Ranking top 12 No. 1's in NBA Draft since 2000

Whichever player ends up as 2026 top prospect will be joining prestigious group. **In Sports**

'Dutton Ranch' villain talks being 'hit by a lot of heroes'

Jai Courtney says screen punches, bulking up, putting on "gun show" come with the job. **In Life**

Behind the rising cost of books

As prices climb, publishers, authors and readers wrestle with inflation, changing habits and how much a novel is worth. **In Money**

USA TODAY

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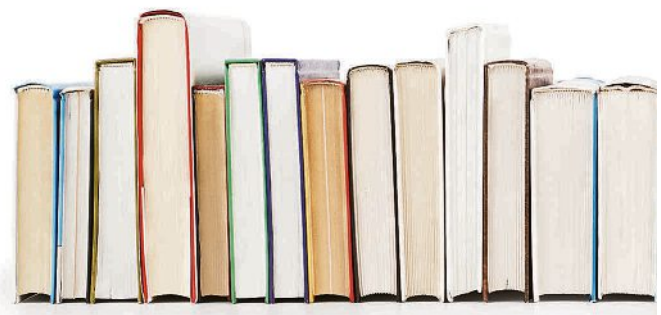

GETTY IMAGES

ALAN GREENSPAN
1926-2026

Influential economist, Fed chair dies at 100

He steered U.S. economy through times of crisis

Barbara Hagenbaugh and Christopher Cann
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan didn't have a lifelong dream of becoming an economist. In fact, the Julliard-trained musician stumbled upon the profession while playing in a dance band.

"I found that in the 20-minute breaks we'd have in between sets that I started to go to the library and read books on economics. Why? I haven't a clue," he said in November 2001.

"I finally found out that I really was looking forward not to playing during the sets but going to the 20-minute breaks, and I said, 'If I'm doing this, I'm in the wrong business,' " Greenspan said. "And that is the best economic move, judgment, I have ever made."

See GREENSPAN, Page 6A



Former Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan speaks in 2015 at a Brookings Institution forum on "Achieving Strong Economic Growth" in Washington. YURI GRIPAS/REUTERS



Susan Page
Washington Bureau Chief
USA TODAY

Birthday jitters? Americans are less than happy ahead of 250th

America is not in a party mood.

Even as the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence – a celebration of the founding of the world's oldest modern constitutional democracy – most Americans are mired in dissatisfaction with the nation's present and pessimism about its future.

By double digits in recent polls, they predict the country's best years are behind us, with more peril than promise ahead.

Despite a few glimmers of good feeling, today's fierce political divisions have redefined a milestone that has often been marked by unity and

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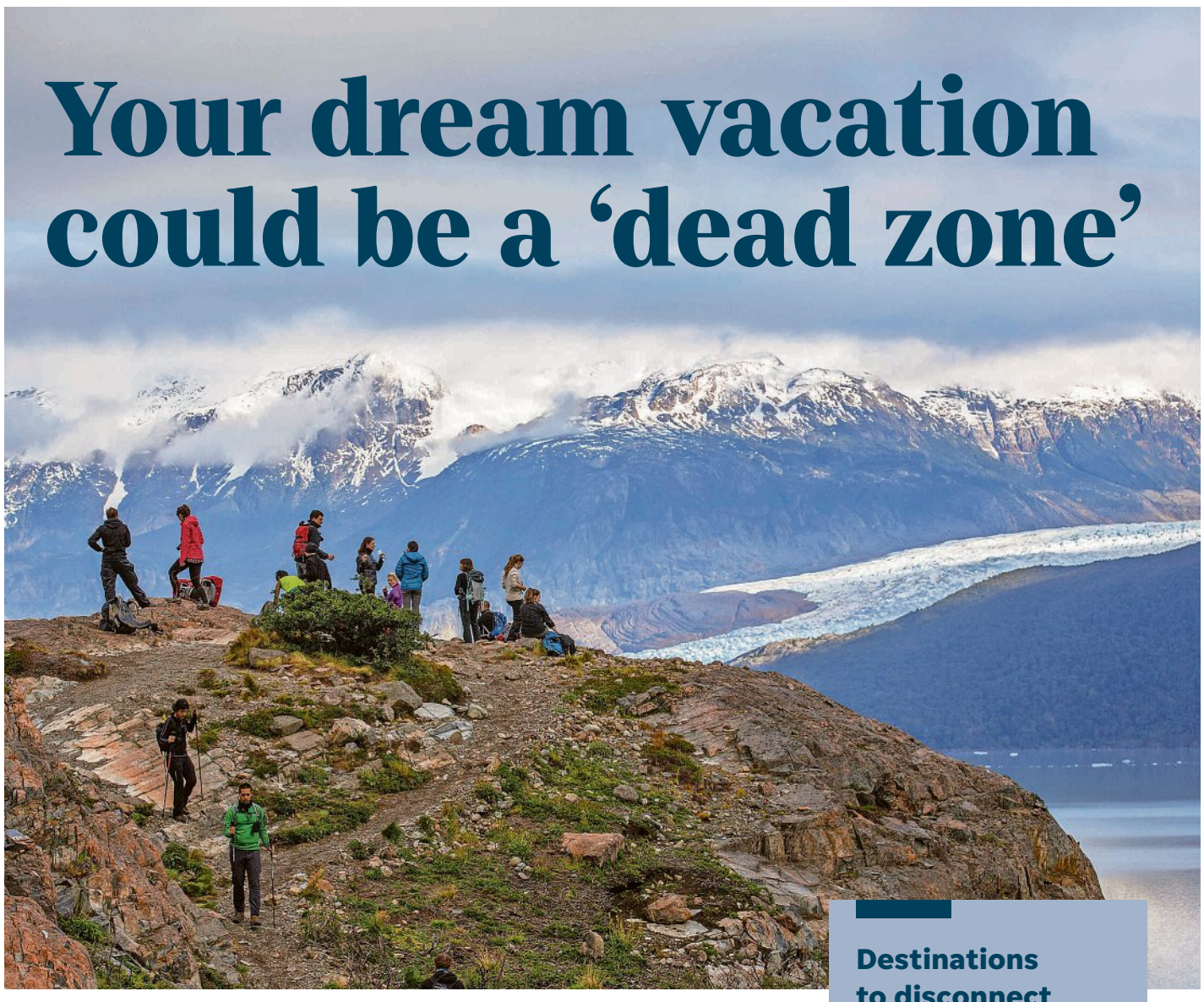

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY G ADVENTURES

Your dream vacation could be a 'dead zone'

Travelers unplug from technology and reconnect with themselves

Kathleen Wong USA TODAY

It was at a lodge in the middle of the Amazon rainforest where Johan Konst was completely disconnected from the rest of the world for the first time. ● The Dutch traveler was exploring Brazil with friends on a trip in April 2023. The group had visited Rio de Janeiro and Manaus before traveling about three hours to the world's largest rainforest, where their accommodations had neither Wi-Fi nor cell service. ● Initially, the lack of internet connection left Konst "a bit shocked." He couldn't get in touch with clients for his PR firm or keep up with the news. ● Then something shifted. **See DEADZONING, Page 4A**



Destinations to disconnect

For travelers who are curious about deadzoning, here are some of the top destinations to try your digital detox, according to G Adventures:

▲ **Patagonia:** Experienced hikers take on the trails of Torres del Paine and Los Glaciares National Park in Chile and Argentina's Patagonia, with glaciers and pristine mountains as their backdrop.

Ecuador: Travelers spend four nights in the Amazon rainforest, staying with a local host family. During the day they take jungle walks to waterfalls, visit an animal rescue center by canoe and experience a shaman ceremony.

Northern Thailand: Starting in Chiang Mai, travelers trek into the mountains to visit remote villages and explore deep caves on a bamboo raft.

Southern Africa: For two weeks, travelers camp in Namibia's desert landscapes before heading to Cape Town. Then they venture into Etosha National Park on a safari.

◀ **Antarctica:** Travelers explore the "White Continent" on Zodiacs and hope to spot whales and penguins.

Nation's 'grandparent economy' is booming



Kasia Gay, 69, retired four years ago. She spends a lot of her time now caring for her two grandchildren. PROVIDED BY KASIA GAY

Millions quietly fill gap in offspring's child care

Madeline Mitchell
USA TODAY

Kasia Gay, 69, always thought her retirement would include a trailer home and cross-country adventures with her husband of more than 30 years.

But that dream died with her divorce, and now she spends her days picking up her grandchildren from school and doing the laundry for her son's family. She's constantly at softball practices, swim meets and award ceremonies, and she said her grandkids typically spend one night a weekend with her and "get upset when I leave."

"I've been told that I am the ultimate grandma, because, you know, whenever they need me, all they have to do is call and I'm there," said Gay, who lives in Southern California. "But I wouldn't give up my grandkids for the world."

Gay is one of millions of grandparents providing free child care for their adult children. New data from an AARP survey found that among the 65 million grandparents in the United States, 15% care for their grandkids daily or almost daily. On average, grandparents spend more than 500 hours a year – the equivalent of 12½ weeks of full-time work – providing care for their grandkids.

See GRANDPARENTS, Page 4A

Supreme Court upholds conviction in Patz murder case

NYC 6-year-old's death prompted changes

Maureen Groppe and Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY



Pedro Hernandez appears with his lawyer, Harvey Fishbein, in Manhattan Criminal Court on Nov. 15, 2012. LOUIS LANZANO/REUTERS

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court has ruled that a man convicted of kidnapping and murdering a 6-year-old in one of the most infamous "cold cases" in American history should not be granted a new trial.

In an unsigned opinion June 22, the court reversed a decision that determined the jurors who convicted Pedro Hernandez of killing Etan Patz received improper instructions.

Etan vanished near his New York City home more than four decades ago. His body has never been found, but his disappearance helped transform the way the country handles missing children.

Hernandez, a former store clerk in Etan's neighborhood, was named a suspect in 2012. Hernandez confessed to the crime, a confession his defense team argued was false and borne from mental illness. After his first murder trial ended in a hung jury, Hernandez was convicted at his second trial in 2017 and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.

The New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the conviction last year. The court said jurors received instructions from the trial judge that could have improperly swayed them toward convicting him.

The appeals court said the judge didn't correctly tell jurors how to consider the fact that Hernandez's first confession came before he had been advised of his rights, including his right to an attorney and his right to remain silent.

New York prosecutors said the appeals court was wrong to throw out the jury's verdict "on such a slender reed."

Retrying Hernandez could be difficult because of how long ago the crime occurred and because some of the witnesses who testified at his trial have died, prosecutors wrote in their Supreme Court appeal.

And Etan's family, they said, would "have to endure yet another highly publicized recounting of the violence done to 6-year-old Etan after waiting decades for an answer to his disappearance."

AMBER Alerts and pictures on milk cartons

Etan's case, along with that of 6-year-old Adam Walsh, who vanished from a shopping mall in Hollywood, Florida, in 1981 and whose partial remains were found two weeks later, are credited with drawing a wave of media attention to missing children and changing the way the FBI and other agencies across the country handle such cases.

Unlike with stolen cars or other objects that had a national database, there was no crime database for children, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children said. There was also no AMBER Alert system.

Etan was one of the first – and remains one of the most notorious – children featured as missing on the side of milk cartons. The containers in the 1980s often displayed posters with photos of missing children and a newly created hotline for sharing any information about their whereabouts. The "Milk Carton Kids" movement didn't last long and didn't lead to many success stories, but for many people, milk cartons are still linked to missing kids.

Justices to decide if prisoners still can sue over medical care

Court to revisit and clarify claims, rights

Maureen Groppe
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court will revisit a decades-old decision – which was already significantly narrowed by the court – that allows federal prisoners to seek damages for deliberate indifference to a serious medical condition.

The court agreed June 22 to hear a case that could clarify whether such lawsuits are still permissible under Carlson v. Green, a 1980 decision in which the high court said federal prison staff had violated the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment when it failed to respond appropriately to a prisoner's fatal asthmatic attack.

The Justice Department argues that further lawsuits on such allegations should not be allowed.

"No more Carlson claims should be viable," Solicitor General John Sauer told the court in a filing.

The Carlson ruling expanded a landmark 1971 decision that established that federal officials could be held personally liable for monetary damages for a violation of constitutional rights.

But in recent decades, the court has sought to limit the ability to sue, including barring lawsuits in cases that are "different in a meaningful way" from the few the court has allowed.

Kekai Watanabe, the inmate at the center of the case, said he should have been hospitalized or seen a specialist after being attacked during a gang-related fight at a federal prison in Honolulu in 2021. Instead, he was given over-the-counter pain medication, according to court filings.

An X-ray taken months later showed that he had a fractured coccyx and that bone chips had migrated to surrounding soft-tissue areas. He did not receive further treatment before being released in 2024.

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said Watanabe's claim is identical to the 1980 decision involving the fatal asthma attack "in all meaningful respects."

But lawyers for the prison nurse said the cases are significantly different, including that Watanabe didn't die and that he had other ways of seeking redress. They also argued in their appeal that the Supreme Court may wish to revisit the earlier decisions allowing such lawsuits.

The Justice Department likewise urged the court to shut down lawsuits over inadequate medical care, arguing that prisoners are filing thousands of civil rights lawsuits every year, exposing staff to "harassing litigation" and personal financial liability.

Lawyers for Watanabe countered that the Justice Department is focusing on the wrong thing. The relevant number of lawsuits is how many are allowed to proceed, they said, and "that number is vanishingly small."



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks after local elections at Kingsdown Methodist Church on May 8 in London. LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

UK PM Starmer resigns amid economic woes

Leader faces rising anti-immigrant party

Kim Hjelmgaard
USA TODAY

LONDON – Britain will get its seventh leader in a decade after Prime Minister Keir Starmer resigned less than two years after he won a landslide election victory that promised to end his country's chaotic politics and reverse deepening public frustration with the cost of living and other economic woes.

The threat to Starmer's premiership has been building for months following bruising defeats for his party in May local elections. On June 22, Starmer set out a timetable for his departure that is likely to usher in an orderly transfer of power this summer. His Labour Party rival Andy Burnham is the leading candidate to replace him.

Starmer said that he "heard the answer" to the question of his premiership and "accepts that answer with good grace."

In a brief address outside his office and residence at 10 Downing Street, Starmer, who has struggled to deliver on campaign pledges and sharply define his agenda, said that he "heard the answer" to the question of his premiership and "accepts that answer with good grace."

Starmer became emotional during the end of his address, saying he would now focus on being the best husband and dad to his "fantastic wife" and "beautiful children."

British voters elect a party, not a specific leader, meaning that Starmer's center-left Labour will stay in government until the next general election, due in 2029. Senior members of his cabinet mounted a revolt against Starmer because they feared Labour could be wiped out in that vote by Nigel Farage's anti-immigration Reform UK party. It has led national opinion polls for more than a year.

Starmer said nominations for a new leader would open on July 9. There could be a new British prime minister soon if the party gets behind a single candidate.

He will remain in his post until a new prime minister is named following an internal party contest. Among the prospective candidates to replace Starmer are his former deputy prime minister, Angela Rayner; and Burnham, until recently the mayor of Britain's third-largest city, Manchester.

Burnham, 56, was mayor of Manchester for the best part of a decade who won plaudits for his success in attracting investment to that city and improvements to its public transportation system, for which he has earned the nickname "king of the North." Burnham, if he wins, is not likely to make significant changes to Britain's domestic or international policies. He is cut from the same broad political cloth as Starmer, though he is viewed as more left-leaning than Starmer. He served in cabinet roles under former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Burnham repeatedly has said Britain needs fundamental change and to bring down the cost of living. He has yet to make clear or outline his approach to foreign affairs or the economy.

But he is viewed by Labour party members as a more effective, optimistic and plain-speaking communicator than Starmer, whose quiet, lawyerly manner has consistently failed to connect with the public's national mood.

"Keir has given huge service to our country and I want to thank him for his leadership and dedication during such a challenging period," Burnham said in a statement.

Trump and a new leader for Britain

President Donald Trump and Starmer have had a rocky political relationship, with the U.S. president criticizing Starmer for refusing to join the U.S. and Israel's war with Iran. Starmer has also appeared to frown on Trump's comments on the NATO military alliance and his administration's overall political direction. Trump has also accused Starmer of "failing badly on immigration and energy."

It is not clear how the next Labour leader will fare in terms of building a relationship with Trump.

Starmer's authority has dwindled since Labour's landslide election victory in July 2024 amid anemic economic growth and perceived missteps over the rollout of social welfare policies.

Britain has struggled to cut spending and invest in such areas as defense.

Reform UK, a party headed by Trump's ally Farage, made big gains at the expense of Labour and the Conservative Party in the May local council elections. Farage has pledged to freeze non-essential immigration, slash taxes and cut down on government waste.

Starmer had previously vowed to stand in any formal Labour leadership race triggered by rebel lawmakers who, fearing a 2029 election wipeout, sought to replace him. But that appeared to change over the weekend as a slew of his cabinet ministers urged him to step aside after Burnham decisively won a parliamentary election to return to Westminster, beating a candidate from Farage's Reform UK.

Analysts say Burnham's policies, like Starmer's, could be hemmed in by bond market investors opposed to any additional borrowing. "In our view, a Burnham premiership would inherit a precarious fiscal situation with few tools to deliver meaningful change," economists at Citibank wrote in an investor note on June 19.

The pound eased against major currencies as speculation mounted that Starmer was going to set out a timetable for his departure.

Britain's revolving door of prime ministers, affecting both Labour and Conservative parties, accelerated in the wake of the 2016 Brexit vote to leave the European Union economic bloc.

That vote was a turning point for Britain's politics and a decade later the political instability and economic upheaval it triggered is still being felt.

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U.S.-Iran talks conclude 'successfully'

First round ends with 'roadmap' to a deal

Christopher Cann, Thao Nguyen, Zac Anderson, Jay Stahl and Natalie Neysa Alund
USA TODAY

The first round of peace talks between the United States and Iran in Switzerland "concluded successfully," mediators said on June 22, after negotiations appeared strained over the Strait of Hormuz and persistent fighting in Lebanon.

"The discussions were held in a positive and constructive atmosphere and yielded encouraging progress, including agreement on a roadmap toward a final deal within 60 days, the establishment of a High-Level Committee to provide political oversight, and the commencement of further technical talks," said Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who attended the talks along with Vice President JD Vance, U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

Sharif did not describe the roadmap in any further detail. The first round of talks on June 21 marked the first in-person negotiations since the two sides agreed to a memorandum of understanding last week, extending a tenuous ceasefire for at least 60 days.

Pakistan's foreign ministry announced Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian will visit Pakistan on June 23, calling it an "important opportunity" to discuss ongoing diplomatic engagements.

Meanwhile, the talks were immediately tested as Iran said it halted maritime traffic through the vital Strait of Hormuz, arguing that Israel's continued strikes targeting Hezbollah in Lebanon violated the ceasefire.

Trump in response issued several stark warnings, saying Iran must rein in Hezbollah forces in Lebanon and suggesting to Fox News he could escalate sharply if Iran closed the strait.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, appearing June 21 on CBS' "Face the Nation," said that after spending over four hours with Trump on June 19, he believes the president will take the Strait of Hormuz with force if talks fail.

"If Iran contests control of the Strait of Hormuz by the United States, we will obliterate them," Graham said. "So, to all the people listening, if this diplomatic effort fails, President Trump is going to take the Strait of Hormuz."

Vance: Strait remains open

Vance, in comments after the first round of negotiations concluded, said that the Strait of Hormuz remained open despite Iran's claims it had closed the waterway over Israeli strikes in Lebanon, a remark that coincided with a dip in oil prices on June 22 as he also reported progress in the talks.

The price of benchmark Brent crude was down just over 2%, trading at just over $78 a barrel on June 22, Reuters reported. Prices were previously up to just over $82 at the start of trading.

Last week, the national average price of gasoline fell to $3.99 per gallon, the first time it's been below $4 since March 30 – about a month after the war began. Analysts have noted that it will take time before shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, which typically carries 20% of the global oil supply, returns to pre-war levels.

See latest developments online at usatoday.com

Follow live updates as United States and Iran discuss peace deal.

The U.S. Treasury Department on June 22 authorized the sale of Iranian oil amid the ongoing peace talks. The general license allows "the production, delivery and sale of crude oil and petrochemical and petroleum products of Iranian-origin" through Aug. 21, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent posted on X.

The move comes on the heels of the United States dismantling its blockade on Iran's ports and ships which first went into effect in April. Under that agreement, Iran will arrange for the "safe passage of commercial vessels with no charge for 60 days only from the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and vice versa," a top U.S. official said.

Vance, in his remarks, emphasized that Trump had "asked us to turn over a new leaf to transform our relationship with the people of Iran," Reuters reported.

The vice president said that U.S. negotiators want Iranian assets that are released to Tehran as part of the peace deal to be used to buy American farm products. The idea was proposed by Kushner, Vance said.

The Trump administration is trying to ensure that any financial benefits Iran receives as part of a peace deal aren't used to fund terrorism. The United States and Qatar, which has helped mediate the peace process, would have "approval" over how the unfrozen assets are used, Vance said.

"The money would actually go to buy American soy, American corn and American wheat for the benefit of the Iranian people," he said.

Vance also said Iran agreed to allow nuclear inspectors into the country and conversations over the inspections would possibly begin as soon as this week.

'De-confliction cell' in Lebanon

Vance said progress had been made on reducing fighting in Lebanon, where Israeli forces have been fighting Hezbollah.

A statement released by Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the parties agreed "on the creation of a de-confliction cell" to halt fighting in Lebanon and opened a communications line to help ensure safe passage for commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz

"The mediating parties will continue to do their utmost to ensure that the negotiations continue to be conducted in a constructive atmosphere with the aim of reaching a final deal," according to the statement.

There were no major reports of violence by nightfall on June 21 after two days of heavy Israeli strikes and exchanges of fire with Hezbollah, Reuters reported. After the memorandum of understanding was signed, traffic appeared to increase in southern Lebanon as some residents began returning to their homes.

More than a million people have been displaced in Lebanon since Israel began its military campaign targeting Hezbollah fighters in March.

Contributing: Rachel Barber, USA TODAY; Reuters

Beleaguered Reflecting Pool project's problems run deep

Landmark beset by green water and peeling paint

Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

It's been about two weeks since President Donald Trump announced that work to beautify the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool was done. But since then a saga of science, nature and accusations of vandalism has slowly unfolded in the nation's capital.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the National Mall fixture has turned an algae green; this often happens after it is drained for maintenance. But paint also has been seen peeling off the bottom. That's unusual.

Trump announced the project to transform the Reflecting Pool in April, saying it had been subject to complaints about leaks and lack of cleanliness. Algae at the pool has been a recurring issue for decades.

The huge project sparked controversy over the cost and the choice to paint the bottom of the water feature "American Flag Blue."

The president, who has also made plans to erect a "Triumphal Arch" near Arlington National Cemetery and demolished the White House's East Wing to construct a huge ballroom, blamed vandalism for the current state of the Reflecting Pool, and pointed to the recent etching of "8647" on the National Mall lawn.

Meanwhile, a former Olympic canoeist, David Hearn, was arrested by U.S. Park Police on June 19 and charged with misdemeanor destruction of government property, the Washington Post reported. Hearn told the outlet he reached into the Reflecting Pool and was able to "grab" an end of a "flapping piece," but didn't remove it. USA TODAY has reached out to Park Police.

Here's what to know about the twists and turns in the Reflecting Pool repainting saga, from the beginning:

The history of the Reflecting Pool's construction, maintenance

The Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial is one of several reflecting pools in the Washington, DC, area. It sits about 2,000 feet in length and 160 feet in width, with the Lincoln Memorial at one end and the World War II Memorial at the other. A reflection of the Washington Monument just beyond can be seen in the water's surface.

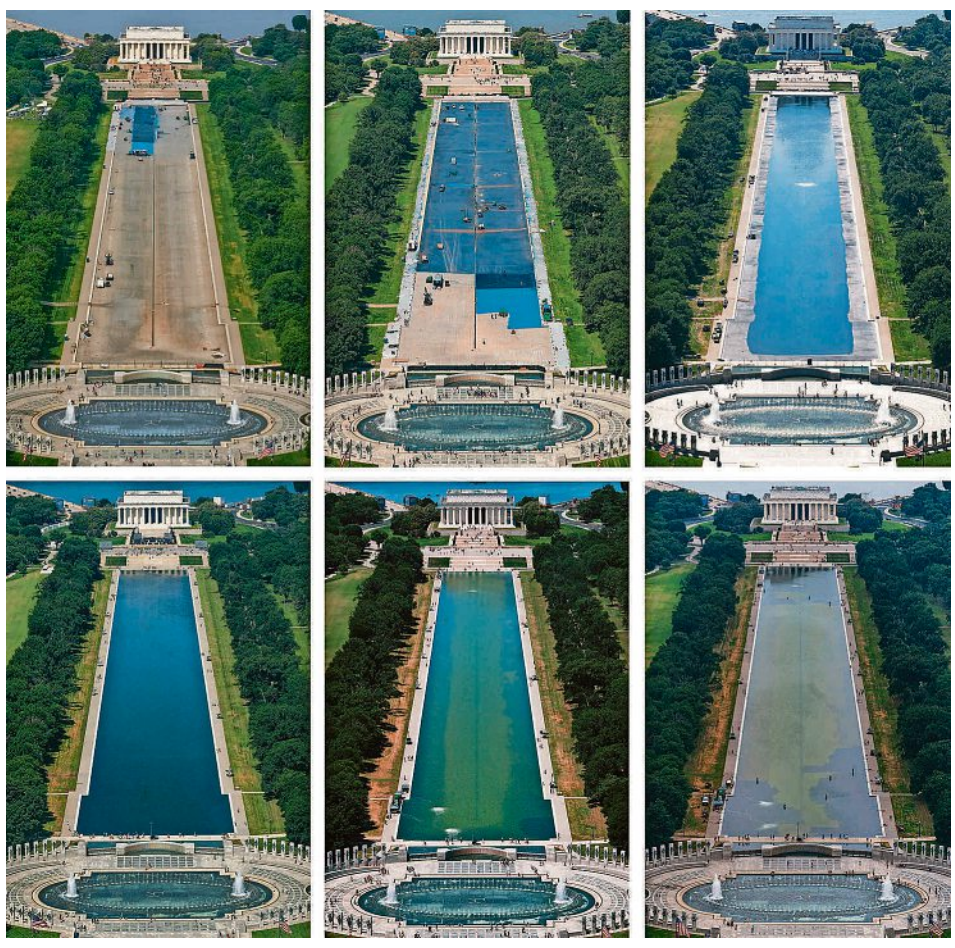
The pool was built in the early 1920s. Since then, it has undergone different renovation projects and improvements. According to a report from the National Park Service, it received a reinforced concrete slab foundation in 1929; drainage trenches were installed along the elm walks next to the pool in the 1930s; a 1981 full renovation addressed water leakage and drainage, and self-sustaining methods to clean it were installed, but soon after, an engineering report revealed the structural system was failing.

As of 1978, the pool was being cleaned twice per year, with 10 to 15 "large truckloads" of debris cleaned out each time, according to the Park Service.

In 2010, a major project to update the pool began, lasting two years and costing $34 million. Algae was an instant problem again after that renovation.

Algae blooms have plagued "every pool reopening since 1922," the Department of the Interior previously said in a statement to USA TODAY.

Algae blooms occur naturally, and warm water and sunlight can cause it to rapidly multiply. Washington saw several hot days, including some in the 90s, as the latest algae bloom began to appear, and recent rainfall also may have contributed. Nutrients that feed blooms can be blown in or carried in via particles that run off paved surfaces when it rains, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool renovations on May 2, May 28, June 7, June 12, June 16 and June 18. President Donald Trump ordered the pool painted blue. KEN CEDENO/ KYLIE COOPER/ANNABELLE GORDON/ERIC LEE/EVAN VUCCI/ANNABELLE GORDON/REUTERS

Algae blooms have plagued "every pool reopening since 1922," the Department of the Interior previously said in a statement to USA TODAY.



Bare patches show where blue paint has peeled from the bottom of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool on June 20. KEN CEDENO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Trump orders Reflecting Pool be painted American Flag Blue

Trump said he chose the color American Flag Blue, a deep navy, to repaint the Reflecting Pool. The project comes ahead of the country's 250th anniversary celebration.

The color, according to the Park Service, would improve the reflectivity of the water feature.

The project to renovate the Reflecting Pool included draining, cleaning and refinishing. Trump previously said the plan was to sandblast, caulk and resurface the pool basin.

Previously, the Reflecting Pool's basin was an achromatic and gray concrete, which the Park Service said collected algae and turned green. Before that, the agency said the bottom of the pool was black, and at times in its history water had been dyed to improve reflectivity.

The nonprofit Cultural Landscape Foundation filed a lawsuit on May 11 against the Department of the Interior over the renovation project, claiming that it violated federal law by not undergoing the proper review process to make changes to historic places.

How much did it cost? How long did it take?

Trump first announced the renovations April 23, calling the pool's condition "terrible."

"In a couple of weeks, we're going to have the most beautiful reflective pool between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial that you've ever seen," Trump said.

It took more than a couple of weeks. The renovations continued through early June. Workers began refilling the Reflecting Pool about two weeks ago.

The cost of the project came in at about $16 million, despite Trump initially saying it should cost $1.5 million.

Two companies, Atlantic Industrial Coatings and Green Water Solutions, were given contracts for the work. Atlantic Industrial Coatings was awarded $14.2 million to give the pool its American Flag Blue tint, while Green Water Solutions got $1.7 million to improve the water quality.

What does the Reflecting Pool look like now?

Visitors to the Reflecting Pool since it was refilled have noted algae covering the bottom, giving it a green appearance.

The Department of the Interior said it had deployed technology to destroy the algae, claiming success in a statement on June 15. But the next day, USA TODAY confirmed the green color was still there, and workers were pouring hydrogen peroxide into the water.

Despite treatment with chemicals, green algae could persist amid hot, humid summer weather, Hans Paerl, research professor of marine and environmental sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, told USA TODAY on June 15.

Most recently, portions of the blue layer of the pool have been seen tearing away and floating in the pool. Photos published by Getty Images on June 18 show a tear in the sealant.

As of June 20, Getty Images and Reuters photos show bare patches where recently applied paint has peeled away. Algae and a green hue were also visible in the water as workers were seen wading in the water to remove algae.

Contributing: Dinah Voyles Pulver, Michelle Del Rey and James Powel



Francine Griesing, 68, and her husband moved from Florida to Utah when their daughter was pregnant. They now help care for their 1-year-old granddaughter and 12-year-old step-granddaughter. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY FRANCINE GRIESING

Grandparents

Continued from Page 1A

The AARP survey of 3,300 grandparents also found they spent an average $2,654 on their grandchildren last year, including more than $700 on gifts, celebrations and treats and nearly $400 on basic needs. Between direct financial support and the value of unpaid care, AARP estimates that the "grandparent economy" is worth $904 billion a year.

"America runs on grandparents," said Debra Whitman, executive vice president and chief public policy officer for AARP. "They are really an economic backbone of our country that I don't think many people appreciate."

Francine Griesing, 68, helps her adult daughter by providing at least 15 hours of free child care each week, on top of her part-time work as a lawyer. She has two grandchildren.

"I think that because child care is so expensive, and getting a home now – the cost of living for young families is so demanding – that more and more grandparents will be and need to be involved," she said. "And I feel fortunate that I'm able to provide whatever kind of support I can."

Griesing and her husband moved from Florida to Utah to be closer to her daughter after her daughter told them she was pregnant in 2024.

"The first thing out of my husband's mouth was, 'When are we moving to Utah?' " she said. "So, there you go."

Moving to be closer to grandparents or grandchildren isn't uncommon. In the survey, 28% of grandparents said they or their grandkids' families moved specifically to live closer together.

Most grandparents enjoy caring for their grandkids, but for some it comes at a cost. The survey found at least 11% of grandparents say they feel taken for granted, and at least 13% feel physically taxed by the care they provide.

"Grandparents want to spend time their grandkids, but it's a lot to be a full-time caregiver or stepping in and helping out with the bills when you might be struggling yourself," Whitman said, adding that many grandparents are retired and on fixed incomes.



Griesing, who still works part time, watches her granddaughter at least 15 hours a week. "It's not that I'm not tired sometimes," she says. "But I never feel like it's a burden."

Gay said she bonded with her grandson, who is 11 now, when she helped him through virtual kindergarten during the COVID-19 pandemic. She's close with both her grandchildren but said her son and daughter-in-law don't always acknowledge all she does for their family.

"Lately I feel like they don't appreciate it because I've done it for five years," she said, adding that she went on a vacation recently for 12 days, and "when I came back, they told me, 'You can never go again during the school year.' And I'm going, 'Excuse me?' "

Still, Gay said, she loves her grandchildren and wouldn't have it any other way. She loves the time they spend together.

Similarly, Griesing said she likes being a grandmother "more than almost anything in the world."

"It's not that I'm not tired sometimes, because little ones run around and they need a lot of attention. But I never feel like it's a burden."

Madeline Mitchell's role covering women and the caregiving economy at USA TODAY is supported by a partnership with Pivotal and Journalism Funding Partners. Funders do not provide editorial input.

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optimism, at least for a moment. A cover of The New Yorker by Barry Bliss portrayed a dyspeptic George Washington, doused by confetti and holding a martini. The caption: "Red, White, and Kinda Blue."

A half-dozen recent national surveys – by the Pew Research Center and Gallup, NBC News and Fox News, Elon University and Emerson College – have posed different questions but consistently shown an anxious nation nervously eyeing what will follow.

That's not entirely new. In the past, the big anniversaries of the Declaration of Independence have been marked not only by celebration but also by protest and unease.

In 1876, at the centennial, the United States was still recovering from a devastating civil war. At the official celebration at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, suffragist Susan B. Anthony marched onstage, uninvited, to present demands for women's rights to the gathered dignitaries.

In 1976, the bicentennial followed the traumas of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal that had forced President Richard Nixon's resignation. Leading the celebration was his successor, Gerald Ford, the only president who had never been elected to national office as president or vice president.

"Many generations of Americans always took the founding as an opportunity to agitate for more rights," said Carol Faulkner, a historian at Syracuse University who has studied the commemorations. "This might be a time of thinking about liberty, equality, the pursuit of happiness."

But in some ways this time is different, she said. "It's much more partisan. It's really much more about a divisive president than the 1876 or the 1976 commemorations."

More pessimistic than proud?

Today's mood is more downbeat, too.

During the bicentennial in 1976, 43% of those surveyed by Roper felt optimistic about the future of the country, compared with 15% who were pessimistic – the positive outnumbering the negative by 28 percentage points. Thirty-nine percent were uncertain. Now, in an Emerson College poll that asked the same question, pessimism had jumped 26 points, to 41%, while optimism had ticked down to 42% – a positive edge of a single point. Eighteen percent were uncertain.

What would the founders think?

Seven in 10 Americans (69%) said in an Elon University Poll that they believed the signers of the Declaration of Independence would feel more disappointment than pride about modern American democracy.

The semiquincentennial comes after two tumultuous decades that have upended the nation's politics and left many Americans feeling battered.

The financial system melted down in 2008 and the global COVID-19 pandemic erupted in 2020. The divisive Iraq War ended in 2011 and the long Afghanistan war 10 years later with a chaotic withdrawal. Since his first election in 2016, President Donald Trump has reshaped a more populist Republican Party with a harder edge. And democratic socialists like New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have become more important forces in the Democratic Party.

Now opponents accuse Trump of making events marking America at 250 – from the UFC cage match June 14 on the White House South Lawn to The Great American State Fair on the National Mall – more about celebrating him than the country. The signature events in Washington, DC, on July Fourth, including a supersized fireworks display, will be "the most spectacular TRUMP RALLY of them all," Trump boasted on Truth Social.

