

MILITARY

At Mexico border, US troop mission stays unchanged
Page 6



NBA PLAYOFFS

Second round keeps the historic trend of 20-point rallies going
Page 32



SUMMER MOVIE PREVIEW

Marvel, DC superheroes expected to do a lot of heavy lifting this season
Pages 12-13

Soldier honored for lifesaving actions during off-post shooting >> Page 4

STARS AND STRIPES®

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CONTINGENCY EDITION

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025

Free to Deployed Areas



Midair relief

COURTNEY SEBASTIANELLI/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force pilots carry an AIRUS bladder relief system during testing at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., in 2023. The final version of the system, which offers variants for male and female anatomy, became available in January.

Air Force pilots get innovative gear to 'go' while in flight

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

During more than a century of manned flight, a nagging problem has been how to answer nature's call when up in the wild blue yonder.

Modern fighter jets such as the F-15 Eagle top out at more than 1,900 miles per hour, though the technology for bladder relief for single and dual-seat aircraft pilots strapped into an ejector seat has lagged.

The problem is a bigger challenge for a growing segment of Air Force flight crews —

the 118 female fighter pilots in jets such as the F-15 Eagle, F-16 Fighting Falcon, F-22 Raptor, F-35 Lightning II and A-10 Thunderbolt II, as well as female weapons systems operators flying in two-seat variants.

"I've flown sorties where I end up covered in my own urine," said Capt. Madeleine Poisson, a F-15 weapons system officer with the 48th Wing based in England.

Prior to January, options for female pilots and weapons system operators for bladder relief in aircraft included adult diapers and a "piddle pack" sleeve that required unstrap-

ping from the seat, unzipping the lower part of their uniform and applying a synthetic sock-like funnel to their body.

There was also a pump system that was not suited to women compared to the men, for whom it was designed.

Along with the discomfort of "flying wet," at least two crashes — both involving male pilots — in the past three decades have been linked to faulty systems or pilot error while attempting in-flight relief, according to the Air Force.

SEE RELIEF ON PAGE 8

American chosen as new pope

By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Robert Prevost, a missionary who spent his career ministering in Peru and leads the Vatican's powerful office of bishops, was elected the first American pope in the 2,000-year history of the Catholic Church.

Prevost, a 69-year-old member of the Augustinian religious order, took the name Leo XIV. He appeared on the loggia of St. Peter's Square wearing the traditional red cape of the papacy — a cape that Pope Francis had eschewed on his election in 2013.

Prevost had been a leading candidate except for his nationality. There had long been a taboo against a U.S. pope, given the geopolitical power already wielded by the United States in the secular sphere. But Prevost, a Chicago native, was seemingly eligible also because he's a Peruvian citizen and lived for years in Peru, first as a missionary and then as an archbishop.

Francis clearly had his eye on Prevost and in many ways saw

SEE CHOSEN ON PAGE 11



ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AP

American Cardinal Robert Prevost, chosen as the 267th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church at the Vatican, will be known as Pope Leo XIV.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Disney sees 1.4M subscribers added, parks thrive

Associated Press

Disney posted solid profits and revenue in the second quarter as its domestic theme parks thrived and the company added well over a million subscribers to its streaming service.

The company also boosted its profit expectations for the year, sending shares up 11% Wednesday.

Disney also announced that it will build a seventh theme park in Abu Dhabi.

For the three months ended March 30, Disney earned \$3.28

billion, or \$1.81 per share. The Burbank, Calif., company lost \$20 million, or a penny per share, a year earlier.

Removing one time charges or benefits, earnings were \$1.45 per share, easily topping the \$1.18 that Wall Street was expecting, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

Revenue rose 7% to \$23.62 billion, also topping projections.

Revenue for Disney Entertainment, which includes the company's movie studios and streaming

service, climbed 9%, while revenue for the Experiences division, its parks, increased 6%.

Recent box office hits include "Moana 2" and "Mufasa: The Lion King." Its latest film, "Thunderbolts*," is currently sitting atop the box office. CEO Bob Iger and Chief Financial Officer Hugh Johnston said in prepared remarks that they're confident in this year's movie slate, which includes "Lilo & Stitch," "The Fantastic Four: First Steps" and "Avatar: Fire and Ash."

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (May 9)	0.86	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound (May 9)	\$1.30	Britain (Pound)	1.3336
Japanese yen (May 9)	139.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3871
South Korean won (May 9)	1363.00	China (Yuan)	7.2254
		Denmark (Krone)	6.5978
		Egypt (Pound)	50.6291
		Euro	0.8845
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7692
		Hungary (Forint)	358.42
		Israel (Shekel)	3.5823
		Japan (Yen)	144.55
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3065
		Norway (Krone)	10.3684
		Philippines (Peso)	55.58
		Poland (Zloty)	3.76
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7508
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.2957
		South Korea (Won)	1396.65
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8264		
Thailand (Baht)	32.81		
Turkey (NewLira)	38.6294		

(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.)

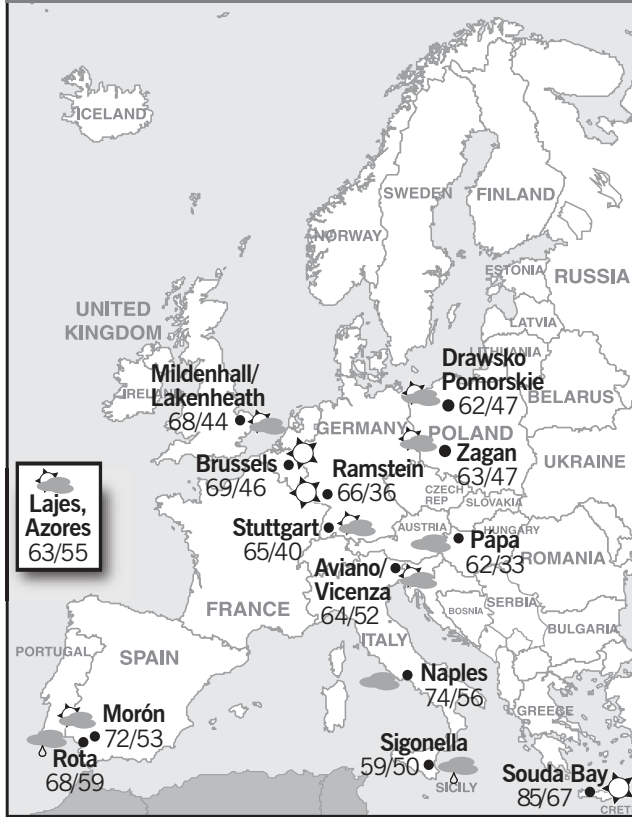
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	7.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	4.38
3-month bill	4.32
30-year bond	4.78

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 21
- Comics 19,22-23
- Crossword 19,22-23
- Faces 20
- Opinion 24
- Sports 25-32

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MILITARY

Analysts say Houthis primed to rearm even after US deal

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

The Houthis are rearming for future fights and will continue to attack Israel, analysts say following a deal the Iran-backed militants struck with the White House to stop attacking Red Sea shipping in exchange for an end to crippling American airstrikes.

The agreement, which the Houthis characterized as an initial understanding, came after nearly seven weeks of U.S. bombing of more than 1,000 Houthi targets.

Those strikes killed top Houthi leaders, destroyed command-and-control sites and took out air defense systems, missile storage sites and drone stashes, the Pentagon said.

But a recent attack on Israel's Ben Gurion Airport shows that the militants are still capable of firing long-range ballistic missiles. With their smuggling networks intact,

the Houthis will use the pause to replenish their supplies, Yemen analyst Nadwa Al-Dawsari said, adding that local monitors detected a major weapons shipment to the Houthis just last week.

"For the Houthis, the ceasefire is not a concession but a calculated tactical pause, an opportunity to regroup, adapt and rearm," said Al-Dawsari, a fellow at the Geneva-based Center on Armed Groups, in an email.

The Houthis, who control Yemen's capital of Sanaa, have survived 11 years of war with the country's internationally recognized government and a supporting coalition led by Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the recent U.S. attacks represented an escalation beyond the previous administration.

But a full military defeat of the Houthis would require a ground operation, said Wolf-Christian Paes, a senior fellow at the Interna-

tional Institute for Strategic Studies.

Such a move likely would be politically unpopular in the U.S. and costly, said Paes, a former member of the U.N. Security Council's expert panel for Yemen.

The Navy could have continued its airstrike campaign, which by some estimates has already cost more than \$750 million. But it's possible that the U.S. simply was running out of military targets, Paes said.

The Pentagon also has faced scrutiny over the loss of expensive military equipment, including at least seven \$30 million MQ-9 Reaper drones destroyed by the Houthis and two F/A-18 Super Hornet jets due to mishaps aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman in recent weeks.

A recent analysis from the Institute for the Study of War and the Critical Threats Project suggested



GERALD WILLIS/U.S. Air Force

A U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet flies over the Red Sea in the U.S. Central Command area of operations on March 23. U.S. airstrikes degraded the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen but the group's smuggling network remains viable, according to analysts.

that the Houthis have learned they can disrupt international shipping with minimal consequences.

"They can basically restart this for any reason at any time they want," said Brian Carter, the Middle East portfolio manager for the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Houthi decision to halt attacks on shipping is reminiscent of an agreement with Saudi Arabia in 2022, after which the Houthis rearmed with the projectiles

they're using today, said Behnam Ben Taleblu, the senior director of the Iran program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

The recent U.S. strikes on the Houthis did generate short-term effects, especially by killing top leadership, said Carter, who nevertheless expects the Houthis to reconstitute.

"This ceasefire may have created a temporary lull," he said. "But one day, the United States is going to have to deal with this once again."

More AFRICOM airstrikes in Somalia coincides with policy change

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Africa Command is launching airstrikes in Somalia at a record-setting pace as the military seeks to counter an influx of Islamic State fighters, military figures show.

Since January, AFRICOM has conducted 25 strikes in Somalia, many of which were directed at ISIS militants, according to command strike reports.

If the intensity of the bombing campaign continues, AFRICOM will exceed the 63 strikes it launched in Somalia in 2019, the

highest tally for the country in the command's history.

"Yes — we've seen an increase in airstrikes," AFRICOM spokeswoman Kelly Callahan said in a statement Thursday.

The uptick coincides with a January directive by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to grant more decision-making authority on airstrikes to AFRICOM commanders.

AFRICOM's Gen. Michael Langley said during Senate testimony in April that those expanded authorities have given the command "the capability to hit (terrorists) harder."

The most recent strike, which happened Sunday, targeted ISIS-Somalia fighters in the Golis Mountains in the northeastern part of the country. The flurry of strikes comes as foreign fighters try to gain a larger foothold in Somalia.

ISIS's Somalia cell has grown from about 500 fighters to 1,500 over the past 18 months, with roughly 60% being foreign, Callahan said.

"ISIS-Somalia, as a franchise of ISIS, has benefited from and shared innovation, finances, and tactics and procedures, including attack plotting with foreign aspi-

rants, with other ISIS groups," Callahan said.

The expansion of ISIS in Somalia comes as AFRICOM also contends with al-Shabab, which the U.S. also targets with airstrikes. With an estimated 7,000 to 12,000 fighters, al-Shabab remains the most formidable terrorist organization in Somalia and the largest in Africa.

U.S. military personnel in Somalia have long offered various forms of support to the country's shaky central government in its struggle to keep al-Shabab at bay.

AFRICOM's ongoing missions there involve training and advising

local ground forces, as well as carrying out airstrikes coordinated with the Somali government.

Langley said in his Senate testimony that the militant group continues to pose "a heightened terrorist threat," especially because it has begun colluding with Houthi rebels across the Gulf of Aden in Yemen.

"We're watching that closely," Langley said.

Some security analysts have said coordination with the Iran-backed Houthis could give al-Shabab access to more sophisticated weaponry.

ACLU asks court to reinstate DODEA books, curriculum after DOD order

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A group of military families is seeking a court order forcing the immediate reinstatement of more than 200 books and other curricular materials removed from Defense Department schools as part of a Pentagon mandate.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a motion Wednesday for a preliminary injunction on behalf of six families with students enrolled in Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

They have a lawsuit pending against DODEA that accuses President Donald Trump's administration of "system-wide censorship" in violation of their First Amendment rights.

"Despite the anxiety and uncertainty among DODEA parents and



Jasmine Vu

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a legal motion Wednesday on behalf of six families with students at Defense Department schools that seeks reinstatement of books and other curricular materials.

students right now, we know that our children have a right to an education free from censorship, and we won't stand by silently and watch that right be taken away" Jessica Henninger, a plaintiff on behalf of

her three children at schools at Fort Campbell, Ky., said in an ACLU statement Wednesday.

In Wednesday's filing, the families ask the court to bar the removal of books and curriculum based on

what the government views as promoting gender ideology and discriminatory equity ideology, as defined by executive orders issued earlier this year. They also want a ruling issued to DODEA Director Beth Schiavino-Narvaez and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth "to reinstate these books and curricula to school library shelves and classrooms," according to the motion, filed in the federal court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Schiavino-Narvaez and Hegseth are also named in the ACLU lawsuit, which was filed last month on behalf of the same families.

The plaintiffs include 12 students from pre-K to 11th grade who attend DODEA schools as children of active-duty service members in Virginia, Kentucky, Italy and Japan.

DODEA "does not comment on

active litigation to ensure the integrity of the legal process and to respect all parties involved," the agency said last month in response to the complaint.

The new motion contains a list of 233 books that the plaintiffs say have been removed from circulation. The vast majority of titles appear to be by or about women, people of color or LGBTQ+ people, the ACLU stated.

DODEA has yet to release a list of books removed as part of an ongoing compliance review directed by the Pentagon in early February.

In documents filed Wednesday in support of the ACLU's motion, parents describe repeated efforts to find out which books and curriculum topics have been shelved. Freedom of Information Act requests for such lists have so far gone unanswered, they say.

MILITARY

Soldier honored for risking life in off-post shooting

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Army Sgt. Brian Lieberman said he was simply doing what the service trained him to do when he risked his own life to respond to the sounds of gunshots outside his Fayetteville, N.C., apartment almost two years ago.

“I went into fight or flight,” the 22-year-old combat medic with the 82nd Airborne Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team said of his June 6, 2023, heroics for which he was awarded the Soldier’s Medal on Tuesday at Fort Bragg. “I was just doing my job.”

The soldier was in his apartment with his roommates that evening when he heard gunshots and immediately grabbed his personally owned firearm and ran toward the commotion near the apartment complex’s pool, according to the citation for his Soldier’s Medal, the Army’s top award for noncombat heroics. Lieberman shouted out that he was an Army medic and was pointed to a victim — a 14-year-old girl — who had been shot.

He began treating the victim when he heard a car “rapidly approaching” and saw “an individual hanging out of the rear window aiming a firearm at him,” according to the citation.

“I threw myself over the girl, almost used myself as a shield [for] her so she wouldn’t get shot again,” Lieberman said. “I pulled out my weapon and returned fire, then continued to treat the vic-

tim.”

After the car fled the scene, Lieberman used a plastic grocery bag as an improvised chest seal to slow the victim’s bleeding until he could receive proper medical supplies.

His actions saved the girl’s life and were credited with helping end the active shooter incident, according to the Army.

Col. Jason Schuerger, the 1st Brigade’s commander, said Tuesday that Lieberman’s response to the gunfire went above and beyond the call of duty and was not the kind of reaction most people have to such incidents. The colonel said the soldier’s actions showed the courage of paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne, especially combat medics.

“Without a doubt, our airborne medics move to the sound of gunfire to save lives,” Schuerger said. “Of course he moved to the sound of gunfire, of course he administered aid, of course he saved somebody’s life.”

The Soldier’s Medal was established in 1926 to “recognize distinguished individual acts of heroism not involving actual contact with any enemy,” according to the Army.

Lieberman said Tuesday that he did not expect to receive the high honor. He said he still finds the entire incident at his home on American soil difficult to believe.

“It was surreal,” he said. “Felt like I had woken up the next day from a crazy dream.”



PRIM HIBBARD/U.S. Army

Army Sgt. Brian Lieberman receives the Soldier’s Medal from Col. Jason Schuerger during a ceremony at Fort Bragg, N.C., on Tuesday.



ANTONIO DE LA FUENTE/U.S. Air Force

Five battlefield crosses are displayed in honor of five Marines during a memorial ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., in February 2024. The Marines were killed in a helicopter crash.

Helo crash that left 5 Marines dead caused by pilot error, probe finds

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A fatal Marine Corps helicopter crash last year was caused by pilot error, but deteriorating weather conditions and the use of night vision goggles might have been contributing factors, according to an investigation released Wednesday.

Three pilots and two crew chiefs were aboard the CH-53 Super Stallion that crashed Feb. 6, 2024, during a late-night flight when the aircraft hit a mountain near Pine Valley, Calif., on its way back to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. The helicopter was discovered the next morning. All five Marines aboard were killed in the crash.

The helicopter, “TIGER 43,” was assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16 of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. The crew was returning to the base from Creech Air Force Base, Nev., when the helicopter crashed.

The investigating officer ultimately found the pilot failed to avoid the mountainous terrain likely due to poor visibility.

During the nighttime flight, there was moderate icing and cloud layers along the helicopter’s route that might have prevented a safe flight. The crew was also using night-vision goggles, which likely did not give them the clear view needed to avoid crashing into the terrain, investigators found.

The limits of night-vision goggles also have been identified as a potential factor in the fatal collision of an Army Black Hawk helicopter and a passenger jet near Reagan Washington National Airport in January that killed 67 people. The goggles can reduce a pilot’s ability to determine distance

and can be degraded by weather or light pollution.

“We may never know the exact reason for this root cause, and the [investigating officer] cannot pinpoint one explanation,” the report reads.

While not a contributing or causal factor, the investigation also found the commanding officer of the Miramar-based squadron should not have approved the crew to fly.

Nine months after the crash, Lt. Col. Nicholas Harvey, the commanding officer, was relieved of duty “due to a loss of trust and confidence in his ability to continue to serve in that position,” according to a statement provided by the service in November.

“The commanding general determined that [Harvey] exhibited poor judgment and was expected to exercise greater care in the performance of his duties,” said the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, which oversees West Coast-based squadrons.

In interviews contained in the report, multiple members of the squadron said crews had been stretched thin because their unit had to fly additional missions to compensate for last year’s monthslong grounding of the V-22 Osprey fleet.

Three days after the crash, the service announced five Marines were killed in the crash — Capt. Benjamin Moulton, Capt. Jack Casey, Capt. Miguel Nava, Lance Cpl. Donovan Davis and Sgt. Alec Langen. On Feb. 16, 2024, the squadron held a memorial ceremony in which more than 550 people gathered to pay tribute to the loss of the crew.

Moulton, 27, was a CH-53E helicopter pilot from Emmett, Idaho. He was commissioned in March

2019 and promoted to captain in August 2023, according to the Marines. His decorations include the National Defense Service Medal.

Casey, 26, was a CH-53E helicopter pilot from Dover, N.H. He was commissioned in May 2019 and promoted to captain in September 2023, according to the service. His decorations include the National Defense Service Medal.

Nava, 28, was a CH-53E helicopter pilot from Traverse City, Mich. He was the longest tenured of the five fallen Marines. He was commissioned in May 2017 and promoted to captain in November 2021. His decorations include the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, according to the service.

Davis, 21, was a CH-53E helicopter crew chief from Olathe, Kan. He enlisted in the Marines in September 2019 and was promoted to lance corporal, the service said. His decorations include the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal and a Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Langen, 23, was a CH-53E helicopter crew chief from Chandler, Ariz. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in September 2017 and was promoted to sergeant in October 2022, the service said. His decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal and two Sea Service Deployment Ribbons.

“We will never forget the Marines of TIGER 43,” the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Gary Warner, and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

PACIFIC

N. Korea fires short-range ballistic missiles

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

North Korea fired an unspecified number of short-range ballistic missiles off its eastern coast Thursday morning, possibly to test their capabilities ahead of potential exports, according to the South's military.

The missiles were launched from Wonsan, a city about 90 miles east of Pyongyang, between 8:10 a.m. and 9:20 a.m., the Ministry of National Defense told reporters via text message. They flew roughly 500 miles before splashing into the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

U.S., South Korean and Japanese intelligence agencies are analyzing the launches and have shared data on the missiles' specifications, the ministry said. North

Korea's launch preparations had been detected in advance, it added.

"We strongly condemn North Korea's missile launch as a clear provocation that seriously threatens the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula," the ministry said.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the weapons posed no threat to the United States or its allies.

Washington's "commitments to the defense of [South Korea] and Japan remain ironclad," a command statement said. "The United States condemns these actions and calls on [North Korea] to refrain from further unlawful and destabilizing acts."

The episode marks North Korea's first ballistic missile testing since March 10, when it fired sev-

eral missiles off its western coast during the start of Freedom Shield, an annual joint military exercise involving the U.S. and South Korea.

The launches may have been conducted to verify missile performance before possible overseas exports, South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesman Lee Sung Joon said at a news conference in Seoul. He did not say where the missiles might be sent.

The United States and South Korean intelligence agencies accuse the North of supplying lethal aid to Russia during its three-year invasion of Ukraine. This includes troops, long-range artillery systems, artillery shells and short-range ballistic missiles.

Washington and Seoul also suspect Pyongyang of exporting bal-

listic missile components and technology to other countries, including Pakistan, Syria and Iran, in the 1980s and 1990s.

North Korea made several displays of military prowess in the weeks leading up to its latest missile barrage.

On Wednesday, the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported that the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, had ordered munitions factories to boost artillery shell production and that the regime was producing them four times its annual rate.

Kim also showcased a new, 5,000-ton destroyer during an April 25 launch ceremony at the Nampo shipping port on the country's western coast, KCNA reported at the time. The destroyer is the largest warship produced by the



KCNA

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervises a cruise missile test Feb. 26.

North and could be armed with cruise and ballistic missiles, KCNA added.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoojin Lee contributed to this report.

Audit finds toxic waste missteps at base in Japan

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A Defense Department inspector general's audit faulted this U.S. airlift hub in western Tokyo for mishandling toxic substances, including chemicals from firefighting foam and electrical equipment, according to a recent report.

The audit cited discrepancies at Yokota involving improper storage of 250 gallons of water contaminated with PFAS — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — and the incorrect disposal of PCBs — polychlorinated biphenyls — found in oil from electrical transformers.

The issues were uncovered during a broader review of hazardous waste management by the DOD in Japan.

The units involved — the 374th Airlift Wing and 5th Air Force — have since addressed the discrepancies by submitting revised plans for proper handling of hazardous materials, according to the April 30 report.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PFAS-contaminated water was stored in drums behind the Yokota Community Center in 2023, according to a Defense Department inspector general's audit.

"We will continue to adhere to all relevant agreements, obligations and procedures as good

stewards of our installations and the environment through continued and close coordination with

our Government of Japan counterparts as we work together towards sustainable solutions," wing spokeswoman Capt. Emma Quirk said by email Wednesday.

The PCBs were disposed of during construction of a steam-generating power plant near the Yokota Community Center, which houses the base exchange, commissary, food court and other businesses.

The construction contract was awarded in November 2019 and the plant was completed by November 2023. A qualified Japanese contractor safely removed 26 barrels of insulating oil and oil residue from the transformers, according to the audit.

However, the wing failed to dispose of the oil through the Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services, as mandated by the Japan Environmental Governing Standards. The wing did not obtain a waiver due to time and budget constraints, the report said.

The PFAS incident stemmed from a fire-suppression system malfunction during cold weather

on Jan 25-26, 2023. The contaminated water was stored in drums behind the community center because the designated hazardous waste site was full, and the wing lacked procedures for storing PFAS waste elsewhere, according to the report.

PFOS and PFOA, both components of PFAS, are sometimes called "forever chemicals" because they build up and persist in the environment and in human bodies, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The agency updated its health advisories in 2021 to say no level of PFOS and PFOA in drinking water is safe. Studies involving lab animals show exposure increases the risk of certain tumors, according to the American Cancer Society.

