U.S. oil exports hit record, filling global supply gap

Experts: Whether gas prices rise or fall depends on how long Mideast disruptions last. **In Money**

Softball's highest-paid has one college goal left

Texas Tech pitcher NiJaree Canady begins her final chase for national championship. **In Sports**

USA TODAY

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JESSE GRANT/GETTY IMAGES FOR CBS BROADCASTING INC.

Cedric the Entertainer grills up new projects

"The Neighborhood" star and executive producer, marking end of series, looks ahead to grilling cookbook and his return to Broadway. **In Life**



GOP drama is causing typically painless procedural votes to drag for hours for Speaker of the House Mike Johnson. GRAEME SLOAN/GETTY IMAGES

Infighting hinders Trump's agenda

GOP drama in Congress could affect midterms

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – House Speaker Mike Johnson says he's doing the impossible on Capitol Hill.

Over the last few weeks, he's been hard at work skillfully negotiating with House Republicans and his Senate counterparts to enact President Donald Trump's legislative agenda in a critical midterm election year, despite a historically small voting margin.

That's one way of looking at it.

Another perspective, as Sen. John Kennedy, a Republican from Johnson's home state of Louisiana, put it: "Mike's having a tough time."

"He's good," the often-frank lawmaker said last month at the Capitol. "But he can't work miracles."

Kennedy's observations came during a particularly challenging week in the House. Republican infighting was on full display as Johnson struggled to cobble together the votes needed to advance a farm bill, extend a critical government spying program, and end the record-long Department of Homeland Security shutdown.

"He's good. But he can't work miracles."

Sen. John Kennedy
Speaking about House Speaker Mike Johnson

The GOP family drama caused typically painless procedural votes to drag on for hours. At one point, a Republican from Iowa, Rep. Zach Nunn, yelled at Johnson from across the House floor, saying the pair needed to "have a conversation."

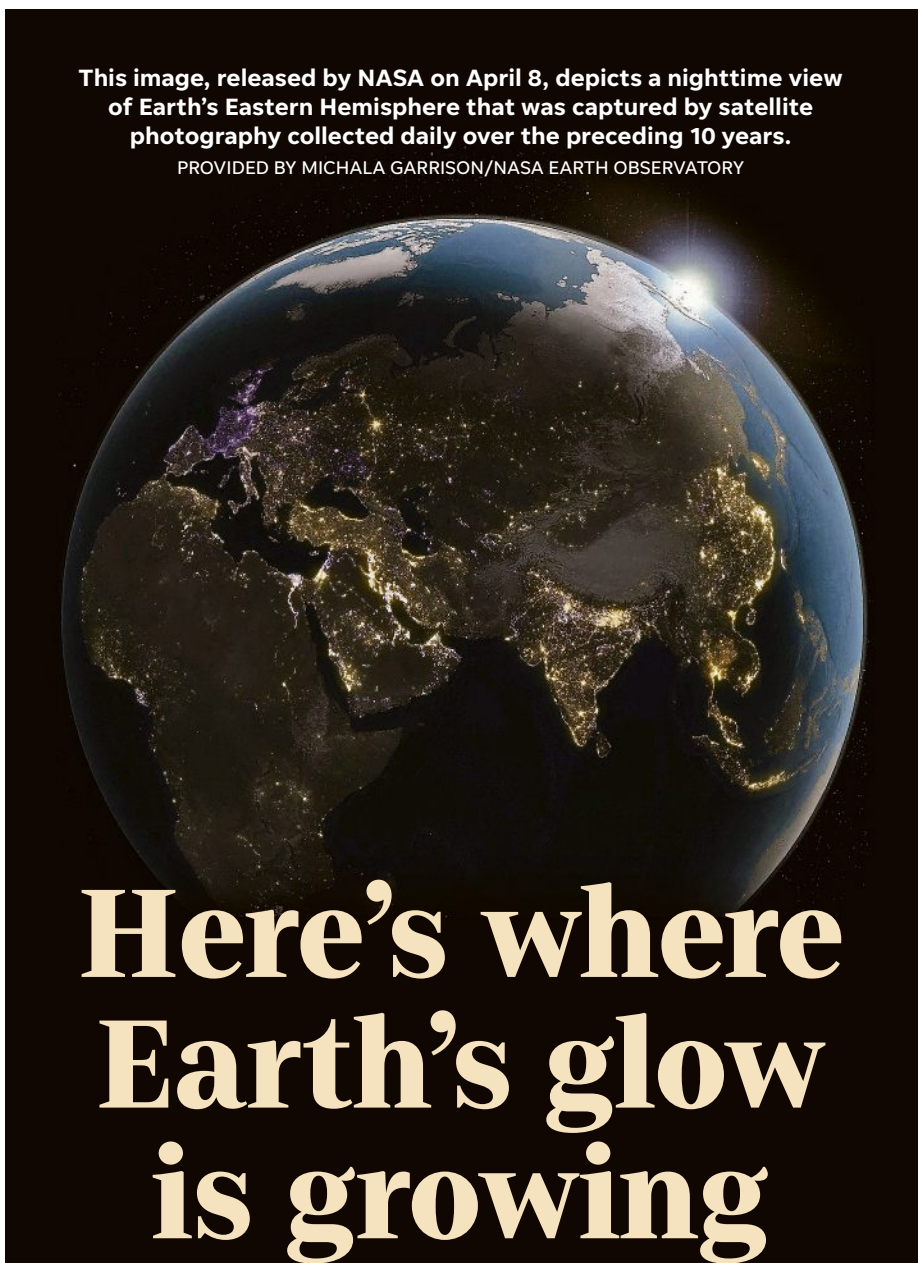
"It's been a whirlwind," Nunn said the morning after a bout of late-night negotiations over sticking points in the farm bill. Though that legislation passed, it still faces an uncertain future in the Senate, where a provision over cancer warnings on pesticides continues to pit farm-state Republicans against "Make America Healthy Again" proponents.

The congressional gridlock, both within and between the Republican-controlled chambers, has already had clear consequences for the American people. Fierce disagreements between GOP lawmakers in the House and Senate were part of the reason the DHS shutdown dragged on, leaving tens of thousands of federal workers worried about their paychecks and travelers

See GOP DRAMA, Page 6A

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This image, released by NASA on April 8, depicts a nighttime view of Earth's Eastern Hemisphere that was captured by satellite photography collected daily over the preceding 10 years.
PROVIDED BY MICHALA GARRISON/NASA EARTH OBSERVATORY

Here's where Earth's glow is growing

NASA shows how light pollution in some areas has gotten worse

Janet Loehrke USA TODAY

Our night sky is getting brighter and brighter – not because of the moon, but because of artificial lighting. • While outdoor lighting is a necessary part of modern society, its widespread use has reshaped natural darkness, affected human and animal health and made the night sky harder to see. • According to a new study that analyzed a combination of satellite images, artificial nighttime lights have brightened Earth by 16% between 2014 and 2022. Researchers from University of Connecticut found that nights are gradually becoming brighter worldwide, though trends vary by region, particularly in areas affected by war or natural disasters. The findings were published in Nature. • In 2022, the United States had by far the highest total luminosity of any country, followed by China, India, Canada and Brazil. • "For decades, we've held a simplified view that the Earth at night is just getting steadily brighter as human population and economies grow," said senior author of the study Zhe Zhu, director of the University of Connecticut's Global Environmental Remote Sensing Laboratory. "The planet's lighting footprint is constantly expanding, contracting and shifting," Zhu said.

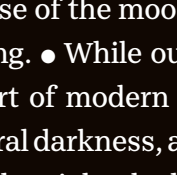
See EARTH'S GLOW, Page 3A

Light pollution: What you can do?

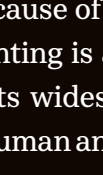
The good part of light pollution is that it is entirely reversible. Anyone is capable of making a difference by using these easy light-dimming tips:



Switch it off
Use lights only when needed. For outdoor lighting, use motion sensor lighting and timers to help reduce unnecessary lighting.



Directional lighting
Directing lighting downward rather than outward or upward will reduce glare and prevent light from scattering into the sky.



Go warm
Choose amber, yellow-toned, or warmer LEDs bulbs. Try to avoid blue-white, cool-toned bulbs.

SOURCE DarkSky International, National Park Service; GRAPHIC Janet Loehrke/USA TODAY

HANTAVIRUS

2 more travelers on ship positive

1 American among the ill of deadly cruise outbreak

Nicole Fallert, Natalie Neysa Alund, Melina Khan, Thao Nguyen and Daniel de Visé
USA TODAY

Two more people, including an American, have tested positive for hantavirus after being evacuated from a luxury cruise ship hit by a deadly outbreak, health authorities said, as Spain prepared on May 11 to evacuate and repatriate the last passengers remaining on the vessel.

A French passenger who was evacuated from the MV Hondius tested positive for the virus and her condition was deteriorating, French Health Minister Stephanie Rist said on May 11.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said on May 10 that one of the 17 Americans being repatriated had tested "mildly positive" for

See HANTAVIRUS, Page 6A

Find live updates online

Visit us at **usatoday.com** to stay up to date with the latest news.



Nearly 150 people from 23 countries were on board the MV Hondius when severe respiratory illnesses among passengers was first reported on May 3. JORGE GUERRERO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

DOJ changed status of pot, but that hasn't made it legal

Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

Despite years of momentum to loosen restrictions on weed, including a recent order from the Trump administration's Department of Justice, there is still a big disconnect between states and the federal government.

On April 23, the Department of Justice said it was easing federal restrictions by moving some kinds of marijuana with medical use from Schedule I, the most heavily controlled drugs under the Controlled Substances Act, to Schedule III, which can be legally prescribed.

But the move doesn't apply to all marijuana, and it doesn't make recreational use legal at the federal level. The Trump administration said it was able to quickly make this narrow change while still pursuing a more sweeping rescheduling.

With the DOJ's most recent action, someone who uses medical marijuana in a state that has a medical use program, if they follow the state's rules, is no longer breaking federal law, said Heather Trela, director of operations and fellow at the Rockefeller Institute

See POT STATUS, Page 3A

Trump says Iran ceasefire on 'life support'

President rejects latest offer as 'unacceptable'

James Powel and Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump said that the ceasefire with Iran is on "life support" since the two countries are unable to reach an agreement to end the war and fighting is resuming in the Strait of Hormuz.

During a White House event, Trump said the ceasefire has been "unbelievably weak" and called Iran's latest peace proposal "a piece of garbage."

"I would say the ceasefire is on massive life support, where the doctor walks in and says, 'Sir, your loved one has approximately a 1% chance of living,' " Trump said on May 11 in the Oval Office.

Trump previously had rejected Iran's response to the United States' latest proposal to end the war, declaring it "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE" in a May 10 social media post, though he did not provide further details.

The comments dashed hopes for an imminent end to the U.S.-Israel war on Iran that has caused widespread damage in the Middle East, paralyzed maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz and driven up global energy prices.

The United States had proposed an end to the fighting that would reopen the key oil shipping waterway and roll back Iran's nuclear program.

In the Oval Office on May 11, Trump said the United States was prepared to continue its military campaign until it is completed.

"They didn't want to go that far," Trump said. "How stupid. Are they stupid people?" Trump asked. "They think that well, I'll get tired of this, or I'll get bored, or I'll have some pressure. But there's no pressure, there's no pressure at all," Trump said.

Reuters, citing Iranian state media, reported that Iran's proposal emphasized its sovereignty over the strait, called for war reparations from the United States, and framed the U.S. proposal as a surrender to Trump's demands.

"We will never bow our heads before the enemy, and if talk of dialogue or negotiation arises, it does not mean surrender or retreat," Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a post on X on May 10. "Rather, the goal is to uphold the rights of the Iranian nation and to defend national interests with resolute strength."

Tense days of attacks

The biggest flare-ups in fighting since a ceasefire began have occurred in recent days in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

The United Arab Emirates said on May 10 that it intercepted two drones coming from Iran, and Qatar condemned a drone attack that hit a cargo ship coming from Abu Dhabi in its waters. Kuwait said its air defenses had dealt with hostile drones that entered its airspace.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for international affairs, warned the French and British that any potential naval deployment to the strait would be met with military force.

"It is emphasized that the presence of French and British warships, or those of any other country potentially accompanying the illegal and internationally unlawful actions of the United States in the strait of Hormuz, will be met with a decisive and immediate response," Gharibabadi wrote on X on May 10.

French President Emmanuel Macron said at a news conference in Kenya that France has "never considered" deploying forces to the region but is "ready" to support security in the strait after hostilities end.

"We have built an ad hoc mission, co-piloted with the British, which has brought together 50 countries and international organizations to enable, in concert with Iran and by deconflicting the matter with all the countries of the region and the United States, to ensure, as soon as conditions allow, the resumption of maritime traffic," Macron said.

Netanyahu said war is 'not over' in '60 Minutes' interview

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" that aired on May 10, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the war "is not over."

The prime minister alleged that Iran still has nuclear material that could be removed if "you go in, and you take it out," in an excerpt of the interview released hours before Trump's post. Netanyahu said Trump told him that, "I want to go in there" and refused to rule out the use of American forces to retrieve the nuclear material.

"I'm not [going to] talk about military means," Netanyahu said. "I think it can be done physically."

Netanyahu added that military goals had not been completed. Israel receives about $3.8 billion of military aid from the United States annually, but Netanyahu said he wanted to wean the country off of it.

Contributing: Reuters

Suspect in press dinner shooting enters not guilty plea

Andrew Goudsward
Reuters

WASHINGTON – The man accused of attempting to assassinate President Donald Trump at a White House reporters' gala last month pleaded not guilty to all charges May 11.

Cole Allen, 31, did not speak in court as his attorney entered the plea. The charges include attempted assassination of the president, assault on a federal officer and firearms offenses.

Prosecutors allege Allen fired a shotgun at a Secret Service agent and stormed a security checkpoint in a foiled attack on Trump and other members of his administration at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

Investigators say Allen traveled to Washington by train, carrying a shotgun, pistol and knives, and booked a room in the Washington Hilton where the April 25 dinner took place.

Allen wore an orange jumpsuit and was shackled at the waist during the brief court proceeding. It was his first appearance in Washington, DC, federal court before the judge who will preside over the remainder of the case, U.S. District Judge Trevor McFadden.

A magistrate judge apologized to Allen and grilled a jail representative over the conditions Allen had faced. His lawyer said he'd been kept alone in a cell and was denied access to a Bible. He had been placed on suicide precautions and isolated from other inmates.

The proceeding May 11 previewed the next legal battle in the case: Allen's lawyers want to have acting Attorney General Todd Blanche and U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro disqualified because they were present and may have been among Allen's alleged targets.

Allen's lawyer, Eugene Ohm, said the defense is likely to seek recusal of the entire U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, which Pirro leads, because of her friendship with Trump and status as a potential victim.

"It is wholly inappropriate for victims of an alleged event like this to be individually prosecuting the case," Ohm said.

Prosecutors are set to respond to the defense's legal filing by May 22. Pirro previously told CNN that "my ability to prosecute this case has nothing to do with my being there."

Allen is detained pending his trial, after he dropped his fight against pretrial detention April 30. He faces a life term if convicted.

Contributing: Aysha Bagchi

Bear kills man at Glacier National Park

Hiker from Florida dies in first attack since 1998

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

A Florida man who went missing while hiking in Glacier National Park in Montana was killed by a bear in what authorities believe to be the first deadly bear attack at the park since 1998.

The body of the hiker was recovered and identified as Anthony Pollio, 33, of Davie, Florida, the National Park Service said in a news release May 9. Pollio was last heard from May 3 after he communicated his plans to hike toward the Mount Brown Fire Lookout.

His last known message was sent at around 8:20 p.m. local time May 3, and the park was notified about his disappearance on the afternoon of May 4, according to the National Park Service.

Park rangers had concentrated their search efforts in the Mount Brown and Snyder Lakes areas and adjacent trail corridors, the park service said. Aerial resources and local rescue crews also assisted in the search.

Pollio's body was discovered by search and rescue crews at around 12 p.m. local time May 6 about 50 feet off the Mount Brown Trail in a "densely wooded area with downed timber," according to the park service. Crews also found some of Pollio's personal items about 2.5 miles from the trailhead.

At the time of the discovery, the park service said Pollio's injuries were consistent with "those sustained by a bear encounter."

"The sequence of events leading to the bear encounter remains under investigation; however, evidence suggests that this was a surprise encounter," the park service said in the May 9 news release.

The National Park Service noted that a section of the trail where the incident occurred remains temporarily closed as authorities investigate and reminded park visitors to stay off closed trails. The agency said park staff were working to "determine next steps based on field assessments and wildlife behavior monitoring."

Bear incidents at Glacier National Park

Fatal bear encounters are uncommon at Glacier National Park, located near the Canada-United States border in northwestern Montana. The park service said the last deadly bear attack at the park occurred in 1998 in the Two Medicine region.

On May 17, 1998, a solo hiker – Craig Dahl – was attacked at the Scenic Point Trail in the Two Medicine Valley, park service records show. Wildlife authorities killed a female bear and two cubs in response to Dahl's death.

Since the park was established, there have been 10 confirmed grizzly bear-related fatalities, from 1967 to 1998, according to park service records.

The last time a bear injured a human at Glacier National Park was in August 2025, the park service said. A 34-year-old woman was injured by a "brown colored bear" while backcountry hiking with another person near Lake Janet, the agency said in a news release at the time.

A female bear and her two cubs charged toward the woman, and she dove off the trail, according to the park service.



A cinnamon-colored black bear munches on berries at Glacier National Park in Montana.
TREVOR HUGHES/USA TODAY

What to do if you encounter a bear

To stay safe in areas where bears can be found, the National Park Service recommends visitors to:

- Stay 100 yards away from bears at all times.
- Carry bear spray and know how to use it.
- Be alert and watch for fresh tracks, scat, and feeding sites. Look for signs of digging, rolled rocks, torn-up logs, and ripped-open ant hills.
- Make noise.
- Hike in groups of three or more people.
- Don't hike at dawn, dusk, or at night, when bears are most active.
- Don't run from a bear.

The female bear swiped at the woman, injuring her arm and shoulder.

The encounter ended after her hiking partner used bear spray, causing the bear to immediately run away, the agency said.

The hikers then used another group's satellite communicator to contact park dispatch and send an SOS, who found the woman in stable condition.

"No action will be taken against the bear at this time, the encounter was a surprise to a sow with two cubs that reacted defensively. The area of the trail the hiking party was on is confined by the lake and dense brush, which the bear came out of," the agency said in the news release.

"The species of the bear could not be positively identified."

Other bear incidents in the United States

The fatal bear encounter at Glacier National Park occurred in the same week that two hikers were injured in a bear attack at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, according to the park service.

At the time, the agency said in a news release that the two hikers sustained injuries in an attack by "one or more bears" on a trail near the Old Faithful geyser on May 4.

In an update on May 7, the agency said a 15-year-old boy and a 28-year-old man were hiking the Mystic Falls trail when they were injured.

Authorities responded to the scene and provided aid before transporting the two hikers from the area by helicopter, according to the park service. The incident remains under investigation, but the agency said park staff believe a female grizzly bear with two or three cubs was involved in the encounter.

"This is the first incident of a bear injuring a person in Yellowstone in 2026," the park service said. "The last time a visitor was injured by a bear in the park was in September 2025.

The last human fatality caused by a bear occurred in 2015 in the Lake Village area of the park."

In April, two U.S. Army soldiers were injured after encountering a brown bear during training at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska, the 11th Airborne Division said in a news release. Both soldiers deployed bear spray during the incident and were treated for their injuries.

Authorities at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which spans parts of North Carolina and Tennessee, also reported a spike in encounters between aggressive bears and humans in April.

Contributing: Julia Gomez and Phaedra Trethan

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USA TODAY CO.

Pot status

Continued from Page 1A

of Government.

But experts have told USA TODAY that the move to reclassify marijuana doesn't satisfy the yearslong push to make it legal for other uses, and won't resolve conflicts between federal and state laws.

"This does not make it legal to be used in any circumstance," Trela said. "This will not make medical marijuana legal in states that have not legalized it."

Despite federal laws, many states have taken the approach of passing their own marijuana laws, often ones far more permissive than the federal government.

This has left the nation with a confusing patchwork of state laws. Most states had been authorizing marijuana for medical use even before the rescheduling, and nearly half of all states also say recreational use is OK. Few ban it outright.

Americans generally support legalization, according to public opinion polling; for the past decade, at least 60% have supported legalization.

Former President Joe Biden announced his intention to reschedule marijuana and also issued federal pardons for certain marijuana-related crimes. President Donald Trump is also pushing for rescheduling.

"Some people like it, some people hate it. Some people hate the whole concept of marijuana," Trump said last year.

What did the new order do?

The Department of Justice action on April 23 did not reschedule all marijuana, a move both Biden and Trump have indicated they support. Instead, it rescheduled products that fall under two categories, including those approved by the Food and Drug Administration: "FDA-approved products containing marijuana and marijuana products regulated by a state medical marijuana license."

These types of marijuana products were moved from Schedule I to Schedule III.

The Controlled Substances Act classifies drugs from Schedule I to Schedule V based on their potential for abuse, addictiveness and medical use. Schedule I drugs have "high potential for abuse and the potential to create severe psychological and/or physical dependence" and "no currently accepted medical use," the Drug Enforcement Administration says.

Marijuana was considered a Schedule I drug since it was first placed on the list in 1970, alongside drugs like heroin, LSD and ecstasy.

Schedule III drugs, which include Tylenol with codeine or anabolic steroids, can be lawfully prescribed as medication regulated by the FDA.

The move could also open up potential tax benefits for weed companies in states where medical marijuana is legal. There is some uncertainty about how that will go, and whether those businesses have reason to be concerned if they also sell recreational marijuana, which remains federally illegal, Trela said.

States' marijuana laws explained

Forty states, three territories and Washington, DC, all allow for medical marijuana as of June 2025, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, which tracks state laws. Twenty-four states, three territories and DC have passed laws permitting recreational use, with a variety of specific rules on legal limits. That's up from just a few years ago.

Some other states allow for "low THC, high cannabidiol" products for medical purposes.

Only Idaho has no legal usage of marijuana products at all.

Full legalization has significant public support: About 64% of Americans think it should be legal, according to an October 2025 survey by Gallup, which has been polling public opinion on weed for decades. The 2025 result was a slight downtick from peak support in 2023 of 70% support.

A confusing disconnect

Technically, pot has been illegal at the federal level everywhere, even though more and more states have said it's allowed. The wave of medical and recreational laws passed at the state level has left a confusing disconnect.

The federal government could, at any time, choose to prosecute someone for recreationally using marijuana, even if they are in a state that allows it, and they are following all the state rules, Trela said.

But the federal government tends not to do that and would rather use its resources pursuing crimes it deems more important. It will still sometimes charge someone for marijuana possession when their actions draw too much attention, Trela said. That could include using weed on federal property, the U.S. Park Police recently said.

For over a decade, Congress has passed provisions in budget bills that bar the DOJ from using taxpayer money to interfere with states' ability to implement medical marijuana programs.

And administrations have discretion over how they will enforce their laws. During the Obama administration, policies dictated that DOJ wouldn't interfere with state laws allowing medical or recreational pot use, effectively discouraging prosecution for nonviolent users who weren't involved in organized crime. Those were rescinded during Trump's first term.

Rescheduling all marijuana to Schedule III, something the Trump administration says it will continue to evaluate, could reduce the mandatory-minimum penalties faced by those who are prosecuted for marijuana use, Trela said.

It would still not make all marijuana use legal at the federal level, however. Full legalization doesn't seem likely any time in the foreseeable future, she said.

Could government legalize pot?

Congress could act on its own to either reschedule marijuana or fully legalize it, Trela said. It's never had enough momentum in Congress to go very far.

Otherwise, the executive branch can pursue a much longer, complicated process to change how it classifies marijuana.

Starting at the end of June, the DOJ said it will begin the process of more broadly rescheduling marijuana, which will include administrative hearings. By limiting the scope of the rescheduling order in April, the DOJ could bypass some of the formal administrative rulemaking process, allowing the order to go into effect immediately.

Opposition to rescheduled weed

Already a federal lawsuit has been filed challenging the DOJ's authority to order the limited rescheduling. The group Smart Approaches to Marijuana, or SAM, and the National Drug and Alcohol Screening Alliance filed a petition on May 4 to block the April rescheduling move, arguing that it violates rulemaking requirements and that the administration overstepped its power.

"With this move, we are now confronted with the most pro-drug administration in our history," SAM said in a statement. "It's a drug that should be carefully researched, of course, but not legalized through the backdoor."

The organization said marijuana should remain on Schedule I until research can prove it doesn't meet the criteria.

Trela said the change will be hugely beneficial for research, the key reason Trump has said he favors rescheduling.

When marijuana was strictly a Schedule I drug, that also meant there were major legal hurdles for anyone wanting to conduct research on its effects, she said. That created something of a feedback loop: It was hard to study pot to prove its medical value because the federal government said it had no medical value. Studies to this point have been limited in their scope or sample sizes, Trela said.

The move to reschedule marijuana is due in large part to its lower public health risk, federal scientists have said. Its medical use includes helping with pain, anxiety and glaucoma. But some studies point to health and psychological risks, such as IQ loss, heart issues and temporary paranoia and hallucinations.

"What are the long-term effects? Are there any long-term effects? What does this do to your body? What is marijuana good for? What is it not good for? Does it help anxiety or does it not?" Trela said. "We don't know on a lot of these things."

Contributing: Eduardo Cuevas

Officials probe cause of Miami boat explosion

Drew Pittock and Anthony Thompson
USA TODAY

The 11 injuries that came after a possible boat explosion in Miami may be tied to the boat's hatches that were allegedly not open when the ignition was started, an eyewitness told local media outlet CBS12.

Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue Battalion Chief Juan Arias said first responders were dispatched around 12:48 p.m. May 9, USA TODAY reported, after reports of an explosion in the waters off Miami's Haulover Sandbar.

Crews arrived and located multiple victims. Eleven people were treated at the scene before being transported to area hospitals. Arias told USA TODAY some of the victims sustained burn injuries, though he did not comment on the full extent of their conditions.

Officials told USA TODAY on May 10 that the cause of the possible explosion is under investigation.

Witness: 'He blew people out of the boat'

Speaking to CBS News Miami, Patrick Lee, a boat charter captain who witnessed the incident, described seeing "three people fly out of the boat" after the explosion. Lee speculated that gasoline fumes ignited after the boat was started, causing the explosion.

"People got on board, and he turned the key and didn't open the hatches, didn't turn on the blowers, and he blew people out of the boat," Lee told the outlet.

Explosion triggers large-scale response

Witnesses told CBS12 that crews responded to the scene "within minutes." They described passengers suffering burns being carried away on stretchers. "I just saw a lot of them were burns all over them," Lee said.

More than 25 units from four organizations responded to the scene, including the local fire department, an Ocean Rescue team, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Coast Guard, according to CBS12.

"This time of year we have a lot of boats on the water, so it's always good to make sure you have a radio with you, life vests, fire extinguishers," Arias told CBS12, "and also an experienced boater with you."

Earth's glow

Continued from Page 1A

The glow: Earth's light pollution

In the United States, nearly 80% of people reside in urban areas. In many locations, the brightness of artificial light sources obscures the beauty of the night sky. Because of city lights, only the brightest stars, planets and other celestial objects are visible, according to DarkSky International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting night skies.

In the University of Connecticut study, researchers also identified areas where artificial light levels had decreased. This dimming was attributed to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022, which triggered a regional energy crisis and caused European nights to darken dramatically.

What is light pollution? Here are the four types

Excessive artificial lighting outside is known as light pollution, and according to DarkSky, there are four ways that light pollution can happen:

- **Glare:** The intense, uncomfortable light that shines directly at the viewer and obstructs their eyesight.
- **Skyglow:** The brightening of the night sky because of light distributed in the atmosphere by human-caused lighting.
- **Light trespass:** Unwanted artificial light spilling onto another person's property or space, such as light from a streetlight shining in a bedroom window.
- **Clutter:** Intensely bright lights, which cause visual discomfort. Common examples include extremely bright streetlights or poorly aimed spotlights.

How much light pollution is in your area?

Excessive lighting is a common feature of cities, suburbs and urban towns. These light sources include parking lots, streetlights, advertisements and both internal and outdoor lighting.

The brightness of the night sky can be measured by using the Bortle scale. The scale has nine levels, with Class 9 representing the highest level of light pollution.

To easily check light pollution where you live, visit the Light Pollution Map (lightpollutionmap.app), which shows how much artificial light is in your area.

How too much light can impact wildlife and humans

Both animals and humans are affected by artificial light.

In animals, research shows that light pollution disrupts a wide range of behaviors, including migration patterns, sleep-wake cycles and habitat development. Species that rely on natural light cues are particularly vulnerable.

According to DarkSky International, sea turtles and birds use moonlight to navigate during migration. Artificial lighting can disorient them, causing them to stray from their routes and often leading to death.

Artificial lights also attract large numbers of insects, which are a primary food source for birds and other animals. Many of these insects are quickly killed when they come into contact with light sources, reducing available food and further disrupting ecosystems.

For humans, artificial light at night can disrupt the body's natural circadian rhythm by suppressing melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep; this disruption may in turn interfere with biological processes such as hormone regulation, cell growth and DNA repair that help protect against cancer.

In a 2024 peer reviewed study published in ScienceDirect, researchers found that higher exposure to outdoor artificial light at night, or ALAN, was associated with a modestly higher risk of breast cancer.

For tips to help reduce light pollution, visit DarkSky.org.

Sources: Nature , NASA, Reuters, DarkSky International, National Park Service, Space.com and USA TODAY research

Contributing: Ramon Padilla

How too much light can impact wildlife

Research shows that light pollution disrupts a wide range of behaviors, including migration patterns and habitat development. Species that rely on natural light cues are particularly vulnerable.



1 billion or more
The number of birds that die annually from overly bright building collisions in the U.S., according to a 2024 study.

70%
Percentage of firefly populations that have declined due to artificial light disrupting their mating rituals.

20% - 60%
Percentage range of sea turtle hatchlings worldwide that fail to reach the sea because overlit coastal areas disrupt their visual cues.

SOURCE American Bird Conservancy, Yale University, ScienceDirect; GRAPHIC Janet Loehrke/USA TODAY

"For decades, we've held a simplified view that the Earth at night is just getting steadily brighter as human population and economies grow. The planet's lighting footprint is constantly expanding, contracting and shifting."

Zhe Zhu
University of Connecticut's Global Environmental Remote Sensing Laboratory

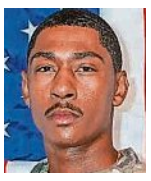
Army recovers body of missing U.S. soldier

He went missing while training in Morocco

Drew Pittock
USA TODAY

The body of a U.S. soldier who went missing during a training exercise in southwestern Morocco this month has been recovered, the U.S. Army announced on May 10.

1st Lt. Kendrick Lamont Key Jr., 27, was one of two U.S. soldiers who went missing on May 2 near the Cap Draa Training Area, the Army said in a news release. A Moroccan military search team found Key's body along the shoreline at about 8:55 a.m. local time on May 9, about a mile from where the soldiers were reported missing.


Key

"Today, we mourn the loss of 1st Lt. Kendrick Key, whose remains were recovered in Morocco," Brig. Gen Curtis King, commanding general of the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, said in a statement. "Our hearts are with his Family, friends, teammates, and all who knew and served alongside him. The 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command Family is grieving, and we will continue to support one another and 1st Lt. Key's Family as we honor his life and service."

Who was 1st Lt. Kendrick Lamont Key Jr.?

Key, of Richmond, Virginia, was assigned to Charlie Battery, 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, according to the Army. He also served as a 14A Air Defense Artillery officer.

Key earned a Bachelor of Science in marketing from Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina, with minors in international business, entrepreneurship, and business administration, the Army said. He later entered the military service in 2023 as an officer candidate, earning his commission through Officer Candidate School in 2024 as an Air Defense Artillery officer.

According to the Army, Key joined Charlie Battery in 2025 and was a platoon leader. He was known for the "care he showed for his soldiers, his commitment to others, and the relationships he built across the formation."

In a statement, Lt. Col. Chris Couch, commander of 5-4 ADAR, described Key as an "exceptional teammate" and said his outfit is mourning Key.

"Kendrick embodied the highest standards of service as a selfless, inspirational leader whose unwavering dedication to his soldiers and their development leaves an enduring legacy within our ranks," Couch said.

Key's next of kin were notified, the Army said. He is survived by his father, Kendrick Key Sr.; his mother, Jihan Key; his sister, Dakota Debose-Hill; and his brother-in-law, U.S. Army Spc. James Brown.

Search efforts are ongoing for second U.S. soldier

The Army said search and rescue efforts for the second U.S. soldier, who has not been identified, will continue. More than 1,000 U.S. and Moroccan military and civil personnel have been involved in the search operation.

