyone who opposes him in light of his social media post last month: "Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country."

In fact, on Sept. 21, *The New York Times* published a lengthy report by Michael Schmidt on Trump's efforts while in office to initiate investigations and prosecutions against political rivals and others he saw as threats. Sure, it was in the *Times*, but this isn't a left-wing fabrication. Schmidt's reporting is based on documents, court filings and interviews, often with people who were appointed by and close to Trump.

For example, according to witnesses, in spring of 2018 Trump, dissatisfied with Attorney General Jeff Sessions, threatened to personally prosecute Hillary Clinton, John Kerry and former FBI Director James Comey, startling his aides and provoking his White House counsel, Donald McGahn, to produce a memo advising Trump of how outside the customary bounds of the Justice Department, and possi-

bly the law, such an action would be. In fact, McGahn and other aides memorialized their warnings to protect themselves should Trump take the actions that they were strongly advising against.

As it happens, little came of Trump's threats. But a second Trump term would be different. He's unlikely to employ a White House counsel like McGahn or a chief of staff like John Kelly, who both worked hard to stall and restrain actions by Trump that would have violated important democratic norms or legal boundaries.

Further, Trump probably feels entitled to payback due to his evidence-free contention that he's been the victim of "lawfare" waged by the Biden administration. Some "lawfare." The Department of Justice has been in Democratic hands for four years, and Trump has yet to be held accountable for attempting to overturn an election, inciting an insurrection, and retaining and hiding classified documents.

Trump is known for being transactional, but he's also transgressive. The norms, and even the laws, that prevent officials from prosecuting their perceived enemies mean little to him.

Thus, when he says that, in a second term, critics who speak out against the Supreme Court should be thrown into jail, it would be extremely naive to fail to take him both seriously and literally.

John M. Crisp is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service.



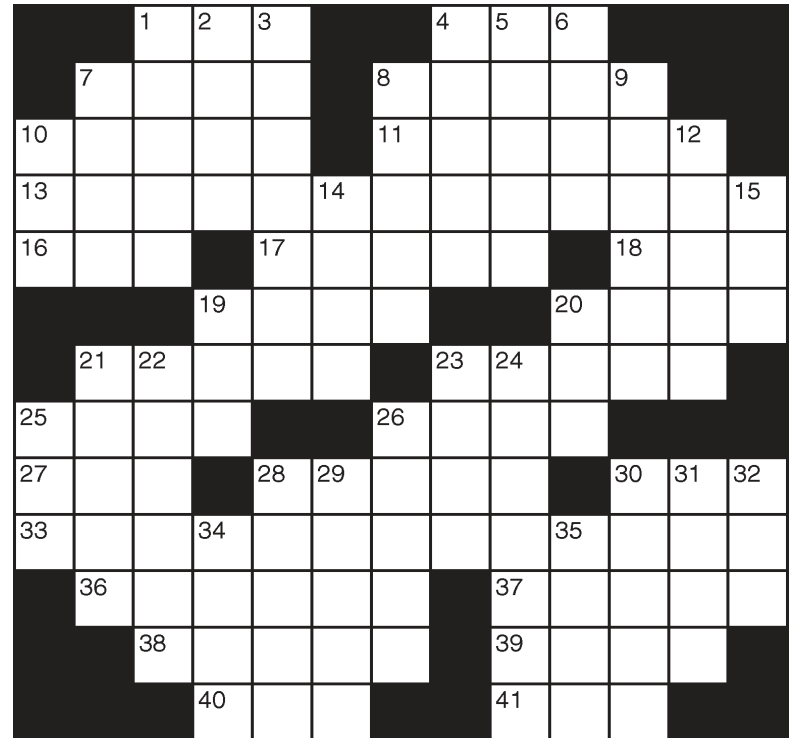
Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

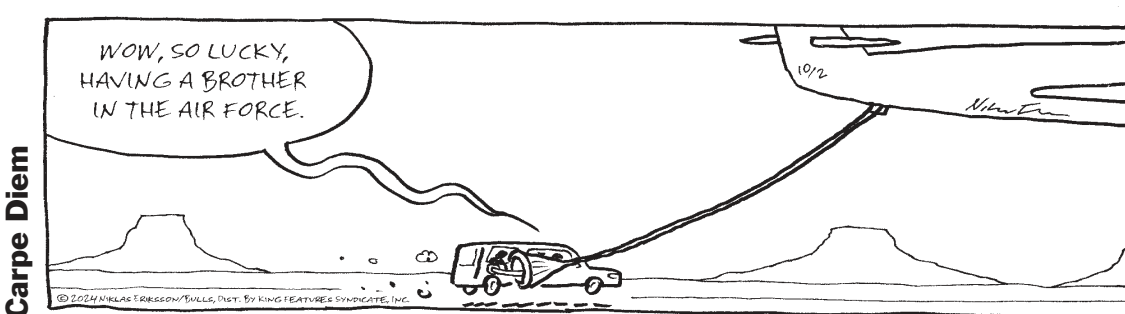
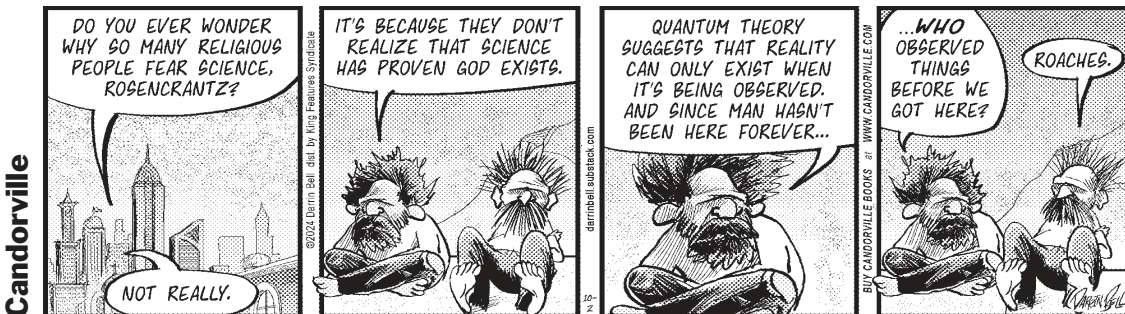
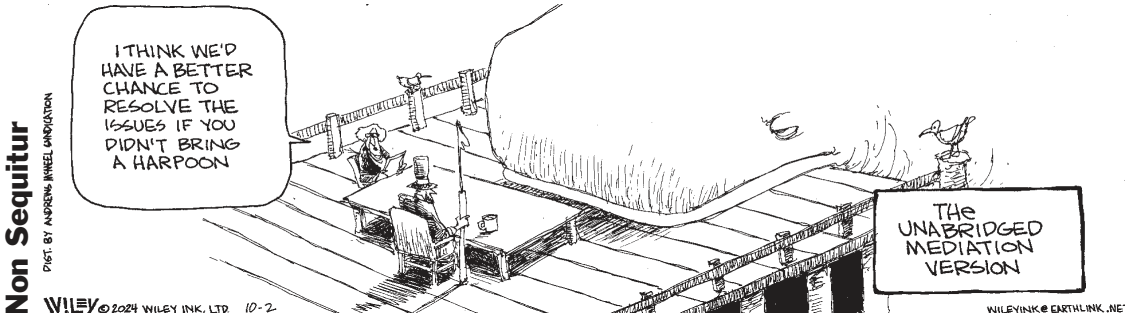
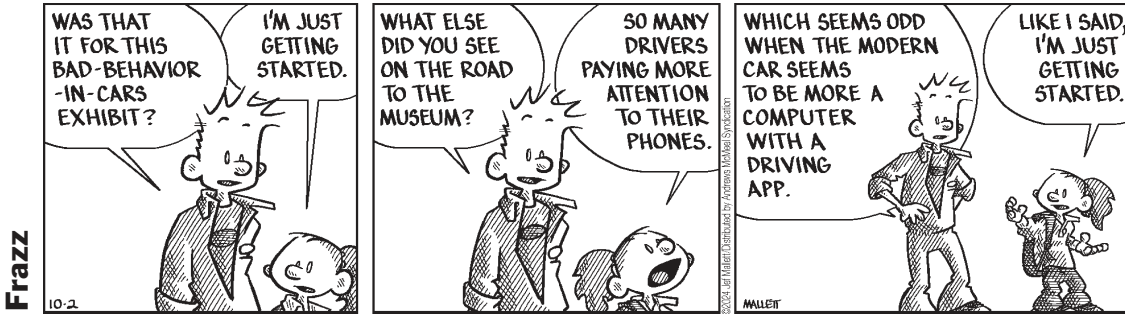
- 1 Stand-up comic Margaret
- 4 Lob's path
- 7 Gumbo or bisque, e.g.
- 8 Arm rest?
- 10 Purse fastener
- 11 Shoe parts
- 13 Idle gossip
- 16 Rds.
- 17 Clear wrap
- 18 Otto — Bismarck
- 19 Greek cheese
- 20 "Present!"
- 21 Humiliate
- 23 Berate
- 25 Help a thief
- 26 Conference leader?
- 27 Mauna —
- 28 Part of Hispaniola
- 30 — -la-la
- 33 Pure chance
- 36 Throat part
- 37 Bridget Fonda, to Jane
- 38 — Dame
- 39 Serving aid
- 40 Menlo Park monogram
- 41 Fixed