Though Congress created a bipartisan commission called America250 to coordinate anniversary celebrations, Trump has created a separate group called Freedom 250 that has taken the lead on the biggest ones. Concerns about his takeover of traditionally nonpolitical celebrations have led some states to decline participating in Washington events and some entertainers to cancel plans to perform at them.

Even some more community-based celebration plans have taken on a partisan ting. In a Gallup Poll taken in collaboration with America250 and the group With Honor, nearly 9 of 10 Republicans (88%) said they planned to mark the anniversary in some way, compared with 54% of Democrats.

The young are especially wary

There are divisions by age, too.

Among seniors, those 65 and older, 84% planned to celebrate. Among younger adults, those 18 to 39, 54% did.

On most measures, young people are more pessimistic than their elders about the future of the country and the resilience of the American dream, the aspiration that has fueled generations of Americans.

Younger adults in the Pew poll were more likely to predict that by the year 2050 the country would be more politically divided, less economically prosperous and a more dangerous place to live. Among voters under 30, 3 in 10 said in a Fox News poll that they would rather be living in some other country.

Some analysts fear that the friction over the 250th celebrations, especially the national ones, may end up reinforcing the nation's bitter divide rather than providing a respite from it.

Still, almost everyone surveyed by Gallup cited something that made them most proud to be an American, topped by "the freedoms we have" (35%) and "the diversity of our people" (28%). Just 4% said they weren't proud of anything.

Nearly 9 in 10 named something that made them optimistic about the future, starting with 26% who cited "people willing to stand up for what they believe is right." But 12% couldn't think of anything that made them optimistic.

Feelings are mixed and sometimes conflicting.

Thinking about the future, 68% told Pew they were hopeful, while 60% said they felt scared; 54% felt happy and 50% felt sad.

An overwhelming 85% told Fox it was important to emphasize national unity and shared values.

On the other hand, they also expressed little confidence that shared values still prevailed. By 58% to 42%, those surveyed said Americans were mostly separated by different values, not bound by shared ones.

Happy 250th, America.

Susan Page, Washington Bureau chief of USA TODAY, has covered 12 presidential elections and seven presidents. Her latest book is "The Queen and Her Presidents" (Harper, 2026).

Deadzoning

Continued from Page 1A

For the next five days, Konst embraced being with his friends and nature. During the day, the group went on boat excursions down the Amazon River. At night, they got to know their fellow international travelers at the lodge.

"The first day, it was like, 'OK, what's happening?' Then after the first day, it was actually pretty nice, because you really feel like the world's going very slowly and you see things you wouldn't have seen if you were on a cell phone," he told USA TODAY.

Konst said he ended up loving the experience. Though it was scary at first to unplug from texts, emails and social media, it became refreshing to realize the "world goes on without you. It doesn't really matter."

More travelers are leaving their cell phones and laptops behind and seeking out destinations with no cell service or Wi-Fi. Called "deadzoning," these trips force people to disconnect with technology and reconnect with themselves, others and nature, according to research by the small-group adventure operator G Adventures.

In data collected last year by the travel company, 58% of travelers said they use a trip without internet connection to "relax and destress," and 41% want to "disconnect from the pressures of work and everyday life."

For these travelers, deadzoning is the antidote to today's fast-paced hustle culture and its resulting burnout. These trips aren't just about going to the most stunning destinations or hitting the top attractions to share on social media. They're meaningful moments for travelers to rest and reset.

No cell service, no problem

There's no doubt modern life can feel stressful, with our phones constantly pinging with notifications and doomscrolling eroding our mental health. In 2024, Americans spent an average of 4½ hours on their phones each day, a 52% increase from 2022.

It's easier said than done to break free from our devices. Some studies show our brain's reliance on them is similar to drug addiction.

Younger people especially carry the burden of being too connected, and more are choosing to disconnect wherever they can. More than a quarter of travelers ages 25 to 30 said they felt happiest on trips when they turned off their devices, according to G Adventures.



Johan Konst, far left, experienced the Amazon rainforest unplugged and undisturbed. PROVIDED BY JOHAN KONST

G Adventures expedition leader Matt Burnaby sees this transformation in real time on his trips to remote, undeveloped destinations, such as an 11-day Antarctica cruise (Wi-Fi is technically available on the ship via Starlink, but it costs an additional fee that acts as a barrier for some passengers). As the ship sails the Antarctic Peninsula, passengers go on excursions, such as taking a Zodiac or kayaking, to view wildlife and immerse themselves in nature.

"We get a lot of comments from guests who are surprised by a sense of, I guess the best way of putting it is, freedom," Burnaby said. "I think a lot of people don't realize how connected – I mean, particularly to their phones – they really are."

'Do not disturb'

This is the philosophy behind deadzoning: The lack of service forces people to be present and find connection in the real world, not from behind a screen.

"You don't really know how important it is to disconnect until you try and the effect of realizing your attachment to social media or being online or just your phone in general," he said. "It's not just disconnecting in that moment but the lasting effect of realizing it stays with you after the voyage as well."

Travelers don't always need to go to far-off places to go offline, either. CIVANA Wellness Resort & Spa in Arizona's Sonoran Desert has launched a "Do Not Disturb" program meant to help travelers disconnect from their devices and be more mindful on their vacation. Guests will be given a "phone cocoon" to physically store their devices, attend screen-free communal meals and spend their time in wellness classes.

Dead whale found on cruise ship's bow

Endangered species prompts investigation

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

A cruise ship arrived at a dock in Seward, Alaska, with a dead endangered fin whale "on top of the ship's bulbous bow," the National Marine Fisheries Service said.

The ship reached the port June 19 with a 61-foot female fin whale on its bow, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Alaska. A local company towed the whale to a nearby beach, where a team prepared for a necropsy – an animal autopsy – to determine how the whale died.

"We are working with the Alaska SeaLife Center to perform a necropsy on the 61-foot, adult female fin whale to determine the cause of death," NOAA Fisheries said in a statement June 21. "Initial findings indicate the whale was pregnant."

The federal agency urged the public to stay away from the necropsy site "for your safety and to allow space for the team to perform the examination and collect samples." The NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement is investigating the incident.

Cruise holding company the Royal Caribbean Group confirmed to USA TODAY that the ship involved in the incident is part of its fleet. The company said it was cooperating with the NOAA as it waits for the necropsy results.

"We are saddened to hear that one of our ships struck a whale while on its way to Seward," the company said in a statement. "We take any impact to marine ecosystems very seriously. The ship immediately reported the incident to the proper authorities."

Cooper Freeman, Alaska director at the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity, sharply criticized the circumstances surrounding the whale's death. He called for a full inquiry.

"It's heart-wrenching that this endangered pregnant fin whale was likely killed by this monster cruise ship," Freeman said in a statement to USA TODAY. "This deserves a full investigation, with hard questions asked about how it happened."

Fin whales are classified as an endangered species, according to the NOAA. The mammal, which gets its name from the fin on its back near its tail, is found in oceans across the globe, the NOAA said. Fin whales typically are found in deep, offshore waters in open seas, away from the coast.

Like all large whales, the NOAA said, fin whales once were hunted by commercial whalers, and their populations were decimated. Populations have since gradually recovered because of conservation efforts.

Though whaling is no longer a threat to the species, it is still threatened by ship strikes, entanglements in fishing gear, underwater noise and climate change, according to the NOAA.

The species is protected under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act. The law makes it illegal for people to disturb, feed, harass, hunt and capture marine mammals.

In recent years, vessel strikes and fishing gear entanglements have been persistent threats. The nonprofit International Marine Mammal Project says about 20,000 whales are killed worldwide by vessel strikes each year.

"Large whale species such as fin, humpback, gray, and blue whales are most often victims, with collisions concentrated in busy shipping lanes near major ports and along migratory routes," the organization said.

From late 2022 to early 2023, USA TODAY reported a series of whale deaths involving more than 20 animals, including critically endangered North Atlantic right whales, humpbacks, pilot whales and orcas. In 2024, the NOAA reported that multiple North Atlantic right whales had died from injuries consistent with a vessel strike. In July 2025, the California Academy of Sciences and the Marine Mammal Center confirmed that 24 whales died in the greater San Francisco Bay Area for the year.

Earlier this year, a dead whale was found on the bow of a ship in New Jersey. The Marine Mammal Stranding Center tentatively identified the whale as a fin whale.

Contributing: Dinah Voyles Pulver, Nathan Diller and Saman Shafiq

State lawmakers step up to tackle menopause treatment

More legislation sheds light on women's needs

Laura Trujillo
USA TODAY

Some women suffered through menopause symptoms such as joint aches and brain fog for years and met with various doctors before reaching out to Elizabeth Lapeyre's New Orleans medical office.

She often prescribed hormone replacement therapy, something not all insurance policies would cover.

"We are leaving so many women behind," says Lapeyre, a gynecologist who specializes in menopause. "Monthly medication costs can run as high as $500."

It's frustrating when a plan isn't covered. "We want all women to have access to treatment," she adds.

Now state legislators are stepping in to help.

After a conversation with Lapeyre, Louisiana Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman, a Democrat, in 2024 introduced a bill to require Medicaid and private insurance to cover perimenopause and menopause treatment. It passed later that year, making Louisiana one of the first states to legislate menopause care.



Adatto

More than half of U.S. states have introduced or passed bills or laws around menopause in the past two years. Last summer, in 2025, Rhode Island became the first state to mandate that companies offer accommodations for menopausal women. And Maryland soon will begin requiring private insurance companies to cover menopause care and will incentivize menopause education for providers.

Legislators are seeing the interest grow around menopause care, now a $20 billion industry that includes everything from herbal supplements to your personal vaginal speculum promoted by Halle Berry. They also better understand the toll menopause can take on women at work; one study by the Mayo Clinic says menopause leads to $1.8 billion in lost work time a year.

"So many health care providers lack the training about menopause and how to manage it. And most medical schools don't even have a menopause curriculum," says Maryland Rep. Joseline Peña-Melnyk, who was inspired to write her state's bill this year after a friend visited five doctors, had 13 blood tests and was prescribed anti-anxiety medicine before a doctor finally diagnosed her menopause.

"No woman should have to suffer like that. Frankly, menopause is a natural and inevitable part of aging," the Democrat says. "But because it's a woman's issue, it's remained under-researched, under-discussed and stigmatized."

'You shouldn't have to fight your insurance company'

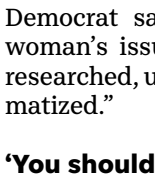
With 1 in 10 women leaving the workforce because of menopause, and an additional 1 in 5 considering retiring early, it can lead to fewer women leaders at a time when they make up fewer than one-third of top jobs.

There is no federal policy that protects women in menopause or perimenopause, the time leading up to menopause. Perimenopause can last up to 10 years and include a fluctuation in hormones, presenting symptoms from frozen shoulder to hot flashes.

Companies need to keep women in the workforce to remain competitive, says Sarah Chavarria, CEO of Delta Dental Insurance Company.

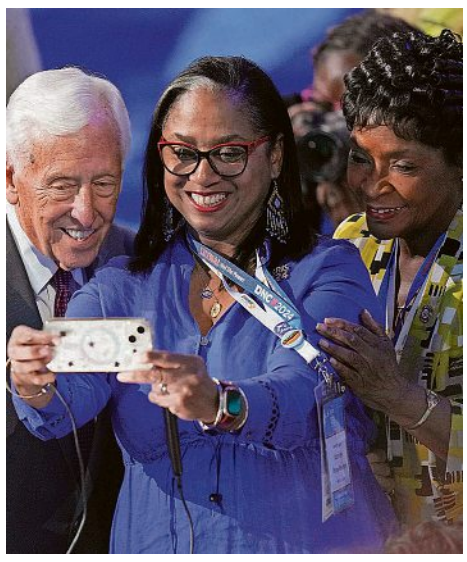
"We spend a significant portion of our working lives navigating menopause," she says. "Menopause affects both oral and whole-body health and in no way should managing these symptoms impact your success at work or your employment status," she says.

For Ohio Rep. Ashley Bryant Bailey, introducing a bill in March to improve menopause coverage felt like common sense as legislators discussed how to attract a strong workforce.



Bryant Bailey

"How do we retain the workers we have? Women are the backbone of our country and if they are retiring early or taking a less stressful job to shoulder these symptoms because they aren't being covered [by insurance] at the scale of other conditions, we need to fix it," the Democrat says.



Maryland Rep. Joseline Peña-Melnyk, center, introduced a menopause bill that requires insurers to cover menopause. The bill passed in May.
MARK HOFFMAN/USA TODAY NETWORK

One in 5 women delayed or passed up menopause treatment because of financial concerns and only 26% have insurance coverage for hormone replacement therapy, according to a 2025 study from GoodRx.

"Menopause is inevitable," Bryant Bailey says. "But you shouldn't have to fight your insurance company."

The need for 'action'

Philanthropist Melinda French Gates sees too many women leaving work at the prime of their career.

"Just when the woman's about to step into the CFO role, or step into the CEO or president role, like she has all this training and knowledge and experience," French Gates told USA TODAY in May. "I think we want that put into the workforce, not taken out. You have to be healthy to be able to do well at your job or at home."

She called on state lawmakers to address menopause.

"We also need action from policymakers, particularly at the state level. Advocates should press lawmakers to create new education requirements, expand insurance and Medicaid coverage for menopause treatments and ensure that women in menopause have workplace protections the way they do in pregnancy – like the ability to take time off to seek care – so they can keep doing their jobs without sacrificing their health," she wrote in a New York Times editorial.

Legislation is passing even in states that rank near the bottom on most women's health measures.

"I live in a state where a raped 11-year-old has to have the baby," Louisiana's Freeman says. "But we came together to pass this menopause bill. People are beginning to understand how important this coverage is."

"It's something that we are seeing right-leaning and progressive-leaning women alike agreeing on. They know it is inevitable, they're going to go through menopause," says Jennifer Weiss-Wolf, the executive director of the Birnbaum Women's Leadership Center at New York University's School of Law, and author of the upcoming "When in Menopause: A User's Manual & Citizen's Guide."



Weiss-Wolf



Foushee

Legislation has fallen into a few categories: insurance coverage, education and workplace accommodations.

Weiss-Wolf is inspired by the pace at which states have passed menopause legislation, and the potential for spurring federal laws.

As if on cue, Democratic U.S. Rep. Valerie Foushee of North Carolina introduced the Menopause Education for Medical Students Act, this month. It would add menopause education in medical schools to better prepare all physicians to care for women.

Laura Trujillo is a national columnist focusing on health and wellness. She can be reached at ltrujillo@usatoday.com.

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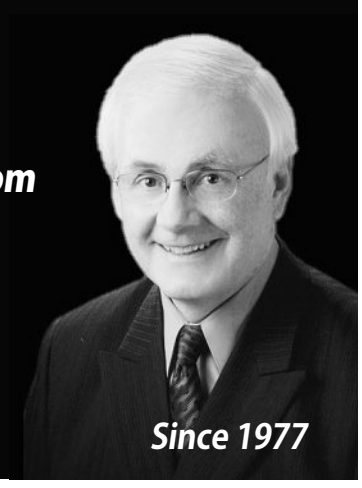

Since 1977

Greenspan

Continued from Page 1A

Greenspan, the influential economist who steered the United States' monetary policy during his five terms as chairman of the Federal Reserve under four presidents, died Monday, June 22. He was 100.

In his more than 18 years as head of the Federal Reserve, Greenspan became one of the most revered public figures around the globe. He steered the U.S. economy through the stock market crash of 1987, the dot-com bubble burst of 2000, the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and the slowdown from 2001 to 2003. Through it all, he earned a reputation as a flexible, forward-thinking, quick-moving and consensus-building economist.

His death was announced by his wife, Andrea Mitchell, chief Washington correspondent for NBC News.

"Alan passed away at our home this morning at the age of 100 from complications of Parkinson's disease," Mitchell said in a statement, according to NBC. "He was a giant of a man who helped shape the U.S. economy for decades under presidents of both parties, but was always honest in acknowledging his mistakes.

"To me he was my husband, who shaped my life from our very first date in 1984. He had 'irrational exuberance' for baseball, the Washington Commanders, tennis, golf and music, especially jazz," Mitchell said. "He will be remembered for his brilliance and his kindness. Being his life partner was the joy of my life."

Greenspan was chairman of the Federal Reserve from 1987 to 2006, the second-longest term in the central bank's history. Steering the U.S. economy through turmoil, the data addict with a sly wit earned a reputation as a flexible, forward-thinking, quick-moving and consensus-building economist.

In a USA TODAY poll right before he retired in January 2006, 65% of the 1,006 people surveyed said they approved of the job Greenspan did as chairman. He was popular across the board: A majority of Democrats and Republicans, higher-income and lower-income, and college-educated and those who did not go to college approved of the job he did at the Fed.

Still, even Greenspan's star dimmed. Some say Greenspan was partly to blame for the U.S. housing bubble, for leaving interest rates too low for too long earlier in the decade, and for not doing more to rein in the subprime mortgage industry. The steep drop in the housing market and the resulting downfall of the mortgage industry led to a credit crisis that brought the economy into a recession.

In October 2008, Greenspan underwent an hourslong public flogging on Capitol Hill from lawmakers who once hung on every word the former Fed chairman had to say. In particular, he was criticized for not doing enough to regulate the mortgage industry as it issued loans that were likely to never be repaid.

"You had the authority to prevent irresponsible lending, and now our whole economy is paying its price," then Rep. Henry Waxman, D-California, said at the time.

Greenspan said he "made a mistake" in assuming that companies, acting in their own self-interest, would not make bad decisions. The crisis was "more than anybody is capable of judging," he said.

"Those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholder's equity – myself especially – are in a state of shocked disbelief," he said.

Such criticism was a sharp departure from Greenspan's popularity as Fed chairman, which he established by building upon the progress of his predecessor in bringing down inflation and – in perhaps his biggest legacy – shepherding the economy through the longest economic expansion in history.

The 10-year period of prosperity in large part was a direct result of Greenspan's recognition that a sharper gain in productivity growth in the 1990s meant the relationship between employment and inflation had eroded. It was an against-the-grain theory that allowed the Fed to keep a looser grip on the economic reins and to allow the unemployment rate to fall far below the level that had been considered a trigger for inflation. As a result, workers enjoyed a strong job market and higher standards of living.

"He not only recognized it but he guided Federal Reserve policy month by month, quarter by quarter that led to that outcome," said William Poole, former president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. "That will stay with us for a long, long time."

Greenspan, however, said in an interview with USA TODAY in September 2007 that he didn't deserve so much credit. He said he served at an optimum time at the Fed, with falling long-term interest rates and low inflation that had more to do with the expansion of globalization than with Fed policy.

The "timing couldn't have been better," he said ahead of the release of his book, "The Age of Turbulence."



Alan Greenspan stepped down as Fed chairman in 2006 after 18 years, the second-longest term in the central bank's history. H. DARR BEISER/USA TODAY

Skills with numbers

An only child, Greenspan was born in New York City on March 6, 1926, to Herbert Greenspan, a stockbroker, and Rose Goldsmith. His parents divorced when he was 4, and he was raised by his mother, who worked in retailing, and by relatives.

From an early age, Greenspan loved playing with numbers. His mother used to show off to relatives how he could do addition and multiplication in his head, a likely uncomfortable feat for someone who as a boy was "more inclined to sit in the corner." An avid baseball fan, he developed his own technique of keeping box scores during the 1936 World Series.

"To this day, I can recite the lineup of Yankees starting players, complete with their positions and batting averages, for that World Series," Greenspan said in "The Age of Turbulence."

His mother loved to sing and dance, and it was from her he got his love of music.

Greenspan learned to play the clarinet as a child and also played flute, saxophone and piano. After giving up his early dreams to become a professional baseball player, he played with famous saxophonist Stan Getz when they were teenagers. After attending the renowned Julliard School of Music in New York, he joined the Henry Jerome swing band and toured the country for a year at a time when jazz and jitterbug dancing were all the rage.

His skill with numbers came in handy: He did tax returns for band members.

Realizing he probably would never make it as a big-time musician, Greenspan enrolled at New York University. He earned his bachelor's degree in economics in 1948 and his master's in 1950. His doctorate in economics from NYU didn't come until later, in 1977, after he had already served as chief White House economist under President Gerald Ford.

In his first economics jobs, Greenspan made $45 a week as he buried himself in analysis of obscure, industrial data.

In 1952, Greenspan married painter Joan Mitchell. They stayed together for less than a year. But she introduced the future Fed chairman to someone who would influence his thinking as an economist – Ayn Rand, author of "Atlas Shrugged" and "The Fountainhead" and a big believer in free-market capitalism.

Through Rand, Greenspan made connections who brought the economist into Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign as a point man on domestic and economic policy. But he declined to join the new administration in 1969 and instead returned to work at the small but extremely successful economic consulting firm Townsend-Greenspan and Co., which he had cofounded in 1954 when he was just 28 years old.

Greenspan went to Washington as White House chief economist in 1974 after Nixon resigned, a development that Greenspan said in his book brought him "relief."

Greenspan also was an economic adviser to Ronald Reagan during his successful presidential campaign in 1980. Seven years later, Reagan turned to Greenspan to head the U.S. central bank when Paul Volcker, one of the most highly respected Fed chairmen in history, stepped down.

His experience in Washington served him well in his new role.

"He is one of the most effective people within the Beltway that I know," former San Francisco Fed President Robert Parry, who served with Greenspan for more than 16 years, said in an interview in January 2004. "I think he has, and I mean this in a very complimentary way, a political sense that most people don't."

Aggressive policymaker

Greenspan took office August 11, 1987, and quickly faced the first of what turned out to be many challenges during his career at the central bank. On Monday, Oct. 19, 1987, the Dow Jones industrial average plunged 508 points, or 22.6%, after falling for days.

Although many economists say the market was overvalued and a decline was inevitable, what triggered the crash is open to debate, and the sheer magnitude of the drop still puzzles economists.

After canceling a speech in Texas and heading back to Washington, the newly minted chairman issued a one-sentence statement before the markets opened, assuring the Fed would continue to keep the financial system liquid. Over the next days, the Fed pumped money into the economy at breakneck speed. By Thursday, banks were lowering their prime lending rate. The markets quickly stabilized, and a major downturn in the economy was avoided.

The move established Greenspan's reputation as an aggressive policymaker, a reputation that was reinforced by many Fed actions throughout Greenspan's time at the helm of the central bank.

Greenspan also early on established a reputation as an A-list celebrity in Washington, attending all of the glitzy see-and-be-seen dinners around town as well as political events. The Washington Post often featured pictures of him with Andrea Mitchell, whom he began dating in the 1980s.

Andrea Mitchell, a divorcee, and Greenspan lived together for 12 years before he proposed at the end of 1996. They were married on April 6, 1997, at a small inn in the Virginia countryside outside Washington. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg presided over the ceremony, which was traditionally announced in The New York Times that morning.

Greenspan quickly became a household name after taking over the Fed in 1987, and investors hung on his every word for ideas about the future course of interest rate policy.

That wasn't always easy. Famous for veiled, sometimes complex speeches that he often wrote while nursing a bad back in his bathtub, Greenspan said in 1987 that he had "learned to mumble with great incoherence." He will long be remembered for setting off a worldwide frenzy after uttering just two words – "irrational exuberance" – about stock prices in 1996.

Greenspan's response to the stock market bubble in the 1990s earned him some criticism from economists who say the Fed chairman could have done more, specifically raise interest rates, to sap strength from the stock market bubble.

"They could have tried, and we'll never know whether it would have succeeded," Robert Dederick, a consultant to Northern Trust, said in a USA TODAY story in September 2002.

Other criticism came from some in Congress, such as Sen. Jim Bunning, R-Kentucky, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, who said the Fed chairman got too involved in politics, testifying about a range of issues outside the main jurisdiction of the Fed, such as Social Security, the minimum wage and energy policy.

The issue that drew the loudest criticism was Greenspan's public support for Republican-backed tax cuts in 2001.

"It may have been a tactical error to endorse Bush's tax bills even though he quite clearly personally supported them," said William Niskanen, a former member of the Council of Economic Advisers and an author of a book on economic policy during the Reagan administration. "I think it reduced the Democratic support for Greenspan."

Greenspan, however, pointed out in his book and in interviews that he advocated tax cuts only if there was a trigger that would take them back if the surpluses were to go away. That part, he lamented, was ignored.

A number of successes

Still, Greenspan's successes likely are still what stick out in the minds of most Americans.

"While there are some negatives in the record, when the score is toted up, he has a legitimate claim to being the greatest central banker who ever lived," Princeton University economists Alan Blinder and Ricardo Reis said in a paper on Greenspan's legacy in August 2005.

The successes:

● Productivity recognition. In the late 1990s, Greenspan had a hunch that productivity, or worker output per hour, was picking up, but it wasn't showing up in data.

Productivity is a big boost for business profitability and allows CEOs to hire more people. In 2000, the unemployment rate dipped to 3.8%, the first time it had fallen below 4% since 1970.

The low unemployment rate had made many economists nervous, including some on the Fed. Historically, low unemployment rates have been associated with inflation dangers as employees are able to negotiate for fatter paychecks, leading to higher prices.

But Greenspan's Fed left interest rates much lower than they would have otherwise been. The gamble paid off: The economy had its longest expansion in history from March 1991 to March 2001.

● Increased transparency. It may seem ironic given Greenspan's penchant for obscure language, but the chairman left a Fed that was far more open than it was when he came.

Before his tenure, the Fed would make changes to interest rates without publicly announcing what it was doing or why it was doing it. Analysts made their careers on discerning the Fed's decisions by studying buying and selling in the bond market.

Under Greenspan, Fed officials began to announce their decisions and released statements about their thinking on the economy immediately after their meetings. Those steps gave investors, businesses and consumers insight into the Fed's thinking. That helps even ordinary consumers wrestling with a decision: If rates are going to go up, a homeowner might want to refinance sooner rather than later.

● Lowered inflation. Greenspan's predecessor, Volcker, has a place in history as the person who broke the back of inflation in the United States. Greenspan held on to Volcker's playbook and brought inflation so low that at one point there were fears of falling prices, or deflation.

Greenspan's success in lowering inflation led to a sharp drop in inflation expectations. That's key, because if consumers expect prices will rise quickly, there can be panic-buying, and businesses have a hard time making plans. Such low inflation gave the public more confidence in the Fed, which helps keep the economy on an even keel.

Non-retirement

Greenspan retired from the Fed in January 2006, leaving at the end of his term.

But he didn't sit idle. Greenspan immediately founded Washington, DC-based Greenspan Associates, an economic consulting firm, and quickly hit the speaker's circuit. His book, which he mostly wrote in longhand, landed at No. 1 on USA TODAY's Best-Selling Books list on Sept. 27, 2007, and spent 15 weeks in the Top 150.

A self-described introvert, Greenspan said he was uncomfortable writing about his life and had a hard time believing anyone was interested.

"The biggest problem I had was learning to write in the first person," he told USA TODAY. "I'm always an objective observer, standing off the stage, examining the play going on, but never on the stage. But they wanted me on the stage, which meant writing in the first person, and that was a struggle."

Even in retirement, rumors of what he said in private speeches moved financial markets on several occasions, months after he no longer had a vote in interest decisions. Greenspan was criticized for making frequent speeches, for which he reportedly made $100,000 and up, and for publicly discussing the economy at a time when his successor, Ben Bernanke, was trying to establish himself as the nation's chief economist.

All that from a a guy who didn't intend to be an economist, let alone famous.

"When I left the Fed I said, 'I now have the capability of becoming anonymous,' " he said. But "I'm an economist; it's what I love to do, it's what I've been doing since my early 20s. I've changed employers, but I've never changed what I do every day. And I have no intention in not doing that."

Contributing: Paul Davidson

Davidson and Barbara Hagenbaugh reported on this story when they worked for USA TODAY.

OPINION

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We're on Facebook (USA TODAY Opinion) and Instagram and X (@usatodayopinion).
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It's a scary time to be LGBTQ+. But show up.



Drew Atkins
USA TODAY



People gather in 2022 to remember the victims of the 2016 mass shooting at Orlando's Pulse nightclub, where 49 people were killed and dozens were injured.
LANNIS WATERS/THE PALM BEACH POST/USA TODAY NETWORK

I can't help eyeing headlines around backsliding support for LGBTQ+ folk with a mixture of fear, exhaustion and determination. It's a frightening time to be openly queer. That's why we must be so, anyway.

A recent Gallup poll identified regressing support for LGBTQ+ issues after nearly two decades of growth. A 2025 survey from the Trevor Project revealed that 1 in 10 LGBTQ+ youth attempted suicide. Halfway through 2026, nearly 800 anti-trans bills have been filed across 43 states, according to the Trans Legislation Tracker. This follows back-to-back years of record-breaking growth, peaking with 1,022 anti-trans bills filed in 2025.

We have so much to lose – including ourselves.

Pride Month is an extension of the resistance of our queer forebears

It's what makes this moment so critical. We have arrived in this cultural moment, ferried by the people who carved out the freedoms we enjoy today, so that we might enjoy the mundane pleasures of holding our partner's hand on the sidewalk or to steal a kiss in the heady light of a dive bar.

But any freedom comes with the opportunity to squander it – and, in this case, we face a largely conservative-led effort to strip us of what we've only recently achieved.

As anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment climbs, it's a necessary reminder that liberation isn't passive; we must seize it in our very identities. It's a disservice to yourself to think you owe anyone a sanitized, palatable version of who you are.

It's a scary time. We have to do it scared.

History has a road map for this. It looks a lot like perseverance in spite of our suffering, not that many would necessarily be aware.

I know they didn't teach me about New York City's Stonewall uprising – a historical watershed moment led in major part by queer people of color, including Marsha P. Johnson – in my rural Ohio high school. And I graduated the year the Supreme Court ruling on Obergefell v. Hodges gave me the same rights as my classmates and parents to marry whom I loved.

Today's Pride Month, parades and celebrations are all extensions of the resistance of our queer forebears.

Nor did my teachers lecture us on the HIV/AIDs crisis, which ripped through the LGBTQ+ community in the '80s. President Ronald Reagan didn't publicly address it until 1985. By that time, 13,000 cases had been diagnosed with the disease that researchers in 1982 called "gay-related immunodeficiency."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 50,000 people died with the virus between 1981-87. Throughout the crisis, protest, art and community became lifesaving care.

When the Food and Drug Administration banned men who had sex with men from donating blood in 1983 (a protocol that was only updated in 2023), lesbians banded together to host blood drives and coordinated their provisioning to HIV/AIDs patients.

Queer people created art to break down stigmas around who could actually contract the virus (everybody, not just gay men) and in mourning and celebration of those who would ultimately die of the disease.

Because of the prejudice and fear around queer people then, we'll never truly know just how many of our own we lost, but we'll forever feel their absence where our queer elders should be.

Just 10 years ago, a gunman opened fire on Pulse, a gay night club in Orlando, killing 49 and wounding 58. In the immediate aftermath, one man crawled from the nightclub and worked his way down the road, triaging victims as he went. Other victims' loved ones and survivors, according to Them, went on to found nonprofits for LGBTQ+ youth, advocate for a memorial on the site and push for accountability around the police response to the shooting.

These are all notable, historic occurrences in queer history. They do not encompass our entire narrative of resistance, one that loops around itself with kiss-ins and marches, but they illustrate the same point: that in the face of – or fueled by or in spite of, depending on who you ask – tragedies, the LGBTQ+ community and our allies have always risen to the needs of our own.

Those among us who have learned the bitter failure of self- or society-induced repression know we cannot outrun ourselves. So we might as well make where and who we are a nice place to live (for us, and for the people like us).

Don't empathize with hate or bow down to the haters

I am not asking you to ignore the perils of what it means to live openly and queerly. I am saying that we have to do it scared. That tragedy will strike anyway. That I refuse to flatten my identity and sacrifice myself in service to a section of society that thrills at the thought of the erasure. Homophobes weaponize their shame because they want your silence. It is not your shame to carry, nor will your silence set you free. It is a shackle. Do not latch it. Because why would I capitulate to someone who doesn't see the beauty in queerness?

I watch moms at Pride giving out free hugs to gay people who might have been rejected by their own. I revel in the blissful mundanity of showing the cashier photos of my best friend's lesbian wedding. I think of my trans siblings and the constant attacks they still suffer despite the sacrifices that have paved our way to the rights we enjoy today, the silence of their should-be allies, and I taste the tears before I feel them running down my cheeks.

You can't empathize with or bow to hate. Don't bother. Your queerness isn't for them.

It's for you.

Drew Atkins is an opinion digital producer for USA TODAY and the USA TODAY Network. You can reach him at aatkins@usatodayco.com

Extreme weather means summer camps must prepare better



Laura A. Schifter
Opinion contributor

Last June, I sent my three daughters to summer camp just as a record heat wave settled over the mid-Atlantic. More than 100 million Americans faced oppressive, record-breaking triple-digit heat indexes that week.

One of my girls was at a lacrosse camp run by the University of Virginia. The other two were at a small basketball program closer to home in the Washington, DC, area. The communication I recently received revealed how prepared each camp was for a growing reality of American summer: weather extremes.

The University of Virginia program said staff would monitor a wet bulb meter, which uses heat and humidity to determine how well a body can cool itself, and call "go" or "no go" based on reaching certain temperature thresholds tied to regional safety standards. Most outdoor sessions were moved to indoor activities like skits and dodgeball.

The smaller basketball camp didn't have a wet bulb meter. It had one un-air-conditioned gym, another with weak A/C, and a few fans pointed in from the corners. The coaches were doing their best, but there were no clear protocols and no proactive communication with families. I only heard about how they were coping in passing, at drop-off and pickup.

Both camps cared deeply about the kids, and no one was harmed. Yet heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in the United States – and only one of those camps was prepared for it.

This summer, more than 26 million American children and adults are going to summer camps. They are heading into a season where extreme weather is more frequent, more intense and more geographically widespread than it was a generation ago.

Beyond extreme heat, our changing climate brings wildfire smoke, storms and floods that are more severe than the summers many of us remember.

Whether it's the oppressive heat we experienced on the East Coast or the tragic floods that devastated Camp Mystic in Texas, our kids are vulnerable to risks we did not face.

The patchwork of state and local rules that regulate camp safety leaves wide gaps.

Those gaps were on full display in the wake of Camp Mystic, where young counselors received no training and the emergency plan failed when it was needed most.

Voluntary accreditation through the American Camp Association sets a higher bar, but only a few camps pursue it in the United States.

Be ready for the summers we have, not what we used to have

Every camp in the country should be ready for the summers we actually have – not the ones we used to have. Camps need a clearer view of how climate risks could intensify in their region.

Keeping kids safe in today's climate rests on three factors: infrastructure; policies and practices; and the awareness of the people on the ground.

Camps in heat-prone areas need reliable cooling spaces. Indoor facilities should be equipped to filter wildfire smoke when air quality deteriorates. Cabins, activity areas and evacuation routes should be designed for flooding and severe weather, rather than making assumptions about what has historically been safe.

Camps also need clear policies and practices for responding to dangerous conditions. Activity modifications and cancellations should be tied to objective standards – such as wet bulb globe temperature for heat, the air quality index for wildfire smoke, and established weather-warning thresholds for storms and flooding.



Summer camps, such as this one in Knoxville, Tennessee, are in full swing.
ANGELINA ALCANTAR/USA TODAY NETWORK

Emergency plans should be documented, rehearsed and updated regularly. Families should also know how and when camps will communicate if conditions change rapidly.

Finally, staff should be trained on the climate risks most likely to affect their camps and how to respond in emergencies. They should know what to do during a flash flood warning or severe storm, and how to recognize the early signs of heat illness.

Campers, too, can be taught age-appropriate ways to stay safe and look out for one another.

Don't leave child safety to voluntary compliance

The American Camp Association took a promising step by launching a national initiative to help camps better prepare for climate risks, but voluntary standards can only go so far.