While the DOD report found no leakage at the storage site, a July 10 report by Tokyo Shimbun, citing unnamed sources, said 167 gallons of PFAS-contaminated water spilled at the community center's loading dock on Jan. 25, 2023.

DODEA teachers union sues over order cutting bargaining rights

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

The union representing Department of Defense Education Activity teachers is suing President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, alleging they unlawfully suspended its rights to due process, free speech and collective bargaining.

The lawsuit — filed Monday by the Federal Education Association in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia — challenges a March 27 executive order that the union says illegally stripped it

and two affiliated unions of their rights to collectively bargain on behalf of members.

The order, according to a White House fact sheet, was intended to "ensure that agencies vital to national security can execute their missions without delay and protect the American people."

The order, which affects thousands of federal workers across 18 agencies and 25 subdivisions, has already been challenged in court by other federal employee unions.

U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman ruled on April 25 that key

provisions of the order were unlawful, CNN reported that day.

The FEA, its stateside branch, and the Antilles Consolidated Education Association represent more than 5,400 teachers and staff at 161 DODEA schools.

More than 64,000 students attend those schools inside the United States and on military bases overseas, according to the complaint.

The suit contends the executive order is "wholly unmoored from the narrow authority that Congress granted to the president to

exclude federal agencies and agency subdivisions from collective bargaining for reasons of national security."

The complaint argues that Hegseth failed to use his authority to exempt DODEA — which the union says has no direct national security role — from the order's mandates.

The suit alleges that DODEA has already begun implementing the order, including eliminating payroll deductions for union dues.

The order violates the separation of powers held by Congress

and the executive branch and disregards the Fifth and First Amendments, the suit claims.

It further alleges the order's "real purposes are to retaliate against federal unions for engaging in protected speech and petitioning activities."

Doreen Greenwald, president of the National Treasury Employees Union, called the order a "brazen, illegal attack" and "an attempt to silence the voices of our nation's public servants," according to a March 31 report by Court-house News Service.

MILITARY

At border, US troop mission unchanged

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — More than 200 migrants have now been charged with trespassing in the new military zone along New Mexico's southern border, yet service members still have not taken part in the physical arrests.

The military zone in New Mexico was established recently to give troops the jurisdiction to apprehend migrants crossing unlawfully into the United States from Mexico. But military operations at the southern border have largely remained the same. Service members detect the presence of people in the zone, called the New Mexico National Defense Area, and alert federal agents who make the arrests.

Troops still have not used their recently authorized power to detain people on the land, said Army Maj. Geoffrey Carmichael,

spokesman for the Joint Task Force-Southern Border.

"I can confirm that task force personnel were instrumental in several detections that occurred, which resulted in swift apprehension carried out by the U.S. Border Patrol who were operating in close proximity to patrolling task force personnel," he said. "I can also confirm task force personnel have neither made any detentions nor apprehensions of alleged trespassers within the national defense areas."

Because troops work in such a close partnership with Customs and Border Protection officers, they have not had to take that next step themselves, he said.

Those detained were migrants also charged with entering the U.S. without authorization, according to the Justice Department.

The cases of the people charged

are in U.S. District Court in New Mexico, where the Army established the military zone last month. It is considered part of Fort Huachuca in Arizona. The area is roughly 170 miles long and 60 feet wide, stretching across much of the southern edge of New Mexico. It does not include any tribal lands.

A couple of weeks later, the Army established the Texas National Defense Area as part of Fort Bliss in El Paso. It extends east more than 50 miles from El Paso to the town of Fort Hancock.

However, no one has been charged with entering this area yet, according to the Justice Department.

Roughly 6,600 soldiers and Marines are working along the southwest border, primarily in a support role to Customs and Border Protection. However, when the defense areas were established,

troops were given additional authorities to temporarily detain anyone trespassing on the new military land — just as they would at any military base.

The border deployments first began in 2018 during President Donald Trump's first term and continued under former President Joe Biden with about 2,500 National Guard at the border at the end of his administration.

When Trump returned to office in January, he ordered active-duty forces to the mission. More than 4,000 have deployed to the border. It is part of his goal of making border security a top priority for the military.

Trump ordered the creation of the military border zones to sidestep laws that prohibit the military from conducting civilian law enforcement.

People detained in the military zones can face a federal charge for

trespassing on military land, which is a misdemeanor that carries the penalty of up to a year in custody and \$100,000 in fines. More traditional illegal entry charges only hold a penalty of up to six months in jail and up to \$5,000 in fines, according to The Washington Post.

Chief Magistrate Judge Gregory Wormuth in New Mexico ordered government lawyers last week to submit a brief explaining their view of the legal standards required to convict someone of trespassing on military property, according to The Post. He also asked whether defendants must have known it was military property to be found guilty.

The southern border task force said troops began installing signs on the land immediately after it was transferred into Army ownership. It will remain Army land for three years.

Military border charges sow confusion in court

The Washington Post

LASCROCES, N.M. — The swift expansion of the Trump administration's new "national defense areas" on the southern border — enabling U.S. troops to detain migrants so that prosecutors can charge them with trespassing on military property — is sowing confusion among defendants, their lawyers and judges, one of whom called the move "unprecedented."

The Defense Department in recent days has taken control of most of the southern boundary of New Mexico as well as part of the border in West Texas, transforming a 60-foot-wide strip of borderland into a military zone and warning that anyone who enters it risks criminal charges. More than 200 migrants have been charged with at least two crimes, for unauthorized entry into the United States and a military installation. Some also face an additional charge.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced the expanded prosecutions in April during a visit to New Mexico as part of the Trump administration's quest to obtain "100%" operational control of the border, where illegal crossings have plunged since Inauguration Day. But defense lawyers say the criminal charges are excessive, because most migrants were unaware that the rugged and remote terrain they stumbled into had recently been transformed into military territory.

Defense lawyers said it is unclear whether migrants could even see the warning signs Hegseth said would be posted in English and Spanish.

"People have no idea they are committing this new offense," Rosanne Camunez, a defense attorney, said in an interview last week as dozens of migrants appeared in court in Las Cruces to face the new criminal charges.

The military-related charges are so unusual that Chief Magistrate Judge Gregory Wormuth in New Mexico ordered government lawyers last week to submit a brief explaining, in their view, the legal standards re-



PAUL RATJE/For The Washington Post

Part of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, is cut off from the U.S. by the border wall in Sunland Park, N.M. The Defense Department has established a 60-foot-wide strip of borderland into a military zone and is warning that anyone who enters it risks criminal charges.

quired to convict someone of trespassing on military property.

"As with all criminal offenses, the government must establish that a defendant possesses the requisite mens rea," Wormuth wrote in his order, referring to the Latin term for the defendant's state of mind and the requirement for most federal crimes that prosecutors prove the defendant intended to break the law. "The scarcity of case law relating to these offenses, particularly given the unprecedented nature of prosecuting such offenses in this factual context, leaves the Court unclear about the mens rea standard as applied in these cases."

In his order, Wormuth asked whether, to be found guilty, defendants must have known that the property they trespassed on is under military control and restricted from the public and that the migrants intended to violate the rules anyway.

In a response Monday, U.S. Attorney Ryan Ellison in New Mexico said that anyone who crosses into the border zone is "now unlawful-

ly entering both the United States and a restricted military area." His office vowed in a news release last week to prosecute the cases aggressively, and said the effort is the "first large-scale use of a novel criminal statute" targeting undocumented immigrants.

"Trespassers into the National Defense Area will be Federally prosecuted — no exceptions," Ellison said in a statement last week.

Migrants who slip over the border have been at risk of facing criminal charges for years, mainly for illegally entering the United States, a minor crime under Title 8, which governs federal immigration laws.

With the expanded military zone, Ellison wrote, migrants are being charged with entering military property in violation of an Army security regulation under Title 50, the national defense and intelligence code. They also might face charges for violating part of Title 18, the federal criminal code, which makes it unlawful to enter a military property "for any purpose prohibited by law or lawful regulation."

Some have been charged with all three offenses.

All are misdemeanors, but the military charges increase the penalties.

The Title 50 charge, for instance, carries up to a year in custody and \$100,000 in fines, while the more traditional illegal entry charge under Title 8, which governs immigration laws, has a penalty of up to six months in jail and up to \$5,000 in fines.

The Title 18 charge is punishable by up to six months in jail.

Ellison wrote that a defendant is guilty of violating the Title 50 Army security regulation if they enter the military zone through an area that is "not a designated port of entry — and knows that such conduct is unlawful." Separately, a person may be guilty of violating the Title 18 section if they crossed into the zone for the purpose of sneaking into the United States, an additional violation of law.

Ellison said someone may be found guilty whether they saw the posted warning signs or not. Nonetheless, he wrote that the government has posted 199 signs along New Mexico's southern border in English and Spanish alerting people not to enter the area, which he described in court records as "difficult and unforgiving desert and mountainous terrain."

The signs say that the area is restricted Defense Department property and that all people who enter may be detained and searched. The signs also forbid unauthorized photography, note-taking or mapmaking of the area.

The signs do not warn people that they could be prosecuted for trespassing.

Defense officials referred questions about the signs and the prosecutions to the Justice Department, which did not respond to inquiries. Ellison also did not respond to requests for comment.

Migrants charged with the offenses have told law enforcement they are from mostly Spanish-speaking countries. But some were from Turkey, where the main language is Turkish, and Pakistan, where the official language is Urdu.

MILITARY

DOD seeks to ID POWs killed in 1945 fire

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

Nearly 80 years after a devastating fire tore through a Japanese military prison during World War II, a Defense Department agency is working to identify American prisoners of war who died in the blaze.

Among those believed killed was 2nd Lt. Eugene Homyak, a 21-year-old radio operator from Denver. He was one of two survivors when his B-29 Superfortress bomber was shot down over Japan on March 10, 1945.

Homyak died weeks later, the Army told his family, at Tokyo Military Prison when it burned to the ground during a firebombing on May 25, 1945, killing dozens of American POWs interred there.

The military said Homyak's remains were "not recoverable."

Now, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or DPAA, is trying to prove otherwise.

"Do we know exactly who died?" DPAA historian Aelwen Wetherby said in a March 14 phone interview. "I would say no. We have a lot of evidence, but any time we're dealing with POWs, especially in circumstances like those surrounding the Tokyo Prison fire, it comes with a level of uncertainty."

The eldest of Homyak's two daughters, Carol Monday, 82, said she has always believed her father died in the prison fire. She remembers seeing him once as a small child.

"It was agony," she said by phone on March 18. "My grandmother and my mother, they were in agony trying to figure out what was happening."

After the war, investigators compiled a list of 62 Americans believed to have died in the blaze. But that total was based largely on circumstantial evidence.

Sixteen names came from dog tags found at the prison site. Another 31 were provided by some of the roughly 400 Japanese inmates held alongside the Americans. The remaining 15 names came from interviews with surviving POWs who recalled seeing or hearing of others possibly transferred to Tokyo Military Prison but could not confirm their fates.

"The Japanese records burned when the prison burned, so we do not have a formal list from the Japanese of who the POWs were," Alexander Christensen, the DPAA forensic anthropologist leading the effort, said by phone March 21.

After the fire, Japanese officials buried what they believed to be

American remains in a bomb shelter trench. In 1950, those unidentified remains were reinterred as unknowns at Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines.

Postwar investigators concluded the remains represented 64 individuals. Of those, 25 were identified through dental records — all U.S. Army Air Forces bomber crew members, Christensen said.

"These guys had much better documented dental work than many World War II casualties, certainly better than your standard Army infantryman," he said.

In 2022, DPAA exhumed the remaining 39 sets for analysis at its lab in Hawaii.

For the sake of thoroughness, the project has expanded the initial list from 62 names to 81 by including 19 additional bomber crew members who went missing over Japan and may have died in the fire.

"There's no evidence that they were brought to the prison, but they could have been," Christensen said.

The 39 sets of remains under analysis are so badly commingled that DNA is the only path to identification.

"There isn't a single accession of that 39 that only has one person



Library of Congress

This image from Sept. 17, 1945, near the Imperial Palace shows the devastating results of Allied firebombing of Tokyo in the final months of World War II.

in it," he said.

But DNA testing has been inconsistent. Some samples yield usable genetic sequences, while many do not — possibly due to varying soil conditions at the cemetery.

Success now depends largely on collecting DNA reference samples from relatives of the 81 men. As of February, DPAA had samples for 63 of them.

So far, two men have been identified.

Monday, her sister and a male cousin submitted DNA samples last year. She believes her father is among those being analyzed in the Hawaii lab.

"It's exciting," she said of the thought of his remains coming home. "And I think it's exciting because it's been kind of a blank spot, you know?"

Giro d'Italia bicycle race to pass US bases in Italy

By **KENT HARRIS**
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Americans based in Italy will have a chance to see many of the world's top cyclists in action over the next few weeks.

The Giro d'Italia, one of the three "Grand Tour" competitions along with the Tour de France and the Vuelta a Espana, begins Friday in Albania.

This year's event will cover 2,140 miles before ending June 1 in Rome. The race passes near every major U.S. military community in Italy except Naval Air Station Sigonella.

Here are some of the events happening near U.S. bases:

Stage 6 on May 15 begins in Potenza and ends in Naples. The 141-mile stage has a low difficulty.

Stage 10 on May 20 is a nearly 18-mile time trial that begins in Lucca and ends at the piazza that's home to the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Unlike the case in most stages, onlookers will have a better chance to see individual cyclists in action as they race separately against the clock.

Stage 13 on May 23 begins in Rovigo and ends in Vicenza. The 112-mile stage is rated at medium difficulty and the finish line is at the



FACEBOOK/USA Cycling

American Brandon McNulty, seen here racing in Oak Ridge, Tenn., in 2023, will be competing in this year's Giro d'Italia bicycle race.

city's famous Monte Berico.

Stage 15 on May 25 begins in Asiago and ends in Fiume Veneto. The 136-mile stage is rated high

difficulty due to several climbs. The long line of cyclists will pass along the SS-13 through the communities of Sacile, Fontanafredda

and Pordenone — where many Americans from Aviano Air Base reside — near the end of the stage.

Three Americans are listed as

participating among the 23 teams featured.

Brandon McNulty is one of eight riders listed for UAE Team Emirates, while Luke Lamperti rides for the Belgian team Soudal Quick-Step and Larry Warbasse is a member of Switzerland's Tudor Pro Cycling Team.

The only team officially based in the United States, EF Education/Easy Post, does not feature an American rider.

McNulty won a stage at the event in 2023 and is the one of the most well-known American riders. Defending champion and Tour de France victor Tadej Pogacar of Slovenia will not be competing at the event this year.

Organizers say that streets along the route generally will be closed off about two hours before participants are expected to pass through. They'll reopen about a half-hour after the last race vehicle has passed.

Other than time trials, where the route will be closed for much of the day, those catching the race in person will likely see a few minutes of action as large groups of riders quickly pass by. They'll have more time to spend with vans selling merchandise that follow and trail the riders along the stage.

MILITARY

IG: Notification policy needed at day cares

Questions raised about informing parents about possible abuse

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon needs a streamlined policy on how and when to notify parents that their child might have experienced abuse or neglect in a military child care facility and to document the process, according to a Defense Department watchdog report released Wednesday.

The 42-page report from the department's inspector general is the first of two evaluating military child care facilities and programs. The second report will focus on policies that verify whether child abuse allegations were handled appropriately at select military day cares, known as child development centers.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The Pentagon needs a streamlined policy on how and when to notify parents that their child might have experienced abuse or neglect in a military child care facility, according to a report.

Jules Hurst, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told the inspector general that the updated policy on notification will be issued by Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year. The Army, Navy and Marines Corps

responded that each would implement the new DOD policy, with the latter two estimating it would be done by April 2026. The Air Force did not respond to the inspector general, but a spokesperson for the service said Wednes-

day that it concurs with the report's recommendation.

Defense leaders called on the inspector general to review notification policies last year after incidents in military-run centers raised questions about when and how parents should be informed about possible abuse or neglect, as well as the proper procedure for handling the allegations.

The military operates America's largest employer-sponsored child care program with about 200,000 children of service members and DOD civilians receiving care, according to the report. The facilities and home-based providers can care for newborns up to children aged 12. The report focused on facilities caring for kids up to age 5.

While instances of abuse are lower in military facilities than in the civilian community, there have been at least two with criminal convictions in recent years.

Wednesday's report confirms what the families have long feared: a systemic failure to promptly and consistently notify

families of child abuse allegations at centers, said Glen Sturtevant, an attorney for the families.

"Without a consistent process to notify parents of abuse allegations, children in these centers are left vulnerable, and parents are left in the dark," he said. "This lack of transparency has compounded the trauma for these children and their families. There must be immediate reforms to ensure accountability, protect our service members' children, and restore trust in these facilities."

During the inspector general's evaluation, the Pentagon issued a policy update requiring notifications to parents or guardians be sent within 24 hours of learning about the allegation of abuse or neglect, according to the report. However, the policy update doesn't address how this communication should occur and the necessary follow up.

Before this, only the Navy had a specific time for notification — days cares had 24 hours for verbal communication and 48 hours for written.

Relief: New system helps increase comfort without decreasing capability

FROM PAGE 1

But male and female pilots have some relief arriving with a new system developed under the "Sky High Relief Challenge" issued by AFWERX, the service's idea incubator program based at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

The program tries to solve key issues at an accelerated timetable compared to the sometimes glacial pace of normal military procurement. Instead of years, ideas can get approved in as little as six months.

For the challenge, the directive was to come up with something better suited for female flight crews than the diapers, piddle pack or pump.

From more than 50 submissions in 2020, the Air Force narrowed the field of solutions to 24, then chose 11 companies to receive \$1.5 million in design prizes to advance their ideas.

"It's energizing and inspiring to see how government, industry, and academia come together to roll up their sleeves and dive deep into problem solving," said Cayley Dymond, the AFWERX challenge program leader.

The Air Force settled in 2021 on the idea from Airion Health, a Los Angeles start-up company, to prototype its solution to the challenge.

The winning idea essentially reverse-engineered the bladder relief problem, coming up with what the Air Force termed a "biocompatible" system that could be used by female flight crews, then adapting it to male pilots as well.

Airion's final product was named the Advanced Inflight Relief Universal System, or AIRUS.

It's a form-fitting, self-cleaning underwear system using a small pump with soft tubing that directs waste to a custom-made "bio-fluid" bag. Pilots control the system with a remote hand controller and simply unplug the bag from the tubing at the end of missions for disposal.

Airion co-founder Colt Seman, who worked in the baby product industry, said bringing a female perspective to the project from the start would be a key to winning the challenge.

"We knew it was imperative to assemble a design team of women, including medical professionals, pilots and flight engineers," Seman said. "AIRUS is a product designed by women, for women."

Full system development started in March 2022 after an initial \$2.5 million contract was awarded to Airion Health by the Air Force.

After testing in 2023, flights with female flight crews in F-15s at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina began in 2024. The last tweaks to the AIRUS design wrapped up in November, and the final version of the system was ready in January.

The AIRUS system is available for purchase by squadrons via the General Services Administration website. The base price is about \$4,000 per kit, which are requisitioned by squadrons for the pilots and flight officers.

The primary challenge cen-

tered on a system that could be used by women, and there are multiple-sized cup attachments for different female body types. But the system also offers two variants built for the male anatomy as well.

"Through the end of April, about 50 AIRUS units have been deployed and more than 100 are in the pipeline," said Matthew Clouse, an AFWERX spokesman at Wright-Patterson AFB. "Orders are coming in for both males and females in units."

The cost to date of developing and fielding AIRUS is about \$4.5 million, Clouse said.

The Pentagon also plans to adapt the system for use by Navy and Marine jet pilots, along with Army helicopter crews. Eventually, the system could be sold to allied nations.

Retired Air Force Col. Samantha Weeks graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado in 1993 and logged 2,200 flying hours in F-15Cs, F-16s and T-38 Talons — including 105 combat hours enforcing "no-fly zones" in the Middle East. She was the first woman to command an F-16 fighter wing and flew the key "solo slot" with the Air Force's elite Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team.

Weeks said she has been in-

involved since 2000 in Defense Department efforts to advance flight equipment for female pilots. In 2018, she made a video about how to choose and use a piddle pack.

"At times, there were females at wings or in squadrons who didn't have someone to ask how does this work, what do I do, where can your purchase this type of flight suit, or this brand of piddle pack," she said.

Weeks retired from the Air Force in 2020 but remains involved in the Defense Department efforts to improve equipment for female aircrews. She hopes AIRUS will cut back on the longtime practice of pilots — particularly women — simply avoiding fluids before flying.

"Tactical dehydration — I hate this term," Weeks said. "Any person saying they 'tactically dehydrate' not to urinate is really just reducing their physical and cognitive abilities, and that has no place in combat."

Air Force studies have shown the practice puts a pilot's physical and mental wellbeing at risk. Air Force researchers have found being dehydrated can cut a pilot's ability to tolerate gravitational force by as much as half. The lower tolerance can cause pilots to experience "G-induced Loss of Consciousness" — known as GLOC.

The lack of liquids can also cause vertigo-like loss of situational awareness, blurred vision, memory lapses and headaches. Pilots who dehydrate repeatedly during their career can develop

kidney problems, urinary infections and suffer from long-term incontinence.

The issues have become more pressing as military aviation has advanced with long-range missions using in-flight refueling that can keep the pilot of a fighter or attack aircraft in the air for up to 16 hours, the Air Force said.

"I am glad to see AIRUS hit the market," Weeks said. "I hope other needs for proper fitting equipment for women continues to have support."

She said the anthropometric data — measurements for the size, shape and weight of pilot and flight officer equipment — is based on a 1967 study using only men. Revisions since 2008 have updated some of the gear.

AIRUS is part of finding solutions for female pilots that can also benefit male pilots — a crucial step in meeting pilot recruiting goals and aiding in the national defense.

"Expedient production of female aviator gear initiatives will maximize the combat lethality and readiness of all military services," Weeks said.

Poisson, the F-15 weapons system officer, is a happy early adopter of the AIRUS system.

"Oh, I love it," she said. "Hands down, the best system that I've seen. I can leave it in while flying, it's relatively comfortable and you have the ability to put it in and take it out while flying. There's no decrease in my capabilities during the mission."



Weeks

NATION

US, UK announce plans for a trade deal

By JOSH BOAK,
CHRIS MEGERIAN
AND JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States and Britain announced plans for a symbolically important trade deal on Thursday, likely lowering the financial burden from President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs while creating greater access abroad for American goods.

The announcement provided a political victory for U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and provided a degree of validation for Trump's claims that his turbulent approach on trade may be able to rebalance the global economy on his preferred terms. Yet the terms of the deal have yet to be completed so that it can be signed, a reminder that a process Trump has promised would be

quick could take weeks as other nations with which the U.S. runs a trade deficit worry that the Republican president's import taxes will drag down economic growth across the world.

"The final details are being written up," Trump told reporters. "In the coming weeks, we'll have it all very conclusive."

The president said that the agreement would lead to more beef and ethanol exports to the U.K., which would also streamline the processing of U.S. goods through customs.

Starmer, speaking over the phone to Trump, stressed the importance of the relationship between the two countries as the anniversary of the World War II victory in Europe was being commemorated.

"To be able to announce this great deal on the same deal 80

years forward, almost at the same hour and as we were 80 years ago with the U.K. and the U.S. standing side by side, I think is incredibly important," Starmer said.

Britain said its deal with the United States will cut tariffs on U.K. cars from 27.5% to 10% and eliminate tariffs on steel and aluminum.

The British government said the deal sets a quota of 100,000 U.K. vehicles that can be imported to the U.S. at a 10% tariff. It said the Trump-imposed 25% tariff on British steel will fall to nothing.

The U.K. said the agreement includes new reciprocal market access on beef and removes the tariff on ethanol, which is used to produce beer, going into the U.K. from the U.S., down to zero.