DOWN

- 1 BBQ fuel
- 2 Corn cover
- 3 Stands against light
- 4 Greek leader?
- 5 Mature, as fruit
- 6 Tech news website
- 7 Venetian blind part
- 8 Kama —
- 9 Beg without shame
- 10 Dol. fractions
- 12 Duel tool
- 14 Kismet
- 15 SSW opposite
- 19 Blubber

- 20 Weeding tool
- 21 Roughly
- 22 Lighthouse
- 23 Son of Adam and Eve
- 24 Lawyer's customers
- 25 Entirely
- 26 Boxer's dream
- 28 Landscaping plant
- 29 Blazing
- 30 Pick up the tab
- 31 Suggestive
- 32 Shock partner
- 34 Shoelace snarl
- 35 Tragic

Answer to Previous Puzzle



10-2

CRYPTOQUIP

H W O O J H N X V   D J W   A Q Z T   Z

T W U J T   Z K J W S   K W S S Q T   J T

U Z T V Z T N X Q ,   C J   D J W   S A N X P

N S ' H   J . P .   S J   H O T Q Z C   N S ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I SAW A GUY GETTING HIT IN THE HEAD WITH A CONTAINER OF SODA. LUCKILY IT WAS A SOFT DRINK.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals O

# SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

### Schedule

#### Thursday's games

**SOUTH**  
Texas State (2-2) at Troy (1-4)

**SOUTHWEST**  
Sam Houston St. (4-1) at UTEP (0-4)

**Friday's games**

**EAST**  
New Hampshire (3-1) at Harvard (1-1)

**SOUTH**  
Jacksonville St. (1-3) at Kennesaw St. (0-4)

**SOUTHWEST**  
Houston (1-4) at TCU (3-2)

**FAR WEST**  
Syracuse (3-1) at UNLV (4-0)  
Michigan St. (3-2) at Oregon (4-0)

**Saturday's games**

**EAST**  
Princeton (1-1) at Columbia (1-1)  
UCLA (1-3) at Penn St. (4-0)  
CCSU (2-2) at Yale (1-1)  
Bryant (1-3) at Brown (2-0)  
Norfolk St. (2-4) at Sacred Heart (2-3)  
Penn (1-1) at Dartmouth (2-0)  
St. Francis (Pa.) (1-3) at Delaware St. (1-4)

Lincoln (Pa.) (0-0) at Morgan St. (2-3)  
Buffalo State (0-0) at Mercyhurst (1-4)  
Albany (NY) (1-3) at Cornell (1-1)  
Wagner (2-3) at Stonehill (1-2)  
Holy Cross (1-4) at Colgate (1-4)  
Delaware (4-0) at Monmouth (NJ) (3-2)  
Lafayette (2-2) at Fordham (0-5)  
LIU Brooklyn (0-5) at Duquesne (2-2)  
Villanova (4-1) at Stony Brook (4-1)  
Temple (1-4) at Uconn (3-2)  
Appalachian St. (2-2) at Marshall (2-2)  
William & Mary (4-1) at Towson (1-3)

**SOUTH**  
SMU (4-1) at Louisville (3-1)  
Boston College (4-1) at Virginia (3-1)  
Pittsburgh (4-0) at North Carolina (3-2)  
Wake Forest (1-3) at NC State (3-2)  
Marist (0-4) at Davidson (3-1)  
Tulane (3-2) at UAB (1-3)  
NC A&T (1-4) at Richmond (3-2)  
Austin Peay (1-4) at West Georgia (1-3)  
Rhode Island (3-1) at Hampton (3-2)  
Furman (1-3) at The Citadel (2-3)  
SC State (2-2) at Tennessee Tech (2-2)  
Wofford (2-2) at W. Carolina (1-3)  
Florida A&M (2-2) at Alabama St. (2-2)  
South Dakota (3-1) at Murray St. (1-3)  
VMI (0-4) at Samford (1-2)  
Ark.-Pine Bluff (1-3) at Alcorn St. (2-3)  
Gardner-Webb (1-4) at UT Martin (2-3)  
Auburn (2-3) at Georgia (3-1)  
Mississippi (4-1) at South Carolina (3-1)  
Chattanooga (1-3) at ETSU (3-2)  
East Carolina (3-2) at Charlotte (2-3)  
NC Central (3-2) at Campbell (2-3)  
W. Illinois (1-3) at Charleston Southern (1-3)

Alabama (4-0) at Vanderbilt (2-2)  
Jackson St. (3-2) vs. Alabama A&M (2-2) at Mobile, Ala.  
Utah Tech (0-5) at North Alabama (1-5)  
Louisiana-Lafayette (3-1) at Southern Miss. (1-3)  
Clemson (3-1) at Florida St. (1-4)  
James Madison (4-0) at Louisiana-Monroe (3-1)  
Texas A&M Commerce (0-4) at SE Louisiana (1-4)  
Nicholls (1-3) at Southern U. (2-2)  
Old Dominion (1-3) at Coastal Carolina (3-1)  
UCF (3-1) at Florida (2-2)  
Duke (5-0) at Georgia Tech (3-2)

**MIDWEST**  
Purdue (1-3) at Wisconsin (2-2)  
Umass (1-4) at N. Illinois (2-2)  
Drake (2-1) at Valparaiso (2-3)  
Morehead St. (3-2) at Butler (4-0)  
Tennessee St. (3-2) at Lindenwood (Mo.) (2-3)

Indiana St. (1-3) at Youngstown St. (1-4)  
Stetson (2-2) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (1-3)  
W. Michigan (1-3) at Ball St. (1-3)  
SE Missouri (4-1) at E. Illinois (1-4)  
Miami (Ohio) (1-3) at Toledo (3-1)  
Bowling Green (1-3) at Akron (1-4)  
Iowa (3-1) at Ohio St. (4-0)  
Indiana (5-0) at Northwestern (2-2)  
North Dakota (4-1) at N. Dakota St. (4-1)  
Rutgers (4-0) at Nebraska (4-1)  
S. Dakota St. (3-1) at N. Iowa (2-2)  
Illinois St. (3-2) at S. Illinois (2-3)  
Baylor (2-3) at Iowa St. (4-0)  
Southern Cal (3-1) at Minnesota (2-3)

**SOUTHWEST**  
Missouri (4-0) at Texas A&M (4-1)  
Army (4-0) at Tulsa (2-3)  
Va. Lynchburg (0-4) at Texas Southern (1-3)  
Cent. Arkansas (4-1) at Abilene Christian (3-2)  
West Virginia (2-2) at Oklahoma St. (3-2)  
Prairie View (2-3) at Incarnate Word (2-2)  
McNeese St. (4-2) at Houston Christian (2-3)  
South Alabama (2-3) at Arkansas St. (2-2)  
Tennessee (4-0) at Arkansas (3-2)  
Northwestern St. (0-5) at Stephen F. Austin (2-2)

**FAR WEST**  
Navy (4-0) at Air Force (1-3)  
Weber St. (2-3) at Montana (4-1)  
Virginia Tech (2-3) at Stanford (2-2)  
UC Davis (4-1) at Portland St. (0-4)  
N. Colorado (0-5) at Montana St. (5-0)  
Presbyterian (2-3) at San Diego (2-2)  
N. Arizona (3-2) at Idaho (3-2)  
Colorado St. (2-2) at Oregon St. (3-1)  
Utah St. (1-3) at Boise St. (3-1)  
Michigan (4-1) at Washington (3-2)  
Nevada (2-3) at San Jose St. (3-1)  
Idaho St. (2-3) at Cal Poly (2-2)  
Tarleton St. (4-1) at S. Utah (2-3)  
Kansas (1-4) at Arizona St. (3-1)  
Hawaii (2-2) at San Diego St. (1-3)  
Miami (5-0) at California (3-1)  
Texas Tech (4-1) at Arizona (3-1)

## TENNIS

### China Open

**Monday**  
**At National Tennis Center**  
**Beijing**  
**Purse: \$3,720,165**  
**Surface: Hardcourt outdoor**

**Men's Singles Quarterfinals**  
Daniil Medvedev (3), Russia, def. Flavio Cobolli, Italy, 6-2, 6-4.  
Carlos Alcaraz (2), Spain, def. Karen Khachanov (7), Russia, 7-5, 6-2.  
Jannik Sinner (1), Italy, def. Jiri Lehecka, Czechia, 6-2, 7-6 (6).  
Bu Yunchaokete, China, def. Andrey Rublev (4), Russia, 7-5, 6-4.