State and local licensing systems should require basic climate preparedness: heat protocols, wildfire-smoke thresholds, flood and storm evacuation plans, and regular staff training. This should not depend on whether a camp has the resources or foresight to act on its own.

We do not leave other core child-safety protections to voluntary compliance. For example, federal law requires background checks for people working with children, and every state requires children in cars use seat belts.

Climate preparedness should be treated no differently.

State and local health agencies also have a role to play by creating clear public guidance, resources and tools about local hazards, and the steps needed to keep kids safe.

We want what summer camps offer, and protection for our kids

Summer camp still offers things many parents want for their children: long days outside, independence, meaningful friendships and childhood memories. We want our kids off their devices, learning resilience and confidence away from home.

We also want our children to come home safe.

After Camp Mystic, many parents are carrying a new kind of anxiety into camp season. Parents are left wondering how to evaluate risks they never expected before.

Does the camp have a real emergency action plan? Has the staff been trained for extreme heat or flash floods? What are the risks in this location? If the answers are unclear, does that mean saying no to something their children love?

The question is no longer whether camps should prepare for climate extremes, but whether we are willing to make that preparation visible, expected and universal.

Laura A. Schifter is a national climate and education adviser and a senior fellow with the Aspen Institute.

USA TODAY

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Pizza Hut to be sold to LongRange Capital for $2.7B

Yum Brands, the fast-food conglomerate, has agreed to sell one its key chains. **Page 4B**

Hospital health contracts under fire

Administration targets anticompetitive deals

Ken Alltucker
USA TODAY

Americans who get health insurance through the workplace would pay less for health care if hospital anticompetitive deals with health insurers were banned, a White House report says.

The federal government has sued two major hospital systems, alleging such anticompetitive deals. In separate antitrust lawsuits in 2026, the Department of Justice accused the hospital systems New York-Presbyterian and OhioHealth of using their market positions to force health insurers to forego lower-priced competitors.

In a new report, White House officials detailed potential savings if the federal government banned such anticompetitive contracts. Monthly premiums on workplace insurance plans would drop 6.5%, which would yield annual savings of about $1,755 per family and $606 per individual, according to the White House's Council of Economic Advisers report.

The report estimated hospital prices would fall 18% in cities affected by anticompetitive deals. Such a ban would save about $4,100 for every patient admitted to a hospital that eliminated such contracting terms.

The White House's Council of Economic Advisers published the report as the Trump administration seeks to counter attacks from Democrats on health care affordability.

The report estimated hospital prices would fall 18% in cities affected by anticompetitive deals. Such a ban would save about $4,100 for every patient admitted to a hospital that eliminated such terms.

Democrats have blamed Congressional Republicans and President Donald Trump for allowing enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies to expire this year, making ACA health insurance more expensive for some enrolled in marketplace plans. More than 5 million people are expected to lose Medicaid coverage by 2034 due to work requirements and other changes to the federal-state program for low-income families, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate.

But White House officials say the report reveals how the administration is handling affordability. Instead of using taxpayer dollars to fund subsidies to lower out-of-pocket costs for consumers, administration officials are targeting rising prices charged by hospitals, drug companies and other health care companies.

Trump also has sought to pressure pharmaceutical companies to lower prices on prescription drugs through his most-favored-nation deals. The Trump administration also launched TrumpRx, a direct-to-consumer website that lists discounted prescription drugs.

The Trump administration has not adopted a rule or backed legislation that would ban anticompetitive contracts. But officials expect the DOJ's lawsuits against two high-profile hospital systems will command the attention of hospital industry leaders.

"Once people appreciate that the DOJ is very serious about this, we expect there will be ripple effects," said a White House official.

The DOJ filed a proposed settlement with OhioHealth on June 16 that would forbid the Ohio health system from adopting terms with health insurers that would deter budget-conscious plans.

See HOSPITALS, Page 2B

After resisting inflationary pressures, prices have risen in recent years



GETTY IMAGES

Buying books becomes costly

Josh Rivera USA TODAY

"From Pitch to Publication" is a series taking readers behind the curtain of modern publishing as a business.

I already know what the price of my novel will be before it publishes next year. • Long before readers decide whether they want to buy "How to Kill a Chupacabras," the publisher has already determined what the number on the back cover will be. • For readers, that number can feel surprisingly high. • Hardcovers that once seemed to hover around $20 now routinely push $30. I recently spent $65 on just two books. And special editions can cost even more. At the same time, consumers are weighing those purchases against Netflix subscriptions, Spotify memberships and an endless supply of free content online. A recent survey from the Authors Guild found that only 36% of people who read a book or listened to an audiobook in the last month bought a new copy (or obtained one through a subscription). Nearly two-thirds didn't purchase a new book.

So, are books actually getting more expensive?

The (unsatisfactory) answer is yes – and no.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, consumer prices have risen roughly 25% since 2020. Yet publishing executives say book prices spent years resisting the same inflationary pressures affecting nearly every other industry.

"Books, historically, have not kept up with inflation," said Keith Riegert, president of The Stable Book Group. He argues that the roots of today's pricing can be traced to the rise of e-books. As publishers experimented with $9.99 and even $2.99 digital editions, consumers' perception of what a book should cost shifted.

See BOOKS, Page 2B

TECH TRENDS

People are using this slang to insult AI

Some concerned about closeness to racial slurs

Greta Cross
USA TODAY

A term that began as a meme to poke fun at artificial intelligence is now causing a stir.

"Clanker," a derogatory term used to describe AI, chatbots and robots, first gained mainstream traction in summer 2025. Though the term got its footing in meme culture, some are concerned about its closeness, in spelling and use, to other racial slurs.

Gaillynn Clements, a linguistics professor at Wake University and Duke University, said the term "clanker" sounds like an onomatopoeia for clanking metal to some; however, the word may be a microtrigger or microaggression to others.

"It anthropomorphizes them, it personifies them, it gives them this two-tiered society-type look like we often have done with religious minorities, racial minorities, gender minorities," Clements told USA TODAY. "We see so much of that polarity in our country right now, a term like this coming along at this time, seems in a sense, to fit, but it's a really negative fit at the same time."

These concerns are amplified when memes "parody" racial tensions, Adam Aleksic, a linguist and influencer known online as Etymology Nerd, told USA TODAY.

In a 2025 TikTok video with more than 1 million views, a comedian acts as a father meeting his daughter's robot boyfriend for the first time. The father initially shows concern about who the robot will be, but when he learns the boyfriend is good-hearted Wall-E, the robot from the Disney movie of the same name, he rejoices. The video's caption reads: "Only Good Clanker."

Though the video was made for comedic purposes, Aleksic said it directly comments on the experience of bringing home a romantic partner to meet the family, who does not accept the partner because of racial or other differences.

What does 'clanker' mean?

"Clanker" is a derogatory term used to describe artificial intelligence, including chatbots and robots.

"Clanker" is not the first of its kind, and it surely won't be the last. Aleksic said he has also heard the term "wireback" to describe AI and robots, in addition to phrases like "gearhead" and "nuts and bolts."

Where does 'clanker' come from?

"Clanker" is derived from the "Star Wars" franchise. Clone troopers donned this slang for older mechanical B1 and B2 battle droids for the noisy, clanking sound they made.

See AI INSULT, Page 2B



Humanoid robots are lined up in the production facility of X-Humanoid at the Beijing Innovation Center of Humanoid Robotics on March 20 in Beijing, China.
KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES

Hospitals

Continued from Page 1B

The proposed settlement "is another example of how this Department of Justice is bringing down healthcare costs for consumers and fighting the anticompetitive behavior that drove them up in the first place," Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said in a statement.

Vivian Ho, an economist at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, said the DOJ's lawsuits against major hospital systems are a "great step in the right direction for lowering health care prices."

She said employers in general have been slow to steer workers toward lower-priced health care options, but said it would help employers do so if anticompetitive language is removed from hospital-insurer contracts.

How do hospital contracts raise prices for consumers?

The White House report details how behind-the-scenes negotiations between hospitals and health insurers can raise prices for consumers.

The report highlights three practices hospitals with a dominant market position use to block or limit competition from lower-cost health providers:

- Anti-steering provisions prevent health insurers from directing patients to lower-cost medical providers.
- Anti-tiering language in contracts makes the insurer place the dominant hospital in the most favorable cost-sharing tier of an insurance plan. Such moves can limit employer and insurer efforts to influence consumers to choose lower-cost hospitals.
- All-or-nothing contracts mandate insurers include all of a dominant health system's hospitals and doctors as part of the insurance plan's network – or none at all. Such provisions can prevent rival hospitals from attracting enough patients to adequately compete, the report said.

The report estimated that about 24% of Americans with an employer health insurance plan live in communities where dominant hospitals had such contracts in place. The contract terms produced "measurable effects" on prices they pay for health insurance, the report said.

If these contract clauses were banned, the report estimated employers and consumers would save about $45 billion each year on insurance premiums. Insurance premiums rise based on total medical spending. Such savings would presumably be passed along to workers through lower insurance payroll deductions or higher wages.

AI insult

Continued from Page 1B



A replica of a B1-series battle droid from the Star Wars franchise is displayed during 2025 Los Angeles Comic-Con at Los Angeles Convention Center on Sept. 26, 2025. PAUL BUTTERFIELD/GETTY IMAGES

Specifically, "clanker" first appeared in the 2005 video game "Star Wars: Republic Commando." The term was then used in the first episode of "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" in 2008, according to the Star Wars fandom site Wookieepedia.

Unsurprisingly, a phrase used in the "Star Wars" universe has transcended into reality; many scientific and tech terms come from science fiction. The word "robot," for example, comes from the 1920 science fiction play "Rossum's Universal Robots," written by Czech writer Karel Čapek, Aleksic explained. In the play, "robots" were artificially created biological beings used to do work humans didn't want to do.

Why is 'clanker' growing in popularity?

As concerns about the implications of AI grow, it's not surprising derogatory terms are popping up, experts said.

In July 2025, U.S. Sen. Ruben Gallego used "clanker" in an X post to promote a bill of his, the Keep Call Centers in America Act, which, if passed, would deter offshoring customer service jobs and require transparency for consumers interacting with AI systems. "Sick of yelling 'REPRESENTATIVE' into the phone 10 times just to talk to a human being?" Gallego wrote in his post. "My new bill makes sure you don't have to talk to a clanker if you don't want to."

The term's likeness to a racial slur also has propelled it into the spotlight, Aleksic added.

"I think that tie to a slur is part of what made it controversial and able to go viral. If you think about what goes viral, there's always a sort of survivorship bias. Things that are more likely to get comments and engagement go more viral and stuff pertaining to controversial topics tends to see more engagement," Aleksic told USA TODAY.

In the Black Ladies subreddit last year, more than 135 users chimed in to discuss the term.

"Does clanker kinda rub anyone else the wrong way?" the original Reddit user posted. "I know it's probably a joke in all from social media, but I can't help but feel like it's incredibly tasteless."

Though some argued the term doesn't have any racial ties, others validated the poster's concerns.

"Science fiction as a genre has historically explored social issues through technological evolution (or devolution) and using robots as racial allegories is quite common in the genre," another Reddit user commented. "It's dark humor that not everyone will feel comfortable laughing at, especially when the 'jokes' (about) robot bias and discrimination viscerally mirror real life traumas and discrimination that folks have experienced."

Is it appropriate to say 'clanker'?

Over the past year, the term "clanker" has proved polarizing. Some believe the phrase is no more than a humorous jab at how users feel about the increased presence of AI in mainstream spaces, while others argue there is more beneath the surface. But whether using the term is appropriate is subjective, Aleksic said.

"I don't think words of frustration are really ever as productive as we'd like them to be, but it's cathartic to say 'clanker,'" he said, "and cathartic in a humorous way, I guess, because it is always a joke in its core."

Clements said that ultimately, dialogue around "clanker" and other such words is important.

"The more we talk about things, the more we know about them and understand them. We can then understand why some people are upset and some aren't, how words are used and that's always fruitful conversation," Clements said.

Predicting the longevity of a new word or phrase is harder than predicting the weather, Aleksic said. But as anti-AI rhetoric continues to grow in the United States, he expects "clanker," or terms like it, will continue being popular.

Books

Continued from Page 1B

"The thing that e-books did was they artificially pushed down the perceived value of books," he told USA TODAY.

The effect rippled through the industry. Mass-market paperbacks – once a low-cost gateway into reading – largely disappeared. Paperback and hardcover prices remained relatively stagnant for years, even as production costs climbed.

According to the American Booksellers Association's research, book prices have increased slightly in recent years, though historically they have not kept pace with inflation and have had very modest increases compared with other goods and services.

"With the supply chain disruptions during COVID, it was the first time in several decades that the retail price of books started to move up," Riegert added.

Yet readers aren't imagining the sticker shock.

Daniel Greene, a "Neon Ghosts" author and one of YouTube's largest book creators, said the issue became impossible to ignore when friends started turning down his recommendations.

"They're like, well, it's 30-plus dollars. Like, I can't do that," Greene told USA TODAY. "And then I saw the paperback was still going to be $23. And I was like, that's nuts."

ABA CEO Allison Hill acknowledged that value perceptions can be difficult because book buyers "aren't questioning the value of the books, they're managing a budget that's been impacted by other rising costs, like groceries, insurance and gas."

For Greene, the concern of higher prices comes in hand with fewer opportunities for authors.

"I used to go buy five books – you know, three from authors I never knew, two from authors I liked. Now I go and I maybe buy one or two," Greene said. "That's horrible for the industry at large because it lowers discoverability of new authors."

Another challenge, industry leaders say, is that readers often assume publishers keep most of the money.

They don't. The margins just aren't there.

For a $20 book, retailers typically take 50% to 60% of the cover price before publishers pay for distribution, freight, warehousing, printing, returns and author royalties.

"A $20 book ends up netting two or three dollars for the publisher at the end of the day," Riegert said.

Those economics become even more challenging because publishing still operates on a returns system that dates to the Great Depression. Bookstores generally can return unsold inventory to publishers for a refund or credit, which also affects pricing calculations.

Meeting reader behavior

At Bindery Books – an influencer-driven publisher launched in 2023 and built around online communities and reader engagement – executives say they think about pricing differently.

"So, we publish trade paperback originals, we don't lead with the hardcover," said Meghan Harvey, Bindery's cofounder and president.

Hardcovers, she told USA TODAY, remain attractive but increasingly function as premium products. "Hardcovers are kind of a prestige buy, and they're $35 a piece."

Instead, Bindery focuses on lower-priced paperbacks because its business model depends on getting books into as many readers' hands as possible.

"We're trying to reach as many people and sell as many copies of a book as we can," Harvey said.

Matt Kaye, Bindery's cofounder and CEO, sees that as particularly important for younger readers.

"I think a lot of younger readers especially feel a lot of economic anxiety," Kaye said. "For trying to generate as much social word of mouth as possible, making sure that e-books and paperbacks are priced accessibly is really important for us."

The industry's pricing pressures aren't limited to paper and printing.

Publishers also must navigate changing consumer behavior, rising shipping costs and a fierce attention economy.

Greene argues that books are increasingly competing against entertainment options that didn't exist in previous generations. "Now books are harder for people to read because their focus is shot, and they're higher priced. And then the availability of every movie and every TV show ever is higher."

Unlike streaming, he noted, books demand attention from consumers.

Madeline McIntosh, founder and CEO of Authors Equity and former CEO of Penguin Random House U.S., argues that today's publishing landscape is less about producing books than it is about convincing people to pay attention to them.

"If I could wave a wand, it wouldn't be about fixing an issue that is inside the industry," McIntosh said. "It's really the shared frustration for anybody who's creating content."

That competition increasingly pits books against every other form of entertainment, not just other books. Publishers are competing with TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, streaming services and video games.

"You can't sell something by telling people it's good for them," McIntosh said. "You have to sell something by telling people it's fun, it's entertaining, it's inspiring."

Yet despite those challenges, none of the publishing executives I spoke with believes readers are abandoning books. In fact, many argue the opposite is happening.

Books as a physical expression of personality

Kaye points to the continued growth of physical bookstores and the rise of BookTok communities that have transformed novels into cultural artifacts.

"Books are kind of the seed or like the source code of culture," he said.

For younger readers who have grown up entirely online, physical books are a rare, tangible object disconnected from screens.

Riegert sees a similar trend emerging.

"We're in this analog revolution, where having the time to not be in front of a screen is a luxury," he said.

That shift is creating what he believes will become a two-track publishing market.

On one side are luxury editions with sprayed edges, special covers and collector appeal.

On the other hand, there are lower-cost paperbacks and print-on-demand books aimed at maintaining accessibility.

"The market is really sort of splitting into two different sides," Riegert added, "where you have the luxury side, and then you have the sort of entry point side to it as well."

Nevertheless, as Riegert, Harvey and Kaye mentioned, the current pricing structure is likely to stay in place for the foreseeable future.

Greene worries that rising prices and the disappearance of mass-market paperbacks could create a future where fewer readers take chances on unfamiliar authors.

"The cheapest option for people who are struggling to buy is being replaced with an option you don't even own," he said, referring to e-books.

"You can't hand it down to your kids."

But as Riegert put it, "Even though it feels expensive to pay $24 for a new [book], you're getting potentially weeks of entertainment out of it."

50★States

News from across the USA

ALABAMA Montgomery: According to a new WalletHub study, Alabama ranks 47th among the 50 states for patriotism, near the bottom of the national list.

ALASKA Anchorage: A study from the American Automobile Association has ranked Anchorage and Fairbanks third and eighth among the top U.S. Independence Day travel destinations for 2026, with Alaska standing out as the only state besides Florida to place multiple cities in the top 10, driven in part by peak cruise season, KTUU reported.

ARIZONA Tucson: The Tucson metro is the fourth most dangerous area for pedestrians in the United States. The latest Dangerous By Design report, published by Smart Growth America, moved Tucson from third on the list in 2024 to fourth in 2026.

ARKANSAS Little Rock: A new study from NiceRX ranked Arkansas fourth in the nation for heart disease deaths, KFOR reported.

CALIFORNIA Long Beach: Divergent Technologies is opening a factory in Long Beach that the company says will produce roughly 20,000 long-range munitions structures annually.

COLORADO Pueblo: A Pueblo training center for aspiring U.S. Air Force pilots that was expected to partner with Pueblo Community College on a new degree program is set to permanently close in October.

CONNECTICUT Uncasville: The Connecticut Pickle Festival will return to Mohegan Sun Aug. 21-23 with its largest event yet, featuring more than 40 vendors, food trucks and unlimited pickle-themed tastings, WTNH reported.

DELAWARE Wilmington: ChristianaCare said it has begun screening for weapons at Wilmington Hospital employee entrances following the arrest of a 23-year-old information technology employee in the shooting of two other employees on June 16.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington: More than 20 people were arrested and 14 indicted in what federal prosecutors described as a major takedown of an alleged cocaine distribution ring operating near Hendley Elementary School, DC News Now reported.

FLORIDA Key West: A 22.5-pound silver bar was recovered from the wreck site of the Nuestra Señora de Atocha, off the coast of Key West, according to an announcement from Mel Fisher's Shipwreck Expeditions. Salvors consider this the "most significant" discovery in decades on this wreck.

GEORGIA Athens: The T.R.R. Cobb House in Athens announced recently that it has established an online database that documents more than 1,100 people who were enslaved by the Cobb family.

HAWAII Honolulu: A University of Hawaii study found that 28% of Native Hawaiians aged 55 and older report mobility limitations, significantly higher than other groups, based on 2019-2021 state health survey data, Hawaii News Now reported.

IDAHO Caldwell: Canyon County officials opened a new 80,000-square-foot sheriff's administration building in Caldwell, consolidating records, investigations, administration and community services under one roof to better serve the fast-growing community, KTVB7 reported.

ILLINOIS Springfield: A new report from a nonpartisan, non-profit organization shows that Social Security insolvency could cost Illinois recipients an average of $507 per month in benefits.

INDIANA Laporte: The city of LaPorte is preparing for a major long-term influx of construction workers who will start building a Microsoft data center in July. A groundbreaking on the over $1 billion investment was held at the 500-acre site.

IOWA Ames: Ames is growing its recreational offerings and restoring native prairie with the help of Iowa State University. The university is leasing 33 acres of university-owned property to the city, while also granting an easement for a future bridge and shared-use path connection.

KANSAS Salina: A new Orange Route is expected to launch Aug. 10, expanding the CityGo fixed-route bus system and improving access to the city's industrial corridor, according to an announcement by OCCK, Inc. Transportation.

HIGHLIGHT: OHIO



Union Local High School is the first high school to receive a U.S. Air Force Thunderbird jet. PROVIDED BY TAYLORE FRASNELLY/UNION LOCAL AFTERBURNERS COMMITTEE

Belmont County: In Belmont County, a tight-knit web of students, faculty and alumni represents Union Local High School. But perhaps nobody represents the school's mascot – the jets – more than the newest member of their community: A retired U.S. Air Force Thunderbird F-16, which now sits on a pedestal in the front lawn. Still donning the red and blue stripes of the synchronized flight group, the plane marks the first and only Thunderbird jet ever donated to a high school. Alumnus Dirk Davis serves as the president of the Union Local Afterburners Committee – a special group he formed for the sole purpose of obtaining the jet.

KENTUCKY Frankfort: A new WalletHub study reveals the states that spend the most money on fast food, with Kentucky ranking in the top 10. Reports from WalletHub reveal that Kentucky ranks No. 8 for spending the most on fast food, with the cost accounting for 0.42% of the median monthly household income.

LOUISIANA Opelousas: The Opelousas Museum has been selected to participate in the inaugural Fieldwork Fellowship, a new national program designed to support rural and tribal communities through customized design, planning and project development assistance. The recognition places Opelousas and St. Landry Parish among a select group of communities across the country working to preserve and expand local cultural narratives, according to a prepared statement.

MAINE Waterville: The Ticonic Bridge between Waterville and Winslow reopened on June 17, coming back into service about eight months earlier than planned after a monthslong rehabilitation project, WMTW reported.

MARYLAND Annapolis: As summer travel picks up, the Maryland Department of Transportation and Maryland State Police are trying to raise awareness about roadway fatalities and encourage safe driving habits. The two are partnering on a summer initiative to publish fatal motor vehicle crash statistics from across Maryland to raise awareness of roadway fatalities and encourage safe driving.

MASSACHUSETTS Nantucket: A replacement for an outdated ferry reservation system for the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority is in a phased rollout with passenger bookings online starting in December and a complete opening at the ferry terminals on March 31, 2027, according to the latest timeline released by Authority officials.

MICHIGAN Detroit: The list of Catholic parishes targeted for the possible stoppage of weekend Masses has grown to about 90 parishes across southeast Michigan, according to the latest proposed models the Archdiocese of Detroit has released as part of its major restructuring process.

MINNESOTA Blackduck: The Blackduck Police Department disbanded its force June 8, marking the 40th department to shut down in the state since 2016, KARE11 reported.

MISSISSIPPI Hattiesburg: William Carey University is undergoing four construction and renovation projects over the summer, each of which scheduled to be complete by the time students return to campus in the fall.

MISSOURI Springfield: A new art exhibition opening in Springfield on July 11 aims to challenge assumptions about people with disabilities through portraiture, film and personal narratives, according to a community announcement. "The Life I Choose," a collaboration between Abilities First and artist Randy Bacon, features black-and-white portraits, short films and stories from individuals with disabilities, according to the announcement.

MONTANA Missoula: The University of Montana recently received a $5.5 million gift from Jim Kennedy, chair of the James M. Cox Foundation, to create a new waterfowl and wetlands research center and support a planned conservation research hub, strengthening the school's nationally recognized Wildlife Biology Program, Missoula Current reported.

NEBRASKA Lincoln: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has received a $1.4 million Department of Energy grant as part of a national $50 million initiative to expand nuclear reactor safety training and workforce development, KOLN reported.

NEVADA Carson City: Wildfire-related home insurance cancellations and declinations – refusals to insure applicants – have skyrocketed in pockets of Nevada, and insurance regulators couldn't give state lawmakers a solid explanation as to why, Nevada Current reported. More fire-prone areas of Nevada, in particular Northern Nevada, saw increases in the number of insurance policies that were canceled and applications that were rejected in the last three years, according to the news outlet.

NEW HAMPSHIRE Exeter: The freight rail company CSX wants to remove the Park Street Bridge due to safety concerns – a plan that has drawn objections from nearby residents who want the structure saved.

NEW JERSEY Trenton: New Jersey is awarding $44 million in state funding to improve local bridges. The Sherrill administration announced 33 Local Bridges Fund grants on June 18, with funding distributed to all 21 counties to repair, replace and reconstruct bridges in need of upgrades.

NEW MEXICO Santa Fe: The biggest ever U.S. clean energy infrastructure project, an $11 billion wind farm and transmission line in New Mexico, is fully operational after nearly two decades of permitting and construction, owner Pattern Energy Group said. SunZia is a 3,650-megawatt wind farm and 550-mile transmission line that will carry power from central New Mexico to southcentral Arizona. About two-thirds of the electricity will then be sent west to customers in California.

NEW YORK Binghamton: Nearly two years after the Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School capital project was introduced, the $56 million project has begun. The school will have two new classroom wings, an upgraded outdoor space, hazardous waste removal, site and traffic improvements and an expansion of student support and counseling services.

NORTH CAROLINA Marshall: The Marshall Town Board approved amending the town's Unified Development Ordinance to regulate against data centers and crypto mining facilities.

NORTH DAKOTA Fargo: North Dakota State University and Dickinson State University have launched a partnership allowing DSU nursing graduates to pursue NDSU's Family Nurse Practitioner training while continuing their studies on the DSU campus, KVRR reported.

OKLAHOMA Oklahoma City: A second trucking company has launched a freight route for autonomous semis on Oklahoma highways. Aurora Innovation, partnering with Volvo Autonomous Solutions, announced the launch of a 200-mile route between Dallas and Oklahoma City to expand its autonomous freight network.

OREGON Salem: Gov. Tina Kotek has declined a July Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association gubernatorial debate with Sen. Christine Drazan despite participating in 2022.

PENNSYLVANIA Souderton: Approximately 1,485 people are set to lose their jobs as JBS, the world's largest meat company and one of Montgomery County's top employers, plans to close its Souderton processing plant. The beef production facility will shutter by Aug. 14, according to a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification.

RHODE ISLAND Providence: Roger Williams Park Zoo has three fuzzy, new residents. "We are delighted to share that three Humboldt penguin chicks successfully hatched this April," the zoo said in a Facebook post on June 15.

SOUTH CAROLINA Lexington County: The first court hearing in the double-murder retrial process for Alex Murdaugh has been scheduled for June 29.

SOUTH DAKOTA Sioux Falls: JE Dunn Construction, one of the contractors helping to build a new men's prison in Sioux Falls, has acquired its fellow prison contractor, Henry Carlson Construction Co., ahead of the $650 million project's completion in 2029.

TENNESSEE Memphis: Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium is almost ready to fully reopen. Memphis football's home stadium has been undergoing renovations for the past two years, but the project is scheduled to be completed before the Tigers' 2026 home opener against Arkansas State on Sept. 5.

TEXAS Kleberg County: Two state agencies are working to plug orphan wells in the Baffin Bay area. The Railroad Commission of Texas and the Texas General Land Office announced that they have plugged one orphaned well, with plans to cap and remove five more wells.

UTAH South Salt Lake: South Salt Lake officials are seeking resident feedback through a new Downtown Parks Master Plan survey to shape future parks, recreation, and open space development in the city's downtown corridor, KSL reported.

VERMONT Montpelier: Vermont ski areas recorded their strongest winter in more than a decade, with statewide visitation rising sharply and outpacing regional and national trends, according to a community announcement released following Ski Vermont's annual meeting at Jay Peak Resort.

VIRGINIA Waynesboro: A public hearing has been scheduled for Northrop Grumman's air permit application in Waynesboro. The public hearing is scheduled for July 23 at the Waynesboro High School auditorium.

WASHINGTON Bremerton: Olympic College students will have access to a free bus pass that allows them to ride Kitsap Transit buses and local foot ferries during the 2026-27 academic year, thanks to a $200,000 state grant. The Olympic College ORCA bus pass will be valid starting on Sept. 1 on Kitsap Transit buses and ferries, though the fast ferries to Seattle are not included, according to a statement from the college.

WEST VIRGINIA Morgantown: West Virginia University's Board of Governors approved a a $1.3 billion operating budget for the academic year that raises undergraduate and graduate tuition for both resident and nonresident students, WDTV reported.

WISCONSIN Sheboygan Falls: About 400 gallons of liquid fertilizer that recently spilled from a Sheboygan Falls farm into the Sheboygan River killed several hundred fish, according to an update from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

WYOMING Evanston: Prometheus Hyperscale's data center is moving forward after the Uinta County Commission recently approved a conditional use permit for the long-proposed project east of Evanston, WyoFile reported.

From USA TODAY Network and wire reports



A franchised Pizza Hut location designed to look like the classic locations from decades ago. PROVIDED BY DALAND CORPORATION

Pizza Hut to be sold for $2.7 billion

Olivia Evans
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Yum Brands, the Louisville, Kentucky-based fast-food conglomerate, has agreed to sell one its key chains.

The Fortune 500 company is selling its Pizza Hut division, excluding mainland China, for $2.7 billion to private equity firm LongRange Capital, according to a June 16 news release. Pizza Hut in mainland China will be acquired by Yum China Holdings, the release continued.

"These transactions enable Yum! to be a more focused company that continues to leverage scale, technology and talent to accelerate our raising the B.A.R. priorities and deliver sustained value for our stakeholders," CEO Chris Turner said in the news release.

"Under LongRange and Yum China, Pizza Hut will be well positioned for future growth with ownership that brings deep expertise in the restaurant industry. Pizza Hut is one of the most iconic restaurant brands in the world, and we are proud of the important role it has played in Yum!'s history. Pizza Hut was built by the passion and dedication of our team members, employees and franchisees, and we're excited for the next chapter."

Under the terms of the deal, Yum Brands is selling Pizza Hut to LongRange for $1.5 billion and is selling Pizza Hut China to Yum China for $1.2 billion. The transactions were unanimously approved by Yum Brands' Board of Directors, the release said, and the company expects both transactions to close in the third quarter of 2026.

Yum Brands expects to provide an update on the sale of Pizza Hut and its 2026 financial projections during its second quarter earnings report on July 30.

Yum Brands is known for its restaurant chains including Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Taco Bell, Habit Burger and Grill and Pizza Hut.

Sale of Pizza Hut to position brand for 'greater success'

The move comes after a November 2025 announcement by Turner that Yum Brands was initiating a review of "strategic options" for its Pizza Hut brand, The Courier Journal, part of the USA TODAY Network, previously reported. At the time, Turner said this move was in an effort to increase value for Yum Brands while positioning Pizza Hut for greater success.

Matt Morris, Yum Brands' senior director of investor relations, said during a June 16 New York Stock Exchange conference that the move gives Yum management more resources and the ability to give more attention "to two of our higher growth brands."

"I think we landed in fantastic areas for both parts of the business, and it really allows Yum to unlock shareholder value, both with what we can do with the proceeds but also the attention on KFC," Morris said.

A company spokesperson did not elaborate on what Yum intends to do with the proceeds from the sale.

History of Pizza Hut

Pizza Hut, founded in 1958 in Kansas, has grown into an international brand, with more than 19,000 locations in over 100 countries and territories.

The pizza brand was spun off from the PepsiCo corporation in 1997, along with KFC and Taco Bell, as part of a new Louisville-based company called Tricon Global Restaurants that was renamed Yum Brands in 2002.

ASK JOHNNY

Context matters when dealing with policy, codes



Johnny C. Taylor Jr.
Columnist
USA TODAY

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. tackles your workplace questions each week for USA TODAY. Taylor is president and CEO of SHRM, the world's largest trade association of human resources professionals, and author of "Reset: A Leader's Guide to Work in an Age of Upheaval."

Question: In my job, I've noticed some coworkers seem to be allowed more flexibility around policies like schedules and dress code, while those same policies are enforced more strictly with others. How should employees approach concerns about consistency without sounding like they're accusing leadership of favoritism? – Grace

Answer: When workplace policies appear to be applied unevenly, it understandably raises questions. But appearances don't always tell the full story. Not every exception is fully visible, and not every difference signals a problem. Context matters more than surface comparisons.

Before drawing conclusions, remember there's often more happening behind the scenes than you can see. For example, a coworker with more schedule flexibility may have a formal accommodation, a negotiated arrangement, or circumstances that aren't appropriate to share broadly. What looks like favoritism from the outside isn't always what it is from the inside. Just because it wasn't announced in the company newsletter doesn't mean it wasn't handled; it just means it wasn't your business.

That said, consistency is a leadership responsibility. Policies should be applied fairly and explained clearly enough that employees understand how decisions are made. Employees don't need access to every detail, but they should understand the framework behind decisions. When they don't, it creates room for doubt. Clarity builds trust; ambiguity erodes it.

Take dress code as an example. People bring different styles, body types, and cultural norms to work. The goal shouldn't be uniformity; it should be appropriateness for the work environment. A well-defined standard allows for individual expression while still maintaining professionalism.

If you genuinely believe there's a pattern – not just a perception – raise it the right way. Ask, "Can you help me understand how flexibility around policies is determined?" That invites clarity without turning the conversation into an accusation. And be careful not to turn this into policing your coworkers. That's not your role, and it rarely ends well. Focus on your own performance, your own expectations, and what you need to succeed.

Ultimately, fairness doesn't mean identical treatment. It means decisions are made consistently, communicated clearly, and grounded in a rationale that holds up, even if you're not entitled to every detail.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of USA TODAY.