"While in Morocco, I was able to witness the professionalism and urgency of the combined search effort," USAREUR-AF commander, Gen. Christopher Donahue, said in a statement. "Our Moroccan hosts have provided every asset we've requested and incredible subject-matter expertise, from mountaineering and dive teams to UAS operators, aircraft and maritime assets. We're incredibly grateful for the efforts they, along with our teammates from across the services, continue to pour in as we search for our remaining soldier."

The two U.S. service members were participating in military exercises known as African Lion 26, USA TODAY previously reported. African Lion is an annual joint exercise hosted by Morocco, Ghana, Senegal, and Tunisia that aims to "strengthen interoperability among U.S. forces, NATO Allies, and African partner nations," according to the U.S. Army of Europe and Africa website.

The Moroccan portion of the exercise kicked off April 27, according to the U.S. Army. The activities in Morocco involved about 5,000 personnel from more than 40 nations and more than 30 U.S.-based industry partners.

Pentagon releases cache of 'never-before-seen' UFO files

Move prompts searches for 'smoking gun' details

Bart Jansen, Josh Meyer, Chris Quintana and Cybele Mayes-Osterman
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Pentagon released "never-before-seen" files on unidentified flying objects, and armchair investigators are furiously combing through them for evidence of "smoking gun" information that some believe the government may have been withholding in the 80-plus years it has been investigating reports of such sightings.

The Pentagon's 162 new files on what the U.S. government calls unidentified aerial phenomena are at a new government website: war.gov/UFO. The website shows 162 files labeled by government agency, including the military, FBI, NASA and the State Department.

President Donald Trump has previously signaled that the Pentagon would release new files on UFOs, which come after other significant releases of such files in recent decades. He announced on social media in February that he would direct Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth and other government officials to release "government files related to alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs)."

Garrett Graff, the author of a recent book on the U.S. hunt for UAPs, said he has looked through some of the files and that, so far, they appear to be consistent with information shared in previous releases, showing that the U.S. government cannot explain everything it has seen in the skies and low orbital space – and that it has gone to great lengths to cover up its research into such sightings.

Graff welcomes the new release and is keeping an open mind.

But he told USA TODAY the documents likely will not provide any evidence that the U.S. government has been hiding any "compelling smoking gun about extraterrestrial life and visits from other planets or other dimensions that the U.S. government knows about, or meaningful evidence here that changes our existing understanding or hypotheses."

"I didn't see immediately any documents that didn't seem consistent with the tens of thousands of pages of similar reports that have been released in the past," said Graff, author of the 2023 book, "UFO: The Inside Story of the US Government's Search for Alien Life Here – and Out There."

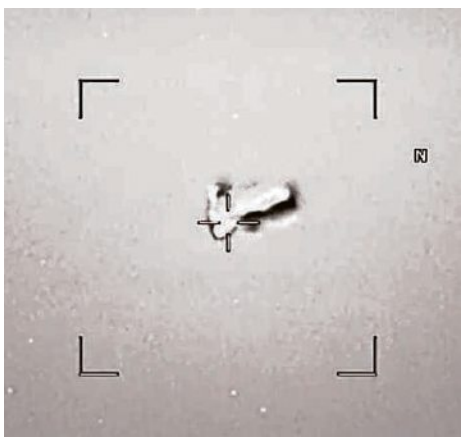
Trump foe Greene calls UAP documents release propaganda

Not everyone welcomed the Friday document drop, including Trump ally-turned-critic Marjorie Taylor Greene.

The former Republican congresswoman from Georgia took to X to suggest the Trump administration chose this particular day to release them as a distraction from its current challenges at home and abroad.

"I really don't care about the UFO files. I just don't," Greene said in one post. "I'm so sick of the 'look at the shiny object' propaganda while they wage foreign wars, let rapist and pedophiles run free, and ruin the value of our dollar."

"Unless they roll out live aliens and test demo UFOs or actually admit what we know this really is then I have way better things to do on this Friday," she said.


U.S. Indo-Pacific Command reported a football-shaped body near Japan.
PROVIDED BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF WAR

In another X post, Greene said, "The most transparent administration in history still hasn't released all the Epstein files or arrested anyone, but rolled out some UFO files today so you would get so excited that you forgot you are paying over $4.50/gallon because they are fighting another foreign war they said they would no longer fight."

In the past, Greene has endorsed various conspiracy theories, including that some school shootings were staged and space lasers were causing deadly wildfires in California.

Agencies participating in 'unprecedented' UAP review

The new release isn't just from the Pentagon; the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has been working closely with it to find and declassify all U.S. government files on the issue of UAPs, or unidentified anomalous phenomena.

> **"I'm so sick of the 'look at the shiny object' propaganda while they wage foreign wars, let rapist and pedophiles run free, and ruin the value of our dollar."**
>
> **Marjorie Taylor Greene**
> Trump ally-turned-critic on X

That's according to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, who said her office is actively coordinating the declassification efforts of all 18 U.S. intelligence agencies "to ensure a careful, comprehensive, and unprecedented review of our holdings to provide the American people with maximum transparency."

Gabbard said in an X post that the May 8 release is just "the first in what will be an ongoing joint declassification and release effort" with the Pentagon.

'A policy of the immediate burying of all Terrestrial hatchets'

The newly released cache includes documents illustrating State Department efforts to find, understand – and if necessary, make peace – with potential extraterrestrials dating back to 1963.

One "Official Use Only" letter from that year to the head of the State Department's Office of International Scientific Affairs," is on the subject of "Thoughts on the Space Alien Race Question" and focuses on "the policy question of what to do if an alien intelligence is discovered in space."

The author of the memo, Maxwell Hunter of the National Aeronautics and Space Council, noted that the probability was low, but that the most immediate concern would be to find out how advanced the "alien race" was and whether it was hostile to the inhabitants of Earth.

"In any event, a policy of the immediate burying of all Terrestrial hatchets would likely be in order," Hunter wrote.

"Even if we only found tame chemical Martians, or merely the debris from some intraglactic survey mission, it would be a good idea to proceed on the assumption that the human race would finally have found a bigger problem than the ones it has created for itself."

A 1965 'UFO Sighting' by astronauts

One NASA document includes a handwritten note about a "UFO Sighting by Borman," in reference to the Gemini 7 space flight in 1965 and a transcript of communications between astronaut Frank Borman and the Manned Flight Center (now known as Johnson Space Center) in Houston.

The transcript begins with Borman's report of a "bogey," a NASA term for an unknown aircraft, as well as a debris field consisting of "very, very many ... hundreds of little particles."

Borman estimated the particles' distance from the spacecraft to be 4 miles. Fellow astronaut James Lovell described observing a "brilliant body in the sun against a black background with trillions of particles on it," according to the transcript.

Astronauts reported bright lights 'like the Fourth of July'

The Apollo 17 astronauts, who were the last humans to set foot on the moon, also saw some very interesting sights during the mission.

While scouring the lunar surface for intriguing rocks in 1972, the astronauts reported seeing flashing lights.

Ronald Evans reported observing "very bright particles or fragments" drifting and "tumbling" nearby. Harrison Schmitt further described the phenomenon as looking "like the Fourth of July."

"There is no consensus about the nature of the anomaly," the Pentagon said in the disclosure files.

Pilot reports glistening object 'so near he could fly right into it'

A former Naval pilot who was teaching a student how to fly in Myrtle Creek, Oregon, in 1947 reported seeing a flying disc travel 1,000 mph, according to an FBI memo on the incident.

Ray Virgil Hatfield, a former lieutenant junior grade in the Naval Air Corps, said the spherical object glistened like aluminum and was more than 5,000 feet in the air.

But Hatfield said at one point the disc 30- to 50-feet in diameter was "so near he could fly right into it," according to the FBI memo.

What did a 23-year-old man see in Michigan?

A little past 4 a.m. on April 17, 1958, David Weaver dialed the FBI to report he had seen something in the sky "described as a circular object with a crystal-type dome that reflected lights," according to an FBI memo from the time. The 23-year-old said he spotted the object on his way home from work.

Weaver said the object was "passing in a northern direction from southwest and crossed the City three blocks south of Six Mile at Lamphere Street."

Weaver had first tried to report his sighting to the Air Force, but "his attempts were unproductive."

Weaver said he had experience with the Civil Air Patrol, but he was, "not too familiar with the identification of the aircraft."

Air Force report describes saucer flying 6,000 mph

Another example from an Air Force "Report on Flying Saucers" in 1947, four witnesses in two planes in Wisconsin reported seeing a saucer they estimated was flying fly 6,000 mph.

The witnesses said the saucer covered the 25 miles from Koshkonong to Elkhorn in 15 seconds.

"By the time the pilot had removed his camera from the glove compartment of his plane, the saucer disappeared and again reappeared approximately ten (10) miles farther along its course after six (6) seconds making its final disappearance," the report said.

'Maybe it's a flying saucer'

One of the files, a 194-page collection of FBI memos and handwritten letters, names witnesses who claimed to have seen flying discs or flying saucers in 1947.

Incidents were reported in cities from Hackensack, New Jersey, to Koshkonong, Wisconsin, to Myrtle Creek, Oregon.

On Aug. 13, 1947, FBI Special Agent Howard Waldron wrote FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover about a "flying disc" reported in Hackensack, New Jersey, 10 days earlier.

One witness described the object as being about 40 inches in diameter, moving horizontally about 200 yards in the air, and "too fast to be an ordinary balloon."

"Maybe it's a flying saucer," the agent reported the witness as saying. "He had never seen anything move through the air quite like this object, and he had no idea where it came from."

New release 'in lockstep with Trump'

The documents are from the White House, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Pentagon's All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, NASA and the Energy Department.

Hegseth said in a statement on the May 8 news release that the Pentagon was "in lockstep" with Trump, "to bring unprecedented transparency regarding our government's understanding of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena."

Anna Kelly, a White House spokesperson, said Trump directed the Pentagon to release the files related to alien and extraterrestrial life, UAPs and UFOs to increase government transparency.

"While past administrations have sought to discredit or dissuade the American people, the President is focused on providing maximum disclosure to the public, who can ultimately make up their own minds about the information contained in these files," Kelly told USA TODAY.

"The American people asked, and President Trump delivered – enjoy!"

Gorsuch revisits history's 'Heroes' in children's book

He says everyday people were key to revolution

Maureen Groppe
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The nation's history hangs on the walls of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch's chambers.

A portrait of James Madison, often called the father of the Constitution, faces paintings of the Revolutionary War battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill.



Gorsuch

They're a reminder to Gorsuch of founding father John Adams' observation that future generations will never know how much it cost to preserve their freedom.

The homes of a third of the signers of the Declaration on Independence were destroyed by the British. All risked treason for backing a cause that deeply divided the colonists and even divided Benjamin Franklin from his son.

"I imagine most of us would like to think we would have had the courage to stand on the side of freedom," Gorsuch told USA TODAY in written responses to questions. "But the reality is that standing up for what you believe is hard in any age."

The courage and sacrifices of not just the founding fathers, but also of less well-known colonists are the subject of a new children's book by Gorsuch and coauthor Janie Nitze: "Heroes of 1776: The Story of the Declaration of Independence."

As the nation prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday, Gorsuch answered written questions from USA TODAY about the book, how his British-born wife views the revolution, what he read growing up, and how humility is a virtue for both founding fathers and Supreme Court justices.

Here are excerpts:

Superheroes aren't superhuman

Gorsuch wants young people to know that heroes aren't superhuman.

"Most of us know George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin," Gorsuch told USA TODAY, "but there are so many ordinary people who displayed extraordinary courage during the Revolution."

One of them was Emily Geiger. The 18-year-old volunteered to ride across enemy-controlled territory to deliver a message to a general in the revolutionary army. When she was captured by the British, Geiger memorized the message, swallowed the paper on which it was written and managed to escape so she could deliver it.

James Armistead Lafayette, an enslaved man who served as a double agent for Washington's army, provided troops with critical intelligence in the Battle of Yorktown.

Richard Lord Jones, who was 10 when he joined the Continental Army as a fifer, suffered many of the same hardships as the soldiers.

"He wasn't a superhero; he was just like us," said Gorsuch, whose ancestors include British colonists who fought for independence.

Gorsuch admires 'fat, bald and obnoxious' John Adams

Many of the people and stories he wrote about were new to the justice, even details about well-known figures.

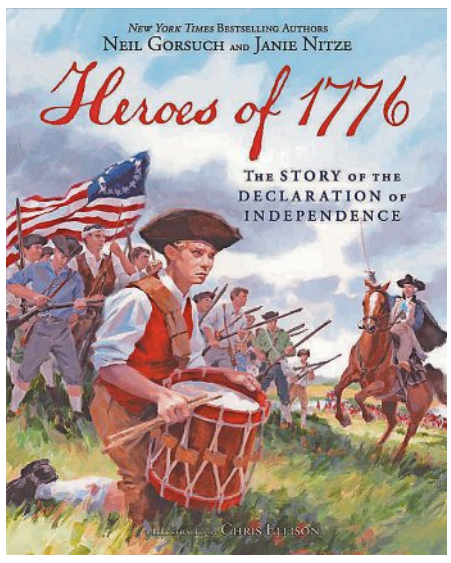
Gorsuch got a kick out of the "friendly argument" between Adams and Jefferson over who should write the Declaration of Independence. Each thought the other should do it.

Adams was able to convince Jefferson to take up the monumental task for several reasons. Jefferson was from the most populous colony, Virginia. Jefferson was the better writer. And Adams, by his own admission, was "obnoxious, suspected, and unpopular."

"What a great story: a mixture of humility and strategy on the part of Adams that landed Jefferson with the pen," Gorsuch told USA TODAY. "And the rest, as they say, is history."

In fact, of all the people profiled in the book, Gorsuch said he perhaps would most like to be Adams.

"Who wouldn't want to be George Washington? And who wants to be John Adams, fat, bald and obnoxious? But I think I'd choose John Adams anyway," Gorsuch said during a recent discussion of his book at the Nixon Library. "I just think he saw ahead."



"Heroes of 1776: The Story of the Declaration of Independence," is written by Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and Janie Nitze. PROVIDED BY HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Gorsuch's own humbling moment

The book humanizes the founding fathers by including personal details such as Jefferson letting his pet mockingbird take food from his lips. Adams was so frugal that his friends bought him more respectable clothes.

USA TODAY asked the justice for a personal detail that should be included in a book about the court.

Gorsuch recounted entering a Colorado courtroom two decades ago as a new appeals court judge. Not used to the standard, black polyester robe that American judges wear, Gorsuch tripped when walking up the steps to the bench. Some of the papers he was carrying went flying as his face "went beet red with embarrassment."

When he later told his wife, Louise, what had happened, she responded: "Oh Neil, don't you know? You have to lift your hem when going up stairs."

"In retrospect," Gorsuch said, "a dose of humility was a fitting way to begin the job of a judge."

Gorsuch's wife teases him

Gorsuch said his wife is "proudly British by birth and proudly American by choice." She became a citizen in 2002.

"For all the deep love Louise has for America, she does like to rib me sometimes by pointing out how much we owe Britain on so many levels, even including when it comes to the names of our states and cities: New Hampshire, Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Plymouth, and so on," Gorsuch said. "The colonists were British, after all, and the two countries shared a common culture, language, and set of customs." Those shared traits, he added, "made declaring independence all the more difficult and fraught – and all the more remarkable."

What Gorsuch read growing up

Gorsuch said he's fortunate that his middle school had a Great Books program. In addition to his regular English classes, he read one book a month and met with students from other schools to discuss it. "The program introduced me to greats like C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and George Orwell – authors I would encourage all young readers to explore," he said.

'It's up to each of us'

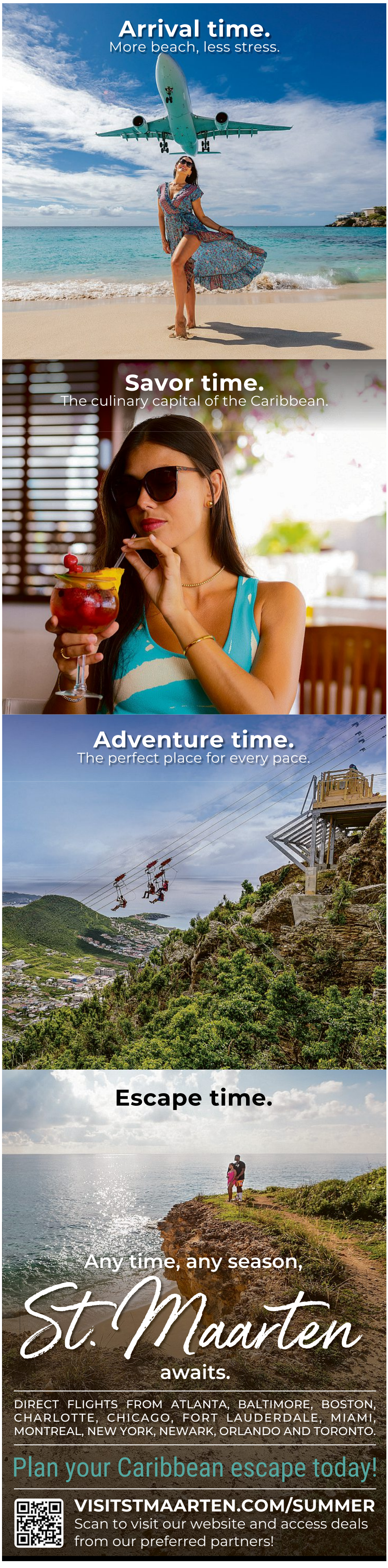
Gorsuch was in grade school in Denver when the nation celebrated its 200th anniversary.

He saw young men struggling after coming back from Vietnam. President Richard Nixon had just resigned over Watergate.

"Still, people came together in remarkable ways for the bicentennial," the justice said. "I remember our neighbors painting their red VW bus with 13 stars and stripes for the 13 original colonies. 'Schoolhouse Rock!' inspired my generation to think about the Declaration, the Revolution, and the Constitution. Newspapers and books retold our history."

Gorsuch said he hopes the nation's 250th anniversary will similarly inspire Americans to reflect on "three perfect ideals" embodied in the Declaration of Independence: equality, liberty and self-rule.

"Those ideals speak to every human heart and belong to each of us," he said, "and it's up to each of us to ensure they long endure."



GOP drama

Continued from Page 1A

fretting over the return of long airport security lines.

But as the midterms draw closer, each public intraparty brawl carries greater risks for the GOP. Democrats, already favored to win back the House in November, are sure to seize on every such squabble to undermine Republicans' pitch to voters that Congress should remain fully under conservative control.

Hanging in the balance is Trump's last chance – possibly ever – to notch big legislative wins.

"Sometimes the process around here is cumbersome. That's the way this works," Johnson told reporters recently. "But in spite of our razor-thin, historically small majority, House Republicans continue to deliver for the American people."

Johnson's shrinking wiggle room

Congress has been straining to do the basics of legislating "for a while," according to Rep. Kevin Kiley.

The California congressman, a Republican-turned-Independent who still caucuses with the GOP, argued the ongoing dysfunction is the fault of no one person – Johnson included.

"He's operating under, I'd say, especially challenging circumstances," Kiley told USA TODAY.

The speaker can only afford two defections on any given vote. That leaves barely any wiggle room amid a tight legislative schedule – not to mention the fact that yet another scandal-ridden House Republican, North Carolina Rep. Chuck Edwards, could face a vote soon costing him his job.

Acrimony between House and Senate Republicans over several issues – from enacting voting restrictions to lowering the Senate's 60-vote threshold known as the filibuster – isn't making it any easier to get important legislation across the finish line from now to November.

Even Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, hasn't been able to fully mask his frustration with the other chamber. On April 29, a reporter asked him outside his office how the Senate can keep functioning amid the latest logistical turmoil. Frustrated, Thune shook his head.

Meanwhile, there's a lot on Congress' plate, including a GOP plan to funnel more than $70 billion to immigration enforcement, plus another $1 billion for security in a new White House ballroom. The Pentagon is also preparing a supplemental defense spending request amid the Iran war, which has already cost taxpayers roughly $25 billion.

There are bipartisan efforts afoot, too: Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are clamoring to enact changes to rein in a spy law. Others want to get to work soon to put more guardrails on online betting. And a massive bipartisan housing reform bill is working its way through both chambers, though it's been stalled in the House for weeks due to concerns from some in the GOP.

"When you're operating within such a small majority, especially, it's maybe a good reason to try and do things in a bipartisan way whenever possible," Kiley said. "The math becomes a lot easier then. And it tends to lead to better policy as well."

Tick season may be shaping up to be one of the worst on record

Earlier, longer warm weather boosts ticks

Mary Walrath-Holdridge
USA TODAY



This year's tick season could shape up to be one of the worst on record, according to federal data and experts. PROVIDED BY 24K-PRODUCTION VIA GETTY IMAGES

This year's tick season could be one of the worst on record, according to federal data and experts.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Tick Bite Data Tracker, which uses real-time emergency room surveillance, shows weekly tick-bite ER visits are higher than historic averages in every U.S. region except the South Central states, with the Northeast recording the highest levels so far in 2026.

During the fourth week of April, about 114 out of every 100,000 emergency department visits nationwide were for tick bites, the highest rate for this point in the year since at least 2017, the CDC said. Nationally, the agency estimates about 31 million people are bitten by ticks each year, and roughly 476,000 Americans are treated annually for Lyme disease, the most common tick-borne illness.

"Tick season is here and these tiny biters can make you seriously sick," Dr. Alison Hinckley, epidemiologist and Lyme disease expert with CDC's Division of Vector-Borne Diseases, told USA TODAY. "That means ticks are out and people are getting bitten, so now is the time for people to take steps to protect themselves and their loved ones."

While the CDC only tracks ER visits related to tick bites – not tick bites or the presence of ticks overall – the increase in these visits indicates that multiple factors, including weather, normal year-to-year variation in tick survival and expansion of tick populations into new geographic areas, could result in one of the most prolific tick-bite seasons in recent memory. However, we won't know how this year overall will compare to other years until the season is over, Hinckley said.

Here's everything to know about why the 2026 tick season is looking especially bad:

Is tick season coming earlier?

Tick season was once relegated to warmer summer months. That's no longer the case, according to Dr. Jim Fredericks, chief entomologist with the National Pest Management Association.

"As we see this trend over time of these milder winters and kind of shorter shoulder seasons – this spring, it feels like it just goes from winter to summer," he said. "This allows for a greater proportion of tick populations to survive the winter, even in places where there has been snow cover."

Warmer weather arriving earlier and lasting longer, paired with relatively balmy winter temperatures, has enabled pests to proliferate almost year-round in some areas. And that layer of snow you might expect to kill them off? It serves as more of a cozy blanket.

"Ticks actually do better when there's more snow rather than less snow because a snowpack is insulating for them," added Kathryn Reif, Bailey-Goodwin endowed associate professor of parasitology at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Auburn University. "They're kind of down in that dead layer of plant material where they're all snuggly warm."

Why is tick season so bad?

Beyond a relatively mild winter nationwide and the snow blanket effect, there is also what experts call the "acorn effect."

Wildlife that often carry ticks, such as deer, mice and squirrels, feed on acorns as they fall from oak trees primarily during the autumn months.

Oak trees do not produce the same crop of nuts every year; however, the number of dropped acorns is based on an irregular cycle. A year of heavy acorn production is called a "mast year" or "mast season," and the United States has seen a few notably large ones in recent years, Fredericks said.

When more small mammals can eat from a plentiful food source and reproduce, more ticks can use them as hosts.

"If our wildlife are healthy and have a lot of food, that can certainly make more of them, which is now more hosts for these ticks to feed on," Reif said.

And because ticks are not born with the diseases they often carry, instead obtaining them from mammals including chipmunks, mice and squirrels, more of those critters running around means not only more hosts but also more potential for disease.

Tick-borne disease on the move

Lyme disease, aka Lyme borreliosis, is often at the forefront of the mind when it comes to tick-borne illness; however, experts have noted that the pests are carrying more disease-causing organisms farther than previously recorded.

Ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, babesiosis, tularemia and tick paralysis are among other diseases of note that can spread to humans and pets.

Lyme, ehrlichiosis (disease caused by the Ehrlichia family of bacteria) and anaplasmosis (caused by Anaplasma phagocytophilum bacteria) are especially prevalent in dogs and their owners, Reif said.

Their prevalence also is expected to expand in 2026, according to the Companion Animal Parasite Council, which forecasts the prevalence of certain diseases affecting dogs across the United States with more than 94% accuracy.

The latter two illnesses generally cause flu-like symptoms in the early stages; however, if untreated, they can lead to respiratory and organ failure, excessive bleeding, damage to the central nervous system and death, according to the CDC.

Lyme is more complex and varied and can cause symptoms ranging from fever and rash to facial paralysis, an irregular heartbeat and even arthritis.

"We have the traditional hot spots where these tick-borne diseases are most common.

"And as years go on, these zones never really contract. They only continue to expand," Reif said.

"These are definitely diseases on the move."

Prep for spending time outside

- Wear repellent.
- Cover exposed skin with clothing and proper footwear.
- Remove clothing and do a tick check as soon as you return home.

Check yourself once back inside

While ticks can attach to any exposed skin, they are often found nestled in warmer, more hidden areas of the body. The CDC suggests paying extra attention to the following areas when checking for ticks:

- In and around the hair
- Around and in the ears
- The back
- Underams
- Waistline
- Belly button
- Between the legs and in the groin area
- Legs and behind the knees
- Behind or between the toes

For more complete advice, check out USA TODAY's guide to protecting yourself, your pets and your home.

Hantavirus

Continued from Page 1A

the Andes strain of the virus, while a second had shown mild symptoms. The two individuals were transferred to Atlanta for further testing, officials said at a May 11 news briefing from the University of Nebraska, where the American passengers were flown for examination.

"Over the next several days, passengers will undergo an initial health assessment and receive guidance on next steps from the CDC experts," said John Knox, the principal deputy assistant secretary for the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response.

The risk to the rest of the country is low, said Adm. Brian Christine, the assistant secretary for health at HHS.

The World Health Organization said there were now nine reported cases of hantavirus linked to the MV Hondius outbreak, of which seven had been confirmed as Andes virus, the only hantavirus known to be capable of human-to-human transmission, generally through close contact, according to the CDC.

Three people have died since the start of the outbreak – a Dutch couple and a German national.

The remaining 24 passengers on board the MV Hondius were set to be evacuated later on May 11 while the ship was anchored near Spain's Atlantic island of Tenerife, according to Spanish authorities.

Questions over positive cases

As the MV Hondius approached the Canary Islands late last week – amid protests from the regional government about the risk of the virus spreading – Spain's health minister and the WHO had said all passengers were "asymptomatic."

Authorities on May 11 faced questions about the two recent positive cases and a suggestion that U.S. passengers had been ill on board.

In a statement, the Spanish health ministry queried the U.S. positive test determination, saying an epidemiologist from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control had tested the American passenger on board the ship since they had been in close contact with a confirmed case.

"A diagnostic test was performed and sent to two laboratories; in one of them, the result was considered by U.S. authorities to be a weak positive, although for us it was inconclusive," the ministry said.

The second American passenger had a "mild cough" that medics on board felt was unlikely to be hantavirus, it added, while the French passenger only exhibited a fever once she boarded the plane.

Spain's health ministry said no blanket PCR testing had been conducted on the ship because it lacked both the technical capacity and an epidemiological reason to do so.

Captain on 'challenging' weeks

Jan Dobrogowski, the captain of the MV Hondius, said in a video message that the past few weeks have been "extremely challenging."

"I wish nothing more to everybody, guests and crew alike, to be able to go home safely and in good health," Dobrogowski said in the video, which was shared by Oceanwide Expeditions on May 11.

"What touched me the most, what moved me the most was your patience, your discipline and also kindness," Dobrogowski said, adding that his thoughts are with the three passengers who died.

UN backs Spain's leadership

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres on May 11 said the agency backs the Spanish government as it oversees the hantavirus outbreak in coordination with the WHO.

"While the current public health risk from the virus remains low, it's important that international health efforts ensure the safety of all, including passengers & crew of the MV Hondius," Guterres wrote in post on X.

Nearly 150 people from 23 countries, including the United States, were on board the MV Hondius when the cluster of severe respiratory illnesses among passengers was first reported to the WHO on May 3, Oceanwide Expeditions, which operates the Netherlands-based expedition cruise, said.

By then, 34 other passengers had departed the vessel, which first sailed from the South American country of Argentina in March, with stops in the Antarctic and other locations before heading to waters off Cape Verde near the coast of West Africa.

The virus was first detected by health officials in Johannesburg on May 2 after a British man became sick and was taken into intensive care, 21 days after another passenger had died. The man's health has since improved, Reuters reported on May 10, citing a WHO official.

Four remain hospitalized in South Africa, the Netherlands and Switzerland. On the remote island of Tristan da Cunha, a suspected case was being treated by a team of medical specialists who were parachuted in by the United Kingdom military.

Contributing: Reuters

OPINION

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These teens couldn't read 'silhouette.' Can you?



James E. Causey
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK

In my columns, I often emphasize the importance of reading. Some of you have told me that I'm too tough on students. Others say that I'm exaggerating, that things can't possibly be this bad.

If you don't want to take my word for it – or the test scores – consider the perspective of a high school senior in Philadelphia who decided to show, not tell.

In a video that has gone viral on social media, a charter school student hands his peers a sentence to read: "She wore a silhouette of clothes that were extraordinary but somewhat gauche."

Several students struggled to pronounce "silhouette," "extraordinary" and "gauche." When asked to explain what they had just read, more than one response was simple and sobering: "I don't know."

One student misread "silhouette." Another admitted she didn't know the word "extraordinary." Even students who could read the sentence couldn't explain it in their own words. People laughed in the comments, but there's nothing funny about it.

What that video shows is far bigger than a few students struggling – it reveals a system that is quietly passing kids along without giving them the most basic tool they need to succeed.

And here's the part that should concern all of us: Instead of addressing the literacy problem, school officials reportedly moved to punish the student who exposed it.

The student, who is Black, says he's been threatened with suspension and possibly barred from participating in graduation.

Preparatory Charter High School officials said in a statement that while federal privacy rules barred the school from discussing details of disciplinary action, "the student in question is not facing expulsion."

"While some students may have agreed to be filmed," the statement said, "the way the footage was presented lacks important context and has led to a portrayal that is misleading and unfair."

The student later posted a follow-up video with another sentence: "The colonel asked the choir to accommodate the governor's schedule."

The results were similar.

The videos have racked up more than a million views, but there likely won't be a third.

The student says officials at Prep Charter High School, which focuses on college readiness, are trying to stop him.

Our literacy problem isn't confined to one school

But here's the truth: This isn't just about one school in Philadelphia.

It's a national problem.

Across the country, too many students are not reading at grade level, and too many school systems are advancing them anyway. According to national assessments, a significant percentage of students, especially in urban districts, lack reading proficiency by the time they reach high school.

That's not a student failure. That's a systemic failure when more than 60% of 12th grade students score below the proficient level in reading across the United States.

How do we fix reading scores?

If a child can't read, who do you blame – and more important, how do you fix it? We can't keep having an honest conversation about literacy without talking about root causes:

- Early literacy gaps that start before kindergarten.
- Curricula that, for years, leaned away from phonics and foundational skills.
- Overcrowded classrooms where struggling readers don't get individual attention.
- Overreliance on computers and tech as teaching tools.
- Social promotion policies that move students forward regardless of mastery.
- And yes, inconsistent support at home, but that alone doesn't explain a crisis of this scale.

Schools cannot solve this alone, but they also cannot ignore it away.

I'm not saying that we hold every student back who falls behind, but if a student is two or three grade levels behind in reading, shouldn't there be mandatory interventions?

Summer school. Extended learning time. Daily reading blocks – high-dosage tutoring. Something.

Because what we're doing now isn't working. We are sending students into the workforce, or off to college, without the ability to comprehend what they read fully. And once they fall behind there, catching up becomes even harder.

Here in Milwaukee, I've challenged Milwaukee Public Schools, which has one of the largest achievement gaps between Black and White students in the nation, to put everything on the table when it comes to literacy.

Because this isn't just about education, it's about life outcomes.

Milwaukee Public Schools is implementing a new approach based on the science of reading standards mandated under Wisconsin law. We can't change the trajectory here fast enough.

Milwaukee already struggles with high poverty rates. When a child grows up in poverty and graduates three or four grade levels behind in reading, what chance are we really giving them?

We are not saving them. We are setting them up for a lifetime of struggle.

That's why conversations about literacy often intersect with discussions about the so-called school-to-prison pipeline. If you can't read well, your opportunities shrink – fast.

It's not just a reading problem

Some will say parents share the blame. And to a degree, that's true, but let's be honest: Some adults would struggle with those same sentences.

This is bigger than individual responsibility. It's systemic. And if we're serious about fixing it, we have to stop punishing people who expose the problem.

That student didn't create the crisis. He revealed it.

Instead of trying to silence voices like his, schools and districts should be using moments like this to spark real change – bringing in parents, educators and even the business community.

Because at this point, it's clear: We don't just have a reading problem. We have an accountability problem.