**Women's Singles Round of 32**  
Madison Keys (18), United States, def. Beatriz Haddad Maia (13), Brazil, 6-3, 6-3.  
Naomi Osaka, Japan, def. Katie Volynets, United States, 6-3, 6-2.  
Aryna Sabalenka (1), Belarus, def. Ashlyn Krueger, United States, 6-2, 6-2.  
Karolina Muchova, Czechia, def. Jaqueline Adina Cristian, Romania, 6-1, 6-3.  
Cristina Bucsa, Spain, def. Elise Mertens (24), Belgium, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2.  
Magda Linette (31), Poland, def. Jasmine Paolini (3), Italy, 6-4, 6-0.  
Mirra Andreeva (17), Russia, def. Donna Vekic (16), Croatia, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.  
Amanda Anisimova (34), United States, def. Daria Kasatkina (9), Russia, 7-6 (1), 6-4.  
Zheng Qinwen (5), China, def. Nadia Podoroska, Argentina, 6-3, 6-2.

**Japan Open**  
**Monday**  
**At Ariake Coliseum**  
**Tokyo**  
**Purse: \$1,818,380**  
**Surface: Hardcourt outdoor**

**Men's Singles Semifinals**  
Ugo Humbert, France, def. Tomas Machac, Czechia, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.  
Arthur Fils, France, def. Holger Rune (6), Denmark, 7-6 (8), 7-6 (10).

## PRO BASKETBALL

### WNBA playoffs

(x-if necessary)  
(Best-of-five)  
**Semifinals**

**No. 1 New York 1, No. 4 Las Vegas 0**  
New York 87, Las Vegas 77  
**Tuesday:** at New York  
**Friday:** at Las Vegas  
**x-Sunday, Oct. 6:** at Las Vegas  
**x-Tuesday, Oct. 8:** at New York  
**No. 2 Minnesota 0, No. 3 Connecticut 1**  
Connecticut 73, Minnesota 70  
**Tuesday:** at Minnesota  
**Friday:** at Connecticut  
**x-Sunday, Oct. 6:** at Connecticut  
**x-Tuesday, Oct. 8:** at Minnesota

## DEALS

### Monday's transactions

**BASEBALL**  
**Major League Baseball National League**  
**NEW YORK METS** — Selected the contract of LHP Joey Lucchesi. Transferred RHP Christian Scott to the 60-day IL. Optioned LHP Alex Young to Syracuse (IL).  
**SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS** — Fired president of baseball operations Farhan Zaidi. Named Buster Posey president of baseball operations.  
**BASKETBALL**  
**National Basketball Association**  
**NEW ORLEANS PELICANS** — Re-signed G Jose Alvarado to a veteran extension.  
**PHOENIX SUNS** — Waived G David Stockton.  
**FOOTBALL**  
**National Football League**  
**CAROLINA PANTHERS** — Signed WR Deven Thompson and TE Stephen Sullivan to the practice squad. Released WR Sam Pinckney.  
**CINCINNATI BENGALS** — Returned P Brad Robbins to the active roster from injured reserve.  
**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS** — Released DB Tony Jefferson.  
**MIAMI DOLPHINS** — Elevated WR D'Wayne Eskridge from the practice squad to the active roster.  
**SEATTLE SEAHAWKS** — Elevated OLB Tyus Bowser and DT Quinton Bohanna from the practice squad to the active roster.  
**TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS** — Waived DT Ben Stille.  
**TENNESSEE TITANS** — Elevated DL Abdullah Anderson and CB Tre Avery from the practice squad to the active roster.  
**HOCKEY**  
**National Hockey League**  
**NASHVILLE PREDATORS** — Assigned Fs Kieffer Bellows and Vinnie Hinostroza and G Matt Murray to Milwaukee (AHL).  
**ST. LOUIS BLUES** — Signed C Nikita Alexandrov to a one-year, two-way contract.

## AP SPORTLIGHT

### Oct. 2

**1950** — Jim Hardy throws six touchdown passes, including five to Bob Shaw, as the Chicago Cardinals pound the Baltimore Colts 55-13.  
**2006** — Tennessee Titans defensive tackle Albert Haynesworth is given a five-game suspension — the longest for on-field behavior in NFL history — for stomping on Dallas Cowboys center Andre Gurode's head and kicking him in the face.

## PRO SOCCER

### MLS

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Inter Miami CF	19	4	8	65	69	45
Columbus	16	5	9	57	60	33
Cincinnati	17	9	5	56	53	41
Orlando City	13	11	7	46	53	46
NYCFC	12	11	8	44	48	44
New York	10	7	14	44	48	44
Charlotte FC	11	11	9	42	37	34
Toronto FC	11	17	4	37	39	56
Philadelphia	9	12	10	37	58	48
CF Montréal	9	12	10	37	44	61
Atlanta	8	13	10	34	41	45
D.C. United	8	13	10	34	46	63
Nashville	8	14	9	33	31	47
New England	9	17	4	31	33	60
Chicago	7	16	9	30	37	55

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LA Galaxy	17	7	7	58	63	46
LAFC	15	8	7	52	54	41
Real Salt Lake	14	7	10	52	62	47
Colorado	15	11	5	50	58	53
Seattle	14	9	8	50	46	34
Houston	13	9	9	48	43	34
Vancouver	13	9	8	47	50	41
Minnesota	13	12	6	45	53	48
Portland	12	10	9	45	64	54
FC Dallas	10	14	7	37	50	52
Austin FC	9	13	9	36	34	44
St Louis City	7	11	13	34	46	58
Sporting KC	8	17	7	31	50	61
San Jose	5	23	3	18	37	72

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

### Wednesday's games

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

## NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Orlando	16	0	6	54	40	13
Washington	15	5	2	47	44	25
Gotham FC	13	4	5	44	27	17
Kansas City	12	3	7	43	47	29
North Carolina	11	9	2	35	31	24
Chicago	9	11	2	29	28	31
Portland	8	10	4	28	31	32
Bay FC	9	12	1	28	26	33
Louisville	6	9	7	25	30	30
San Diego	5	10	7	22	19	26
Angel City	6	12	4	22	26	37
Seattle	5	12	5	20	23	36
Utah Royals FC	5	14	3	18	15	34
Houston	4	13	5	17	15	35

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

### Friday's games

Chicago at Houston  
Angel City at Seattle

### Saturday's games

San Diego at North Carolina  
Kansas City at Louisville  
Bay FC at Gotham FC  
Utah Royals FC at Portland

### Sunday's game

Washington at Orlando

### Friday, Oct. 11

Orlando at Portland

## PRO HOCKEY

### NHL preseason

**Monday's games**  
Pittsburgh 5, Detroit 1  
N.Y. Islanders 4, Philadelphia 3  
Tampa Bay 3, Florida 1  
Washington 3, Columbus 2  
New Jersey 3, N.Y. Rangers 1  
Buffalo 4, Detroit 3, OT  
Calgary 4, Seattle 3, OT  
Edmonton 3, Vancouver 2, SO  
Los Angeles 4, Anaheim 0

**Tuesday's games**  
Detroit at Pittsburgh  
New Jersey at N.Y. Rangers  
Ottawa at Montreal  
Philadelphia at Boston  
Chicago at Minnesota  
Columbus at St. Louis  
Vegas at Colorado  
Utah at San Jose

**Wednesday's games**  
Florida at Tampa Bay  
Nashville at Carolina  
Calgary at Winnipeg  
Edmonton at Seattle  
Utah at Anaheim



DUANE BURLESON/AP

Head coach Mark Few and basketball powerhouse Gonzaga will join the Pac-12 beginning in 2026. Gonzaga doesn't have a football team.

# Gonzaga, UTEP changing leagues

By TIM BOOTH  
*Associated Press*

Basketball powerhouse Gonzaga will become the latest member of the rebuilt Pac-12 Conference, the school announced Tuesday, while the Mountain West Conference moved quickly to secure its future by adding UTEP.

Gonzaga will move from the West Coast Conference where it has dominated for most of the last quarter century into a conference that was being rebuilt around football, but should be pretty stout on the basketball court. Gonzaga will become the eighth Pac-12 member along with holdovers Washington State and Oregon State, and fellow newcomers Boise State, San Diego State, Fresno State, Utah State and Colorado State from the Mountain West.

Gonzaga will join the conference in all of its sports beginning July 1, 2026, as the Pac-12's only private college up to this point.

"Today represents an exciting milestone for the Pac-12 as we welcome another outstanding institution with a rich history of success into our league," Pac-12 Commissioner Teresa Gould said.

Adding Gonzaga still leaves the Pac-12 in need of another football-playing member for CFP purposes. Gonzaga does not have a football program.

The Mountain West is in the same position of still needing to add one more football-playing member even with the addition of UTEP. The Miners will leave Conference USA beginning in 2026.

"The addition of UTEP restores historic rivalries with several of our member institutions within the geographic footprint and provides valuable exposure in the great State of Texas," Mountain West Commissioner Gloria Nevarez said in a statement. "We welcome and look forward to competing against the student-athletes of UTEP."

Both conferences have been in a scramble to secure their futures outside the Power Four of college sports, but the addition of Gonzaga clearly gives the Pac-12 the advantage on the basketball court.