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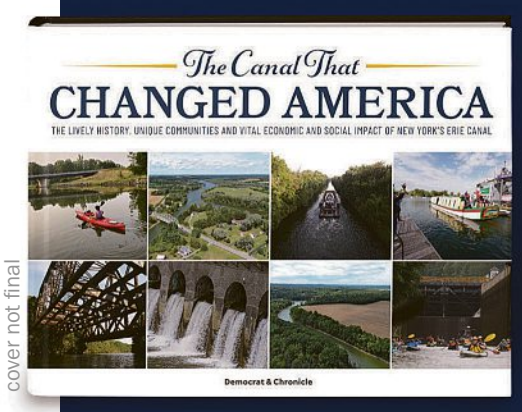

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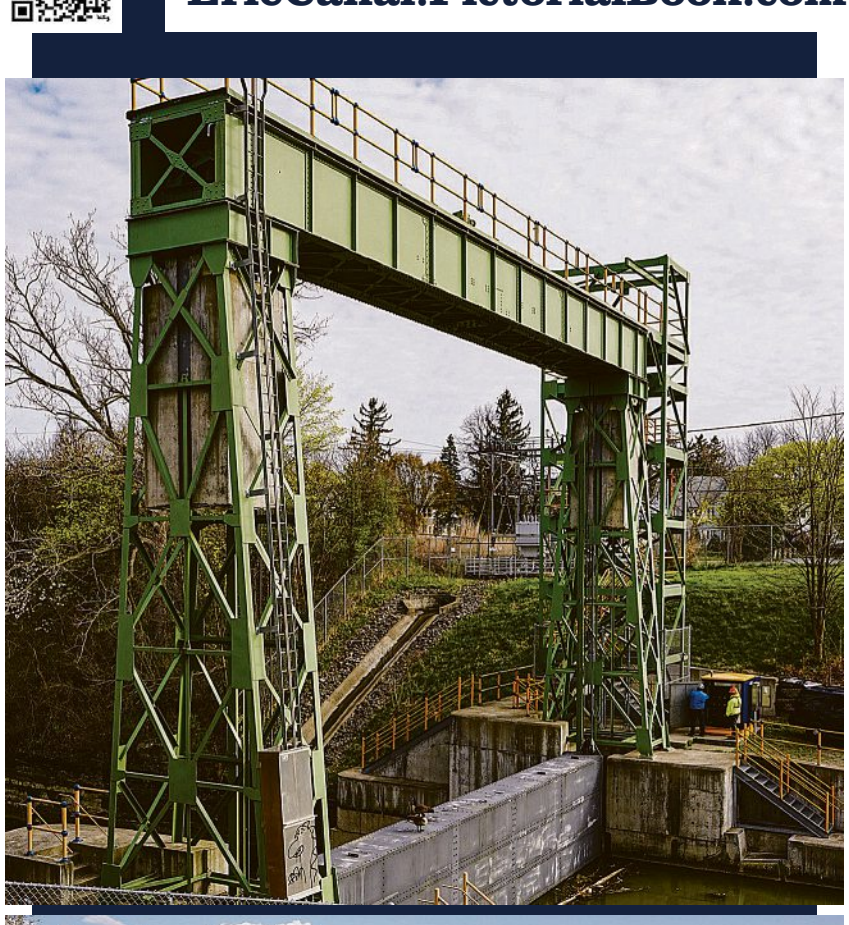

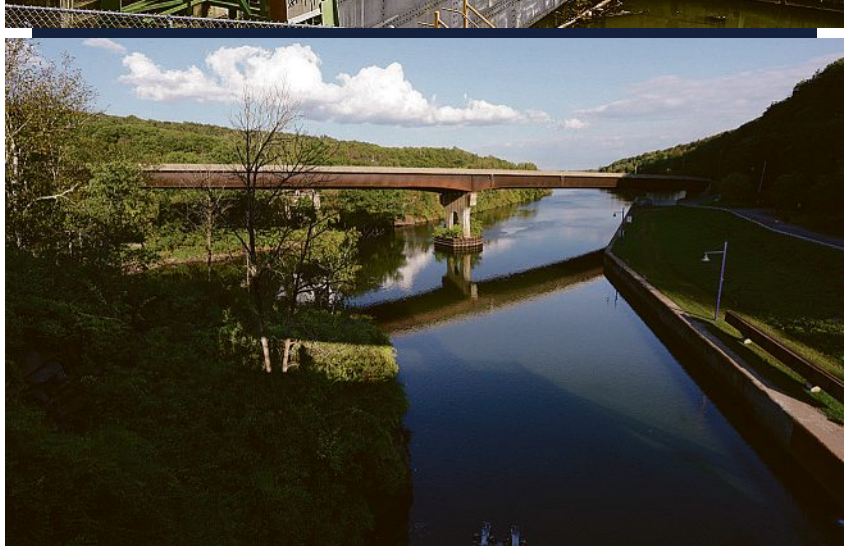

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SELECT COMPANY

The 2026 top NBA pick will have high bar to hit to rank with these No. 1s

Mark Giannotto USA TODAY

There's still a debate about the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft, which begins June 23. Will the Washington Wizards select AJ Dybantsa or Darryn Peterson, or maybe Cameron Boozer? The weeks since the draft lottery have not settled much, with rumors and speculation seizing control as NBA executives and agents try to shape the narrative.

There's a long legacy of Hall of Famers produced from the No. 1 spot atop the draft order, with players like Elgin Baylor (1958), Oscar Robertson (1960), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (1969), Magic Johnson (1979), Shaquille O'Neal (1992) and Tim Duncan (1997) among those who thrived under the spotlight.

Recent history shows the right No. 1 pick can change the direction of a franchise. The wrong one can set a team back for years. Cooper Flagg, the No. 1 pick in 2025 and the reigning NBA rookie of the year, was a relative slam dunk compared to the decision facing the Wizards front office this time.

Here's a countdown of USA TODAY Sports' ranking of the 12 top No. 1 picks since 2000:

12. John Wall, 2010

Washington Wizards

- **Career**: 11 seasons, 684 games
- **Stats**: 18.7 points, 8.9 assists, 4.2 rebounds, 1.6 steals

Wall led the Wizards past the first round of the playoffs three times in four years during his prime after the franchise had accomplished the feat just once in the previous 30 years. The athletic point guard, who last played in an NBA game in January 2023, earned All-NBA and All-Defense honors one time apiece during his career.

11. Yao Ming, 2002

Houston Rockets

- **Career**: 8 seasons, 514 games
- **Stats**: 19 points, 9.2 rebounds, 1.9 blocks, 1.6 assists, 23.0 PER (Player Efficiency Rating)

The 7-foot-6 Chinese big man became one of the best centers in the NBA with the Rockets but had his run as an

See NO. 1 PICKS, Page 2C

TOP: 2026 No. 1 hopefuls AJ Dybantsa, Cameron Boozer and Darryn Peterson
BOTTOM: LeBron James, Yao Ming and Derrick Rose PHOTOS BY GEOFF BURKE, BRETT DAVIS, TIM FULLER, DENIS POROY, CRAIG STROBECK, GARY A. VASQUEZ/IMAGN IMAGES

Clark's Open win defies the haters

Adam Schupak
Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

SOUTHAMPTON, NY – When Wyndham Clark first met mental coach Julie Elion, he was skeptical that working with a coach to help him improve his thoughts would help him win tournaments. "You guys all say the same things," he said when they first met. "Nothing works."

Clark needed Elion like never because on June 21 at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club for the final round of the 126th U.S. Open he faced not only the course but a crowd that rooted openly against him. Overnight, he said, he had the craziest dream of his life. Then he woke up with a pit in his stomach and endured a nightmare as his 54-hole lead shrank to as little as one before the front nine was over. He was in danger of becoming the first 54-hole leader in U.S. Open history to blow a six-stroke lead. On a sunny, windswept day over the Scottish links-style mostly treeless layout with its humps and bumps and swales, Clark was the golfer that the fans loved to hate.

"We knew it was going to come," and they strategized for "the haters," said Elion, but as she later admitted, "I've seen a lot of bad behavior over the years but never like this."

Yet somehow Clark made enough

See CLARK, Page 2C



Wyndham Clark celebrates after winning the U.S. Open on June 21 at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club.
BILL STREICHER/IMAGN IMAGES

May leaves Michigan to be coach of NBA's Mavs

Matthew Glenesk
USA TODAY

Dusty May is headed to the NBA.

May, who led the Michigan Wolverines to the NCAA's 2025-26 basketball season national championship this past spring, will be the next Dallas Mavericks coach, USA TODAY Sports has confirmed.

The last coach to jump from college to NBA was John Beilien in 2019, another Michigan man. Larry Brown was the last men's basketball coach to leave for the NBA after winning a national title the season before (with Kansas in 1988).

Per multiple reports, Michigan is working on elevating Michigan assistant Mike Boynton Jr. to interim head coach. Boynton spent seven seasons as head coach at Oklahoma State from 2017 to 2024 before joining May's staff. Boynton was 119-109 as Cowboys coach, including a trip to the NCAA Tournament in 2021.

May and Michigan had been in talks about a new contract, but as of May 18 the deal hadn't been signed, May confirmed to USA TODAY's Jordan Mendoza. May said there were "minor details" being adjusted between both

See MAY, Page 3C

Clark

Continued from Page 1C

clutch putts to shoot 3-over 73 and weather the storm to become the first wire-to-wire U.S. Open champion since Martin Kaymer in 2014 and a two-time winner of his national championship.

"Being in the arena is not for everybody, and I think it shows a lot about Wyndham, how he handled not only this golf course but I think the crowd today as well and is a well-deserving champion," said world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler, who played in the last pairing with Clark.

Scheffler's putter stayed cold and he shot a final-round 71 in his pursuit of completing the career Grand Slam and finished tied for fourth. Sam Burns settled for runner-up after making a valiant charge, shooting 67 for a 72-hole total of 277.

What a difference a year makes for Clark, who left the U.S. Open at Oakmont in Pittsburgh a broken man after missing the 36-hole cut and destroying a locker in the venerable clubhouse that the membership had been kind enough to let him use for the week.

Clark's season of turmoil was framed around two incidents where his childish behavior went viral: the other being when he lost control at the PGA Championship, throwing a club in anger following a wild tee shot. He snapped the clubhead and nearly struck a volunteer with the club. It all reached a head when shortly after apologizing for his behavior at the PGA and promising he would do better, he was caught on camera doing something even more inexcusable at Oakmont. It was one of those life lessons he probably needed, but no one ever wants to look in the mirror and take responsibility for such actions. When the photo of the kicked-in locker went viral, Clark went underground.

"It was a really tough two, three days for me. I was in a dark place, didn't really go outside much," he said. "At that moment I just felt a lot of my career, world ranking, reputation, everything just dwindling. That's a terrible feeling. Yeah, I would say in that moment I definitely didn't think I'd be here this year doing this."

The consequences of his actions last year are still being felt. In a letter sent to Oakmont membership shortly after the incident, club president John Lynch said, "Reinstatement would be contingent upon Mr. Clark fulfilling a number of specific conditions, including full repayment for damages, a meaningful contribution to a charity of the Board's choosing, and the successful completion of counseling and/or anger management sessions."

Last week, rumors were flying Clark hadn't satisfied the requirements laid out by the club but Bob Ford, the longtime Oakmont pro who remains in an emeritus role, told Golfweek, "You may have heard a lot of stories. I will give you the facts. Wyndham has done everything that was asked of him by both the USGA and Oakmont together. The lockers are fixed and he did pay for them."

Clark has been criticized in some corners for not making a full apology, or apologizing quickly enough. He acknowledged that the social media backlash and harm to his reputation were self-inflicted, and he's attempting to make reparations and change his ways.

"What happened at last year's U.S. Open was the kick in the face to say, 'Hey, wake up, let's get back to who I am,' " he said. "I screwed up. I learned a lot and it got me back to who Wyndham Clark is."

Clark described himself as "fun and outgoing, I'm fierce, competitive, love the game, respect the game, and I just had a bad moment ... I'm just happy I'm here on the other side of things."

With a new girlfriend, a new caddie, a new swing coach and a new putter, Clark has a new attitude. The one constant has been Elion, who has trained Clark to block out the negative voices and "the haters." On Saturday, she sent Clark an Instagram message posted by Sahil Bloom, an inspirational writer and creator of curiosity-inducing content, to play with a surfer mentality.

"When a surfer gets up on a wave, they enjoy the present moment, even though they know that the wave will eventually end," read the philosophical tip. "They fully enjoy this wave, with the wisdom and awareness that there are always more waves coming."

Improving one's mental health isn't a linear journey, Elion likes to say. With her help, Clark has to come to accept that the mental game is full of ebbs and flows. He was on top of the world after winning the 2023 U.S. Open, conceding to Elion, "This stuff really works."

"If you think of it as climbing Everest, sometimes you go up, sometimes you have to go down to go back up," he said.

His game started to ascend again not long after Cherry Hills Country Club in Denver awarded Clark an honorary membership last year. Clark conducted a junior clinic for the members and hit the shots while Pat Coyner, the club's director of instruction and a PGA member, served as emcee.

Coyner, 53, studied Clark's swing and detected it had become long at the top, leading to swinging past parallel. His lead wrist was extended or cupped. It led to an open face, a steep shaft and becoming narrow in his downswing, which meant he had to back out of it at impact and tilt away from the target at impact. That's never a good thing for anyone but especially for a fader of the ball. Clark wound up battling a two-way miss. Clark, who had gone the last three seasons without a swing coach, was intrigued with this diagnosis and one day last fall he texted Coyner and asked him if he could help him rebuild his swing.

Clark still prefers his patented fade but the swing changes he's made have allowed Clark to move it both ways now that his clubface is in a better position.

"His draws are some of the best irons he's hit," Coyner said.

The ball-striking came first and the putting followed. Clark switched into a Scottsdale TEC Ally Blue Onset, a white mallet, and has been red-hot ever since. He ranked fourth in strokes gained: putting for the week and was at his most deadly on Saturday when he salvaged a series of par putts and hit the shot of the championship – a 275-yard cut 3-wood to 3 feet to set up eagle.

Last year, Clark conceded he struggled with self-doubt and even when he got into contention he focused too much on the holes in his game.

Clark surged into the lead on Thursday evening after the frisky North Atlantic wind calmed down and he posted 6-under 64, the lowest score in the first round of a U.S. Open at Shinnecock. He drained a 33-foot birdie putt on 18 for a 1-under 69 on Friday and stretched the lead on Saturday with an even-par round thanks to one incredible par save after another and the shot of the championship – a cut 3-wood from 275 yards at the par-5 16th that stopped 3 feet from the hole for an eagle. Clark's putting was shades of 2004 U.S. Open winner Retief Goosen, who famously one-putted 11 of Shinnecock's treacherous and complex greens in the final day.

On Saturday night, despite building a commanding lead, Clark texted Elion a bunch of angry emojis and wrote that his lead should've been greater. "I was like, 'Oh my God, here we go again,' " said Elion. "But that's also what makes him great. He's so competitive."

In the final round, it all seemed to be slipping away as he made bogey on three of the first seven holes, getting "Shinnecocked" as his pitch was rejected by the slope of the green and returned near his feet, and failed to make a birdie until No. 10.

With LIV Golf scooping up the majority of golf's villains, Clark's petulance became an easy target to become the PGA Tour's newest heel. It was hard to know for sure if the fans rooted against Clark because they didn't like him as a person or because they wanted either a close contest or more specifically to see history in the form of Scheffler becoming the seventh golfer in history to win the career Grand Slam. It was probably a combination of both.

But even in the run-up to the Open, Clark had been ridiculed for saying he was going to celebrate his previous victory last month at the CJ Cup Byron Nelson in Dallas with "some grape." Then he trolled Canadian fans at the RBC Canadian Open wearing the sweater of Team USA's Olympic hockey hero, Jack Hughes, on to the tee at a hole nicknamed The Rink.

Facing a steady barrage of heckling, Clark cheered for himself when he holed a 25-foot birdie putt at 16, the longest putt he'd made in the last 34 holes.

He cracked jokes with his caddie Dave Pelekoudas every time they heard someone cheer for him. "I'd go, oh, there's one person that likes me," Clark said.

But there was at least one more supporter in his corner. What he didn't know was that his father, Randall, who had introduced Wyndham to golf at a young age and had gone undergone heart surgery in 2024, caught a red-eye to see him win for the first time. After Clark lagged a 62-foot putt to tap-in range to secure a 72-hole total of 4-under 276 and a stroke better than Burns, he joined Goosen and contemporaries Bryson DeChambeau and Brooks Koepka as two-time U.S. Open champions. Clark's dad ran onto the green and surprised his son, who didn't know he was there, wrapping him in a bear hug on Father's Day.

Wyndham had found his next wave, and it was a big one. Let's see how long he can ride this one.

No. 1 picks

Continued from Page 1C

elite player cut short due to injury. Ming earned All-NBA honors five times but only once did his teams in Houston advance past the first round of the playoffs.

10. Cade Cunningham, 2021

Detroit Pistons

- **Career**: 5 seasons, 292 games
- **Stats**: 22.5 points, 8.0 assists, 5.4 rebounds, 1.0 steals, 18.0 PER

Cunningham earned first-team All-NBA honors for the first time this past season after leading the Pistons to the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference. He enjoyed a breakthrough in Detroit in 2025, earning third-team All-NBA honors while leading the franchise to a playoff win for the first time since 2008.

9. Derrick Rose, 2008

Chicago Bulls

- **Career**: 15 seasons, 775 games
- **Stats**: 17.4 points, 5.2 assists, 3.2 rebounds, 18.0 PER

Rose would be ranked higher based on his brief rise and peak as an NBA player, when he won the 2009 Rookie of the Year award and the 2011 MVP award in his third season after the Bulls took him No. 1 overall. Injuries derailed Rose's time in Chicago after a run to the 2011 Eastern Conference finals, though he did carve out a lengthy career as a role player. His only All-NBA honor came during his MVP season.

8. Blake Griffin, 2009

Los Angeles Clippers

- **Career**: 13 seasons, 833 games
- **Stats**: 19 points, 8 rebounds, 4 assists, 21.0 PER

Griffin didn't play during his first year in the NBA due to injury, but he won NBA Rookie of the Year in 2011 as part of a strong run of seasons during the first portion of his career with the "Lob City" Clippers. Griffin was a five-time All-NBA selection, including one nod later with the Detroit Pistons.

7. Karl-Anthony Towns, 2015

Minnesota Timberwolves

- **Career**: 11 seasons, 789 games
- **Stats**: 22.8 points, 11.1 rebounds, 3.1 assists, 23.6 PER

The 2016 NBA Rookie of the Year was a versatile two-way force for the Knicks as they won their first NBA championship since 1973 this season. Towns also earned third-team All-NBA honors for the third time in his career last year. One of the best 3-point shooting big men in league history, Towns previously led the Timberwolves to a playoff series win for the first time in 20 years.

6. Anthony Edwards, 2020

Minnesota Timberwolves

- **Career**: 6th season, 494 games
- **Stats**: 24.6 points, 5.2 rebounds, 4.1 assists, 18.2 PER

Edwards could be poised to climb even higher based on the potential shown during his first six years in the NBA. He's already a two-time All-NBA selection (and fell just shy of the 65-game threshold to achieve the feat a third time this past season). The two-way threat averaged a career-best 28.8 points this season while also setting career highs for field-goal percentage and 3-point percentage.

5. Victor Wembanyama, 2023

San Antonio Spurs

- **Career**: 3 seasons, 203 games
- **Stats**: 23.4 points, 11 rebounds, 3.5 assists, 3.5 blocks, 25.7 PER



LeBron James, right, is our top No. 1 NBA draft pick of the century while Cooper Flagg, left, the top selection last year, came in at No. 18. KEVIN JAIRAJ/IMAGN IMAGES

Wembanyama has quickly leaped into the top five of this list after leading the Spurs to the NBA Finals, earning first-team all-NBA honors and winning the NBA Defensive Player of the Year Award during his third season in the NBA. He finished third in MVP voting this year and appears poised to be the best big man in the league for a generation.

4. Kyrie Irving, 2011

Cleveland Cavaliers

- **Career**: 15 seasons, 875 games
- **Stats**: 23.7 points, 5.6 assists, 4.1 rebounds, 1.3 steals, 22.2 PER

Irving was the 2012 Rookie of the Year after the Cavaliers chose him with the No. 1 overall pick and then won an NBA championship alongside LeBron James in 2016. He is a three-time All-NBA selection (and did so with three different teams) and made the NBA Finals with the Dallas Mavericks in 2024. Irving did not play for the Mavericks during the 2025-26 season while recovering from a torn ACL suffered in March 2025.

3. Anthony Davis, 2012

New Orleans Hornets

- **Career**: 14 seasons, 867 games
- **Stats**: 24.0 points, 10.7 rebounds, 2.6 assists, 2.3 blocks, 26.7 PER

Davis ranks behind Dwight Howard on this list even though he was the NBA Finals MVP on the team Howard won a championship with because of how Davis' tenure with the team that took him No. 1 went. He had one playoff run with New Orleans before demanding a trade to the Los Angeles Lakers. Davis nonetheless became arguably the best two-way big man of his generation, and the argument is only due to the injuries that sidelined him over the years. Davis is a five-time All-NBA selection (including four first-team nods), a five-time All-Defensive pick and led the NBA in blocks three times.

2. Dwight Howard, 2004

Orlando Magic

- **Career**: 18 seasons, 1,367 games
- **Stats**: 15.7 points, 11.8 rebounds, 1.8 blocks, 1.3 assists, 21.3 PER

His career numbers don't do justice to his run as one of the league's most dominating players during his prime years after being picked No. 1 by the Magic. The recent Hall of Fame inductee was an eight-time All-NBA selection (including five first-team nods), named Defensive Player of the Year three times, led the league in rebounding five times and led the NBA in blocks twice. Howard won an NBA championship as a role player with LeBron James and the Lakers in 2020 after leading Orlando past James and into the NBA Finals as a star 11 years earlier.

1. LeBron James, 2003

Cleveland Cavaliers

- **Career**: 23 seasons, 1,924 games
- **Stats**: 27.0 points, 7.5 rebounds, 7.4 assists, 26.9 PER

The NBA's all-time leading scorer is a no-brainer No. 1 choice for the best No. 1 pick since 2000. The four-time MVP, four-time Finals MVP and four-time NBA champion just completed his record-breaking 23rd season in the league and still seems to have more left in the tank. He's only one season removed from earning second-team All-NBA honors with the Los Angeles Lakers as a 40-year-old. Though his initial run in Cleveland as its No. 1 pick ended in his controversial "decision" to leave for Miami, James led the Cavaliers to the NBA Finals and then returned to Cleveland to win an NBA championship in 2016. He also won consecutive championships with the Heat in 2012 and 2013 and guided the Lakers to the 2020 championship.

Iran handling adversity with class, might get ultimate reward



Nancy Armour
Columnist
USA TODAY

INGLEWOOD, CA – When faced with impossible and unfair situations, may we all have the composure of Iran's World Cup team.

No matter what happens the rest of this tournament, the Iranian players have given a master class in handling adversity. They have been reasoned in their complaints, all of which are deserved, and have not stooped to personal insults or histrionics. Nor have they quit or self-imploded.

That they are still in the running for a first-ever spot in the knockout rounds, maybe even top of the group, is stunning, and if the soccer gods have any sense of fairness at all, they will make this happen.

"The situation hasn't been the best, but we don't want to keep repeating that because I think everyone is aware of that," Alireza Jahanbakhsh said after Iran kept its Group G hopes alive with its second draw of the World Cup, this one 0-0 against Belgium on June 21.

"Today was an amazing performance, but I think we cannot let down the next game against Egypt. We know how important that is," Jahanbakhsh said. " We know what it means for our people back home."

Iran team a political pawn in U.S.

There is little argument that the Iranian regime is heinous. It has murdered its own people, supported terrorist organizations in the Middle East and targeted Americans. It is understandable why any American administration, the current one included, has less than positive feelings about Iran's leaders.

But the regime is not playing at the World Cup. The players have as much power against it as the person sitting in Section 108 at Sunday's game. Probably less, given other athletes have been punished, including by death, for speaking out.



Iran's Ehsan Hajsafi, Mehdi Taremi, Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh and teammates salute their fans after the match June 21. DANIEL COLE/REUTERS

Yet the U.S. government, aided and abetted by FIFA, has made the Iranian team a proxy in its war with Iran. The team was forced to move its base camp from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, Mexico, at the eleventh hour. Members of the delegation, including the head of the Iranian federation, have been denied visas. The players' families are not here.

Worst of all, they're under a stricter curfew than most teenagers when they come to the United States for their games. They didn't arrive until late Saturday afternoon, and coach Amir Ghalenoei said their flight was supposed to leave a mere two hours after the game against Belgium.

"I don't think another team could sustain with conditions like this," Ghalenoei said. "Our players are really giving everything, they are playing with their heart, and in the future generations, we will remember them."

Iran team doesn't quit

There are many teams that would have cratered in this situation, and no one would have been surprised. How many of us would have thrown tantrums if punished for someone else's misdoings?

Yet Iran has simply played on.

Belgium doesn't exactly look like the No. 10 team in the world. Or the one that routed the U.S. men's national team 5-2 in March, for that matter. But Iran held it scoreless, with goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand living up to his "Wall of Persia" nickname.

Beiranvand made seven saves, with the most impressive one coming in the 59th minute. Down on the grass, he somehow reached out his hand to block Maxim De Cuyper's shot from close range than snagged the ball to prevent it from crossing the goal line.

"The unity, the fighting spirit we have for each other, for our country, for the people – we try to win every game and try not to concede, and the situation like this can happen," Iran midfielder Saman Ghoddos said.

Iran will finish the group stage against Egypt on June 26 in Seattle. Win that, and Team Melli would finish no worse than second in Group G.

In six previous World Cup appearances, Iran has never made it past the group stage.

"Once we went to the dressing room today, we said whatever feeling we have, we have to take it with us tonight," Jahanbakhsh said. "It's really in our control to do what we have to do. Firstly for our people back home, and then for ourselves, because some of us, we play more than 10, 12 years together.

"So hopefully we can make a best performance in the last game."

Iran's entire performance at this World Cup has been admirable. We all can take a lesson from it.

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Iranians grateful for Mexican people's support

Nancy Armour USA TODAY

INGLEWOOD, CA – Mexico's hospitality for Iran's World Cup team has not gone unnoticed. Or unappreciated.

Midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh made a point of thanking the people of Mexico, which welcomed the Iran soccer contingent after they were forced to relocate their training camp from Tucson, Arizona. The team is based in Tijuana, Mexico, and flies to the United States for its games.

"We love Mexican people. I think everyone has the same feeling," Jahanbakhsh said after Iran held Belgium to a 0-0 draw on June 21, keeping its hopes of making the knockout rounds alive. "It's just unbelievable how welcome we are there and the hospitality there is amazing, and I think there is a really heartful feeling between the players and the team to Mexican people now. I would like to say, 'muchas gracias,' " Jahanbakhsh added, smiling.

Some Tijuanans are even road-tripping to Los Angeles to support their new friends. At the Belgium game, there were fans wearing caps and jerseys from Club Tijuana, where Iran is training, and many Mexico fans seem to have adopted Iran as their No. 2 team.

"It feels kind of home when we are there in Tijuana and them coming all the way here to support us, it means a lot to us," Jahanbakhsh said. "At least we are another four or five days there. Hopefully it's a bit longer. We really appreciate them, and hopefully we can have more good and fun times with them together."

Iran plays Egypt on June 26.

Spain finds its spark, Yamal delivers lifeline

Meghan L. Hall
USA TODAY

ATLANTA – Lamine Yamal didn't need 90 minutes to make his presence felt. He needed just 10.

In front of a sold-out crowd of 68,239, Yamal showed off his dazzling footwork against Saudi Arabia, his strength and zip on the ball just under a minute into play. Then, as if the football gods drew it up themselves, Yamal met the moment of his first World Cup start as only great players can.

In the blink of an eye, the midfielder came running across the box to meet a gorgeous crossing pass from Mikel Oyarzabal. Yamal turned his stride into a perfectly timed slide at the far post, and with impeccable finesse pushed the ball into the net to give Spain a 1-0 lead, en route to a 4-0 offensive bonanza.

History.

As fate would have it, the 18-year-old was 14 days younger (18 years, 343 days old) than soccer legend Lionel Messi (18 years, 357 days old) was when he scored his first World Cup goal. Yamal is also the second-youngest player to score a World Cup goal for Spain after Gavi (18 years, 110 days old in 2022 against Costa Rica) and the eighth-youngest to score in World Cup history.



Lamine Yamal scored Spain's first goal June 21 against Saudi Arabia at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. JUSTIN SETTERFIELD/GETTY IMAGES

After his mind-bending goal, Yamal slid again on the far touchline in unbridled celebration, then fell to his knees and pointed to the sky as if to say he was thankful for the moment.

"I've always dreamed of being at a World Cup, and being able to score in my first match as a starter is a dream," Yamal said. "I watched the last World Cup from a classroom, so being able to score here with my mom and my family in the stands is a dream come true."

Spain desperately needed to score after a disappointing 0-0 showing against Cape Verde on June 15. Yamal, who was returning from injury, played, but he did not start. The midfielder played 19 minutes after making his World Cup debut in the second half. La Roja had 27 attempts on goal, but just seven of them were on target.

Sunday, there were 21 attempts against Saudi Arabia. Eight were on target, including a brace scored by Oyarzabal in the 21st and 24th minutes. The 29-year-old added to his assist on Yamal's goal with two more goals in under three minutes.

Leading 3-0 at the break, Spain head coach Luis de la Fuente took both Yamal and Oyarzabal off. "Lamine is in perfect condition to take on full matches now. And what can we say about Oyarzabal? He'd been dealing with a minor issue – you can't share everything – but he always delivers an exceptional performance," De la Fuente said.

The goal put Spain up 4-0. Yamal and others were able rest in preparation for the June 26 match against Uruguay.

Following Spain's win, the team sits at the top of the Group H standings with four points.

May

Continued from Page 1C

parties, but he said he was committed to staying with the Wolverines.

"We'd like to build one of the most consistent, greatest basketball programs in the country," May said.

A request for clarification on whether May had signed his contract was not immediately returned to USA TODAY Sports at the time this story published.

May, 49, went 64-13 in two years in Ann Arbor after guiding Florida Atlantic to the Final Four in 2023. He compiled a 190-82 record (.699) in eight college seasons.

The Mavericks finished 26-56 last season, hired Toronto Raptors executive Masai Ujiri as team president, and parted with coach Jason Kidd on May 19.

Dallas has the No. 9 pick in this year's draft and are in the midst of a rebuild led by last year's top pick Cooper Flagg.

May was busy this offseason reshaping Michigan's roster after key players Aday Mara and Morez Johnson Jr. declared for the draft and Big Ten Player of the Year Yaxel Lendeborg exhausted his eligibility.

Michigan brought in a a trio of proven transfers in Moustapha Thiam (Cincinnati), JP Estrella (Tennessee) and Jalen Reed (LSU) to pair with a top-five freshman class in the nation, led by McDonald's All-Americans Brandon McCoy and Quinn Costello.

May's previous deal was set through 2030 and offered him an annual increase of $250,000 for the next four seasons, according to his contract obtained by USA TODAY Sports. His base salary in 2025-26 was $4.6 million and was set to increase to $4.85 million this season, under his previous contract.

May's buyout on his previous contract was reduced to $5 million after April 30.

Can Michigan basketball players enter portal with May leaving?

Yes, NCAA rules allow for the creation of a special transfer portal window following a head coaching change. At that time, players can enter the portal and potentially sign with another team.

According to the NCAA on Jan. 14, the Division I Cabinet enacted immediate rules changes for the transfer portal, including those for a team going through a coaching change.

Per the NCAA:

"When a head coaching change occurs, a 15-day period will open five days after the new head coach is hired or publicly announced. If a new head coach is not announced within 30 days of the previous head coach's departure – and the 31st day after the head coach's departure is after the championship game – a 15-day window will open. The additional head coach departure window is available only after the basketball transfer window opens through Jan. 2."

Five days after Michigan hires or publicly announces its hire, the 15-day transfer portal will open, allowing players to enter and potentially sign with a team. The 15-day window will open if the Wolverines are unable to make a hire within 30 days of May's departure for the NBA.

That is separate from a 15-day transfer window that opens the day following the championship game, which in 2026 was on April 4.



Dusty May, 49, went 64-13, including the NCAA 2025-26 season national championship, in two years at Michigan. PATRICK SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

Contributing: USA TODAY Sports reporter Zac Al-Khateeb and Detroit Free Press reporter Tony Garcia

Cape Verde one win from historic knockout spot

Katie Fryburger
Special to USA TODAY

MIAMI GARDENS, FL – Cape Verde manager Pedro Leitão Brito – aka Bubista – walked into his postgame press conference June 21 smiling. The Blue Sharks had just earned another surprising World Cup result, battling Uruguay to a 2-2 draw at Hard Rock Stadium.

After opening their tournament run with a scoreless draw against Spain, the tiny island nation remains unbeaten through two matches against former World Cup champions.

For Bubista, that achievement isn't just for him and his players, or even his home country.

"This is something we owe to smaller national teams," Bubista said. "Teams that struggle to qualify for a world tournament. We owe that to our people, to the African people."

Cape Verde has a population of roughly 500,000 and entered the tournament as one of the biggest underdogs in the 48-team field. Yet through two matches, the squad has gone toe-to-toe with opponents carrying far greater resources, deeper talent pools and richer soccer histories.

"A country may be small and struggle financially, but if they're resilient, if they work in an organized manner, they can also stand shoulder-to-shoulder with major teams," Bubista said. "You can achieve great things regardless of your challenges."

That resilience was reflected in Cape Verde's performance after Uruguay erased an early Cape Verde lead with two first-half goals. Rather than fold, the Blue Sharks responded.

Hélio Varela came off the bench and scored the equalizer in the 61st minute, securing another point and keeping the nation's knockout-round hopes alive.

Bubista and his Cape Verde squad pulled off another improbable result against a two-time World Cup-winning country and its revered manager. Prior to the match, Bubista offered Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa a small gift from Cape Verde.

"Bielsa is a master," Bubista said. "All I did was give him a little token, a gift from Cape Verde. Something to remember us by. I was really happy to be able to spend that time and to meet him personally. To that, he said thank-you, and he wished us all the best."



Helio Varela scored the second goal for Cape Verde in their World Cup game June 21. PAUL CHILDS/REUTERS

If Bielsa doesn't remember the Blue Sharks by their pre-match gift, he'll certainly remember them by the result they earned against a traditional power in the sport.

Now, with draws against Spain and Uruguay, Cape Verde enters its final group stage match against Saudi Arabia with a chance to advance. A win will get them into the knockout round. If Spain beats Uruguay, a draw would even be enough. The Blue Sharks have gone from a team happy to be here to a team playing for real stakes in their final group stage match.

"At this point, all we think about is to classify," Bubista said.

Katie Fryburger is a student in the University of Georgia's Carmical Sports Media Institute.

Vozinha's mom granted visa after fan-led push

Erin Kirby
Special to USA TODAY

MIAMI GARDENS, FL – Vozinha wept on the pitch June 15. He had just put in a historic performance: a seven-save shutout of Spain that gave Cape Verde its first-ever point at the World Cup. But his mother wasn't there to witness it.

Ana Candida Evora could not afford the visa bond required of Cape Verdean citizens. Now she was in the stands for the June 21 match against Uruguay in Miami, thanks in part to a major social media push to get her there.

After the 0-0 draw, Vozinha's Instagram following jumped from 50,000 to several million within hours. But his attention remained less on his internet fame and more on his mother's absence.

"My mother didn't manage to be here because of the money we have to pay for the visa," Vozinha said. "We didn't manage on time and I would like her to be here."

Evora had given her own interview following the match, expressing how confident she was in her son.

"I said that no ball would enter his goal, and that is exactly what happened," she said.

Several supporters from Cape Verde, Canada, the United States and beyond launched GoFundMe pages and fundraising initiatives asking fellow Cape Verdeans to chip in whatever they could. These campaigns cleared their goal, pulling in donations from around the world.

The attention soon reached Washington. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries posted that "no mother should miss the chance to see her son make history" and said he had asked Secretary of State Marco Rubio to intervene.

The State Department's initial response left matters unsure. A spokesperson said the agency had no record of a visa application from Evora, though immediate relatives of players already qualified for fee waivers. Officials later said the holdup was a passport issue, not a visa denial.



Ana Candida Evora watches from a Hard Rock Stadium suite as her son, Vozinha, plays in goal for Cape Verde. PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA/AFP VIA GETTY

Evora did not have a valid passport and had to apply for one before her visa could move forward. Once that piece was in place, the rest came together quickly.

By June 17, the process had moved forward. Jeffries announced that Evora would secure a visa in time for Sunday's match, with all fees waived.

Evora was at Hard Rock Stadium for Cape Verde's match against Uruguay, a 2-2 tie. Mother and son shared the same stage for the first time this World Cup in front of an audience that has learned both their names and their stories.

Erin Kirby is a student in the University of Georgia's Carmical Sports Media Institute.

ESPN host sweats the details ahead of draft

Kristie Ackert
USA TODAY

AJ Dybantsa does not want to hear "from the Boston area." He grew up in Brockton, Massachusetts. In his head, when he imagines the moment – when his name was called and he would walk out onto the stage – he wants to hear "from Brockton.



Andrews

When Malika Andrews reached out to the projected No. 1 pick in the NBA draft the other day, he wanted to make sure she understood the difference. He wanted to make sure she wrote it down: he's from Brockton, not Boston.

She wrote it down. She always does.

Andrews, 31, is the face of ESPN's NBA coverage. She hosts "NBA Today" and "NBA Countdown," just wrapped the NBA Finals on site and in 2022 became the first woman to host the draft.