James E. Causey is an Ideas Lab reporter for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, where this column first appeared. Reach him at jcausey@jrn.com or follow him on X: @jecausey

Democrats put politics ahead of kids in school choice fight



Ingrid Jacques
USA TODAY



Secretary of Education Linda McMahon, center, visits charter school Pembroke Academy in Detroit on Sept. 8.
KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/USA TODAY NETWORK

In 2025, the Republican-led One Big Beautiful Bill Act created a federal school choice tax credit program – the first of its kind.

The program allows states and Washington, DC, to opt in. Governors can make that decision on their own, though legislatures can also step in.

So far, more than half the states say they plan to participate, including five with Democratic governors (though in Kansas and Kentucky, Republican legislatures effectively forced their governors' hands).

Despite the program's popularity – and flexibility – Democrats in Congress are trying to kill it before it gets off the ground in 2027.

Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly and Hawaii Sen. Mazie Hirono are leading the effort, joined by about 30 colleagues. On April 15, they introduced the "Keep Public Funds in Public Schools Act."

The name is misleading.

How school choice tax credit would work as scholarships

Supporters of the bill portray the tax-credit scholarships as "vouchers," even though no federal funds are directly appropriated. Nor would the state and local dollars that primarily fund public schools be affected.

Instead, the scholarships would be funded through private donations to nonprofit organizations, with contributors eligible for a federal tax credit of up to $1,700. Those funds could be used for a range of educational expenses, including tuition, homeschooling materials and tutoring.

What's not to like?

For Democrats in Congress, quite a bit. The program has drawn opposition from teachers unions – a core political ally – and lawmakers are responding.

"As the Trump administration continues its all-out, coordinated attack on public education, its newly-created national school voucher program will harm our public schools by diverting critical resources that could otherwise be used to support students," Hirono said in a statement.

But the tax credit program does not do that. It does not draw from existing public school funding streams. Instead, it gives families access to privately funded scholarships they can use for a range of educational needs.

Teachers unions tend to oppose policies that introduce competition into public education.

That helps explain why school choice has expanded in many Republican-led states while remaining limited in most Democratic ones.

The federal tax credit scholarship would extend those options into states that have been reluctant to adopt them – a shift unions have long resisted.

That opposition is on full display in the legislation itself. Kelly and Hirono's announcement includes statements from leaders of the nation's largest teachers unions.

Lawmakers are free to weigh those views. But putting union priorities ahead of family options has consequences for kids.

If states don't opt in, they're leaving dollars on the table

When Democratic Colorado Gov. Jared Polis opted into the tax credit program, he admitted he'd be "crazy not to."

States that decline to participate risk losing out. Residents can donate to scholarship-granting organizations in any state and still receive the federal tax credit. If their home state opts out, those dollars can simply flow elsewhere.

That dynamic is likely to push more states to join. Patrick Wolf, an education policy professor at the University of Arkansas, told Education Week he expects most states will opt in for that reason.

"If they don't participate, many of their citizens will make contributions for which they'll get a federal tax credit, and those dollars will go to students in other states," Wolf said.

Only two states – Minnesota and Wisconsin – have said they won't participate. It should be an easy choice for the remaining undecided states, nearly all of them led by Democratic governors.

But politics are getting in the way.

Take my home state of Michigan. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has yet to decide whether to opt in, and her office did not respond to a request for comment.

U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon made the case during a visit in March: "Opt in. Unlock these opportunities for every Michigan family."

Whitmer could use the help. Near the end of her second term, Michigan ranks among the worst states in fourth-grade reading. She has made literacy a top priority – so why not give families more options for tutoring and support? The answer is political. Teachers unions, a core Democratic constituency, oppose the program, and the Democratic-controlled Michigan State Board of Education has urged Whitmer to reject it.

Families in Michigan – and in other states still on the sidelines – should tell their governor to opt in.

Ingrid Jacques is a columnist at USA TODAY. You can contact her at ijacques@usatoday.com or on X: @Ingrid_Jacques

USA TODAY

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We survey and compile the top news stories from all 50 states plus Washington, DC. **Page 3B**

Millions may be owed an IRS refund from the COVID-19 era

The deadline to claim it is fast-approaching, tax advocate group says. **Page 4B**

Americans fear high hospital bills

Research shows medical debt is widespread

Medora Lee
USA TODAY

Most Americans have health insurance, but that doesn't ease fears of a medical emergency pushing them to the financial brink, a study shows.

Nearly 97% of the 1,507 Americans surveyed in February by financial services firm JG Wentworth said they had health insurance. Still, 94.7% of the insured said they still worry about hospital bills. On average, a $4,354 tab would be the financial breaking point for Americans, data showed. Seven in 10 Americans said an unexpected medical bill under $10,000 would hamper their ability to cover essential expenses.

To put that in perspective, the average cost to stay just one night in a hospital was $3,297 in 2024, according to nonprofit health policy researcher KFF. The average stay was 5.8 days in 2023, KFF said.

Medical debt is widespread; Americans owe $220 billion in total, KFF said. In JG Wentworth's poll, 85.1% of respondents said they already had medical debt, and 81.3% owed $1,000 to $10,000.

"While health insurance is in place to reduce your medical costs, it doesn't eliminate them entirely," a JG Wentworth spokesperson said by email. "Even people with good insurance coverage can face deductibles adding up to thousands of dollars and surprise out-of-network charges from some providers. Insurance can limit the financial impacts of serious medical emergencies, but it doesn't prevent a significant bill from arriving after a routine procedure."

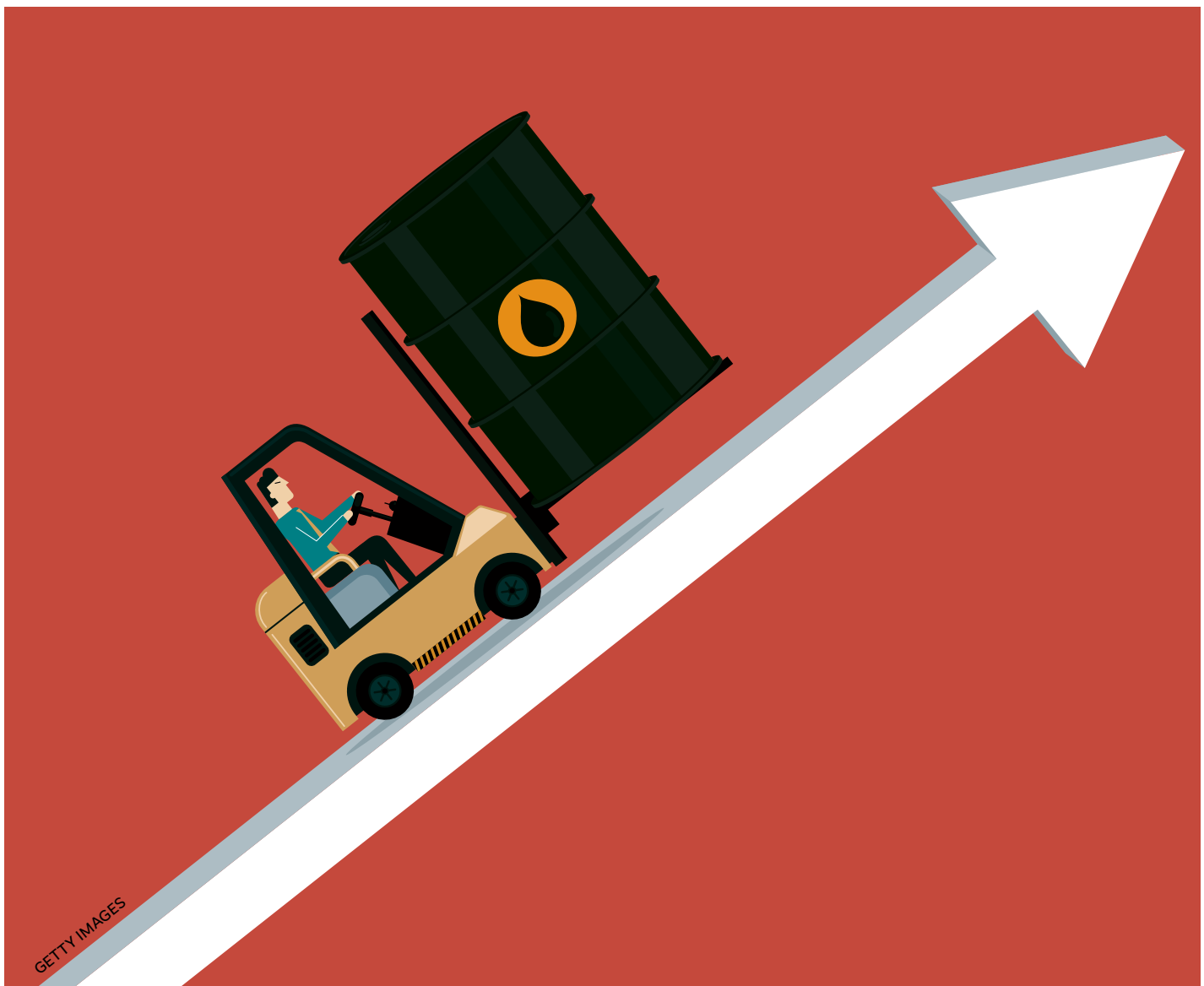
Insurance gap

A reason one hospital visit can devastate household finances is that nearly 1 in 4 (23%) Americans are underinsured, according to a study by private foundation The Commonwealth Fund, which focuses on health care issues. Underinsured means people are exposed to high out-of-pocket and unaffordable costs despite having insurance.

JG Wentworth's survey reflects some of that uncertainty; only 12.4% of insured respondents feel very confident their insurance would prevent financial hardship if a serious medical issue arose. Ninety-two percent had even delayed or avoided medical care because of cost concerns, it said.

Among respondents with long-term conditions, nearly 1 in 3 (31.8%) said their condition has worsened because they could not afford their medication, data showed. Almost 96% said they had to choose between medication

See BILLS, Page 2B



U.S. oil exports rise with prices

Gas costs will depend on how long disruptions last

Dian Zhang and Andrea Riquier USA TODAY

The United States exported oil at record levels in April, rushing to fill a global supply gap amid the Iran war, even as gas and oil prices remained stubbornly elevated. ● April exports averaged 5.3 million barrels per day over four weeks, up from 3.8 million at the end of March, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's weekly exports data. ● The week ending April 24 was the standout as exports spiked to 6.4 million barrels per day before pulling back to 4.8 million barrels per day in the following week. Despite a drop of more than 2 million barrels per day, crude oil exports remain well above the roughly 4 million barrels shipped overseas daily in the same period last year.

"That's really a big one-week jump," said Brian Prest, economist at Resources for the Future. "That week ending April 24 is the first week in modern American history where the U.S. has been a net crude oil exporter."

The surge of U.S. exports reflects how oil markets are adapting to the supply disruption caused by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz following U.S. and Israeli strikes on the country starting on Feb. 28.

Market participants are finding ways to connect supply with demand amid a historic supply disruption, said Clayton

"We have to get those Mideast export flows going again if we want to have reasonable fuel prices."

Clayton Seigle
A senior fellow for energy security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies

Seigle, a senior fellow for energy security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Oil markets are operating efficiently, even in a time of crisis."

The world has lost 13 million barrels per day from the Middle East for more than two months due to the war, Seigle said. Regions that rely heavily on Middle Eastern oil, especially Asia, are facing supply shortages.

The United States, the world's largest oil producer, thus has "an opportunity to temporarily fill in the gaps in oil supply

See OIL, Page 2B

Think twice before eating a grape at grocery store

C. A. Bridges
USA TODAY

You're in Publix, looking through the produce section for just the right bag of grapes or blueberries. Can you pop one in your mouth? Should you? Is it legal? Will you do jail time?

The practice is a contentious one. Grape munchers say they just want to make sure they taste good before buying them, and besides, no one will miss one or two. A recent Fort Myers News-Press poll on sampling produce, a part of the USA TODAY Network, found 80% of the respondents chose "No. It's rude, like stealing and it could impact your health."

"The Simpsons" even weighed in on the matter in an early episode, when Lisa called out Marge for eating grapes, resulting in a shameful checkout confession and an exasperated clerk. On "Everybody Loves Raymond," Ray's father, Frank (played by Peter Boyle), got into a shouting match with a produce manager over some pilfered trail mix.



Is it OK to try a few grapes while shopping in the grocery store? Opinions differ, but stores usually just want you to ask first. C. A. BRIDGES/USA TODAY

For the most part, grocery stores are pretty chill about it. Most, such as Sprouts Farmers Market, request that you ask someone first. Store owners are aware that free samples (in moderation) often result in sales.

Whole Foods goes further with a "Try Before You Buy" policy.

"Our team members can open a bag of chips, slice a piece of fruit or twist open bottled iced tea," the company said on its website. "That way you can bring home products you like."

Does Publix mind if you eat a few grapes?

"If a customer would like to sample an item in produce, we invite them to

See GRAPES, Page 2B

8.2 million food, drink containers recalled

Thermos issues recall due to laceration injuries

Drew Pittock
USA TODAY



Recalled Thermos 16-oz. Stainless King Food Jar (SK3000), 40-oz. Sportsman Food & Beverage Bottle (SK3010), and 24-oz. Stainless King Food Jar (SK3020). PROVIDED BY THERMOS

Thermos issued a recall for roughly 8.2 million food jars and beverage bottles sold nationwide after more than two dozen people reported laceration injuries or permanent vision loss.

According to a notice April 30 on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website, Thermos, an insulated food and beverage container manufacturer, is recalling about 5.8 million Stainless King Food Jars and about 2.3 million Sportsman Food & Beverage Bottles.

"If perishable food or beverages are stored in the container for an extended period of time, the stopper can forcefully eject when opened, which can result in serious impact injury and laceration hazards to the consumer," the notice says.

The products were sold for $30 at Target, Walmart and other stores nationwide, as well as online at Amazon.com, Walmart.com, Target.com and Thermos.com from around March 2008 to July 2024.

How many people have been injured?

As of April 30, Thermos has received 27 reports of people requiring medical attention after the stopper struck them, with three people suffering permanent vision loss.

Affected models

Here are the recalled model numbers, which are printed on the bottom of the products:

- Thermos Stainless King Food Jars, manufactured before July 2023: SK3000 and SK3020
- Thermos Sportsman Food & Beverage Bottles, all units: SK3010
- Food Jars and Food & Beverage Bottles, all units: SK3000 (16-ounce), SK3020 (24-ounce), SK3010 (40-ounce)

The company said consumers should stop using the products immediately and contact Thermos to receive a free replacement pressure-relief stopper or replacement bottle, depending on the model.

"For recalled 3000 and 3020 Food Jars, consumers will be asked to throw away the stopper and send a photo of the disposed stopper to Thermos," the company said. "For recalled 3010 Bottles, consumers will be asked to return their recalled Bottle to Thermos using a prepaid shipping label."

For information on how to replace a faulty container, visit Thermos' recall page or call 662-563-6822 from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CT Monday through Friday.

Bills

Continued from Page 1B

and essentials such as food.

How long can medical debt saddle you?

Only 6.7% of those JG Wentworth surveyed believe they can clear their medical debt within a year. Almost 90% believe it will take one to three years to pay off.

A small group of just 2.9% expect it to take more than three years, and 0.9% never expect to repay it at all, the survey said. Medical bills are the No. 1 reason people file for bankruptcy, accounting for nearly 67% of them a year, according to a 2019 study published in the American Journal of Public Health.

How can people manage medical debt?

The best way to manage medical expenses is to plan, experts said.

"Know your deductible, out-of-pocket maximum and coinsurance rate before you need them," the JG Wentworth spokesperson said. "Confirm every provider is in-network before elective procedures. If you're on a high-deductible plan, consider paying into a Health Savings Account (HSA). Contributions are tax-advantaged, and the balance carries over indefinitely. Keep accessible savings to cover at least half of your out-of-pocket maximum at all times."

HSAs got a boost in President Donald Trump's signature tax and spending bill last summer. The bill opened up HSAs to tens of millions more Americans by allowing more Affordable Care Act insurance plans, Direct Primary Care arrangements, and plans with telehealth coverage. HSA plans are a favorite savings vehicle among financial advisers because contributions are tax-free, money grows tax-free, and if used for a qualifying expense, withdrawals are tax-free.

Also, double-check your medical bills by asking for an itemized statement, experts said. Look for errors or overcharges, which happen more often than you may think.

It even happened to former U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams, who posted a copy of his nearly $5,000 emergency room hospital bill – *after* insurance paid its portion. The bill left him "flabbergasted," he told USA TODAY at the time, and he started the process to dispute the bill.

Researching and disputing a medical bill can be arduous, but companies such as Goodbill and Resolve can help get your bill lowered. They get paid by taking a cut of the savings.

Another option is to ask about financial assistance programs before paying. "Many hospitals offer these, but they are not always advertised," the JG Wentworth spokesperson said.

Grapes

Continued from Page 1B

ask for the produce manager/assistant produce manager and they will be happy to assist," Publix spokesperson Lindsey Willis said in an email.

Is sampling produce illegal?

Can you get arrested or fined for swiping a grape? Only if you're creating a nuisance or downing half a bag of them, and even then, you'd likely just be asked to leave.

There is no specific federal law about theft of produce at that scale that wouldn't be more trouble than it's worth to enforce. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration's Food Code doesn't mention it, although it does have safety guidelines for stores on offering produce as samples.

Is it a good idea to eat grapes or other produce while shopping?

There are several good reasons not to snarf down produce in the store that isn't set out for that purpose, even if you plan to buy it:

- **It's theft.** If you eat more than a few items from a bag sold by weight, you'll be underpaying when you check out. If you sample from a product that doesn't sell by weight and then don't buy it, the next person will get less than they pay for.
- **It's poor etiquette and bad hygiene**. Grazing in the produce section can set a bad example for any children who see you do it, and it's inconsiderate to other shoppers who are left with the food you've been handling.
- **It can be a health risk.** Supermarket produce still may have traces of pesticides, contamination from the farm and whatever the grocery store employees had on their hands.

Is it safe to eat grapes in store?

Excess moisture on fresh fruits and vegetables can cause them to spoil faster, so stores usually put them out for sale as is. Shoppers are expected and encouraged to wash their produce before they use it.

That means the grapes you pop in your mouth in the store could still be dusted with pesticides (including PFAS or "forever chemicals"), fecal matter from farm animals, debris from shipping and other things you probably don't want to swallow. In recent years, several different multistate salmonella outbreaks have started with Florida-grown produce.

In the Environmental Working Group's (EWG) 2026 Dirty Dozen guide to produce with the highest levels of pesticide residues, based on laboratory tests conducted by the Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Data Program, grapes were No. 4 on the list, right after strawberries.

Next were nectarines, peaches, cherries, apples, blackberries, pears, potatoes and blueberries. First on the list: spinach, which the report said has more pesticide residue by weight than any other type of produce, followed by greens such as kale.

So while some minor produce grazing isn't illegal, there may be other consequences.

You should never sample what you don't plan to buy, and ask an employee for help.

They'll clean and even slice the produce before bringing it to you.

How to clean your produce

Food processing is monitored at local, state and federal levels, but sometimes things get through. The FDA offers these tips:

- Choose produce that isn't bruised or damaged, and cut away any damage or bruising that occurs after you buy it.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
- Thoroughly rinse fruits and vegetables under running water before eating or preparing them, especially if they won't be cooked. Gently rub produce under the water – soap or a produce wash is not necessary – and use a clean vegetable brush to scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers.
- Dry produce with a clean cloth or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- Remove the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.
- Store perishable produce in the refrigerator at or below 40 degrees.
- Avoid eating raw sprouts such as alfalfa, clover, radish and mung bean.
- Drink only pasteurized or shelf-stable fruit and vegetable juices.



Oil tankers sit anchored off Muscat, Oman, on March 7 amid Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz after the United States and Israel began striking Iran on the last day of February. BENOIT TESSIER/REUTERS

Oil

Continued from Page 1B

around the world."

Why not keep the oil here?

Right now, it's better for U.S. producers to export oil because overseas buyers are paying more for it than domestic ones would, said Greg Upton, the executive director of the Center for Energy Studies and a professor at Louisiana State University.

Since the start of the war, the United States has exported more than 280 million barrels over nine weeks, drawing down the country's strategic petroleum reserves in the process. The Department of Energy released nearly 23 million barrels from the reserve since late March, part of the 172 million barrels the DOE is authorized to release by President Donald Trump. As of May 1, the reserves stood at about 392 million barrels.

Yet, oil and gas prices have remained elevated.

Brent crude oil, the international benchmark, was trading above $100 a barrel as of 4 p.m. ET on May 6. West Texas Intermediate Crude, or WTI, which comes from American producers, fetched about $95.

That could shift at some point, however. If WTI is used more, and Brent demand ticks lower, the gap between the two prices may narrow, making WTI less attractive. More importantly, the cost of transporting Brent from the Gulf Coast to such places as Asia and Europe may also start to add up, said Rob Wilson, president of East Daley Analytics, an energy consultancy.

Experts say keeping more oil in the United States would not necessarily lower domestic gasoline prices.

The price of oil, which is used everywhere in the world, is set globally, Seigle said. "A supply disruption anywhere increases prices everywhere."

The national average gas price per gallon is $4.54, according to the latest AAA data.

Even if crude oil stays in the United States, domestic refineries already are running near maximum capacity. "No matter how much more crude oil you have here instead of sending overseas, we're not going to be able to create more gasoline here," Seigle added.

What's next?

Experts say whether the U.S. gas price continues to rise or begins to fall will depend on how long disruptions in the Middle East last.

"We are, unfortunately, probably on our way to revisiting that all-time high of the nationwide pump price, just above $5 a gallon, that we saw in 2022," Seigle said.

In summer 2022, the national average gas price in the United States passed $5 a gallon, driven by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"It's simply not sustainable," Seigle said, as the United States continues to supply the oil to the rest of the world to fill the energy gap created by the war. "We have to get those Mideast export flows going again if we want to have reasonable fuel prices."

But American companies also might boost supply.

On May 5, Trump hailed what he called "Great Progress" toward a deal with Iran. Global oil markets responded, sending prices down sharply. Still, progress has been elusive so far in the conflict, and the longer it drags on, the more incentive U.S. producers have to increase their output, Wilson told USA TODAY.

Diamondback Energy, a shale producer, on May 4 said it would step up both its fracking and its drilling operations, calling higher prices a "catalyst." Wilson thinks other producers may follow suit. At the end of the day, U.S. consumers will pay prices for what's going on in the global market. "Whether that's good or bad depends on those global events," Prest with Resources for the Future said.

On the other hand, if the conflict drags on long enough, U.S. legislators may be motivated to set policy to shield American consumers, Upton said. As recently as 2016, U.S. producers weren't allowed to export oil. That ban was lifted only because domestic refineries couldn't keep up, he noted.

50★States

News from across the USA

ALABAMA Cullman: A mattress manufacturing plant has shuttered its operations in Cullman, which triggered over 100 recent layoffs.

ALASKA Juneau: State data shows that 12- to 15-year-old Alaskans had the highest rate of ATV crash injuries of any age group, Alaska Public Media reported.

ARIZONA Tucson: Tucson is asking developers of a controversial data center to restore water it took without authorization, months after it rejected the project. The request came after the city discovered a contractor hired by Beale Infrastructure used almost 652,000 gallons of potable water from the Tucson service area for dust control on the site of Project Blue, a 290-acre planned data center complex just south of Tucson.

ARKANSAS Fort Smith: The University of Arkansas-Fort Smith unveiled two new centers aimed at tackling one of the River Valley's challenges: building a workforce ready for the future of manufacturing.

CALIFORNIA Palm Desert: College of the Desert has hit a roadblock in its effort to offer a bachelor's degree in casino and integrated resort management, after a campus from the California State University system challenged the college's proposal.

COLORADO Denver: The Trump administration sued Colorado seeking to strike down a 13-year-old state ban on large-capacity firearm ammunition magazines.

CONNECTICUT Storrs: A new guide offering information about local farms and food providers in northeastern Connecticut is available online and will be distributed at in-person locations, according to a community announcement. The 52-page 2026 Guide to Farm Fresh Food in Northeastern Connecticut is produced by Grown ConNECTed.

DELAWARE Delaware City: The Delaware City Refinery will have nearly one month of increased emissions of a harmful chemical. The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control announced the refinery would begin repairs on equipment at its coker carbon monoxide boiler. The repair will cause the equipment to shift from a primary pollution-control process to a secondary emissions control.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington: Officials said Washington, DC, welcomed 27.2 million visitors in 2025, a slight uptick from 2024, WUSA9 reported.

FLORIDA Cape Canaveral: All Points Logistics has secured a 64-acre lease from NASA to construct more than a half-million square feet of spacecraft prelaunch processing facilities at Kennedy Space Center.

GEORGIA Atlanta: Buc-ee's, the Texas-based travel center chain known for its mall-sized stores, barbecue and beaver merchandise, is suing Teddy's Market, a small convenience store in Georgia, for alleged brand infringement.

HAWAII Honolulu: The Hawaii Foodbank is partnering with SUN Meals and Kaukau 4 Keiki to provide free summer meals for students, ensuring families have reliable food support throughout June and July, Hawaii News Now reported.

IDAHO Eagle: The Eagle Fire Department broke ground on its first new station in 20 years, KTVB7 reported.

ILLINOIS Chicago: For the first time in more than a century, a bald eagle chick has successfully hatched within Chicago city limits, marking what the Chicago Park District called a historic milestone for the city's wildlife restoration efforts.

INDIANA Indianapolis: The National Rifle Association's annual expo will return to Indianapolis in 2029 and 2031, Gov. Mike Braun and NRA Executive Vice President and CEO Doug Hamlin announced.

IOWA Boone: An animal control officer was awarded more than $380,000 after being attacked by a pair of dogs nearly three years ago while she was pregnant.

KANSAS Salina: Students at Kansas Wesleyan University will have more opportunities to explore ministry and community leadership, thanks to a two-year grant from the Council of Independent Colleges Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education. The funding will support the expansion of the university's Campus Ministry internship program.

HIGHLIGHT: MASSACHUSETTS



A petition drive has begun to urge the repair and long-term replacement of the Scusset Fishing Pier. RON SCHLOERB/USA TODAY NETWORK

Sandwich: At the edge of Scusset Beach State Reservation, near where the Cape Cod Canal meets the open sweep of the bay, a familiar landmark is falling apart, and the people who know it best are raising their voices to save it. Local residents and line fishermen say the Scusset Fishing Pier on the north side of the canal – long a gathering place for anglers, families and visitors – is showing structural decline. A petition drive has begun to urge the pier's repair and long-term replacement. The state Department of Conservation & Recreation built the pier in the 1950s.

KENTUCKY Louisville: Mayor Craig Greenberg is again proposing deep cuts to a pair of local conservation offices, threatening a range of environmental programs two years after similar cuts were rejected by the Louisville Metro Council. Under the mayor's budget proposal, the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District would receive only $50,000 in fiscal year 2027, a cut of more than 50%. The Jefferson County Cooperative Extension office would receive $150,000, compared with $250,000 in the prior year.

LOUISIANA Ruston: The first walls on Buc-ee's travel center in Ruston were raised as the freeway phenomenon's inaugural Louisiana campus begins to take shape. Underground fuel tanks also have been installed, as well as the support beams for the gas pump island canopies.

MAINE Windham: The large water tower located behind the Windham Town Hall is being removed as the final phase of the Libby Hill Water Storage Tank project, WMTW reported.

MARYLAND Hagerstown: Nearly 3,000 students from across the region attended the Maryland Symphony Orchestra's annual Link Up Youth Concerts at The Maryland Theatre in Hagerstown.

MICHIGAN Detroit: The effort to identify how many Detroit home demolition sites may contain toxic dirt has grown in size and cost. Initially, the number of sites to be tested for toxic dirt was around 420, and the overall cost to test and potentially refill the dirt was around $8 million, city officials said last year. The number of sites being tested for contaminated dirt has grown to 650 locations, said Tim Palazzolo, director of the Construction & Demolition Department. The administration of Mayor Mary Sheffield is now seeking City Council permission to pay a private contractor $3.5 million to test the sites, adding to the overall cost of the problem.

MINNESOTA St. Cloud: Residents can expect major upgrades to the Herb Brooks National Hockey Center by fall. Construction is underway on a $12.9 million project that will reduce the size of both hockey rinks, replace a failing cooling plant and make behind-the-scenes updates to the facility.

MISSISSIPPI Jackson: Resean Thomas, chief of the Jackson Fire Department, is alerting city leaders that the department needs 60 firefighters and $2 million to improve its recently downgraded fire rating.

MISSOURI Springfield: The Friends of the Library Book Sale set a new record and pushed total fundraising past $6 million. The event, held in Springfield, brought in $220,326.90 – the highest total in the sale's history despite severe weather and competing events, according to a community announcement.

MONTANA Helena: A report by an internal response team found Montana Public Service Commissioner Brad Molnar committed serious misconduct, including unwelcome sex-based comments and retaliation against those who reported him, the Daily Montanan reported.

NEBRASKA Lincoln: The new Clyde Malone Community Center has officially opened after nearly two years of construction, with leaders calling it a major investment in a space for families to grow, heal, and thrive, KOLN reported.

NEVADA Reno: A 200-megawatt lithium-ion battery energy storage system was approved when City Council voted to adopt a 54-acre land annexation for the project.

NEW HAMPSHIRE Durham: University of New Hampshire officials expect the state economy will be bolstered with the development of The Edge, a massive mixed-use, research and residential community planned for the western portion of the school's campus.

NEW JERSEY Newark: NJ Transit is dropping the price of its roundtrip ticket to eight World Cup matches taking place at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford to $105 from $150, the agency said.

NEW MEXICO Ruidoso: Contour Airlines will launch nonstop Ruidoso-Denver service on June 25, KRQE reported.

NEW YORK Albany: A string of wildfires across New York in late April is raising concerns about what's sparking fires during one of the most dangerous times of year. Officials say many of them are preventable. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, forest rangers responded to multiple fires between April 23 and April 26, with causes including illegal burns, equipment failures and roadside hazards.

NORTH CAROLINA Hot Springs: The Appalachian Trail has long been a cultural touchstone of the town's identity, and that connection will only be strengthened as downtown now offers an Appalachian Trail shelter. The Walnut Mountain Shelter, built in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, was transported from over the border in Del Rio, Tennessee, and sits less than 100 feet away from the trail at the Hot Springs Welcome Center.

NORTH DAKOTA Bismarck: North Dakota's Heritage Center will open its "North Dakota 250 Road Trip: Our American Story" exhibit this summer, featuring more than 250 artifacts highlighting the state's history ahead of America's 250th birthday, KXNET reported.

OHIO Upper Arlington: A Franklin County judge ruled cleanup of the former Golden Bear shopping center site can continue, saying the development company did not prove its case for a temporary restraining order against the city.

OKLAHOMA Oklahoma City: A group of Oklahoma crop experts projected Oklahoma's 2026 winter wheat harvest at 47.799 million bushels, with an average yield of 23.11 bushels per acre, said Mike Schulte, executive director of the Oklahoma Wheat Commission.

OREGON Newberg: An Oregon university announced the state's first three-year bachelor's degree program. George Fox University, a private Christian college, announced it will begin offering 90-credit online bachelor's degrees in fall 2026.

PENNSYLVANIA Erie: In order to prepare and build for the future, Eerie Horror Fest is taking a hiatus in 2026. Officials at Film Erie, which operates the Eerie Horror Fest, announced that the Halloween-themed film festival that usually takes place in October at the Warner Theatre, is taking 2026 off to reconstruct some plans. Those plans include how to add sustainable funding, become more independent and find more venue options.

RHODE ISLAND Providence: The Audubon Society of Rhode Island is sharing some sad news after the first peregrine falcon of the spring hatched atop Providence's Superman Building. The baby bird looks fine, but it appears that the other eggs in the nest won't hatch, according to the Audubon Society.

SOUTH CAROLINA Greenville: Irina the Amur, a leopard at the Greenville Zoo, is pregnant. The zoo confirmed her pregnancy through an ultrasound, which revealed a pleasant surprise: Irina will be giving birth to twins.

SOUTH DAKOTA Pierre: Gov. Larry Rhoden recently announced that Travel South Dakota is reinstating its Tourism Advertising Promotion Grant Fund, which is available to tourism-related businesses and destination marketing organizations to help advance tourism in rural communities, according to a release.

TENNESSEE Nashville: A new report ranks Tennessee last in the nation in how much it spends on public school students. Tennessee spent $12,147 per student during the 2024-25 school year, according to a report released by the National Education Association. That puts Tennessee at No. 51 on the list, which includes all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and marks a three-place drop from the previous year. By comparison, the national average was $18,826.

TEXAS Laredo: Six bodies were found on May 11 in a train boxcar in Laredo, according to police. A Union Pacific worker discovered them in a train yard at a remote location near the U.S.-Mexico border, and police and firefighters later confirmed they had died, said Laredo Police Investigator Joe Baeza.