Last year, Washington State, Boise State, San Diego State, Colorado State, Utah State and Gonzaga all reached the NCAA Tournament in men's basketball and two seasons ago San Diego State reached the national championship game.

Gonzaga athletic director Chris Standiford said talks with the Pac-12 progressed "earnestly" last weekend and the school formally applied for membership Monday night — it was unanimously approved.

"We are excited to join a conference with great tradition and a commitment to innovating during this evolving time in collegiate athletics," Standiford said.

The Pac-12 began to restock for a 2026 relaunch last month by nabbing the five schools from the Mountain West to join Washington State and Oregon State, the only two Pac-12 schools left after a dramatic round of realignment took effect this summer.

The Bulldogs have thrived in the WCC, reaching the NCAA Tournament every year it has been played since 1998, with two Final Four appearances and eight seasons of at least 30 victories.

The school has in the past talked to the Big East about conference affiliation, and the Big 12 had discussed adding Gonzaga to its conference USA beginning in 2026.

UTEP was a member of the Western Athletic Conference for nearly 40 years before joining Conference USA in 2005.

Joining the Mountain West will reunite the Miners with previous conference foes like Nevada, San Jose State, New Mexico and Wyoming.

# NFL

## Scoreboard

American Conference						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	3	1	0	.750	122	83
N.Y. Jets	2	2	0	.500	76	62
Miami	1	3	0	.250	45	103
New England	1	3	0	.250	52	87
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	3	1	0	.750	79	94
Indianapolis	2	2	0	.500	85	85
Tennessee	1	3	0	.250	79	90
Jacksonville	0	4	0	.000	60	109
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	3	1	0	.750	75	53
Baltimore	2	2	0	.500	106	88
Cincinnati	1	3	0	.250	102	104
Cleveland	1	3	0	.250	66	87
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	4	0	0	1.000	92	72
Denver	2	2	0	.500	62	55
L.A. Chargers	2	2	0	.500	68	50
Las Vegas	2	2	0	.500	78	97
National Conference						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	3	1	0	.750	121	102
Dallas	2	2	0	.500	97	104
Philadelphia	2	2	0	.500	86	96
N.Y. Giants	1	3	0	.250	60	84
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	3	1	0	.750	97	78
Atlanta	2	2	0	.500	75	85
New Orleans	2	2	0	.500	127	70
Carolina	1	3	0	.250	73	129
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Minnesota	4	0	0	1.000	116	59
Detroit	3	1	0	.750	104	82
Chicago	2	2	0	.500	77	75
Green Bay	2	2	0	.500	104	89
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	3	1	0	.750	102	85
San Francisco	2	2	0	.500	103	82
Arizona	1	3	0	.250	96	106
L.A. Rams	1	3	0	.250	75	115

**Thursday's game**  
Dallas 20, N.Y. Giants 15

**Sunday's games**  
Atlanta 26, New Orleans 24  
Chicago 24, L.A. Rams 18  
Cincinnati 34, Carolina 24  
Denver 10, N.Y. Jets 9  
Houston 24, Jacksonville 20  
Indianapolis 27, Pittsburgh 24  
Minnesota 31, Green Bay 29  
Tampa Bay 33, Philadelphia 16  
San Francisco 30, New England 13  
Washington 42, Arizona 14  
Kansas City 17, L.A. Chargers 10  
Las Vegas 20, Cleveland 16  
Baltimore 35, Buffalo 10

**Monday's games**  
Detroit 42, Seattle 29  
Tennessee 31, Miami 12

**Thursday, Oct. 3**  
Tampa Bay at Atlanta

**Sunday, Oct. 6**  
N.Y. Jets vs Minnesota at London  
Baltimore at Cincinnati  
Buffalo at Houston  
Carolina at Chicago  
Cleveland at Washington  
Indianapolis at Jacksonville  
Miami at New England  
Arizona at San Francisco  
Las Vegas at Denver  
Green Bay at L.A. Rams  
N.Y. Giants at Seattle  
Dallas at Pittsburgh

**Monday, Oct. 7**  
New Orleans at Kansas City  
**Open:** L.A. Chargers, Tennessee, Detroit, Philadelphia

**Thursday, Oct. 10**  
San Francisco at Seattle

**Sunday, Oct. 13**  
Jacksonville at Chicago  
Arizona at Green Bay  
Cleveland at Philadelphia  
Houston at New England  
Indianapolis at Tennessee  
Tampa Bay at New Orleans  
Washington at Baltimore  
L.A. Chargers at Denver  
Pittsburgh at Las Vegas  
Atlanta at Carolina  
Detroit at Dallas  
Cincinnati at N.Y. Giants  
**Open:** Kansas City, L.A. Rams, Miami, Minnesota

# Goff's perfect passing lifts Lions

BY LARRY LAGE  
Associated Press

DETROIT — Jared Goff threw a perfect game, setting an NFL record by completing all 18 of his passes to help the Detroit Lions beat the Seattle Seahawks 42-29 Monday night.

"I just gave the game ball to somebody else, so I feel awful," Lions coach Dan Campbell said. "I knew he played a heck of a game. I did not know he was perfect."

Kurt Warner had the previous league mark for the passes without an incompletion, going 10-for-10 for Arizona against Houston in 2005.

"It's a cool thing," Goff said. "I'm just happy we got the win."

Goff did throw an incomplete pass, but it was negated by a penalty.

"I was like, does that count?" he recalled wondering.

Goff also had a touchdown reception for the first time in his career, catching a pass from Amon-Ra St. Brown, and threw one of his two touchdown passes to the All-Pro receiver. Goff and St. Brown are the eighth duo in league history to throw and catch a touchdown from each other.

St. Brown lobbed a 7-yard pass to Goff on a trick play in the third quarter and caught an 8-yard touchdown from the quarterback in the fourth.

Goff, who threw for 292 yards,



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Lions quarterback Jared Goff passes on Monday against Seattle in Detroit. Goff threw a touchdown pass and also caught one.

completed his first 14 passes in Detroit's previous win at Arizona to set a personal record that lasted a little more than a week. He also threw a pass over the middle to Jameson Williams, who ran away from the Seahawks for a 70-yard touchdown in the third quarter.

The Lions (3-1) asked Goff to throw one more time from his end zone and he was sacked for a safety with 2:01 remaining, cutting their lead to 13 points.

The Seahawks (3-1) simply could not overcome an injury-depleted defense that could not stop

Detroit on the ground or through the air.

"It shows we aren't the team we want to be," Seattle coach Mike Macdonald said.

Macdonald went for it on fourth-and-4 from the Detroit 39 early in the fourth and receiver Tyler Lockett negated a first down with pass interference, getting called for running a pick play that freed up Jaxon Smith-Njigba for a catch.

"They said he picked the guy, but I think we all saw he never made contact with him," Smith said.

Macdonald went for it again on fourth-and-goal from the Detroit 3 with 2:09 to go and Geno Smith threw a fourth straight incompletion.

The Lions took advantage and went ahead by 15 points with 5:23 left when Goff threw a high pass to St. Brown, who leaped for the catch and got both feet in the end zone.

Jahmyr Gibbs ran for two touchdowns in the second quarter and finished with 78 yards rushing. David Montgomery started the scoring barrage with a 1-yard touchdown run, capping a 10-play, 93-yard drive that took 7-plus minutes off the clock in the first quarter, and had 80 yards from scrimmage.

Smith was 38-for-56 for 395 yards with a 9-yard touchdown pass to rookie tight end AJ Barner in the third quarter on a drive he extended with a sneak on fourth down. He threw an interception in the end zone to Kerby Joseph with a minute left, sealing Seattle's first setback this season.

"Even when we were down 14, we knew we had a chance to come back," Smith said.

DK Metcalf had seven catches for 104 yards and a costly fumble at the Detroit 37 in the first quarter.

Kenneth Walker, who gained 80 yards on 12 carries, had a career-high three touchdowns rushing.

# Rudolph leads Titans to first win of season

BY ALANIS THAMES  
Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Mason Rudolph was happy to help lead the Tennessee Titans to their first win of the season on Monday, even though he felt like he didn't have to do much.

Nick Folk helped him with five field goals, and Rudolph led seven scoring drives after starter Will Levis left with a shoulder injury in the 31-12 win over the Miami Dolphins.

"I didn't do a whole lot, that's for sure," Rudolph said. "Tony (Pollard) and the O-line and Tyjae (Spears) just mauled them up front. Moved the ball, controlled the ball in the second half. We protected the ball there in the second half and got out with the win."

Rudolph threw for 85 yards and completed 9 of 17 passes in relief of Levis, who attempted just four passes before injuring his right throwing shoulder on a scramble.

Brian Callahan, who got his first win as the Titans' coach, said Levis tried to go back in but was in pain. Tennessee's upcoming bye week factored into the decision to hold him out.

Folk made field goals of 53, 52, 47, 51 and 29 yards. Spears took a direct snap and ran it in for a 7-yard touchdown. Pollard had a 4-yard touchdown run to go with 88 yards on 22 carries. The Titans (1-3) rushed for 142 yards.