So, she sweats the details, like the preferred hometown of a teenager, because for 30 seconds she will decide how the biggest moment of his life will sound.

Andrews doesn't just wing those seconds. She reports them. The instinct is deeply ingrained. Andrews came up from print, ran her college newspaper at the University of Portland, earned a New York Times reporting fellowship, and then covered the NBA for the Chicago Tribune. ESPN hired her in 2018 to write. She's also the host of "WNBA Countdown" and this year has added tennis to her roster; she will be hosting ESPN's Wimbledon coverage in a week.

Tennis isn't her background, but she is a reporter at heart. She likes to tell the story of the people behind the news.

The Knicks are still on her mind. She was on site when they won their first title in 53 years. It wasn't the trophy that she remembered.

"There's winning an NBA title, and then there's winning an NBA title for a franchise like the Knicks," Andrews said. "I've covered a lot of champions. This one was different."

What she keeps thinking about is how the team will get remembered. Jalen Brunson, told for years he was too small, just a second-round pick. OG Anunoby, hurt during Toronto's 2019 title run and stuck watching. Josh Hart, a near disaster of a mistake in Game 4 that ended up not mattering.

"I am glad they will be remembered as winners instead," Andrews said.

She knows the job of a reporter helps shape those memories. So, before the draft, even during those NBA Finals, she calls every prospect she can reach, about 15 to 20 of them. She does some research, but she always makes a point to ask every prospect the same thing. "When you dreamed about that moment, what did you hear?"

Reporters do not owe a source input in how a story is shaped. Andrews makes an exception for input for the draft. The kids get one shot for a lifetime memory, she wants to get it right.

On the floor, she works from a binder – alphabetized by last name – no teleprompter, the night running live. Below the camera, her researcher Gil Bransford holds the lowest-tech tool in the building, a note card clipped to what amounts to a trash picker-upper and taps the bottom of her chair with updates.

The morning of the draft, Andrews is filled with nervous excitement. The lights and camera go on, the first name is called and that drains out. "I always feel this deep calm," she said. "And it's not about (me), it's about these guys."

The draft opens June 23 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Dybantsa is expected to be among the first names Commissioner Adam Silver reads. When the moment comes, there will be general talk: a year at BYU, top player in the country, three golds with the national team in the under-19, 17, and 16's, etc.

Meanwhile, Andrews will quickly flip to the notes she wrote while talking to him. There, she will see the thing that was most important to him.

And Andrews will remember to say that he is from Brockton.

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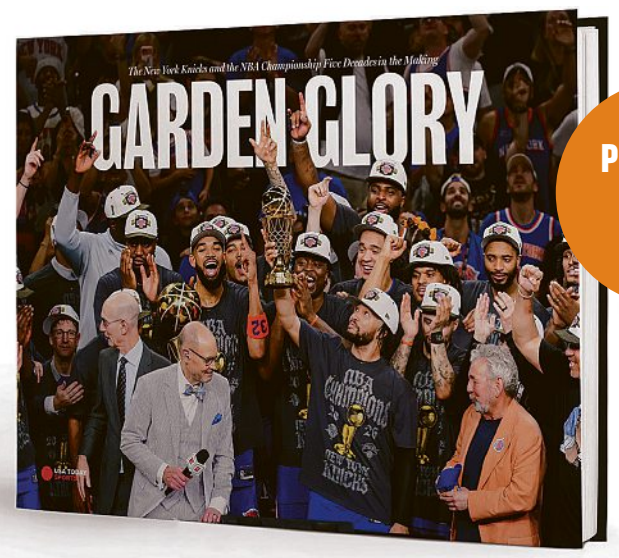

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The Knicks hadn't won an NBA title since 1973. Fifty-three years of heartbreak — from Ewing's near-miss in '94 to the '99 Finals run that fell short — tested every fan who ever packed Madison Square Garden. *That wait is over!*

Jalen Brunson and company ripped through the 2026 playoffs, reaching the NBA Finals with 13 consecutive victories that closed out the Hawks, included sweeps of the 76ers and Cavaliers, and built a 2-0 lead over the Spurs. Then the Knicks polished off Victor Wembanyama and San Antonio to hoist the Larry O'Brien Trophy.

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USA TODAY SPORTS

MEIJER LPGA CLASSIC

Woad's huge miss helps Yamashita win

Beth Ann Nichols
Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

It looked like Lottie Woad had the title in hand. After a brilliantly holed bunker shot for birdie on the 71st hole at the Meijer LPGA Classic, Woad carried a one-shot lead over Miyu Yamashita into the closing par 5 at Blythefield Country Club near Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Looking back, Woad wishes she had laid up. But she went for it on the 18th, and her third shot from the rough went a little too far past the hole. The former Florida State star needed a two-putt to win and instead lipped out from 3 feet, leaving everyone in shock.



Yamashita

The closing bogey sent Woad back to the 18th tee with Yamashita, a major champion looking for her third career title. It was an overtime battle between the No. 7 (Woad) and the eighth-ranked player in the world, a 13-time winner on the JLPGA.

"I honestly didn't expect it to end up in a playoff," said Yamashita, who birdied the 18th hole in regulation to get to 17 under.

At 4-foot-11, Yamashita, the shortest player on tour, came up big, getting up and down for birdie on the first extra hole to clinch the title. Yamashita was the hottest player all day, carding a closing 8-under 64 to come from five back.

Last year, after winning the AIG Women's British Open, Yamashita zoomed up the board from eight strokes back in Malaysia to win in a playoff. She grew emotional on Father's Day talking about her dad, who doubles as her instructor.

"This week I had really good feeling," said the 24-year-old Yamashita, "so I'm really happy to win."

Wei-Ling Hsu made three birdies and an eagle over her last seven holes at Blythefield Country Club to shoot 67 and take a share of third with China's Yan Liu.

Rookie Riley Smyth made her first cut of the season in her 10th start, taking a share of 12th to earn $51,880.

Woad, 22, hasn't yet been a pro for a full year and already has two LPGA titles to her credit, a top-10 ranking and likely a starring role on the 2026 European Solheim Cup team in the Netherlands.

"I'm already having nightmares about that," joked U.S. captain Angela Stanford, who was working in the booth for CBS.

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

Last to 1st: Lundgaard made 'right moves'

Zion Brown
The Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY Network



Christian Lundgaard celebrates after winning the XPEL Grand Prix at Road America on June 21 at Elkhart Lake. GARY C. KLEIN/USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

ELKHART LAKE, WI – Arrow McLaren team principal Tony Kanaan gave Christian Lundgaard a pep talk on the starting grid before the Grand Prix at Road America. The message: Don't make life harder on yourself.

But the Danish driver failed to follow those instructions, and on the first lap of the race June 21, he drove his No. 7 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet into Scott Dixon's No. 9 Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, causing damage to Lundgaard's car.

Lundgaard dipped into pit lane on that first lap, as the No. 7 needed a new front wing and tires. It was crucial for Lundgaard's pit crew to operate quickly so that the car wouldn't get lapped, which it didn't. Still, it didn't seem likely – or even possible – that Lundgaard could make his way from last (25th) to first.

But as the 55-lap race on the 4.014-mile road course progressed, Lundgaard's car kept gaining speed and positions. With Lundgaard having an outside chance of a win, strategist Kyle Moyer decided to gamble.

While most of the race's leaders made their final pit stop three to four laps before Lundgaard – a decision influenced by IndyCar's new and cautious full-course yellow procedure – Moyer kept Lundgaard on track until lap 45, the fifth-latest pit stop in the race. After a brief pit stop due to Lundgaard not needing a full tank of gas to get to the end, he exited pit lane second, behind Marcus Armstrong and ahead of David Malukas.

That was when Lundgaard knew he was in the fight for the win.

"I think ultimately we made the right moves at the right time," Lundgaard said. "Staying out on that last pit sequence is what really gained us the win. But that's also the riskiest thing we could do because we're exposing ourselves to yellow (flags). That was win it or finish last at that time."

Malukas passed Lundgaard on Lundgaard's out lap since Malukas' tires were warmer. But Lundgaard got by Malukas on lap 49, leaving only Armstrong ahead of him.

Lundgaard didn't think he'd catch Armstrong, who Lundgaard felt "should have won this race." But Armstrong's No. 66 Honda engine began to fail on lap 52, allowing Lundgaard to pass Armstrong, whose car completely shut down on the next lap. Lundgaard held off Malukas following the restart to get his second win of the season.

Moyer, who is in his first full season as Arrow McLaren's team manager after being fired by Team Penske last May, made the call that paid dividends in the end. Moyer became the strategist on the No. 7 car this year, and he and Lundgaard have made an excellent pairing through 10 races.

"The one thing I have learned with Kyle is he's not afraid of taking risks," Lundgaard said. "I'm sure it's going to bite us someday. The more races we can win until then, the better. ... He's very aggressive, but he also knows exactly what he's doing. There's no question in his mind. Whenever he makes a mistake, he's honest about it, raises his hand. I think it helps the group move forward. There's never any unanswered questions."

After a 2025 season that saw Lundgaard succeed but come up short of wins on several occasions, the 24-year-old has taken the next step, getting another victory after winning the Sonsio Grand Prix on the IMS road course in May.

Up until the Sonsio Grand Prix, Pato O'Ward was the only driver to win a race for Arrow McLaren since McLaren Racing bought a stake in the team in 2020 and became the majority owner in 2021. This team has been built around O'Ward, who is the most popular driver in the series and has finished top five in five of his six seasons with the team.

But this year, Lundgaard has outperformed his highly regarded teammate, as Lundgaard is fourth in the championship while O'Ward is fifth and Lundgaard is the only Arrow McLaren driver to finish on the podium this season. In his second year at Arrow McLaren, Lundgaard – who is often forgotten among a talented crop of under-30 IndyCar drivers – has become a force.

"I think everything is going according to how I thought it would, right?" Lundgaard said. "First year in the team – obviously Pato is very established in there – it's trying to learn as much as possible together, make the package better. I feel like I've evolved a little bit. I think he's gone a little bit backwards, unfortunately, in terms of results. At the end of the day, I know how good he is."

Lundgaard is a pending free agent, and if it wasn't clear already, Sunday was another data point showing that Arrow McLaren should do all it can to keep him around. Kanaan previously said that he'd wait until after the Indianapolis 500 to talk extensions with Lundgaard and fellow free agent teammate Nolan Siegel, but those talks have not reached the formal stage, according to Lundgaard.

"I feel like right now we're more chitchatting, which is always fun as well," Lundgaard said on Friday. "I'm not worried at all from my own perspective. So we'll see how it goes, but obviously we've done great together, and I see that in the future too."

When asked about a potential extension after the race, Lundgaard said winning a race "never hurts" while grinning. If those talks between him and Arrow McLaren's have indeed been casual, it will be in the team's best interest to accelerate those talks with the driver who's tracking toward back-to-back seasons in the top five.

After winning the Sonsio Grand Prix, Lundgaard said, "I think we've unlocked the door now. I'm pretty confident many more will come." It took only four races for that next win to come after Lundgaard went winless in the last two seasons.

Lundgaard is here to stay as a threat to win, especially on road and street courses. He proved himself with consistent results in 2025, and this year he's proved himself as a winner.

It's Heim Time at Cup Series' Naval Base Coronado

Chris Vinel
The Daytona Beach (Florida) News-Journal
USA TODAY Network

Corey Heim adjusted his hat and stared across the temporary NASCAR track at Naval Base Coronado.

He had just concluded his postrace interview, and his expression said it all.

What the heck just happened?

In the Cup Series' first event at the active military facility on June 21, Heim prevailed from a late battle with Tyler Reddick. He claimed his first victory at NASCAR's highest level in the 13th start of his career. The 23-year-old part-timer for 23XI Racing led the final three laps on the 3.4-mile street course.

"I hope I don't wake up from this dream," Heim said. "I don't know. This is insane."

NASCAR's road king, Shane van Gisbergen, entered the weekend with about the lowest betting odds you'll ever see (-150). But a multiple-car crash ended his day on lap 32 and broke the race wide open. It featured 20 lead changes. Ryan Blaney led a race-best 12 laps.

In the final 10 laps, Heim and Reddick jostled up front. Heim overtook his 23XI teammate with some contact with three laps to go. With two laps remaining, Reddick blew a tire, contributing to Heim's 10.37-second margin of victory.

"Caught a couple breaks with some of the good guys wrecking out," Heim said. "But they don't ask how, just how many."

The answer is now one.

Heim captured the NASCAR Truck Series championship in 2025. He owns 26 victories across six seasons in that series, including three this year.

Last month, 23XI announced it was promoting Heim to the Cup level full-time in 2027.

Driving the No. 91 Chevrolet for Trackhouse Racing, former Formula 1 driver Kevin Magnussen finished 27th in his first NASCAR race but recorded the fastest lap of the day at 2:12.485.

Contributing: USA TODAY's Mitchell Northam

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Sourcewell Participating Entities include thousands of governmental, higher education, K-12 education, nonprofit, tribal government, and other public agencies located in the United States and Canada.

Sourcewell encourages the use of Small, Minority-owned, Women's Business Enterprise, Veteran-owned Business Enterprise (S/M/WBE/VBE) suppliers both as prime and subcontractors and encourages the participation of these suppliers in the solicitation process.

A full copy of the Request for Proposals can be found on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal https://proportal.sourcewell-mn.gov.

Only proposals submitted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal will be considered.

Proposals are due no later than August 4, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. Central Time, and late proposals will not be considered.

NOTICES
PUBLIC NOTICE

Orange County Community College hereby invites the submission of sealed bids for the following: ITB-OCCC-2027-06 Shredding and Document Destruction.

Bids will be received until August 4, 2026 at 1:00 pm ET, by Orange County Community College, 115 South St, Middletown, NY 10940, in Orange Hall Room 207. The bid MUST be delivered to a college employee. Interested suppliers must submit a proposal in accordance with solicitation documents posted at http://www.coretrustpg.com/public-sector/solicitations.

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Sourcewell encourages the use of Small, Minority-owned, Women's Business Enterprise, Veteran-owned Business Enterprise (S/M/WBE/VBE) suppliers both as prime and subcontractors and encourages the participation of these suppliers in the solicitation process.

A full copy of the Request for Proposals can be found on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal https://proportal.sourcewell-mn.gov.

Only proposals submitted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal will be considered.

Proposals are due no later than August 11, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. Central Time, and late proposals will not be considered.



Tony Vitello and the Giants were swept in three games at Miami. RHONA WISE/IMAGN IMAGES VIA REUTERS CONNECT

Devers fumes after Giants manager swaps him out

Gabe Lacques
USA TODAY

It took 77 games, but things finally got weird between Rafael Devers and San Francisco Giants manager Tony Vitello.

Devers, the Giants' slugging first baseman, wagged his finger vigorously toward Vitello after the rookie manager sent in a pinch-runner for him in the top of the ninth inning June 21 at Miami, the Giants trailing by a run.

Yet speedy pinch runner Jonah Cox had already entered. Devers, who had drawn a leadoff walk, tried to shoo him away from the bag. Yet he had to yield to the rookie who was called up from Double-A on June 1 and left the field cursing into his helmet.

And then, before Cox could even think about stealing second base, Jung Hoo Lee flied out and Willy Adames hit into a game-ending double play, sealing the Giants' 2-1 loss and a desultory sweep in Miami.

Vitello said in his postgame news conference that Devers' leg had been bothering him a little bit, and that Cox represented their best chance to tie the score, although noting that Marlins reliever Lake Bachar was challenging to steal a base against.

"You know how competitive he is. He wanted to stay in the game," Vitello said. "Once we announce the move, the move is made. Just going with our best effort to win the game. (Devers) was signaling over to us he was good to run. Obviously, would like Jonah to get a bag. He's relatively quick to the plate. But on a double, going on our best chance to win the game.

"In a perfect world, you'd like to see Cox get a bag at second, if he can. At the very least, if you go down, you go down swinging with your fastest guy."

Yet if Cox found his way home, that still would have only tied the score. Devers' bat would have been removed from the middle of the lineup in extra innings, likely the source of Devers' consternation. Devers is third on the Giants with 11 homers and has 246 for his career.

Still, Vitello insists he and the Giants first baseman, owed roughly $225 million through 2033, are good.

"We talk every day. We're good. I'd rather have guys you have to rip off the field," Vitello said shortly before the Giants headed to the airport for a cross-country flight back to San Francisco.

"I don't have any problem with Raffy. We talk every day; he's one of the most entertaining guys to be around. He wants to stay in the game."

The loss wasted a complete-game effort from ace Logan Webb, who gave up five hits and two runs in eight innings. The Giants are now 31-46 in the first season for Vitello, the first manager to make the leap from college coaching, at Tennessee, to the major leagues.

FOR THE RECORD

All times ET

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
N.Y. Yankees	46	30	.605	–
Tampa Bay	43	31	.581	2
Toronto	38	39	.494	8½
Baltimore	37	42	.468	10½
Boston	31	44	.413	14½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	41	37	.526	–
Chi. White Sox	39	37	.513	1
Minnesota	38	41	.481	3½
Detroit	33	44	.429	7½
Kansas City	32	46	.410	9

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	40	39	.506	–
Athletics	38	40	.487	1½
Texas	37	40	.481	2
Houston	37	42	.468	3
L.A. Angels	32	47	.405	8

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	48	28	.632	–
Philadelphia	42	35	.545	6½
Miami	40	38	.513	9
Washington	40	38	.513	9
N.Y. Mets	34	43	.442	14½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	46	29	.613	–
St. Louis	41	34	.547	5
Chicago Cubs	40	37	.519	7
Pittsburgh	39	39	.500	8½
Cincinnati	37	39	.487	9½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Dodgers	49	29	.628	–
San Diego	39	37	.513	9
Arizona	39	38	.506	9½
San Francisco	31	46	.403	17½
Colorado	30	48	.385	19

Sunday's Scores
Milwaukee 9, Atlanta 4
Cincinnati 4, N.Y. Yankees 1
Detroit 5, Chi. White Sox 4, 10 innings
Tampa Bay 4, Washington 3
Miami 2, San Francisco 1
Houston 2, Cleveland 1
St. Louis 12, Kansas City 10
Texas 4, San Diego 3
Pittsburgh 8, Colorado 6
Minnesota 4, Arizona 2
L.A. Angels 9, Athletics 7
Seattle 3, Boston 1
Baltimore 12, L.A. Dodgers 1
Philadelphia 6, N.Y. Mets 2
Toronto at Chicago Cubs, ppd

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

Tuesday's Games
Houston at Toronto, 4:07 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Detroit, 6:40 p.m.
Kansas City at Tampa Bay, 6:40 p.m.
Texas at Miami, 6:40 p.m.
Seattle at Pittsburgh, 6:40 p.m.
Philadelphia at Washington, 6:45 p.m.
Milwaukee at Cincinnati, 7:10 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m.
Cleveland at Chi. White Sox, 7:40 p.m.
L.A. Dodgers at Minnesota, 7:40 p.m.
Arizona at St. Louis, 7:45 p.m.
Boston at Colorado, 8:40 p.m.
Baltimore at L.A. Angels, 9:38 p.m.
Atlanta at San Diego, 9:40 p.m.
Athletics at San Francisco, 9:45 p.m.

Wednesday's Games
Texas at Miami, 12:10 p.m.
Cleveland at Chi. White Sox, 2:10 p.m.
Boston at Colorado, 3:10 p.m.
Baltimore at L.A. Angels, 4:07 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Detroit, 6:40 p.m.
Kansas City at Tampa Bay, 6:40 p.m.
Seattle at Pittsburgh, 6:40 p.m.
Philadelphia at Washington, 6:45 p.m.
Houston at Toronto, 7:07 p.m.
Milwaukee at Cincinnati, 7:10 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m.
L.A. Dodgers at Minnesota, 7:40 p.m.
Arizona at St. Louis, 7:45 p.m.
Atlanta at San Diego, 8:40 p.m.
Athletics at San Francisco, 9:45 p.m.

Thursday's Games
Kansas City at Tampa Bay, 12:10 p.m.
Seattle at Pittsburgh, 12:35 p.m.
Athletics at San Francisco, 3:45 p.m.
Houston at Detroit, 6:40 p.m.
Philadelphia at Washington, 6:45 p.m.
Texas at Toronto, 7:07 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Boston, 7:10 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m.
Arizona at St. Louis, 7:45 p.m.

SOCCER

FIFA World Cup

Group A

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Mexico	2	0	0	6	3	0
Korea Republic	1	1	0	3	2	2
Czechia	0	1	1	1	2	3
South Africa	0	1	1	1	1	3

Group B

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Canada	1	0	1	4	7	1
Switzerland	1	0	1	4	5	2
Bosnia-Herz.	0	1	1	1	2	5
Qatar	0	1	1	1	1	7

Group C

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Brazil	1	0	1	4	4	1
Morocco	1	0	1	4	2	1
Scotland	1	1	0	3	1	1
Haiti	0	2	0	0	0	4

Group D

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
United States	2	0	0	6	6	1
Australia	1	1	0	3	2	2
Paraguay	1	1	0	3	2	4
Turkiye	0	2	0	0	0	3

Group E

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Germany	2	0	0	6	9	2
Ivory Coast	1	1	0	3	2	2
Ecuador	0	1	1	1	0	1
Curacao	0	1	1	1	1	7

Group F

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Netherlands	1	0	1	4	7	3
Japan	1	0	1	4	6	2
Sweden	1	1	0	3	6	6
Tunisia	0	2	0	0	1	9

Group G

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Egypt	1	0	1	4	4	2
IR Iran	0	0	2	2	2	2
Belgium	0	0	2	2	1	1
New Zealand	0	1	1	1	3	5

Group H

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Spain	1	0	1	4	4	0
Uruguay	0	0	2	2	3	3
Cape Verde	0	0	2	2	2	2
Saudi Arabia	0	1	1	1	1	5

Group I

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Norway	1	0	0	3	4	1
France	1	0	0	3	3	1
Senegal	0	1	0	0	1	3
Iraq	0	1	0	0	1	4

Group J

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Argentina	1	0	0	3	3	0
Austria	1	0	0	3	3	1
Jordan	0	1	0	0	1	3
Algeria	0	1	0	0	0	3

Group K

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Colombia	1	0	0	3	3	1
Congo DR	0	0	1	1	1	1
Portugal	0	0	1	1	1	1
Uzbekistan	0	1	0	0	1	3

Group L

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
England	1	0	0	3	4	2
Ghana	1	0	0	3	1	0
Panama	0	1	0	0	0	1
Croatia	0	1	0	0	2	4

Monday's Games
Group J: Argentina vs. Austria
Group I: France vs. Iraq
Group I: Norway vs. Senegal
Group J: Jordan vs. Algeria

Tuesday's Games
Group K: Portugal vs. Uzbekistan (Houston), 1 p.m.
Group L: England vs. Ghana (Foxborough, Mass.), 4 p.m.
Group L: Panama vs. Croatia (Toronto), 7 p.m.
Group K: Colombia vs. DR Congo (Zapopan, Mexico), 10 p.m.

Wednesday's Games
Group B: Switzerland vs. Canada (Vancouver, Canada), 3 p.m.
Group B: Bosnia and Herzegovina vs. Qatar (Seattle), 3 p.m.
Group C: Scotland vs. Brazil (Miami Gardens, Fla.), 6 p.m.
Group C: Morocco vs. Haiti (Atlanta), 6 p.m.
Group A: Czechia vs. Mexico (Mexico City), 9 p.m.
Group A: South Africa vs. South Korea (Guadalupe, Mexico), 9 p.m.

Thursday's Games
Group E: Ecuador vs. Germany (East Rutherford, N.J.), 4 p.m.
Group E: Curacao vs. Ivory Coast (Philadelphia), 4 p.m.
Group F: Japan vs. Sweden (Arlington, Texas), 7 p.m.
Group F: Tunisia vs. Netherlands (Kansas City, Mo.), 7 p.m.
Group D: Turkey vs. United States (Inglewood, Calif.), 10 p.m.
Group D: Paraguay vs. Australia (Santa Clara, Calif.), 10 p.m.

Friday's Games
Group I: Norway vs. France (Foxborough, Mass.), 3 p.m.
Group I: Senegal vs. Iraq (Toronto), 3 p.m.
Group H: Cape Verde vs. Saudi Arabia (Houston), 8 p.m.
Group H: Uruguay vs. Spain (Zapopan, Mexico), 8 p.m.
Group G: Egypt vs. Iran (Seattle), 11 p.m.
Group G: New Zealand vs. Belgium (Vancouver, Canada), 11 p.m.

Saturday's Games
Group L: Panama vs. England (East Rutherford, N.J.), 5 p.m.
Group L: Croatia vs. Ghana (Philadelphia), 5 p.m.
Group K: Colombia vs. Portugal (Miami Gardens, Fla.), 7:30 p.m.
Group K: DR Congo vs. Uzbekistan (Atlanta Stadium), 7:30 p.m.
Group J: Algeria vs. Austria (Kansas City, Mo.), 10 p.m.
Group J: Jordan vs. Argentina (Arlington, Texas), 10 p.m.

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	11	4	.733	–
N.Y. Liberty	11	6	.647	1
Indiana	9	7	.563	2½
Washington	8	7	.533	3
Toronto	8	8	.500	3½
Chicago Sky	4	11	.267	7
Connecticut	2	15	.118	10

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	13	4	.765	–
Las Vegas	12	4	.750	½
Dallas	10	6	.625	2½
Golden State	10	7	.588	3
L.A. Sparks	8	8	.500	4½
Portland	8	9	.471	5
Phoenix	5	12	.294	8
Seattle	3	14	.176	10

Sunday's Scores
Las Vegas 92, Golden State 73
Washington 84, Minnesota 79
L.A. Sparks 98, N.Y. Liberty 97

Monday's Games
Chicago at Connecticut
Toronto at Atlanta
Phoenix at Indiana
Dallas at Seattle

Tuesday's Game
N.Y. Liberty at Las Vegas, 10 p.m.

Wednesday's Games
Phoenix at Indiana, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Washington, 7:30 p.m.
Portland at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Atlanta at Golden State, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games
L.A. Sparks at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Las Vegas, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Liberty at Seattle, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games
Washington at Connecticut, 7:30 p.m.
Portland at Chicago, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Golden State, 10 p.m.

DEALS

FOOTBALL
National Football League
DENVER BRONCOS – DT Tyler Onyedim signed/draft choice Four-year contract (through 2029).
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS – DE Keyron Crawford signed/draft choice Four-year contract (through 2029).

WEATHER

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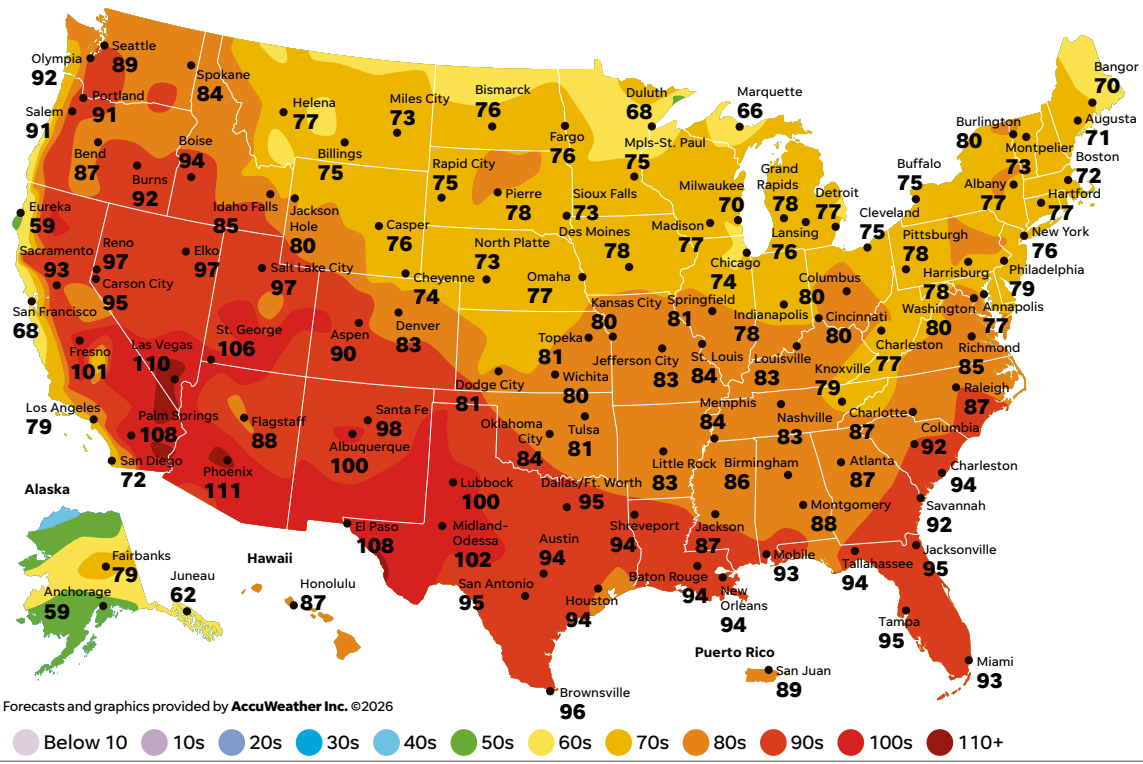
TODAY'S FORECAST

A corridor of thunderstorms, some severe, will extend from **Minnesota** to the **Texas** Panhandle today. Any severe thunderstorm will be capable of producing damaging winds, hail and even a tornado. Spotty thunderstorms will dot the **Southeast** during the afternoon.

It will be summerlike, with plenty of humidity and some sunshine. Meanwhile, a storm slowly moving off the coast will spread rain from **Maine** to **Maryland**. Interior locations will dry out by midday.

Elsewhere, a strong area of high pressure anchored over the western **United States** will support dry and very warm weather from **New Mexico** to **Washington**. In the **Pacific Northwest**, temperatures will be 10-15 degrees above the historical average, and may approach records.

TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES



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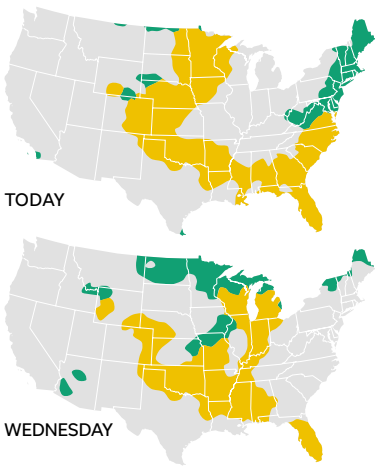
PRECIPITATION FORECAST

T-storms Rain Snow Ice/mix



EXTREMES

Note: For contiguous 48 states through Sunday

HOTTEST: 111° Death Valley, Calif.
COLDEST: 33° Alamosa, Colo.