The planned deal was the first outlined since Trump began his

stutter-step efforts to rewire the global economy by dramatically increasing import taxes in an attempt to increase domestic manufacturing. The president quickly rolled out tariffs after returning to the White House, targeting traditional allies such as the U.K. with import taxes on steel, aluminum and autos. Trump announced near universal tariffs on April 2, then partially retreated a week later and announced that his administration would seek individual agreements with various countries over the next few months.

The U.S. already runs a trade surplus with the U.K., making it a bit easier to find common ground as Trump has staked his tariffs on specifically eliminating the annual trade deficits with multiple nations he says have taken advantage of the U.S.

No new deals have been reached with America's largest trading partners, including Canada, Mexico and China. Trump has left the highest tariffs in place on China, sparking a confrontation between the world's two biggest economies. Washington and Beijing are sending officials to Switzerland this weekend for an initial round of trade talks.

Trump promised on Thursday that there are "many other deals, which are in serious stages of negotiation, to follow!"

The U.S. and the U.K. have been aiming to strike a bilateral trade agreement since the British people voted in 2016 to leave the European Union, allowing the country to negotiate independently of the rest of the continent. Then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson touted a future deal with the U.S. as an incentive for Brexit.



ERIC KAYNE/Stars and Stripes

Ceremony honors WWII victory

World War II veterans Dixon Hemphill and Navajo Code Talker Thomas Begay lay wreaths at the World War II Memorial in Washington on Thursday. Friends of the National World War II Memorial and the National Park Service commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Allied forces' victory and the end of World War II in Europe with a special V-E Day event.

Some migrants told they would be sent to Libya, attorneys say

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. authorities informed some migrants of plans to deport them to Libya, a country they are not from and that has a history of human rights violations, attorneys said Wednesday. A judge said they can't be deported without a chance to challenge such a move in court.

The legal scramble comes as the Trump administration is pushing forward with plans to carry out mass deportations, including efforts to send migrants to a country where they are not a citizen. The most controversial example of so-

called third-country removals has been sending Venezuelans to a notorious El Salvador prison.

Sending deportees to Libya, a country with a documented history of migrant abuse, would mark a major escalation of the administration's push for third countries to take in people being removed from the United States.

A U.S. official said earlier Wednesday there were plans to fly migrants to Libya on a military plane but did not have details on the timing of the C-17 flight. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military oper-

ations.

Immigration attorneys say some clients, including people from Vietnam, Laos and the Philippines, were told by immigration enforcement agents that they were going to be deported to Libya. Some were told they were going to Saudi Arabia, they said.

The Tripoli-based government of Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said in a statement Wednesday that there was "no deal or coordination" with the U.S. to receive migrants. However, it said "some parallel parties" could have agreed to receive them.

GOP centrists revolt against cuts in bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When it comes to Medicaid, Rep. Juan Ciscomani is telling fellow Republicans he won't support steep cuts that could hit thousands of residents in his Arizona district — "my neighbors, people my kids go to school with" — who depend on it.

Republican Rep. Don Bacon, who represents the liberal-leaning "blue dot" of Omaha, Neb., is trying to protect several Biden-era green energy tax breaks. He's warning colleagues that "you can't pull the rug out from under" businesses that have already sunk millions of dollars into renewable developments in Nebraska and beyond.

And for Republican Rep. Nick LaLota of New York, it's simple: "No Salt. No Deal. For Real." He wants to revive — and bump up — what's known as the SALT deduction, which allows taxpayers to write off a portion of their state and local taxes. Capping the deduction at \$10,000 hurt many of his Long Island constituents.

"Governing is a negotiation, right?" said Rep. Nicole Malliotakis of New York, another Republican who is also involved in the talks. "I think everybody is going to have to give a little."

As GOP leaders draft President Donald Trump's "big, beautiful bill" of some \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks and \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts by Memorial Day, dozens of Republicans from contested congressional districts have positioned themselves at the center of the negotiating table. While it's often the most conservative members of the House Freedom Caucus driving the legis-

lative agenda — and they are demanding as much as \$2 trillion in cuts — it's the more centrist-leaning conservatives who could sink the bill. They have been hauled into meetings with Trump at the White House, some have journeyed to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, and many are huddling almost daily with House Speaker Mike Johnson.

And they are not satisfied, yet. "To get everybody politically and policy-wise on the same page is going to require more conversations," said LaLota, who is among five Republicans pledging to withhold their support unless changes to the SALT deduction are included.

Diving into the gritty details of the massive package, the GOP leaders are running into the stubborn reality that not all the ideas from their menu of potential tax breaks and spending cuts are popular with voters back home. Moreover, their work of compiling the big package is not happening in a vacuum. It comes amid growing economic unease rippling across the country as Trump has fired thousands of federal workers, including some of their own constituents, and as his trade war sparks concerns of empty store shelves and higher prices.

Brendan Buck, a former adviser to an earlier House speaker, Paul Ryan, warned in an op-ed Wednesday that all the party's energy is being poured into one bill, with questionable returns.

"Many Republicans are hoping that the tax bill can blunt the economic damage caused by the Trump tariffs," Buck wrote in *The New York Times*, "but that is highly unlikely."

NATION

Applications for jobless benefits fell last week

By MATT OTT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell last week despite heightened uncertainty about how President Donald Trump's tariffs will impact the U.S. and global economies.

Jobless claim applications fell by 13,000 to 228,000 for the week ending May 3, the Labor Department said Thursday. That's in line with the 229,000 new applications analysts forecast.

Weekly applications for jobless benefits are considered a proxy for layoffs and have mostly bounced around a healthy range between 200,000 and 250,000 since COVID-19 decimated the economy.

Even though Trump has paused or pulled back on many of his tariff threats, concerns remain about a global economic slowdown that could upend the U.S. labor market, which has been a pillar of the American economy for years.

On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve held its benchmark lending rate at 4.3% for the third straight meeting, after cutting it three times in a row at the end of last year.

Fed chair Jerome Powell said the risks of both higher unemployment and inflation have risen, an unusual combination that complicates the central bank's dual mandate of controlling prices and keeping unemployment low.

Powell said that tariffs have dampened consumer and busi-

ness sentiment, but that data has not yet shown significant harm to the economy.

There have been trade developments this week, with the U.S. and Britain announcing the framework for a trade deal Thursday.

No new deals have been reached with America's largest trading partners, including Canada, Mexico and China.

Trump has left the highest tariffs in place on China, heightening tensions between the world's two largest economies.

Washington and Beijing are sending officials to Switzerland this weekend for an initial round of trade talks.

Trump is attempting to reshape the global economy by dramatically increasing import taxes to

rejuvenate the U.S. manufacturing sector.

A contraction has already begun in the U.S., where the economy shrank at a 0.3% annual pace from January through March as Trump's trade wars disrupted business. First-quarter growth was slowed by a surge in imports as companies in the United States tried to bring in foreign goods before Trump's massive tariffs went into effect.

It was the first quarterly GDP decline in three years.

Like his pledge to institute tariffs, Trump's promise to drastically downsize the federal government workforce has occupied much of the early weeks of his presidency and is still in motion.

It's not clear when the job cuts

ordered by the Department of Government Efficiency — or "DOGE," spearheaded by Elon Musk — will surface in the weekly layoffs data. However, the federal government staff reductions are already being felt, even outside of the Washington, D.C. area.

Despite showing some signs of weakening during the past year, the labor market remains robust with plentiful jobs and relatively few layoffs.

Last week the government reported that U.S. employers added a surprisingly strong 177,000 jobs in April. The unemployment rate held at a historically healthy 4.2%, however, many economists anticipate that a negative impact from trade wars will materialize this year for American workers.

New report shows NYC helicopter breaking apart in midair

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Federal officials on Wednesday released images of a doomed New York City sightseeing helicopter as it broke apart in midair last month, killing six.

The series of still photographs taken from surveillance camera video shows the fuselage, containing the engine and rotors, separating from the helicopter's tail. The rotor blades and the transmission then detach from the cabin that's carrying the passengers and the pilot.

The images were included in the preliminary report about the flight released by the National Transportation Safety Board.

"Several witnesses described hearing several loud 'bangs' emanating from the helicopter before it broke up and descended into the river," the report says.

Justin Green, an aviation law-

yer and former Marine helicopter pilot, said the sequence of images shows the helicopter yawing severely and the tail boom failing, suggesting it was most likely struck by the aircraft's main rotor blades during flight.

"It's clear that some mechanical issue precipitated the breakup," he said.

The initial report, which runs about six pages, does not address the initial cause of the breakup. That, Green said, will likely be determined by a forensic examination of the wreckage itself, including the rotor blades, the engine and transmission.

"A tail strike could be caused by a pilot not handling a loss of power emergency and allowing the rotor rpm to decay, which makes the rotors flap up and down more and that can cause a strike," he said.

The aircraft, a Bell 206L-4 built in 2004, also appeared to be fairly

old and well used, according to Green.

At the time of the crash, the helicopter had operated about 50 hours since its last inspection on Feb. 27, according to the NTSB report. The helicopter's airframe accrued nearly 13,000 total hours of operation, and the engine accrued more than 23,000 hours.

Federal Aviation Administration records also show the aircraft had a maintenance issue last September involving its transmission assembly.

The aircraft was on a typical tour, departing from the downtown heliport by Wall Street around 3 p.m. and flying north along the Manhattan skyline before heading south toward the Statue of Liberty. Less than 18 minutes into the flight, witnesses saw the tail and main rotor break away and smoke pouring from the spinning helicopter.



BRUCE WALL/AP

In this photo taken from video, a helicopter falls from the sky into the Hudson River, April 10, in Jersey City, N.J.

More airports are scanning faces. A new bill would limit the practice.

By WILL OREMUS
AND ANDREA JIMÉNEZ
The Washington Post

It's becoming standard practice at a growing number of U.S. airports: When you reach the front of the security line, an agent asks you to step up to a machine that scans your face to check whether it matches the face on your identification card. Travelers have the right to opt out of the face scan and have the agent do a visual check instead — but many don't realize that's an option.

Sens. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., and John Neely Kennedy, R-La., think it should be the other way around.

They plan to introduce a bipartisan bill that would make human ID checks the default, among other restrictions on how the Trans-



BILL O'LEARY/The Washington Post

Washington Dulles International Airport officials program iPads loaded with biometric facial recognition scanners in September 2018.

portation Security Administration can use the technology.

The Traveler Privacy Protec-

tion Act, shared with The Washington Post's Tech Brief on Wednesday ahead of its introduction, is a narrower version of a 2023 bill by the same name that would have banned the TSA's use of face recognition altogether. This one would allow the agency to continue scanning travelers' faces but only if they opt in and bar the technology's use for any purpose other than verifying people's identities. It would also require the agency to immediately delete the scans of general boarding passengers once the check is complete.

"Facial recognition is incredibly powerful, and it is being used as an instrument of oppression around the world to track dissidents whose opinion governments don't like," Merkley said in a

phone interview Wednesday, citing China's use of the technology on the country's Uyghur minority.

"It really creates a surveillance state," he went on. "That is a massive threat to freedom and privacy here in America, and I don't think we should trust any government with that power."

Kennedy said in an emailed statement: "The TSA subjects countless law-abiding Americans to excessive facial recognition screenings as they travel, invading passengers' privacy without even making it clear that they can opt out of the screening. The Traveler Privacy Protection Act would protect Americans' ability to say 'no' to these facial scans and safeguard the personal data that the TSA collects."

The push comes as the TSA is rapidly expanding its use of face scanners. The agency began testing face scans as an option for people enrolled in "trusted traveler" programs, such as TSA PreCheck, in 2021. By 2022, the program quietly began rolling out to general boarding passengers. It is now active in at least 84 airports, according to the TSA's website, with plans to bring it to more than 400 airports in the coming years.

The agency says the technology has proved more efficient and accurate than human identity checks. It assures the public that travelers' face scans are not stored or saved once a match has been made, except in limited tests to evaluate the technology's effectiveness.

WORLD

India, Pakistan trade fire as tensions soar

Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan — India fired attack drones into Pakistan on Thursday, killing at least two civilians, the Pakistani military said. India, meanwhile, accused its neighbor of attempting its own attack, as tensions soared between the nuclear-armed rivals.

India acknowledged that it targeted Pakistan's air defense system, and Islamabad said it shot down several of the drones. India said it "neutralized" Pakistan's attempts to hit military targets. It was not possible to verify all of the claims.

The exchanges came a day after Indian missiles struck several locations in Pakistan, killing 31 civilians, according to Pakistani officials. New Delhi said it was retaliating after gunmen killed more than two dozen people, mostly Hindu tourists, in India-controlled Kashmir last month. India accused Pakistan of being behind the assault. Islamabad denies that.

Both sides have also traded fire across their frontier in disputed Kashmir; Pakistan claimed it killed scores of Indian soldiers. There was no confirmation from India.

Late Thursday in Indian-controlled Kashmir, residents of the city of Jammu reported hearing explosions and sirens.

Shesh Paul Vaid, the region's former director-general of police, said there was a complete blackout in Jammu following loud blasts. Vaid told The Associated Press that the Jammu Airport likely was under attack and that some of the 50 loud explosions he heard likely were because "our defense system is at work."

Indian officials did not immediately comment. Jammu is close to the Line of Control, the de facto border that divides the Kashmir region between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has vowed to avenge the deaths in India's missile strikes, raising fears that the two countries could be headed toward another all-out conflict. Leaders from both nations face mounting public pressure to show strength and seek revenge, and the rhetoric and claims could be a response to that pressure.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke Thursday to the Pakistani prime minister and India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, urging both sides to de-escalate the situation, the U.S. State Department said.

The two countries have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

Chosen: Chicago-born Leo XIV to lead

FROM PAGE 1

him as his heir apparent. He brought Prevost to the Vatican in 2023 to serve as the powerful head of the office that vets bishop nominations from around the world, one of the most important jobs in the Catholic Church. As a result, Prevost had a prominence going into the conclave that few other cardinals have.

The crowd in St. Peter's Square erupted in cheers, priests made the sign of the cross and nuns wept as the crowd shouted "Viva il papa!" after the white smoke wafted into the late afternoon sky at 6:07 p.m. Waving flags from around the world, thousands of people waited to learn who had won.

The last pope to take the name Leo was Leo XIII, an Italian who led the church from 1878 to 1903. That Leo softened the church's confrontational stance toward modernity, especially science and politics and laid the foundation for modern Catholic social thought, most famously with his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which addressed workers' rights and capitalism.

Earlier Thursday, large school groups joined the mix of humanity awaiting the outcome in St. Peter's Square.

They blended in with people participating in preplanned Holy Year pilgrimages and journalists from around the world who have descended on Rome to document the election.

Pedro Deget, 22, a finance student from Argentina, said he and his family visited Rome during the Argentine pope's pontificate and were hoping for a new pope in Francis' image.

"Francis did well in opening the church to the outside world, but on



LUCA BRUNO/AP

People react after Cardinal Dominique Mamberti announced the election of Cardinal Robert F. Prevost as the 267th pope, choosing the name of Pope Leo XIV, at the Vatican, Thursday.

other fronts maybe he didn't do enough. We'll see if the next one will be able to do more," Deget said from the piazza.

For much of the past century, the conclave has needed between three and 14 ballots to find a pope. John Paul I — the pope who reigned for 33 days in 1978 — was elected on the fourth ballot. His successor, John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

The cardinals opened the secretive, centuries-old ritual Wednesday afternoon, participating in a rite more theatrical than even Hollywood could create. Bright red cassocks, Swiss Guards standing at attention, ancient Latin chants and oaths preceded the slamming shut of the Sistine Chapel doors to seal the cardinals off from the outside world.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the 70-year-old secretary of state under

Francis and a leading contender to succeed him as pope, assumed leadership of the proceedings as the most senior cardinal under age 80 eligible to participate.

The voting followed a strict choreography, dictated by church law.

Each cardinal writes his choice on a piece of paper inscribed with the words "Eligo in summen pontificem" — "I elect as supreme pontiff." They approach the altar one by one and say: "I call as my witness, Christ the Lord who will be my judge, that my vote is given to the one who, before God, I think should be elected."

The folded ballot is placed on a round plate and tipped into a silver and gold urn. Once cast, the ballots are opened one by one by three different "scrutineers," cardinals selected at random who write down the names and read them aloud.

Russia, Ukraine report attacks despite Moscow-declared truce

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia and Ukraine both reported attacks on their forces on the first day of a 72-hour ceasefire called by Russian President Vladimir Putin, while Ukraine's parliament unanimously approved a landmark minerals deal with the U.S..

The ratification is a key step in setting the deal in motion. It would allow Washington access to Ukraine's largely untapped minerals, deepen strategic ties and create a joint investment fund with the U.S. for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Parliament approved the agreement with 338 members voting in favor out of the required 226 votes, Ukrainian lawmaker Yaroslav Zheleznyak wrote on his Telegram account.

No lawmaker voted against it or

abstained.

"This document is not merely a legal construct, it is the foundation of a new model of interaction with a key strategic partner," Ukrainian Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko wrote on X.

Russian bombs meanwhile struck northeast Ukraine in the opening hours of Moscow's unilateral ceasefire, killing at least one civilian, Ukrainian officials said. Artillery assaults took place across the 620-mile front line, although with less intensity than in the previous 24 hours, officials said.

The ceasefire coincides with Russia's biggest secular holiday, the 80th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany. Kyiv has pressed for a longer-term ceasefire.

Putin on Thursday welcomed

Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Kremlin. Xi, who Putin earlier described as "our main guest" at Friday's Victory Day festivities, arrived in Russia on Wednesday for a four-day visit.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha accused Russia of violating its own ceasefire 734 times between midnight and midday Thursday. He called the ceasefire a "farce" on the social media platform X.

He said Russia carried out 63 assault operations along the front line, 23 of which were still ongoing as of midday. Ukraine "responds appropriately" and is actively sharing information about the attacks with the U.S., the European Union and others.

"We will not let Putin fool anyone when he does not even keep his own word," Sybiha said.

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ENTERTAINMENT



20TH CENTURY STUDIOS, MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

“The Fantastic Four” are assembling for the first time under the umbrella of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Kevin Feige. Heading to theaters July 25, “First Steps” is set in a retro-futuristic 1960s New York, where Pedro Pascal’s Reed Richards is “basically Steve Jobs meets Einstein who’s creating technology that’s changing the world” and Vanessa Kirby’s Sue Storm/Invisible Woman, shown above, is “essentially the secretary-general of the U.N.,” director Matt Shakman said.



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

David Corenswet puts on the “Superman” cape for the first time in the James Gunn-directed flick, out July 11. He stars alongside Rachel Brosnahan as Lois Lane and Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor.

Will superheroes save the cinema?

Marvel, DC is expected to do a lot of the heavy lifting this season with ‘Thunderbolts,*’ ‘Superman,’ ‘The Fantastic Four: First Steps’

BY LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Superman already has a lot on his broad shoulders. It seems unfair to add the fate of Hollywood to his worries.

But that’s the kind of pressure that comes with being one of the biggest stars in the comic book universe, who is getting a grand reintroduction at a tumultuous time. Thankfully he’s not doing it alone — Marvel Studios is also returning to theaters in a big way with two movies this summer, “Thunderbolts*” and “The Fantastic Four: First Steps.”

Five years after the COVID-19 pandemic brought movie business to a halt, and two years after the strikes, the industry has yet to fully recover. Critics may have complained of superhero fatigue, but after several summers of depleted offerings, it’s clear that they’re a vital part of the mix — especially when they’re good.

The \$4 billion summer of “Barbenheimer” may be most remembered for those two movies, but it didn’t get to that number without the “Guardians of the Galaxy” and “Spider-Man” movies, the second- and third-highest grossing of the season.

The filmmakers behind some of the summer’s biggest movies spoke to The Associated Press about what to expect in 2025:

SEE SUPERHEROES ON PAGE 13

ENTERTAINMENT

Superheroes: Sidekicks include other franchises, event movies, independents

FROM PAGE 12

Summer movie math

Summer begins early in Hollywood, on the first weekend in May. Kids might still be in school, and pools might still be closed, but that kickoff can make or break that pivotal 123-day corridor that has historically accounted for around 40% of the annual box office. Last year was the first in many that didn't launch with a Marvel movie, and it showed — the business limped along for weeks until Disney came to the rescue with "Inside Out 2" and "Deadpool & Wolverine."

This year, the powerful studio is back in that familiar spot with "Thunderbolts*," now in theaters, which brings together misfits and antiheroes like Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh), Red Guardian (David Harbour) and Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan).

"It's a fun twist on what a movie like this could be," said director Jake Schreier. "There are some places we're gonna go that are different from what you would normally expect."

"Thunderbolts*" made \$76 million domestically in its first weekend — not an eye-popping total, but strong reviews have Disney hoping the movie could maintain strong numbers for several weeks.

The Memorial Day weekend a few weeks later could also be a behemoth with the live action "Lilo & Stitch" and "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning" storming theaters. With a new "Jurassic World," a live-action "How to Train Your Dragon" and a Formula One movie also on the schedule through June and July, the summer 2025 season has the potential to be the biggest in the post-COVID era.

Before the pandemic, all but one summer since 2007 broke the \$4 billion mark. Since 2020, only one has: 2023's, led by "Barbie."

Saving Superman (and the DC Universe)

After three "Guardians" movies, James Gunn knows enough to know that he doesn't have much control over whether people buy tickets for his movies. His job is to make something good, entertaining and "worthy" of the audience.

But that's also possibly underplaying the pressure of taking on Superman and overseeing a unified DC universe that kicks off with "Superman" on July 11. He considers it the first true superhero movie he's ever made.

"It's a personal journey for Superman that's entirely new," Gunn said. "It is, first and foremost, about what does Superman learn about himself. But it's also about the robots and the flying dogs and all that stuff. It's taking a very real person and putting them in the middle of this outrageous situation and outrageous world and playing with that. I think it's a lot of fun because of that."

The film introduces a new actor to the role of Superman/Clark Kent in David Corenswet, who stars alongside Rachel Brosnahan as Lois Lane and Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor. Gunn said to expect different things from both.

"It was a lot of fun making a Lex that is actually going to kill Superman," he said. "He's pretty scary."

The film is also "seeding the rest of the DCU," Gunn said. "If it works as a movie



UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT/AP

From left, Rupert Friend, Mahershala Ali and Bechir Sylvain in "Jurassic World Rebirth," the seventh film in the franchise, out July 2. It was directed by self-proclaimed "Jurassic Park" superfan Gareth Edwards, and written by the original's screenwriter.

in a basic way, that's what we need to happen; that's what I care about."

Superman as a brand has always trailed Batman at the box office. None of the Zack Snyder films crossed \$1 billion, not accounting for inflation, while both Christopher Nolan "Dark Knight" sequels did. But Gunn isn't thinking a lot about that.

"I just want to make a decent movie that makes a little money," Gunn said.

Marvel's Fantastic family

Superman's not the only legacy brand getting a splashy reintroduction this summer. A new Fantastic Four crew, assembled for the first time under the umbrella of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Kevin Feige, is heading to theaters July 25.

"Fantastic Four is a comic I've loved since I was a kid," said director Matt Shakman. "They are the legendary heroes of the '60s that the Marvel silver age was built on."

Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, "The Fantastic Four" is among Marvel's longest-running comics series. But it has not had the most distinguished history on film, including two with Chris Evans and one with Michael B. Jordan.

"The Fantastic Four: First Steps" is set in a retro-futuristic 1960s New York, where Pedro Pascal's Reed Richards is "basically Steve Jobs meets Einstein who's creating technology that's changing the world" and Vanessa Kirby's Sue Storm is "essentially the secretary-general of the U.N.," Shakman said.

A television veteran with directing credits on shows like "WandaVision" and "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia," Shakman said he wants to do right by the characters, and audience.