"I knew the style of game we needed to play to win this game," Callahan said. "I knew that they were going to have some trouble offensively, and I knew that we were going to be able to run the ball effectively on them."

Tyler Huntley, who signed with the Dol-



REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

Titans quarterback Mason Rudolph replaced an injured Will Levis and helped Tennessee earn its first win of the season.

phins on Sept. 17 off Baltimore's practice squad, ran for a touchdown and had 96 yards passing. But the Dolphins' offense continued to struggle without Tua Tagovailoa, who remains on injured reserve with a concussion.

Huntley was named starter on Saturday, as No. 2 quarterback Skylar Thompson nurses a rib injury.

"I felt pretty comfortable," Huntley said. "Just now I got to dig in deeper and just know the ins and outs of the offense, and it will take our offense to another level."

Huntley brought the Dolphins (1-3) within 10 when he scored on a 1-yard run with 3:40 left. He was intercepted on the 2-point conversion

attempt, and the Titans recovered the ensuing onside kick.

Huntley was called for intentional grounding in the end zone on Miami's last effort at a comeback, adding two more points for the Titans.

Tyreek Hill was held under 50 yards receiving for the third straight game with 23 yards on four catches, as the Dolphins managed just 78 yards passing.

Titans receiver DeAndre Hopkins was also quiet with two catches for 31 yards.

Linebacker Emmanuel Ogbah intercepted Levis and secured the ball between his knees to end a promising opening drive for the Titans.

The Dolphins gave it right back when Huntley threw a backward pass to Hill that went off the receiver's fingertips. It was initially ruled an incomplete pass but after review, it was overturned to a fumble that Tennessee recovered.

That was the first takeaway of the season for the Titans, who entered the game with a minus-7 turnover differential.

It was also the first of numerous miscues for the Dolphins: two players in motion at the snap multiple times, uncharacteristic drops by playmakers and an overall inability to sustain drives.

The Dolphins headed to halftime trailing 9-3 and were held without a touchdown for the eighth straight quarter.

"There's a major disconnect between preparation and execution," Dolphins coach Mike McDaniels said.

## MLB

# Leader: Rose broke his idol's hits record at age 44

## FROM PAGE 24

to outfield to third to first, and he led the league in hits seven times.

"Every summer, three things are going to happen," Rose liked to say, "the grass is going to get green, the weather is going to get hot, and Pete Rose is going to get 200 hits and bat .300."

Rose reached 1,000 hits in 1968, 2,000 just five years later and 3,000 just five years after that. He moved into second place, ahead of Hank Aaron, with hit No. 3,772, in 1982. No. 4,000 was off the Phillies' Jerry Koosman in 1984, exactly 21 years to the day after his first hit. He caught up with Cobb on Sept. 8, 1985, and surpassed him three days later, in Cincinnati, with Rose's mother and teenage son, Pete Jr., among those in attendance.

Rose was 44 and the team's player-manager. Batting left-handed against the San Diego Padres' Eric Show in the first inning, he smacked a 2-1 slider into left field, a clean single. The crowd of 47,000-plus stood and yelled. The game was halted to celebrate. Rose was given the ball and the first base bag, then wept openly on the shoulder of first base coach and former teammate, Tommy Helms. He told Pete Jr., who later played briefly for the Reds: "I love you, and I hope you pass me." He thought of his late father, a star athlete himself who had pushed him to play sports since childhood. And he thought of Cobb, the dead-ball era slasher whom Rose so emulated that he named another son Tyler.

Baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth, watching from New York, declared that Rose had "reserved a prominent spot in Cooperstown." After the game, a 2-0

win for the Reds in which Rose scored both runs, he received a phone call from President Ronald Reagan.

"Your reputation and legacy are secure," Reagan told him. "It will be a long time before anyone is standing in the spot where you're standing now."

Four years later, he was gone.

On March 20, 1989, Ueberroth (who was soon succeeded by A. Bartlett Giamatti) announced that his office was conducting a "full inquiry into serious allegations" about Rose. Reports emerged that he had been relying on a network of bookies and friends and others in the gambling world to place bets on baseball games, including some with the Reds. Rose denied any wrongdoing, but the investigation found that the "accumulated testimony of witnesses, together with the documentary evidence and telephone records reveal extensive betting activity by Pete Rose in connection with professional baseball and, in particular, Cincinnati Reds games, during the 1985, 1986, and 1987 baseball seasons."

In August 1989, at a New York press conference, Giamatti spoke some of the saddest words in baseball history: "One of the game's greatest players has engaged in a variety of acts which have stained the game, and he must now live with the consequences of those acts." Giamatti announced that Rose had agreed to a lifetime ban from baseball, a decision that in 1991 the Hall of Fame ruled left him ineligible for induction. Rose attempted to downplay the news, insisting that he had never bet on baseball and that he would eventually be reinstated.



**The National League's Pete Rose (14) slams into American League catcher Ray Fosse to score the winning run during the 12th inning of the All-Star Game on July 14, 1970. Fosse suffered a fractured shoulder.**

Meanwhile, his story changed. In a November 1989 memoir, written with "The Boys of Summer" author Roger Kahn, Rose again claimed innocence, only to reverse himself in 2004. He desperately wanted to come back, and effectively destroyed his chances. He continued to spend time at casinos, insisting he was there for promotion, not gambling. He believed he had "messed up" and that his father would have been ashamed, but he still bet on baseball, albeit legally.

"I don't think betting is morally wrong. I don't even think betting

on baseball is morally wrong," he wrote in "Play Hungry," a memoir released in 2019. "There are legal ways, and there are illegal ways, and betting on baseball the way I did was against the rules of baseball."

His disgrace was all the harder because no one seemed to live for baseball more than Rose did. He remembered details of games from long ago and could quote the most obscure statistics about players from other teams. He was as relentless in spring training as he was in the postseason, when he brawled with the New York Mets' Buddy Harrelson during the 1973 NL playoffs.

His compulsion was most memorably defined in an otherwise meaningless contest — the 1970 All-Star Game, in Cincinnati.

In the bottom of the 12th inning, the score tied at 4, he singled with two outs and advanced to second on a single by Billy Grabarkewitz. When Jim Hickman followed with a single, Rose raced past third and crashed at home into the Cleveland Indians' Ray Fosse, scoring the winning run and fracturing Fosse's shoulder. It was a collision often replayed, and an injury from which the catcher said years later still pained him.

"Would I do the same thing again today in the same situation? Damn right I would," Rose wrote in his 2019 memoir. "But would I rather it had all gone down without Ray having suffered an injury that would dog his career? You bet."

In the beginning, it was all about the game. He was a Cincinnati native from a working-class neighborhood whose father, Harry Francis Rose, like the father of

Mickey Mantle, taught his son to be a switch hitter. Rose mastered his skills with a broom handle and a rubber ball, thrown to him by his younger brother, Dave.

Pete Rose graduated from high school in June 1960. He flew to Rochester, N.Y., two days later, and then rode a bus some 45 miles to Geneva, home of the Reds' level D minor league team. By 1962, he had been promoted to level A, in Macon, Ga. He batted .330 and vowed to displace Reds second baseman Don Blasingame in 1963, telling a reporter "I'm going to be on his heels."

Blasingame was with the Washington Senators by midseason and Rose was a phenomenon: "Charlie Hustle," Yankees pitcher Whitey Ford reportedly called him, mockingly, after watching him hurry to first upon drawing a walk in spring training. Rose hit .273 as a rookie and, starting in 1965, batted .300 or higher 14 out of 15 seasons. He was so dependable that in 1968, the "Year of the Pitcher," he led the league with a .335 average, one of three batting titles.

In his post-baseball life, he did make it to a few honorary associations. The Reds voted him into the team's Hall of Fame in 2016, the year before a bronze sculpture of Rose's iconic slide was unveiled outside of Cincinnati's Great American Ball Park.

Rose the man was never inducted into Cooperstown, but his career was well-represented.

Items at the Baseball Hall include his helmet from his MVP 1973 season, the bat he used in 1978 when his hitting streak reached 44 and the cleats he wore, in 1985, on the day he became the game's hits king.



AL BEHRMAN/AP

**Rose, serving as the Reds' player-manager, argues a called strike with home-plate umpire Randy Marsh during a game against the St. Louis Cardinals at Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati on Aug. 27, 1985.**

## MLB



JASON ALLEN/AP

Kansas City Royals shortstop Bobby Witt Jr. has champagne poured on him by teammates during a celebration in the locker room after the Royals clinched a playoff berth with a win over the Braves on Friday in Atlanta.

# Royals, O's meet not long after each had 100 losses

By STEPHEN WHYNO  
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Adley Rutschman and Bobby Witt Jr. were the top two picks of baseball's 2019 amateur draft, back when the Baltimore Orioles and Kansas City Royals were among the worst teams in the sport.

"It's pretty crazy," Witt said Monday. "Now we're matching up in the postseason."