TOP TRAVEL CITIES Air quality index (AQI)

ATLANTA	BALTIMORE	BOSTON	CHARLOTTE	CHICAGO	DALLAS/FT. WORTH	DENVER	DETROIT	HONOLULU	HOUSTON	LAS VEGAS	LOS ANGELES
TUE Humid 87/68	TUE Showers around 78/63	TUE Morning rain 72/64	TUE T-storm 87/66	TUE Partly sunny 74/61	TUE Clearing 95/77	TUE Heavy t-storm 83/57	TUE Partly sunny 77/58	TUE Showers around 87/76	TUE Humid 94/77	TUE Sunny, hot 110/84	TUE Mostly sunny 79/61
WED Partly sunny 88/72	WED Partly sunny 85/64	WED Warmer 82/65	WED Partly sunny 88/68	WED T-storms 79/63	WED Breezy 96/77	WED Stray t-storm 85/58	WED T-storms 78/62	WED Showers around 87/75	WED Partly sunny 94/76	WED Partly sunny 106/87	WED Some sun 80/62
THU Stray t-storm 88/72	THU Stray t-storm 87/70	THU Partly sunny 81/66	THU Stray t-storm 91/72	THU Showers 78/62	THU Breezy 95/77	THU A P.M. t-storm 77/61	THU Showers around 79/60	THU A few showers 86/74	THU Partly sunny 92/76	THU Sunny 109/84	THU Some sun 78/63
AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Unhealthy s/g	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Unhealthy s/g	AQI Moderate

MIAMI	MPLS-ST. PAUL	NEW ORLEANS	NEW YORK	ORLANDO	PHILADELPHIA	PHOENIX	SALT LAKE CITY	SAN DIEGO	SAN FRANCISCO	SEATTLE	WASHINGTON
TUE Stray t-storm 93/79	TUE T-storms 75/62	TUE Humid 94/77	TUE Showers around 76/64	TUE Stray t-storm 98/76	TUE Showers around 79/64	TUE Sunny, hot 111/89	TUE Sunny, hot 97/74	TUE Shower 72/65	TUE Partly sunny 68/54	TUE Very warm 89/62	TUE Showers around 80/65
WED A P.M. t-storm 92/78	WED A few showers 77/56	WED Partly sunny 92/76	WED Partly sunny 84/66	WED A P.M. t-storm 92/75	WED Partly sunny 85/66	WED Hazy sun, hot 111/91	WED Sunny, hot 99/69	WED Partly sunny 73/67	WED Some sun 71/56	WED Partly sunny 87/54	WED Mostly sunny 85/68
THU A P.M. t-storm 91/79	THU Showers around 74/57	THU Partly sunny 92/75	THU Partly sunny 81/68	THU A P.M. t-storm 92/76	THU Stray t-storm 86/69	THU Hazy sun, hot 114/90	THU Sunny, warm 92/73	THU Partly sunny 74/65	THU Breezy 71/55	THU Clouds 72/54	THU Stray t-storm 89/73
AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Unhealthy s/g	AQI Unhealthy s/g	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Moderate

c Cloudy **f** Fog **i** Ice **r** Rain **sf** Snowflurries **sn** Snow **w** Windy **dr** Drizzle **h** Haze **pc** Partly cloudy **s** Sunny **sh** Showers **t** Thunderstorms

U.S. CITIES

	TODAY	WED
Akron, Ohio	75/53pc	78/59c
Albany, N.Y.	77/59pc	80/56s
Albuquerque	100/71s	99/68s
Allentown, Pa.	76/57pc	82/57s
Amarillo, Texas	96/68t	96/67t
Anaheim, Calif.	81/62pc	82/62pc
Anchorage, Alaska	59/49c	61/49pc
Aspen, Colo.	90/48pc	85/50pc
Atlantic City, N.J.	77/66sh	81/67pc
Augusta, Ga.	90/68t	89/68pc
Austin, Texas	94/76pc	96/73pc
Bakersfield, Calif.	100/72s	100/72s
Baton Rouge, La.	94/75c	91/75pc
Billings, Mont.	75/51s	75/53pc
Birmingham, Ala.	86/66pc	87/69t
Bismarck, N.D.	76/53c	73/50pc
Boise, Idaho	94/63s	95/63s
Buffalo, N.Y.	75/56pc	74/58pc
Burlington, Vt.	80/59sh	79/60pc
Cedar Rapids, Iowa	76/63pc	81/60pc
Charleston, S.C.	94/72t	89/73t
Charleston, W.Va.	77/54sh	82/58pc
Cheyenne, Wyo.	74/54t	75/53t
Cincinnati	80/58pc	79/62c
Cleveland	75/57pc	79/61pc
Colorado Springs	87/57t	78/56t
Columbia, S.C.	92/70t	89/70pc
Columbus, Ohio	80/58pc	81/63pc
Corpus Christi, Texas	91/78s	93/78s
Dayton, Ohio	78/57pc	78/65pc
Daytona Beach, Fla.	95/75t	91/74t
Des Moines, Iowa	78/65t	83/59s
Duluth, Minn.	68/51t	63/49sh
Durham, N.C.	85/66t	88/67pc
El Paso, Texas	108/80s	108/80s
Fairbanks, Alaska	79/51sh	69/48c
Flagstaff, Ariz.	88/56s	84/53sh
Fargo, N.D.	76/55t	71/54pc
Fort Myers, Fla.	95/78t	93/77t
Fort Smith, Ark.	85/72t	83/72t
Fort Wayne, Ind.	77/53pc	77/61t
Fresno, Calif.	101/69s	100/69s
Grand Rapids, Mich.	78/52pc	73/61t
Green Bay, Wis.	74/57pc	70/57t
Greensboro, N.C.	82/63t	86/66pc
Greenville, S.C.	87/63t	87/64pc
Harrisburg, Pa.	78/61pc	84/62s
Hartford, Conn.	77/61r	82/58s
Indianapolis	78/57pc	79/66t
Islip, N.Y.	77/65r	84/61pc
Jackson, Miss.	87/74t	87/73t
Jacksonville, Fla.	95/75t	92/73t
Jefferson City, Mo.	83/69pc	81/69t
Kansas City	80/66pc	80/66t
Key West, Fla.	90/82t	90/82t
Knoxville, Tenn.	79/62pc	85/65pc
Laredo, Texas	98/78s	100/77w
Lexington, Ky.	81/59pc	81/65pc
Lincoln, Neb.	77/65t	81/61s
Little Rock, Ark.	83/72t	82/71t
Long Beach, Calif.	78/64pc	79/64pc
Louisville, Ky.	83/63pc	85/69t
Lubbock, Texas	100/73pc	100/72pc
Madison, Wis.	77/62pc	75/58t
Manchester, N.H.	77/59r	83/57s
Memphis, Tenn.	84/70pc	83/71t
Milwaukee	70/58pc	74/62t
Mobile, Ala.	93/75pc	90/72t
Modesto, Calif.	95/61s	95/59s
Montgomery, Ala.	88/69t	90/70t
Myrtle Beach, S.C.	90/72t	86/75t
Nags Head, N.C.	86/69t	79/70pc
Nashville, Tenn.	83/63pc	87/69pc
Newark, N.J.	80/66sh	87/67pc
New Haven, Conn.	76/62r	84/59pc
Norfolk, Va.	84/70t	83/68pc
Oakland, Calif.	68/54pc	69/56pc
Oklahoma City	84/71t	88/71t
Omaha, Neb.	77/64t	81/61s
Palm Springs, Calif.	108/84s	109/80pc
Pensacola, Fla.	93/75t	91/74t
Pierre, S.D.	78/54s	76/51pc
Pittsburgh	78/54pc	80/59pc
Portland, Maine	72/57sh	81/57pc
Portland, Ore.	91/64s	91/57s
Providence, R.I.	74/61r	83/59s
Raleigh, N.C.	87/67t	90/69pc
Rapid City, S.D.	75/51s	69/49c
Reno, Nev.	97/62s	95/61s
Richmond, Va.	85/63t	87/64pc
Rochester, N.Y.	76/54pc	76/58pc
Sacramento, Calif.	93/55s	92/55s
San Antonio	95/78pc	95/74pc
San Jose, Calif.	79/57s	81/58s
Santa Fe, N.M.	98/59s	96/60pc
Sarasota, Fla.	94/80t	93/79t
Savannah, Ga.	92/73t	91/72t
Scottsdale, Ariz.	109/85s	111/85h
Shreveport, La.	94/77t	95/74t
Sioux Falls, S.D.	73/59t	78/54pc
South Bend, Ind.	74/50pc	77/61t
Spokane, Wash.	84/63s	89/60pc
Springfield, Mo.	81/68pc	77/67t
Springfield, Ill.	81/60pc	80/63t
St. Louis	84/68pc	80/70t
St. Petersburg, Fla.	94/79t	91/79t
Syracuse, N.Y.	77/57pc	78/57pc
Tallahassee, Fla.	94/75s	94/70t
Tampa, Fla.	95/80t	91/79t
Toledo, Ohio	77/55pc	78/61t
Topeka, Kan.	81/68pc	83/67pc
Tucson, Ariz.	108/80s	107/82s
Tupelo, Miss.	83/68pc	86/70t
Tulsa, Okla.	81/72t	82/71t
Virginia Beach, Va.	84/70t	82/70pc
Wichita, Kan.	80/68pc	83/67c
Wilmington, Del.	78/62sh	85/61pc
Winston-Salem, N.C.	84/63t	86/66pc
Worcester, Mass.	71/61r	79/60pc

WORLD CITIES

	TODAY	WED
Beijing	81/65sh	88/62s
Buenos Aires	54/39s	52/43pc
Cancun, Mexico	91/78sh	92/76pc
Dubai, UAE	109/92s	114/92s
Frankfurt	94/69pc	97/73pc
Hong Kong	92/84r	93/84t
Istanbul	84/67s	85/69s
Jerusalem	82/65s	84/65s
Johannesburg	64/43h	68/41h
London	97/72s	100/73s
Mexico City	76/57r	73/58t
Montreal	78/59c	76/61pc
Moscow	74/52pc	70/53pc
Mumbai, India	86/80r	86/81r
Paris	104/73s	106/76s
Rio de Janeiro	78/69s	75/66r
Rome	92/69pc	92/71s
Seoul	87/64c	85/66s
Singapore	88/78t	87/79t
Sydney	65/46pc	66/56s
Toronto	77/56pc	75/59pc
Tokyo	79/67c	78/69c

MLB POWER RANKINGS

Free-falling Giants yet to hit bottom

Gabe Lacques
USA TODAY



Rafael Devers is hitting .238 in 166 games since joining the San Francisco Giants. SAUL MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

The San Francisco Giants are on the verge of a low they haven't reached since 2018.

And that doesn't even include their myriad off-field dramas.

The Giants were swept in three games at Miami this past weekend and once again fell 15 games below .500, at 31-46. They haven't been 16 games underwater since the final day of the 2018 season.

The Giants are also firmly ensconced at No. 29 in USA TODAY Sports' MLB power rankings – and No. 30 Colorado isn't too far from dropping them to the cellar. While the Giants franchise is known for its June swoons, this one is unique.

The club has lost five of eight games since starting pitcher Landen Roupp and two relievers scrawled a Bible verse on their caps on the Giants' Pride night, a story that grew into more than a week-long news cycle, despite the pitchers claiming they simply want to "play ball."

But that's not going so hot either. Rafael Devers publicly protested his removal from their June 21 game at Miami by wagging his finger at manager Tony Vitello and then cursing into his helmet; shortly thereafter, the Giants hit into a game-ending double play. Adrian Houser, one of Buster Posey's offseason pitching signings, is ticketed for the bullpen and not happy about it.

And the Giants are on pace for 65 wins, fewest since 2017. This might not be bottom, either.

A look at USA TODAY Sports' updated rankings:

1. Atlanta Braves (–): Bryce Elder has given up five, six and eight earned runs in a five-start span.

2. Milwaukee Brewers (–): Brandon Woodruff was set to return June 22 after a two-month siesta due to shoulder inflammation.

3. Los Angeles Dodgers (–): Shohei Ohtani now a two-way player at home, too.

4. New York Yankees (–): Paul Goldschmidt has four homers in his last seven games and 12 for the year, two more than 2025 total.

5. Tampa Bay Rays (–): Chandler Simpson finally snaps a 30-game drought without a stolen base.

6. Philadelphia Phillies (+3): Still that guy: Kyle Schwarber's three-homer night gives him seven more dingers than anyone in National League.

7. St. Louis Cardinals (–): Michael McGreevy's K rate, ERA slide a good bit in June.

8. Cleveland Guardians (-2): Travis Bazzana is happening: Posts first multiple-homer game on 4-for-4 night.

9. Chicago White Sox (-1): Seranthony Dominguez blows his fourth save.

10. Chicago Cubs (+1): Pete Crow-Armstrong's 19-game heater: 36-for-80 (.450), 10 homers, 1.432 OPS. Wow.

11. Seattle Mariners (+1): Kade Anderson Watch: Scoreless streak up to 27 ⅔ innings, SO/BB ratio 90-8 at Class AA.

12. San Diego Padres (-2): The unstoppable Samad Taylor promoted to leadoff spot.

13. Washington Nationals (+1): CJ Abrams homers in three straight games, pushes OPS to .901.

14. Arizona Diamondbacks (-1): Zac Gallen's ERA climbs to 6.10.

15. Miami Marlins (+3): Once again finding their midseason mojo: At 14-4, own baseball's best record in June.

16. Toronto Blue Jays (–): Shane Bieber will be making his long-awaited season debut June 23 at Houston.

17. Pittsburgh Pirates (-2): Losing seven straight Paul Skenes starts is no way to contend.

18. Athletics (+1): After a long week in Vegas and giving up 27 runs to the Angels in Yolo County, "home" ERA now 6.14 – worse than that of the Rockies.

19. Texas Rangers (-2): Remember Jordan Montgomery? Tosses a scoreless inning at Class AA in first outing since 2024.

20. Baltimore Orioles (+1): Pete Alonso is delivering: Eighteen homers, a .812 OPS.

21. Cincinnati Reds (-1): Elly De La Cruz on the minor league rehab trail back to Cincy.

22. Houston Astros (–): Three straight series wins and they say they'll be buyers.

23. Minnesota Twins (+1): A 5-1 road trip. Dodgers' visit to Target Field will be a nice heat check.

24. New York Mets (-1): Hey, they're only five games out – of fourth place in the NL East.

25. Detroit Tigers (+1): Swept the mighty White Sox, so perhaps all is not lost.

26. Boston Red Sox (-1): Aroldis Chapman just three strikeouts shy of tying Hoyt Wilhelm's 1,363, most by a reliever in major league history.

27. Kansas City Royals (–): Bobby Witt Jr. going down just the latest bummer in a season full of 'em.

28. Los Angeles Angels (–): Donovan Walton with a six-game extra-base hit streak. Yes, the Donovan Walton.

29. San Francisco Giants (–): Great timing: After awkwardness of Rafael Devers' Mutombo routine, the Giants hop a plane for their longest flight of the year to date – 2,600 miles.

30. Colorado Rockies (–): Cole Carrigg providing some fuel to this season.

U.S. OPEN WINNERS AND LOSERS

Clark isn't the only winner at Shinnecock

Kristie Ackert
USA TODAY



Wyndham Clark celebrates after winning the U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club on June 21. BILL STREICHER/IMAGN IMAGES

They cheered his misses and sang to the other guy, but Wyndham Clark won the U.S. Open anyway June 21. He held off Sam Burns by one stroke at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club for his second U.S. Open title. Technically, he went wire-to-wire, with a gallery rooting against him pretty much until the final holes early in the evening.

Scottie Scheffler, who was serenaded the whole final round with "Happy Birthday," could not turn his 30th birthday into a career Grand Slam.

The amateurs stole a few moments and most of the favorites faded.

Here are the winners and losers from Shinnecock.

Winners

Wyndham Clark: He won the U.S. Open as the man the whole place was rooting against. Clark closed with a 3-over 73 and held off Sam Burns by just one shot for his second U.S. Open title. He grinded it out. With the lead down to one, he yanked his drive into the fescue at the par-5 16th, hacked out, then drained a 24-foot downhill putt for the birdie that put it away.

"New York didn't really like me," he said. "I love you guys."

Sam Burns: He started the day seven back and even par for the week, then made a final round a fight with birdies on three of his first five holes. He dropped a 17-footer on the 16th to pull within one, but the putts would not fall down the stretch. He pushed a birdie try wide at No. 17 and watched another slide past on 18. He posted 3-under and then had to sit and watch Clark close it out.

Tom Kim: Nobody had him finishing in the top five, but there he was on Sunday. It was his first top-five finish in official PGA Tour competition since the 2023 Travelers, where he lost a playoff to Scheffler. He gave himself a chance and went for broke at the end, firing at the 18th for the eagle he needed to match Burns only to watch the ball settle 6 feet short.

Jackson Koivun: In his last round as an amateur, Koivun shot 2-under 68, the best round by any amateur posted Sunday. He finished 5 over and tied for 32nd, two clear of playing partner Miles Russell. The world's top-ranked amateur turns pro now, with his professional debut set for the John Deere Classic in early July.

Ryder Cowan: Cowan, 21, fought through a playoff just to reach Shinnecock, then led the amateurs wire-to-wire behind a record-tying opening-day 68. A closing 73 let Jackson Koivun tie him at 5 over to share low amateur honors. Still, Cowan finished a shot ahead of Rory McIlroy.

Miles Russell: He won a lot of fans over with a touching gift to his dad on Father's Day. Russell, the second youngest player to make a U.S. Open cut since World War II, had his dad slip inside the ropes, take his bag and caddie for him on the final hole. It was a sweet moment, but what should be remembered is that a 17-year-old was there on Sunday.

Ludvig Åberg: He may not have won his first major, but Åberg takes momentum out of this weekend. He matched the lowest score of the day with a 4-under 66 to finish at 3 over, a tie for 17th. A birdie-less Friday had knocked Åberg out of contention, but he can take that final-round 66 into next month's British Open.

Losers

Bryson DeChambeau: He came to Shinnecock as a two-time U.S. Open champion and left having missed his third straight major cut. Royal Birkdale is next month, and a missed cut there would complete the humiliating feat of missing out on all four majors.

Jon Rahm: He was the only man in the field to go bogey-free in the first round. Then, he shot 78 on Friday, drop-kicked his driver and went home. The 68-78 split was the ugliest of the weekend.

Brooks Koepka: The last man to lift the trophy at Shinnecock after winning on the course in 2018, Koepka didn't play like he was happy to be back. He made six bogeys on the front nine Friday on his way to a 10-over 77.

Patrick Cantlay: This was his fourth missed cut in his last six majors. He needed a birdie at the last to play the weekend and three-putted instead, finishing 6 over.

Adam Scott: This one is bittersweet. Scott made his 100th consecutive major start at Shinnecock, a streak only Jack Nicklaus has ever reached. He shot 73-75 and missed the cut.

Rickie Fowler: For the third consecutive year, Fowler watched the weekend at the U.S. Open from home. Five bogeys in his final 12 holes Friday did Fowler in.

Rory McIlroy: He played the weekend, but not well. He closed his third round with five bogeys and then opened Sunday with three more.

Bigger World Cup means players have more days off



Nancy Armour
Columnist
USA TODAY



USA goalkeeper Matt Turner and his family attend the MLB game between the Angels and the Rays on June 14 at Angel Stadium. KIYOSHI MIO/ IMAGN IMAGES

LOS ANGELES – Expanding the World Cup doesn't only mean more games.

It means more rest, too.

After having a full week between the opener against Paraguay and the second game against Australia, the U.S. men's national team has six days before the group stage finale June 25 against Turkey. Compare that with previous World Cups, when there were typically four days between group stage games, and there's anywhere from three to six days between games in the knockout rounds.

At the 2022 World Cup, for example, the U.S. men's national team played every four days.

"I absolutely love it," Tyler Adams said. "Your body feels it, obviously, a little bit more coming in from the end of a season and into a World Cup where there's so much emotion, so much adrenaline, all these things. So yeah, it's nice having (more time off)."

When there are only four days between games, the days go quick. The first is typically an off or recovery day. There's traveling to the site of the next match, which usually occurs two days before the game. (Though in Qatar, with all the games in and around Doha, travel could be done day of game.) And oh, yeah, training, meetings and film review have to be fit in somewhere in between.

That doesn't leave much time to catch your breath, let alone do anything else.

At this World Cup, nothing has to be rushed. The first day after the USMNT plays is usually focused on recovery. Massages, stretching, ice baths, things like that. The next is a complete off day, giving the players time to spend with their families, sightsee or relax. Then it's back to training, and there are still three or four full days to get work done.

It's similar to the club schedule where, outside of cup competitions, there is typically one game a week.

"You're able to actually game-plan games, whereas in Qatar, you weren't really able to do that. You're able to game-plan training, you don't have to go really full into it," said Brenden Aaronson, who is playing in his second World Cup. "I think that's the biggest part of it. And I think that's going to help us throughout this time."

The USMNT doesn't have to log a lot of miles in the group stage, playing two of its games at SoFi Stadium, about an hour's drive from its base camp in Irvine, California, and the third in Seattle. Compare that with, say, England, which has its base camp in Kansas City, Missouri, and group stage games in Dallas, Boston and New York.

"For teams that have to travel a lot and play in three different places, I think it's a good thing that they have enough time to be able to recover and take care of their body and take care of their injured," Weston McKennie said.

Giving injured players that extra time to recover might be the biggest benefit of this expanded tournament. At least, it's going to be for the USMNT.

Christian Pulisic didn't play in the game against Australia after injuring his left calf in the first half against Paraguay. But coach Mauricio Pochettino said he expects Pulisic will be ready for the group stage finale against Turkey.

The Turkey game is 13 days after the U.S. played Paraguay. In that same time frame in Qatar, the USMNT had finished the group stage and played its round of 16 game against the Netherlands.

"I've enjoyed the fact that we've had time to de-stress from the game. We've got more time in between games for people who might pick up niggles and stuff to actually get ready for the next game. So I do think there's benefits to that," Antonee Robinson said.

So what are players doing with all this newfound free time? Teams from other countries are taking advantage of the chance to sightsee. Harry Kane and England teammates Djed Spence and Dan Burn went to a Kansas City Royals baseball game with manager Thomas Tuchel. Norway's Erling Haaland checked out Katz's Deli in New York.

The USMNT is staying at a beachside resort, so sun and sand is always an option. Similar to in Qatar, U.S. Soccer has set up a lounge at the team hotel where players can watch games, play video games or hang out.

But for many of the USMNT players, the days off are a chance to spend time with their families. For players who are in Europe for the majority of the year, that's no small thing.

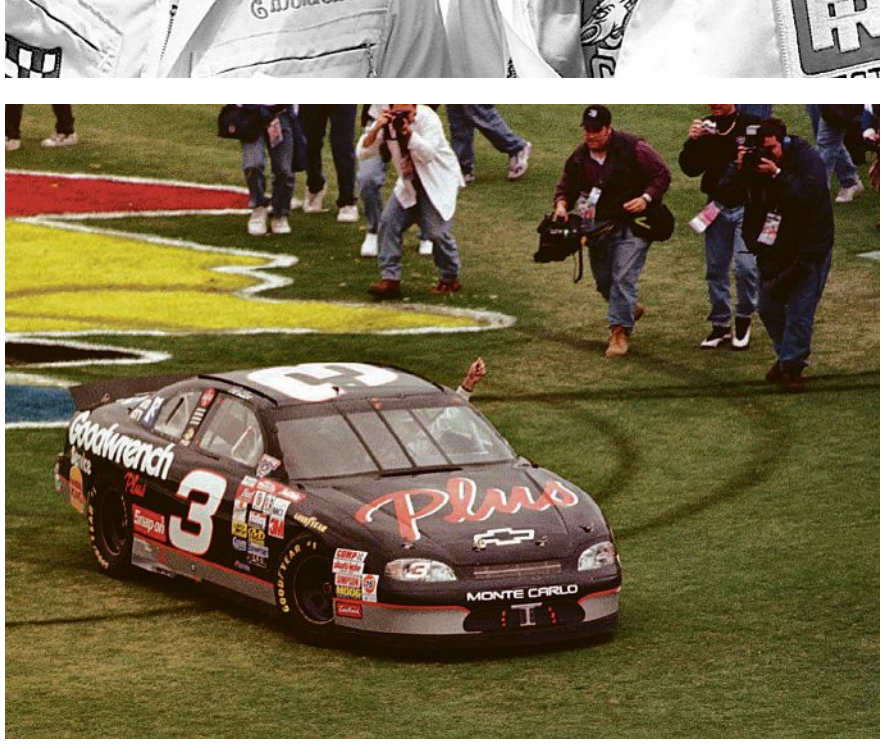
"Off day, I don't want to spend time with any of (my teammates)," Adams cracked.

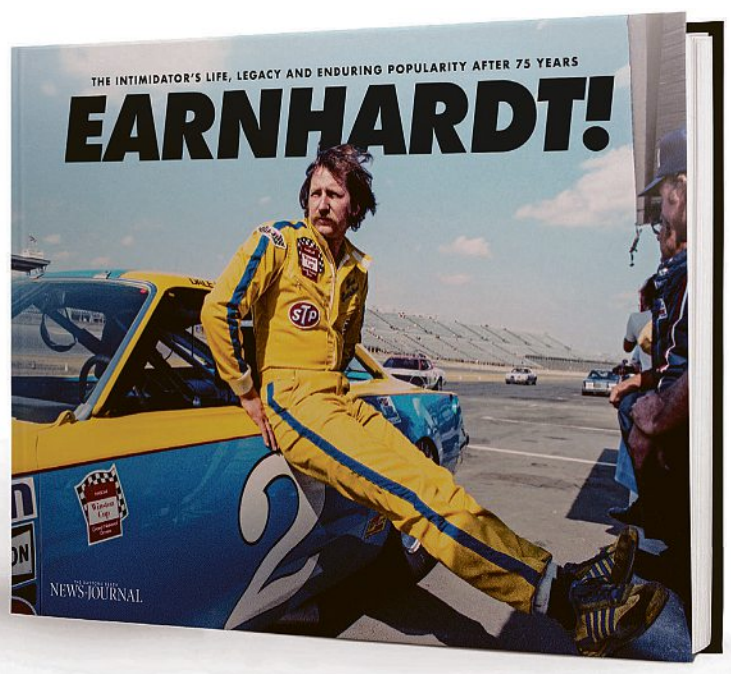
"I don't get to see my brothers, my mom or my dad often," Adams continued. "So that was super important to just be able to hang out with them and put the game to the side for a day."

No team likes to press pause when it's winning at the World Cup. But the trade-offs of these extra days off make it worth it.

Remember the life of a
Legend







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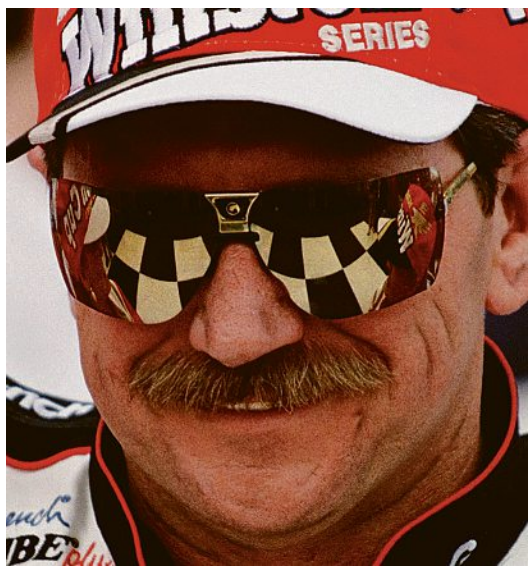

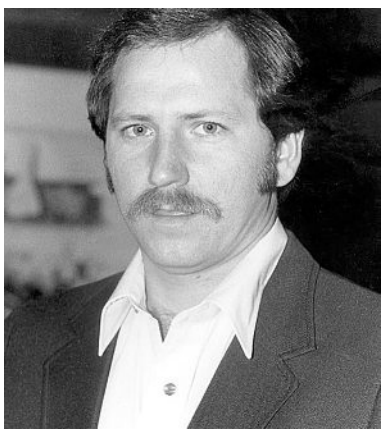

THE DAYTONA BEACH
NEWS-JOURNAL

‘Toy Story’ universe expands its reach in the internet age

We rank the beloved franchise as it has grown, from playthings to movie icons. **Page 2D**

The voice of the summer has book lovers by the throat

Jeff Hays has helped make Matt Dinniman’s “Dungeon Crawler Carl” series a hit. **Page 4D**

LIFELINE



KENA BETANCUR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

THEY SAID WHAT?
THE STARS’ BEST QUOTES

“It wasn’t a popular choice. Nobody wanted ‘You Oughta Know’ first. They were terrified of that song.” – Alanis Morissette said of her Grammy-winning anthem on the “Talk Easy With Sam Fragoso” podcast. She said she had to sell her team on putting the track out in 1995 as her first single from “Jagged Little Pill,” and didn’t mind being “misinterpreted” or labeled “angry.” She added, “Every woman I knew was pissed because they were paying attention. How do you not get pissed?”

IT’S YOUR BIRTHDAY
WHO’S CELEBRATING TODAY



Mraz

Author **Richard Bach** turns 90. Actor **Ted Shackelford**, 80. Supreme Court Associate Justice **Clarence Thomas**, 78. Singer **Glenn Danzig** (Misfits), 71. Bassist-producer-presenter **Randy Jackson**, 70. Actor **Frances McDormand**, 69. Director **Joss Whedon**, 62. Singer **Chico DeBarge** (DeBarge), 60. Actor **Selma Blair**, 54. Actor **Joel Edgerton**, 52. Singer **KT Tunstall**, 51. Singer **Jason Mraz**, 49. Rapper **Memphis Bleek**, 48. Actor **Melissa Rauch**, 46.
– USA TODAY Network

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Aries (March 21-April 19). Having trouble getting your message across? Conversations feel slightly off in close connections.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Concentration may feel impossible today. Having trouble organizing your mind so you can push forward? Narrow it down.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Expressing yourself may require jumping a few self-doubt hurdles. Do you want to share, but feel the hesitation creep in?

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Blurring the lines of communication? What you feel and what you say may differ.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Is intuition speaking? Or your mind? It may be hard to tell the difference.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Questioning your place in the community. The Libra moon clashing with Mercury may have you wondering if you belong.

Libra (Sept.23-Oct. 23). What you feel may clash with meeting external expectations. Tempted to tell the people what they want to hear?

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Stuffing your brain with information? You may feel overwhelmed by thoughts today. Pause and give yourself rest.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Feeling out of sync with others? Social interactions may stir up complicated feelings.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). External pressures and persistent disruptions can heighten stress levels today. Ready to snap at the next person who interrupts you?

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Big dreams may crash down to earth when daily reality gets involved. What’s actually doable? Ground your inspirations with practicality.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Do your feelings need an outlet? Redirect the tension into something creative.

STREAMING



Jai Courtney in “Dutton Ranch.” PHOTOS PROVIDED BY EMERSON MILLER/PARAMOUNT+

Courtney punches in at ‘Dutton Ranch’

Bryan Alexander USA TODAY

Jai Courtney might be the ultimate optimist – or downright crazy – when it comes to the future of his wild card “Dutton Ranch” villain Rob-Will Jackson and “Yellowstone” legend Rip Wheeler (Cole Hauser). • There is serious bad blood between Rip and Rob-Will, the substance-abusing, wayward scion of the Dutton-rival Jackson family in the “Yellowstone” spinoff. Rip planted his fist into Rob-Will’s face during their first meeting in Episode 1, and things have only gotten more tense through Episode 7 (now streaming on Paramount+). • Still, Courtney, 40, is hopeful that the duo might mend fences one day.

“Things are coming to a head with Rob-Will and Rip,” Courtney tells USA TODAY. “But I feel there’s potential for them to join forces at a certain point. This is not a spoiler; it’s just what I feel. They’re two alpha guys, Rip and Rob. There’s a potential for arm wrestles and camaraderie at some point.”

Until then, viewers can enjoy the boiling, sometimes exploding, tension between Rob-Will and Rip, the new Jackson family ranch foreman.

Born to tough-as-nails single mother Beulah Jackson (Annette Bening), the owner of the 10 Pedal Ranch, and a mysteriously deceased father, Rob-Will has regressed into the full-on “Dutton Ranch” villain – even menacing his more measured, adopted brother Joaquin (Juan Pablo Raba).

“You know how these shows work, we need someone coming in and messing things up,” says Sydney-born Courtney, who dismisses the “villain” term. “There is an antagonistic quality to Rob-Will. He’s grappled with substance abuse issues, a good dose of Mommy issues and there’s some Daddy issues sprinkled in, too.”

Drug-raging Rob-Will kills his own ranch hand in Episode 1, which immediately shows the malaise behind Texas’s long-standing Jackson family and kicks off the slow-brewing series chaos. Joaquin had to clean that mess up, all the more difficult since the Jacksons don’t have a Dutton “train station” to dispose of their bodies.

Beulah orders her beloved Rob-Will to rehab (for the third time) and out of the family business line of succession after this alleged last straw killing. Yet, Rob-Will walks out of rehab, and is intent on thwarting the ceremonial ranch handover to heir apparent Joaquin.

Rob-Will has the support of his adoring wild child daughter, Oreana (Natalie Alyn Lind), but not of openly distrustful Rip, who gave the gun-toting Rob-Will that punch felt around the Dutton universe in their gas station first meeting. Rob-Will’s bloody-mouthed Rip retort was just as classic.

“You get that one for free,” Rob Will said. “The next one’s gonna cost you.”

Courtney has ‘been hit by a lot of heroes’

Courtney has become an experienced face target for the best Hollywood superstars.

“I’ve been hit by a lot of heroes,” Courtney says of the screen punch. “I know how to give that head-snap and make them feel pretty (expletive) cool about it. That’s what happens when you play these antagonist, morally ambiguous characters for so long.”

Courtney’s antagonist résumé is indeed loaded, including the deranged

See COURTNEY, Page 2D



Rob-Will (Courtney) laughs before being punched by Rip (Cole Hauser).

STREAMING

Coben’s ‘Find You’ taps into a father’s nightmare

Ralphie Aversa
USA TODAY

The latest Harlan Coben project to hit Netflix will have you on the edge of your seat.

In Netflix’s new limited series “I Will Find You” (all eight episodes streaming now), David Burroughs (Sam Worthington) is serving a jail sentence after he was found guilty of murdering his son, though he did not commit the crime. After receiving evidence that his son is still alive, David teams up with his ex-sister-in-law, Rachel Mills (Britt Lower).

What ensues is a prison break and rescue attempt that brings the page-turning Coben novel to the small screen – yet, the two characters at the center of the action have no experience with prison breaks or rescue attempts.

“I said to Britt early on, I didn’t want [the characters] to be like Wonder Twins,” Worthington, 49, jokes to USA TODAY alongside his costar. “I wanted a real relationship between them that felt authentic in this melodramatic world.”

Achieving that authenticity also meant understanding even the smallest of details. And Worthington and Lower say they didn’t hold back, asking show producers various questions during filming, such as how their characters obtained a phone, changed out of smelly clothes or got something to eat while attempting to escape authorities?



Britt Lower, left, and Sam Worthington star in “I Will Find You.”
PROVIDED BY TED BELTON/NETFLIX

While all of those answers aren’t necessarily in the novel, the actors say those details helped them bring the series to life.

“My character’s a journalist who’s usually on the other side of the notebook, and now she’s all of a sudden in the story,” Lower, 40, explains. “They’re both kind of figuring out how to be inside of this propulsive getaway and mission to find this kid together.”

Lower adds that her portrayal of Rachel was “anchored” by the character’s relationship with her sister and David’s ex-wife Cheryl (Erin Richards).

“I don’t have a sister in real life, but I’ve always wanted one, and I felt so kindred with Erin,” Lower says. “Erin was actually pregnant while we were filming and her character was pregnant, so there was this real care of like, ‘This is a person stewarding life right now.’ ”

“I think Harlan’s series go to the core of what you’re willing to do to protect your family,” she adds.

Coben’s personal connection to ‘I Will Find You’

Lower’s summation of Coben’s work is in line with the best-selling author’s thoughts on the series.

Coben, who has had more than a dozen of his novels adapted to film or TV, says that much of his personal life influenced this story. “I Will Find You” is set in New York and Boston; Coben was raised in New Jersey and grew up vacationing at Revere Beach in Massachusetts.

Coben, 64, also highlights the father-son aspect of the series. In addition to Burroughs’ attempt to find his

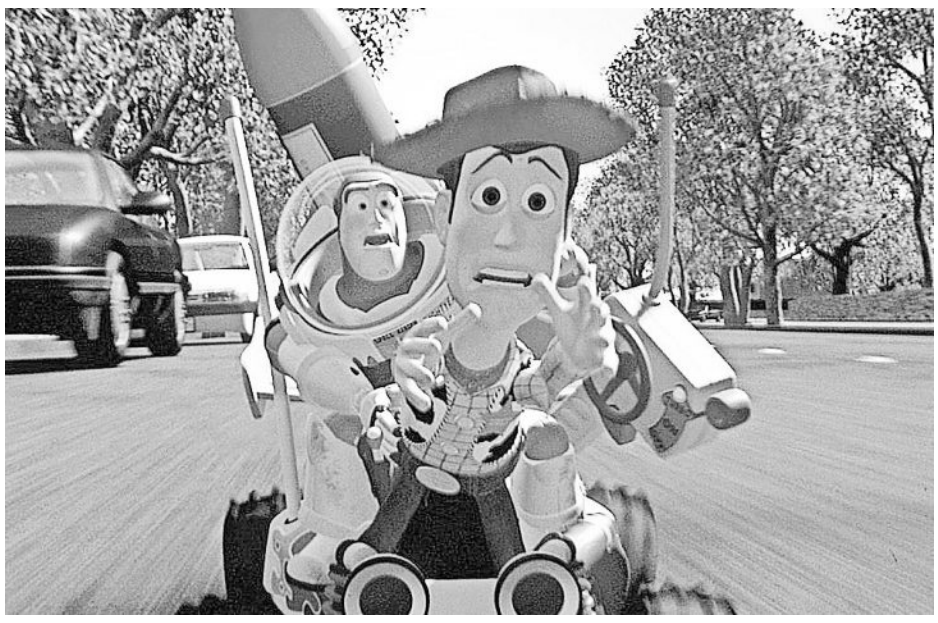
See FIND YOU, Page 2D

MOVIES

Ranking 'Toy' chest is not child's play

Brian Truitt USA TODAY

You've got a friend in Woody. And Buzz Lightyear. And Jessie. And Slinky Dog. And, of course, Forky. • Since the original film in 1995, the "Toy Story" movies have become the stalwart franchise of Disney's Pixar animation studio, entertaining generations with their tales of toybox shenanigans but also wrecking audiences emotionally with their signature heartfelt scenes. They've even spawned a movie-within-a-movie spinoff with "Lightyear." • First, the playthings of young Andy and later little Bonnie, the crew led by cowboy Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) and spaceman Buzz (Tim Allen) have looked out for their kids as well as each other. And in their latest adventure, "Toy Story 5" (now in theaters), those dudes plus spitfire cowgirl Jessie (Joan Cusack) face a new existential threat with the introduction of high-tech tablet Lilypad (Greta Lee). • So how does it compare with the other "Toy Story" movies? We're going to infinity and beyond definitively ranking all six franchise films. (Everything other than "Toy Story 5" is streaming on Disney+.)



These guys have been with us since 1995, if you can believe it.



Jessie, (voiced by Cusack, center) and Lilypad (Greta Lee) have words in "Toy Story 5." PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DISNEY/PIXAR

6. 'Lightyear' (2022)

Chris Evans (aka Captain America) is a pretty good Buzz Lightyear. Sox is maybe the coolest cat robot. And kudos for that meaningful LGBTQ+ moment. The rest of this straightforward sci-fi action tale – essentially, the movie Andy loves that spawned the Buzz action figure – is decently spiffy but not completely worthy of the "Toy Story" brand. This Buzz origin story is Pixar's meta version of "Star Wars," with a cosmic "Bad News Bears" vibe, a couple of existential crises (a "Toy Story" staple) and a bunch of pesky alien vines.

5. 'Toy Story 4' (2019)

A "Toy Story" that deals in adventure, fun debuts (Keanu Reeves' Duke Caboom!) and happy reunions before piling on a deluge of feels. After Andy hands over his toys to young Bonnie, Woody's not as beloved as he once was. When he and Forky (Tony Hale), a spork with a death wish, are left behind in a family RV getaway, Woody reconnects with old love interest Bo Peep (Annie Potts) and runs afoul of freaky doll Gabby Gabby (Christina Hendricks). Meanwhile, Buzz needs to be rescued when he gets himself stuck as a carnival prize.