UTAH Salt Lake City: A Utah judge rejected a request by Tyler Robinson, the man accused of killing conservative activist Charlie Kirk, to ban live TV and still photography from courtroom proceedings but accepted his motion to delay a key hearing.

VERMONT Burlington: The Vermont Police Academy is hosting an exhibition focusing on the experiences of former residents of St. Joseph's Orphanage in Burlington, where many children described abuse at the hands of nuns and staff. The Voices of St. Joseph's Orphanage Exhibition Display is open to the public for engagement and learning, according to a community announcement. The exhibit runs through May 21.

VIRGINIA Weyers Cave: The World War II Warbird Expo is coming to the Shenandoah Valley Airport for the America 250 celebration. To celebrate, the Capital Wing of the Commemorative Air Force will present a special Warbird Expo and Fly-In featuring several World War II-era aircraft at Shenandoah Valley Airport May 16-17.

WASHINGTON Port Orchard: The Port of Bremerton is ready to bid for construction on a project to replace the aging breakwater at the Port Orchard Marina, a step closer for an issue the port has been discussing and preparing for years.

WEST VIRGINIA Charleston: Gov. Patrick Morrisey has signed the Joanna Phillips Domestic Violence Prevention Act, a new law aimed at strengthening protections for domestic violence victims, WDTV reported.

WISCONSIN Milwaukee: The FBI has started an investigation into Wisconsin's 2020 election, sources told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, part of the USA TODAY Network. The investigation is only in a preliminary phase and is focused on vetting previous complaints – and no ballots have been seized in Wisconsin, the sources said.

WYOMING Sheridan: Sheridan County commissioners approved at least a 15% pay raise for all elected offices except their own, beginning next year, The Sheridan Press reported.

From USA TODAY Network and wire reports

Millions may be owed a refund from COVID era

Medora Lee
USA TODAY

Tens of millions of Americans may not realize they could be owed a IRS refund from the COVID-19 era, so the independent National Taxpayer Advocate (NTA) is sounding the alarm to let them know the deadline to claim it is fast-approaching.

"Many taxpayers affected by this issue have low and moderate incomes," NTA said in a blog post. "These taxpayers are less likely to have professional representation and to learn about complex legal developments like this one. As a result, they face a greater risk of missing the opportunity to claim refunds to which they may be entitled."

Potential refunds or abatement of penalties stems from a court ruling in Kwong vs. United States interpreting a tax rule that says once a federally declared disaster is in effect, tax code Section 7508A(d) mandates postponement of applicable tax deadlines for the disaster period plus 60 days.

The court ruled the COVID-19 public health emergency from Jan. 20, 2020, through May 11, 2023, fell under this provision. Add in 60 days, and the new tax deadline for tax year 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 filings would have been July 10, 2023.

Without taxes due, the IRS likely also had no right to levy penalties and interests during that window, tax lawyers said. So, if you were charged penalties or fees, you may be owed a refund, they said.

The IRS disagrees with the ruling and the Department of Justice will probably appeal, but until then, taxpayers must make a claim to preserve their refund if it's approved, lawyers said.

"For taxpayers dealing with financial pressures, these amounts can make a real difference," NTA said. "But most taxpayers must act by July 10, 2026, to request their potential refunds."

What could taxpayers receive if the ruling is affirmed?

According to NTA, taxpayers may be owed:

- Penalties assessed for failure to timely file returns, failure to pay taxes, or failure to make estimated tax payments.
- Interest that began accruing earlier than it should have, or not at all.
- Overpayment interest for the 2020–2023 disaster period.

"Some practitioners believe that even where the underlying liability arose before the disaster period began, you may not have had to pay interest or penalties during that period," NTA said. "Again, the IRS disagrees," and taxpayers may have to wait to get the final answer. However, again, to preserve the right to a potential refund, taxpayers must claim by July 10.

Who's affected?

A broad group of taxpayers may be entitled to the refund, experts said.

"Impacted taxpayers represent a broad cross-section of the public, including individuals, small businesses, large corporations, estates, and trusts," NTA said.

"The issue reaches taxpayers with obligations related to income, employment, estate, gift, and excise taxes. It may also affect taxpayers who filed late international information returns, which can result in significant penalties even when no tax is due."

How does someone know if they may be owed a refund?

Taxpayers need to check their tax records to see if the IRS levied any penalties or interest during the tax filing pause, said Jon Wasser, partner at Fox Rothschild who focuses on tax issues. They can do that by either asking their tax professionals or looking at their IRS tax transcript.

IRS tax account transcripts show each year's tax information, including filing status, taxable income and adjustments made after the original return was processed. It also shows payments, penalties and interest with dates they were made or assessed.

Tax account transcripts are available online by registering to use the Individual Online Account to view, print, or download, or by mail, according to the IRS. Americans can order one by mail on the IRS website or by calling the automated phone transcript service at 800-908-9946.

It should arrive in five to 10 calendar days.

What do taxpayers need to do to protect their right to a refund?

Tax professionals can file claims on behalf of a taxpayer, or a taxpayer may file one using a claim for refund and request for abatement form, also known as IRS Form 843, using information from the tax transcript, Wasser said.

A taxpayer should specify on the form that it's a protective claim based on the Kwong v. United States decision regarding Section 7508A(d) and the COVID-19 disaster period, lawyers said.

"You're basically telling the IRS, 'here's a refund claim, put it on hold for now' " until the case has a final determination, Wasser said. If, after all litigation is complete and the IRS must issue refunds, you would have preserved your right to claim yours.

ASK JOHNNY

Take-home assignment after interview offers clues to culture



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: I applied for a job and was given a take-home assignment as part of the interview process. However, the project feels excessive and looks more like real work that the team would normally be paid to do. Is it reasonable to push back or decline an assignment like this, and how should candidates handle requests that cross that line? –Terrance

Answer: Yes, you can push back. And yes, you can decline. But before you do, ask yourself a more important question: What is this process telling you?

Interviews are a two-way evaluation. The company is assessing your skills. You're assessing their judgment, culture, and what they prioritize in candidates. A take-home assignment is not just a test of your ability. It's a preview of expectations.

These projects often are legitimate skills demonstrations. Employers want proof you can do the work. That's reasonable. A focused, time-bound assignment tied directly to the role is fair.

At the same time, if the request makes you feel uneasy about putting in that much time, it may signal a cultural misalignment. The interview process is your first glimpse into a company's culture and how they operate.

You don't need to be confrontational. You can respond professionally and ask some clarifying questions: How long should this take? How will it be evaluated? Is there flexibility in scope? Serious employers will have thoughtful answers.

Be realistic, though. As a candidate, you're unlikely to overhaul an established hiring practice. If this is how they hire, it's probably how they operate. Your decision isn't about changing them. It's about deciding whether this process, and, ultimately, this environment, fits you.

Also, step back and weigh the full opportunity. Are the compensation, growth prospects, leadership reputation, and mission strong enough for you to justify the lift? Or does this feel like an early warning sign that you may not be fully aligned with the organization?

Not every opportunity deserves your time. And not every process deserves your participation.

If you choose to opt out, do it professionally. Thank them. Keep the door open. The professional world is small. And remember, the hiring process is often the most organized a company will ever be. If it feels misaligned now, it likely won't feel better later. Trust your judgment.

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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USA TODAY SPORTS



From $1 million NIL deals to seeking missing title

Mitchell Northam USA TODAY

NiJaree Canady's college softball career is nearly over. • When Texas Tech's run in the NCAA Tournament ends – and Red Raider fans hope that's with them lifting the national championship trophy in Oklahoma City – Canady will not only be remembered as one of the sport's greatest pitchers and a transformative player for Texas Tech, but also as a trailblazer in bringing money into softball. Through name, image and likeness (NIL) earnings, Canady has been the sport's highest paid player for the last two years, earning north of $1 million a season.

The investment has been worth it for Texas Tech. A year ago Canady powered the Red Raiders to their first Big 12 championship and trip to the Women's College World Series. Her list of accolades includes multiple pitcher and national player of the year awards from D1Softball.com, NFCA, Softball America, USA Softball, Big 12 and Pac-12.

Canady said she is finally feeling comfortable with being the face of softball NIL.

"It took a little bit to get there too, but now that it's my senior year, I think that's kind of a role I've started to accept," Canady told USA TODAY Sports. "It's definitely been a whirlwind – I feel like that's the best way to describe it. There's a lot of positives, but I feel like it's something you have to adjust to.

"It's an amazing time in college athletics, specifically for female athletes. Women's sports are exploding, so that's fun to be a part of."

Texas Tech is widely considered to be a contender for the World Series in Oklahoma City The Red Raiders earned the 11th seed in the 64-team bracket and will host the Lubbock Regional beginning May 15. Tech's first game will be against Marist (4:30 ET, ESPN+). Canady is spreading the word about her ongoing NIL partnerships with Venmo and how it's helped her handle all the dollars she's earned.

"I feel like all college athletes are managing larger lines of money, which is amazing, but there's also responsibility that comes with that," Canady said. "So, that's why I like Venmo so much, because I'm already familiar with it and it just makes things so much easier than a traditional credit card. You're still earning cash back – and when I was in high school I wasn't really thinking about that – it's just through an app that you're more familiar with. The Venmo debit card makes it easier. I'm learning how

See CANADY, Page 7C

MAIN: Texas Tech pitcher NiJaree Canady reacts to one of her a 209 strikeouts this season. SECONDARY: Canady will lead Tech into the NCAA tournament. PHOTOS BY NATHAN GIESE/LUBBOCK (TEXAS) AVALANCHE-JOURNAL



Lorenzo Reyes
USA TODAY

Ejected Wemby learning harsh lessons

This would've been a very different game had Victor Wembanyama been on the floor for most of it.

The San Antonio Spurs wasted a chance to take a commanding 3-1 NBA playoff series lead on May 10 over the Minnesota Timberwolves in the Western Conference semifinals when Wembanyama's second-quarter ejection sabotaged their efforts.

Wembanyama, 22, is a bright, young player, one who has been transparent about his relative inexperience in playoff basketball. Treat this as another lesson, rather unfairly, that he'll have to learn.

Because not only did Wembanyama miss 2 ½ half quarters of an eventual five-point loss, he might face further discipline from the NBA league office, though not a possible suspension.

With Game 5 set for May 12 (8 p.m. ET, Peacock), the NBA was expected to review the incident and make any determination on discipline by the

See REYES, Page 7C



Victor Wembanyama commits a Flagrant 2 foul on Naz Reid during Game 4 at Target Center.
BRUCE KLUCKHOHN/IMAGN IMAGES

MLB STATS TO KNOW

Rookie on pace for HR mark after first quarter

Gabe Lacques
USA TODAY

It's believing season in Major League Baseball.

This past weekend, all but one team passed the 40-game mark, a very unofficial but nonetheless meaningful checkpoint that signals the season is already – gulp – one quarter complete. And it's officially OK to start buying what you're seeing.

Oh, that's not a hard and fast rule. Fans can believe the New York Mets won't lose 99 games, and Fernando Tatis Jr. won't finish with zero home runs, and they'll probably be correct.

But for many trends, the cement has set even if it's not totally dry. With that, we take a look at six paces that are defining the season – and would certainly look startling come the end of September:

61: Home runs for Munetaka Murakami

OK, this one might be tough to maintain. That doesn't diminish what the 6-foot-2, 213-pound Murakami has done in his first season in the world's premier league.

Sure, the worrywarts were right: Murakami is striking out 34.4% of the

See MLB, Page 7C

MLB

Dodgers lose their No. 1 power ranking

Gabe Lacques
USA TODAY



Atlanta's Ozzie Albies and Matt Olson are off to red-hot starts in 2026. JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA/ GETTY IMAGES

The Los Angeles Dodgers won't go wire-to-wire in the National League West – nor will they in USA TODAY Sports' power rankings.

The preseason No. 1 may very well win a third consecutive championship this autumn, but for now they have been dislodged from the top spot for the first time this season by the Atlanta Braves.

The passing of the torch came head-to-head, as Atlanta won two of three games at Dodger Stadium and improve to a major league-best 28-13. Their plus-87 run differential is also tops in the majors, and they also lead in OPS and ERA.

Uh, any questions?

The Braves' newfound position will be tested immediately, as they return home for a three-game series against the No. 3 Chicago Cubs, beginning on May 10 at Truist Field.

A look at our updated rankings:

1. Atlanta Braves (+1): Spencer Strider punches out eight Dodgers in second start of year.

2. Los Angeles Dodgers (-1): Mookie Betts is back this week, not a moment too soon for flaccid offense.

3. Chicago Cubs (+1): Have the Cubs rescued Michael Conforto? Batting .364 with 1.132 OPS in 55 plate appearances.

4. Tampa Bay Rays (+2): Nick Martinez's 1.70 ERA is best in club history through eight games for a starter.

5. New York Yankees (-2): Carlos Rodón makes season debut but can't prevent unsettling sweep at Milwaukee.

6. San Diego Padres (-1): A quarter through the season, Fernando Tatis Jr. at 0.0 WAR and zero home runs.

7. Milwaukee Brewers (+3): Sweep the Yankees for first time since they were an American League team – in 1989.

8. Pittsburgh Pirates (–): Oneil Cruz on a 40-homer pace.

9. Cincinnati Reds (-2): Elly De La Cruz's 135 adjusted OPS 16% higher than previous career best.

10. Cleveland Guardians (+1): A Patrick Bailey-Austin Hedges catching duo won't make anyone forget Johnny Bench.

11. Toronto Blue Jays (+1): Addison Barger finally returns and now he needs an elbow MRI.

12. Athletics (+3): Can Shea Langeliers bring a batting title back to Yolo County?

13. St. Louis Cardinals (+3): Jordan Walker up to 11 home runs.

14. Arizona Diamondbacks (-1): Eduardo Rodriguez averaging six innings per start, which he hasn't done since 2019.

15. Detroit Tigers (-6): Not exactly a "Win one for the Gipper" response after Tarik Skubal's injury.

16. Philadelphia Phillies (+3): Kyle Schwarber homers in four straight games for second time in his career.

17. Texas Rangers (-3): Jacob de Grom is 5-0 with a 1.22 ERA when pitching decisive game of series for Rangers.

18. Seattle Mariners (-1): Getting ugly: Cal Raleigh in a 0-for-32 hole, average down to .161.

19. Miami Marlins (-1): "We're trying to win. We're trying to win this year," general manager Peter Bendix says after flurry of roster moves.

20. Baltimore Orioles (–): After getting outclassed in four-game sweep in Bronx, they get another shot at Yankees.

21. Kansas City Royals (+2): Cole Ragans heads to injured list with left elbow impingement.

22. Washington Nationals (-1): Nasim Nuñez leads majors with 17 steals.

23. Chicago White Sox (+3): Davis Martin, All-Star Game starting pitcher? Stranger things have happened.

24. New York Mets (-2): Well, looks like Clay Holmes could fetch a nice haul at trade deadline, at least.

25. Minnesota Twins (-1): Series win at Cleveland their first since April 15.

26. Houston Astros (-1): After injury reset, Tatsuya Imai will start May 12.

27. Boston Red Sox (–): Only Texas has scored fewer runs in AL.

28. San Francisco Giants (–): Pragmatic or desperate? Dumping Gold Glove catcher Andrew Bailey is definitely something.

29. Los Angeles Angels (–): Alek Manoah experience will begin with a "bulk guy" appearance.

30. Colorado Rockies (–): Ethan Holliday with a three-homer week in Class A ball.

NASCAR CUP SERIES

SVG ends Watkins race with crazy drive

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

Shane van Gisbergen knows he owns these road-course races. He's been nearly untouchable for the rest of the NASCAR Cup Series. But he insists he had to work for it at Watkins Glen International on May 10.

"Oh, for sure, but it's not easy," SVG said. "Everyone's really good."

Yes, van Gisbergen secured his first win of the 2026 season in the Go Bowling at The Glen. It was his sixth victory in his last seven tries on road courses.

But with 24 laps to go, he pitted from the lead and reemerged in 24th.

Still, he weaved his way through the 38-car field in 16 laps, retaking the top spot and eventually crossing the finish line seven seconds in front of runner-up Michael McDowell. Ty Gibbs placed third.

"There was a lot of pressure there, and I think McDowell was good," van Gisbergen said. "Connor (Zilisch) was good, Tyler Reddick. There was some really good guys and a lot of pressure. Just stoked for these guys to execute every facet of our game."

SVG turned 37 years old on May 9 and gave himself a birthday gift that afternoon by securing pole position during qualifying.

He unboxed another present with his win. He claimed Stage 2 and fronted the pack for 74 of the 100 laps. Gibbs led the second-most laps with only 17.

Gibbs was the driver van Gisbergen overtook for the final lead change.

"Thank you to Trackhouse," van Gisbergen said. "We weren't very good in practice, and then qualifying was amazing. Good tweaks. Then, today, what a race car. (Crew chief Stephen Doran) made great calls. I wasn't sure how it was going to work, and then to run them down like that, very, very special."

With the seventh victory of his Cup Series career, van Gisbergen tied Chase Elliott as the circuit's winningest active driver on the road. He also holds the record for wins by a driver born outside of the United States.

McDowell is no slouch on road courses, either.

The 41-year-old slotted as the runner-up for his first top-three finish since snatching second at Sonoma in June 2024. He led five laps.

It marked his second top-five of the campaign, with his first occurring at COTA in March. In eight races between then and Watkins Glen, McDowell cracked the top 20 only twice – and hadn't done so in five weeks.

"It's been a rough few weeks," he said. "But that's what is great about NASCAR. You're only one week away from grabbing a top-five finish and having some momentum on our side.

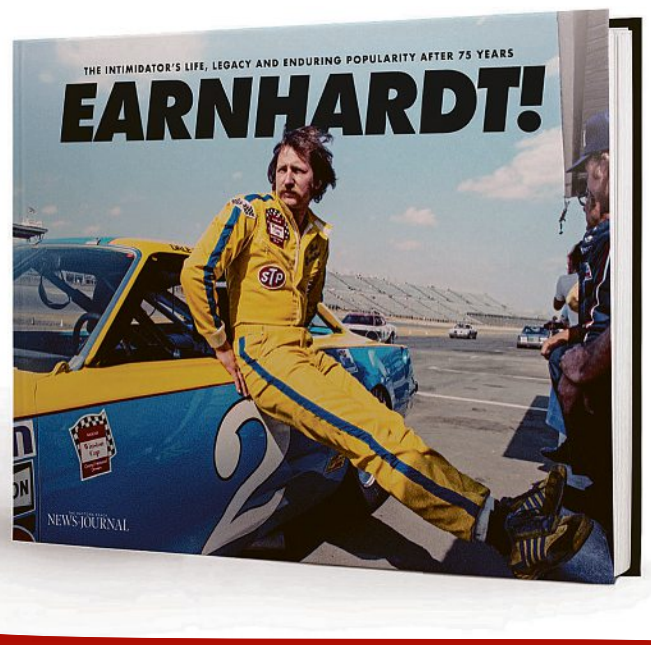
"We knew this was a track we could come to, and if we executed like we did today, we could contend for the win. We still needed a little bit more to hang with Shane van Gisbergen there. But all-in-all, the No. 71 Go Bowling Chevrolet team had a good day."

The Spire Motorsports driver carries two career victories: one at Daytona in 2021 and another on the Indy road course in 2023.



Shane van Gisbergen spent 74 of the 100 laps in front on the way to his first 2026 win. SEAN GARDNER/ GETTY IMAGES

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THE DAYTONA BEACH
NEWS-JOURNAL

Reitan makes most of Truist chance

Cameron Jourdan
Golfweek | USA TODAY NETWORK

Kristoffer Reitan has had to question whether he was going to get into the last two PGA Tour signature events. He no longer has to wonder.

The 28-year-old won the Truist Championship on May 10, his first PGA Tour victory in his 15th start. He is the second player from Norway (Viktor Hovland) to win on the tour and did so shooting 2-under 69 in the final round at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, North Carolina, to beat Rickie Fowler and Nicolai Hojgaard by two shots.

"I don't have any words, to be honest," he told CBS' Amanda Balionis after the winning putt dropped. "This is way more than I expected, and for it to happen this quickly is just unreal. Yeah, a dream come true."


Reitan

After a tie for second at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans two weeks ago, Reitan was at home last week expecting a week off. But after a withdraw ahead of the Cadillac Championship, he moved up to first alternate and found himself in the field after Jake Knapp withdrew. He contended and ultimately finished 14th, doubling his last hole. He thought that took him out of the Truist field.

Little did he know, it helped him get in. Alex Smalley jumped Reitan and moved into the Aon Swing 10, putting him in the field while Reitan then earned his spot in the field via the Aon Swing 5.

"For me it doesn't make any sense because I shouldn't be rewarded for having a bad hole, but I'll take it. I'll take a coincidence like that," Reitan said May 9.

He started the final round one shot behind Alex Fitzpatrick, who with brother Matt defeated Reitan at the Zurich Classic to earn his PGA Tour card. And even last week, like Reitan, Fitzpatrick had some strong moments before a T-9 finish at the Cadillac.

The duo played junior golf in Europe and found themselves together in the final pair in the Truist final round, though Fitzpatrick struggled out of the gate. He was 3 over after three holes and had battled back to be a shot behind Reitan with two holes to play, but a double on the par-3 17th took him out of contention.

"I'm disappointed not to have won, but I'm also really proud of myself for how I battled out there," Fitzpatrick said. "I was 3 over through three and then in my head I'm thinking I could shoot 81 here. So, yeah, I felt like I was super happy that I was very patient."

Reitan, meanwhile, went out in even par with a pair of birdies and bogeys. He took control with a pair of birdies on the 14th and 15th to take the outright lead, and then he conquered the Green Mile.

Other PGA Tour players to have their first career win at the Truist (formerly Wells Fargo) include Rory McIlroy, Rickie Fowler and Max Homa.

'26 Presidents Cup captain snaps 8-year winless streak

Todd Kelly
Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

It's been nearly eight years, but Brandt Snedeker is a winner once again. Snedeker shot a final-round 5-under 66 on May 10 at the Oneflight Myrtle Beach Classic to come from down three shots down at the start of the day to win his 10th title on the PGA Tour.


Snedeker

Snedeker, the 2026 Presidents Cup captain, did what 2025 Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley did: win on tour ahead of leading Team USA in an international competition. While Snedeker is probably still not in any conversation to play for the Red, White and Blue this September, he can call himself a winner again.

Snedeker's last win came on Aug. 19, 2018, at the Wyndham Championship. He earned more that day ($1,080,000) than he did May 10 at Dunes Golf & Beach Club. With the Oneflight being a PGA Tour opposite-field event, he will take home $720,000.

But that's merely a footnote for the 45-year-old, who contended earlier this year at the Valspar Championship but ended up tied for 18th after a final-round 76. This timeSnedeker was stellar in the final round with that 66, his second 66 of the week. His other two scores were 67s as he finished at 18 under to edge Mark Hubbard by a shot.

"It's been a roller coaster. I feel amazing. I feel so lucky to still be out here still doing what I love to do, to have a chance to win a golf tournament at my age, and to be able to pull it out is something super special. I'm just so pumped. I don't know what else to say," Snedeker said. "I've had a lot going on this year obviously with Presidents Cup stuff and getting to be around the guys. It really pushed me a lot. It did. Seeing Gary Woodland win a few weeks ago in Houston and seeing the old guys play well and the young guys push them, it's been fun to get back in the swing of things and play some good golf."

And while it's been awhile for him to hoist a trophy, Snedeker insists his game hasn't been that far off.

"I know people don't think I been playing that great, but I been playing pretty good. Just kind of have not been able to put four rounds together, and this week I did," he said. "So excited for what the next little bit holds, and going to really enjoy tonight and celebrate this. Ten wins out here is a huge accomplishment for me, and super excited about it."

Snedeker's win had one other perk: It earned him a spot in the 2026 PGA Championship, which starts this week on May 14.

Hubbard made bogey on 16 and 18 to shoot 70. He was in the final group and contended all day but came up short.

"It's always one of those with golf, like, what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Was my attitude good because I had unbelievable ball control for the most part of this week, or did I have ball control because my attitude was good? We'll see," he said. "Right now I feel a lot better than I would have in past situations, and just overall throughout the week I had a lot more fun out there. I just felt a lot more calm and less stressed, and that was really nice. I'd like to continue feeling that throughout the rest of the year."

Brooks Koepka tied for 11th after finishing at 12 under. Ryan Ruffels made $11,411 for his tie for 45th after stepping away from creating content for his YouTube channel after earning a spot via a sponsor exemption.


Jeeno Thitikul is doused after her winning putt on the 18th green during the final round of the Mizuho Americas Open. SARAH STIER/GETTY IMAGES

Jeeno Thitikul earns second '26 LPGA title

Beth Ann Nichols
Golfweek | USA TODAY NETWORK

Jeeno Thitkul is back.

After Nelly Korda looked poised to put together another dominant season, Thitikul said not so fast. As least her clubs did anyway, as she collected her ninth career LPGA title and second this year at the Mizuho Americas Open. It's Thitikul's second consecutive win at the Mizuho, though she accomplished the feat on a different course, winning at the testy Mountain Ridge Country Club in West Caldwell, New Jersey.

After a season in which there were no repeat winners on the LPGA until October, Thitikul becomes the fourth player this season to win twice, joining Hyo Kim, Hannah Green and Korda. In February, Thitikul won for the first time on home soil at the Honda LPGA Thailand.

After the win in Thailand, Thitikul started to feel off with her irons, calling on her longtime swing coach to help get her sorted. His message: try less.

"I just give credit to him that sometimes you don't try to fix things to be perfect," said Thitikul, who drained a long birdie putt on the difficult 18th to win by four over good friend Ruoning Yin, who noted in a hilarious post-round interview on CBS that Thitikul gave her "sh--" last year for not being there when she won.

This time, Yin was front and center with the champagne.

"I think this week will be my fifth runner-up in 19 months, so I don't know, I think it's coming," said Yin, who hit 18 greens in the final round.

Thitikul and Yin teamed up to win the Dow Championship two years ago but this week found themselves battling against each other.

Thitikul was asked after the round how the confidence would help in the coming weeks, with the U.S. Women's Open at Riviera around the corner. She has yet to win a major championship.

"I mean, like it's always my dream," said Thitikul. "I would say not goal, but dream to be able to win a major. As I said, I don't want to put anything on my shoulder right now. I just took all of it out. I just play golf.

"Whether I win major or not, I think I have done enough."

Lucas Herbert wires LIV, earns invite to U.S. Open

Field Level Media
REUTERS

Lucas Herbert has won golf tournaments around the world. He finally has his first title on LIV Golf.

The Australian completed a wire-to-wire win May 10 at LIV Golf Virginia with a final-round 3-under 69 at Trump National DC in Potomac Falls, Virginia.

Herbert went 24 under par for the week, four strokes better than runner-up Sergio Garcia of Spain (final-round 70). Bryson DeChambeau went 64-66 on the weekend to grab third place at 19 under before he plays the PGA Championship this week.

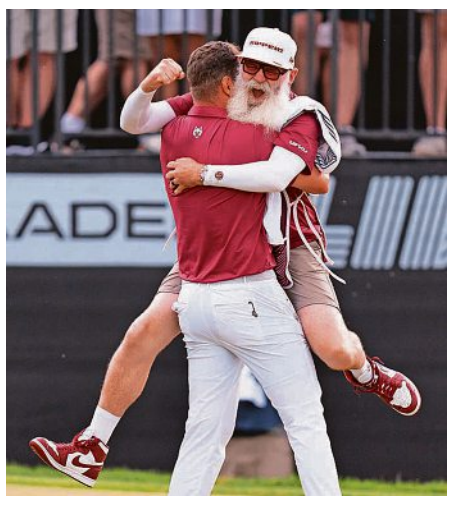
Herbert built an insurmountable lead by opening the tournament with rounds of 64 and 63. Even a double bogey at the par-3 ninth hole in the final round did not harm his chances much, as he finished with eight birdies and three bogeys on the card.

Herbert finished the week with 29 birdies plus one eagle.

Asked what he learned about himself this week, Herbert replied, "Probably that I can perform pretty damn well when things aren't perfect.

"I was pretty sick all week, and I woke up this morning probably feeling worse than I did the last few days. I had Sergio coming at me for 36 holes really hard, and he pushed me the whole way, made me earn that one. I didn't doubt myself. I missed a few putts here and there and made it a contest late."

Herbert, 30, will have even more to celebrate. The victory vaulted him into third place in the LIV season standings, behind Spanish star Jon Rahm and DeChambeau, which earned Herbert a berth in the U.S. Open.


Lucas Herbert celebrates with his caddie at LIV Golf Virginia at Trump National. JACK POWER/IMAGN IMAGES

Herbert, who had won on the PGA Tour, DP World Tour and Asian Tour, was eligible for only two majors since the start of the 2024 season.

Garcia's day wasn't done when he landed in second. The team he captains, Fireballs GC, went to a playoff against 4Aces GC. Rather than choosing himself, Garcia used countrymen Josele Ballester – who shot a 12-under 60 on May 9 – and David Puig, who made birdie to cinch the team win.

DP WORLD TOUR

S. African wins by 14 in Spain

Cameron Jourdan
Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

Only Tiger Woods has won a DP World Tour event by a larger margin than Yurav Premlall did May 10 in Spain.

The 22-year-old South African had a historic victory in the Catalunya Championship, winning by 14 shots at Real Club de Golf El Prat in Barcelona. The 14-shot margin of victory is the second largest in the history of the DP World Tour, trailing only Woods' win at the 2000 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach.

"I mean the last eight, nine months have been such a struggle just to build myself onto a platform where I know I could give myself a chance to win and to end up obviously in this position," Premlall said. "I'm just so grateful so it's a dream come true."

Although the U.S. Open is a USGA event, it's also considered a DP World Tour event. But if majors weren't included, Premlall has a piece of history all to himself. It's his first DPWT victory and second as a pro, his first coming on the Sunshine Tour two years ago. The 14-shot margin of victory does defeat another Woods' mark of largest margin of victory in a player's first win on the tour.


Yurav Premlall celebrates his 14-shot victory in the DP World Tour's Estrella Damm Catalunya Championship on May 10 in Barcelona. LUKE WALKER/GETTY IMAGES

Premlall finished at 28 under, doubling up second-place finisher Shaun Norris. Premlall broke the course record with a 9-under 63 in the third round, and if that wasn't enough, he did it again in the final round. Over the event's 72 holes, he carded 33 birdies.

NCAA SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT WINNERS AND LOSERS

SEC, Nebraska, midmajors flex strength

Austin Curtright and Mitchell Northam
USA TODAY

Throw RPI, Quad 1 wins and conference tournament victories out the window. The 64-team NCAA Softball Tournament bracket has been set, and each team making the field embarks on a new season – the postseason.

Sixteen teams earned the right to host a regional at their home stadium, with the top eight seeds also hosting the Super Regional round should they advance past the double-elimination regional tournament.

Alabama earned the top overall seed, despite losing to Texas 7-1 in the SEC tournament championship game. The Crimson Tide edged out the Longhorns (No. 2) and Oklahoma (No. 3) for the top spot in the bracket.

Texas is looking to repeat as national champions after defeating Texas Tech last season in the national title series. Oklahoma, meanwhile, is looking for revenge, after failing to win its fifth consecutive championship while also missing out on the national championship series for the first time since 2018.

Here are USA TODAY Sports' winners, losers and snubs after the NCAA Softball Tournament bracket reveal May 10:



Texas, with Teagan Kavan, was awarded the No. 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament. SARAH PHIPPS/THE OKLAHOMAN

Winners

SEC: For the second consecutive year, the SEC landed nine of the 16 national seeds, including six of the top eight teams in 2026. The SEC also occupied the top three spots in the rankings, with Alabama, Texas and Oklahoma, respectively.

Arkansas, ranked No. 1 in RPI, came in as the No. 4 overall seed, followed by Florida (No. 6), Tennessee (No. 7), Georgia (No. 10), Texas A&M (No. 15) and LSU (No. 16).

The margins were close at the top, but the Crimson Tide ultimately edged out Texas despite losing to the Longhorns 7-1 in the SEC tournament championship game May 9. Alabama, No. 2 in RPI, finished 15-5 in Quad 1 games and went 49-7 on the season with a better conference record (19-5) than Texas (16-8).

Nebraska: Powered by arguably the best two-way player in the sport, Jordy Frahm, the Cornhuskers grabbed the final No. 1 seed in the tournament and received a relatively manageable draw for their regional. Nebraska will open the postseason against South Dakota, which surprisingly won the Summit League Tournament with a losing record of 20-34-1. Other teams in the Cornhuskers' regional include Louisville and Grand Canyon.

Midmajors: Three teams from midmajor conferences earned at-large bids to the NCAA Tournament with SE Louisiana, Texas State and Marshall all hearing their names called. SELA opens against Belmont, Texas State will face Florida A&M, and Marshall will take on Arizona. Nods for Marshall and Texas State make the Sun Belt a three-bid league as they join automatic qualifier South Alabama.