Rutschman and the Orioles host Witt and the Royals in an AL Wild Card Series of two teams with 100-loss seasons not far back in the rearview mirror. For Kansas City, it was last season, and their 30-win improvement ranks as one of the most impressive turnarounds over the past half-century.

Game 1 was Tuesday at Camden Yards. The winner of the best-of-three series faces the New York Yankees in the Division Series.

"This is something I've dreamed about since I was a kid," said Witt, who hit .332 to win the AL batting title. "Going into the last offseason, this was the goal and we're here now. We just got to keep working."

The Royals went from 56-106 to 86-76, enough for the second wild card. Only five teams made a bigger leap from one season to the next, a group that includes Baltimore from 2021 to '22.

That was after the Orioles lost more than 100 games in three consecutive full seasons. But with Rutschman, Gunnar Henderson and other prospects resulting from those dark days, they won the AL East a year ago and got a taste of the playoffs — a Division Series defeat to the eventual champion Texas.

Henderson hopes he and his teammates are more "battle-tested" this time around.

"Last year's experience of what that felt like at the end when we did have this kind of fairytale season and the quick exit, I'm hoping that these guys still have that taste in their mouth going into this postseason," manager Brandon Hyde said. "I think they do."

## Late-season struggles

The parallels are not just historic. The Royals and Orioles at times this season were dominant, but each had second-half struggles that endangered reaching October.

Kansas City had two seven-game skids in the past five weeks. Baltimore lost 11 of 16 from Sept. 4-22.

"There's very rarely a team that goes through a season without some sort of a rough patch," Royals manager Matt Quatraro said. "But whether that's two games, four games, seven games — whatever your losing streaks are — these guys in this clubhouse are so resilient. They bounce back. They really do the best job I've ever seen of turning the page from one day to the next."

The Royals join NL East champion Philadelphia as the only teams to go into this year's playoffs under .500 over their prior 10 games. The Orioles were at least able to finish 4-2 to recapture some swagger.

"I think we fought ourselves a lot the second half of playing good baseball and then kind of struggling for a little bit," Game 1 starter Corbin Burnes said. "To see how we played this last week was good. We got the offense swinging the bats, pitching we threw the ball well. It's a good momentum builder going into the postseason."

## Aces on the mound

The 4:08 p.m. EDT start time and the markets involved do not make this a marquee series, but the pitching matchup in the opener was certainly popcorn-worthy with a couple of All-Stars getting the nod: Burnes and Cole Ragans. The Orioles had not decided on starters for later games, but going with Burnes in the opener was a no-brainer after the 2021 NL Cy Young Award winner had a 1.20 ERA in five September starts.

"He's a guy that can beat anybody on any night," Hyde said. "If Corbin Burnes is pitching, you expect to win that night and that's how our guys feel."

The Royals feel the same way about Ragans, the ace of their strong rotation. Seth Lugo is expected to take the mound for Game 2 on Wednesday.

"They trust me, so you just put in the work behind the scenes, prepare the best I can prepare and give our team the best chance I can to win a ballgame," Ragans said. "That's all my goal's been all year is just to win. Nothing changes just because it's the playoffs. Same routine, same mindset going in and go from there."



Rutschman

# Ex-Astros manager Hinch leading Tigers against former team

By KRISTIE RIEKEN  
Associated Press

HOUSTON — A.J. Hinch led Houston to a championship in 2017, and the last time he managed a postseason game it was the Astros' loss in Game 7 of the 2019 World Series.

The following January, he was suspended for a year by Major League Baseball and fired the same day for his role in Houston's sign-stealing scandal.

Hinch returned to the playoffs Tuesday with the Detroit Tigers in their first postseason appearance in a decade when they faced the AL West champion Astros in Game 1 of a best-of-three Wild Card Series. Detroit ace Tarik Skubal (18-4, 2.39 ERA) opposed fellow left-hander Framber Valdez (15-7, 2.91) in the opener.

Hinch, who has managed the Tigers since 2021, has insisted this series is not about his redemption.

"I'm not proud of the story to get here," Hinch said Monday before the Tigers worked out at Minute Maid Park. "I've owned up to that and I will continue to do that. I'm very sorry for how it all went down. But all I had was the next opportunity to try to make it better and try to do my part to make this happen as fast as possible for the Detroit Tigers."

The Tigers were 10 games out of the last AL wild-card spot on Aug. 10 before going 31-13 the rest of the way to punch their ticket to the playoffs for the first time since 2014.

Now they face a playoff-tested Houston team that's in the postseason for an eighth straight year. Detroit outfielder Riley Greene believes the Tigers' path to this point will help them this week.

"I feel like we've been playing playoff baseball since August," he said. "We're young and all we really want to do is win and we're doing whatever we can to win."

The Astros also had a difficult path to the playoffs this season. Houston overcame a 7-19 start to win its fourth straight AL West title and its seventh in eight years, only

falling short during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season.

Hinch and Astros manager Joe Espada share a close bond after Hinch hired Espada as his bench coach in Houston before the 2018 season. Espada is in his first season as manager after Dusty Baker's retirement.

"I'm actually looking forward to it," Espada said. "He's a good friend. We have spent a lot of time together. I've learned a ton from A.J., but I think this series is about the Astros against the Tigers."

## Valdez's mental growth

Valdez is looking for a much better postseason this year after he lost each of his three playoff starts last season while giving up a combined 19 hits and 12 earned runs.

The 30-year-old has worked on improving his mental toughness over the past few years with the help of Dr. Andy Nunez, a psychologist in the Astros organization.

"With Dr. Andy, I've talked to him almost every day, whether it's on the phone, whether before a game, after a game, even if I'm not playing, I try to take the moment and talk to him," Valdez said in Spanish through a translator. "We talk about life, try to talk about the mental aspect of it, how to handle certain situations ... (and) I try to take that advice and make the most of it."

## Skubal's crown

Skubal, who had 228 strikeouts to go with his 18 wins and 2.39 ERA, became the first American Leaguer to win the pitching Triple Crown since Cleveland's Shane Bieber did it in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, and the first in a full season since Justin Verlander in 2011.

The likely AL Cy Young Award winner is looking forward to his playoff debut.

"It means a lot to have the confidence from A.J. and the organization, and I'm going to roll out there (Tuesday) and do my best to put our team in position to win," he said.



ERIC CHRISTIAN SMITH/AP

Detroit Tigers manager A.J. Hinch led the Houston Astros to two AL pennants and a World Series title in 2017, but his legacy was tarred by a sign-stealing scandal that cost him his job in 2020.

## MLB

# Legacies, fortunes attainable in October

BY DAVID BRANDT

Associated Press

Japanese superstar Shohei Ohtani has put up some of the best regular-season numbers in baseball history over the past six months. Bobby Witt Jr. is a precocious 24-year-old who just won the American League batting title.

They've both proven they are excellent at baseball.

Now it's time to see if they're good at October baseball.

"The mound is 60 feet, 6 inches away, first base is 90 feet away," Witt said on Monday. "It's the same game I've played since I was little, and so just go out there, enjoy every moment and take it all in."

The Kansas City shortstop was trying not to put too many expectations on himself before the biggest games of his professional career. That's probably smart.

But there's little doubt that October competition is a little different. It all started Tuesday when the Tigers-Astros, Royals-Orioles, Mets-Brewers and Braves-Padres begin their best-of-three Wild Card Series.

The Yankees, Guardians, Dodgers and Phillies all earned a bye until the Division Series, which begins on Saturday.

Everyone feels the pressure of the playoffs. Owners, fans, players. Yankees slugger Juan Soto, Astros third baseman Alex Bregman, Orioles outfielder Anthony Santander and Mets first baseman Pete Alonso are among the upcoming free agents who could increase their value by millions with good postseason performances.

Soto was still a rising star with the Washington Nationals when they won their title in 2019. He hit .333 with three home runs and seven RBIs in that World Series, and a



SETH WENIG/AP

**The New York Yankees' Aaron Judge, left, and Juan Soto are among the biggest stars in baseball. But one major difference between them is that Soto has a World Series ring while Judge is looking for his first.**

similar performance over the next few weeks could send his asking price this winter into the stratosphere.

The postseason is also where legacies are made.

Yankees slugger Aaron Judge is already one of the most productive sluggers in the storied franchise's history. He smashed 58 homers this season two years after a 62-homer campaign and his tape-measure homers are the stuff of legend.

But he doesn't have a championship ring, and that's the expectation in the Bronx. The Yankees haven't won a title since 2009.

"I think there's no question he's one of the franchise's greatest players," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "But he's playing for (championships). That's why he

does this, not to rack up personal accolades. He embodies that. He lives that. I'm sure winning it all would add a level to his legacy."

Philadelphia's Bryce Harper is another one of this generation's great players who has never won a title. The two-time MVP led the Phillies to the World Series in 2022 — earning MVP of the National League Championship Series along the way — before losing to the Houston Astros for the title.

It's one of the few missing pieces of a stellar career.

"We've just got to play Philly baseball and continue to play," Harper said after his team clinched the NL East.

There's little doubt that MLB is salivating over a potential Ohtani vs. Judge matchup in the World Series.