"It's working on an incredibly large scale in terms of world building, but it's also no different from all of the great comedies and dramas that I've done," Shakman said. "In the end, it comes down to character, it comes down to relationships,

it comes down to heart and humor."

Plus, he feels a responsibility to the idea of the big summer movie.

"It was the joy of my childhood. ... A lot of it has to do with building worlds and entering into a place of wonder," he said. "That's what I felt when I saw 'Indiana Jones' when I was a kid, and it's what I hope people feel when they see 'Fantastic Four' this summer."

Why summer 2025 might be a big year for movies

Studios know that superheroes alone don't make a robust theatrical marketplace. There are plenty of other options on the menu including franchises, event movies and independents: There are family pics ("Smurfs," "Elio," "The Bad Guys 2"); action and adventures ("Ballerina," "The Karate Kid: Legends"); horrors, thrillers and slashers ("28 Years Later," "I Know What You Did Last Summer," "M3GAN 2.0"); romances ("Materialists," "Jane Austen Wrecked My Life"); dramas ("Sorry, Baby," "The Life of Chuck"); a new Wes Anderson movie ("The Phoenician Scheme"); and comedies ("Freakier Friday," "Bride Hard," "The Naked Gun") — though one of the most anticipated, "Happy Gilmore 2," will be on Netflix.

"The frequency of movies, the cadence, the sheer number of them and the perceived quality and excitement surrounding this lineup is almost like never before," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. "Draw me a blueprint of a perfect summer lineup: 2025 is it."

One of the biggest movies of the season may be "Jurassic World Rebirth," the seventh movie in a \$6 billion franchise. Even its poorly received predecessor made \$1 billion. This time, they enlisted a new filmmaker, self-proclaimed "Jurassic Park" superfan Gareth Edwards, and the original's screenwriter for a new adventure with Scarlett Johansson, Mahershala Ali and Jonathan Bailey.

"People say, like, do you feel pressure, and the most pressure I feel is from myself as a fan and to Steven Spielberg, to not disappoint him," Edwards said. "Weirdly, what's great about doing a 'Jurassic' movie is that everybody knows deep down that, like, half the reason they're in this business is because of that film and Steven's work."

It's fitting, in a way, that 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of what's considered the first summer blockbuster: "Jaws."

Edwards said he was born into that world of big summer blockbusters that shaped his early love of movies. Directing one, he said, "is kind of the dream. You get the chance to swing for the fences."

And the unstable economy might work in the industry's favor, at least when it comes to moviegoing. Even with increased ticket prices, theatrical movies remain the most affordable entertainment outside of the home, and attendance tends to increase during recession years. The annual domestic box office crossed \$10 billion for the first time in 2009.

More recently, the week the tariffs were announced, "A Minecraft Movie" doubled its opening weekend projections, and all of those ticket buyers saw trailers and posters for everything to come. It was, Dergarabedian noted, one of the only positive financial stories that week.

"Top Gun: Maverick" filmmaker Joseph Kosinski knows a few things about launching a pricey big-screen spectacle into a turbulent marketplace. But he's feeling good about the summer, and "F1's" place within it. Warner Bros. will release "F1" on June 27.

"This is the summer where all this product that we've all been working on for the last few years is finally coming into the marketplace, so I'm very optimistic," Kosinski said. "By the end of this summer, hopefully people aren't talking about being in a funk anymore and it feels like we got our mojo back and we're off to the races."

TELEVISION

Finally more than just the girlfriend

Actor Lovie Simone discusses her new role in 'Forever' on Netflix, her career up to now

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

While cutting together scenes for the new series "Forever," Mara Brock Akil, who has created shows like "Girlfriends," "Being Mary Jane" and "The Game," recalls asking her video editor to pause for a moment. Was there a problem? No. Akil was watching someone very right: the show's female lead, Lovie Simone.

"I was like, 'Oh my God, not only is this girl beautiful, she's acting her (expletive) off,'" Akil said. It was a privilege to know that "something that I wrote is aligned with her moment."

The title "Forever" may sound familiar because it shares a name with the Judy Blume novel first published in 1965 but is frequently challenged by critics because it includes teen sexuality. This version is also a coming-of-age story but takes place in 2018 and 2019 instead of the 1960s, and the couple at the center of the story is Black. The series debuted Thursday on Netflix.

"I think it does a good job at mimicking the energy and the intention of the book," said Simone, who had not read "Forever ..." prior to this job.

The protagonists, Keisha and Justin (played by Simone and newcomer Michael Cooper Jr.), meet at a New Year's party, like in the book. The two knew one another as kids, but it's been years since they've seen each other, and now there are romantic sparks.

Simone says that while, yes, the show is about young romance and firsts, there's plenty of character development too.

"It was like, 'Wow, I am the love interest, AND I have a story to tell while being the love.' It's really nice to not just be the girlfriend," she said.

Early on in filming, Simone and Cooper purposely kept their distance off-screen to make their reacquaintance authentic.

"In the beginning of the story, they hadn't talked in so long so, we didn't want to have too much rapport," she said. "We were like, 'OK. We're not gonna see each other too much ... We still kind of want to be strangers a little bit.'"

Keisha is also grappling with betrayal by her ex-boyfriend who shared an intimate video of her that was seen by other students. She transferred schools to escape the bullying. Keisha is determined to be perfect in all things

to get into Howard University and make her mother proud.

That pressure to live up to high standards is a familiar one for many teens and "we can all relate to those feelings and how they make us feel," Simone said.

Set in Los Angeles, the show was filmed in real neighborhoods, giving it authenticity. The characters shop in the Fairfax District. Keisha lives in Crenshaw, and Justin's family lives in Park-Windsor Hills, an affluent African American neighborhood.

Simone wasn't familiar with LA prior to filming. She grew up in New York and now lives in Atlanta.

"I don't know too much about LA culture. I know the stigmas around it, but I don't know LA culture, and coming here and falling in love with the true LA culture was so amazing," she said.

Simone began acting around age 9 and remains the only actor in her family. She has a twin sister, Yuri, a musician who goes by Reiyō The Giant. Simone's original dream was to be like Selena, Miley, Keke and Zendaya.

"I really wanted to be the girl on Disney Channel with the neon wand, tracing out the logo," Simone said, adding that as she got older, she felt a pull to more serious stories.

Her first big opportunity was the role of rebellious teen Zora on the OWN drama "Greenleaf," about the family behind a popular megachurch. After the first season as a recurring character, Simone was bumped up to series regular.

"That was college for me. It was four years with all of these GOATS like Oprah Winfrey, Lynn Whitfield, Keith David, Lamman Rucker. I learned how to react with a sense of groundedness. I really want to always fool myself. I know that we are acting for audiences, but I work to fool myself, to make myself believe that I exited myself and a new person came in."

The experience also raised the bar for Simone's career goals.

"Now I can have a bit more discernment with my future projects because I've worked with all of these living legends," she said.

If by chance "Forever" gets a second season, Simone says she would love to see Keisha's next chapter, even in a time jump postcollege: "I just wanna know more about Keisha. I fell in love with her."

"I really want to always fool myself. I know that we are acting for audiences, but I work to fool myself, to make myself believe that I exited myself and a new person came in."

Lovie Simone



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Actor Lovie Simone poses for a portrait on April 18 in Los Angeles. Her new series, "Forever," based on Judy Blume's 1965 coming-of-age book, debuted Thursday on Netflix.

HEALTH & FITNESS



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Pick up the pace to improve your health

Moving a bit faster when going about your chores, daily activities lowers your risk of heart attack or stroke

BY GRETCHEN REYNOLDS
The Washington Post

If you're not a fan of working out or simply don't have time, we've got good news for you. Doing everyday chores and activities a bit more briskly might lead to big gains in health and longevity, a new study shows. That means you could tweak how you clean your house, climb stairs or run for the bus and get some of the benefits of exercise without a trip to the gym.

In the study, published last month in *Circulation*, researchers analyzed the daily movements of more than 20,000 adults over the course of about a week. None formally exercised. But some moved with more zip than others as they went about their lives, taking the stairs instead of the escalator, for instance, or speed vacuuming their living rooms.

The amounts of these everyday exertions were small, the study found, often less than five minutes a day, but the impacts appeared outsize. Those who moved around briskly were as much as half as likely to experience a heart attack or stroke in the following years as people who almost always dawdled through their days.

The study suggests that "it's a good idea to find ways to fit exertion into your daily life," said Emmanuel Stamatakis, a professor at the University of Sydney, who led the study. "But that doesn't mean you have to actually exercise."

The science on movement vs. exercise

The study advances a growing area of research into whether and how we can be healthy without exercise. For the past few years, Stamatakis and his colleagues have been using data from the immense UK Biobank to explore that issue.

The biobank has enrolled tens of thousands of British adults, who provided health information and tissue samples. Many of them also wore advanced activity trackers for a week, which provided detailed readouts of how they spent almost every moment of their days at work and home.

In past studies from his lab, Stamatakis and his co-authors analyzed those readouts and related health and death records. They discovered that people who said they never exercised but who often moved around at what scientists call a vigorous pace — meaning they got out of breath as they ran for a bus or sprinted intensely up the stairs — typically developed fewer serious diseases and lived longer than people who rarely, if ever, moved vigorously.

But Stamatakis knew, as an exercise scientist, that a lot of people are intimidated by words like vigorous and intense, in the context of exercise and movement.

So, for the latest study, he and colleagues decided to see whether gentler forms of everyday activities might also be associated with better health.

Moving in short bursts has greatest benefits

In simple terms, physical activity can be light, moderate or vigorous, depending on how hard you push yourself. Light-intensity activities feel easy enough that you can chat with someone without puffing and even sing. During moderate activity, you're still able to talk, a little breathlessly, but not sing. When activity grows vigorous, you can barely speak without gasping, and you certainly can't sing.

To conduct their study, Stamatakis and his colleagues used algorithmic machine learning to closely analyze movement patterns in 10-second increments and determine whether someone was moving lightly, moderately or vigorously. They used biobank tracker records from 24,139 adults who never formally exercised, then cross-checked against hospital and death data.

What they found was that light everyday activities, which might include strolls to pick up lunch or visit the copier, slightly reduced risks for cardiovascular problems and deaths during the next eight years, compared to the risks in people who recorded almost zero activity (meaning they remained seated for almost the entire day). But people needed more than two hours a day of light activity to see much benefit.

Moderate everyday activity was far more potent. If people spent 24 minutes a day moving around at a moderate pace, their risks of developing or dying from cardiovascular problems dropped by as much as 50%.

And the most effective dose of vigorous everyday movement was even lower. Barely five minutes a day of pacing around or rushing places while huffing and puffing was associated with nearly 40% less likelihood of dying from heart problems.

Clean and garden as fast as you can

From a practical standpoint, the takeaway of the new study is straightforward, Stamatakis said. "Look for opportunities" to ramp up the intensity of chores and activities, he said, especially if you don't often exercise.

"Taking the stairs will be moderate activity for most people," he said. Hurrying up them will be vigorous. Or pick up the pace while you walk, swinging your arms, "which is what we call sprint walking," he said, "and is moderate. Or garden as fast as you can. There are plenty of opportunities to add a little more exertion" to what you're going to be doing anyway.

The study has limitations, of course. It mostly involved white, educated Brits. It's also possible that people who move through chores slowly have underlying health problems, predisposing them to heart risks. But the researchers excluded anyone who experienced heart problems in the first year of the study, lessening that possibility.

Perhaps most important, the findings aren't meant to discourage exercise. "You can do both," Stamatakis said, exercise and push yourself sometimes as you go about your day, assuming that your health and circumstances allow.

"It's quite a good study, both the methodology and the message," said Martin Gibala, an exercise scientist at McMaster University in Canada, who studies exercise intensity but was not involved with this research. The results suggest that, even if you choose not to exercise, sprinkling a little moderate or vigorous everyday activity into your life "can have meaningful health effects."

MUSIC



Eric Church has a more lush, orchestral vibe on his latest album, "Evangeline vs. the Machine," his first since 2021.

Robby Klein

Refusing to sit still

Q&A: Eric Church on his New Orleans-inspired new album and that polarizing Stagecoach set

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

Nearly 25 years after he moved to Nashville to make it as a country musician, Eric Church can count among his achievements 11 No. 1 country radio hits, five platinum-or-better albums, four CMA Awards and one six-story bar on Nashville's crowded Broadway called Chief's. (You'll remember the bar's opening weekend last year, when Church's pal Morgan Wallen was arrested for hurling a chair off the roof.)

Chief's is just one of several business pursuits Church has undertaken lately, along with a line of whiskeys, co-ownership with Wallen of the Field & Stream brand and a minority stake in the NBA's Charlotte Hornets. Yet on May 2, the day before his 48th birthday, the singer and songwriter returned to music with "Evangeline vs. the Machine," his first album since 2021.

Produced by his longtime collaborator Jay Joyce, "Evangeline" moves away from the hard-rocking sound of earlier tunes like "Springsteen," "Give Me Back My Hometown" and the weed enthusiast's "Smoke a Little Smoke" toward a lush, more orchestral vibe complete with strings, horns and a choir. "Johnny" is a kind of response song to the Charlie Daniels Band's 1979 "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," while "Darkest Hour" offers help to someone in need — an idea Church actualized last year when he said he'd

SEE CHURCH ON PAGE 17

MUSIC

Church: COVID spurred singer to diversify business interests

FROM PAGE 16

donate royalties from the song to victims of Hurricane Helene in his native North Carolina.

The LP, which closes with a spooky rendition of Tom Waits' "Clap Hands," follows Church's controversial headlining performance at 2024's Stagecoach festival in Indio, Calif., where he and more than a dozen gospel singers blended the singer's originals with spirituals like "Amazing Grace" and "I'll Fly Away" and far-flung covers including Al Green's "Take Me to the River" and Snoop Dogg's "Gin and Juice." ("This is Friday night, not Sunday morning!") I recall one guy near me shouting in frustration after half an hour or so.) Church, who's married with two sons — and who will take "Evangeline" on tour this fall — called from Nashville to talk about the Stagecoach set, the new album and his hobnobbing with billionaires.

Los Angeles Times: You opened Chief's a little over a year ago. What are the headaches you've run into as a business owner?

Church: S—, there's been a bunch of those. I think just managing the messaging of why we're different than other places. Listen, it's been a roaring success — maybe the best bar down there. But we're leaning into songwriter shows and shows by upcoming artists versus being somewhere to hear "Friends in Low Places" and get blackout drunk. The biggest challenge is just trying to make sure that people know what it is when they walk in the room.

Morgan called me from the street after it happened. I was watching college basketball, and he said, "Hey, this just happened." I said, "Uh-oh." I knew it was gonna be noisy, and it was — it was damn noisy. The next day on Fox News, the No. 1 story was Morgan throwing a chair, and No. 2 was Israel and Gaza. But you just kind of roll with it.

It was actually a good thing for Mo. I think that was a line for him, and he's done really well since then — it was a thing he's reacted positively to as a person. I used the old Billy Joe Shaver line on him: "I'm just an old chunk of coal, but I'll be a diamond one day." He went down [to Chief's] and apologized to the staff, shook everybody's hand. I was proud of him.

What motivated you to get involved with these extramusical endeavors?

For me, it was COVID. All of a sudden, you can't play shows, and I just remember thinking, I need to do a better job of widening out what I do.

Any entrepreneurial models in your mind?

Jay-Z's done a great job. When I did the national anthem at the Super Bowl with Jazmine Sullivan [in 2021], I remember I was like, "How does all this work?" And they said, "Jay-Z runs it." I went, "What do you mean?" They said, "Jay-Z runs the entertainment at the Super Bowl." OK, well, that's f— cool.

I'm in the Hornets with J. Cole — he's another guy that's done a really good job. Artists who get to a high level, they have these opportunities because they have the Rolodex. They meet people at shows, they meet people backstage. For me, I play golf with 'em. You've got Fortune 500 guys and billionaires and CEOs, so what do you actually do with that opportunity?



Anthony D'Angio

Eric Church is getting ready to tour in support of "Evangeline vs. the Machine," which was released on May 2. The sound of the new album, which includes strings, horns and a choir, was inspired by a live collaboration with Trombone Shorty.

Ten years ago, would you have seen yourself hanging out with rappers and billionaires?

Negative [laughs].

Couple of questions about Stagecoach last year before we get into the new album. I was there that night —

So you were the one.

It was a polarizing gig.

F— that — it was great. PBS did a documentary, and there's a moment midway through the show where you can actually see me start to grin. I'm like, this is going interesting. But as soon as it was over, I went back and listened to "Springsteen" a cappella in 30-mile-an-hour winds that night, and I knew it was good. If it wasn't good, I would've had a problem.

I kind of knew going in: This is probably not the place for this show. I'd played Stagecoach five or six times — you know there's gonna be 30,000 TikTokers out there on people's shoulders trying to take pictures of themselves. But I did it because it was the biggest megaphone and it would get the biggest reaction.

Maybe it's because it happened right after Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter" came out, but I got the impression that one of your goals with the performance was to draw attention to the Black roots of country music.

Sure. I was trying to show an arc mu-

sically — that this goes way back. I was trying to show where it all began. And I mean, maybe it was a little bit of a "f—you." I know we ran people off. But it wasn't for the people that left — it was for the ones that stayed.

I got a text from Lukas Nelson the following day. He was there with his surf buddies. He said, "We came in from Maui, and I just want to tell you that reminded me so much of my dad." He said, "I put my arms around my buddies, and we all sang along." I thought, well, he probably had plenty of room.

What would you say not to a hater but to an Eric Church fan — someone who did stay for the show but just didn't get it?

What I hope fans understand is that it would have been easy for me to do what a lot of artists do and take too much money to come play the hits, then get back on the plane and go home. But I actually thought, I respect this festival enough that I'm gonna work my ass off for a month. I didn't just the day before go, "Let's do this." I know the effort that went into it. And what we gave you, good or bad, was a show you're never gonna see again.

People talk about Dylan going electric at Newport, but in the moment that didn't go well for Dylan. He was booed — people threw s—. But now that's a paradigm shift, right? You and I are going, "F—, I wish I was there." Ten years from now, people are gonna go, "I was at that Stagecoach show, and I stayed till the end."

Would you do it again?

Oh, hell yeah. Tomorrow.

I hear "Evangeline vs. the Machine" as being on a continuum with Stagecoach.

Yeah, but I'll tell you where it started.

Trombone Shorty came and played a show with me in New Orleans on the Gather Again tour [in 2022], and we ended up in the dressing room after and got in this incredible conversation about brass instruments and string instruments and the history of music. He invited me to come play this show he does during Jazz Fest. There were probably two white people onstage that night: me and Steve Miller.

So we do my song "Cold One" and [the Beatles'] "Come Together." I've done "Cold One" a thousand times, but I had never done "Cold One" like that. It was a Black New Orleans band with horns and background singers and a violin player — not Juilliard violin but like a janky New Orleans violin. The dude had the damn thing on his shoulder, not under his chin. Everything was wrong for what that song is. I'm not convinced anyone even knew the song [laughs]. But we found our spot in the middle of it, and it was killer. I flew home thinking: I want to do a record this way.

Your falsetto in "Darkest Hour" — it's almost uncomfortably vulnerable.

The song actually started three or four keys lower. But I was listening to Jim Ford and Sly & the Family Stone — honestly, I was thinking about Andy Gibb — and I just kept moving it up. I was incredibly insecure the first time in the studio, but I think that insecurity is what led to the authenticity of the emotion.

You've said you wrote "Johnny" after the Covenant School shooting in Nashville in 2023. Do you envision the song reassuring a listener, or making them angry?

Maybe both? The hardest thing I've ever done in my life is dropping my boys off at school the day after the shooting. I sat in the parking lot for I don't even know how long because I didn't know what to do. Do I stay here just in case? Not like I could do anything. But just to be close. And for whatever reason, Charlie Daniels came on. What hit me was that the devil was not in Georgia — he was here in Nashville.

Why finish the record with a Tom Waits cover?

I had four years off [between albums], and I wrote a ton of songs. And a bunch of them are hit songs. I don't mean that arrogantly — I just know after this amount of time that they're hit songs. But some of them didn't work with the room and with the instrumentation.

We were going in [the studio] at 10 o'clock the next morning, and I was watching some show on Netflix, and "Clap Hands" came on. All of a sudden, I was like, "Oh, s—..." I paused it, grabbed my guitar, laid down just me with the riff and sent it to Jay. I said, "What about this?" He goes, "See you at 10," and we cut it the next morning.

What's your relationship with weed these days?

Mainly edibles. I don't really smoke anymore. And edibles are interesting — you have to learn that environment because you never know how it's gonna work out.

Gimme a circumstance where you'd be like, "All right — I'll do this again."

When a certain person passes you a joint, I'm gonna smoke it. I was on Willie [Nelson]'s bus one night. Toby Keith came up — this was when he was alive. Robert Earl Keen was up there. Lance Armstrong was up there. It was a whole vibe. I think I was high for a month.

You played tribute concerts in L.A. last year honoring Jimmy Buffett and Robbie Robertson.

I've done a bunch of those tribute shows — too many of them — but those guys meant the world to me. Jimmy and I were campmates at a club out there in California, so I spent a lot of time with him.

At some of these tributes you'll be like the one country guy on the bill.

What's funny is that backstage, everybody's the same. I'll tell you this story: At the Jimmy show, I was standing side-stage watching the Eagles with my wife. Paul McCartney was about to come out, and a guy comes up and says, "Hey, when Paul comes out, just kind of hug the wall, because Paul likes to have a clear lane." No big deal — it's Paul McCartney. So I hug the wall and Paul comes out. He's watching the Eagles, and I look back and we kind of lock eyes. I'm uncomfortable [laughs]. Then he walks up to me and he goes, "Eric." I said, "Yeah?" He goes, "Jimmy and I played tennis together, and he thought the world of you. You wanna come sing 'Hey Jude' with me?"

I'd thought he was gonna say, "Could you please move further to the left and get the f— out of my way?" And instead he's asking if I want to sing with him. I was like, "Yes, Sir Paul, I would love to come sing 'Hey Jude' with you." So me and Brandi Carlile and a few others, we went out and sang with Paul McCartney. That's one of those moments where you go, "What the f— am I doing here?"