In a year where some coaches – like UConn women's basketball's Geno Auriemma – have said that the transfer portal and name, image and likeness (NIL) harms midmajors, that doesn't seem to be true in softball. Two other midmajors – Nevada and Wichita State – were among the first four teams out of the field.

Losers

ACC: Despite pleas from ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips and Virginia Tech head coach Pete D'Amour, the conference earned just two Top 16 seeds. Only Florida State and Duke will host games in regional play, while Stanford and the Hokies were placed on the fiveline. The Cardinal will play at Oklahoma State's regional in Stillwater, while Virginia Tech is heading down to Baton Rouge hosted by LSU.

Making matters worse for the ACC, North Carolina was not awarded an atlarge bid and was one of the first four teams excluded from the field.

As the No. 9 overall seed, Florida State – the conference champions – has the best chances of any ACC of hosting Super Regionals. The Seminoles just need one of the top eight seeds to get upset this weekend.

Texas Tech: Texas Tech led all Power Four teams with 51 wins but lands the No. 11 overall seed after falling to Arizona State 4-0 in the Big 12 tournament championship. The Red Raiders boast one of the nation's best players in twotime national player of the year NiJaree Canady, who carried them to the national championship series last season.

Texas Tech has one of the most talented rosters in the country, especially with two-way star Kaitlyn Terry in the fold after transferring from UCLA. The Red Raiders fell victim to their weak RPI metric (No. 15) thanks to playing a relatively weak schedule (No. 172-ranked strength of schedule).

Texas Tech lines up with No. 6 Florida or the Gainesville Regional winner in Super Regionals, which has the potential to be fireworks.

Teams in Tuscaloosa Regional: Alabama landed the top overall seed, but the NCAA committee didn't do it any favors with its draw. Heading to the Tuscaloosa Regional is Southeastern Louisiana, the No. 37 team in RPI that went 47-14. Facing SELA in the first round is Belmont and Maya Johnson, the No. 3 overall pick of the AUSL who leads college softball with a ridiculous 0.66 earned run average on the year.

While the Bruins will have to score runs, Johnson is more than capable of keeping Belmont in games with her dominance in the circle. Should Belmont's sticks get out, it could be a dangerous opponent for Alabama, which is led by quite the pitching duo itself in SEC Pitcher of the Year Jocelyn Briski and true freshman standout Vic Moten.

Alabama opens the Tuscaloosa Regional against South Carolina-Upstate but could be in for some tougher-than-expected matchups before Supers.

NCAA MEN'S LACROSSE

Johns Hopkins, ACC roll as defending champ out

Eddie Timanus
USA TODAY

For the most part, the first round of the NCAA men's lacrosse tournament went according to script. There were, however, a few significant surprises, as the Round of 16 was not a clean sweep for the seeded teams playing at home.

One of the host squads sent packing early was defending champion Cornell. The Big Red had lost quite a bit of star power from the 2025 title team and managed only a No. 7 seed in this year's field, meaning a tough draw in the Round of 16 with longtime power of the sport Johns Hopkins. The Blue Jays prevailed 9-8 in overtime in Ithaca, New York, in the tournament's most dramatic finish thus far. But there were other unseeded teams that took down favorites in the eight games.

Tournament winners

Johns Hopkins: Trailing 6-3 at the break, the unseeded Blue Jays rallied behind a monumental effort by the defensive unit that held Cornell to two goals after halftime. The dramatic game couldn't be decided in regulation. A goal by Jimmy Ayers off a feed from Matt Collison in overtime completed the comeback, giving Hopkins the 9-8 victory.

Duke: After barely squeaking into the field as the last at-large selection, the Blue Devils scored the last five goals of the game to rally for a 14-12 win at fourth-seeded Richmond. Duke's Cal Gerard dominated at the X winning 21 of 27 face-offs, but the Blue Devils still found themselves trailing the hot-shooting Spiders 12-9 in the fourth quarter before finishing strong against the worn-down Richmond defense. Liam Kershis notched a career-best five points on three goals and two assists for the Blue Devils.

Syracuse: A pair of Jimmy McCool saves in the final minute of regulation helped the Orange escape with a wild 16-15 win against Yale. In a game that went back and forth for most of the evening May 10, the Orange finally managed to build a four-goal cushion in the fourth quarter only to see the Bulldogs mount one last rally. Finn Thomson led a balanced Syracuse attack with three goals and two assists, and McCool finished with 16 saves.

High seeds: The NCAA tournament field's three top-seeded teams advanced with little drama. No. 1 Princeton used an 8-0 third quarter to pull away from Marist 17-8, No. 2 Notre Dame played its usual lock-down defense backed by Thomas Ricciardelli's 16 saves to smother Jacksonville 18-5, and No. 3 North Carolina began the weekend with a 24-6 romp past Albany.



Syracuse is back in the NCAA quarterfinals; last year it played Maryland in the semifinals. ERIC CANHA/IMAGN IMAGES

Georgetown: The Hoyas became the third team to win on the road, closing out the first round May 10 with a 14-10 triumph at No. 5 Virginia, thanks in large measure to a 15-save effort from goalie Anderson Moore. The Cavaliers' loss prevented a clean sweep by the ACC, which had to settle for a 4-1 mark but still comprises half of the quarterfinal field.

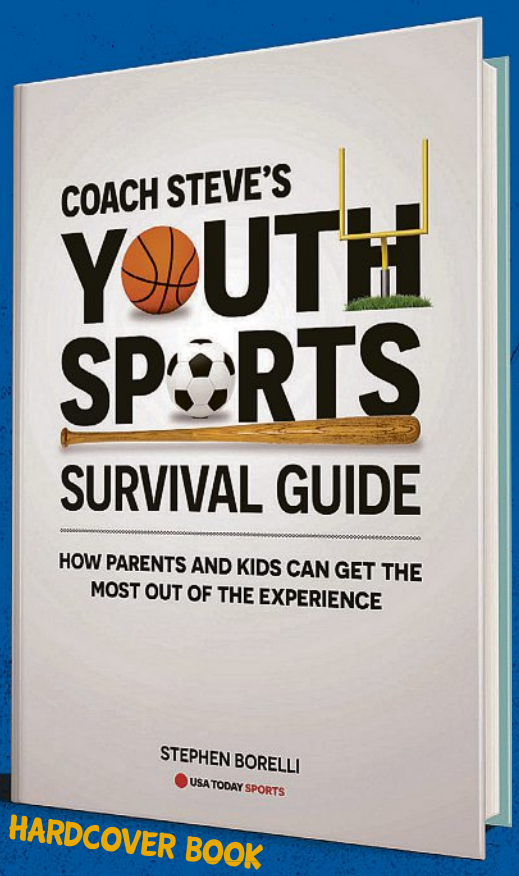
Tournament losers

Cornell: The defending champs appeared to have matters in hand when a highlight goal by Willem Firth set up by Ryan Goldstein late in the first half gave the Big Red a three-goal lead at intermission. But the offense was kept off the board for the first 21 minutes of the second half as Johns Hopkins mounted its comeback. Cornell goalie Matthew Tully did everything he could to preserve the lead for the Big Red making 17 saves, including a pair in the sudden victory period, but there was nothing he could do to stop Ayers' point-blank look on the game-winner.

Richmond: There were a number of positives for the Spiders in a historic season. Their first time hosting an NCAA Tournament game drew a crowd of 6,805, a record for the Round of 16 under the tournament's current format. They also had one of the top plays of the weekend as a near length-of-the-field pass led to a go-ahead goal by Aiden O'Neil at the close of the third quarter. Ultimately though, their 14-win season was cut short, amounting to a missed opportunity as the highest seed eliminated to date.

Midmajors: It was a rough weekend for the tournament participants from outside the power conferences. At least tourney newcomer Jacksonville and Marist can claim play-in victories, but they along with America East champ Albany and Patriot League winner Army were collectively outmatched and outmanned.

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NBA DRAFT LOTTERY WINNERS, LOSERS

Wizards nailed down 1 while Pacers lost out

Lorenzo Reyes
USA TODAY

It's fitting that the NBA draft lottery coincides with spring.

It's the chance for some of the most disadvantaged teams in the league to have their fortunes revived through the draft. And this year is particularly noteworthy for a few reasons.

For one, this is projected to be a generational draft class loaded with elite talent like AJ Dybantsa from BYU and Darryn Peterson of Kansas, though it's also a very deep group.

For another, this year was also noteworthy because of the overt tanking that took place in the final months of the regular season, when the worst teams not-so-subtly self-sabotaged their on-court performance with the hopes of securing one of these top picks. The lottery May 10 determined whether all that tanking was worth it.

Here are the winners and losers from the draft lottery:

WINNERS
Bulls

No team saw a bigger jump in the lottery than the Bulls, who entered with the ninth-best odds to sneak into the top four. The Bulls did just that, leaping up to No. 4. Chicago does have some nice pieces but has lacked a star player who can create his own shot. The draft should fix that. Also, after Billy Donovan stepped down as coach, this leap up the board suddenly makes the vacant Chicago job a lot more appealing.

John Wall delivers for the Wizards

Wall, the last player Washington selected No. 1 overall, had represented the Wizards in the 2011 lottery, a year when Washington fell to No. 6 and drafted Jan Veselý. This time, Wall came through. The Wizards, who had the worst record in the NBA at 17-65, secured the No. 1 selection and suddenly are in an enviable position. They brought on some veterans in Trae Young and Anthony Davis, have some young pieces in Alexandre Sarr, Kyshawn George and Tre Johnson and will now get the chance to take their pick of Dybantsa or Peterson.

The Jazz are about to turn the corner

Let's give Danny Ainge some credit (after he got a dose of good luck). The Jazz fully embraced the tank, pulling their starters in the fourth quarters of games, and now they'll hold the No. 2 overall pick. Utah already had some solid, young pieces, especially after it made the trade to acquire Jaren Jackson Jr. Pairing him with Lauri Markkanen, Ace Bailey, center Walker Kessler (who will be returning from a shoulder injury) and the No. 2 overall pick instantly gives the Jazz a fascinating and dynamic roster – and one that could be sneaky competitive as soon as next season.

Grizzlies may find their Ja Morant replacement

Jumping up three spots – from No. 6 to No. 3 – could put the Grizzlies in an excellent spot to feel comfortable moving on from Ja Morant, whom the team reportedly made available in trade talks before the February deadline. If Darryn Peterson falls to No. 3, he could be an excellent fit. Peterson has plenty of size at 6-foot-5, can handle the ball and has a natural scoring ability. Perhaps the thing Memphis would like most about Peterson is that he protected the ball, committing just 1.6 turnovers per game.



The Bulls, with guard Collin Sexton already on the roster, hold the No. 4 pick. ANNA CARRINGTON/IMAGN IMAGES

Clippers rebuild on the fly

Los Angeles, even after it turned its season around, probably wasn't going to compete this season in the Western Conference. So the Clippers shrewdly – and with a bit of luck – essentially turned Ivica Zubac into the 2026 No. 5 selection (more on that below), a 2029 unprotected first and Bennedict Mathuin, who showed immense promise as a scorer off the bench. The Clippers also added Darius Garland in the James Harden trade. All of which means, now with the No. 5 pick in their possession, the Clippers – who entered the season as the oldest team in NBA history – can complete a mini-rebuild on the fly.

Pelicans catch a break

It's not that they won the lottery or even moved up, the Pelicans are winners here because their selection moved down. To start, New Orleans doesn't even hold its own first-round pick in the 2026 draft; during last year's draft, the Pelicans traded that selection to the Hawks – and made it unprotected – to move up 10 spots to No. 13 and select Derik Queen. Yet the Pelicans struggled this season and ended up with the seventh-best odds to win the lottery (6.8%) and a 29.3% chance of securing a Top 4 pick. In the end, the pick the Pelicans will trade to Atlanta is the No. 8 selection, which is still a very good pick, but nowhere near as painful had it been a Top 4 selection, or even No. 1.

LOSERS
Pacers and trade for Ivica Zubac

The entered the draft with a 14% chance to claim the No. 1 overall selection and a 52.1% chance to land a Top 4 pick, tied for highest among all teams. Yet the Pacers landed in the worst possible place. They sent their first-round selection to the Clippers in the trade that landed center Ivica Zubac. That pick, however, was protected for picks No. 1-4 and 10-30. That means that if the pick fell anywhere between that 5-9 range, it would go to Los Angeles.

Indiana nearly made it, but with its selection landing at No. 5, it was the last hurdle the Pacers had to clear to secure a Top 4 pick. So instead of pairing an elite talent with a healthy Tyrese Haliburton, Pascal Siakam and Zubac, Indiana's gap year ends up as a significant letdown. It also puts a ton of pressure on Zubac to deliver and make the deal worth it. In essence, the Pacers traded away Bennedict Mathurin and a couple of first-round draft picks – one of which became the No. 5 selection in a deep draft – for Zubac.

Nets

A fall of three spots might not initially appear to be so terrible, but in this draft it likely means the difference between a great player and a generational one. The Nets had the third-worst record in the NBA (20-62) and are a very young team, one that made first first-round selections last season. Assuming most predraft projections hold true, the third pick could've netted Brooklyn someone like Caleb Wilson, the North Carolina star who is climbing up draft boards because of his blend of size, skill and athleticism. The Nets should still secure a very good player at No. 6, but the lottery wasn't kind to a team that has won just 46 games over the last two seasons.

DRAFT ORDER

1. Washington Wizards
2. Utah Jazz
3. Memphis Grizzlies
4. Chicago Bulls
5. Los Angeles Clippers (via IND)
6. Brooklyn Nets
7. Sacramento Kings
8. Atlanta Hawks (via NOP)
9. Dallas Mavericks
10. Milwaukee Bucks
11. Golden State Warriors
12. Oklahoma City Thunder (via LAC)
13. Miami Heat
14. Charlotte Hornets
15. Chicago Bulls (via POR)
16. Memphis Grizzlies (via PHX)
17. Oklahoma City Thunder (via PHI)
18. Charlotte Hornets (via ORL)
19. Toronto Raptors
20. San Antonio Spurs (via ATL)
21. Detroit Pistons (via MIN)
22. Philadelphia 76ers (via HOU)
23. Atlanta Hawks (via CLE)
24. New York Knicks
25. Los Angeles Lakers
26. Denver Nuggets
27. Boston Celtics
28. Minnesota Timberwolves (via DET)
29. Cleveland Cavaliers (via SAS)
30. Dallas Mavericks (via OKC)
31. New York Knicks (via WSH)
32. Memphis Grizzlies (via IND)
33. Brooklyn Nets
34. Sacramento Kings
35. San Antonio Spurs (via UTA)
36. Los Angeles Clippers (via MEM)
37. Oklahoma City Thunder (via DAL)
38. Chicago Bulls (via NOP)
39. Houston Rockets (via CHI)
40. Boston Celtics (via MIL)
41. Miami Heat (via GSW)
42. San Antonio Spurs (via POR)
43. Brooklyn Nets (via LAC)
44. San Antonio Spurs (via MIA)
45. Sacramento Kings (via CHA)
46. Orlando Magic
47. Phoenix Suns (via PHI)
48. Dallas Mavericks (via PHX)
49. Denver Nuggets (via ATL)
50. Toronto Raptors
51. Washington Wizards (via MIN)
52. Los Angeles Clippers (via CLE)
53. Houston Rockets
54. Golden State Warriors (via LAL)
55. New York Knicks
56. Chicago Bulls (via DEN)
57. Atlanta Hawks (via BOS)
58. New Orleans Pelicans (via DET)
59. Minnesota Timberwolves (via SAS)
60. Washington Wizards (via OKC)

NBA draft combine

The NBA draft combine officially began on May 10 at Wintrust Arena in Chicago and runs through May 17. It is not open to the public.

Prospects with most at stake

Darryn Peterson, Kansas: The Kansas star doesn't have to show NBA teams he might be the best prospect in this draft class based on talent. They know that. But if he's to be the No. 1 pick, Peterson will have to prove to the Washington Wizards front office that the mysterious health issues surrounding his availability with the Jayhawks were indeed just a one-off due to the introduction of creatine into his workout regimen. Peterson's medical evaluation with the NBA at the scouting combine is likely to be scrutinized as much as any prospect.

Nate Ament, Tennessee: Ament began this season at Tennessee rated as a potential top-10 pick in the draft. An intriguing but inconsistent freshman year has him hovering with a group of prospects who could go in the lottery or fall to late in the first round. Ament is perhaps the most intriguing because of his length as a wing and long-term development possibilities. He could benefit from the measurement portion of the combine. Ament nearly returned to the Vols for a lucrative name, image and likeness (NIL) offer, according to multiple reports, so his draft position will determine whether he made the right decision.

Koa Peat, Arizona: Peat, like Ament, watched his draft stock slide a bit despite a relatively successful freshman season at Arizona. There are concerns about Peat's lack of perimeter shooting and whether his physical style can translate to the NBA. What his measurements are at the combine, as well as how we he does in shooting drills, will help dictate if he's closer to a potential lottery pick or more like a fringe first-round pick.

Jayden Quaintance, Kentucky: The 6-foot-10 center played just four games at Kentucky this past season after spending his first year of college at Arizona State and suffering a torn ACL. The five-star recruit has been pegged as a potential lottery pick for years and showed flashes of becoming a defensive force at Arizona State. He can show NBA evaluators in Chicago that he has put the knee injury behind him and cement his status as a lottery pick and possible steal in this deep class.

Allen Graves, Santa Clara: Graves blossomed into a 6-foot-9 two-way playmaker as a redshirt freshman while helping Santa Clara make the NCAA Tournament. He has to decide whether to stay in the draft or return to college as one of the most coveted players in the transfer portal. As a 19-year-old who was an under-the-radar recruit out of high school in Louisiana, Graves fits the mold of a player whose stock could improve with a strong showing at the combine. Former Santa Clara standout and current Oklahoma City Thunder star Jalen Williams did just that in 2022 when he became a first-round draft pick.

– Mark Giannotto

Knicks sweep with blistering 3-point accuracy

Kristie Ackert
USA TODAY

The New York Knicks came into Philadelphia on May 10 looking to close out an NBA playoff series sweep over the 76ers. Miles McBride made sure it wasn't even close.

McBride led the Knicks with 25 points on 7 of 9 shooting from 3-point range as New York routed the Philadelphia 76ers 144-114 to complete a sweep of the Eastern Conference semifinals. They advance to the conference finals for the second consecutive year.

The Knicks made 24 of 43 attempts from beyond the arc, including a flaming hot 11 of 13 from 3-point range in the first quarter and went into halftime having hit 17 three-pointers to lead 78-53.

Jalen Brunson had 22 points, Karl-Anthony Towns had 17 points and 10 assists, and Josh Hart had 17 points and nine rebounds.

McBride, who started in place of injured OG Anunoby, came back from sports hernia surgery in late March and barely registered in eight appearances before Anunoby's injury forced him into the lineup in Game 3.

The win gave the Knicks their first playoff sweep since 1999.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Sourcewell, a State of Minnesota local government unit and service cooperative, is requesting proposals for Electrical Energy Power Generation Equipment with Related Parts, Supplies, and Services to result in a procurement solution for use by its Participating Entities.

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

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 June 23, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. Central Time, and late proposals will not be considered.

NOTICES
PUBLIC NOTICE

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The Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit's (CSIU) Keystone Purchasing Network (KPN), a national public sector purchasing cooperative is soliciting sealed bids for Commercial Cleaning Equipment and Custodial Supplies for all current and potential KPN Members.

The bid deadline is June 1, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Bids shall be received electronically. Interested bidders must register to access and secure the bid documents online at https://kpn.ionwave.net. There is no charge to register. The bids will be publicly opened on June 1, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. Eastern Time at the CSIU Main Office, 90 Lawton Lane, Milton, PA. Go to https://www.theKPN.org for more information. The CSIU reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof or items therein and to waive informalities and/or technicalities as it deems best to protect its interest.

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ODDS

NBA
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SAN ANTONIO	10	218.5	Minnesota

NBA

Playoffs
CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS
(Best-of-7 series; x- if necessary)
EASTERN CONFERENCE
New York Knicks 4, Philadelphia 76ers 0
May 4: New York 137, Philadelphia 98
May 6: New York 108, Philadelphia 102
May 8: New York 108, Philadelphia 94
May 10: New York 144, Philadelphia 114
Detroit Pistons 2, Cleveland Cavaliers 1
May 5: Detroit 111, Cleveland 101
May 7: Detroit 107, Cleveland 97
May 9: Cleveland 116, Detroit 109
May 11: Detroit vs. Cleveland
May 13: Cleveland vs. Detroit, TBD
x-May 15: Detroit vs. Cleveland, TBD
x-May 17: Cleveland vs. Detroit, TBD
WESTERN CONFERENCE
Minnesota Timberwolves 2, San Antonio Spurs 2
May 4: Minnesota 104, San Antonio 102
May 6: San Antonio 133, Minnesota 95
May 8: San Antonio 115, Minnesota 108
May 10: Minnesota 114, San Antonio 109
May 12: Minnesota vs. San Antonio, 8 p.m.
May 15: San Antonio vs. Minnesota, TBD
x-May 17: Minnesota vs. San Antonio, TBD
Oklahoma City Thunder 3, L.A. Lakers 0
May 5: Oklahoma City 108, Los Angeles 90
May 7: Oklahoma City 125, Los Angeles 107
May 9: Oklahoma City 131, Los Angeles 108
May 11: Oklahoma City vs. Los Angeles
x-May 13: LA vs. Oklahoma City, TBD
x-May 16: Oklahoma City vs. LA, TBD
x-May 18: LA vs. Oklahoma City, TBD

NHL

Stanley Cup Playoff
SECOND ROUND
(Best-of-7 series; x- if necessary)
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Carolina Hurricanes 4, Philadelphia Flyers 0
May 2: Carolina 3, Philadelphia 0
May 4: Carolina 3, Philadelphia 2 (OT)
May 7: Carolina 4, Philadelphia 1
May 9: Carolina 3, Philadelphia 2 (OT)
Montreal Canadiens 2, Buffalo Sabres 1
May 6: Buffalo 4, Montreal 2
May 8: Montreal 5, Buffalo 1
May 10: Montreal 6, Buffalo 2
May 12: Buffalo vs. Montreal, 7 p.m.
May 14: Montreal vs. Buffalo, 7 p.m.
x-May 16: Buffalo vs. Montreal, TBD
x-May 17: Montreal vs. Buffalo, TBD
WESTERN CONFERENCE
Colorado Avalanche 2, Minnesota Wild 1
May 3: Colorado 9, Minnesota 6
May 5: Colorado 5, Minnesota 2
May 9: Minnesota 5, Colorado 1
May 11: Colorado vs. Minnesota
May 13: Minnesota vs. Colorado, 8 p.m.
x-May 15: Colorado vs. Minnesota, 8 p.m.
x-May 17: Minnesota vs. Colorado, TBD
Vegas Golden Knights 2, Anaheim Ducks 2
May 4: Vegas 3, Anaheim 1
May 6: Anaheim 3, Vegas 1
May 8: Vegas 6, Anaheim 2
May 10: Anaheim 4, Vegas 3
May 12: Anaheim vs. Vegas, 9:30 p.m.
May 14: Vegas vs. Anaheim, 9:30 p.m.
x-May 16: Anaheim vs. Vegas, TBD

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE
East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	26	13	.667	–
N.Y. Yankees	26	15	.634	1
Toronto	18	22	.450	8½
Baltimore	18	23	.439	9
Boston	17	23	.425	9½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	21	21	.500	–
Chi. White Sox	19	21	.475	1
Kansas City	19	22	.463	1½
Detroit	19	22	.463	1½
Minnesota	18	23	.439	2½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Athletics	21	19	.525	–
Texas	19	21	.475	2
Seattle	19	22	.463	2½
L.A. Angels	16	25	.390	5½
Houston	16	25	.390	5½

NATIONAL LEAGUE
East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	28	13	.683	–
Philadelphia	19	22	.463	9
Miami	19	22	.463	9
Washington	19	22	.463	9
N.Y. Mets	15	25	.375	12½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago Cubs	27	14	.659	–
Milwaukee	22	16	.579	3½
St. Louis	23	17	.575	3½
Pittsburgh	22	19	.537	5
Cincinnati	22	19	.537	5

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Diego	24	16	.600	–
L.A. Dodgers	24	16	.600	–
Arizona	19	20	.487	4½
San Francisco	16	24	.400	8
Colorado	16	25	.390	8½

Sunday's Scores
Miami 5, Washington 2
Baltimore 2, Athletics 1
Tampa Bay 4, Boston 1
Philadelphia 6, Colorado 0
L.A. Angels 6, Toronto 1
Cincinnati 5, Houston 0
Minnesota 5, Cleveland 4
Chi. White Sox 2, Seattle 1
Milwaukee 4, N.Y. Yankees 3
Texas 3, Chicago Cubs 0
San Francisco 7, Pittsburgh 6
Arizona 5, N.Y. Mets 1
Atlanta 7, L.A. Dodgers 2
San Diego 3, St. Louis 2
Detroit 6, Kansas City 3
Monday's Games
L.A. Angels at Cleveland
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore
Tampa Bay at Toronto
Arizona at Texas
Seattle at Houston
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers
Tuesday's Games
L.A. Angels at Cleveland, 6:10 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore, 6:35 p.m.
Washington at Cincinnati, 6:40 p.m.
Colorado at Pittsburgh, 6:40 p.m.
Philadelphia at Boston, 6:45 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Toronto, 7:07 p.m.
Detroit at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at Atlanta, 7:15 p.m.
Kansas City at Chi. White Sox, 7:40 p.m.
Miami at Minnesota, 7:40 p.m.
San Diego at Milwaukee, 7:40 p.m.
Arizona at Texas, 8:05 p.m.
Seattle at Houston, 8:10 p.m.
St. Louis at Athletics, 9:40 p.m.
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
L.A. Angels at Cleveland, 1:10 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore, 6:35 p.m.
Washington at Cincinnati, 6:40 p.m.
Colorado at Pittsburgh, 6:40 p.m.
Philadelphia at Boston, 6:45 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Toronto, 7:07 p.m.
Detroit at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at Atlanta, 7:15 p.m.
Kansas City at Chi. White Sox, 7:40 p.m.
Miami at Minnesota, 7:40 p.m.
San Diego at Milwaukee, 7:40 p.m.
Arizona at Texas, 8:05 p.m.
Seattle at Houston, 8:10 p.m.
St. Louis at Athletics, 9:40 p.m.
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10 p.m.

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
N.Y. Liberty	2	0	1.000	–
Chicago	1	0	1.000	½
Atlanta	1	0	1.000	½
Washington	1	1	.500	1
Indiana	0	1	.000	1½
Toronto	0	1	.000	1½
Connecticut	0	2	.000	2

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	2	0	1.000	–
Dallas	1	0	1.000	½
Phoenix	1	1	.500	1
Seattle	1	1	.500	1
Las Vegas	1	1	.500	1
Minnesota	0	1	.000	1½
Portland	0	1	.000	1½
L.A. Sparks	0	1	.000	1½

Friday's Scores
N.Y. Liberty 106, Connecticut 75
Washington 68, Toronto 65
Golden State 91, Seattle 80
Saturday's Scores
Dallas 107, Indiana 104
Phoenix 99, Las Vegas 66
Atlanta 91, Minnesota 90
Chicago Sky 98, Portland 83
Sunday's Scores
Seattle 89, Connecticut 82
N.Y. Liberty 98, Washington 93
Las Vegas 105, L.A. Sparks 78
Golden State 95, Phoenix 79
Tuesday's Games
Atlanta at Dallas, 8 p.m.
Minnesota at Phoenix, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Liberty at Portland, 10 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Seattle at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Las Vegas at Connecticut, 8 p.m.
Chicago Sky at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Indiana at L.A. Sparks, 10:30 p.m.
Thursday's Games
Minnesota at Dallas, 8 p.m.
N.Y. Liberty at Portland, 10 p.m.

FOOTBALL

UFL

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
St. Louis Battlehawks	5	2	0	.714	159	139
Orlando Storm	5	2	0	.714	145	120
DC Defenders	5	2	0	.714	209	135
Birmingham Stallions	3	4	0	.429	134	164
Louisville Kings	3	4	0	.429	153	139
Dallas Renegades	3	4	0	.429	157	175
Columbus Aviators	2	5	0	.286	150	174
Houston Gamblers	2	5	0	.286	125	186

Friday's Score
St. Louis 31, Columbus 20
Saturday's Scores
Louisville 30, DC 13
Birmingham 21, Dallas 17
Sunday's Score
Orlando 24, Houston 23
Friday's Game
Orlando Storm at Dallas, 8 p.m.
Saturday's Games
DC at Louisville, noon
Houston at St. Louis, 3 p.m.
Sunday's Game
Columbus at Birmingham, 1 p.m.

SOCCER

MLS
EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	7	1	3	24	23	8
New England	7	3	1	22	20	13
Inter Miami CF	6	2	4	22	26	21
Chicago	5	4	2	17	20	14
D.C. United	4	4	4	16	15	17
Cincinnati	4	4	4	16	24	27
NY City FC	4	5	3	15	22	18
Charlotte FC	4	5	3	15	20	21
NY Red Bulls	4	5	3	15	19	28
Toronto FC	3	4	5	14	20	24
CF Montreal	4	7	0	12	16	23
Columbus	3	6	3	12	16	19
Atlanta	3	8	1	10	13	20
Orlando City	3	8	1	10	16	34
Philadelphia	1	8	3	6	10	19

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Jose	9	1	2	29	27	8
Vancouver	8	1	2	26	27	7
Los Angeles FC	6	3	3	21	20	12
Seattle	6	1	3	21	14	6
Minnesota	6	3	3	21	16	18
Real Salt Lake	6	4	1	19	20	17
FC Dallas	5	3	4	19	23	16
Houston	6	5	0	18	17	19
LA Galaxy	4	4	4	16	18	18
Austin FC	3	4	5	14	18	21
Colorado	4	7	1	13	22	20
Portland	4	6	1	13	19	21
San Diego FC	3	5	4	13	20	20
Saint Louis	2	6	3	9	10	18
Sporting KC	1	8	2	5	8	32

Saturday's Scores
Toronto FC 2, Inter Miami CF 4
Chicago 1, NY Red Bulls 3
CF Montreal 2, Orlando City 0
Charlotte FC 2, Cincinnati 2
Atlanta 1, LA Galaxy 2
New England 2, Philadelphia 1
FC Dallas 3, Real Salt Lake 1
Nashville 2, D.C. United 2
Colorado 0, Saint Louis 1
Portland 6, Sporting KC 0
Seattle 1, San Diego FC 1
San Jose 1, Vancouver 1
Sunday's Scores
NY City FC 3, Columbus 0
Minnesota 2, Austin FC 2
Los Angeles FC 1, Houston 4
Wednesday's Games
NY City FC at Charlotte FC, 7:15 p.m.
Chicago at D.C. United, 7:30 p.m.
Portland at CF Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Nashville at New England, 7:30 p.m.
Inter Miami CF at Cincinnati, 7:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Orlando City, 7:30 p.m.
Columbus at NY Red Bulls, 7:30 p.m.
Vancouver at FC Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Colorado at Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.
Los Angeles FC at Saint Louis, 8:30 p.m.
LA Galaxy at Sporting KC, 8:30 p.m.
Houston at Real Salt Lake, 9:30 p.m.
Austin FC at San Diego FC, 9:30 p.m.
San Jose at Seattle, 9:30 p.m.
Saturday's Games
Chicago at CF Montreal, 4:30 p.m.
Saint Louis at D.C. United, 7:30 p.m.
Columbus at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto FC at Charlotte FC, 7:30 p.m.
NY City FC at NY Red Bulls, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at New England, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Orlando City, 7:30 p.m.
Sporting KC at Austin FC, 8:30 p.m.
Vancouver at Houston, 8:30 p.m.
LA Galaxy at Seattle, 9:15 p.m.
Cincinnati at San Diego FC, 9:30 p.m.
Colorado at Real Salt Lake, 9:30 p.m.
FC Dallas at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

English Premier League

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Arsenal	36	24	7	5	68	26	79
Man City	35	22	8	5	72	32	74
Man United	36	18	11	7	63	48	65
Liverpool	36	17	8	11	60	48	59
Aston Villa	36	17	8	11	50	46	59
Bournemouth	36	13	16	7	56	52	55
Brighton	36	14	11	11	52	42	53
Brentford	36	14	9	13	52	49	51
Chelsea	36	13	10	13	55	49	49
Everton	36	13	10	13	46	46	49
Fulham	36	14	6	16	44	50	48
Sunderland	36	12	12	12	37	46	48
Newcastle	36	13	7	16	50	52	46
Crystal Palace	35	11	11	13	38	44	44
Nott'm Forest	36	11	10	15	45	47	43
Leeds United	35	10	13	12	47	52	43
Tottenham	35	9	10	16	45	54	37
West Ham	36	9	9	18	42	62	36
Burnley	36	4	9	23	37	73	21
Wolverhampton	36	3	9	24	25	66	18

Note: Three points for win, one point for tie.
Saturday's Scores
Liverpool 1, Chelsea 1
Fulham 0, AFC Bournemouth 1
Brighton 3, Wolverhampton 0
Sunderland 0, Manchester United 0
Manchester City 3, Brentford 0
Sunday's Scores
Crystal Palace 2, Everton 2
Burnley 2, Aston Villa 2
Nottingham Forest 1, Newcastle 1
West Ham United 0, Arsenal 1
Monday's Game
Leeds United at Tottenham
Wednesday's Game
Crystal Palace at Man City, 3 p.m.
Friday's Game
Liverpool at Aston Villa, 3 p.m.