This is Ohtani's first trip to the postseason in his seven-year career. He nearly won the National League Triple Crown this season, batting .310 with 54 homers, 130 RBIs and 59 stolen bases.

But the stats reset to zero when it comes to October.

Those who can deal with the pressure excel. Kansas City catcher Salvador Perez was the World Series MVP in 2015 and hasn't been back to the playoffs since. One decade later, he's relishing his return to fall baseball.

"Pressure? You get excited," Perez said. "Maybe a little more in playoffs. ... It's just a game. You're just competing and have fun and try to do the best to help your team to win. In playoffs, a little more. I think these guys, they're ready."

## D-backs can only watch as NL title defense dreams vanish

BY DAVID BRANDT

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks arrived at Chase Field on Monday afternoon for a light workout and heavy anxiety.

After a full afternoon of scoreboard watching, their fears were confirmed. There will be no postseason for the defending National League champions.

The Atlanta Braves and New York Mets split their doubleheader Monday in Atlanta, meaning both those teams are headed to the playoffs while the Diamondbacks were the odd team out. All three finished the regular season with an 89-73 record, but the Mets and Braves both owned tiebreakers over Arizona because they won the season series.

In the end, there was nothing to do but watch the season slip away



DARRYL WEBB/AP

**A year after making a surprise run to the World Series, Christian Walker and the Arizona Diamondbacks will not be able to defend their pennant.**

on TV. Diamondbacks ace Zac Gallen was playing catch on the field as the final out was recorded

before trudging off the field and to the clubhouse.

"I was planning on playing to-

morrow," Gallen said.

The Mets-Braves doubleheader on Monday was scheduled one day following the expected end of the regular season after Hurricane Helene washed out two of their games in Atlanta last week.

It wasn't an ideal situation for anyone involved.

"It's unfortunate, but you can't control the weather," Gallen said. "Who knew a hurricane was going to happen? That's moreso the bigger picture — people are losing their lives and homes. For me to get mad about a natural disaster would be a little tone deaf.

"The more disappointing part is that we — to a certain extent — controlled our own destiny and we didn't come through. Didn't execute."

The D-backs needed either the Mets or Braves to sweep the two

## Scoreboard

### Playoffs

x-if necessary  
**WILD CARD SERIES**  
(Best-of-three)  
American League  
Houston vs. Detroit

Tuesday: Detroit at Houston  
Wednesday: Detroit (TBD) at Houston (TBD)

x-Thursday: Detroit at Houston  
Baltimore vs. Kansas City

Tuesday: Kansas City at Baltimore  
Wednesday: Kansas City (Lugo 16-9) at Baltimore (TBD), **AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.**  
Wednesday **CET, 5 a.m. Thursday JKT**  
x-Thursday: Kansas City at Baltimore

National League  
Milwaukee vs. New York

Tuesday: New York at Milwaukee  
Wednesday: New York (TBD) at Milwaukee (TBD), **AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Thursday CET, 8 a.m. Thursday JKT**  
x-Thursday: New York at Milwaukee

San Diego vs. Atlanta

Tuesday: Atlanta at San Diego  
Wednesday: Atlanta (TBD) at San Diego (Musgrove 6-5)

x-Thursday: Atlanta at San Diego

**DIVISION SERIES (Best-of-five)**  
American League

New York vs. Baltimore or Kansas City

Saturday: Baltimore-Kansas City winner at New York (Cole 8-5)

Monday, Oct. 7: Baltimore-Kansas City winner at New York

Wednesday, Oct. 9: New York at Baltimore-Kansas City winner

x-Thursday, Oct. 10: New York at Baltimore-Kansas City winner

x-Saturday, Oct. 12: Baltimore-Kansas City winner at New York

Cleveland vs. Houston or Detroit

Saturday: Houston-Detroit winner at Cleveland

Monday, Oct. 7: Houston-Detroit winner at Cleveland

Wednesday, Oct. 9: Cleveland at Houston-Detroit winner

x-Thursday, Oct. 10: Cleveland at Houston-Detroit winner

x-Saturday, Oct. 12: Houston-Detroit winner at Cleveland

National League

Los Angeles vs. San Diego or Atlanta

Saturday: San Diego-Atlanta winner at Los Angeles

Sunday: San Diego-Atlanta winner at Los Angeles

Tuesday, Oct. 8: Los Angeles at San Diego-Atlanta winner

x-Wednesday, Oct. 9: Los Angeles at San Diego-Atlanta winner

x-Friday, Oct. 11: San Diego-Atlanta winner at Los Angeles

Philadelphia vs. Milwaukee or New York

Saturday: Milwaukee-New York winner at Philadelphia

Sunday, Oct. 6: Milwaukee-New York winner at Philadelphia

Tuesday, Oct. 8: Philadelphia at Milwaukee-New York winner

x-Wednesday, Oct. 9: Philadelphia at Milwaukee-New York winner

x-Friday, Oct. 11: Milwaukee-New York winner at Philadelphia

## MLB



JASON ALLEN/AP

From left, the Mets' Francisco Lindor, Jose Iglesias, David Peterson and Brandon Nimmo celebrate in the dugout Monday after taking the lead during the eighth inning of the first game against the Braves.

# Mets, Braves advance after doubleheader split

## Arizona last team to be eliminated from playoff chase

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — A final day that wasn't on the schedule and won't soon be forgotten.

An improbable comeback by the New York Mets in the opening game of a makeup doubleheader to secure their playoff berth. A gritty recovery by the Atlanta Braves in the nightcap, stamping their postseason ticket as well.

And all the Arizona Diamondbacks could do was watch hopelessly from the desert, their hopes snuffed out by two games on the other side of the country.

"You're just focused on getting into the postseason," said Braves first baseman Matt Olson, soaked in champagne as he celebrated a 3-0 win in the last game of the regular season. "Whatever it took. If we had to play four games today, we would have done it."

The regular season went to extra innings after the Mets and Braves had a pair of games rained out last week by Hurricane Helene. They controlled their own fates, with each holding a tiebreaker edge over the defending NL champion Diamondbacks.

Arizona needed one team to sweep, so they were pulling for the Mets after they overcame deficits of 3-0 in the eighth inning and 7-6 in the ninth to win the opener 8-7, going ahead for good on Francisco Lindor's two-run homer.

"An instant classic game," said Brandon Nimmo, whose two-run

homer capped a six-run eighth.

The Braves, to their credit, bounced back to get the win they had to have. Even after ace Chris Sale was scratched because of back spasms, journeyman Grant Holmes stepped in to lead off a three-hitter spread among six pitchers.

At the end, in the perfect capper to a wacky day, there were champagne-spraying celebrations in both clubhouses at Truist Park.

Atlanta, New York and Arizona all finished 89-73.

Holmes found out he was starting about a half-hour before the first pitch.

"I was about to go get some food," said the 28-year-old Holmes, who finally made it to the big leagues this year after a decade in the minors. "They came up to me and said, 'Hey, you're going to start this one off today.' And I was like, 'Oh, OK, here we go.'"

With their postseason berth locked up, the Mets added left-hander Joey Lucchesi to the roster to start the second game. The 31-year-old left-hander spent most of the season at Triple-A Syracuse, giving up five runs in 4⅓ innings in his lone big league appearance before Monday.

He looked like an ace against the Braves, who might've still been a bit shellshocked after the way they lost the opener. Lucchesi (0-2) allowed just three hits, including a run-scoring single to Gio Urshela, in a six-inning, 111-pitch outing.

But Marcell Ozuna gave the Braves some breathing room with a two-run single in the seventh. Daysbel Hernandez (3-0) earned the win and Raisel Iglesias finished it off for his 34th save in 37 chances.

The Braves also got a scoreless inning from starter Reynaldo López, who had pitched six innings just two days earlier.

"I'm so proud of all those guys," Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said. "It takes the whole building to make something like this happen."

The Mets were already in party mode after Lindor's 33rd homer.

Trailing 3-0, with just three singles through seven innings against rookie Spencer Schwellenbach, New York's offense came to life in the eighth.

The Mets surged ahead with their six-run outburst. The Braves stormed back with four runs in the bottom half, as Ozzie Albies delivered a bases-loaded double with two outs for a 7-6 lead—giving him five RBIs in the game after a two-run homer in the third.

But New York delivered the final blow with Lindor's drive into the Braves bullpen off Pierce Johnson (7-5).

"That was one of the craziest games I've ever been a part of," said Carlos Mendoza, the Mets rookie manager. "Just the meaning of it. Coming back in the game and then losing the lead and then coming back again in the ninth. It was unbelievable, like you should write a book."

# Atlanta ace Sale out for Wild Card Series

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Atlanta Braves ace Chris Sale, the favorite for the National League Cy Young Award, is out for the Wild Card Series against the San Diego Padres because of back issues.

Sale was a last-minute scratch Monday from the final game of the regular season, the nightcap of a makeup doubleheader against the New York Mets.

Manager Brian Snitker said the Braves will be without their top starting pitcher when they face the Padres in a best-of-three series that begins Tuesday. The Braves will reassess Sale's status if they advance to the Division Series.