4. 'Toy Story 3' (2010)

How you feel about this one depends on how much you prefer to be psychologically rattled to your core. Teenage Andy is getting ready for college and his toys wind up being sent to Sunnyside Daycare, where seemingly chummy Lots-o'-Huggin' Bear (Ned Beatty) runs the show. In one of Pixar's most epic heel turns, Lotso actually is a diabolical villain who runs a toy prison, essentially, and the toys' escape attempt eventually leads to Woody and Co. facing their potential doom in an incinerator. Sure, they make it out OK, but man, you're never the same.

3. 'Toy Story 5' (2026)

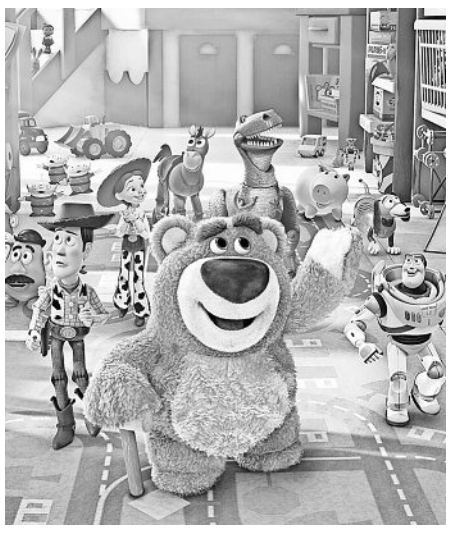
Jessie takes the reins in the newest installment, which smartly takes the franchise into the internet era. Bonnie gets a tablet computer named Lilypad (Greta Lee), who helps connect the girl with friends but is a smarmy menace to our beloved "Toy Story" gang. Woody and Buzz deal with her while Jessie is taken to the former farm home of her first owner, Emily. Jessie faces her longtime abandonment issues but also makes a new friend in Smarty Pants (Conan O'Brien), a scene-stealing potty-training toy who's the best thing since Forky.

2. 'Toy Story' (1995)

The first movie won us over with humor, heart and a focus on making Woody and Buzz frenemies for life. Woody is Andy's preferred toy until the kid gets a Buzz Lightyear at his 6th birthday party. The two butt heads and Woody knocks Buzz out of a window, turning the other toys against the vintage cowboy. But these rivals get on the same page when sadistic youngster Sid toy-naps them, Buzz figures out that he's not actually a real space ranger in an emotional scene, and Woody and Buzz take flight in the adventure's rocket-powered climax.

1. 'Toy Story 2' (1999)

Like "The Empire Strikes Back," the rare sequel that's better than the original, thanks to the debuting Jessie lending a needed girl-power spunk to the franchise while also deepening its tear-jerking potential. When Woody is stolen by a toy collector, he finds out he's part of a gang of toys based on a 1950s Western puppet show and is being sold to a Tokyo toy museum. Though Stinky Pete turns out to be a ne'er-do-well, Jessie is a valuable new pal who reveals her own trauma from being donated by her kid. That sort of character depth, plus one heck of a rescue mission involving Buzz, a pizza truck and some weird little aliens, puts "Toy Story 2" on a shelf of its own.



Lots-o'-Huggin' Bear (voiced by Ned Beatty) turns a daycare into a toy prison in "Toy Story 3." DISNEY/PIXAR

Find You

Continued from Page 1D

son, the series explores the relationship between two other fathers: mobster Nicky Fisher (Clancy Brown) and prison warden Phillip MacKenzie (Peter Outerbridge) and their respective sons.

It's a topic Coben can relate to, as he's a father of four. The author also acknowledges that the loss of his own father, who died from heart issues when he was 26, affects "a lot of the stuff that I do ... like it or not."

Coben wanted to capture an 'American story,' inspire hope

"I Will Find You" marks the first Coben Netflix adaptation to originate in the United States.

"I think this is a uniquely American story," Coben says alongside showrunner Robert Hull, citing the prison break as one of the story's aspects that lent itself to being more American. "I just think that everybody was sort of captured by this whole idea of this man who starts so broken. I mean, the opening line: 'I'm serving the fifth year of a life sentence for murdering my own child and spoiler alert: I didn't do it.'"

Worthington echoes Coben, noting of the opening sequence, "I think Harlan's idea was that he put the character in the worst situation you could imagine emotionally and physically. The idea is: how do you find hope?"

"That was the drive for the novel and the story," he continues.

"So the glimmer of hope comes in the form of Rachel offering the potential photo of the kid still being alive, and then the hope is what you build on as the series progresses."

And by the time the ending rolls around, Coben hopes that the audience will be "genuinely moved" by the story.

"I think solving the mystery doesn't mean much if you don't care about who's solving it," Hull adds. "That's really what the show's about."



Rachel Mills (Britt Lower, left) and David Burroughs (Sam Worthington) confer and team up to find David's son in Netflix's "I Will Find You." PROVIDED BY NETFLIX

Courtney

Continued from Page 1D

hitman in 2012's "Jack Reacher" (punched by Tom Cruise!), sadistic Dauntless leader Eric Coulter in the "Divergent" franchise and Captain Boomerang in DC Comics' "Suicide Squad' movies (Margot Robbie socked him!).

The Sheridan-verse bonus is that Courtney comes with his own guns with those arms. The Aussie actor has bulked up since the rising star appeared as Bruce Willis's screen son, Jack McLane, in 2013's "A Good Day to Die Hard."

Fun fact about the fifth, and possibly last, installment of the "Die Hard" franchise with Willis: Jack makes the vaunted final kill, the only time the original John McClane didn't have that franchise honor.

The 6-foot-1 Courtney has even muscled up more.

"I grew up at a certain point. There's no skinny Jai Courtney anymore. I just try to stay in shape," Courtney says. "With Rob-Will, they were going to get what they were given when I turned up. I guess Rob-Will lifts weights here and there."

Rob-Will's love of tank tops: 'You gotta put on a gun show'

It doesn't hurt that Rob-Will is a big fan of the bicep-revealing tank top.

"You gotta put on a gun show at some point if you've got it," says Courtney, who has no problem getting into the mercurial character with the black, fitted cowboy hat from M.L. Leddy's in Fort Worth.

"I just pull on those boots, stick that hat on my head, and smoke a couple of cigarettes. He's pretty easy to find."

Rob-Will can be crazy charismatic, emphasis on the crazy.

Even mom Beulah believes her son might have no good in him, which is harsh. There's room for some spiritual growth in Courtney's mind.

"He's not going to become someone that we haven't seen already," Courtney says.

"But it'd be a mistake to discount Rob-Will for his messiness as someone who can't transform and really succeed."

Courtney might be wise to seek smaller goals, such as getting Rob-Will on a horse. The Taylor Sheridan-modern-cowboy-universe reserves that honor for the good guys.

Courtney loved the required "Dutton Ranch" cowboy camp training that raised his riding to new levels.

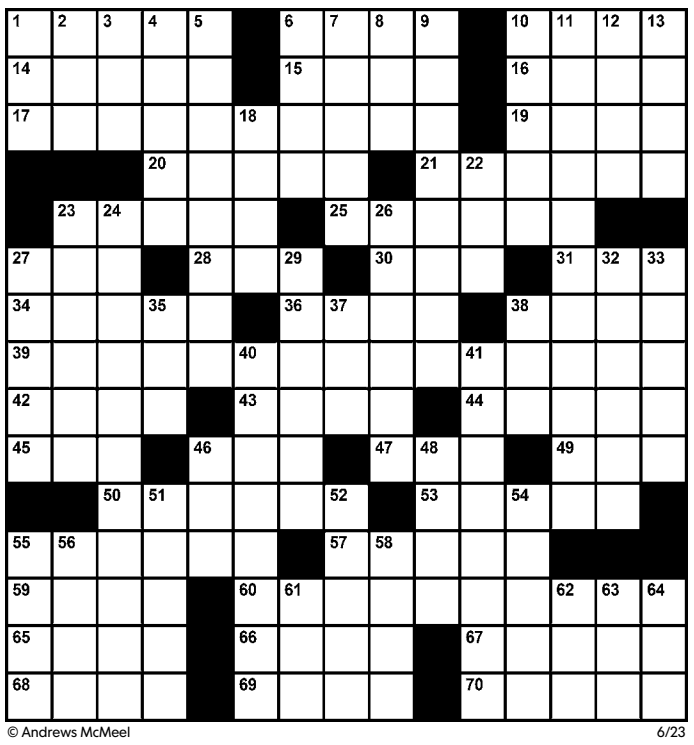
"I did this cowboy camp with these amazing wranglers, and then Rob-Will is riding in a Range Rover or Ford truck," Courtney says.

"I love riding. Hopefully, we'll see some now that Rob-Will is back on the ranch. That seems to be Rob-Will's legacy, literally."

USA TODAY CROSSWORD

EDITED Amanda Rafkin
BY Zhouqin Burnikel

CHANGING TABLE



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ACROSS
1 Helps with a scam, say
6 Belted out a tune
10 Sound devices that might be cranked to 11
14 Beauty product thicker than toner
15 Pretty Yende solo
16 Toy horn's sound
17 Chamomile and peppermint drinks
19 Supernatural glow
20 Visitor from outer space
21 Birthstone sometimes mistaken for ruby
23 Prolific inventor Nikola
25 Sticky fossil excavation site
27 Spanish for "more"
28 Move to and ___
30 Get even with?
31 Path of a jump shot
34 Where the Eucharist is prepared
36 Shopaholic's destination
38 "Arrivederci!"
39 Metallica and Black Sabbath, e.g.
42 Initial poker bet
43 Stately trees in historic towns
44 Took a tumble
45 4G ___
46 Prefix meaning "before"
47 Teensy bit
49 Spherical lip balm brand
50 Large plots of land
53 Pigs with tusks
55 "Let's bet even more money"
57 Works with meters, sometimes
59 Words on a page
60 Surprised second look
65 Heaviest fencing blade
66 Currency in Cyprus
67 "Honest!"
68 Green fuzz on a rock
69 Construction location
70 Move stealthily

DOWN
1 Electric guitar wood
2 Insect on a honey jar
3 Show up on the wrong day, say
4 Big band instruments
5 Minor
6 Fill completely
7 "Why ___ you at work?"
8 "Empire" actress Long
9 Cooker on a patio
10 Centipede developer
11 Person who enjoys an uphill battle?
12 Tiny hole in a sponge
13 "This instant!"
18 "You're full of it!"
22 Primate studied to understand human evolution
23 Innate gift
24 Levies on inherited wealth
26 "Finally!"
27 Taj ___
29 Egg dish such as khai jiao
32 They've got tuners for tunes
33 Prices
35 Rd. similar to a blvd.
37 Casino cash source
38 Pet that may claim your lap
40 BMW alternative
41 Broken mirror and spilled salt, to some
46 Faux ___
48 Brother of Cain
51 Custom-made ceremonies?
52 Burst of growth
54 ___ Martin (Bond's car)
55 Line on a list
56 Confiscated car
58 Instrument with octave keys
61 "Of course, ma cherie"
62 Ye olde pub pour
63 Carnival automaker
64 Frightened shriek

Monday's Answer

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

6/22

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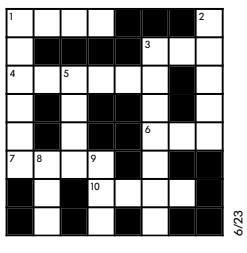
TXTPERT



6/23

Across	Down
1. 4283	1. 488837
3. 268	2. 78667
4. 842824	3. 2446639
6. 667	5. 2886
7. 7666	8. 653
10. 6239	9. 669

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Today's theme
House and home



Use the phone keypad to decode the clues. For example: 2 could be A, B or C ... and 5678 could be LOST



6/22

Friday's solution

Numbers

More puzzles: **PLAY.usatoday.com**
Want solutions? **answers.usatoday.com**
Feedback: **feedback@usatoday.com**

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

		5		8			7	
1			5	6		2		
	4		7					1
				5			9	7
9			3	7	6			4
8	6			1				
2					5		1	
		4		2	3			8
	8			9		4		

6/23

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★☆☆☆

SUDOKU FUSION ON YOUR PHONE
puzzles.usatoday.com

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Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x2 box contains the numbers 1 through 6 (no repeats).

		3	5		2
	4	2	1		
1		5	4		
		4	6		1
		1	2	6	
2		6	3		

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★☆☆☆

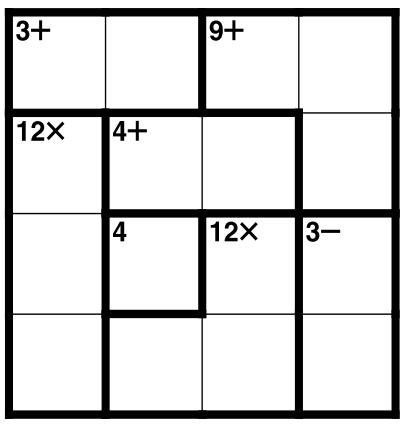
Monday's Answers

2	9	8	4	1	5	6	7	3
6	3	1	7	9	2	4	5	8
4	7	5	3	6	8	9	1	2
8	5	4	2	7	3	1	6	9
9	6	3	5	8	1	7	2	4
7	1	2	6	4	9	3	8	5
3	2	7	1	5	4	8	9	6
5	8	6	9	3	7	2	4	1
1	4	9	8	2	6	5	3	7

1	3	6	2	4	5
2	4	5	1	6	3
5	2	4	6	3	1
6	1	3	4	5	2
4	5	1	3	2	6
3	6	2	5	1	4

6/22

KENKEN



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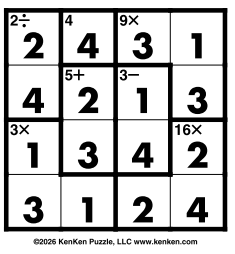
1. Each row and column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 without repeating.

2. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.

3. Freebies: fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



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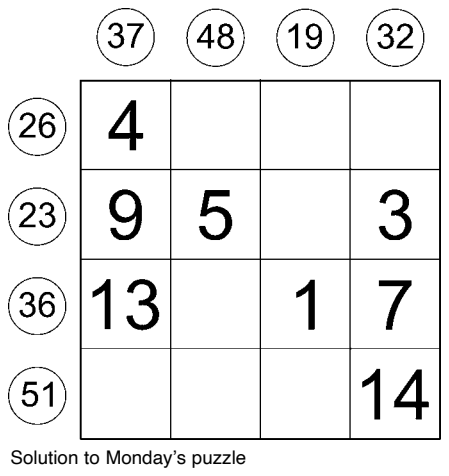
KUBOK 16

By Davide Coppo Difficulty: **EASY**



Solution to Monday's puzzle

4	8	6	12
3	5	9	15
1	2	13	16
11	14	7	10

Enter the missing numbers from 1 to 16 without repetitions so that the sum of the four numbers in each row and column is the same as the corresponding circled number.

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6/23/26

Words

WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek 6/23

Find and Circle:
Nine car companies ☑☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
U.S. states: New ___ ☐☐☐
Two martial arts ☐☐
It orbits between Mars and Jupiter ☐
Warmth ☐

Monday's answer: PULITZER PEABODY GRAMMY NOBEL EMMY TONY / GREEN MAUVE BLACK WHITE CREAM / MARINERS CUBS METS / PINT / HAVE



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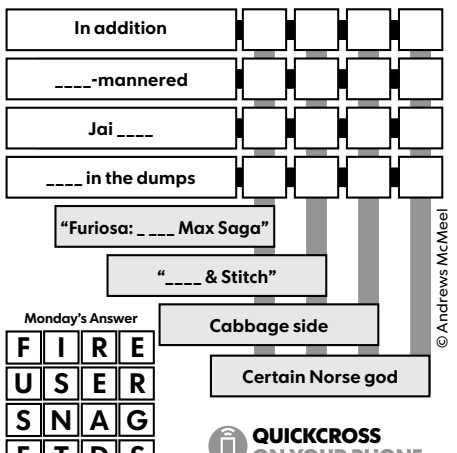
QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes 6/23



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Monday's Answer

F	I	R	E
U	S	E	R
S	N	A	G
E	T	D	S

6/22

QUICKCROSS ON YOUR PHONE
puzzles.usatoday.com

UP & DOWN WORDS

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt 6/23

1. **EASTERN**
2. ____
3. ____
4. ____
5. ____
6. ____
7. ____ **BUTTON**

Clues:
1. Region including Nova Scotia
2. Ginger ale brand
3. Frozen carbon dioxide
4. Cold compress
5. Prepare to leave
6. Way to ascend
7. Floor selector in a lift

Monday's Answer

SAVANNAH	BANANA
BANANA	BOAT
BOAT	SHOW
SHOW	BILL
BILL	RUSSELL
RUSSELL	BRAND
BRAND	NEW

PLAY ONLINE PUZZLES.USATODAY.COM

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DON'T QUOTE ME®

Humorist Evan Esar offers this thought.

Rearrange the words to complete the quote.
CAR INVENTED JAMS PLACE SIT TRAFFIC

"THE ___ WAS _____ AS A CONVENIENT _____ TO ___ OUT _____ ___."

6/23

Monday's Answer: "Camping is nature's way of promoting the motel business." - Dave Barry

©WIGGLES 3D GAMES

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 reveal (4)	
2 pilot (7)	
3 top-of-the-line (9)	
4 "Little Women" matriarch (6)	
5 recap (7)	
6 "All About That Bass" singer (7)	
7 reacted to the alarm (5)	

TRA	OR	SH	RI	AVI
AT	NDO	LU	MA	RU
XU	IN	RM	OW	AWO
OR	KE	WN	EE	OUS

Monday's Answers: 1. PARENT 2. NIGHTMARE 3. LOGIC 4. HASSLING 5. FOOTBALL 6. DITCHES 7. FARGO 6/23

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JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CTDHI

SCUHR

BSRIEC

EFNYZR

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: ____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DRIFT GLAND WIGGLE TOASTY
Answer: When he preached, he seemed like a different person — as if he had an — "ALTAR" EGO

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BONUS CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Alaskan king —
5 Cry of approval
10 Bovine
13 Adore
14 Batman's sidekick
15 Bird found in marshes
16 Golden Calf, e.g.
17 Century plant
18 Sept
19 Atonement
21 Road surfacing material
23 Row
24 Debt letters
25 Black bird
28 Support for a statue
33 Tolerate
34 "Norma —"
35 Rescue
36 — populi
37 Audibly
39 Youngster
40 Holiday times
42 Seize
43 In the company of
45 Wrongdoer's punishment
47 — Carlo
48 Macaw genus
49 Candid
51 Disentangle
55 Own
59 City in Egypt
60 Dye method
62 Follow in secret
63 — St. Vincent Millay
64 Of sheep
65 Punta del —
66 Solidify
67 Fast car
68 Woodwind instrument

DOWN
1 Cut
2 Traveled on
3 The Bard's river
4 Tardy
5 Supporting piece
6 Pilot's acknowledgement
7 Org. for lawyers
8 Paper towel brand
9 Biased (Hyph.)
10 Soft drink
11 Surgeon type
12 Desire
15 Ski downhill
20 On cloud —
22 Edgar Allan —
25 Rants and —
26 Higher up
27 Female fox
28 Investigation
29 — de vie
30 Hooked claw
31 — -garde
32 Shelf
37 Michigan city (2 wds.)
38 Fond du —
41 Strophe
43 Iowa city
44 Fiend
46 Baseball stat
49 Editorialize
50 Card game
51 Employs
52 Painter's subject
53 Dispatched
54 Molten rock
56 Facilitate
57 Venue
58 Wheelless vehicle
61 Twitch

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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

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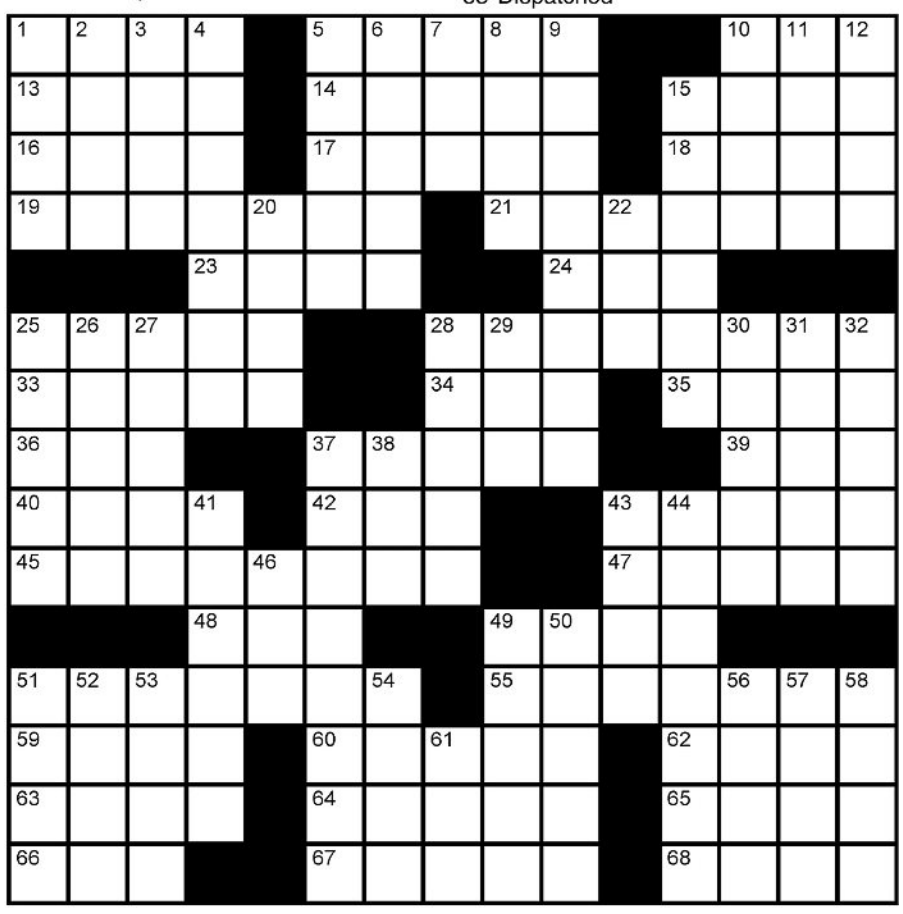

BOOKS

Hays strikes a vocal cord with 'Dungeon Crawler' fans

Clare Mulroy
USA TODAY

Matt Dinniman sometimes hears a peculiar question about the audiobooks of his series, "Dungeon Crawler Carl": Why didn't he credit the female narrator?

It's an easy answer: There isn't a female narrator. But you could be convinced otherwise, hearing the uppity British quips of Princess Donut. She and nearly all the characters in Dinniman's eight Carl novels are voiced by Jeff Hays, whose skill has helped catapult the near-perfect-Audible-rated series to the forefront of the LitRPG (literary role-playing game) subgenre.

Audio greatly overindexes in this subgenre, Audible previously told USA TODAY. The Carl series specifically has clocked more than 140 million listening hours on the app. The audiobook is a selling point for many readers because of the range of distinct voices Hays creates for the eclectic cast of characters.

Watching Hays perform his characters live is a masterclass in audio storytelling. To a panel of eager BookCon attendees in April, Hays read from the newest book and flipped flawlessly from voice to voice. That's why USA TODAY is crowning him this year's voice of the summer, the audiobook narrator sure to be in everyone's headphones this year.

"I never, ever predicted this level of success," Hays says. "This is an absurd scale that I still have trouble wrapping my mind around. I want audiobooks that I produce to be greater than the sum of its parts. And I think we definitely did that with "Dungeon Crawler Carl. "I feel such a kinship to the way Matt's imagination works and I feel like I'm right there with him with every decision he's making and able to respond in the way that he's imagining in his head."

The voice behind 'Dungeon Crawler Carl'

Dinniman and Hays met at an audiobook award ceremony in Kansas City and became friends long before Dinniman started writing the Carl series, the author told USA TODAY at BookCon.

"He was also a gamer his whole life, so he understands the book really well," Dinniman says. "He is just a super talented voice actor. He's also a professional musician and I think that helps a lot with audiobook narration because they understand the cadence. And, you know, he's crazy. So it fits well."

Though Hays was in a few high school plays, he'd call his formal acting training "severely lacking." But a love of reading and producing led him to audiobook narration, eventually creating his company, Soundbooth Theater, where he leads full-cast, immersive audiobooks.

Hays loves classics. When he reads, he wants something heavy in "word craft" and "how to express them in the most evocative ways ... that really touch your soul." But when it comes to audiobooks, he wants pulpy, high-octane adventures.

"LitRPG has been a great genre for exercising my versatility and developing my instrument to take on more and more unique, diverse characters," Hays says.

So when Carl landed on his doorstep, Hays already had an entire résumé full of similarly "depraved and messed up" books, full of very colorful characters" (a compliment, he clarifies). He felt more than up for the task.

Hays 'ad-libs' 'Dungeon Crawler Carl' characters

With more than 200 characters in the series, how does Hays create such an immersive, memorable world for "Dungeon Crawler Carl"? He says it's all about reading between the lines and ad-libbing, but not how you'd expect.

"Timing and tone and that stuff, it's not explicitly there on the page. It requires that I am fully immersed in the scene myself. It requires that I feel like I'm there with the actors and I can say, 'Hold up, let's retake that,' " Hays says. "When I say ad lib, I'm not saying I'm changing the words. What I'm saying is I am improvising how the character would deliver the line in the moment that sparks that laughter in someone."

He says "actors," but what he really means is the cast of voices he has created for iconic characters including Carl, Princess Donut and System AI. He sees himself as a director and a casting director, keeping a rotating "troupe" of actors based on his visualization of the characters.



"Dungeon Crawler Carl" audiobook narrator Jeff Hays speaks at Audible's San Diego Comic-Con panel on July 26, 2025.
PHILLIP FARAONE/GETTY IMAGES FOR AUDIBLE

He starts with an actor whom he admires and thinks would do a good job if given that role. It's not an impression, it's "channeling" that style of performance, he says. As he gets more familiar with the voice, he's able to quickly reference that "actor." Carl started as a riff on actor Patrick Warburton. But the character – and the voice – has evolved over so many books.

"He's got such a special place now in my heart and in my career, and what he represents is so big in the grand scheme of my performance that that's a voice that's going to get retired once "Dungeon Crawler Carl" is finished," Hays tells USA TODAY. "That's a narration voice I will never use again because I don't want other things so strongly associated with something that's so ubiquitous as "Dungeon Crawler Carl" anymore. It would be just a betrayal of the character."

A business is evolving

Audiobook narrators are no longer the anonymous voices behind your favorite book. Many of them are becoming celebrities and public figures in their own right. At BookCon this year, one of the hottest tickets was a seat in the Audible-sponsored panel featuring Hays and Dinniman. On one Reddit post with 141 upvotes, one Audible user laments that Hays "might have ruined audiobooks for me. ... NOTHING is quite as good."

"Jeff Hays is the first actor that actually forced me to learn who they are because they are so damn good," another reads.

"That was my goal from the beginning," Hays says. "I wanted people searching my name on Audible. I wanted to impress upon people, this is a style of storytelling that if you search my name, you're going to get."

He also wants to "earn his royalties," he says. Unlike most narrators, Hays and his Soundbooth Theater operate on a royalty-only basis. Most traditional audiobook narrators get paid per finished hour of recording and don't receive royalties after the book comes out.

With Soundbooth Theater, Hays is piloting a new method of narration, where a voice actor also operates as director and producer. He's passionate about "audio drama," which involves a full cast, sound effects and a bigger production team. He wants to represent an audiobook as a businessman, not just a voice.

"If we don't take advantage of that, if we don't own our medium, then what's going to happen is the people in suits are going to make the decisions and audiobooks will never rise above a certain level of entertainment," Hays says. "Audiobooks are competing against all other medias. We have to remember that. Why would people listen to this audiobook when they could watch Netflix?"

Hays' production adds a theatrical element to the traditional audiobook. Last year, when he recorded the crime novel "The Bones at Point No Point" by D.D. Black, he went to the small town from the book to record ambient sound.

They also are rolling out "Immersion Tunnel" versions of "Dungeon Crawler Carl" with added audio elements in episodic format. For the repeat readers who keep "Dungeon Crawler Carl" on bestseller lists and Hays' career on the upswing, he wants to gift them a new, special experience.

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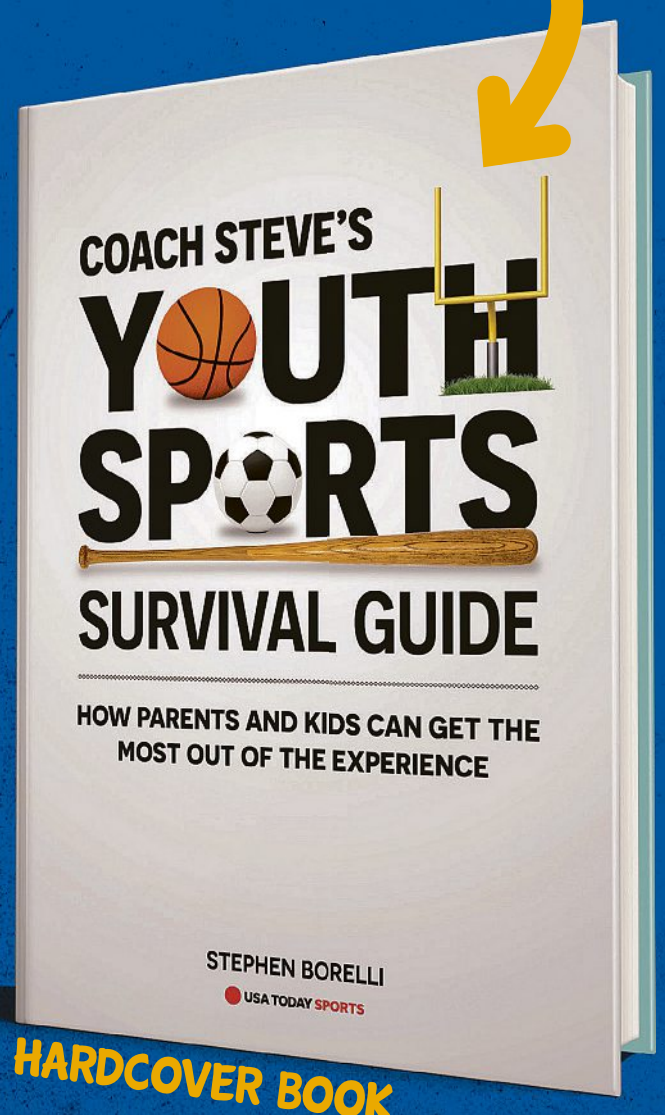
COACH STEVE'S YOUTH SPORTS SURVIVAL GUIDE

So, your son or daughter plays sports. What now?
Youth sports has become a $40 billion per year industry, fraught with pitfalls but also boundless benefits our kids can carry with them throughout their lives. How do we find the "right" team, coach and experience? Stephen Borelli (aka "Coach Steve") and his wife have lived in this realm for a decade and half, and Borelli has become a national authority for his coverage and advice for navigating sports parenting. He draws on his three-decade perspective as a sportswriter as well as expert advice from notable sports figures past and present (many of them parents) from Annika Sorenstam to Andre Agassi, Shannon Miller, Caitlin Clark, Yogi Berra, John Wooden and Ted Lasso to help us get the most out of the journey. This hardcover book is a must-read for parents and athletes of all ages.



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USA TODAY SPORTS

NATION&WORLD EXTRA

REASSURING ISRAEL

Trump allies defend him amid anxiety over Iran deal



Vice President JD Vance, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani take the stage at the start of a meeting aimed at advancing a deal to end the Middle East conflict. NATHAN HOWARD, POOL/GETTY IMAGES

Alexander Cornwell and Benjamin Raab
REUTERS

JERUSALEM – American allies of President Donald Trump this week defended him to an Israeli public anxious about a U.S. interim deal with Iran and White House criticism that together appeared to signal fissures in Israel's decades-old alliance with Washington.

The U.S.–Israeli relationship has been on a roller coaster, from the early confidence they shared after their joint attack on Iran to public disagreements between Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over how to end the four-month-old war.

Netanyahu and many other Israelis see a risk that Trump's memorandum of understanding with Iran will empower a state they regard as their deadliest enemy and constrict their ability to respond to threats from Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

They sense the U.S. alliance – long the bedrock of Israel's strategic approach – is under strain as opinion polls show Americans increasingly unhappy with Israel and their strongest champion in Washington appears to be turning away.

"The United States and Israel have an unbreakable bond," Mike Huckabee, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, said on June 21 after acknowledging there was an "enormous level of anxiety about the relationship."

He spoke at a foreign policy conference in Jerusalem where concerns about the state of the U.S.–Israel alliance dominated many of the discussions.



"The United States and Israel have an unbreakable bond," says U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee. RONEN ZVULUN/REUTERS FILE

Mark Levin, a conservative Fox News commentator and longtime Trump supporter who has broken with the president over the Iran deal, told the audience that while he did not like the agreement and believed that the "Iranian regime" had to be destroyed, he nevertheless praised Trump for what he said was the president's support for liberty, religious freedom, Christianity and Judaism.

Alongside their concerns about the wording of the Iran deal, Israelis worry about Trump's insistence on Israel agreeing a ceasefire with Hezbollah in Lebanon and his language responding to Netanyahu's resistance to those agreements.

In recent weeks Trump has called Netanyahu "crazy," lectured Israel that "you don't have to knock an apartment down every time you're looking for somebody" and publicly pondered asking Syria to replace Israeli troops in Lebanon.

Vice President JD Vance also struck a more critical tone, saying "Trump is the only head of state in the entire world who is sympathetic to the nation of Israel at this moment in time," adding later that not all criticism of Israel should be dismissed as antisemitism.

The fact such sharp views are emanating from Trump's Republican Party is especially worrying for many Israelis, with U.S. Democrats far more vocally critical of Israel than in previous years.

Sid Rosenberg, a prominent conservative New York radio host, told Israelis that for all their concerns about Trump, he was the best option for them.

"You could have JD Vance. Good luck with that," he said, after acknowledging that "a lot of people in Israel are very, very upset" with the president.

While large majorities of Republicans 50 and older view Israel positively, younger conservative Americans have grown more critical, a Pew Research Center poll from late March showed. Some 57% of Republicans aged 18 to 49 have an unfavorable opinion of Israel, up from 50% a year previously.

Many Americans were outraged by the scale of death and devastation in

See ISRAEL, Page 4NN

Fighting abates during new talks

Meetings to resolve Iran war continue this week

Humeyra Pamuk, Dave Graham and Laila Bassam
REUTERS

BUERGENSTOCK, Switzerland – The United States waived sanctions on Iran for 60 days from June 22 after the first talks under a nascent peace deal, while officials reported a sustained lull in fighting in Lebanon under the agreement aimed at ending hostilities across the region.

The developments followed a weekend that had appeared to put the week-old accord in jeopardy, including threats from President Donald Trump to restart the war if Iran disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz after Tehran declared the strategic waterway closed.

Tanker traffic through the strait started to pick up on June 22 and oil prices resumed their slide.

Vice President JD Vance said talks with Iranian officials in Switzerland had laid a good foundation for a final peace deal, although Iran denied that it had begun discussions of its nuclear program.

U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran, and Israeli strikes in Lebanon, have killed thousands and displaced millions. The Iran war has also shaken markets around the world and raised global oil prices, which settled 3% lower on June 22 after Vance reported progress had been made.

The two sides, trying to build on the interim deal they signed last week, agreed a road map toward a permanent agreement within 60 days at the talks in the Qatari-owned Swiss mountain resort of Buergenstock, mediators Pakistan and Qatar said.

They also agreed on a mechanism to end fighting in Lebanon between U.S. ally Israel and Iran-aligned Hezbollah, and opened a communications line to help ensure safe passage for commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz in order to avoid conflict in the strategic waterway.