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CROSSWORD AND COMICS

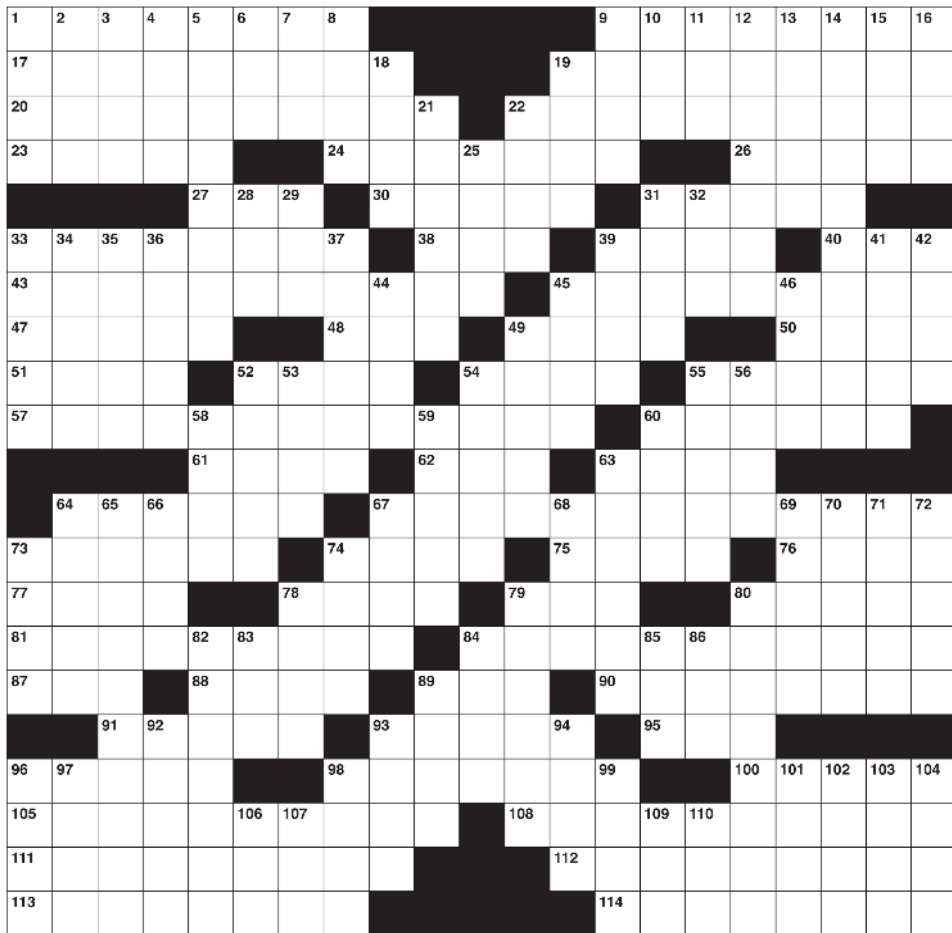
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

NUMBERS GAME

BY JACOB REED / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Jacob Reed is a director, writer and visual artist in Pasadena, Calif. He has directed numerous videos for "Jimmy Kimmel Live!," "Funny or Die and BuzzFeed. His thought-provoking short documentary, "Full Picture," appeared in more than a dozen film festivals around the country. This is his first Sunday crossword for The Times. — W. S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Don't mention it"
 - 9 Like a lover's lips, perhaps
 - 17 Sudden dose of reality, in slang
 - 19 Emphatic words of denial
 - 20 **5508461375/618**
 - 22 **0-508718**
 - 23 Sheep's peep
 - 24 How detectives might act
 - 26 Ones providing help around the House
 - 27 Poli _____
 - 30 Attack, as a castle
 - 31 Jazz singer Carmen
 - 33 Food-centric broadcasts originating in South Korea
 - 38 Computing company whose logo has remained largely the same since it was introduced by Paul Rand in 1962
 - 39 Advance
 - 40 Tough spot for a teen?
 - 43 **316008+5336338**
 - 45 **32008-531718714**
 - 47 Broke bread
 - 48 Holder of valuable contributions, in brief
 - 49 One of three on the Mayflower
 - 50 Alan of "Marriage Story"
 - 51 One of Chekhov's "Three Sisters"
 - 52 Rapper Kid _____
 - 54 Style of writing?
 - 55 Renaissance locale of the early 20th century
 - 57 **607-376006**
 - 60 Longtime Japanese camera brand
 - 61 Either of the two statues in front of the New York Public Library
 - 62 Root word?
 - 63 Riverbank material
 - 64 Lucky lottery winner's cry
 - 67 **30451045708**
 - 73 Sleazeball
 - 74 Shipshape
 - 75 They're rising over time
 - 76 Humorist Bombeck
 - 77 When tripled, "You know what I'm sayin' . . ."
 - 78 _____ Tour (record-breaking music event of 2023-24)
 - 79 Suffix with proverb
 - 80 Shepherd's staff
 - 81 **57334-4614**
 - 84 **7738.51773+51.345**
 - 87 It's in the bag!
 - 88 Heart
 - 89 _____ Tour (annual sporting series)
 - 90 Like some marriages, seating and musical compositions
 - 91 Like the weather around a lighthouse, maybe
 - 93 Baseball features
 - 95 "By the way . . ."
 - 96 _____ Moriarty, novelist who wrote "Big Little Lies"
 - 98 Tolkien character who dies as "the Grey" and returns as "the White"
 - 100 Some opinion pieces
 - 105 How to read the "words" written on this puzzle's 108-Across
 - 108 Device used to read the eight visual clues in this puzzle
 - 111 Some large structures for pet owners
 - 112 Head honcho
 - 113 Gave a thumbs up
 - 114 Goes to the mat?
 - 22 Bush Senior and Carter each had one
 - 25 Headquarter?
 - 28 "The Source" channel
 - 29 Swiatek of women's tennis
 - 31 _____ point
 - 32 Six-pack component
 - 33 PC platform of the 1980s
 - 34 Of service
 - 35 Hundred Acre Wood resident
 - 36 One way to "play it"
 - 37 Reached a base horizontally
 - 39 Show that, uh, didn't win 43 of its 54 Emmy nominations
 - 41 Page that points to other pages
 - 42 Crew
 - 44 Floral subject for van Gogh, Monet or O'Keeffe
 - 45 Oodles of
 - 46 Adult male deer
 - 49 Gourmet mushroom type
 - 52 One of the Marx Brothers
 - 53 "Yikes!"
 - 54 Lunacy
 - 55 Word with Kitchen or Angels
 - 56 Naysayer
 - 58 Film excerpt
 - 59 Bumpy jumpers
 - 60 City where tourists take photos pretending to hold up its famous landmark
 - 63 Name shouted in "A Streetcar Named Desire"
 - 64 Boiling
 - 65 Periods of abstinence from TV, news, social platforms, etc.
 - 66 Honest-to-goodness
 - 67 Possible polling problem
 - 68 Morales on the screen
 - 69 Evita in "Evita"
 - 70 Pitchfork feature
 - 71 Chew the scenery
 - 72 Tended to a Zen garden, in a way
 - 73 Anatomical sac
 - 74 Gait faster than a walk
 - 78 Website with a "Personalized and Custom Jewelry" page
 - 79 Line in old Apple ads
 - 80 Some kindergarten art supplies
 - 82 Goaded
 - 83 Comedian Notaro
 - 84 "Yikes!"
 - 85 Junior and senior: Abbr.
 - 86 Garment for one who's wearing a wire?
 - 89 Half of a noted magic duo
 - 92 In reserve for now
 - 93 Old sayings
 - 94 Adirondack chair part
 - 96 Coming-of-age Pixar film of 2021
 - 97 Beers that might punnily have "hop" in their names, for short
 - 98 "Splendid!"
 - 99 Steady stream
 - 101 What a hot dog might do
 - 102 List-ending abbr.
 - 103 Cry after putting one's pencil down
 - 104 Married mujeres: Abbr.
 - 106 Sinus specialist, for short
 - 107 POTUS 34
 - 109 Subj. of a class with dummies in it
 - 110 Purple yam in Philippine cuisine
- DOWN**
- 1 Government org. that investigates accidents
 - 2 Spoken
 - 3 What a whistler whistles
 - 4 "_____ girl!"
 - 5 "Nevertheless . . ."
 - 6 Jimmy Kimmel's network
 - 7 [2 funny!]
 - 8 [way 2 funny!!!!]
 - 9 Down for the count, in brief
 - 10 Italian diminutive suffix
 - 11 Word whose letters are aptly found from left to right in "scion"
 - 12 Bear's counterpart on Wall Street, once
 - 13 Courtyards
 - 14 Tough customer for a wedding planner
 - 15 Debussy's "Clair de _____"
 - 16 Brain tests, for short
 - 18 Rolls
 - 19 Bogus
 - 21 Cannabis variety contrasted with indica

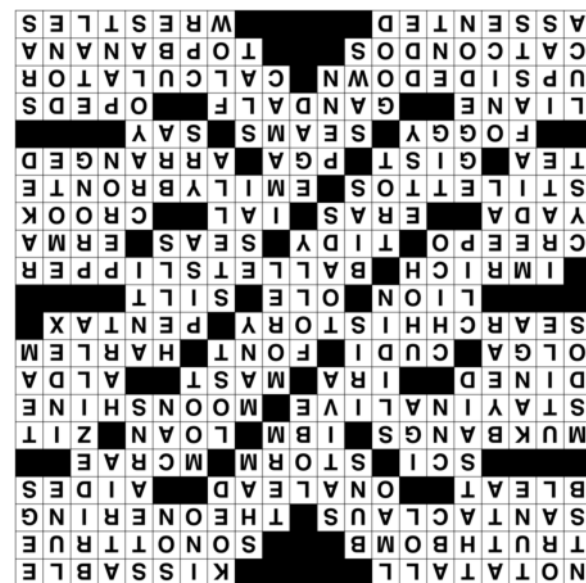


GUNSTON STREET

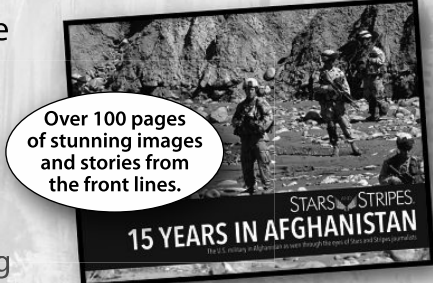


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FACES

World Video Game Hall inducts 4 new honorees

Associated Press

The World Video Game Hall of Fame on Thursday inducted four honorees, paying tribute to games that challenged players and changed the industry.

Making up the Class of 2025 are: Defender, the 1981 arcade game that raised the bar on difficulty; Tamagotchi, the digital pets that bridged toys and video games; GoldenEye 007, whose four-person mode influenced multiplayer games that followed; and Quake, which debuted in 1996 with a 3D engine that became the new standard for the industry.

The winners emerged from a field of 12 finalists that included Age of Empires, Angry Birds, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare, Frogger, Golden Tee, Harvest Moon, Mattel Football and NBA 2K.

The Hall of Fame each year recognizes arcade, console, computer, hand-held, and mobile games that have had staying power and influenced the video game industry or pop culture.

The bestselling Defender, released by Williams Electronics, proved that players would embrace complex and challenging games in the arcade, the experts said. It combined intense gameplay and a complicated control scheme with a horizontally scrolling shooter.

"Defender's punishing gameplay raised the level of competition in arcades, and it was among the first games to truly separate dedicated players from more casual ones," Jeremy Saucier, assistant vice president for interpretation and electronic games, said.

The 1996 launch of Tamagotchi is credited with sparking the popularity of pet simulation video games. The hand-held egg-shaped electronic game allowed owners to care for a virtual pet from birth through death, feeding, playing with and cleaning up after it by pressing buttons. Collections manager Kristy Hisert said Tamagotchi offered something dif-



THE STRONG MUSEUM/AP

Defender, GoldenEye 007, Quake and Tamagotchi are the newest inductees into the World Video Game Hall of Fame.

ferent than the popular video game electronics of the time.

"It provided players with feelings of connection, caring and customization, a respite from competition and fighting games," she said. Neopets, Nintendogs and other social media and app-based versions of pet simulation games would follow.

GoldenEye 007 was based on the 1995 James Bond spy film "GoldenEye" and was the third bestselling game for the Nintendo 64, behind Super Mario 64 and Mario Kart 64. The result of a 1997 partnership between Nintendo and Rare, the first-person shooter game was known for its four-person multiplayer mode, which Hall of Fame experts said influenced many multiplayer games that followed.

Id Software's 1996 Quake was also recognized for its lasting influence, with a game code that "is a literal legacy" and continues to be used in some games after nearly 30 years, electronic games curator Lindsey Kurano said.

"Of few games can it be said that its DNA — its code — continues to be present in modern games, decades after release," she said.

The World Video Game Hall of Fame is inside The Strong National Museum of Play. Anyone can nominate a video game for consideration. Museum staff name 12 finalists each year and solicit votes from experts and fans before announcing the winners.



AP

Rapper Kendrick Lamar received the most BET Awards nominations with 10 heading into the June 9 event.

Kendrick Lamar the leading BET nominee with 10 nods

BY JONATHAN LANDRUM, JR.

Associated Press

Kendrick Lamar extends his dominant musical reign, entering next month's BET Awards as the leading nominee.

The rap megastar earned 10 nominations Thursday, including an album of the year for his highly-acclaimed project "GNX," the network announced. His ubiquitous diss track "Not Like Us," emanating from the Drake feud, received nominations for video of the year and viewer's choice award.

Lamar made waves with his Grammy triumph, winning song and record of the year for "Not Like Us." He followed up with a groundbreaking Super Bowl halftime show, becoming the first solo hip-hop performer to headline the coveted slot. He is currently on the Grand National Tour with SZA.

Doechii, Drake, Future and GloRilla each received six nominations. Metro Boomin pulled in five nods, while SZA and The Weeknd each scored four.

Comedian-actor Kevin Hart, who hosted the BET Awards in 2011, will helm the show again as it celebrates its 25th anniversary.

The BET Awards will offer tributes to former pop-

ular hosts and performances, including the network's once-flagship program "106 & Park."

"'106 & Park' was more than just a music countdown show; it was the heartbeat of Black youth culture and one of the highest-rated BET programs for over a decade," said Scott Mills, BET's president and CEO. The weekday show launched in 2000 and lasted for more than a decade. The show thrived with a video countdown, interviews and performances.

The awards, which celebrate Black entertainers on television, will air live on June 9 from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

There's a competitive list of top-notch actors.

For best actor, the category includes: Aaron Pierre, Aldis Hodge, Anthony Mackie, Colman Domingo, Denzel Washington, Jamie Foxx, Joey Bada\$\$, Hart, Sterling K. Brown and Will Smith.

For best actress, the nominees include: Andra Day, Angela Bassett, Coco Jones, Cynthia Erivo, Keke Palmer, Kerry Washington, Quinta Brunson, Viola Davis and Zendaya.

Stephen Curry, LeBron James, Simone Biles, Angel Reese and Jalen Hurts are among the sports stars competing for awards.

Netflix about to roll out new look, additional features to homepage

BY WENDY LEE

Los Angeles Times

The home of "Selling Sunset" and "The Four Seasons" is getting a major renovation.

Netflix on Wednesday said it is rolling out a new look and a series of additional features to its TV homepage, as the streamer continues to build its stable of film and TV programming, live events and games.

When customers open the revamped homepage, it will show additional information about titles, such as "Emmy Award Winner" and "#1 in TV Shows."

Netflix is also introducing motion techniques to keep the images of its programs "fluid and snappy," which may feature live

events that viewers might be interested in.

The revamp is meant to make the platform more engaging for viewers, while making it easier to navigate Netflix's massive library of titles.

As entertainment companies like Disney, Warner Bros. Discovery, Paramount and YouTube compete for eyeballs, it's become ever more important for streamers to build apps that are attractive and easy to use — one of the underrated elements of the streaming wars.

Clunky user interfaces and challenges with content "discoverability" — i.e., trying to find something to watch in a bottomless digital well of shows — are some of the main things consumers complain about when us-

ing streaming services.

The Netflix rollout is expected to take place globally over the next few weeks starting May 19.

"Our members do a lot of eye gymnastics when they're scrolling down and right and going back and forth between rows and title details on the homepage," said Chief Product Officer Eunice Kim in a press briefing on Tuesday.

"We're putting all the information you need to make an informed choice about what to watch front and center."

Netflix said it is also testing a way for customers to search for title recommendations using artificial intelligence technology. Customers who choose to opt in on Apple

devices can type, "I want something funny and upbeat," and the search tool will suggest titles that match the description.

OpenAI is providing some of the capabilities for the generative AI search function, Netflix said.

The streamer also said it is testing a vertical video feed on mobile devices, where it will show clips of Netflix programs that customers can tap to watch the whole show or movie immediately, add it to their list to watch later or share the title with friends.

Vertical video has become a prevalent way that people watch content on phones with the rise of TikTok, which was followed by the likes of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman who disappeared 62 years ago found safe

WI REEDSBURG — Sixty-two years ago, Audrey Backeberg disappeared from a small city in south-central Wisconsin after reportedly hitchhiking with her family's babysitter and catching a bus to Indianapolis.

Nobody ever knew where she went or what happened to her.

All that changed last week when she was found alive and safe in another state.

Detective Isaac Hanson discovered an out-of-state arrest record that matched Backeberg, which triggered a series of investigative moves. Turns out Backeberg chose to leave the town of Reedsburg on her own accord — likely due to an abusive husband, Hanson said.

"She's happy, safe and secure; And just kind of lived under the radar for that long," he said.

Hanson and other officials met with Backeberg's family to see if they had a connection with that region. They also started digging through Backeberg's sister's Ancestry.com account, pulling census records, obituaries and marriage licenses from that region.

Within about two months, they found an address where a woman was living that Hanson said shared a lot of similarities with Backeberg, including date of birth and Social Security number. Hanson was able to get a deputy from that jurisdiction to go to the address. Ten minutes later, Backeberg, now in her 80s, called Hanson.

"It happened so fast," he said.

SpaceX sends up latest Starlink launch

FL ORLANDO — SpaceX knocked off its latest Cape Canaveral, Fla., mission on Tuesday night.

A Falcon 9 carrying 28 Starlink satellites lifted off at 9:17 p.m. from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's Space Launch Complex 40.

The first-stage booster for the mission flew for the seventh time with a recovery landing downrange in the Atlantic Ocean on the drone-ship Just Read the Instructions.

This was the 38th orbital launch from the Space Coast so far in 2025 with all but two coming from SpaceX. The others were Blue Origin's debut New Glenn launch in January and a United Launch Alliance Atlas V that flew that company's first mission of the year last week.

Student partially paralyzed after a fall at frat party

CA BERKELEY — A University of California, Berkeley student just weeks away from graduating became paralyzed from the waist down after a recent fall at a university fraternity event.

Bandna Bhatti's family told KTVU that on April 19, Bhatti fell from a stairway at Phi Kappa Tau on Piedmont Avenue. She was



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Leaving on a jet plane

Passengers head into Denver International Airport on Wednesday, in Denver.

found 15 minutes later but didn't know how bad her injuries were; 911 was called seven hours later.

Bhatti, 21, is paralyzed from the waist down and has a spinal fracture and brain hematoma, according to a GoFundMe created to cover her medical costs.

A university spokesperson told KRON4 that the Berkeley Police Department is investigating the incident.

Lawmakers OK expanding state auditor's powers

NC RALEIGH — The North Carolina House on Tuesday passed a bill expanding the powers of the state auditor, a typically low-profile office that Republican lawmakers have repeatedly sought to embolden since November, when it was won by a Republican for the first time in 16 years.

"It ensures the state auditor can do the job the voters elected him to do: protecting taxpayers, detecting fraud and holding public spending to account," House Majority Leader Brenden Jones, the bill's sponsor, said.

House Bill 549, which passed along party lines, would empower Auditor Dave Boliek to investigate any non-governmental organization that receives public funds, and would greatly expand his office's access to state databases.

The bill would also give him more flexibility over hiring and firing staff in his office — a move critics warned could turn merit-based state jobs into political appointments.

Starting July 1, the bill would exempt new hires in the auditor's of-

fice from the State Human Resources Act — a broad law that establishes protections for state employees. It would give current employees the choice to exempt themselves from the act.

"What you're saying, if you are seeking to make these positions exempt, is that political preferences should take precedent over merit — but for the employees in this office only," Rep. Tim Longest, a Wake County Democrat, said.

Measure lets schools decide cellphone policies

MI LANSING — The Michigan Senate voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to require school districts to develop their own policies on the use of cellphones by students, avoiding a stricter statewide ban that had been sought by some lawmakers.

The Senate supported the bill in a vote of 28-9, with nine Republicans crossing over to join majority Democrats.

The Republican-controlled Michigan House has been preparing its own, more rigid bill on cellphones in schools. The House plan would prohibit students in grades kindergarten through fifth from having cellphones on school grounds and ban students in grades sixth through eighth from using phones during instructional time, lunch and recess.

Democratic Sen. Dayna Polehanki, the sponsor of the Senate measure, said she is hopeful that the Senate and House would ultimately meet somewhere in the middle on cellphone school policy.

"If you have a policy, you have to enforce it," Polehanki said of school

districts. "If the parents are having problems with it, change it at the board level.

"But to say you need the state to step in and... prescribe a policy that might not be right for your community, I just don't think that's a great rationale."

AG says CRT suit against school system resolved

TX DALLAS — After suing Coppell ISD alleging educators were breaking state law by teaching critical race theory, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton announced Wednesday he "resolved" the case with the district.

The lawsuit, filed in March, based its claims on a hidden-camera recording originally published in 2023 by a group called Accuracy in Media. Video appeared to show a Coppell ISD administrator discussing ways to get around the state's anti-CRT laws.

District officials insisted in a court filing that the footage was "heavily edited and manipulated so to be grossly misleading."

Critical race theory is an academic framework that probes the way policies and laws uphold systemic racism — such as in education, housing or criminal justice. In recent years, many conservatives conflated it with work aimed at making schools more equitable for students.

In Wednesday's announcement, Paxton said the lawsuit was resolved after district officials "voluntarily took measures to ensure that unlawful critical race theory ("CRT") will not be taught in its classrooms."

Those measures included dis-

avowing the theory and circulating to staff Texas laws surrounding the teaching of race and the importance of being fully compliant with state law, according to the news release.

Suspect's girlfriend to pal: 'We started the fire'

NJ BARNEGAT TOWNSHIP — The girlfriend of a 17-year-old arrested in connection with a massive wildfire in New Jersey last month allegedly admitted to a friend that her group started the blaze, court documents show.

"We started the fire," she wrote to a classmate in a Snapchat message, according to an affidavit of probable cause obtained by NJ Advance Media.

The unnamed girlfriend, who has not been charged, was reportedly in the area where the fire is believed to have started.

Investigators say she voluntarily sent her classmate a message on April 22, the day officials first spotted the blaze. The classmate then went to police.

The Jones Road wildfire started in the Greenwood Forest Wildlife Management Area in Barnegat Township, some 90 miles south of Midtown Manhattan.

Over the past two weeks, the still-going wildfire has burned through more than 15,300 acres. It also forced thousands of evacuations, led the state to declare a state of emergency and triggered an air quality health advisory for the New York City area.

On Tuesday, officials confirmed the blaze was about 90% contained.