NWSL

	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	6	2	1	19	15	9
Washington	5	1	3	18	15	6
San Diego	6	3	0	18	13	9
Utah	5	2	2	17	12	6
Gotham	4	2	3	15	9	5
Kansas City	4	4	0	12	10	14
Orlando	3	3	2	11	12	11
Seattle	3	3	2	11	7	8
Houston	3	4	1	10	10	12
Bay	3	3	1	10	7	10
Angel City	3	4	0	9	12	9
Denver	2	3	3	9	12	10
North Carolina	2	3	3	9	9	11
Louisville	2	5	1	7	13	15
Chicago	2	7	0	6	4	18
Boston	1	5	2	5	7	14

Note: Three points for win, one point for tie.
Friday's Score
Orlando 1, North Carolina 0
Saturday's Scores
Gotham 1, Boston Legacy 1
San Diego 2, Angel City 1
Denver Summit 4, Houston 1
Sunday's Scores
Kansas City 3, Chicago 0
Bay 0, Utah 0
Washington 1, Seattle 0
Tuesday's Game
Orlando at Boston Legacy, 7 p.m.
Friday's Games
Houston at Kansas City, 8 p.m.
Washington at San Diego, 10 p.m.
Gotham at Seattle, 10 p.m.
Boston Legacy at Bay, 10 p.m.

Champions League
SEMIFINALS
Tuesday's Score
Arsenal 1, Atlético Madrid 0; Arsenal advances 2-1 on aggregate.
Wednesday's Score
Bayern Munich 1, Paris Saint-Germain 1; PSG advances 6-5 on aggregate.
FINAL
Satuday, May 30
Paris Saint-Germain vs. Arsenal, noon

COLLEGE BASEBALL

USA TODAY Sports Coaches Poll

Rank, school (1sts)	W-L	Pts	LW
1 UCLA (30)	46-5	750	1
2 North Carolina	40-9-1	709	2
3 Georgia Tech	42-8	693	3
4 Georgia	41-11	664	5
5 Texas	37-12	595	4
6 Auburn	35-15	589	6
7 Oregon State	40-11	546	8
8 Florida State	36-15	485	12
9 Southern Miss	37-14	467	13
10 Texas A&M	37-12	463	7
11 West Virginia	35-12	450	15
12 Mississippi State	38-14	401	11
13 Southern Cal	41-12	360	16
14 Arkansas	34-18	342	18
15 Oregon	36-14	325	14
16 Alabama	35-17	291	19
17 Kansas	37-15	290	9
18 Coastal Carolina	34-17	260	10
19 Ole Miss	34-18	241	23
20 Florida	34-18	221	20
21 Nebraska	37-14	136	24
22 Arizona State	34-17	102	17
23 Oklahoma State	33-18	90	28
24 Boston College	36-17	72	22
25 Jacksonville State	40-11	53	26

Dropped out: No. 21 Oklahoma 31-18, No. 25 Virginia 33-18.
Others receiving votes: Oklahoma 31-18 45; Cincinnati 35-18 41; Wake Forest 35-17 16; Tennessee 34-18 10; UC Santa Barbara 34-15 9; Virginia 33-18 8; Mercer 39-13 7; California Baptist 39-13 6; Miami (Florida) 35-15 5; Missouri State 30-17 4; Kent State 37-12 3; UTSA 34-17 1.
The USA TODAY Sports board of coaches is made up of 30 coaches at Division I institutions. All are members of the American Baseball Coaches Association.
COLLEGE LACROSSE
NCAA men's schedule
Opening Round
Wednesday's Scores
Marist 10, Stony Brook 6
Jacksonville 13, Robert Morris 7
Saturday's Scores
No. 3 North Carolina 24, UAlbany 6
No. 8 Penn State 10, Army 6
John's Hopkins 9, No. 7 Cornell 8, OT
Duke 14, No. 4 Richmond 12
Sunday's Scores
No. 2 Notre Dame 18, Jacksonville/Robert Morris 5
No. 1 Princeton 17, Marist/Stony Brook 8
No. 6 Syracuse 16, Yale 15
Georgetown 14, No. 5 Virginia 10

AUTO RACING

NASCR Cup Series
Go Bowling at The Glen
Watkins Glen International
Sunday
1. (1) Shane Van Gisbergen, Trackhouse Racing, 100, 68 points.
2. (2) Michael McDowell, Spire, 100, 36.
3. (10) Ty Gibbs, Joe Gibbs Racing, 100, 42.
4. (9) Chase Briscoe, Joe Gibbs, 100, 35.
5. (15) Tyler Reddick, 23XI Racing, 100, 41.
6. (25) A. Dillon, Richard Childress, 100, 38.
7. (12) AJ Allmendinger, Kaulig Racing, 100, 36.
8. (21) Kyle Busch, Richard Childress, 100, 35.
9. (3) Austin Cindric, Team Penske, 100, 39.
10. (17) John H. Nemechek, Legacy, 100, 32.
11. (7) Ryan Blaney, Team Penske, 100, 34.
12. (14) Chris Buescher, RFK Racing, 100, 30.
13. (16) Daniel Suárez, Spire, 100, 24.
14. (30) Ryan Preece, RFK Racing, 100, 23.
15. (19) Cole Custer, Haas Factory, 100, 22.
16. (20) Denny Hamlin, Joe Gibbs, 100, 21.
17. (22) Todd Gilliland, Front Row, 100, 20.
18. (33) Zane Smith, Front Row, 100, 19.
19. (24) Erik Jones, Legacy Motor, 100, 18.
20. (5) Connor Zilisch, Trackhouse, 100, 21.
21. (8) Christopher Bell, Joe Gibbs 100, 20.
22. (35) Noah Gragson, Front Row, 100, 15.
23. (23) Kyle Larson, Hendrick, 100, 14.
24. (27) Chase Elliott, Hendrick, 100, 13.
25. (28) Alex Bowman, Hendrick, 100, 12.
26. (32) Riley Herbst, 23XI Racing, 100, 13.
27. (4) Ross Chastain, Trackhouse, 100, 20.
28. (11) Carson Hocevar, Spire, 100, 9.
29. (18) Bubba Wallace, 23XI Racing, 100, 9.
30. (26) Brad Keselowski, RFK Racing, 100, 7.
31. (29) Ricky Stenhouse Jr, HYAK, 100, 6.
32. (34) Josh Berry, Wood Brothers, 100, 5.
33. (31) Ty Dillon, Kaulig Racing, 99, 4.
34. (37) Josh Bilicki, Garage 66, 99, 0.
35. (38) Katherine Legge, Live Fast, 99, 2.
36. (13) William Byron, Hendrick, 97, 1.
37. (36) Cody Ware, Rick Ware, 90, Accident 1.
38. (6) Joey Logano, Team Penske, 85, 10.

GOLF

PGA Tour ONEflight Myrtle Beach Classic
Sunday
Myrtle Beach, SC
Dunes Golf and Beach Club
Purse: $4 million
Yardage: 7,347; Par: 71
Final Round
Brandt Snedeker .....67-66-67-66—266 (-18)
Mark Hubbard.....66-67-64-70—267 (-17)
Beau Hossler.....68-68-64-68—268 (-16)
Kevin Roy .....68-66-65-69—268 (-16)
Aaron Rai.....65-67-66-71—269 (-15)
C. Bezuidenhout.....67-67-68-68—270 (-14)
Eric Cole .....69-69-65-67—270 (-14)
Tom Kim .....69-68-66-67—270 (-14)
Blades Brown.....69-69-66-67—271 (-13)
Mac Meissner.....67-69-64-71—271 (-13)
Brooks Koepka.....68-70-64-70—272 (-12)
Paul Peterson.....66-70-71-65—272 (-12)
Zecheng Dou.....71-68-65-69—273 (-11)
Lanto Griffin .....70-69-67-67—273 (-11)
Keita Nakajima .....65-72-65-71—273 (-11)
Davis Thompson.....70-68-69-66—273 (-11)
Taylor Moore.....68-67-71-68—274 (-10)
Sam Ryder .....68-68-69-69—274 (-10)
Austin Eckroat.....67-70-68-70—275 (-9)
Patrick Fishburn .....69-71-67-68—275 (-9)
Brice Garnett.....75-66-65-69—275 (-9)
Doug Ghim .....68-69-69-69—275 (-9)
Jackson Suber.....69-70-69-67—275 (-9)
Zachary Bauchou .....71-69-71-65—276 (-8)
Nick Dunlap .....69-72-66-69—276 (-8)
Rasmus Hojgaard .....71-69-68-68—276 (-8)
Matt Kuchar .....70-69-69-68—276 (-8)
David Skinns.....73-69-67-67—276 (-8)
Hayden Springer.....70-71-69-66—276 (-8)
Karl Vilips.....68-67-71-70—276 (-8)
A. Dumont De Chassart.71-70-69-67—277 (-7)
Max Greyserman.....70-71-70-66—277 (-7)
Petr Hruby .....68-74-68-67—277 (-7)
Johnny Keefer.....72-70-66-69—277 (-7)
Ben Kohles .....68-70-70-69—277 (-7)
Pontus Nyholm.....70-70-66-71—277 (-7)
John Parry.....68-68-70-71—277 (-7)
Steven Fisk.....70-72-66-70—278 (-6)
Casey Jarvis .....67-73-68-70—278 (-6)
Takumi Kanaya .....68-68-69-73—278 (-6)
Neal Shipley .....73-67-70-68—278 (-6)
Jimmy Stanger.....71-71-66-70—278 (-6)
Erik van Rooyen .....72-69-65-72—278 (-6)
Danny Walker .....70-72-67-69—278 (-6)
Chan Kim.....70-71-65-73—279 (-5)
Justin Lower.....69-72-67-71—279 (-5)
Davis Riley .....67-70-70-72—279 (-5)
Ryan Ruffels.....67-70-72-70—279 (-5)
Adam Svensson .....67-75-69-68—279 (-5)
Camilo Villegas.....72-69-69-69—279 (-5)
Danny Willett.....72-70-68-69—279 (-5)
Grayson Wood.....73-67-70-69—279 (-5)
Connor Doyal.....73-69-71-67—280 (-4)
Adam Hadwin.....67-71-72-70—280 (-4)
Rico Hoey .....71-69-71-69—280 (-4)
Billy Horschel .....71-66-67-76—280 (-4)
Peter Malnati .....68-68-71-73—280 (-4)
Marcelo Rozo .....72-69-68-71—280 (-4)
Kevin Yu .....70-68-73-69—280 (-4)
Zac Blair.....70-69-71-71—281 (-3)
Luke Clanton .....70-70-70-71—281 (-3)
Christo Lamprecht .....70-72-68-71—281 (-3)
Seamus Power.....68-72-72-69—281 (-3)
John VanDerLaan.....66-73-70-72—281 (-3)
Kensei Hirata .....70-71-69-72—282 (-2)
Martin Laird.....64-75-72-71—282 (-2)
Trace Crowe.....71-70-68-74—283 (-1)
Cam Davis .....70-71-71-71—283 (-1)
Garrick Higgo.....70-71-70-72—283 (-1)
Joe Highsmith.....70-69-71-73—283 (-1)
Lee Hodges.....72-69-71-71—283 (-1)
Brendon Todd.....69-73-70-71—283 (-1)
Carson Young.....70-71-71-71—283 (-1)
Hank Lebioda .....68-70-72-74—284 (0)
Tyler Collet.....69-73-71-75—288 (4)
Troy Merritt .....71-69-68-80—288 (4)

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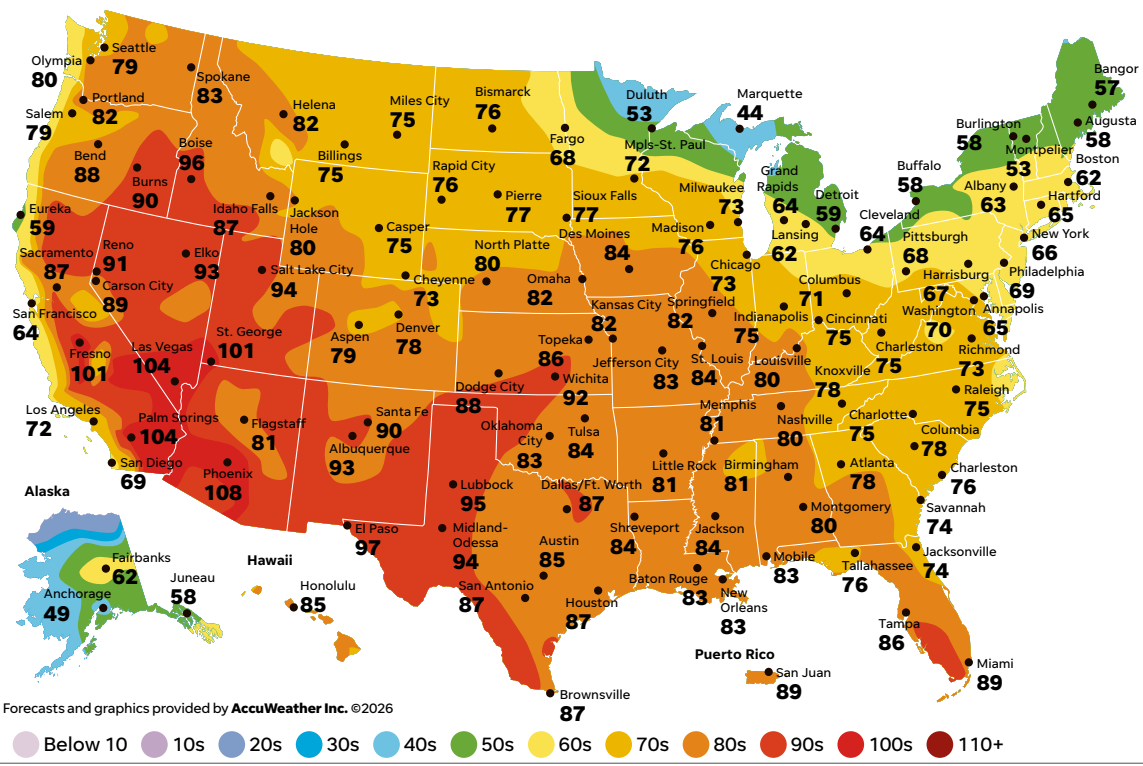
TODAY'S FORECAST

Showers and thunderstorms will develop from northern **Missouri** and western **Iowa** through northern **Minnesota** into eastern **Michigan** today. Thunder will be likely from **Kansas** City, **Missouri**, through southern **Wisconsin**. Storms may become severe from **Kansas** City through west-central **Illinois**, where they will be capable of hail and damaging winds.

Much of the country will remain dry, besides **Florida**, which could have a few heavier thunderstorms at times, that will feature localized damaging winds, hail and flooding downpours. In the **West**, it will be warm to hot.

The **Southwest** will experience heat that could result in dehydration or heatstroke. The **Northwest** will be 15-25 degrees above historical average. The **Plains** will feature sunshine.

TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES

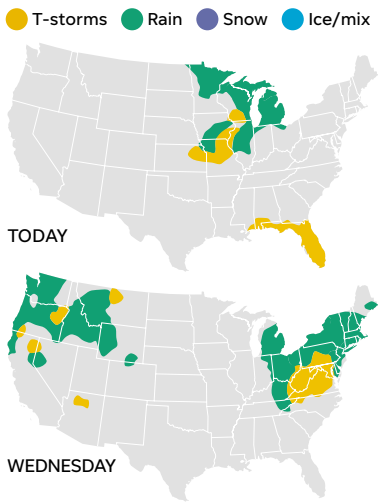


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PRECIPITATION FORECAST

T-storms Rain Snow Ice/mix



EXTREMES

Note: For contiguous 48 states through Sunday

HOTTEST: 112° Death Valley, Calif.
COLDEST: 21° Hazen, N.D.

TOP TRAVEL CITIES Air quality index **(AQI)**

	TUE	WED	THU	AQI
ATLANTA	Sunlit, nice 78/61	Partly sunny 82/59	Sunny 77/53	Moderate
BALTIMORE	Mostly sunny 69/55	T-storms 76/52	Shower 67/51	Moderate
BOSTON	Mostly sunny 62/47	Showers around 60/53	Rain 60/52	Good
CHARLOTTE	Sunny, nice 75/53	Partly sunny 77/56	Mostly sunny 74/51	Moderate
CHICAGO	A few showers 73/50	Breezy, cooler 58/42	Sunny 66/51	Moderate
DALLAS/FT. WORTH	Sunny, warmer 87/65	Sunny 90/69	Breezy 90/69	Good
DENVER	Mostly sunny 78/52	Very warm 87/63	Very warm 85/50	Moderate
DETROIT	Showers around 59/54	A few showers 59/43	Partly sunny 63/45	Moderate
HONOLULU	A few showers 85/73	Showers around 85/72	A few showers 84/73	Good
HOUSTON	Warmer 87/68	Partly sunny 90/69	Some sun 88/69	Moderate
LAS VEGAS	Very hot 104/75	Very hot 97/72	Hazy sunshine 96/72	Moderate
LOS ANGELES	Not as warm 72/59	Partly sunny 73/58	Some sun 76/58	Moderate
MIAMI	Heavy t-storm 89/76	Stray t-storm 87/75	T-storms 88/73	Good
MPLS-ST. PAUL	Windy 72/45	Breezy 69/49	Breezy 73/55	Moderate
NEW ORLEANS	Clouds, sun 83/70	Partly sunny 88/70	Mostly sunny 88/69	Good
NEW YORK	Mostly sunny 66/51	Showers around 66/55	Rain 64/51	Moderate
ORLANDO	A.P.M. t-storm 85/70	Stray t-storm 85/68	Mostly sunny 92/68	Good
PHILADELPHIA	Mostly sunny 69/53	A few showers 72/56	Showers around 66/50	Moderate
PHOENIX	Very hot 108/80	Hot 102/75	Sunny, hot 100/74	Moderate
SALT LAKE CITY	Hot 94/70	Stray t-shower 86/56	Not as warm 73/54	Moderate
SAN DIEGO	Partly sunny 69/62	Partly sunny 72/59	Partly sunny 70/61	Moderate
SAN FRANCISCO	Partly sunny 64/55	Sprinkles 68/52	Partly sunny 69/53	Good
SEATTLE	Partly sunny

MLB

Continued from Page 1C

time, his 55 punch-outs leading the American League. His whopping 43.9% whiff rate is near the very bottom of the majors. Yet he's clearly running into enough balls, and his expected slug (.568) practically mirrors reality (.565).

Additionally, his .369 on-base percentage was only slightly dented by the move to MLB, as he posted a .379 OBP his last full season in Japan. An elite 22% chase rate certainly helps that, allowing him three shots to unleash his "A" swing against pitches in the zone.

His two-year, $34 million deal is possibly the White Sox's finest free agent investment ever. In concert with slugging middle infielder Colson Montgomery and emerging ace Davis Martin, Murakami has helped the 19-10 Sox push memories of 121 losses seem much longer than two years ago.

110: Wins for the Cubs, Braves and Yankees

OK, so these teams probably won't maintain their .684 winning percentage, right?

Well, you probably didn't figure that the Cubs would win (at least) 15 games in a row at Wrigley Field, either. Heck, a streak that long hasn't happened since 1935, but Chicago is now a stunning 18-5 at the Friendly Confines after a raucous four-game sweep of the Reds, who went from second to last place in a hurry.

Now, however, the Cubs will have to carry on without lefty Matthew Boyd, who tore meniscus in his knee. Then again, they lost ace Cade Horton for the season and lefty Justin Steele suffered a setback on the rehab trail and still, the club entered the weekend 26-12, tied with Atlanta and the Yankees for the best record in baseball.

Once again, Shota Imanaga is off to a fantastic start, with 11- and 10-strikeout games already. Yet April and May are by far the two best months of his career (2.28 ERA, 3.83 the rest of the time). Put it this way: If he can sustain, the Cubs may just run off with their first full-season division title since 2017.

.500: Winning percentage for AL Central, West champions

Yep, we have at least a remote shot at baseball history: First time a team "won" a division without a winning record.

Folks might remember 1994 for the lost World Series or the historic statistical seasons washed away, but perhaps the real tragedy was sweating whether the Texas Rangers (52-62 and in first place when the plug was pulled on the season) could win the AL West with a .456 winning percentage.

In subsequent seasons, the 2005 San Diego Padres (82-80) and 2007 St. Louis Cardinals (83-79) captured ignominious "championships" in the six-team format, with the Cards Jeff Weaver-ing their way to a World Series title.

Now, we have perhaps the most parity-laden year in recent memory, with 18 of 30 teams within three games of the .500 mark. The flat distribution of wins is most pronounced in the AL's Central and West, with Cleveland and the Athletics "leading" their divisions at 20-19 and 19-18, respectively.

What gives?

Well, we're firmly out of the tanking era, teams like the Chicago White Sox and Colorado Rockies have cleaned up their acts and exited their historically awful periods and even clubs trying not to win (hello, St. Louis) are finding surprise success.

Additionally, the schedule – which seems to get weirder every year – has kept many division combatants away from each other. Four AL Central teams have just six or seven games against division foes, while the Tigers, say, have already played 21 interleague games.

Separation may occur once the division games pile up. Then again, there's no obvious punching bag anywhere in the majors, with only the Rockies and San Francisco Giants barely on track for 100 losses.



Ben Rice leads MLB with a 1.214 OPS, though he's sidelined for the moment by a bone bruise on his hand. VINCENT CARCHIETTA/IMAGN IMAGES

1.214: OPS for Ben Rice

Yordan Alvarez, in the conversation as the greatest hitter of his era, is having arguably the finest season of his career. Yet Alvarez, and Aaron Judge, and Matt Olson and the resurgent Mike Trout are all looking up at a part-time catcher drafted in the 12th round by the New York Yankees.

Ben Rice is not just off to a powerful start, as his major league-best OPS suggests, he's nearly in the Triple Crown conversation at the moment, leading the AL with a .343 average, second with 27 RBIs and 12 homers trailing only Judge and Murakami.

This thing is real: Rice ranks in at least the 97th percentile in a half-dozen measurables, and his batting average on balls in play is a normal .269. Sustainable?

Well, Rice is currently day-to-day with a bone bruise on his hand, slowing his roll just a bit. But plenty is already in the bank both for he and the Yankees, now 26-12 after largely bringing back last year's roster.

Projecting another big step forward for the 27-year-old Rice was clearly a prudent part of their grand plan.

3.61: Walks per game

Weird one, we know. Yet no stat probably better exemplifies the effect the automated ball-strike system has had on the game.

That walk rate (per team) is the highest since a 3.75 mark in 2000 (right in the teeth of the steroid era) and third-highest since 1956. And why's that?

Well, the ABS challenge system has empowered batters to be more selective around borderline calls, and provided a real-time check on umpires who might be more inclined to give pitchers the edge.

In short: The strike zone is smaller.

Has that made it easier to hit? Alas, not really. The leaguewide .242 batting average is the worst since the mound was lowered after the 1968 season and down 2.5% since 2023, when hitter-friendly rules (a shift ban, bigger bases) were enacted and the league batted a collective .248.

So is life getting easier for pitchers? Um ...

8: Complete games

Yeah, that's the pace. For the entire league. This is not a misprint.

So far, only Miami's Sandy Alcantara and Seattle's George Kirby have managed to go the distance, Kirby's the eight-inning variety in a losing effort. While that seems like nothing new – nobody faces the order three times through, velocity and relievers are king, blah, blah, blah – this drop is still precipitous.

Just last season, pitchers threw 29 complete games, one more than the previous all-time low set in 2024. Starters aren't working dramatically less than 2025 – averaging 5.1 innings per start, compared to 5.2 a year ago.

Still, it's instructive to think how dramatic the drop has been over the past decade: Starters averaged 5.8 innings in 2015 and threw 104 complete games that season. Nowadays, the opener is still prevalent as both a strategy and survival mechanism – 21 of 30 teams have used a reliever to start the game so far – and traditional pitching roles continue to get blurred.

Will a 72% drop in complete games hold throughout the season? Perhaps. Pitchers are all stretched out and can get deeper into games than in March and April, but warmer weather also helps the hitters.

Just don't be surprised when $35 million becomes the baseline salary for the handful of sentient starters on the free agent market.

Reyes

Continued from Page 1C

evening of May 11. According to ESPN's Shams Charania, Wembanyama has avoided suspension.

No team is better than the Timberwolves at annoying opposing players, getting under their skin to force them to respond in ways that are uncharacteristic. Jaden McDaniels, an all-world defender and sometimes troll, is the perfect example.

McDaniels, one series after he called out the entire Denver Nuggets by name for being "all bad defenders," joined teammate Naz Reid in the second quarter in Game 4 pestering Wembanyama to the point of frustration that prompted the Spurs phenom to throw a reckless elbow at Reid's throat.

It was a dangerous play, and Reid and Wembanyama are both fortunate the elbow appeared to catch Reid's collarbone before striking his throat.

And, to be completely fair to Wembanyama, McDaniels and Reid were aggressively harassing Wembanyama, and he should have the right to protect himself. This is nothing new.

"At some level, it's starting to get actually disgusting, just in terms of when he tries to fight through things and be professional and mature and deal with some of that stuff," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson told reporters after the game. "I'm glad he took matters into his own hands – not at all in terms of hitting Naz Reid, I want to be very clear about that. I'm glad Naz Reid was OK, I didn't want him to elbow him. But he's going to have to protect himself if they're not."

But Wembanyama will have to learn that he and the Spurs stand to lose more in cases like these. He's one of the top three best players in the world, and teams are going to hunt and target him – whether that's in an attempt to put him in foul trouble, or, like the night of May 10, to get in his head. This is only magnified in the playoffs, when a suspension can swing an entire series.

Wembanyama is too good. No player impacts the game on both ends the way he does. His defensive presence alters the way opposing teams attack San Antonio, and his shooting range and offensive portfolio are singular for someone with his frame.

After playing just 12 minutes and 29 seconds, Wembanyama left with four points on 2 of 5 shooting, adding four rebounds and one assist. And the Timberwolves, both in the minutes following the ejection and in the fourth quarter, spammed attacks in the paint, knowing Wembanyama would not be there to protect the rim. Simply put: Wembanyama's ejection made the prospect of a Spurs victory far more challenging.

"Everybody know the rim's going to be a lot more open when he's not on the floor," Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards told reporters after the game. "Yeah, he's 8 feet tall, so he's gonna cover up the rim anytime he on the floor."

When reviewing possible suspensions, the league looks at several factors, including a player's history.

Since this was Wembanyama's first Flagrant 2 and first ejection, the NBA might opt to let the time missed in Game 4 stand. The league can also fine Wembanyama.

Johnson, who obviously has an agenda to push in this case, said it "would be ridiculous" if Wembanyama was suspended.

Either way, the Spurs should prepare for the possibility. And beyond that, they should continue to expect teams to provoke Wembanyama like this, simply because San Antonio is easier to beat when he's not on the floor.

Canady

Continued from Page 1C

to manage money better before getting into the professional space."

The professional ranks are just around the corner for Canady. Last week, she was selected second overall in the Athletes Unlimited Softball League draft by the Texas Talons.

ESPN platforms will broadcast more than 50 AUSL games this season, CBS Sports Network will air 20 and MLB Network will carry 11. It's the first season in which the fledgling softball league will have teams based in cities, rather than touring across the country.

While softball fans across the country will be able to see Canady on national TV, Tech fans can make the drive to Round Rock to see her in person.

"I'm staying in Texas, which is amazing," Canady said. "I know I'm excited for that. I've already seen a lot of Red Raider fans who were happy about me staying in Texas. So I'm excited for that."

Canady was drafted two days after one of the more historic outings of her career. In the Red Raiders' regular-season finale against rival Baylor, the 6-foot right-hander from Topeka, Kansas, tossed her first perfect game. She struck out nine batters as Texas Tech won 8-0 in five innings.

Texas Tech reached the run-rule mark while Canady was standing in the on-deck circle. That's when Haile Toney doubled to left center, driving in Kaitlyn Terry and Taylor Pannell.

"I knew I was pitching a good game," Canady said. "I was in the on-deck circle and that's when it sank in. I was thinking, 'OK, if Toney gets these runs in, the game's over.' So, to get the first perfect game of my career on senior night with my family in town, that was amazing."

Canady ended the regular season ranking sixth nationally in ERA (1.24), fourth in hits allowed per seven innings (3.48) and 10th in total strikeouts (209).

Texas Tech is 52-6 this season but failed to capture a second consecutive Big 12 title. The Red Raiders fell on May 9 in the conference championship game to Arizona State.

Bigger goals await the Red Raiders. After making the championship series last year, then bolstering their roster with high-profile transfers in the offseason, Texas Tech is projected to make it back to the sport's biggest stage.

Canady feels those expectations, but she's unbothered by them.

"There's always pressure, but I've said this before, pressure is a privilege. It"s a privilege to go out on that stage, it's a privilege to make it to Oklahoma City and it's going to be hard. But also, anything can happen," Canady said. "Like, we've seen one-seeds not make it past their own regionals. It takes one good weekend. It takes getting hot at the right time. And honestly, anyone can win. So, I'm just excited to get started."



NiJaree Canady is honored during Texas Tech's senior day ceremony after throwing a perfect game May 2 in a Big 12 game. NATHAN GIESE/LUBBOCK AVALANCHE-JOURNAL

All that's left for Canady to cap off a remarkable collegiate career is to win a national championship. She's been to the Women's College World Series three times – twice with Stanford and once with Tech – but hasn't raised the trophy in the final game.

To do so this season would be especially meaningful for not just Canady, but her fans at Texas Tech too.

"It would be amazing, not only just for this team, but I feel like for the Lubbock community and the Texas Tech community. I feel like those fans are excited, and just being able to play for them and win for them and get a national championship for them would be awesome."

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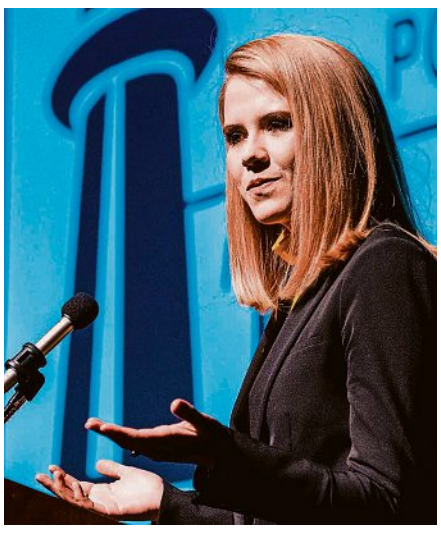
Netflix's 'Marty, Life Is Short' goes beyond the laughter

The usually private actor and comedian opens up about love and loss among family. **Page 2D**

Josh Groban goes to the movies for 'Cinematic' album

The singer and actor honors Rob Reiner and others with classic songs from film. **Page 4D**

LIFELINE



BRIAN WELLS/USA TODAY NETWORK

MAKING WAVES
ELIZABETH SMART

"She could absolutely still be alive. There are cases that span many more years than mine does, and they came back alive. And we're talking years and years," Elizabeth Smart said while speaking on the disappearance of Nancy Guthrie, the 84-year-old mother of "Today" show host Savannah Guthrie, during a recent CNN interview. The comments from Smart, who spent nine harrowing months in captivity after her 2002 abduction, come as May 12 marks 100 days since Guthrie apparently was abducted from her Tucson, Arizona, home in the middle of the night.

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY
WHO'S CELEBRATING TODAY



Malek

Singer-musician **Steve Winwood** turns 78. Singer-musician **Billy Squier**, 76. Actor **Gabriel Byrne**, 76. Actor **Ving Rhames**, 67. Actor **Emilio Estevez**, 64. Actor **Vanessa Estelle Williams**, 63. Actor **Stephen Baldwin**, 60. Actor **Kim Fields**, 57. Actor **Rhea Seehorn**, 54. Actor-comedian **Jason Biggs**, 48. Actor **Rami Malek**, 45. Actor **Emily VanCamp**, 40.
– USA TODAY Network

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Aries (March 21-April 19). Not playing well with others? The moon's clash with Venus puts you in a moody headspace that lasts until nightfall.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). As the moon and Venus clash, don't go to extremes to help someone who doesn't appreciate the effort.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Sure, a little attention would be nice ... Pause! Avoid making a scene as the moon and Venus clash.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). What are you getting out of your current romantic relationship? Think it through as the moon clashes with Venus.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Seeking deeper connections? As the moon and Venus clash, you want a friend to really see you.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Why don't they appreciate you?! Beware of overreacting when the moon and Venus square off.