In the first of several steps

See IRAN, Page 4NN



Vice President JD Vance speaks to members of the media before boarding Air Force Two as he leaves Switzerland after meeting with representatives from Iran. NATHAN HOWARD/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Judge shuts down probe into MN officials

Ruling finds Justice Dept investigation coercive

Andrew Goudsward and Brad Brooks
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – A judge found that the Trump administration unlawfully demanded information from several Minnesota officials at the height of its immigration crackdown in the state earlier this year, ruling that the Justice Department had abused the investigative process.

The ruling by Minnesota-based U.S. District Judge Patrick Schiltz quashed subpoenas to the office of the state's Democratic Gov. Tim Walz and five other local and state offices, according to an order made public on June 22.



Walz

It effectively halts a probe by President Donald Trump's Justice Department into whether Democratic officials had impeded immigration enforcement in their public resistance to the deployment of thousands of agents to conduct deportation roundups.

Schiltz, an appointee of Republican President George W. Bush, wrote that the Justice Department's legal justification for the investigation was "risible."

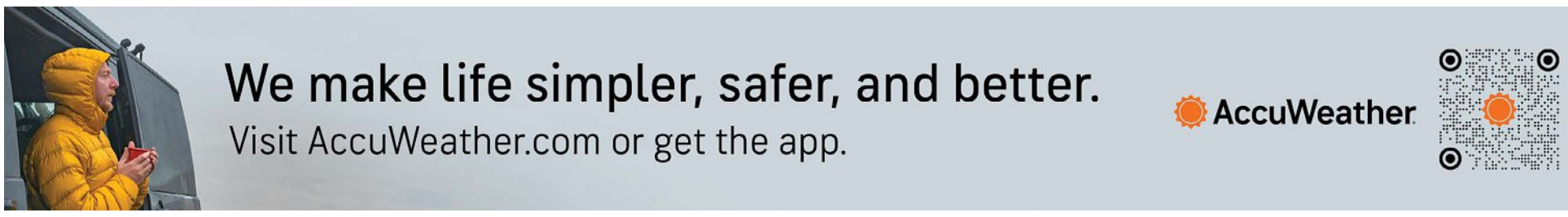
"The Court finds that the dominant purpose of the challenged subpoenas is to coerce Minnesota officials into assisting the federal government with enforcing civil immigration law and to harass and retaliate against them for failing to do so," Schiltz wrote. The order issued on June 17 was unsealed on June 22.

A Justice Department spokesperson said the department "takes the unlawful obstruction of federal law enforcement operations extremely seriously and will continue to act in full compliance with the law to investigate these matters."

The immigration surge led to numerous violent confrontations with residents and activists in the Minneapolis area, including the killings of two U.S. citizens by federal agents in January.

The ruling is the latest to find that the Trump Justice Department conducted a politically motivated investigation aimed more at harassing opponents than examining potential crimes. A judge in Washington, DC, made a similar finding in halting a probe into then-Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell in

See JUDGE, Page 4NN

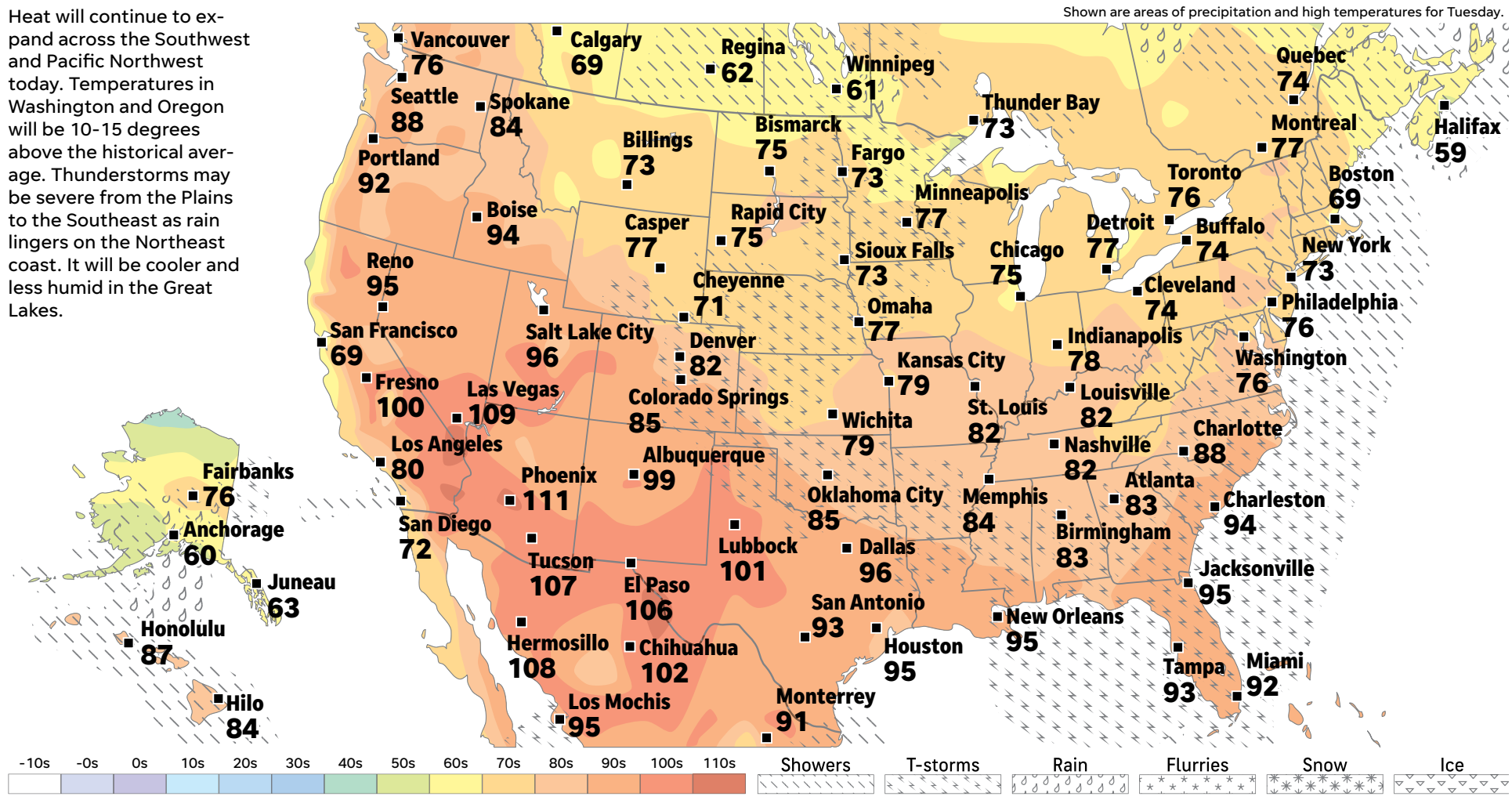


NATIONAL SUMMARY

Heat will continue to expand across the Southwest and Pacific Northwest today. Temperatures in Washington and Oregon will be 10-15 degrees above the historical average. Thunderstorms may be severe from the Plains to the Southeast as rain lingers on the Northeast coast. It will be cooler and less humid in the Great Lakes.

In the digital e-edition, you can click anywhere on the US map to get up-to-date forecasts, radar, MinuteCast® and more.

Shown are areas of precipitation and high temperatures for Tuesday.



MONDAY EXTREMES

NATIONAL (for the 48 contiguous states)

High:	**110** at Presidio, TX
Low:	**30** at Stanley, ID
Precip:	**3.78"** at Ponca City, OK

INTERNATIONAL (excludes Antarctica)

High:	**122** at Omidieh, Iran
Low:	**16** at Oruro, Bolivia
Precip:	**6.02"** at Kutubdia, Bangladesh

TODAY IN HISTORY

Sir Frances Drake encountered a hurricane on June 23, 1586, that caused floods and damaging wind along the North Carolina and Virginia shorelines. Thunderstorms spawned by the hurricane produced hailstones the size of a hen's egg.

WEATHER TRIVIA™

Q: Do car tires protect you from lightning?

A: No; the metal frame offers the protection

NATIONAL CITIES TUESDAY

● Denotes possible travel delays

	High/low/W	Air Quality
Aberdeen, SD	79/52/t	32
● Abilene, TX	99/76/pc	28
Accomac, VA	84/60/r	48
Adrian, MI	78/53/pc	49
Akron, OH	74/51/pc	45
Alamogordo, NM	107/76/s	80
Alexandria, VA	79/63/r	56
Alliance, OH	76/52/pc	45
● Amarillo, TX	98/68/t	45
● Ames, IA	77/62/t	41
Anderson, SC	86/62/pc	45
● Appleton, WI	76/60/pc	22
Asheville, NC	79/56/pc	54
Ashland, OH	74/52/pc	42
Athens, GA	85/63/pc	46
● Augusta, GA	90/66/t	44
Austin, TX	94/76/pc	24
● Bartlesville, OK	79/69/t	25
Battle Creek, MI	75/51/pc	39
Bedford, IN	78/57/pc	51
Binghamton, NY	70/52/pc	44
● Bluffton, SC	94/73/t	30
Bremerton, WA	89/52/s	29
Brockton, MA	71/59/r	47
Brownwood, TX	97/75/s	25
Burlington, IA	77/62/pc	42
Burlington, NC	84/60/t	41
Burlington, VT	78/59/sh	32
Cambridge, OH	78/51/pc	45
● Camdenton, MO	80/67/pc	40
Canandaigua, NY	75/55/pc	38
Canton, OH	76/53/pc	47
Carlsbad, NM	106/71/s	58
Chambersburg, PA	76/58/r	59
Cherry Hill, NJ	76/63/r	54
Cincinnati, OH	78/56/pc	49
Clarksville, TN	82/60/pc	54
Coldwater, MI	75/52/pc	47
Columbus, OH	78/54/pc	50
Corning, NY	75/50/pc	46
Corpus Christi, TX	92/77/s	50
Daytona Beach, FL	95/76/t	33
Deming, NM	106/71/s	52
● DeRidder, LA	94/73/s	41
● Des Moines, IA	78/64/t	43
Detroit, MI	77/54/pc	50
● Devils Lake, ND	69/54/t	18
Dover, NH	70/58/r	46
El Paso, TX	106/79/s	72
Elmira, NY	74/49/pc	45
Erie, PA	72/55/pc	42
Eugene, OR	91/53/s	34
Evansville, IN	82/61/pc	52
Fall River, MA	71/59/r	44
Farmington, NM	97/58/s	59
Fayetteville, NC	92/68/t	35
● Fond du Lac, WI	76/58/pc	32
Fort Myers, FL	94/78/t	89
● Fort Smith, AR	83/73/t	25
Framingham, MA	71/58/r	45
Freeport, IL	77/59/pc	34
Fremont, OH	76/57/pc	48
● Fort Collins, CO	83/57/t	63
Gadsden, AL	81/60/pc	44
● Gainesville, FL	95/75/t	32
Galesburg, IL	77/60/pc	38
Gastonia, NC	86/61/t	46
● Glen Rose, TX	97/75/pc	29
● Gonzales, LA	95/74/pc	34
Great Falls, MT	70/47/s	41
● Green Bay, WI	75/58/pc	20
Greenville, SC	86/59/t	47
Hackensack, NJ	73/64/r	42
Hagerstown, MD	76/58/r	58
● Hattiesburg, MS	91/74/pc	39
Henderson, KY	81/60/pc	48
Hendersonville, NC	80/58/pc	51
Herkimer, NY	77/55/pc	44
Hillsdale, MI	75/52/pc	47
Holland, MI	73/55/pc	28
Hornell, NY	75/51/pc	44
Houma, LA	94/73/pc	40
Howell, MI	76/53/pc	47
● Hutchinson, KS	78/68/t	28
Hyannis, MA	70/60/r	39
Indianapolis, IN	78/55/pc	51
Iowa City, IA	78/64/pc	41
Ithaca, NY	74/52/pc	42
● Jackson, MS	88/74/t	42
Jackson, TN	83/62/pc	54
● Jacksonville, FL	95/74/t	26
Jacksonville, NC	91/67/t	33
Kent, OH	74/51/pc	43
Kewanee, IL	76/61/pc	36
Keyser, WV	77/56/r	56
Kinston, NC	90/64/t	30
Knoxville, TN	79/59/pc	58
Lafayette, IN	77/52/pc	50
Lafayette, LA	93/74/pc	39
Lakeland, FL	98/76/t	43
Lansing, MI	75/53/pc	30
Las Cruces, NM	103/71/s	61
Lebanon, PA	75/59/r	52
Leesburg, FL	95/76/t	38
Levittown, PA	75/62/r	48
Lincoln, IL	80/60/pc	39
Louisville, KY	82/62/pc	61
● Lubbock, TX	101/73/pc	42
Manitowoc, WI	68/55/pc	27
Mansfield, OH	74/51/pc	39
Marshall, NC	73/56/pc	53
● Marshfield, WI	75/58/c	22
Massillon, OH	76/53/pc	44
McLean, VA	77/61/r	52
Melbourne, FL	93/75/t	38
Memphis, TN	84/69/pc	48
Middletown, NY	72/57/r	47
Milford, MA	69/58/r	44
Milwaukee, WI	69/56/pc	45
Monroe, MI	77/56/pc	50
● Monroe, LA	91/76/t	41
● Montgomery, AL	87/66/t	36
Muncie, IN	78/54/pc	50
Murfreesboro, TN	79/59/pc	57
Naples, FL	91/79/t	125
Nashville, TN	82/62/pc	60
Neptune, NJ	74/64/r	42
New Bedford, MA	73/60/r	43
● New Bern, NC	91/67/t	34
New Philadelphia, OH	76/48/pc	43
Newark, OH	79/54/pc	51
Newton, NJ	71/54/r	47
New York, NY	73/63/r	42
Norwich, CT	72/58/r	45
● Ocala, FL	94/77/t	35
● Oklahoma City, OK	85/71/t	38
Opelousas, LA	93/73/pc	37
● Oshkosh, WI	75/59/pc	23
● Palm Beach, FL	92/80/t	53
Palm Springs, CA	108/85/s	45
● Panama City, FL	89/77/t	35
Pekin, IL	79/62/pc	39
● Pensacola, FL	91/76/t	39
Peoria, IL	78/60/pc	40
Petersburg, VA	82/60/r	35
Phoenix, AZ	111/88/s	110
Port Huron, MI	72/47/pc	31
Portsmouth, NH	71/59/r	49
Poughkeepsie, NY	73/56/r	49
Providence, RI	73/62/r	47
Pueblo, CO	97/64/t	60
Quincy, MA	69/61/r	48
Redding, CA	99/68/s	38
Reno, NV	95/62/s	56
Ravenna, OH	75/50/pc	43
Richmond, IN	78/54/pc	52
Rochester, NY	75/55/pc	40
Rockford, IL	78/59/pc	29
Ruidoso, NM	94/66/s	72
Salem, OR	91/56/s	55
● Salina, KS	80/67/t	30
Salinas, CA	69/56/pc	25
Salisbury, MD	84/62/r	48
San Angelo, TX	99/74/s	21
Sarasota, FL	92/81/t	44
● Savannah, GA	94/71/t	32
Sheboygan, WI	68/56/pc	31
Shelby, NC	86/60/t	46
● Sherman, TX	91/76/pc	34
● Shreveport, LA	94/76/t	36
Silver City, NM	100/68/s	48
Sioux Falls, SD	73/56/t	38
Somerset, PA	70/51/r	57
Somerville, NJ	74/58/r	46
South Bend, IN	73/49/pc	36
Spartanburg, SC	86/61/t	49
Springfield, IL	79/60/pc	48
● Springfield, MO	80/67/pc	38
● St. Augustine, FL	93/75/t	28
● St. Cloud, MN	71/57/t	18
St. George, UT	105/80/s	58
Staunton, VA	75/52/r	53
● Stevens Point, WI	76/60/c	23
Stockton, CA	95/56/s	44
Stroudsburg, PA	72/55/r	50
Stuart, FL	93/76/t	50
Sturgis, MI	75/52/pc	46
● Tallahassee, FL	93/72/t	32
Thibodaux, LA	95/73/pc	39
● Topeka, KS	79/68/pc	38
Tuscaloosa, AL	85/66/t	41
Utica, NY	76/53/pc	44
Ventura, CA	68/58/pc	36
Victorville, CA	97/63/s	53
Vineland, NJ	79/60/r	54
Visalia, CA	99/64/s	62
Washington, DC	76/63/r	61
Watertown, SD	73/54/t	31
● Wausau, WI	74/58/c	19
Waynesboro, PA	75/57/r	57
White Plains, NY	72/61/r	46
● Wichita Falls, TX	97/75/t	39
Wilmington, DE	76/61/r	53
Wilmington, NC	93/69/t	33
● Wisconsin Rapids, WI	77/60/c	25
Wooster, OH	74/49/pc	41
Worcester, MA	69/60/r	47
York, PA	74/57/r	55

Air Quality Index: 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

	Tuesday High/low/W	Wednesday High/low/W
Acapulco	92/78/c	91/77/t
Addis Ababa	75/56/sh	69/55/sh
Algiers	91/65/s	88/66/s
Amman	86/67/s	88/68/s
Amsterdam	85/70/pc	94/70/s
Ankara	85/56/s	86/60/s
Asuncion	61/39/s	64/41/s
Athens	92/71/s	89/71/s
Auckland	63/56/r	61/55/sh
Baghdad	120/84/pc	106/82/pc
Bangkok	99/81/r	98/80/r
Beijing	83/65/sh	88/63/s
Beirut	85/73/s	85/73/s
Belgrade	85/67/sh	88/67/s
Berlin	82/58/pc	89/66/pc
Bogota	64/48/pc	67/49/r
Brussels	88/69/s	95/71/s
Bucharest	86/70/pc	83/67/t
Budapest	90/64/s	92/66/s
Buenos Aires	55/40/s	52/44/pc
Cairo	95/73/pc	96/73/pc
● Cape Town	62/53/sh	63/51/pc
Caracas	87/75/s	87/74/t
Casablanca	84/67/pc	83/65/pc
● Colombo	88/81/r	89/81/r
Copenhagen	73/57/s	81/61/pc
Damascus	96/63/s	98/64/s
Dublin	81/58/pc	71/59/s
Geneva	94/68/s	94/67/s
● Guatemala City	81/63/t	80/61/t
Hanoi	105/86/pc	104/83/pc
Harare	72/44/c	73/45/s
Havana	94/73/pc	92/74/r
Helsinki	65/54/pc	58/53/r
Hong Kong	93/85/r	93/85/t
Jakarta	90/76/t	91/75/sh
Jerusalem	81/64/s	84/65/s
Johannesburg	63/43/pc	68/41/pc
Kabul	89/64/s	91/66/s
Khartoum	103/85/s	103/84/pc
Kyiv	82/64/s	83/64/c
Kingston	92/79/s	90/80/pc
La Paz	57/25/s	54/23/s
Lagos	87/75/r	86/76/r
Lima	75/67/s	74/67/pc
Lisbon	85/64/pc	78/65/pc
London	95/72/s	99/69/s
● Madrid	105/71/s	103/74/pc
Manila	95/82/t	92/82/t
● Mexico City	76/57/r	73/58/t
Milan	99/75/s	95/76/c
Mombasa	84/71/sh	84/71/pc
Montevideo	50/39/c	51/40/pc
Montreal	77/58/c	76/61/pc
Moscow	74/53/pc	70/54/pc
Nairobi	71/57/c	72/58/c
New Delhi	100/85/pc	101/87/pc
Panama City	88/75/t	92/75/t
● Paris	103/74/s	106/77/s
Port-au-Prince	98/75/sh	94/74/s
Rio de Janeiro	79/70/s	75/66/r
Riyadh	114/86/pc	115/84/pc
Rome	92/69/pc	91/71/s
San Jose	82/71/r	84/69/r
● San Salvador	91/68/c	89/66/t
Santiago	60/34/pc	60/32/c
● Sao Paulo	68/55/r	58/54/sh
Sarajevo	86/61/t	85/61/t
● Shanghai	76/72/sh	81/72/r
Singapore	90/79/t	88/79/t
Stockholm	70/57/sh	69/53/r
Sydney	64/46/pc	66/56/s
Taipei	98/79/pc	98/78/pc
● Tegucigalpa	87/67/t	84/64/t
Tehran	102/81/s	103/78/pc
Tokyo	77/66/c	79/69/c
Toronto	76/56/pc	75/59/pc
Tunis	95/71/s	97/73/c
Vancouver	76/59/pc	75/57/pc
Vienna	88/63/pc	89/62/s
Warsaw	79/54/pc	81/58/pc
Yerevan	86/60/s	73/58/t
Zagreb	89/67/c	91/64/s
Zurich	93/63/s	94/64/s

● Denotes possible travel delays Tuesday

Weather(W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

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House committee reaches deal on social media rules for youth

Courtney Rozen
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee leadership agreed on legislation that would require social media platforms to provide "safeguards and tools" for minors and parents, according to a statement on June 22, a key step in a yearslong debate over how to protect children online.

Chairman Brett Guthrie and top committee Democrat Frank Pallone declined to release more specific details about the agreement, but said it would "hold Big Tech accountable."

"We worked across the aisle for many months and have now found common ground on policies to significantly improve the digital environment for kids," Guthrie and Pallone said in a joint statement.

Tech companies are under increasing scrutiny in the United States for their effect on youth, with parents and state officials pushing to ban phones from schools to limit access.

The agreement does not include a "duty of care" provision, a spokesperson for committee Republicans said. Such language would require companies to design social media platforms with children's safety in mind.



Tech companies are under increasing scrutiny for their effect on youth, with parents and state officials pushing for safeguards to protect children. KYLIE COOPER/REUTERS

The House agreement faces several hurdles before becoming law, including winning support in the Senate and from President Donald Trump.

The White House press office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Speaker Mike Johnson, the top Republican in the House, supports the agreement, according to a source familiar with his thinking. House Democrats have long demanded that the "duty of care" provision be included in any children's online safety legislation, complicating the bill's path forward.

At the national level, U.S. lawmakers for years have declined to pass comprehensive legislation regulating social media, prompting states to pass their own laws. At least 20 states enacted laws last year addressing social media use by children, according to the nonpartisan National Conference of State Legislatures, an organization that tracks state bills.

Reuters previously reported that Meta Platforms, which owns Instagram and Facebook, lobbied Congress for legal immunity from child-harm claims tied to social media products.

Meta, Google's YouTube, TikTok and Snap are facing thousands of lawsuits accusing them of designing social media platforms that are harmful to young people. If such a provision became law, it could undermine those cases.

Asked about the lobbying effort and the proposed language, Meta spokesperson Stephanie Otway said the provision "does not extinguish existing lawsuits, nor does it represent blanket immunity."

Meta and YouTube face a combined $6 million in damages after they lost the first case at trial in California early this year.



British new Member of Parliament for Makerfield Andy Burnham appears to be the front-runner to replace Prime Minister Keir Starmer after he resigned on June 22. HOUSE OF COMMONS/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

Burnham goes from U.K. sidelines to center stage

Andrew MacAskill and Elizabeth Piper
REUTERS

LONDON – Four years ago Andy Burnham complained he was repeatedly denied a main-stage speaking slot at the Labour Party conference under Prime Minister Keir Starmer's leadership, saying it was a sign of disrespect for his then position as Greater Manchester mayor.

There was some sympathy for one of Labour's most popular politicians, but now, as he seeks to become Britain's seventh prime minister in a decade, Burnham must prove he can occupy that center stage, win over voters and overcome the economic constraints that hamstrung his predecessors.

Burnham's pitch is that only he has the political charisma and the vision in Labour to connect with voters to defeat the populist anti-immigration Reform UK party, led by Nigel Farage, which has led in every poll since early last year.

His decisive victory in a contest for a seat in parliament last week, where Reform had recently performed strongly in local elections, has won over many Labour lawmakers after Starmer announced he would resign on June 22.

Burnham "has proven his credentials in putting forward a Labour vision voters can rally around," said Alex Sobel, a Labour member of parliament.

His supporters see Burnham – who won the nickname "King of the North" for his defense of the area during the COVID-19 pandemic – as a leader who made his mark at the helm of one of Britain's few regional success stories in recent years.

But his critics portray Burnham as someone who has sought to portray himself as a "normal man of the people" rather than the highly educated career politician he is.

It is now likely that Burnham will replace Starmer as prime minister after the former health minister, Wes Streeting, said he would not oppose him in a leadership contest. Streeting said he had talked at length to Burnham in recent days, fueling speculation that he may have struck a deal for standing aside in return for the promise of a top job. Streeting denied a job offer had been made. Burnham later posed with more than 100 Labour lawmakers in parliament on June 22 , but did not speak to waiting journalists.

So far, Burnham has only given hints of what his agenda could be if he becomes the next prime minister. It is his record as Greater Manchester mayor, a job he took in 2017 to escape what he called London-centric politics, that offers the best insight into his possible plans.

Burnham's battle against then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson over the toughest COVID pandemic restrictions in 2020 raised his profile again beyond Manchester.

When his receipt and dismissal of Johnson's offer of $29.13 million in compensation – a third of the "bare minimum" he was asking for – was captured live on television, it burnished his image as standing up for his region against an overbearing central government.

He strongly supports further decentralisation along with a more interventionist state and describes his political beliefs today as "more place first rather than party first."

He has long argued that, by shifting power away from London, which dominates Britain's economy, communities can take direct control over the things that shape their own lives, such as utilities and transport.

Burnham was born in Liverpool. He won a place to study English at the University of Cambridge and after graduating took a familiar path to political prominence, first as a researcher and then adviser in parliament.

He first served as a junior minister under former Prime Minister Tony Blair, and later culture secretary and health secretary under former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

In 2010 and 2015, he ran to become leader of the Labour Party and failed both times.

In the last year, Burnham has criticized the government for "being in hock to the bond markets" in comments he has since said had been misrepresented. He has called for nationalization of key industries and for Britain to rejoin the European Union.

But in recent weeks, he moved toward middle ground. He said the nation's finances were too constrained for large-scale nationalizations and said Britain was not going to rejoin the EU any time soon.

In 2022, after the last soccer World Cup, Starmer poked fun at Burnham, likening his changing positions to someone switching allegiance to those national sides that might be winning in the tournament.

Burnham "got to see his boyhood team Argentina win the World Cup," he said in a speech. "It was a mixed bag because he also got to see his boyhood team France lose the final and his boyhood teams Morocco and Croatia lose in the semis."

FINANCIAL MARKETS

Megacap tech puts drag on markets

SpaceX drops 16.4% while Alphabet falls 5%

Abigail Summerville, Twesha Dikshit and Joel Jose
REUTERS

The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq closed down on June 22, dragged by declines in the megacap technology stocks including Alphabet, while investors assessed developments in U.S.–Iran negotiations.

The Dow closed higher, boosted by the healthcare and industrial sectors. SpaceX tumbled 16.4%, its biggest single-day drop, and weighed heavily on the Nasdaq Composite. It is still trading above its initial public offering price of $135 per share. The Elon Musk-led company launched its first-ever debt offering on June 22 and said it had about $100.8 billion in cash and cash equivalents as of June 19.

Optimism about artificial intelligence has supported Wall Street's recent rally, but analysts noted that more investors have been questioning lofty spending on infrastructure expansion by hyperscalers. Alphabet fell 5% while Meta, Amazon and Microsoft fell between 2.3% and 4.7%.

"Energy prices are coming down, which is certainly a catalyst for both the consumer as well as businesses."

Bill Northey
Senior investment director at US Bank

"This is a very sentiment-driven sector and the group tends to trade together on a day-to-day basis," said Bill Northey, senior investment director at US Bank.

"But as we step back ... some of the strongest fundamentals are within the AI data center buildout space. That includes both the hyperscalers as well as many of the components that go into that continued buildout."

The next test for the rally will be Micron Technology's quarterly results on June 24. Shares of the memory chipmaker are up nearly 300% this year. Seven of the 11 major S&P sectors closed higher, led by real estate and energy stocks. Communication Services was a laggard, falling 3.8%.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 148.01 points, or 0.29%, to 51,712.71, the S&P 500 lost 27.79 points, or 0.37%, to 7,472.79 and the Nasdaq Composite lost 351.33 points, or 1.32%, to 26,166.60. Oil prices fell as Washington and Tehran agreed on a roadmap toward a final deal within 60 days. U.S. and Iranian officials made "great progress" at the first round of their talks in Switzerland that ended early on June 22, mediators said, although tensions persisted over Lebanon and the Strait of Hormuz.

"Energy prices are coming down, which is certainly a catalyst for both the consumer as well as businesses," Northey said. "On the flip side of that, we came out with a very hawkish (Federal Reserve) under new Chair Kevin Warsh, and it led the market to believe that there will be a more prioritized focus on returning to price stability in the near term."

This view on the Fed has lifted U.S. Treasury yields and pressured stock prices lower, he said. A focus this week will be on June 25 release of Personal Consumption Expenditures data, the Fed's preferred gauge of core inflation.

A stronger-than-expected reading could reinforce expectations of a hawkish Federal Reserve, after Warsh underscored the need to curb inflation at last week's meeting.

Markets currently expect a 25-basis-point rate hike from the Fed in September, according to LSEG data.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 1.32-to-1 ratio on the NYSE. There were 345 new highs and 200 new lows. On the Nasdaq, 2,078 stocks rose and 2,773 fell as declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 1.33-to-1 ratio.

The S&P 500 posted 29 new 52-week highs and 33 new lows while the Nasdaq Composite recorded 144 new highs and 186 new lows. Volume on U.S. exchanges was 22.97 billion shares, compared with the 22.12 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days.

Iran

Continued from Page 1NN

envisaged under the agreement to provide economic relief to Iran, the U.S. Treasury announced a waiver until Aug. 21 on sanctions, allowing Tehran to sell oil and related products and receive payment for them.

Vance, who has maintained an upbeat tone since the memorandum of understanding was signed, said Tehran had agreed to allow in nuclear inspectors, and to establish mechanisms to handle its assets frozen abroad and manage ceasefires.

"We laid a very good foundation for a successful final deal," he told reporters after taking part in the talks.

However, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei told the official IRNA news agency that Iran had not yet discussed nuclear issues or made new commitments.

Trump said in a post on Truth Social on June 22 that Iran will agree to have weapons inspections to ensure "nuclear honesty."

"If Iran doesn't live up to their agreement, or if they're not behaving, I will do what I have to do," Trump later told reporters.

Iran has limited inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency since the United States and Israel launched a first round of air strikes last year, and suspended them entirely when war broke out in February. It says its nuclear program is peaceful.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on social media that Tehran had secured waivers for oil and petrochemical exports, the release of some of its frozen assets abroad and the launch of a reconstruction and development plan for Iran.

Vance said White House envoy Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, had come up with a process whereby the United States and Qatar would have control over Iranian funds when they are unfrozen, and the money could be spent on U.S. corn, soy and wheat.

"So, the money that we lift is going to go to our farmers," Trump told reporters. However, Iran's Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said there was no such obligation and said at least some of the remaining frozen funds could be used to buy other non-sanctioned goods, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported.



An excavator clears rubble from the site of a collapsed building following Israeli bombardment in Nabatieh, Lebanon, on June 21. Iran warned the United States to "be careful" after President Donald Trump threatened to strike the Islamic republic over its support for Hezbollah, even as the parties held talks in Switzerland seeking a deal. MAHMOUD ZAYYAT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

> **"If Iran doesn't live up to their agreement, or if they're not behaving, I will do what I have to do."**
> **President Donald Trump**

Technical talks were due to continue for the rest of this week.

The interim peace agreement calls for ending all hostilities, including in Lebanon, which Israel invaded in March after Hezbollah fired across the border. Israel was not party to the peace agreement and says it will not withdraw its troops from Lebanon, but on June 19 it agreed to a new ceasefire.

Though intense fighting continued for another day, Lebanese officials said it had abated since June 20. Israel and Lebanon were due to start a new round of talks in Washington on June 23, with Beirut determined to press ahead with direct negotiations even as they appear to be overshadowed by Iran's decision to make Lebanon part of its negotiations with the United States.

Hassan Wazni, director of a hospital in the heavily bombarded city of Nabatieh, said it was the first two full days of calm since the war began.

"I'm monitoring the situation day by day, and most of the time I'm sleeping in the hospital. This is the longest a ceasefire has held," he told Reuters by phone.

More than a million Lebanese have been displaced by the war, and though some have begun returning to their homes, many are still too wary.

In Qennarit, a southern town, mourners carried the bodies of four women killed in a June 20 wave of Israeli strikes. The coffins were draped in yellow Hezbollah flags with the group's green logo of an arm holding an assault rifle.

Judge

Continued from Page 1NN

March.

The Justice Department sought a wide range of information on state and local policies and directives related to federal immigration operations. The subpoena recipients included Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Walz, whom Trump has frequently derided and who served as Democrat Kamala Harris' vice presidential nominee in 2024.

Walz said in a statement that the decision was "a victory for the rule of law and our democracy."

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, a Democrat whose office was also subpoenaed, applauded the ruling.

"In America, we settle our political differences at the ballot box, and it should disturb every American that Donald Trump is weaponizing the criminal justice system against people he disagrees with," he said in a statement.

The Justice Department issued the subpoenas in January as Trump administration officials accused Walz and other officials of deliberately stoking interference with Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations in the state.

Walz openly encouraged citizens to record video of ICE arrests and lauded protesters opposed to the Trump administration's crackdown.

DOJ lawyers said the investigation was focused on whether state and local officials had violated laws barring obstructing federal operations and harbored migrants living illegally in the United States.

Recipients challenged the subpoenas in court, arguing they were issued for the improper purpose of retaliating against political opponents and coercing cooperation with the federal government.

Schiltz found that the DOJ put forward little evidence that state and local officials had violated any laws.

"The fact that connections between the information sought in the subpoenas and any possible criminal violation range from extremely weak to nonexistent only adds to the overwhelming evidence that these subpoenas were not issued to investigate, but to harass, coerce, and retaliate," the judge wrote.



Mourners attend the funeral of four women after an Israeli strike on June 20 on the village of Qennarit, Lebanon. Israel is concerned about the U.S.-Iran deal and what it could mean for future action in Lebanon. AZIZ TAHER/REUTERS

Israel

Continued from Page 1NN

Israel's war in Gaza after the deadly Hamas attack of Oct. 7, 2023, on Israeli communities and the taking of hostages.

Israel has also faced criticism over the joint decision to launch the war on Iran, a conflict that is deeply unpopular in the United States, including among Trump's conservative base.

Victoria Coates, vice president at the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank and Trump's deputy national security adviser during his first term, suggested on June 22 that the U.S.–Israeli relationship was strained but expressed confidence that the leaders of both countries would bring it "back on track."

A day earlier, speaking at the conference, she had said that recent days had been "challenging for all of us, to put it mildly," but that there had been plenty of "great and good things" in Trump's second term "for which we can and should be grateful."



Mediators Pakistan and Qatar said on June 22 that Iran and the United States had agreed to set up a plan with Lebanon "to ensure the adherence of the termination of military operations" there. JALAA MAREY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Until recently, Trump had been seen in Israel as its strongest-ever White House ally after his decision in his first term to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights and his leading diplomatic role securing the release of hostages last year.

Two Israeli officials familiar with Netanyahu's thinking said the prime minister was not concerned that comments by Trump and Vance indicated any meaningful U.S. policy changes, such as slower arms deliveries.

Netanyahu believed the comments might be partly geared toward assuaging voters ahead of U.S. midterm elections in November amid growing frustration over Israel and the war, said the officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The anxiety in Israel has led some prominent figures to say it is time for the country to envisage a future without strong U.S. support and to further build up its own military and technological capabilities.

Ohad Tal, chair of the U.S.-Israel caucus in Israel's parliament the Knesset, said Israelis needed to prepare for the day when there is a less supportive U.S. president "and this is why we have to be much more independent and we have to forge new alliances."