From wire reports

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
18							19	20				
			21				22			23	24	25
26	27	28				29				30		
31					32				33			
34				35				36				
37			38				39					
			40				41			42	43	44
45	46	47			48	49						
50					51					52		
53					54					55		

ACROSS

- 1 Abbr. in an email
- 4 "Frozen" snowman
- 8 Pop flavor
- 12 "What a cute kitten!"
- 13 Make over
- 14 Actor Clive
- 15 Represent
- 17 Monthly payment
- 18 Auto floor covering
- 19 Purse
- 21 Connections
- 22 Frozen spike
- 26 Fashion designer Bill
- 29 Luggage tags, e.g.
- 30 Mauna —
- 31 Trenches
- 32 U.S. Army bases
- 33 Musician's jobs
- 34 Jurist Lance
- 35 Parking place
- 36 Plain writing
- 37 Personal history
- 39 Calendar abbr.
- 40 ICU hookups
- 41 Virgil epic
- 45 Baseball's Musial
- 48 Requested
- 50 "Listen!"
- 51 Sharp
- 52 Prefix with night or light

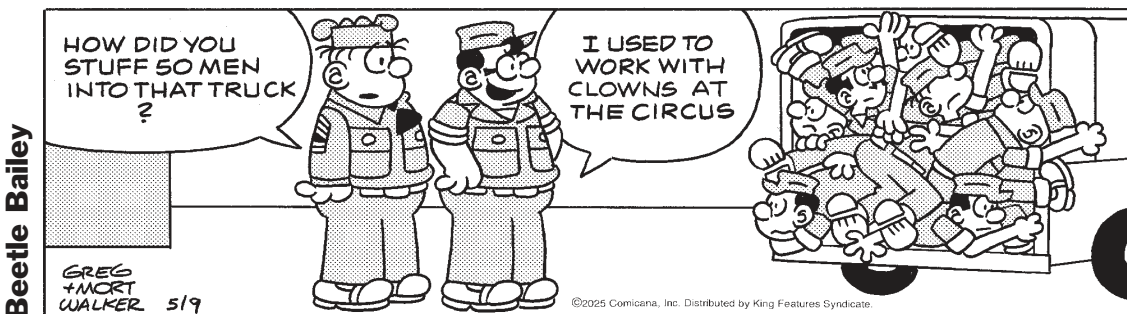
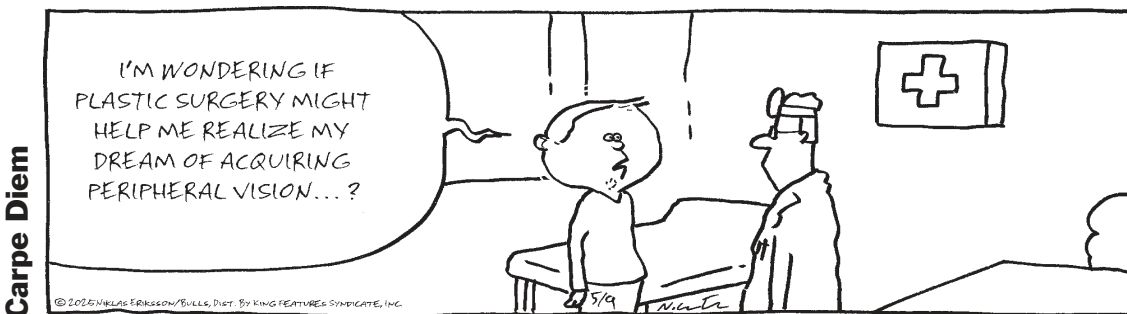
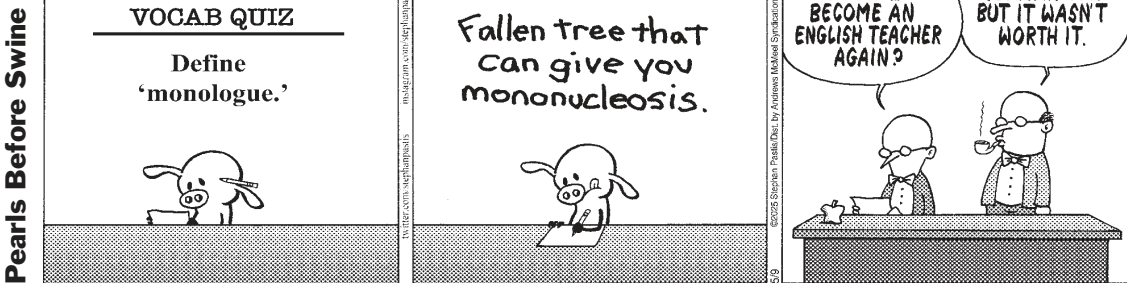
- 53 Sapporo sashes
- 54 Canal zones?
- 55 Enervate

DOWN

- 1 Pear choice
- 2 Club in a Manilow song
- 3 "Moonstruck" actress
- 4 Mork's people on a sitcom
- 5 Some jobs
- 6 Big fuss
- 7 Disallows
- 8 Welsh pooch
- 9 Have debts
- 10 Novelist Deighton
- 11 Busy insect
- 16 Out of whack
- 20 Condo coolers
- 23 Advertising award
- 24 Fireplace fuel
- 25 Lighten
- 26 Edge
- 27 Mandolin's kin
- 28 Teensy bit
- 29 Addams cousin
- 32 Abandon
- 33 Prep coffee beans
- 35 Actress Tyler
- 36 Hogs the mirror
- 38 Cries from sties
- 39 Charlatan
- 42 New newts
- 43 Nebraska neighbor
- 44 Faucet problem
- 45 HBO rival
- 46 Indent key
- 47 "Exodus" hero
- 49 Salt source

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	I	R	D		B	A	R	B		P	E	W			
A	R	I	E		I	N	F	O		A	L	E			
B	O	O	N	D	O	C	K	S		D	O	E			
U	N	T	I	E	S				O	X	L	I	P		
					M	A			C	A	M	E	O		
C	O	P	S			J	A	R		D	C	I	I		
A	N	E				O	R	T			K	G	S		
B	O	A	R			B	T	S		T	S	A	R		
					C	E	A	S	E		O	H			
G	O	O	F	S					S	E	R	I	A	L	
A	R	C				S	H	A	M		R	O	C	K	S
E	E	K				E	S	A	U		B	E	I	T	
L	O	S				S	T	A	G		S	S	N	S	



5-9

CRYPTOQUIP

C A M T M H N V Y E C A V N P O
 N W W M H E P O T X G E K M N P A N Q C N
 Y N G M T Z T Z R ' V K H T X J M Z T K B
 T P X W N H C A : " H N K B C A E V Q T R . "

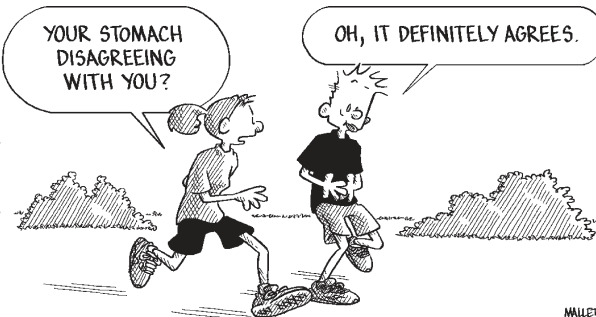
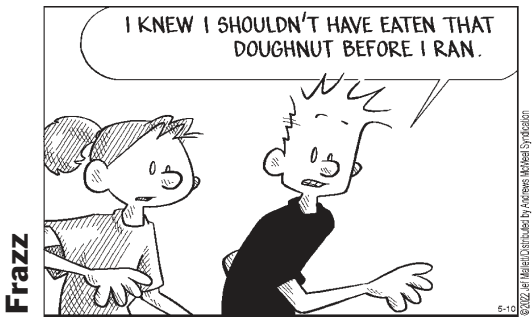
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE STORE WAS SELLING TWO WOOD-SHREDDING MACHINE MODELS, SO I WENT WITH THE CHEAPER CHIPPER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals H

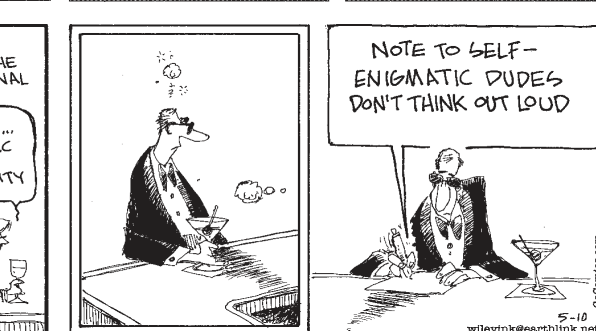
Bizarro



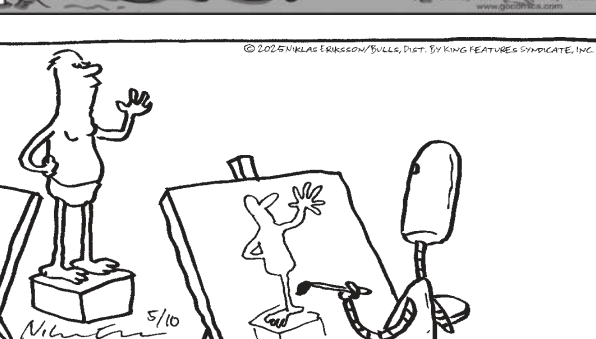
Loose Parts



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Wumo



Beetle Bailey



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11
12							13					
14							15					
16					17	18				19		
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24	25	26		27			28		29		30	31
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		38		39		40			41			
42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51					52	53			
54								55				
56								57				

ACROSS

- 1 Like draft beer
- 6 Art props
- 12 Money in coin
- 13 Coats with goo
- 14 Gobi, for one
- 15 Most fitting
- 16 Worldwide (Abbr.)
- 17 "Nope!"
- 19 ACLU concerns
- 20 Director Wertmuller
- 22 — Baba
- 24 Rx writers
- 27 Tablet
- 29 Like — of bricks
- 32 Strikes it rich
- 35 "May It Be" singer
- 36 Read quickly
- 37 Turf
- 38 Clear the tables
- 40 Purim's month
- 42 Med. plan option
- 44 Spouse
- 46 Per person
- 50 CPA's expertise
- 52 Bamboozling
- 54 Oats-nuts-fruit mix
- 55 Merges
- 56 "Hear me out"
- 57 Bicycle part

DOWN

- 1 Unlock
- 2 Egg container
- 3 Immune system agent
- 4 Football filler
- 5 Funnel-shaped blooms
- 6 Jacob's brother
- 7 Greek leader?
- 8 Command to Fido
- 9 Retired
- 10 For fear that
- 11 Bygone fleet
- 12 Reagan Era "Star Wars" prog.
- 18 Latte spec
- 21 URL addresses
- 23 Back muscle, briefly

- 24 French Mrs.
- 25 Author Brown
- 26 Luxury stadium seating
- 28 Gorged (on)
- 30 Sean — Lennon
- 31 Homer's neighbor
- 33 — Claire, WI
- 34 Genetic letters
- 39 Low-lying land
- 41 Speedy
- 42 Webmaster's code
- 43 Hawaiian island
- 45 Victor's cry
- 47 Pocket bread
- 48 Scott Turow book
- 49 Film ratings
- 51 D-Day vessel
- 53 French article

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	C	C		O	L	A	F		C	O	L	A	
O	O	H		R	E	D	O		O	W	E	N	
S	P	E	A	K	F	O	R		R	E	N	T	
C	A	R	M	A	T			B	A	G			
				I	N	S		I	C	I	C	L	E
B	L	A	S	S		I	D	S		L	O	A	
R	U	T	S		F	T	S		G	I	G	S	
I	T	O		L	O	T		P	R	O	S	E	
M	E	M	O	I	R			F	R	I			
				I	V	S		A	E	N	E	I	D
S	T	A	N			A	S	K	E	D	F	O	R
H	A	R	K			K	E	E	N		T	W	I
O	B	I	S			E	A	R	S		S	A	P

5-10

CRYPTOQUIP

VIJEI UBCK SNHT VCPBK UT
 GHHLCHLJGST OCL OBNJQY,
 FSJQYJQY JQFTESF SC IGMT?
 UTT-QTYGSJMT.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE AEROSMITH SONG OFFERING ADVICE ON HOW TO MOVE A BABY'S CRADLE BACK AND FORTH: "ROCK THIS WAY."
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals B

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OPINION

The Trump experience: Right ends, wrong means

BY JONAH GOLDBERG

Tribune Content Agency

President Donald Trump has identified real problems, but he's abusing his power in trying to correct them.

Perhaps the most frustrating thing about being a conservative critic of Trumpism is that you often start by agreeing with Trumpworld about ends while disagreeing about means.

This pleases nobody. The left, broadly speaking, considers the ends as illegitimate as the means, and the pro-Trump right thinks that if you're against the means you really don't desire the ends. I'm against the abuse of power, even for my own "side."

For instance, I've argued for decades that liberal media bias is real and a problem. I think you can exaggerate the problem, particularly these days (Fox has dominated cable news for decades). But, yes, the MAGA crowd is right that much of the "legacy" media is often reflexively hostile to Republicans. But that doesn't mean I support the way Trump's Federal Communications Commission is bullying various media organizations for being critical of Trump, or that I applaud Trump's jihad against The Associated Press for refusing to call the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America."

Or consider Harvard. If you read its own report on antisemitism at the university, it's hard to disagree with many of the administration's criticisms. Harvard has been intolerant of internal dissent, and its educational philosophy has been absurdly left-wing. For instance, a mandatory class for students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education deployed a grotesque chart titled "The Pyramid of White Supremacy" equating free trade agreements with "slavery" and "colorblindness" with "racial profiling." (See Page 150 of the antisemitism report; the graphic is no longer in use.) It

suggests that the Anti-Defamation League is engaging in "coded" rhetoric for "genocide." Meanwhile, the Harvard Law Review seems to be practicing flat-out racial discrimination.

But as Charles Lane of The Free Press recently put it, "Harvard had it coming. That doesn't mean Trump is right." The Trump administration has frozen funding and ended new research grants to Harvard unless it adopts recommended reforms, and the president wants to revoke the school's tax-exempt status. These are draconian "remedies," raising a host of different ethical, prudential, legal, policy and constitutional issues. Suffice it to say, I think defunding cancer research to own the libs seems like overkill. Removing Harvard's tax-exempt status is probably illegal. But even if it's not, it's insane to do it via executive order and would set a precedent conservatives will rue.

I could make similar arguments about everything from Trump's threats to law firms to his attacks on NATO. Heck, I've been in favor of annexing Greenland — peacefully! — for a long time. But I think threatening military force (as he did again last weekend) is grotesque.

But these examples are also a good basis for making a point beyond "Trump is awful." The old story of liberal media bias has gotten worse, for a number of structural reasons. Back in the days when big newspapers, a few news magazines and three broadcast networks defined the mainstream media, audiences were broad and diverse. This encouraged news outlets to play it more down the middle. They didn't always succeed, but there were institutional safeguards and incentives to prevent straying too far left or right. For instance, advertisers for baby formula did not want to sponsor content that might offend one or another swath of the market.

Cable and the internet balkanized the media landscape. The incentive structure changed with it. Instead of seeking to appeal to a broad audience, outlets switched to a strategy of appealing to a "sticky" narrow slice that was more ideological. Liberals can see this plain as day with Fox News but strain to see the dynamic with MSNBC.

As journalism became more ideological, so did journalists. Many news organizations drew their talent from elite schools of the sort that taught "The Pyramid of White Supremacy." It should be no surprise that their coverage of, say, the George Floyd protests was informed by their educational experience, often defending or downplaying the violent destruction of property. In the same way that fish don't know they're wet, a lot of journalists couldn't see how far left their institutions had drifted. But conservatives could — and dreamed of punishing them for it.

The story of the universities is different, but a similar dynamic has been at play. Groupthink around a slew of ideological commitments festered. They lost sight of their own obligation to be institutions for all Americans. Like the media, Harvard and others exploited their traditional status to advance ideological agendas. And like the media, they invoke their traditional status as a kind of force field against outside pressure or criticism. Harvard — and higher ed generally — abused its positions and invited an inevitable correction. That the form of the Trump correction is as lamentable as the need for one is true.

Again, this view annoys people who see American politics as an endless war between heroes and villains. But it is that view that got us here.

Jonah Goldberg is editor-in-chief of The Dispatch and the host of The Remnant podcast.

Why cutting the Energy Department budget is good

BY JACK SPENCER

The Heritage Foundation

Media coverage of President Donald Trump's recommended Department of Energy budget has been predictably negative. It has focused heavily on his proposed cuts, with the word "slash" appearing in numerous headlines. But his budget is more accurately described as a major policy shift — and a very beneficial one.

If Congress passes this budget so the president can sign it into law, then it's goodbye to using the department to impose an unpopular and expensive energy transition on the American people, and hello to a policy of energy abundance and dominance.

The White House suggested canceling over \$15 billion in funding for an assortment of programs that forced unreliable and economically unsustainable so-called green energy programs into our energy infrastructure. This is a win for American taxpayers and energy users.

These programs are not only expensive, they displace reliable and affordable energy sources such as coal and natural gas with intermittent energy, mostly wind and solar. Were America to continue down this road, it will be only a matter of time before the nation experiences blackouts similar to the one in Spain last month, as well as an expansion of energy rationing — which some parts of the country have already seen at times of peak summer demand.

But it's not just the climate-focused offices

that had their budgets reduced — DOE's other programmatic offices were cut as well. The Office of Nuclear Energy was cut by more than \$400 million, the Office of Fossil Energy was cut by \$270 million, and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy was cut by more than \$2.5 billion.

These proposed cuts should also be applauded. While more details will emerge, it seems like the administration is moving away from using taxpayer money to push technologies into the market and instead focusing on developing new cutting-edge technologies and solving more basic, underlying technological and scientific questions.

This is the kind of work that can be broadly applicable throughout the energy industry. It could even result in breakthroughs that the private sector could then commercialize and make available to the public.

If this budget does reflect a shift in focus away from commercialization and toward more basic research, the nation will be much better off. It means that American companies, rather than politicians and government officials, will decide what energy sources are used.

This theme is carried out through other offices in the department as well. The Office of Science, for example, is reducing spending on climate change research and is instead focusing on areas such as quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and critical minerals.

Though details of the budget have yet to be released, it is clear the administration is

changing the Department of Energy's priorities for the better. However, more should be done in the coming years.

America became energy rich due to the efforts of the private sector and not the federal government. The Department of Energy was born out of a fear in the 1970s that America was entering an era of energy scarcity and that government action was necessary to mitigate that risk.

In fact, the opposite was true. Thus, if the conditions that originally justified the Department of Energy's creation no longer exist, it is worth asking why we need such a department.

While much of the work done in the department is important, particularly its work to clean up the nuclear weapons complex and its cutting-edge scientific research, much of its energy-focused spending is unnecessary and crowds out work that could be done by private researchers, either in companies or in universities.

This doesn't necessarily mean that closing the Department of Energy is the next step. But it does mean that many more cuts could likely be made in future budgets. Such cuts would allow the federal government to focus on what it does best, while leaving other functions to the men and women in our energy sector — who have brought us energy dominance. Let's hope that Congress gets the message and passes the president's proposed budget.

Jack Spencer is a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation.

SCOREBOARD/NCAA

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball American League

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Placed OF Andrew Benintendi on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 5. Selected the contract of OF Nick Maton to Charlotte (IL).

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Optioned RHP Zak Kent to Columbus (IL).

DETROIT TIGERS — Activated C Tomas Nido and RF Manuel Margot. Released RHP Kenta Maeda.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Agreed to terms with RHP Stephen Nogosek on a minor league contract.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Sent RHP Touki Toussaint outright to Salt Lake (PCL). Sent RHP Touki Toussaint outright to Salt Lake.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Sent RHP Jonathan Loaisiga on a rehab assignment to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).

SEATTLE MARINERS — Activated OF Leody Taveras. Optioned OF Rhylan Thomas to Tacoma (PCL).

TEXAS RANGERS — Placed OF Kevin Pillar on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 4.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Recalled OF Jonathan Clase from Buffalo (IL). Selected the contract of RHP Braydon Fisher. Optioned OF Alan Roden and RHP Dillon Tate to Buffalo. Designated OF Steward Berroa for assignment.

National League

CHICAGO CUBS — Sent RHP Ryan Brasier on a rehab assignment to Iowa (IL).

CINCINNATI REDS — Placed INF Noelvi Marte on the 10-day IL. Recalled OF Rece Hinds from Louisville (IL).

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Recalled RHP Landon Knack from Oklahoma City (PCL). Optioned RHP J.P. Feyereisen to Oklahoma City. Placed RHP Evan Phillips on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Matt Sauer from Oklahoma City.

MIAMI MARLINS — Sent CF Derek Hill on a rehab assignment to Jacksonville (IL). Recalled LHP Cade Gibson from Jacksonville. Optioned RHP George Soriano to Jacksonville.

NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with LHP Colin Poche on a minor league contract.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Optioned 1B Luke Baker to Memphis (IL).

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Reinstated RHP Sean Reynolds from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Ryan Bergert to El Paso (PCL).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Reinstated RHP Michael Soroka from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Eduardo Salazar to Rochester (IL). Optioned RHP Zach Brzycky to Rochester.

BASKETBALL

Women's National Basketball Association

INDIANA FEVER — Waived F Yvonne Ejim.

LAS VEGAS ACES — Waived F Queen Egbo and G Harmoni Turner.

MINNESOTA LYNX — Waived Fs Dalayah Daniels, Ajae Petty and Camryn Taylor and G Diamond Johnson.

PHOENIX MERCURY — Waived Gs Anna Makurat and Shyla Heal.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

DALLAS COWBOYS — Acquired WR George Pickens and a 2027 6th-round pick from the Pittsburgh Steelers in exchange for a 2026 3rd-round pick and a 2027 5th-round pick. Waived WR Seth Williams.

DENVER BRONCOS — Signed WR Pat Bryant to a rookie contract.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed DT Foley Fatukaso to a contract. Claimed LB Jackson Woodard off waivers from the Seattle Seahawks.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed LB Joe Bachie to a contract.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Released WR Gabe Davis.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Reverted WR Justin Lockhart to injured reserve after clearing waivers.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Waived DT David Olajiga.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Signed DT Johnathan Hankins.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed DL James Lynch to a one-year contract. Waived/Injured LB Kyron Johnson and WR Tay Martin.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Signed G Jonas Johansson to a two-year contract extension.

WINNIPEG JETS — Recalled C/RW from Manitoba (AHL).

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

COLUMBUS CREW — Signed MF Daniel Gazdag to a multiyear contract extension.

HOUSTON DYNAMO — Extended first team loan from FluminenseFC in Brazil to D Felipe Andrade.

MINNESOTA UNITED — Signed G Wessel Speel, Ds Kieran Chandler, Britton Fischer and Kisa Kiingi, MFs Curt Calov and Babacar Niang, Fs Luke Hille, Muba Nour and Darius Randell to short-term contracts.

TENNIS

Italian Open

At Rome
Purse: Euro 6,009,593
Surface: Red clay
Seedings in parentheses
Wednesday
Women's Singles
Round of 128

Victoria Azarenka, Belarus, def. Camila Osorio, Colombia, 6-2, 6-3.
Naomi Osaka, Japan, def. Sara Errani, Italy, 6-2, 6-3.
Kamilla Rakhimova, Russia, def. Wang Xinyu, China, 6-3, 6-2.
Caroline Dolehide, United States, def. Olivia Gadecki, Australia, 7-6 (5), 5-7, 6-2.
Varvara Gracheva, Russia, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.
Victoria Mboko, Canada, def. Arianna Zucchini, Italy, 6-2, 6-3.
Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, def. Elina Avanesyan, Russia, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.
Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, def. Polina Kudermetova, Russia, 6-7 (10), 6-4, 6-2.
Bianca Andreescu, Canada, def. Federica Urgesi, Italy, 6-0, 6-3.
Ashlyn Krueger, United States, def. Anna Bondar, Hungary, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1.
Eva Lys, Germany, def. Moyuka Uchijima, Japan, 6-1, 6-0.
Hailey Baptiste, United States, def. Anna Blinkova, Russia, 7-6 (7), 6-4.
Maria Sakkari, Greece, def. Belinda Bencic, Switzerland, 6-2, ret.
Veronika Kudermetova, Russia, def. Lucia Stefanini, Italy, 7-5, 6-2.
Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Russia, def. Katie Boulter, Britain, 6-3, 6-3.
Emiliana Arango, Colombia, def. Viktoriya Tomova, Bulgaria, 7-6 (6), 5-7, 6-4.
Antonia Ruzic, Croatia, def. Tyra Caterina Grant, Italy, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.
Olga Danilovic, Serbia, def. Katerina Siniakova, Czechia, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.
Emma Raducanu, Britain, def. Maya Joint, Australia, 7-5, 6-7 (1), 6-3.
Marta Kostyuk, Ukraine, def. Alexandra Eala, Philippines, 6-0, 6-1.
Katie Volynets, United States, def. Arantxa Rus, Netherlands, 6-3, 6-3.
Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Dayana Yastremska, Ukraine, 2-6, 7-6 (6), 6-3.