Libra (Sept.23-Oct. 23). Going through the motions? The more you try to get organized, the more disordered your life becomes today.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Do you see long-term potential in your crush? The future is unclear as the moon and Venus clash.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Need some hibernation time? As the moon and Venus clash, avoid compromising your needs to your detriment.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Attention drifting? The moon's clash with Venus makes socializing, not business, your priority on the job.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Indulging a spur-of-the-moment whim? Have fun, but know your limits, as the moon and Venus clash.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Hurt feelings? A loved one's snub puts you in a self-pitying mood as the moon squares off with Venus.

TELEVISION



Calvin (Cedric The Entertainer) gets ready to party in "The Neighborhood" finale. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MONTY BRINTON/CBS

Cedric hosts 'Neighborhood' block party

Bryan Alexander USA TODAY

Cedric the Entertainer obviously did not want "The Neighborhood" to end on CBS after eight seasons. ● But executive producer and star Cedric, 62, can still smile about the blowout wrap party in February after shooting the series finale, "Welcome to Goodbye," which aired May 11 (8 ET/PT on CBS and Paramount+). ● Costars including Max Greenfield (neighbor Dave Johnson), Sheaun McKinney (TV son Malcolm Butler) and Tichina Arnold (TV wife Tina Butler), along with actors who appeared as far back as Season 1, packed the decked-out Radford Studios soundstage for the closing celebration.

"It was a blast. There were cast and crew who've been with the show forever, and people whose storylines ended in Season 1 showing back up," Cedric tells USA TODAY of his final episode as Calvin Butler, the community-minded central "Neighborhood" character who doesn't wear his emotions on his sleeve. "There was a blooper reel, and a lot of time recalling the laughs we've had on, and off, camera. By the end of the night I wasn't crying, I just had allergies."

OK, maybe there were some happy tears. But, truthfully, there haven't been traumatic wails around the ending of "The Neighborhood." The comedy, created by Jim Reynolds ("The Big Bang Theory"), delivered laughs and solid ratings for a good run with "Original Kings of Comedy" star Cedric (real name Cedric Antonio Kyles) at the helm.

"Of course, this is the kind of show you wish you could do forever, or at least have a 'Law & Order'-type run," Cedric says, referencing the long-running NBC procedural franchise. "But eight seasons is a long time. And we feel blessed."

Adding to that feeling is the sense of series completion. In the wake of the CBS merger with Paramount Skydance, "The Neighborhood" was given a final Season 8 in March 2025, allowing the opportunity to conclude its story on its own terms. The Pasadena-set comedy follows Calvin and the Butler family, whose lives are forever changed when a White Midwestern family, the Johnsons, move next door in the predominantly Black neighborhood.

"The great thing about it is we were able to leave the story on our own terms," Cedric says. "Many shows don't get that. They just find out they're not coming back. And it's like, 'Whoa!' "

See CEDRIC, Page 2D



Tichina Arnold, from left, Cedric The Entertainer, Beth Behrs, Hank Greenspan, Max Greenfield, Marcel Spears and Sheaun McKinney wrap up an eight-season run with the episode "Welcome to Goodbye."

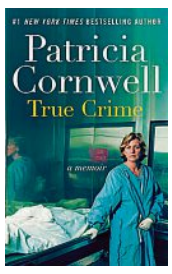
BOOKS

Cornwell plumbs her past for 'True Crime'

Clare Mulroy
USA TODAY

Patricia Cornwell has spent much of her career in the morgue. She has traipsed through body farms of decomposing corpses. She tattooed a turkey from the grocery store to see how it would fade postmortem.

The author of the Kay Scarpetta novels is known for embedding herself in forensics for research, but this time she's giving her own life an autopsy.



If you wondered the kind of mental fortitude it takes to spend all day with violent crime, real and imaginary, her memoir might be your answer. "True Crime" (out now from Grand Central Publishing) traces the author's emotionally turbulent childhood to a stint as a police reporter to the heights of her thriller writing career.

In 'True Crime' fashion, Cornwell runs toward fear

Cornwell's mother suffered from psychotic depressive episodes that sent her to a psychiatric facility while Cornwell and her brothers lived with an abusive foster family. From a young age, Cornwell learned from her mother that the world was unsafe. "She was always anticipating what might injure or kill us," she writes.

Life would confirm this on many occasions for Cornwell. She reveals she was molested at age 5 and raped and drugged by a police officer in early adulthood. She writes that TV and radio host Larry King forced her hand onto his crotch during a flight.

Writing is cathartic for Cornwell, who prefers to run headfirst into what scares her. She's afraid of sharks, she says, so naturally she reads every article about sharks she comes across. She ruminates on the danger lurking around her – scaffolding that could fall, escalators that slice.

"Most people are on autopilot and they just go tootling out into the great unknown," Cornwell says. "There's a difference between being vigilant and being fearful. Fear is very dangerous. You do not want to be ruled by fear. A life ruled by fear is one destined for ruin because it stops you from doing everything that might cause you to have success and purpose."

The same research lens applies to her trauma. In her first Scarpetta book, "Postmortem," a police reporter is raped by a district attorney. The details are changed, but this plot was largely inspired by Cornwell's own rape when she was a reporter at the Charlotte Observer. In hindsight, she says, writing about it was a "therapeutic move."

Cornwell takes a scalpel to abuse, eating disorders

Cornwell's childhood memories are uncharacteristically detailed. But it's not her fictional flair coming into play here – much of "True Crime" comes from a manuscript Cornwell wrote at 19, a "thinly veiled" autobiography about her eating disorder. She turned in the 300 or so pages as her college thesis and put it in a box, never resurfacing it until now.

When she reread it in her 60s, she scrapped the language but took the vivid memories.

"I couldn't have written this book today without that Patsy Daniels (her maiden name) from long ago, and her work never would have seen the light of day had Patricia Cornwell not come along," Cornwell says. "That's been the best part of this is I feel like I went back and rescued my child.

"I marveled over the things that I noticed back then and the way I described them. And I realized it was rather humbling. I had more respect for the young person that had been there that I didn't think was all that good at anything."

A childhood in limbo also comes painfully into focus here. Cornwell

See CORNWELL, Page 2D

STREAMING

Martin Short goes beyond laughs to talk about life, love and loss

Erin Jensen
USA TODAY



Martin Short sits with his friend, Catherine O'Hara, for a documentary about his life. PROVIDED BY NETFLIX

Onscreen, Martin Short's zany characters – enthusiastic Ed Grimley, tactless Jiminy Glick and exuberant Franck Eggelhoffer in "Father of the Bride," among them – have made audiences cackle for decades.

But off-camera, life hasn't always been a stream of laughs. As Netflix's documentary "Marty, Life Is Short" (now streaming) shows, the funnyman has suffered harrowing tragedies.

"He has a history of terrible loss, and he has an attitude that is very positive," says director Lawrence Kasdan, an Oscar-nominated filmmaker and Short's longtime friend. The two met during casting for the 1987 rom-com "Cross My Heart," and "I knew that he had this history, and yet I was fascinated, from the time that we got to know each other, by how upbeat and positive he was, despite real challenges," he says.

At just 20, Short already had suffered the loss of his older brother and his parents. In 2010, his wife of 30 years, Nancy Dolman, died of ovarian cancer at age 58. In February, Short mourned the death of their daughter, Katherine Short, who died by suicide at age 42.

"The thing I admire most about him, I think, is his resilience," Kasdan, 77, says. "That's really the subtext of the whole movie ... how do we recover when things go bad? It's not that complicated when things are going great, but nobody has a life where everything goes great."

Kasdan gives viewers an intimate look at the witty Short, 76, through home footage shot by the star and interviews with early collaborators Eugene Levy, Andrea Martin and Catherine O'Hara, who died in January of a pulmonary embolism, following a rectal cancer diagnosis. Tom Hanks, Steve Martin, John Mulaney and Steven Spielberg also praise Short's talents and character. Short's son, Oliver, also participated, but a sit-down with his brother, Henry, proved "logistically impossible," Kasdan says.

Here's what you should know about "Marty, Life Is Short."

A 'private' Short lets viewers in

Kasdan says the idea for a documentary came to him while working on a 2022 docuseries about visual effects, "Light & Magic." When talking to his team about the project's tone "I said, 'I want it to feel like what it's like to hang out with Marty Short,' " Kasdan says. "They really responded to that because, even though they were younger people, they just love Marty, and they wanted to know all what that meant."

When Kasdan pitched the film to Short, "he was a little hesitant at first because he just didn't want it to be another one of these documentaries," the director says. "He's also a private person. But he came around. We talked for quite a while about it, and I think if we hadn't been friends, he wouldn't have done it. But he agreed."

Short has seen the film "several times," Kasdan says. "He really likes it."

'Marty, Life Is Short' is dedicated to O'Hara and Katherine Short

Kasdan and his team of filmmakers decided to dedicate the documentary to the memories of O'Hara and Katherine Short. A picture of the two is included at the end of the movie. Kasdan says he was close to both. He directed O'Hara in "Wyatt Earp," and collaborated with her husband, production designer Bo Welch, on "The Accidental Tourist" and "Grand Canyon."

"And Katherine Short, I've known since she was a little girl," Kasdan says, "I just feel total affection, and sadness at her loss."

Katherine Short's death is not recounted in the documentary, due to timing and a desire to let Short grieve privately.

"We were well into finishing of the film, and even if we hadn't been, it's not something I want to put him through questions about," Kasdan says. "He has his own way of dealing with it. He will tell people what he wants to tell them."

Short fell in love with the 'drop-dead beautiful' Nancy

"Nancy was drop-dead beautiful," Short says in the documentary, but he didn't pay too much attention to the men gawking at her because he was in an on-again, off-again relationship with Gilda Radner. One summer, when he and Dolman were both single, she came to see him in a play. They stopped in at a Four Seasons hotel, where Short delivered a wisecrack to a member of the staff: "'My wife and I would like a room please.' And even he started laughing because we looked about 12," Short says. "That was it."

They wed in 1980 but had trouble conceiving because of Dolman's endometriosis.

"We were stunned," Short says when they couldn't get pregnant, and they turned to fertility drugs that affected Dolman's mood. She once got mad at Short for not cleaning the counter after making a sandwich.

"I said, 'OK, you have to stop those drugs. And we're going to adopt a baby,'" Short says. "And we adopted Katherine, and then Oliver, and then Henry."

O'Hara praises Short and Dolman as "an amazing team."

"My husband and I went through a little rough patch in our marriage," O'Hara says. So they went to couples counseling where the therapist asked if they knew any couples they aspired to be like. "We said, 'Oh, we have these friends, Marty and Nancy.' And she said, 'I can't tell you how many people have named them, when I've asked this question.'"

Bill Murray's success affected Short's move to comedy

Short decided against auditioning for The Second City Toronto when it opened in 1973, because he "didn't like the idea of being funny on demand," he says, "because I was basically afraid of it. I wanted to be Sinatra. I wanted to be a singer. I wanted to be an actor."

But Short felt stuck professionally. So he moved to Los Angeles with Dolman, when she landed a recording contract. In 1977, Short and Dolman were walking to get dinner with friends Paul Shaffer and Bill Murray. Short became "overwhelmed with, 'I can't. I can't do it,' " he says. Short told Dolman, "I can't go and pretend to be happy for Bill because I don't know what I'm doing."

The next morning Short, "woke up in a funk." But seeing the improv group War Babies provided clarity.

"It was like the light bulbs went off. 'Of course this is what I should be doing,'" Short says, and he joined Second City Toronto.

Short has learned 'loss is something to negotiate'

Short's brother, David, died after a car accident in 1962, when the comedian was 12. After, "it was like nothing made sense," Short says. "And then I had a dream. And I'm telling you, I can see it right now, and it was in Technicolor. And I was sitting by a stream in the woods, and David came up. He looked handsome. He was wearing this beautiful Ban-Lon shirt. And he said: 'I'm fine. Everything is wonderful, and I'll see you in a minute.' And I woke up, and the cloud had lifted."

But tragedy struck the family again when Short's mom, Olive, started to cough at David's funeral. She'd previously battled breast cancer quietly, Short says. But this time, it was predicted that she had just three months left to live. Olive refused to accept her prognosis, as she had "another child to raise," Short says.

Olive "was in perfect health for the next two years," Short says, but died when he was 18. His father's health declined quickly after, and Charles Short died when his son was just 20. Dolman was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2007 and died in 2010.

"Like any family, it's just a simple fact that loss is something to negotiate," Short says. "It's going to happen to all of us, and we must celebrate and continue that voice and never let it go."

Cedric

Continued from Page 1D

What happens in 'The Neighborhood' series finale?

The series finale wraps up several long-running "Neighborhood" storylines, including the marriages of Calvin's grown sons, Malcolm (McKinney) and Marty (Marcel Spears), the pregnancies of their respective spouses, and the Johnsons' poignant departure as the family returns to the Midwest.

"We wanted to show that life just keeps moving forward and changes for the Butlers," Cedric says. "Happy things come to the family, but things go away, too."

"The Neighborhood" franchise will exit as well; planned spinoffs have not taken off. One planned series, centered on sons Malcolm (McKinney) and Marty (Spears) moving to a new neighborhood, was not picked up by CBS for the 2025–26 season.

"We tried," Cedric says. "None of the sequels were able to go forward."

Cedric stars in Netflix's 'Swapped,' writes grilling bible

Cedric, however, has no plans to slow down, already moving forward with a surge of post-"Neighborhood" projects. The actor stars in the animated Netflix film "Swapped," voicing Caloo, the father of the woodland creature Ollie (voiced by Michael B. Jordan).

"Michael was in his Oscar run at the time," Cedric says. "He'd be leaving the sound studio as I was coming in and we'd pound (fists)."

The grill pro just unleashed his bible cookbook "AC Barbeque: The Husky and Handsome Guide to Grilling" (Simon & Schuster) with Anthony Anderson, his co-host on A&E's "Kings of BBQ."

Of course, there are multiple references to grilling in "The Neighborhood" finale, which features a front-yard Yardecue for the wedding guests (Calvin insists on fresh-ground pepper and plenty of it).

'The Neighborhood' ends, but 'Joe Turner's' rolls on Broadway

The crown jewel project is Cedric's return to Broadway alongside Taraji P. Henson in the August Wilson play "Joe Turner's Come and Gone." Cedric's first Broadway appearance since the 2008 production of David Mamet's "American Buffalo" has been extended through July 26.

"You get hired for your TV stardom, but you've got to get out there every night with a live audience and hold that play down and show great respect to the playwright," Cedric says.

"But I know I've done this before. And I have to trust in that. I'm bringing the heat."

Cedric loves the Broadway schedule, even if it means weekend matinees and Mondays off. "That's the only day I can go to the dentist," he says.

The theater return also means adjusting to a common annoyance that has worsened since 2008: audience phones interrupting the stage performance.

"We beg people every night to turn them off, but of course it happens," Cedric says. "A regular phone going off is one thing. But somebody last night had a Biggie song as a ringtone that went on and on. That just threw me off. But you have to concentrate, and you carry on."

Cornwell

Continued from Page 1D

brings readers into her parents' fraught relationship ("The two of them virtually destroyed each other," she says) and her mother's mental health struggles. In one instance, before her mother was hospitalized, she gathered up all of the children's clothing and possessions and threw them into the fire.

"It's not just my story," Cornwell says with the eye of a journalist and a mystery writer. She works her way up the family tree to explain her mother's mental health struggles, investigating her grandfather and great-grandfather, both of whom fell to their deaths under mysterious circumstances. Family tragedies steeped into the next generation. Cornwell never had children because she was afraid she would pass on the "abandonment, loss, fear" she felt.

Cornwell is a private person. She has dealt with stalkers. Putting her personal life under a microscope felt "unnerving" but "it's important that you do what you need to do, even if it scares you a little bit," she says.

"If anybody might've been destined for calamity and failure, it honestly was me, and yet it didn't turn out that way. So that should give hope to other people in their own stories, especially artists and dreamers, people who have something they want to do and it keeps failing and they are in despair. I know that feeling."

Looking back on Scarpetta amid new Nicole Kidman series

Scarpetta fans will revel in a trip down memory lane in "True Crime." The books finally found the silver screen with Nicole Kidman at the helm when "Scarpetta" premiered this year. But it wasn't easy to get there.

Cornwell reminisces about the Kay Scarpetta would-bes, including Susan Sarandon, Jodie Foster and Demi Moore. Cornwell has some regrets about Moore. Moore threw herself into preparation to play Scarpetta, but the adaptation fell through. Around the same time, Cornwell was charged with a DUI after she flipped her car on the highway. Cornwell canceled her research visit to the FBI Academy with Moore.

"I said I needed to figure out why I wasn't dead," she writes. "The last thing on my mind was the movie."



Patricia Cornwell's memoir is "True Crime." PROVIDED BY PATRICK ECCLESINE

It wasn't until she befriended Jamie Lee Curtis that an adaptation moved past the writing stage. Curtis wanted Kidman for the part.

"I thought that would be wonderful, but I also really, truly didn't believe it," Cornwell says. "I kept waiting for the plug to get pulled. Until they actually started filming, I didn't believe it was going to happen. And until it actually aired, I kept thinking something was going to go wrong because it's always failed."

Cornwell praises Amazon Prime for being a "book-centric" studio that stays faithful to such books as Scarpetta. And Kidman has been "immersing herself" in the forensic world, Cornwell says.

"Welcome to my scary world because it's not for the faint of heart," Cornwell says. "It's not an easy role. And like I've said, whoever was going to do this had to deal with 36 years of fans, and that's a very, very tall order, but she's done it."

With "Scarpetta" in full focus, it's hard to imagine there was a time when Cornwell thought she'd hang up her bestseller. After the 2016 book "Chaos" she took a five-year hiatus. During the pandemic, Cornwell was struck with inspiration. She tried to coax her protagonist out from hiding.

"'I'm wondering if you'd like to work on a case together again," I ventured. 'Depends on what it is,' (Scarpetta) answered, implying that it had better be a good one," Cornwell writes.

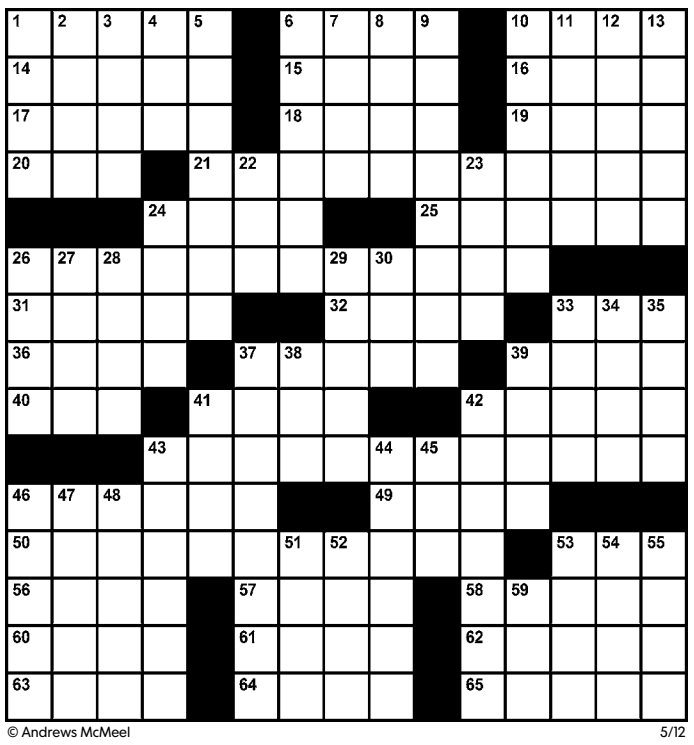
"Autopsy" published in 2021. Cornwell has been on a clean book-a-year schedule since. If she does retire Scarpetta, she'll take a big swing: Cornwell has always wanted to fly on a rocket for research. Scarpetta could get into some good investigating on the moon.

"She will," Cornwell says. "Someone's going to die up there. They're going to need people."

USA TODAY CROSSWORD

EDITED Amanda Rafkin
BY Willa Angel Chen Miller

DO THE TWIST (FREESTYLE)



© Andrews McMeel 5/12

ACROSS
1 "Let's do it sooner rather than ___"
6 Pre-bar exam
10 Glitzy rock genre
14 Make super-happy
15 Bhindi fry veggie
16 Pasta sauce brand
17 Words to study, for short
18 Action movie protagonist played by Reeves
19 Send out
20 "The best is ___ to come"
21 No longer an option
24 Flavor of bottle-shaped gummy candies
25 Threw out
26 With 50-Across, mnemonic for helping people remember which way to turn screws
31 Transcript highlight
32 Oolong, chai, etc.
33 Dribble guard
36 Reservation at a Korean-style karaoke bar
37 Useful thing
39 What's often lost over text message
40 Genre with "drops" (Abbr.)
41 Bummed out
42 Cafe menu item
43 Novelty ballpark snack served in headgear
46 "Side to Side" singer Grande
49 Ctrl + Z command
50 See 26-Across
53 "Funny!"
56 Pool division
57 Chooses
58 Desert or rainforest
60 Lousy smell
61 One might get filed
62 Word before "hand" or "management"
63 Dampens
64 Programming keyword, with "if"
65 Bodybuilding goals

DOWN
1 Tax
2 Singer Blacc featured in "Wake Me Up"
3 Diplomacy
4 "i'll get there at . . ." letters
5 Powers down and turns on again
6 Meaning of "1%" on milk cartons
7 Improv routine
8 Iconic St. Louis structure
9 "Got ya!"
10 Like hair that's overdue for a wash
11 Baby sheep
12 Spry
13 Silenced on Zoom, say
22 Cool, in 1990s slang
23 Many Bluey fans
24 Buddy
26 Seldom encountered
27 Music player discontinued in 2022
28 ___ onto (grab hold of)
29 "Guess who? Yours truly!"
30 "Golly!"
33 "___ Sides, Now" (Joni Mitchell hit)
34 "Still ___ You" (Paramore song)
35 Insects that go "bzzz"
37 Without any help
38 Addition result
39 Walking ___ (snack in a Fritos bag)
41 Millennials, informally
42 Red-and-black beetle
43 Negativity sources
44 Spat
45 U-turn from SSW
46 Green-light
47 Duane ___ (drugstore chain)
48 "Otherwise . . ."
51 The Flame Queen, e.g.
52 Milo's pug companion
53 Arizona tribe
54 "SO true!"
55 This gal's
59 Initials on a beer menu

Monday's Answer

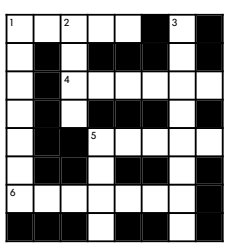
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M	E	T	A	■	I	R	O	N	S	■	I	N	T	O
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Y	O	U	G	O	T	T	H	A	T	R	I	G	H	T
S	N	L	■	Z	I	N	E	S	■	■	C	E	O	S
■	■	■	N	O	M	A	D	■	D	R	E	S	S	Y
E	L	T	O	N	■	■	■	C	R	A	W	■	■	■
G	L	U	T	E	N	F	R	E	E	P	A	S	T	A
G	A	L	A	■	G	O	U	D	A	■	T	O	R	N
O	M	I	T	■	O	W	N	E	D	■	E	D	E	N
N	A	P	E	■	S	L	E	D	S	■	R	A	K	E

5/11

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TXTPERT



5/12

Across
1. 24462
4. 264652
5. 24453
6. 7656666

Down
1. 2666767
2. 4726
3. 32555263
5. 2665

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Today's theme
Countries



Use the phone keypad to decode the clues. For example: 2 could be A, B or C ... and 5678 could be LOST



Yesterday's solution 5/11

Numbers

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

				3		1		2
1					2	3		
	4	2	7	9				
5				4	7		6	
8				6				3
	6		8	2				9
				7	6	9	5	
		6	5					4
2		5		1				

5/12

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).

	2	4		3	
3			2		
2	1		4	5	
	4	5		1	2
		2			3
	3		5	2	

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★☆☆☆

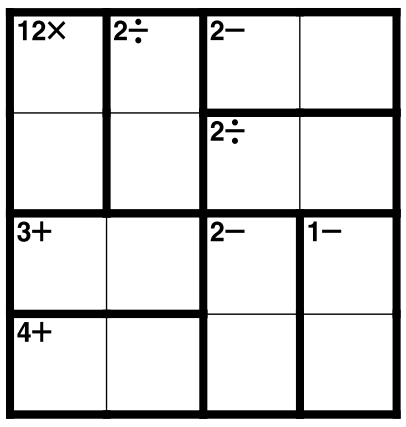
Monday's Answers

8	6	2	1	7	9	4	5	3
3	4	7	2	5	6	9	1	8
9	5	1	3	4	8	6	7	2
2	1	8	6	3	4	7	9	5
6	9	5	8	2	7	1	3	4
4	7	3	5	9	1	2	8	6
7	8	4	9	6	5	3	2	1
1	3	9	4	8	2	5	6	7
5	2	6	7	1	3	8	4	9

1	6	3	4	2	5
2	4	5	6	1	3
5	3	2	1	6	4
4	1	6	3	5	2
6	5	4	2	3	1
3	2	1	5	4	6

5/11

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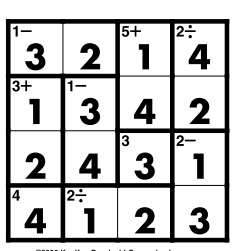
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1. Each row and column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 without repeating.

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



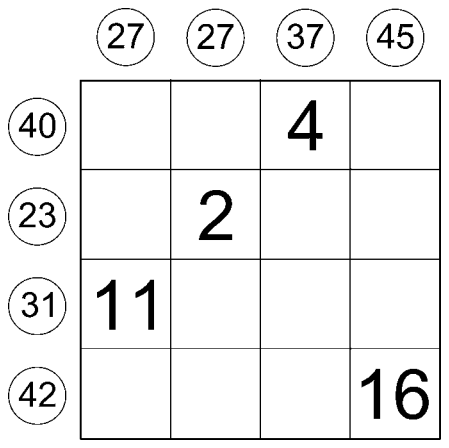
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KUBOK 16

By Davide Coppo

Difficulty: **EXPERT**



Solution to Monday's puzzle

9	13	7	16
3	8	10	4
11	1	15	14
6	2	5	12

Enter the missing numbers from 1 to 16 without repetitions so that the sum of the four numbers in each row and column is the same as the corresponding circled number.

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Words

WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek 5/12

Find and Circle:
Six birthstones ☑☐☐☐☐☐
Three eating utensils ☐☐☐
Three thoroughfares ☐☐☐
Two opposing directions ☐☐
Between Mississippi and Georgia ☐

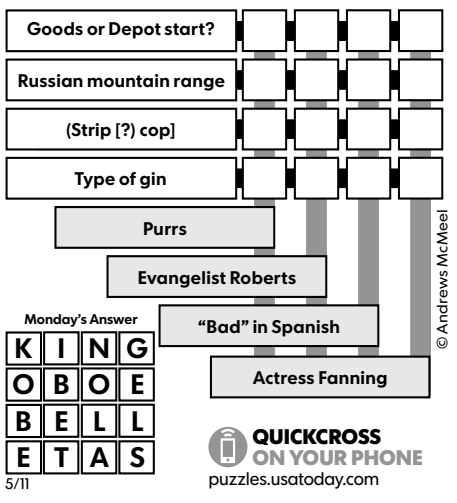
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S	P	G	W	K	T	S	R	S	S	L	I
P	V	A	R	S	Y	I	L	T	A	A	A
O	M	O	L	H	H	T	D	R	E	B	M
O	F	W	T	P	S	A	E	E	Y	A	O
N	Z	E	P	E	O	M	G	E	B	M	N
G	M	A	W	R	E	Z	W	T	U	A	D
A	S	B	O	U	L	E	V	A	R	D	D

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Monday's answer: HEXAGON CIRCLE SQUARE OVAL / ELEPHANT CARIBOU ANTELOPE / KANSAS TEXAS UTAH / ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE / ITALIAN

QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes 5/12



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Monday's Answer

K	I	N	G
O	B	O	E
B	E	L	L
E	T	A	S

5/11

QUICKCROSS ON YOUR PHONE
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UP & DOWN WORDS

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt 5/12

1. **JUNIOR**
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____ **POINT**

Clues:
1. It's similar to middle school
2. Far overhead
3. Warmer than 32 F
4. Frigid
5. Kidman/Law movie
6. Citrus soda brand
7. Measure of moisture levels

Monday's Answer

NO GOOD
GOOD TIMES
TIMES SQUARE
SQUARE OFF
OFF WORK
WORK OUT
OUT WEST

PLAY ONLINE PUZZLES.USATODAY.COM

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DON'T QUOTE ME®

©WIGGLES 3D GAMES

German composer Johann Sebastian Bach talks about coffee.

Rearrange the words to complete the quote.
DRIED GOAT LIKE MORNING PIECE ROAST WITHOUT

"_____ MY _____ COFFEE I'M JUST ___ A _____ UP _____ OF _____ ___."

5/12

Monday's Answer: "Nothing is so exhausting as indecision, and nothing so futile." - Bertrand Russell

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 lacking spice (5)	_____
2 moral tales (6)	_____
3 looking for hiders (7)	_____
4 South Florida metropolis (5)	_____
5 conversation starters (11)	_____
6 predate (8)	_____
7 focus of landscape painting (7)	_____

EC ES BLA NG FA
BL ERS SE MI EAK
EKI EDE IC ND EN
SC ERY ANT EBR MIA

Monday's Answers: 1. QUITE 2. PANG 3. GIFTS 4. HASTIER 5. PEEVISH 6. MISGIVING 7. SALUTATION 5/12

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DGFEU
EGTRI
SYAHFL
NEGDRE

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"_____-_____"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: KITTY SWEPT COTTON SLOWLY
Answer: The rival impound vehicle drivers were going — "TOW"-TO-"TOW"

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BONUS CROSSWORD

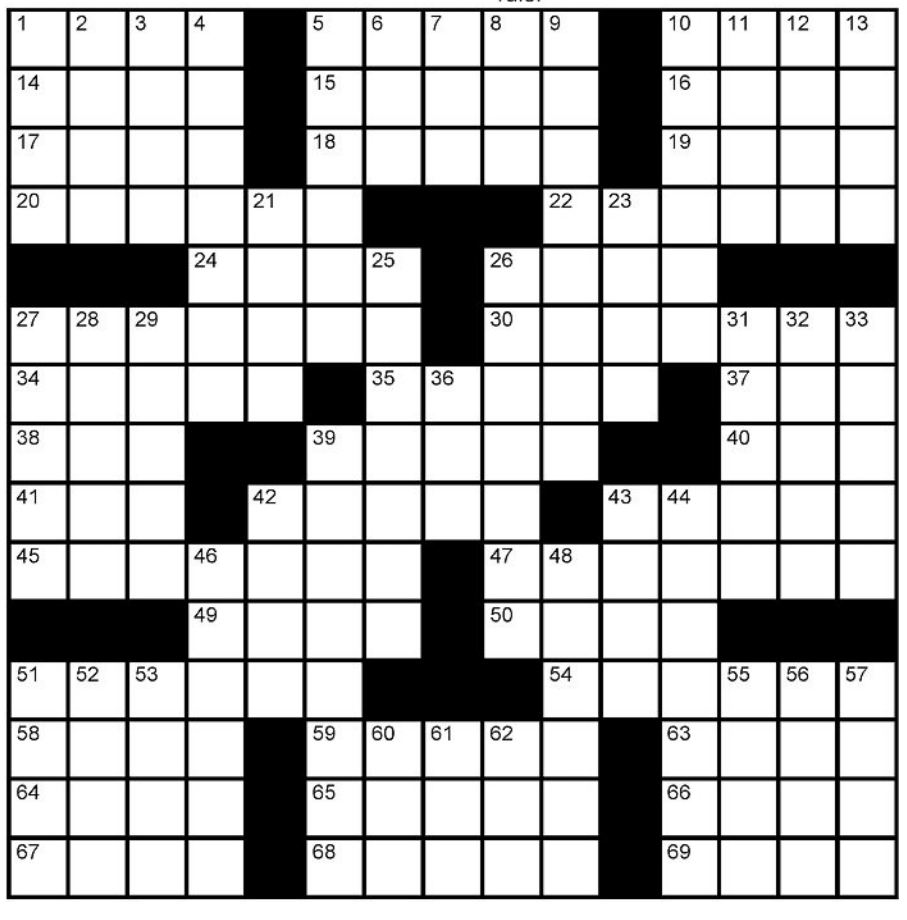
ACROSS
1 Source of roe
5 Hidden supply
10 Actor — Scott
14 Rabbit
15 Cookout venue
16 Filament
17 Singer — Redding
18 Town in Maine
19 Metal fastener
20 Gun or rifle, e.g.
22 Bores
24 Villain in Shakespeare
26 Mattress size
27 Upset
30 Curl
34 Actor's spoken words
35 Metallic sound
37 Inventor — Whitney
38 Friend, in France
39 Mean dwelling
40 CD- —
41 Stone
42 Fuzzy fruit
43 Figure of speech
45 Extremely good
47 Tried
49 New Year's Eve word
50 Private sch.
51 Adheres
54 Source
58 Cards held
59 Great salty expanse
63 Grotto
64 "God's Little —"
65 Compel
66 Actor — Alda
67 Woodwind instrument
68 Army posts
69 Road division

DOWN
1 Display
2 "10 Things I — About You"
3 Elaborate song
4 Loathe
5 Light cake
6 Cigarette additive
7 From — — Z
8 Do wrong
9 Swindle
10 Overhead shade
11 Soap brand
12 Seed appendage
13 Torme and Ott
21 Nosebag filler
23 Icy expanse
25 Growth of fruit trees
26 Windpipe
27 Moves up and down
28 Border
29 Come together
31 "Bad, Bad — Brown"
32 Flee to marry
33 Used a stopwatch
36 Fond du —
39 Blocks (2 wds.)
42 Stopper
43 Old Russian ruler
44 Extreme
46 Touched down
48 Cakes for tea
51 Burn
52 Shoestring
53 Concerning (2 wds.)
55 Festive party
56 — the Terrible
57 Hawaiian goose
60 Pigeon sound
61 Blunder
62 Behave

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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

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MUSIC

Groban reels in the classics for 'Cinematic'

Melissa Ruggieri
USA TODAY

Josh Groban's satiny baritone has coated classical pop, Italian standards, Broadway boomers and holiday singalongs.