"He wants to step up," Snitker said. "We're hoping that with some more rest or whatever, we can get him right and get to the next round."

Journeyman Grant Holmes stepped in for Sale against the Mets, throwing one-hit ball over four innings as the Braves won 3-0 to clinch a wild-card berth. New York also made the playoffs with a thrilling 8-7 victory in the first game of the twin bill, while the defending NL champion Arizona Diamondbacks were eliminated.

All three teams finished 89-73, but the Braves and Mets held the season-series tiebreakers over the Diamondbacks.

Snitker said Sale (18-3, 2.38 ERA) has dealt with back issues periodically all season, though the issue became more problematic after his most recent start, a five-inning stint against Cincinnati on Sept. 19 that was notable for a drop in velocity.

"I think he felt it in Cincinnati, but it's something he's had off and on all year," Snitker said. "He knows how to deal with it."

Sale was scheduled to start last Wednesday against the Mets, but the game was rained out. He kept

getting pushed back, with Snitker insisting that he was simply trying to save the left-hander for an elimination game.

General manager Alex Anthopoulos insisted the latest round of back spasms only cropped up after a throwing session on Sunday.

"He's been throwing all week just to keep his arm going," Anthopoulos said. "He went out to the cages to throw. He came in after and told us his back was tight. We talked to him about it and he told us he's pitched with worse."

Anthopoulos said it was decided before the start of the doubleheader that Sale would not be able to go.

"The more we talked about it, this was the right thing," Anthopoulos said. "This is not an (injured list) thing. This is a day-to-day thing. If we could have him pitch and it was safe, we would do that. Regardless, we're going to need him where we want to go. We're going to need him going forward."

Snitker made the injury sound more serious after the doubleheader, conceding that Sale will not be available until the second round at the earliest.

It was a discouraging setback for Sale, who had battled injuries since 2018 but made it to the closing days of his first season with the Braves without any major issues.

Now the team is left pondering its options, which include bringing up a pitcher from the Triple-A roster to take Sale's spot against the Padres.

Top prospects Hurston Waldrep and AJ Smith-Shawver have continued throwing since the end of the minor league season. So has Ian Anderson, who has struggled with injuries since going 4-0 with a 1.26 ERA over eight starts in the 2020 and '21 postseasons.

"They're all going to be options," Snitker said.



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN/AP

The Atlanta Braves will be without ace Chris Sale for their Wild Card Series against the San Diego Padres after Sale suffered back spasms.

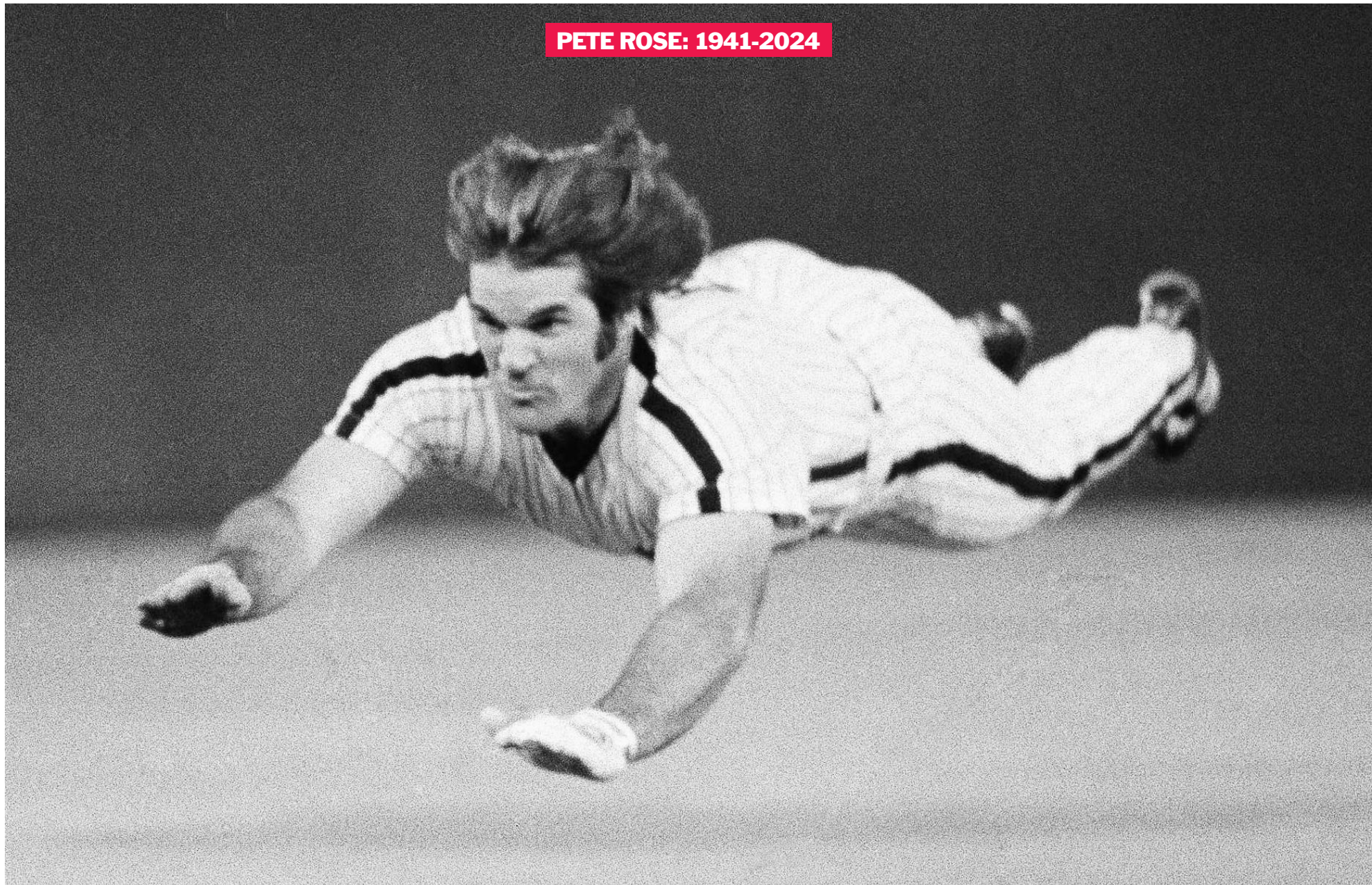
# SPORTS



**Playoff field complete**  
Mets, Braves split doubleheader, snag final two spots » **MLB, Page 23**



**PETE ROSE: 1941-2024**



RUSTY KENNEDY/AP

Known for his head-first slides, Pete Rose holds the major league record for hits (4,256), games played (3,562) and the National League record for the longest hitting streak (44).

# Baseball's hits leader dead at 83

## 'Charlie Hustle' never made it into Hall of Fame after lifetime ban for betting on MLB games

**BY HILLEL ITALIE**  
*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Pete Rose, baseball's career hits leader and fallen idol who undermined his historic achievements and Hall of Fame dreams by gambling on the game he loved and once embodied, has died. He was 83.

Stephanie Wheatley, a spokesperson for Clark County in Nevada, confirmed on behalf of the medical examiner that Rose died Monday. Wheatley said his cause and manner of death had not yet been determined.

For fans who came of age in the 1960s and '70s, no player was more exciting than the Cincinnati Reds'

No. 14, "Charlie Hustle," the brash superstar with shaggy hair and muscular forearms. At the dawn of artificial surfaces, divisional play and free agency, Rose was old school, a conscious throwback to baseball's early days. Millions could never forget him crouched and scowling at the plate, running full speed to first even after drawing a walk, or sprinting for the next base and diving headfirst into the bag.

Major League Baseball, which banished him in 1989, issued a brief statement expressing condolences and noting his "greatness, grit and determination on the field of play." Reds principal owner and manag-

**"You made all of us better. No matter the life we led. No one can replace you."**

**Johnny Bench**  
Reds teammate

ing partner Bob Castellini said in a statement that Rose was "one of the fiercest competitors the game has ever seen" and added: "We must never forget what he accomplished."

A 17-time All-Star, the switch-hitting Rose played on three World Series winners. He was the National League MVP in 1973 and World Series MVP two years later. He holds the major league record for games played (3,562) and plate appearances (15,890).

He was the leadoff man for one of baseball's most formidable lineups with the Reds' championship teams of 1975 and 1976, with teammates that included Hall of Famers John-

ny Bench, Tony Perez and Joe Morgan. But no milestone approached his 4,256 hits, breaking his hero Ty Cobb's 4,191 and signifying his excellence no matter the notoriety which followed. It was a total so extraordinary that you could average 200 hits for 20 years and still come up short.

Rose's secret was consistency, and longevity. Over 24 seasons, all but six played entirely with the Reds, Rose had 200 hits or more 10 times, and more than 180 four other times.

He batted .303 overall, even while switching from second base

**SEE LEADER ON PAGE 20**

## Goff has perfect passing night in Lions' win » NFL, Page 19