Men's Singles

Round of 128

Francisco Comesana, Argentina, def. Daniel Altmaier, Germany, 6-1, 7-5.
Jordan Thompson, Australia, def. Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, France, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (5).
Corentin Moutet, France, def. Rinky Hijikata, Australia, 3-6, 6-1, 7-5.
Alexandre Muller, France, def. Jiri Lehecka, Czechia, 2-6, 6-3, 7-6.
Tallon Griekspoor, Netherlands, def. Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.
Camilo Ugo Carabelli, Argentina, def. Pablo Carreno Busta, Spain, 6-2, 1-6, 6-3.
Carlos Taberner, Spain, def. Aleksandar Kovacevic, United States, 6-3, 1-6, 7-5.
Vit Koprivka, Czechia, def. Quentin Halys, France, 6-4, 6-3.
Roman Andres Burruchaga, Argentina, def. Lorenzo Sonego, Italy, 6-2, 6-3.
Dusan Lajovic, Serbia, def. Yoshihito Nishioka, Japan, 7-5, 6-1.
Cameron Norrie, Britain, def. Christopher O'Connell, Australia, 6-3, 6-2.
Laslo Djere, Serbia, def. Tomas Martin Etcheverry, Argentina, 6-3, 6-2.
Otto Virtanen, Finland, def. Hamad Medjedovic, Serbia, 6-4, 6-4.
Francesco Passaro, Italy, def. Chun Hsin Tseng, Taiwan, 6-0, 2-6, 6-3.
Vilius Gaubas, Lithuania, def. Damir Dzumhur, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 7-6 (3), 2-6, 6-4.
Luciano Darderi, Italy, def. Yunchaokete Bu, China, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Thursday

Women's Singles
Round of 64

Naomi Osaka, Japan, def. Viktorija Golubic, Switzerland, 2-6, 7-5, 6-1.
Ons Jabeur (27), Tunisia, def. Petra Kvitova, Czechia, walkover.
Jaqueline Cristian, Romania, def. Yulia Putintseva (23), Kazakhstan, 7-6 (2), 7-5.
Diana Shnaider (13), Russia, def. Caroline Dolehide, United States, 6-0, 6-0.
Iga Swiatek (2), Poland, def. Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, 6-1, 6-0.
Peyton Stearns, United States, def. Anna Kalinskaya (28), Russia, 6-2, 6-3.
Jelena Ostapenko (17), Latvia, def. Rebecca Sramkova, Slovakia, 1-6, 6-4, 6-3.
Elise Mertens (25), Belgium, def. Suzan Lamens, Netherlands, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Men's Singles

Round of 128

Jesper De Jong, Netherlands, def. Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, 6-2, 6-4.
Aleksandar Vukic, Australia, def. Nicolas Moreno de Alboran, United States, 7-6 (2), 6-2.
Nicolas Jarry, Chile, def. Hugo Gaston, France, 7-6 (4), 6-4.
Roberto Bautista Agut, Spain, def. Matteo Arnaldi, Italy, 6-4, 6-3.
Mariano Navone, Argentina, def. Federico Cina, Italy, 6-3, 6-3.
Fabian Marozsan, Hungary, def. Joao Fonseca, Brazil, 6-3, 7-6 (4).

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	8	1	2	26	22	8
Minn. United	5	2	4	19	15	10
Portland	5	3	3	18	21	19
San Diego FC	5	4	2	17	21	15
LAFC	5	4	2	17	17	16
Austin FC	5	5	1	16	7	13
Seattle	4	3	4	16	17	13
Colorado	4	3	4	16	15	16
FC Dallas	4	4	3	15	14	19
San Jose	4	6	1	13	24	20
Real Salt Lake	4	7	0	12	12	17
Sporting KC	3	7	1	10	17	21
St Louis City	2	5	4	10	8	12
Houston	2	5	4	10	10	16
LA Galaxy	0	8	3	3	8	21

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Columbus	7	1	3	24	18	10
Philadelphia	7	3	1	22	21	10
Cincinnati	7	3	1	22	15	13
Inter Miami CF	6	1	3	21	20	11
Charlotte FC	6	4	1	19	18	12
Nashville	5	4	2	17	20	14
NYC FC	5	4	2	17	13	13
Orlando City	4	2	5	17	18	12
New England	5	4	1	16	9	7
New York	4	4	3	15	12	13
Chicago	3	4	4	13	18	22
D.C. United	3	5	3	12	13	23
Atlanta	2	5	4	10	12	20
Toronto FC	1	6	4	7	8	16
CF Montréal	0	8	3	3	5	16

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

Saturday's games

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

Sunday's game

Los Angeles FC at Vancouver

Wednesday, May 14

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

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	5	2	0	15	14	5
Orlando	5	2	0	15	14	5
San Diego	4	2	1	13	14	9
Gotham FC	3	2	3	12	12	8
Portland	3	2	3	12	11	9
Washington	4	3	0	12	10	10
Seattle	3	2	2	11	7	6
Angel City	3	2	2	11	13	14
North Carolina	2	3	2	8	8	9
Bay FC	2	3	2	8	7	8
Louisville	2	3	2	8	8	13
Houston	2	4	1	7	6	10
Utah Royals FC	1	5	1	4	4	11
Chicago	1	5	1	4	3	14

Friday's games

Gotham FC at Louisville
Utah Royals FC at Angel City

Saturday's games

Washington at Chicago
Orlando at North Carolina
Portland at San Diego

Sunday's games

Bay FC at Kansas City
Houston at Seattle

Friday, May 16

San Diego at Gotham FC
Seattle at Louisville
Portland at Houston
Kansas City at Orlando

Saturday, May 17

Chicago at North Carolina
Utah Royals FC at Washington
Angel City at Bay FC

Settlement do-over saves roster slots

By EDDIE PELLIS

Associated Press

Attorneys handling the \$2.8 billion NCAA settlement proposed a massive do-over Wednesday when it comes to roster limits, offering athletes who lost their spots a chance to play without counting against the new caps for as long as they have eligibility.

Under court order to come up with an updated plan, the attorneys in court filings suggested that schools compile lists of all the players they cut in anticipation of the settlement being approved — a number that certainly could be in the hundreds and perhaps far more.

Those “Designated Student-Athletes,” as they’re called in the new legal filing, can be invited back to compete for roster spots — no guarantees — or go to new schools.

Either way, those athletes won’t count against the new roster limits that are coming under the plan unveiled last fall and given initial approval by U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken in October.

The proposal would also give the exemption to high school recruits who were promised spots that were later rescinded; the exemptions would last for as long as those players are eligible in college.

Wilken has already signed off on the key components of the settlement, which includes allowing each school to share up to \$20.5 million each year directly with their athletes and the nearly \$2.8 billion in back pay that will go to players who said the NCAA and five biggest conferences wrongly kept them from earning name, image and likeness money.

The latest proposal capped a two-week scramble after Wilken sent attorneys for both sides back to the negotiating table, saying the roster limit details of the plan as written were unacceptable.

The plan calls for replacing scholarship limits (85 for football and 9.9 for men’s wrestling, for example) with roster limits (105 for football, 30 for wrestling). A school can offer scholarships to every player on a team, but that will cost money and most predict that walk-ons or partial scholarship athletes will be left out.

Wilken clearly sympathized with the hundreds of players who lost roster spots as schools began preparing to implement terms of the settlement. About a dozen told their stories during an April 7 hearing.

Wilken asked lawyers to rework that part of the deal. The NCAA’s first response to Wilken’s request — which included the idea of “grandfathering in” current players to their roster spots — was to change nothing, arguing that undoing roster moves already in play would create more turmoil in an already chaotic process.

Wilken told them to do it anyway or put the whole plan at risk.

The plaintiffs’ attorneys said they did Wilken one better, not only giving schools a chance to bring back players they cut without it counting against their limit, but putting the exemption in play for a new school, as well.

“Plaintiffs believe that these changes to the settlement agreement exceed the protections that the court requested.”

Court filing believe that these changes to the settlement agreement exceed the protections that the court requested,” their court filing read.

The attorneys noted there is no guarantee that the athletes will win their roster spots back.

“While defendants insisted that the changes to the settlement agreement recognize that individual schools and their athletics departments retain discretion to independently determine which athletes will be on their rosters, that has always been the case; and it remains unchanged whether or not there are roster limits,” they wrote.

The judge is expected to give opponents to the plan a brief window to file updated objections before her final decision. As Steve Berman, co-lead counsel for the plaintiffs, predicted earlier this week, some of those objecting to the plan were not satisfied with the new proposal.

“While the NCAA and Class Counsel have acknowledged our objection to roster caps is valid, their proposed mushy modification doesn’t go far enough,” said attorney Steven Molo, who represents a group of objectors.

“Many, many student athletes have had something taken away from them. The fight will continue.”

AP SPORTLIGHT

May 9

1993 — The Phoenix Suns beat the Los Angeles Lakers 112-104 in overtime to become the first NBA team to lose two playoff games at home and come back to win three straight games.

2010 — Dallas Braden pitches the 19th perfect game in major league history, a dazzling performance for the Oakland Athletics in a 4-0 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays.

2016 — Stephen Curry returns from a sprained right knee to score an NBA-record 17 points in overtime, finishing with 40 as the Golden State Warriors rally to take a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference semifinals with a 132-125 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Athletics in a 4-0 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays.

2016 — Stephen Curry returns from a sprained right knee to score an NBA-record 17 points in overtime, finishing with 40 as the Golden State Warriors rally to take a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference semifinals with a 132-125 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

SOCCER/MLB



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

Seattle Reign forward Emeri Adames celebrates after scoring a goal against North Carolina Courage during the second half of an NWSL match last summer in Seattle. The NWSL has asked U.S. Soccer to sanction a second-division league that could possibly launch in 2026.

As popularity grows, so do options

NWSL was once lone pro women's league in North America; others have entered market

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

As the popularity of women's soccer grows, so have the opportunities for players looking to make the sport a career.

The National Women's Soccer League was once the lone professional women's league in North America. But others have more recently jumped into the market, including the United Soccer League's Super League and the Northern Super League in Canada.

And now it appears lower-tier leagues are forming, too. The NWSL has asked U.S. Soccer to sanction a second-division league that would include at least six teams and possibly launch in 2026. The Women's Premier Soccer League Pro will also launch next year as a second-tier league.

"I think this is what progress looks like," said Amanda Vanderwort, president of the USL Super League. "I think the more options there are, whether it's owners, investors, players or fans, the better it is for everyone. And competition is good for the development of the game."

The Super League sits on the top tier of women's professional soccer in the United States alongside the NWSL. The eight-team league plays on a fall-to-spring calendar like many international leagues, and is currently in the stretch run of

its inaugural season. A ninth team will join next season.

Although the Super League doesn't share the same national profile, level of competition or attendance as the NWSL, the two leagues aren't necessarily built to be rivals. Growing the game is good business.

Room for all

NWSL Commissioner Jessica Berman believes there's room for everyone.

"There are countless examples of players who were unsigned in our league who ended up going to some of those other leagues, who are still able to play the sport of soccer and continue their careers. And maybe there's a world where they find their way back to the NWSL," Berman said. "If they didn't have a place to go and play in the interim, they might not have continued to play."

There are signs of the mutually beneficial relationship. The NWSL's Washington Spirit has loaned several players to the Super League's Dallas Trinity this season. The NWSL's Gotham FC played a pair of preseason friendlies against the Super League's Fort Lauderdale United and Tampa Bay Sun.

New on the scene

Jumping into the fray is the Northern Super League, which kicked off last month in Canada.

The league has long been a dream of former national team star and co-founder Diana Matheson. It has been boosted by Christine Sinclair, international soccer's all-time leading goal scorer.

Canada was one of just two countries that played in the 2023 Women's World Cup without a domestic professional league. The other was Haiti.

While a majority of the players in the league are Canadian, 20 other countries are represented, too. The league minimum salary is \$50,000.

"It's a global industry and we're competing with leagues all over the world, which is the reality. But I think in North America specifically, I think us, the NWSL, Liga MX Femenil in Mexico, also know that we have the opportunity to really build women's soccer in our region," Matheson said. "I think we've got three very competitive tier-one women's pro leagues in our region that can work together to build that landscape."

Liga MX Femenil is the most established of the women's professional leagues in North America outside of the NWSL. It has 18 teams, all associated with men's teams.

"The interest in women's soccer is growing, we are in the conversation now and changing narratives, and that allows us to talk about how much the game has been developing in the country," league Presi-

dent Mariana Gutierrez told The Associated Press last fall.

Stay tuned

More options are coming. Should U.S. Soccer sanction the lower-division NWSL league, it will serve to develop players as part of the greater soccer ecosystem, bridging the gap between amateur soccer and the top tier.

Cleveland Soccer Group, which had bid in the latest round of NWSL expansion, pivoted to joining the division 2 WPSL Pro. Cleveland's group, which will also have an ownership stake in the league, will join teams from Atlanta, Dallas, North Carolina, Oklahoma City, Sioux Falls and the San Francisco Bay Area in the league's first season next year.

"Rising demand calls for more options, not fewer," Vandervort said. "And if you look at the landscape today, we still don't have as many options for women to go pro, even with the addition of these leagues, as the men do. If you look across the landscape, across the cities, the communities, the towns, that don't have access to women's pro soccer today, there's a huge gap. So the more women's soccer we have, the greater our sport will become, the more dynamic, the more exciting for fans, the more opportunity for players and coaches and staff, and everyone involved in the game."



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Derek Shelton was fired as Pirates manager after leading Pittsburgh to a 12-26 record and last place in the NL Central.

Pirates fire Shelton as manager

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pirates fired manager Derek Shelton following a rocky opening month to the season that saw Pittsburgh quickly slip into last place in the NL Central.

General manager Ben Cherington made the announcement Thursday. Bench coach Don Kelly will take over for Shelton, who is the first manager fired across Major League Baseball this season.

The decision comes with the Pirates riding a seven-game losing streak that saw its record fall to 12-26. Shelton, hired by Cherington in November 2019 as part of a franchise-wide reset by owner Bob Nutting, went 306-440 in five-plus seasons with Pittsburgh.

"Derek worked incredibly hard and sacrificed a lot over five-plus years," Cherington said in a statement. "His family became a big part of the Pirates family, and we will miss that. He's an incredibly smart, curious, and driven baseball leader. I believe he was the right person for the job when he was hired. I also believe that a change is now necessary. I wish Derek and his family all the best in their next chapter."

Pittsburgh, ranked 26th out of 30 MLB teams in opening day payroll, began the season hoping to contend behind reigning NL Rookie of the Year Paul Skenes. While the 22-year-old Skenes has been solid and the starting rotation has been steady, the Pirates' offense has languished near the bottom of the NL all season.

Kelly, a Pittsburgh native, has been the Pirates bench coach since 2020.

"Donnie is as respected as any person in our clubhouse and throughout our organization," said Nutting. "He is a Pirate. He bleeds black and gold. No one is more committed, and no one loves this team or city more than Donnie. He is the right person to manage our team and help get us back on track."

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	21	16	.568	—
Boston	19	19	.500	2½
Tampa Bay	16	20	.444	4½
Toronto	16	20	.444	4½
Baltimore	13	22	.371	7
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	23	13	.639	—
Cleveland	22	15	.595	1½
Kansas City	22	16	.579	2
Minnesota	17	20	.459	6½
Chicago	10	27	.270	13½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	22	14	.611	—
Athletics	20	18	.526	3
Houston	18	18	.500	4
Texas	18	19	.486	4½
Los Angeles	15	20	.429	6½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	24	14	.632	—
Philadelphia	21	15	.583	2
Atlanta	17	19	.472	6
Washington	17	21	.447	7
Miami	14	22	.389	9
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	22	16	.579	—
Cincinnati	19	19	.500	3
Milwaukee	19	19	.500	3
St. Louis	19	19	.500	3
Pittsburgh	12	26	.316	10
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	25	12	.676	—
San Diego	23	13	.639	1½
San Francisco	24	14	.632	1½
Arizona	19	18	.514	6
Colorado	6	29	.171	18

Wednesday's games
 Cleveland 8, Washington 6
 Houston 9, Milwaukee 1
 St. Louis 5, Pittsburgh 0
 San Francisco 3, Chicago Cubs 1
 Seattle 6, Athletics 5
 N.Y. Mets 7, Arizona 1
 L.A. Dodgers 10, Miami 1
 Boston 6, Texas 4
 Philadelphia 7, Tampa Bay 0
 N.Y. Yankees 4, San Diego 3, 10 innings
 Cincinnati 4, Atlanta 3
 Minnesota 5, Baltimore 2
 Kansas City 2, Chicago White Sox 1
 Detroit 8, Colorado 6, 10 innings
 L.A. Angels 5, Toronto 4

Thursday's games
 Baltimore at Minnesota
 Texas at Boston
 Chicago White Sox at Kansas City
 Detroit at Colorado, 2
 Philadelphia at Tampa Bay
 Cincinnati at Atlanta
 Toronto at L.A. Angels
 L.A. Dodgers at Arizona

Friday's games
 Texas (Corbin 2-1) at Detroit (Skubal 3-2)
 Atlanta (Elder 2-1) at Pittsburgh (Falter 1-3)
 St. Louis (Fedde 2-3) at Washington (Parker 3-2)
 Milwaukee (Quintana 4-1) at Tampa Bay (Littell 2-5)
 Philadelphia (Nola 1-5) at Cleveland (Williams 2-2)
 Chicago Cubs (Taillon 2-1) at N.Y. Mets (Holmes 4-1)
 Boston (Dobbs 2-1) at Kansas City (Lorenzen 3-3)
 Miami (Meyer 2-3) at Chicago White Sox (Wilson 0-1)
 Cincinnati (Martinez 1-3) at Houston (Brown 5-1)
 San Francisco (Hicks 1-3) at Minnesota (TBD)
 San Diego (Vásquez 1-3) at Colorado (Senzatela 1-5)
 Baltimore (Sugano 3-2) at L.A. Angels (Hendricks 1-3)
 L.A. Dodgers (Sasaki 1-1) at Arizona (Rodriguez 1-3)
 Toronto (Gausman 2-3) at Seattle (Castillo 3-2)
 N.Y. Yankees (Warren 1-2) at Athletics (Bido 2-2)

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

Padres slowly but surely get healthier

By Mike Fitzpatrick
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Already off to a strong start this season, the San Diego Padres are getting healthier, too.

Baseball's top bullpen received a boost Wednesday when the Padres (23-13) reinstated Sean Reynolds from the 15-day injured list. Second baseman Jake Cronenworth is expected back Friday — and pitcher Yu Darvish is scheduled to face hitters Thursday for the first time in his recovery from right elbow inflammation.

"It's a substantial step," manager Mike Shildt said before the rubber match of a three-game series at Yankee Stadium.

The welcome news comes after 22-year-old All-Star center fielder Jackson Merrill returned from the injured list Tuesday night and went 2-for-4 with a double in the cleanup spot against New York.

"Picked up right where he left off," Shildt said.

Merrill followed that Wednesday night with a home run and two RBIs, but the Yankees rallied for a 4-3 victory in 10 innings. He was hit on the left forearm by a 93 mph fastball from Devin Williams in the 10th, but remained in the game and said afterward he was fine.

Darvish threw a bullpen Tuesday at the club's spring training complex in Arizona. The five-time All-Star has been sidelined all season, and it's still too soon to project a timeline for his return.

"Tomorrow's a good indicator," Shildt said. "It'll get more crystal from there."

Cronenworth, however, played the second of back-to-back rehab games Wednesday for Triple-A El Paso. He went 1-for-2 with a walk and scored twice against Round Rock after going 1 for 2 with a two-run homer and three walks Tuesday night.

Following a day off Thursday, the two-time All-Star is likely to come off the 10-day IL in time for Friday night's series opener at Colorado.

"That's where we're trending," Shildt said.

Cronenworth has been out since April 9 with a fractured right rib after getting hit by a pitch. He will



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

San Diego Padres center fielder Jackson Merrill scores on a sacrifice fly by Jason Heyward during the fourth inning against the Yankees on Tuesday in New York. Merrill had been out for a month with a hamstring injury.

probably wear a piece of equipment to protect his ribs when he returns, Shildt said.

San Diego is still dealing with other injuries, however, as ace Dylan Cease left his start against the Yankees on Wednesday with a cramp in his right forearm. Cease had no-hit New York for six innings before giving up a hit in the seventh, leaving soon after with nine strikeouts and one run given up in 6⅔ innings.

"It basically made my hand close tight for a couple of seconds. I don't think it's anything too serious," Cease said after the Yankees rallied for a 4-3 victory in 10 innings. "I honestly was going to throw some warmup pitches and see, but I think the smart thing was

to do what we did there."

Reynolds is looking to make his 2025 debut after recovering from a stress reaction in his right foot. The rookie right-hander threw 5⅓ hitless innings in four rehab outings for El Paso.

The 6-foot-8 Reynolds reached the majors for the first time last season and was extremely effective in nine appearances, racking up 21 strikeouts and a 0.82 ERA in 11 innings. His four-seam fastball averaged 96.9 mph.

"He's ready to compete for us," Shildt said.

San Diego's bullpen entered Thursday with the lowest ERA (2.42), WHIP (1.01) and opponents' batting average (.188) in the majors — even after Adrian More-

jon and Wandy Peralta were tagged for a combined 10 earned runs and seven hits in the seventh inning of Tuesday night's 12-3 loss to the Yankees.

To open a roster spot for Reynolds, the Padres optioned right-hander Ryan Bergert to Triple-A, where he will build his pitch count back up to resume his regular role as a starter.

Bergert, 25, went 1-0 over four scoreless relief appearances for San Diego in his first taste of the major leagues.

"I thought Bergert was outstanding. It's hard to break into the big leagues," Shildt said. "Really pleased for him. Happy about how he's progressed, how he accepted that role."

Mariners get Taveras off waivers, trade Castillo

By Tim Booth
The Seattle Times

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Looking to add outfield depth, the Seattle Mariners tapped into an AL West rival on Tuesday.

The Mariners claimed outfielder Leody Taveras off waivers from the Texas Rangers in what should be an upgrade to Seattle's outfield as the club continues to deal with Victor Robles and Luke Raley stuck on the injured list.

Taveras was placed on waivers by the Rangers on Sunday.

Taveras, 26, appeared in 30 games this sea-



Taveras

son for Texas with 24 starts in center field. He was batting .241 with a .601 OPS in the early stages of the season.

Two years ago, Taveras was a breakout star as part of the Rangers' run to the World Series title. He posted a .266/.312/.421 slash line, appearing in 143 games in the regular season in the best season of his career to date. During the postseason, Taveras started all 17 of Texas' games.

Taveras saw his numbers at the plate dip last season to .229/.289/.352, but he stole 23 bases and walked 42 times, both career bests.

To clear a spot for Taveras on the 40-man roster, the Mariners designated Luis F. Castillo — aka "the pebble" — for assignment. Seattle then traded Castillo to the Baltimore Orioles for cash considerations.

Castillo made two starts for the Mariners this season and was 0-1 with a 5.02 ERA in four starts for Tacoma. He had also been notable for sharing a name with now former teammate All-Star starting pitcher Luis Castillo.

NHL PLAYOFFS

Marner breaks tie as Leafs top Panthers

Associated Press

TORONTO — Mitch Marner has experienced a whirlwind stretch — both at home and at the rink. Joseph Woll waited patiently and prepared for a chance he wasn't sure he'd get.

They both came through for the Toronto Maple Leafs in Game 2 of their second-round playoff series.

Marner scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period and Woll made 25 saves in place of the injured Anthony Stolarz as the Maple Leafs beat the Florida Panthers 4-3 on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 series lead.

"A really exciting time in my house," said Marner, who became a father for the first time during the weekend. "(And) pretty special feeling tonight."

Woll was pressed into service after Stolarz exited midway through Monday's opener — a 5-4 Toronto victory — following an elbow to the head from Panthers center Sam Bennett, Woll started for the first time since April 17.

"It's been something I've had to focus on and come up with a plan to stay ready," Woll said. "It's a different challenge than playing every night, but a challenge nonetheless."

Woll, who entered with a .950 save percentage in his four previous playoff starts, also performed well when called upon in both the 2023 and 2024 postseasons because of injury.

"Calm and cool," Maple Leafs coach Craig Berube said. "On his toes and fighting through traffic. Very impressed."

Max Pacioretty and Max Domi each had a goal and an assist, William Nylander also scored and Morgan Rielly added two assists



NATHAN DENETTE, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Maple Leafs' Mitch Marner, left, celebrates his goal with Chris Tanev during the third period against the Florida Panthers in Toronto on Wednesday. Marner's goal lifted the Maple Leafs to a 4-3 victory.

for Toronto.

Anton Lundell had a goal and an assist, and Aleksander Barkov and Brad Marchand also scored for defending Stanley Cup champion Florida. Sergei Bobrovsky finished with 16 saves.

"Lots of stuff that we like about our game that we think we can improve," Panthers coach Paul Maurice said. "We'll take a look at it and get better."

The best-of-seven matchup between Atlantic Division heavyweights now shifts to South Florida, with Game 3 set for Friday.

Trailing 3-2 after two periods, the Panthers got even at 5:33 in the third when Lundell shoved his third goal of the playoffs past Woll.

Toronto regained the lead just 17 seconds later when Marner fired a shot from the boards that found its way through traffic past

a surprised Bobrovsky.

Marner, who turned 28 on Monday, has added an "M" to his equipment since he and wife Stephanie welcomed their son Miles on Sunday morning.

"Just calmness," he said of what looking down and seeing that initial does for him. "I try to stay calm as much as I can throughout games. It's always a roller-coaster ride. There's always stuff going

Stars top Jets in opener behind Rantanen's 2nd straight hat trick

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Mikko Rantanen had a natural hat trick in the second period, Jake Oettinger made 30 saves and the Dallas Stars beat the Winnipeg Jets 3-2 on Wednesday night in Game 1 of their second-round series.

Rantanen, who had a hat trick in the third period of Dallas' Game 7 win over his former Colorado teammates, is the third player in NHL history — and the first in nearly 40 years — with hat tricks in consecutive playoff games.

Edmonton's Jari Kurri accomplished the feat in Games 5 and 6 of the 1985 Campbell Conference final, and Chicago's Doug Bentley did the same in Games 4 and 5 of the 1944 Stanley Cup Final.

"Sometimes it goes that way," said Rantanen, acquired from

Carolina at the trade deadline. "The third goal goes off them and goes five-hole. Or when you're going through a tough stretch, you feel like you could only pray for those and those never come."

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is Friday night in Winnipeg.

Nino Niederreiter and Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets, who had won four in a row at Canada Life Centre. Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves.

Scheifele returned after sustaining an upper-body injury in Game 5 in the first round against St. Louis. Stars forward Jason Robertson was back after injuring a knee in the final game of the regular season.

Winnipeg led the NHL with 116 points to earn home-ice advantage through the playoffs, while Dallas was second in the Central Division

and third in the Western Conference with 106.

"We know we just gave up home-ice advantage," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "And that wasn't a game where they rolled over top of us for three periods. That was a game where we weren't at our best."

Niederreiter got the sold-out crowd cheering when his sharp-angled backhand beat Oettinger at 3:30 of the second period. He became the NHL's first Swiss-born player to skate in 100 post-season games.

Rantanen tied it at 8:43 with his sixth goal of the playoffs. His second goal was a tip of Thomas Harley's point shot with 5:39 left, and he made it 3-1 on the power play 2:17 later when his shot went in off Jets defenseman Dylan Samberg.

"Sometimes it's ups and downs



FRED GREENSLADE, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Dallas Stars goaltender Jake Oettinger makes a save on the Jets' Gabriel Vilardi during first-period playoff action in Winnipeg on Wednesday.

in hockey and now it's going well individually and as a team," Rantanen said.

Rantanen extended his points streak to four games with eight goals and six assists across the stretch. He has 15 points sthis

postseason so far.

"He's one of the best players in the world and he's just on fire right now, so we're just trying to get him the puck," said center Sam Steele, who assisted on Rantanen's first goal of the night.

Scoreboard

Second Round

Best-of-seven
x-if necessary
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Carolina 1, Washington 0

Carolina 2, Washington 1, OT
Thursday: at Washington
Saturday: at Carolina, AFN-Atlantic, 12 a.m. Sunday CET, 8 a.m. Sunday JKT
Monday: at Carolina
x-Thursday, May 15: at Washington
x-Saturday, May 17: at Carolina
x-Monday, May 19: at Washington

Toronto 2, Florida 0

Toronto 5, Florida 4
Wednesday: Toronto 4, Florida 3
Friday: at Florida, AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m. Saturday CET, 9 a.m. Saturday JKT
Sunday: at Florida
x-Wednesday, May 14: at Toronto
x-Friday, May 16: at Florida
x-Sunday, May 18: at Toronto

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Edmonton 1, Vegas 0

Edmonton 4, Vegas 2
Thursday: at Vegas
Saturday: at Edmonton, AFN-Atlantic, 3 a.m. Sunday CET, 11 a.m. Sunday JKT
Monday: at Edmonton
x-Wednesday, May 14: at Vegas
x-Friday, May 16: at Edmonton
x-Sunday, May 18: at Vegas

Dallas 1, Winnipeg 0

Wednesday: Dallas 3, Winnipeg 2
Friday: at Winnipeg, AFN-Sports2, 3:30 a.m. Saturday CET, 11:30 a.m. Saturday JKT
Sunday: at Dallas
Tuesday: at Dallas
x-Thursday, May 15: at Winnipeg
x-Saturday, May 17: at Dallas
x-Monday, May 19: at Winnipeg

HOCKEY



Nathan MacKinnon, left, and Sidney Crosby talk on the bench during 4 Nations Face-Off on Feb. 10. They are joining forces to play for Canada at the ice hockey world championship for the first time in 10 years.

CHRISTINNE MUSCHI, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Crosby and MacKinnon back together for Canada at worlds

BY KAREL JANICEK
Associated Press

Be aware: Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon join forces to play for Canada at the ice hockey world championship after 10 years.

As all eyes are on the NHL playoffs, the two major stars are in Europe for the worlds opening on Friday across the Swedish capital of Stockholm and Denmark's city of Herning.

It is the final men's international test before the 2026 Winter Games in Italy, where NHL players return to the Olympics after 12 years.

The two friends and neighbors in Halifax, Nova Scotia, were on the team that Crosby captained to gold at the 2015 worlds. By winning the tournament in Prague then, Crosby joined hockey's Triple Gold Club, a small group of players who have won the Stanley Cup, the Olympics and the worlds.

These are the third worlds, and first since 2015 for Crosby, a three-time Stanley Cup winner (2009, '16 and '17) and double Olympic champion (2010 and '14). He's captured gold for Canada at every international tournament, including the 2016 World Cup of Hockey and the 2005 world junior championship.

In February, the 37-year-old also shone alongside MacKinnon as he captained Canada to the 4 Nations Face-Off trophy, beating archrival the United States in overtime.

Crosby has behind him a 20th NHL season featuring 33 goals, 58 assists and 91 points in 80 games for the Pittsburgh Penguins, who missed out on the NHL playoffs.

MacKinnon opted to join Canada after his Colorado Avalanche

were knocked out in the first round. It will be the fourth worlds and first since 2017 for the 29-year-old center, who recorded the second highest points in the regular season — 116 — and added another 11 in the playoffs.

Crosby will also reunite with goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury who has just exited the NHL but postponed his retirement at age of 40 to play again with Crosby and at the worlds for the first time.

"It'll be fun to go spend some time together and yell at him in practice a bit, keep him honest," said Fleury, who won the Stanley Cup with the Penguins three times.

Among the rising stars, Canada includes Macklin Celebrini, 18, the top pick in the 2024 NHL draft who collected 63 points from 25 goals and 38 assists in his rookie season for the San Jose Sharks.

Canada is the most successful nation at the tournament with 28 titles and is a favorite every year no matter who is available. With Crosby and MacKinnon, it is definitely the team to beat.

Other contenders

David Pastrnak is back for the defending champion Czech Republic after his Boston Bruins didn't advance to the playoffs.

The Czechs beat Switzerland 2-0 in the final in Prague last year with Pastrnak scoring the winner. It was the seventh title won by the Czech Republic — or Czechia — since the 1993 breakup of Czechoslovakia. Pastrnak racked up 106 points in the NHL, reaching one hundred for the third straight season.

Utah captain Clayton Keller will also captain a U.S. that is seeking a first worlds medal since a

bronze in 2021. Alternate captains, forward Tage Thompson of the Buffalo Sabres and forward Conor Garland of the Vancouver Canucks, were on that team four years ago. Columbus defenseman Zach Werenski and Boston netminder Jeremy Swayman were on the team that was fifth last year.

Filip Forsberg will appear again for the Sweden team that beat Canada 4-2 in the bronze-medal game last year. The left winger will return home to play in two regular season games between Nashville and the Penguins in Stockholm in November as part of the the NHL global series. Others on the Sweden squad include New York Rangers forward Mika Zibanejad and New Jersey defenseman Jonas Brodin and goalie Jacob Markstrom.

The 2022 champion Finland struggled at the previous two worlds, finishing seventh and eighth, its worst results in decades. Nashville goalie Justus Annunen, Chicago forward Teuvo Teravainen and Rangers forward Juuso Parssinen hope to help turn things around.

Switzerland features a trio from New Jersey; forwards Nico Hischier and Timo Meier and defenseman Jonas Siegenthaler.

The format

The 16 teams are divided into two groups for the preliminary round.

Canada is in Group A in Stockholm with Sweden, Finland, Austria, France, Latvia, Slovakia and newcomer Slovenia. Group B in Herning includes the Czechs, Switzerland, the U.S., Denmark, Germany, another newcomer Hungary, Kazakhstan and Norway.

Quenneville hired as Ducks coach, 1st job since ban

BY GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Joel Quenneville is returning to the NHL with the Anaheim Ducks for his first head coaching job since the second-winningest coach in league history resigned and was banned for his handling of a sexual assault scandal.

Quenneville, 66, was hired by Ducks general manager Pat Verbeek on Thursday for his first coaching job since his resignation from the Florida Panthers 3½ years ago in the wake of his handling of the sexual assault scandal during his tenure with the Chicago Blackhawks.

Quenneville and Blackhawks executives Stan Bowman and Al MacIsaac were banned from the NHL for nearly three years after an independent investigation concluded that the team mishandled allegations raised by former player Kyle Beach against video coach Brad Aldrich during the team's Stanley Cup run in 2010. The trio was reinstated last July, and Bowman became the Edmonton Oilers' general manager three weeks later.

Before his departure, Quenneville spent parts of 25 seasons behind the benches of St. Louis, Colorado, Chicago and Florida, establishing himself as his era's most consistent winning coach.

He led the Blackhawks to Stanley Cup championships in 2010, 2013 and 2015. His 969 career victories are the second-most in NHL history, trailing only Scotty Bowman's 1,244.

Quenneville's reputation and career were badly damaged by his role in the Blackhawks' handling of the accusations against Aldrich. After four seasons out of the sport,

the 13-year NHL defenseman is getting another chance behind the bench — this time with a franchise in the middle of a lengthy rebuilding process.

Quenneville takes over a team that has missed the playoffs for seven consecutive seasons, the third-longest active absence in the NHL. Anaheim finished sixth in the Pacific Division this season at 35-37-10 after being in the bottom two for the previous four consecutive years.

He replaces Greg Cronin, who was surprisingly fired by Verbeek at the conclusion of his second season in charge. Cronin led the Ducks to a 21-point improvement in his second season, but Verbeek changed course for reasons he declined to reveal when he announced the firing.

While announcing the change, Verbeek said he expects the Ducks to make the playoffs next season. That's a pronouncement that the first-time GM had never made during his 3½ years in charge of owner Henry Samueli's franchise.

And Quenneville has plenty of experience in getting teams to the postseason. His teams have made 20 Stanley Cup playoff appearances, reaching the postseason in all but two of the 22 seasons he finished.

Quenneville inherits a team with an ample stock of young talent. The roster includes No. 2 overall pick Leo Carlsson, No. 3 overall picks Mason McTavish and Beckett Sennecke, promising forward Cutter Gauthier, rising defensemen Jackson LaCombe and Pavel Mintyukov, and several veteran forwards, including two-time All-Star Troy Terry and Trevor Zegras.



JIM RASSOL/AP

Panthers head coach Joel Quenneville looks on from the bench during a game in 2021. He resigned that season and hasn't coached since.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Comebacks: Knicks staged big rallies during both wins over Celtics

FROM PAGE 32

That's the most of any postseason in the digital play-by-play era, which goes back to 1997.

A look at how the comebacks happened:

April 24: Thunder trail by 29, win

The big lead: Memphis 69, Oklahoma City 40, 3:07 left first half

The final score: Oklahoma City 114, Memphis 108

How it happened: The Grizzlies' undoing started when star guard Ja Morant got hurt and left the game on the possession where Memphis took the 29-point lead. The Thunder outscored the Grizzlies 74-39 the rest of the way, with Chet Holmgren scoring 23 points for OKC in that span. Memphis missed 30 of its final 41 shots.

April 29: Pacers trail by 20, win

The big lead: Milwaukee 33, Indiana 13, 11:26 left first half

The final score: Indiana 119, Milwaukee 118, OT

How it happened: The Pacers got the lead down to six by half-time, then the final 29 minutes were largely back and forth. The Bucks led by seven with 40 seconds left in overtime, before Indiana ended the game on an 8-0 run and won it on Tyrese Haliburton's layup with 1.4 seconds remaining.

Monday: Knicks trail by 20, win

The big lead: Boston 75, New York 55, 5:47 left third quarter

The final score: New York 108, Boston 105, OT

How it happened: The Celtics went up 20, then shot 23% the rest of the way (9 for 39) and relied almost entirely on the 3-point shot (6 for 28) over those 23 minutes. OG Anunoby and Jalen Brunson combined to outscore Boston 39-30 by themselves over that finishing stretch, and neither team scored in the final 1:16 of overtime.

Tuesday: Pacers trail by 20, win

The big lead: Cleveland 81, Indiana 61, 6:51 left third quarter

The final score: Indiana 120, Cleveland 119

How it happened: Over the game's final 40 minutes, the Pacers led for 0.00046% of the time — and won the game. Indiana outscored the Cavaliers 59-38 over the final 18:51, Tyrese Haliburton's 3-pointer with 1.1 seconds left capping an 8-0 burst in the final minute and giving the Pacers a 2-0 series lead.

Wednesday: Knicks trail by 20, win

The big lead: Boston 73, New York 53, 2:19 left third quarter



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

New York Knicks guard Josh Hart (3) and center Mitchell Robinson celebrate after defeating the Boston Celtics 91-90 in Game 2 of a second-round playoff series Wednesday in Boston.

The final score: New York 91, Boston 90

How it happened: The Knicks outscored the Celtics 38-17 in the final 14:19 of the game, as Boston — just like in Game 1 — built a big lead and then couldn't hit a shot. The Celtics were 5 for 25 from the field in that stretch, 2 for 12 from 3-point range. Boston's starters were a combined 2 for 19 down the stretch, while New York shot 15 for 28 and got 14 points from Mikal Bridges over those minutes. Jayson Tatum couldn't get a good look on the last play, and the Knicks took a 2-0 series lead.



SUE OGRONKI/AP

Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell, left, falls after being fouled by Indiana Pacers guard Andrew Nembhard on Tuesday.

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NBA PLAYOFFS



KYLE PHILLIPS/AP

Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander leaps over Denver's Peyton Watson for a dunk in the second half on Wednesday in Oklahoma City.

SGA, Thunder roll early, tie Nuggets

BY CLIFF BRUNT
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points in three quarters, and the Oklahoma City Thunder set league and team records in a 149-106 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Wednesday night that tied the Western Conference semifinal series at one game apiece.

Oklahoma City set an NBA playoff record for first-half points with 87, surpassing the 86 scored by the Cleveland Cavaliers against the Golden State Warriors in Game 4 of the NBA Finals on June 9, 2017. Chet Holmgren, who missed two critical free throws late in Game 1, made a pair with one second remaining in the second quarter to set the record and give the Thunder an 87-56 lead.

The Thunder tied the record for points in any half of a playoff game. Milwaukee had 87 in the second half against Denver on April 23, 1978.

"Basically it was one team playing tonight," Denver center Nikola Jokic said.

The top-seeded Thunder wanted to avoid taking a 2-0 deficit on the road. Oklahoma City became the first home team to win a game in the second round. Game 3 is Friday in Denver.

"We knew what was at stake tonight," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We came out desperate. We wanted to just take care and control the things that we knew we could. And we did a pretty good job of that, specifically to start the game. The start carried us through the rest of the night."

Gilgeous-Alexander made 11 of 13 field goals, all 11 of his free throws and had eight assists. He led eight players who scored in double figures.

Thunder coach Mark Daig-

neault said Gilgeous-Alexander did much more than score.

"He made them pay when they overhelped on him," Daigneault said. "He had the ball ahead of them all night, so he got his teammates shots, too. It wasn't just a one-man show. He was super efficient. I mean, he had an unbelievable blend tonight."

Jokic, who had 42 points and 22 rebounds in a Game 1 victory, had just 17 points and eight rebounds on Wednesday before fouling out late in the third quarter.

Russell Westbrook led the Nuggets with 19 points. Oklahoma City's crowd cheered for the ex-Thunder star when he entered Game 1 as a reserve, but the fans changed their approach and booed him shortly after he entered Game 2.

The Thunder led 45-21 at the end of the first quarter after shooting 71.4% from the field.

"We got punked, and we didn't play well enough and they came out with the right intensity," Denver interim coach David Adelman said. "We didn't."

Oklahoma City continued its dominance in the second quarter. A lob from Gilgeous-Alexander to Jalen Williams for a two-handed jam gave the Thunder a 78-43 lead.

Oklahoma City led 124-76 after three quarters. The largest lead was 49 points.

Adelman said he wouldn't minimize the loss, even though the Nuggets head back to Denver with home-court advantage.

"I'm not sitting here tonight talking about the 1-1 thing tonight," he said. "Not tonight. We're not going to flush that. We've got to be better. We know that. That being said, it's nice to know that you got a win underneath your belt."

Bridges helps Knicks steal another game from Celtics

BY KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press

BOSTON — For the second straight game, the New York Knicks found themselves in a hole the Boston Celtics have rarely let teams out of this season.

The Knicks again found a way — almost the same way, in fact — to pull off the improbable. And now they are two wins away from knocking the defending champions out of the playoffs.

Mikal Bridges sealed another 20-point comeback with his second straight game-ending steal and the Knicks stunned the Celtics again Wednesday night, winning 91-90 for a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

"Just finding ways to win," Bridges said.

Jalen Brunson scored 17 points for New York and made two free throws with 12.7 seconds left for a 91-90 lead. Jayson Tatum then couldn't get to the rim and Bridges moved in to bat the ball away and recover it.

Bridges also scored all of his 14 points in the fourth quarter. Josh Hart had 23 points and Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 21 points and 17 rebounds for the Knicks, who will host Game 3 on Saturday.

"Going home we realize the opportunity we have. We just have to stay locked in," Brunson said.

Jaylen Brown and Derrick White scored 20 points apiece for the Celtics, who were 10 for 40 from 3-point range after going 15 for 60 in Game 1.

Tatum was limited to 13 points on 5-for-19 shooting for the Celtics, who went more than eight minutes without a field goal in the fourth quarter. They missed 13

Scoreboard

Second Round

Best-of-seven x-if necessary Eastern Conference Indiana 2, Cleveland 0

Indiana 121, Cleveland 112
Indiana 120, Cleveland 119
Friday: at Indiana, AFN-Sports, 1:40 a.m.
Saturday CET, 9:40 a.m. Saturday JKT

Sunday: at Indiana
x-Tuesday: at Cleveland
x-Thursday, May 15: at Indiana
x-Sunday, May 18: at Cleveland

New York 2, Boston 0

New York 108, Boston 105, OT
Wednesday: New York 91, Boston 90
Saturday: at New York, AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. Saturday CET, 5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

Monday: at New York
x-Wednesday, May 14: at Boston
x-Friday, May 16: at New York
x-Monday, May 19: at Boston

Western Conference Denver 1, Oklahoma City 1

Denver 121, Oklahoma City 119
Wednesday: Oklahoma City 149, Denver 106

Friday: at Denver, AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. Saturday CET, 12 p.m. Saturday JKT

Sunday: at Denver
Tuesday: at Oklahoma City
x-Thursday, May 15: at Denver
x-Sunday, May 18: at Oklahoma City

Golden State 1, Minnesota 0

Golden State 99, Minnesota 88
Thursday: at Minnesota
Saturday: at Golden State, AFN-Sports, 2:30 a.m. Sunday CET, 10:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

Monday: at Golden State
x-Wednesday, May 14: at Minnesota
x-Sunday, May 18: at Golden State
x-Tuesday, May 20: at Minnesota

consecutive shots during the stretch.

Teams that win the first two games of a best-of-seven series on the road win the series 85.7% of the time. The Knicks took the opener when Bridges stole the ball away from Brown with a second left in overtime.

"Opportunity to show what we're made of," Brown said of a Boston team that swept New York 4-0 in the regular season.

"We've got to respond."

Kristaps Porzingis didn't start after sitting out the second half of Game 1 with an illness. He came

off the bench for just the fifth time in his NBA career and finished with eight points and four rebounds in 14 minutes.

All eyes were on the Celtics' offense after they missed an NBA playoff-record 45 3-pointers in their Game 1 loss. They went 24-for-54 from 2-point range Wednesday.

Despite their shooting struggles, the Celtics found some traction late in the third quarter, using a 16-6 run — keyed by their effort on the defensive end — to turn a 10-point lead into a 73-53 advantage late in the period.

It was 84-68 after Payton Pritchard's 3-pointer with 8:40 to play but the Celtics wouldn't make another basket until Tatum's driving dunk with 18.5 seconds remaining.

New York cut it to 86-82 on a floater by Hart before Towns' three-point play cut it to 86-85. Tatum missed a jumper, and Brunson made an 18-footer to put New York in front.

A jumper by Brown rolled off the rim on Boston's next trip up the floor. Brunson then found a lane to the basket and dropped in a layup to make it 89-86.

Tatum connected on a pair of free throws and then got it back following a New York miss that rolled out of bounds with 24.2 seconds left.

Trailing 89-88, Tatum pushed the ball in to the front court and drove easily past Mitchell Robinson for a dunk.

Brunson was fouled and connected on both free throws.

Hart said they are going home knowing they can still play better.

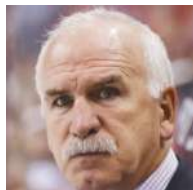
"I don't even think we know what we're capable of," he said.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Knicks forward Mikal Bridges, center, blocks a pass by Celtics forward Jayson Tatum in the final seconds of Game 2 of the second-round playoff series on Wednesday in Boston. New York won for a 2-0 lead.

SPORTS



Rehired

Ducks name Quenneville coach after ban for handling of abuse scandal » **Hockey, Page 29**

NBA PLAYOFFS

Comebacks keep coming

Teams continuing to find ways past 20-point deficits

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

New York down by 20 on Monday. Indiana down by 20 on Tuesday. New York down by 20 again Wednesday.

No problem.

For the first time since play-by-play began being digitally tracked across the NBA about 30 years ago, there have been three consecutive days where the winning team in a playoff game came from at least 20 points down to win.

The Knicks did it in Boston on Monday, the Pacers did it in Cleveland on Tuesday and New York did it again on the Celtics' home floor Wednesday.

"We told each other just keep believing. Just keep fighting and sticking together, and keep chipping away. There wasn't going to be a 20-point shot," Knicks guard Jalen Brunson said after the first big rally on Monday.

Indiana scored the final eight points in 47.9 seconds to win Tuesday.

"It's the NBA, crazier things have happened," Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton said. "That's just what basketball is. We don't give up and we're battle tested. We just find a way."

Add in a pair of similar rallies — a 29-pointer by Oklahoma City and another 20-pointer by Indiana — in Round 1, and that pushes the total of 20-point comebacks so far this postseason to five.

SEE COMEBACKS ON PAGE 30

INSIDE

Knicks take 2-0 lead; Thunder rout Nuggets to even up series **Page 31**



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

New York Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns takes a shot over Celtics guard Jrue Holiday during the second half of Game 2 of a playoff series Wednesday in Boston. The Knicks managed to win after a 20-point deficit for the second time in as many games.

Maple Leafs take 2-0 lead; Stars top Jets in opener » **NHL playoffs, Page 28**