On "Cinematic," out now, Groban sinks into movie classics, another genre well-suited to his robust vocals.

From Adele's Oscar-winning James Bond theme ("Skyfall") to timeless Disney sentiments ("When You Wish Upon a Star" from "Pinocchio") to forceful drama ("Brucia La Terra" from "The Godfather"), Groban exercises every facet of his chameleonic instrument.

His 10th album also is peppered with guests including upcoming tour partner Jennifer Hudson on a duet arrangement of "Unchained Melody," the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles augmenting "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," and, most special to Groban, his father, Jack, playing trumpet on the eternally swoony "Moon River."

Calling recently from Los Angeles – and just before announcing his engagement to Natalie McQueen and receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame – the always affable Groban, 45, chatted about recording with his dad in Louis Armstrong's studio, his appreciation of Phil Collins, and paying tribute to Rob Reiner in song.

Question: You had infinite choices with this album. How did you whittle it down to 10 songs?

Answer: I knew what my bookends were. "As Time Goes By" would open the album because (orchestrator) Jeff Atmajian wrote an opening arrangement that captured the essence of what I wanted people to hear first. And then to end with a song that has meant so much to me ("Stand By Me") and include a tribute to Rob Reiner.

You said "the why" was a big factor in choosing these songs. Why that particular Rob movie?

Obviously, tragically, the why became very apparent. We missed the (recording) deadline because it was a last-minute decision to do ("Stand By Me") and that worked in its favor because it was intimate and that was exactly how we wanted it. It's one of the most important things I've ever recorded. It deserved to be a final thought.

Did you rewatch some of these movies before recording?

(Laughs) I did! Not just to get back in the mood but also to educate myself about some of the films that admittedly I didn't know the songs were from. The cool thing about an album like this is everyone knows the theme from that movie. But it also pays tribute to the songs that were maybe far more popular than the movies themselves.

You mean like "Against All Odds"? Phil Collins has written some timeless songs even though he often gets a bad rap.

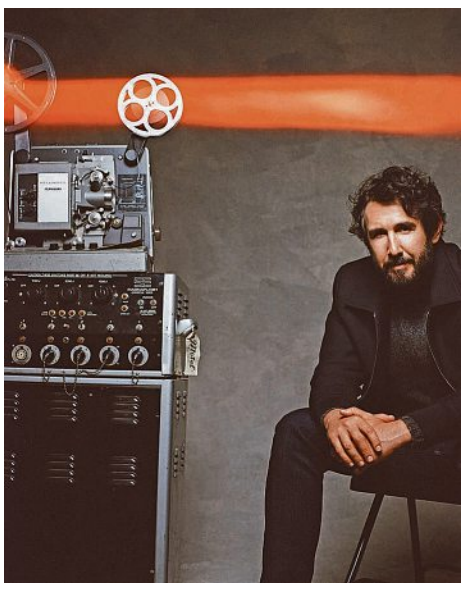
I think Phil Collins has written some of the most brilliant songs, period. But something unlocks in him when writing in service of a film, and that's not uncommon.

Your dad, Jack, also appears on the album. Is this the first time you've recorded together?

This is the first time he's been on record period. He did a version of "Old Devil Moon" with me in 2015 (during a show in Los Angeles) and it was one of my favorite moments onstage ever. I have a photo from it but no recording. I knew he could play and when (conductor/arranger) Vince Mendoza wrote this brilliant rendition of "Moon River" I asked (my dad) if he thought he could handle the arrangement. He practiced at home, and I'd come to the house and listen to him play it. He's going to be 80 this summer. He really crushed it. (Album producer) Greg Wells took the initiative to get Sunset Sound, Louis Armstrong's favorite studio and room, and got his stool for my dad to sit on. My whole family came to watch. It was a core memory for all of us.

Do you think your dad was nervous?

My dad is the coolest guy I know. On the surface he doesn't get thrown. This meant so much to him, too, and for us to share as a father and son. He sacrificed so much. He was a musician. He was brilliant at the trumpet, but it was a time when deciding to go all-in on an artistic dream was at odds with a family. So my brother and I could stand on the back of that stability to follow our artistic dream.



Josh Groban released "Cinematic," an album of movie songs, May 8. PROVIDED BY JENNIFER MCCORD FOR JOSH GROBAN

Why was it important for you to feature the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles on "Can You Feel the Love Tonight"?

When we were trying to figure out what songs would be relevant today, that song is so iconic and Elton (John) is so iconic, and I grew up listening to that song. Of course I thought: What do I have to add to this? We were listening to Elton's version and reading lyrics and doomscrolling about the fear in the world and the division and where is the feeling of love? So we thought: What if we view the approach as an anthem to discovering that feeling and to give that love to communities that really need it?

Had you ever performed with them before?

I sang with the Gay Men's Choir for (Barack) Obama's first inauguration, and I remembered the power of their voices. But also, representing an allyship with a community that needs to feel the love was an inspiration. I was honored they said yes.

You and Jennifer Hudson make a swoony pair on "Unchained Melody." Do you have plans to do anything together on your upcoming tour?

Yeah, we're definitely going to sing it together during the show. Her voice is such an extraordinary instrument. ... We sang together for the first time (on a holiday special in 2024). We did "O Holy Night," and when our voices came together on that final "Noel," we looked at each other like: We *have* to do this again.

You're also heading back to Caesars Palace in Las Vegas in October with your "Gems" residency. Will these shows be different from the tour?

The show we created for Vegas took time to craft, so we want to have a show that represents what we can only do for Vegas. But every time I come back I want there to be enough changes to whatever I'm doing in that moment, so "Cinematic" will be represented.

You've pivoted back to music, but any plans to return to the theater after this album and tour cycle?

It just comes down to whether the right thing feels as exciting as the last two (Groban earned Tony nominations for "Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812" and "Sweeney Todd"). I wasn't planning on either of them, but I knew from the excitement I had in my creative soul they were shows I would drop everything for. I would love to do something new, maybe even off-Broadway. Theater is always an opportunity to spread my wings.

I would be remiss if I didn't ask if your dog George is traveling with you.

He is not really the traveling Westie I thought he might turn out to be. He's shown himself to be a very special dog with his own likes, and those don't involve a tour bus. He loves his little buddies in LA. He gets nervous in situations he doesn't know. But he gets cuter by the day. He has a little sister now, who is 50 pounds – Stevie.

Is she named for Stevie Nicks?

She is. My (fiancée) is a big fan and she got to name her. But she is the adventure dog, and she is all love.

MUSIC

Singer Mika stays in 'Motion' and on mission

Ralphie Aversa
USA TODAY

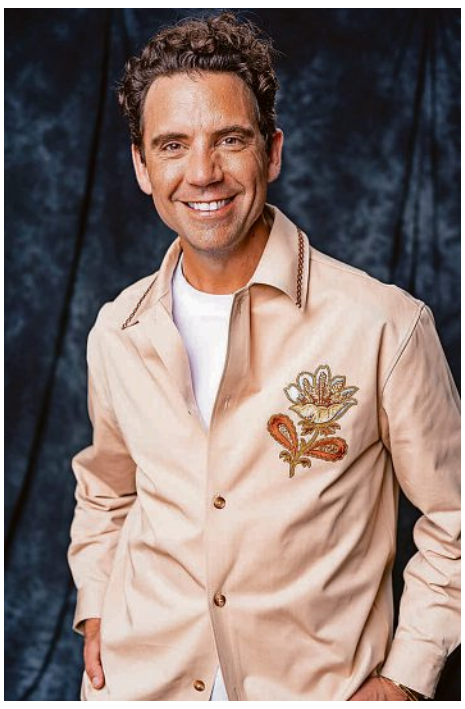
NEW YORK – Platinum selling singer/songwriter Mika reveals exclusively to USA TODAY that he plans to mark the 20th anniversary of his debut album, "Life in Cartoon Motion," released in 2007 with the catchy single "Grace Kelly."

"We're doing something quite glorious," the singer, 42, teases. "I can't say too much about it now, but it's going to go around the world."

Mika, born Michael Penniman Jr., says that when he created the LP, he was "looking for freedom." The artist was born in Lebanon, but conflict in the country forced his family to Paris. At age 7, Mika's father was on a business trip to Kuwait and "effectively taken hostage in the American Embassy" during the Gulf War. He was able to return to his family after eight months. But Mika reflects that his father came back "a different person."

"Our life fell apart in Paris," he says. Mika remembers his family piling into a Toyota Previa ("the most wonderful, ugliest car ever made in the history of cars") and moving to London after the ordeal. "I got kicked out of school, and that's when I started doing music.

"I was looking for a way of finding color, finding love, finding joy, putting it into my life and then making sure that it would be part of my daily life," Mika says of his debut album, released when he was 23. "That was why I wrote that first album. It's as simple and as complicated as that."



Singer-songwriter Mika currently is touring in support of seventh album, "Hyperlove." NATHANIAL GARY/USA TODAY

Mika comments on TikTok, 'Grace Kelly' duet challenge

Mika's breakout single "Grace Kelly" recently had a moment on TikTok as fans and celebrities took part in the "Grace Kelly" duet challenge by singing different parts of the song together. Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell even got in on the action.

Mika calls the trend "fun" and says it made him giggle. But when it comes to TikTok, he has a hot take that isn't related to any musical trend.

"Everyone who's 35 and upwards gets on TikTok and then ends up spending money and buying stuff," he dishes. "They're all embarrassed, but it's true."

Mika's online shopping habits are not exclusive to TikTok, either.

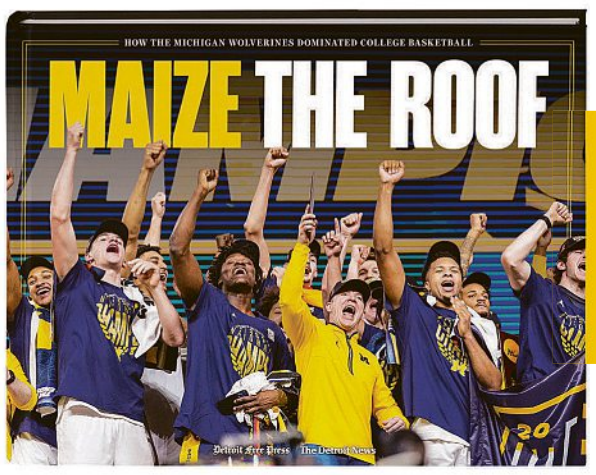
"When I found myself the other day actually considering to do a quick-purchase buy of a perfume that I had not smelled, but that looked really intriguing on Instagram, I thought: 'That's it. I've hit rock bottom,' " he joked.

At least he has his job to keep him busy and maybe keep him from another "nice raincoat." Mika is now traveling the United States on the Spinning Out Tour in support of his album "Hyperlove," his seventh LP and first all-English album since 2019.

"It's taken quite a few years to get back to the States just because of life and chaos, but the audience so far has been remarkable. Staying weird and defending weird, experimental pop with the most amount of fearless joy possible, is not just a kind of manifesto, but a mission."

LAST CHANCE TO SAVE

MICHIGAN'S CHAMPIONSHIP IN A HARDCOVER COLLECTOR'S BOOK

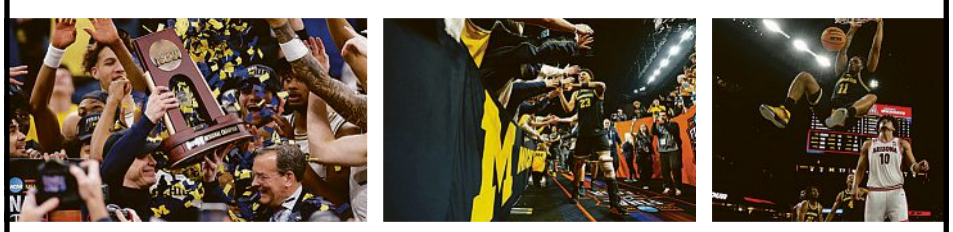


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Coach Dusty May's 2025-26 squad steamrolled the NCAA Tournament. With its supersized frontcourt and skilled guards, Michigan broke program records for victories and ran through March and April with a decisive fist. The Wolverines routed Tennessee in the Elite Eight, crushed Arizona in the Final Four and denied UConn a dynasty in the championship game. This 208-page, full-color hardcover book from the award-winning journalists of The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press covers the entire championship run with dynamic photography and behind-the-scenes stories from the record-breaking regular season through every round of the tournament. Relive the moments and meet the personalities that brought the title back to Ann Arbor after 37 years. Reserve your copies of this historic team's success today!

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NATION&WORLD EXTRA

Court clears way for new AL voting map

State Republicans pursue more favorable districts

John Kruzel
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way on May 11 for Alabama Republicans to pursue a congressional voting map more favorable to their party ahead of November's midterm elections, the latest fallout from the court's seismic voting rights ruling.

The justices lifted a lower court's decision that had blocked state Republicans' preferred map as racially discriminatory and for illegally diluting the voting power of Black Alabamians. The politically conservative Southern state is expected to seek to revert to this previous map, which would drop the number of districts where Black voters comprise a majority, or near-majority, from two to one out of the state's seven U.S. House districts. Use of the previous map could be beneficial to Republicans.



People protest for voting rights and against redistricting outside the state capitol in Montgomery, Alabama. JAYLA WHITFIELD-ANDERSON/REUTERS

The order was powered by the nine-member court's conservative majority. The three liberal justices dissented and suggested that the lower court could reapply its judicial block to the Alabama Republicans' preferred map. Alabama is among a group of Republican-led states that has sought to eliminate majority-Black congressional districts and boost their party's chances ahead of the elections following the Supreme Court's ruling undercutting a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. Black voters tend to support Democratic candidates.

In its landmark April 29 ruling, the court, in a 6-3 decision powered by its conservative members, struck down an electoral map that had given Louisiana a second Black-majority U.S. congressional district. The redrawn map, the majority ruled, had relied too heavily on race in violation of the constitutional equal protection principle.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, Alabama immediately filed emergency motions asking the justices to allow it to revert to an older map with only a single majority-Black district. Alabama, where Black voters make up a quarter of the electorate, had been ordered by a lower court to use a map that

See VOTING, Page 4NN

CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST

HOPES FOR CEASEFIRE FADING


Iran has called for an end to the war on all fronts, including Lebanon, where U.S. ally Israel continues to strike. REUTERS

Trump says Iran truce 'on life support' after new proposal

Nandita Bose, Nayera Abdallah and Elwely Elwelly
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump said on May 11 that a ceasefire with Iran was "on life support" after Tehran's response to a U.S. proposal to end the war made clear the two sides were still far apart on a number of issues.

Iran has called for an end to the war on all fronts, including Lebanon, where U.S. ally Israel is fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah militants.

Tehran also demanded compensation for war damage, an end to the U.S. naval blockade, a guarantee of no further attacks, and resumption of Iranian oil sales.

Tehran also emphasized its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, where it has shut down shipping traffic that normally carries one-fifth of the world's oil and gas supply.

Trump said Iran's response threatened the status of a ceasefire that has been in place since April 7. "I would call it the weakest right now, after reading that piece of garbage they sent us. I didn't even finish reading it," said Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to end the ceasefire.

The United States had proposed an end to fighting before starting talks on more contentious issues, including Iran's nuclear program.

Tehran defended its stance on May 11. "Our demand is legitimate," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said.



Azam Azad, an Iranian teacher, walks to class where she teaches via webcam and online with students at a girls' school in Tehran on May 11. With the outbreak of war and insecurity in Tehran, classes are being held without students in person and online. ATTA KENARE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that Iran's armed forces are ready to respond decisively to any "act of aggression." Brent crude oil futures were up 3% to more than $104 a barrel as the deadlock left the Strait of Hormuz largely closed. Before the war began on Feb. 28, the narrow waterway carried one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas, and has since become a central pressure point in the conflict.

Disruption caused by the near-closure of the strait has forced oil producers to cut exports, and OPEC oil output dropped further in April to the lowest in more than two decades, a Reuters survey showed.

The United States on May 11 also imposed new sanctions on individuals and companies it said were helping Iran ship oil to China, part of efforts to cut off funding for Tehran's military and nuclear programs, while also

See IRAN, Page 4NN

Zelenskyy claims Putin has no plans to end war

Russia, Ukraine report violation of ceasefire

REUTERS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on May 11 that Russia has no intention of ending the more than four-year-old war with his country and Kyiv was preparing for further attacks. Zelenskyy made his comments as a U.S.-mediated ceasefire linked to Russia's 81st anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany drew to a close, with each side accusing the other of violating it. He also spoke two days after Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested the conflict was coming to an end.

"Today there was no silence on the front line. Combat actions have continued," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. "Russia has no intention of ending this war. And we are, unfortunately, preparing for new attacks. But peace must come. That is exactly what we are working for."

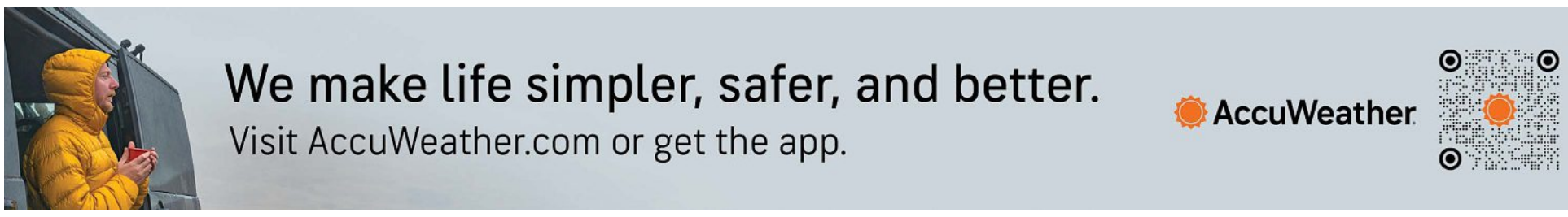
Both countries reported fighting along their long front line despite the ceasefire, and each accused the other of launching drone and artillery strikes. Ukraine and Russia agreed on May 8 to a May 9-11 ceasefire as part of a U.S.-led push for peace under President Donald Trump after more than four years of war triggered by Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Trump said on May 8 that he hoped the ceasefire would be extended, but it was already showing signs of strain by May 10.

Putin said on May 9, after the Victory Day commemorations, that he thought the war was coming to an end. He said he would be willing to negotiate new security arrangements for Europe, with Germany's former chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, as his preferred partner. But European foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels on May 11, rejected Putin's suggestion about Schroeder. They dismissed any role for Schroeder, who has worked for Russian state companies and cultivated a close relationship with Putin. Zelenskyy said on May 10 Moscow had refrained from large-scale aerial and missile attacks but had continued assaults along parts of the 745-mile front line where Russian forces are advancing. He said Ukrainian troops were responding and defending their positions.

Russian state news agencies reported on May 11 that Russia's Defence Ministry had said it had recorded 23,802 ceasefire violations by Ukraine since the start of the ceasefire. Russian troops had responded in kind to Ukrainian attacks, the ministry was quoted as saying.

One person was killed and three

See UKRAINE, Page 4NN

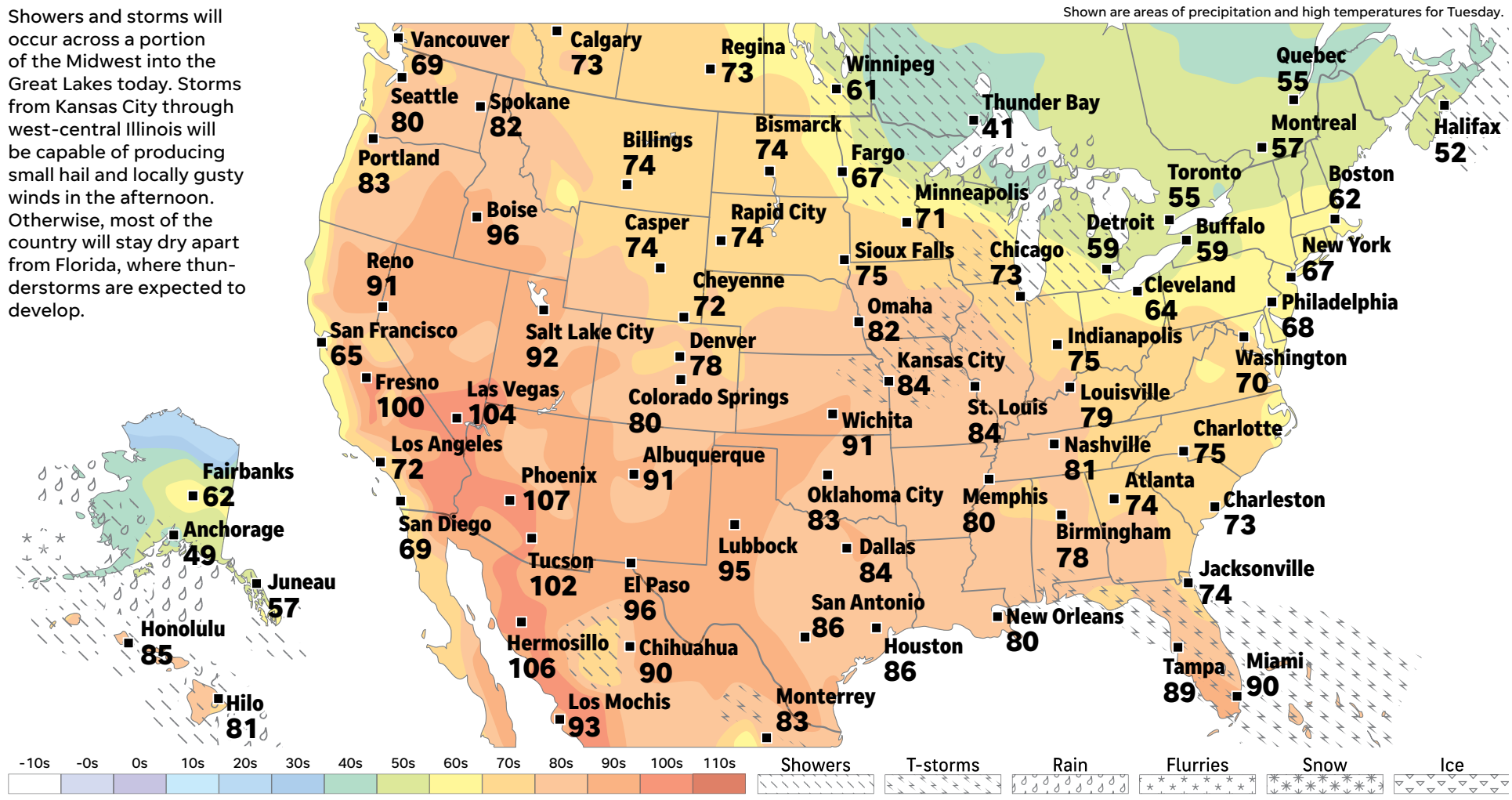


NATIONAL SUMMARY

Showers and storms will occur across a portion of the Midwest into the Great Lakes today. Storms from Kansas City through west-central Illinois will be capable of producing small hail and locally gusty winds in the afternoon. Otherwise, most of the country will stay dry apart from Florida, where thunderstorms are expected to develop.

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 Thermal, CA
Low: **19** at International Falls, MN
Precip: **1.51"** at Cherry Point, NC

INTERNATIONAL (excludes Antarctica)

High: **116** at Turbat, Pakistan
Low: **-8** at Stefansson Island, Canada
Precip: **3.82"** at Apartado, Colombia

TODAY IN HISTORY

A drought helped to cause major dust storms in the Midwest during the 1930s. On May 12, 1934, wind-blown dust darkened the sky as far east as the Atlantic coast.

WEATHER TRIVIA™

Q: Which month in the U.S. averages the most tornadoes?

A: May and June are just about even

NATIONAL CITIES TUESDAY

● Denotes possible travel delays

	High/low/W	Air Quality
Aberdeen, SD	73/38/pc	106
Abilene, TX	86/63/pc	50
Accomac, VA	64/51/s	45
● Adrian, MI	63/52/sh	42
● Akron, OH	65/55/pc	50
Alamogordo, NM	96/65/s	93
Alexandria, VA	72/55/s	50
● Alliance, OH	65/54/pc	50
Amarillo, TX	94/55/s	66
Ames, IA	80/48/sh	123
Anderson, SC	75/52/s	47
Appleton, WI	71/45/sh	36
Asheville, NC	71/47/s	54
● Ashland, OH	65/55/pc	46
Athens, GA	75/54/s	47
Augusta, GA	76/52/s	42
Austin, TX	85/63/s	67
● Bartlesville, OK	84/56/s	60
● Battle Creek, MI	64/47/sh	39
● Bedford, IN	76/56/pc	57
Binghamton, NY	58/46/pc	33
Bluffton, SC	72/65/pc	34
Bremerton, WA	81/50/pc	40
Brockton, MA	63/40/s	53
Brownwood, TX	85/58/pc	53
Burlington, IA	77/50/t	97
Burlington, NC	74/48/s	48
Burlington, VT	58/39/pc	29
● Cambridge, OH	71/55/pc	51
● Camdenton, MO	82/54/s	59
Canandaigua, NY	60/45/pc	35
● Canton, OH	66/54/pc	53
Carlsbad, NM	97/62/s	80
Chambersburg, PA	69/53/pc	37
Cherry Hill, NJ	69/52/s	51
● Cincinnati, OH	74/57/c	65
Clarksville, TN	80/56/pc	62
● Coldwater, MI	65/46/sh	40
● Columbus, OH	72/58/pc	59
Corning, NY	62/45/pc	38
Corpus Christi, TX	87/66/s	74
Daytona Beach, FL	79/70/t	39
Deming, NM	96/60/s	69
DeRidder, LA	83/63/s	39
Des Moines, IA	80/50/sh	134
● Detroit, MI	59/54/sh	43
Devils Lake, ND	68/41/c	39
Dover, NH	60/38/pc	51
El Paso, TX	96/70/s	79
Elmira, NY	62/46/pc	37
● Erie, PA	57/53/pc	43
Eugene, OR	76/51/s	26
● Evansville, IN	80/61/pc	58
Fall River, MA	63/42/s	52
Farmington, NM	91/51/s	83
Fayetteville, NC	75/49/s	101
Fond du Lac, WI	74/43/sh	40
Fort Myers, FL	91/74/t	36
Fort Smith, AR	83/59/s	53
Framingham, MA	64/40/s	52
Freeport, IL	77/46/t	58
● Fremont, OH	65/55/sh	42
Fort Collins, CO	80/49/s	91
Gadsden, AL	77/55/s	55
Gainesville, FL	77/67/r	29
● Galesburg, IL	77/48/t	117
Gastonia, NC	75/47/s	47
Glen Rose, TX	86/60/s	49
Gonzales, LA	84/65/pc	39
Great Falls, MT	77/49/pc	55
● Green Bay, WI	70/43/sh	29
Greenville, SC	74/51/s	49
Hackensack, NJ	67/50/s	57
Hagerstown, MD	68/55/s	37
Hattiesburg, MS	80/63/pc	40
● Henderson, KY	80/59/pc	58
Hendersonville, NC	71/48/s	51
Herkimer, NY	59/42/pc	33
● Hillsdale, MI	63/48/sh	41
● Holland, MI	66/46/sh	42
Hornell, NY	63/47/pc	38
Houma, LA	83/67/sh	38
● Howell, MI	59/48/sh	37
Hutchinson, KS	90/51/s	50
Hyannis, MA	58/47/s	38
● Indianapolis, IN	75/56/pc	57
Iowa City, IA	79/49/t	80
Ithaca, NY	59/47/pc	34
Jackson, MS	82/60/s	41
Jackson, TN	80/52/s	61
Jacksonville, FL	74/67/r	35
Jacksonville, NC	71/54/s	42
● Kent, OH	64/54/pc	49
● Kewanee, IL	77/48/t	118
Keyser, WV	73/48/pc	47
Kinston, NC	73/48/s	43
Knoxville, TN	77/55/s	52
● Lafayette, IN	76/53/c	57
Lafayette, LA	82/65/sh	38
Lakeland, FL	86/69/t	41
● Lansing, MI	62/48/sh	39
Las Cruces, NM	93/60/s	74
Lebanon, PA	67/51/s	36
Leesburg, FL	79/69/t	32
Levittown, PA	68/50/s	50
● Lincoln, IL	82/52/t	113
● Louisville, KY	79/60/pc	75
Lubbock, TX	95/60/s	60
Manitowoc, WI	63/43/sh	32
● Mansfield, OH	65/56/pc	48
Marshall, NC	73/48/s	53
Marshfield, WI	68/39/sh	33
● Massillon, OH	66/55/pc	49
McLean, VA	71/56/pc	41
● Melbourne, FL	84/72/t	29
Memphis, TN	80/58/s	69
Middletown, NY	64/45/s	41
Milford, MA	62/41/s	52
Milwaukee, WI	71/47/sh	42
● Monroe, MI	61/54/sh	40
Monroe, LA	83/56/s	52
Montgomery, AL	76/59/s	46
● Muncie, IN	74/56/pc	58
Murfreesboro, TN	79/57/s	61
Naples, FL	88/75/t	30
Nashville, TN	81/59/s	65
Neptune, NJ	61/52/s	54
New Bedford, MA	63/45/s	50
New Bern, NC	72/51/s	44
● New Philadelphia, OH	69/54/pc	49
● Newark, OH	71/55/pc	54
Newton, NJ	65/44/s	35
New York, NY	67/52/s	60
Norwich, CT	63/42/s	52
Ocala, FL	79/68/t	28
Oklahoma City, OK	83/60/s	68
Opelousas, LA	84/64/pc	36
Oshkosh, WI	71/45/sh	38
● Palm Beach, FL	87/76/t	32
Palm Springs, CA	103/71/s	98
Panama City, FL	79/66/r	33
● Pekin, IL	81/50/t	126
Pensacola, FL	78/66/t	47
● Peoria, IL	80/51/t	125
Petersburg, VA	74/49/s	48
Phoenix, AZ	107/79/pc	83
● Port Huron, MI	58/51/sh	34
Portsmouth, NH	63/40/pc	42
Poughkeepsie, NY	66/45/s	42
Providence, RI	64/45/s	51
Pueblo, CO	87/49/s	83
Quincy, MA	63/44/s	54
Redding, CA	92/60/s	54
Reno, NV	91/60/pc	86
● Ravenna, OH	64/54/pc	48
● Richmond, IN	74/55/pc	59
Rochester, NY	59/47/pc	37
Rockford, IL	74/48/t	57
Ruidoso, NM	82/59/pc	116
Salem, OR	78/51/pc	34
Salina, KS	87/49/s	53
Salinas, CA	67/53/s	33
Salisbury, MD	69/50/s	41
San Angelo, TX	87/59/s	56
● Sarasota, FL	88/74/pc	29
Savannah, GA	71/64/s	30
Sheboygan, WI	65/44/sh	31
Shelby, NC	74/48/s	46
Sherman, TX	84/60/s	50
Shreveport, LA	85/58/s	46
Silver City, NM	90/58/pc	67
Sioux Falls, SD	75/41/s	106
Somerset, PA	67/53/pc	47
Somerville, NJ	67/45/s	49
● South Bend, IN	69/49/sh	46
Spartanburg, SC	74/50/s	48
● Springfield, IL	81/52/t	108
● Springfield, MO	80/56/s	69
St. Augustine, FL	75/70/r	24
St. Cloud, MN	66/41/pc	35
St. George, UT	101/71/pc	74
Staunton, VA	70/48/s	46
Stevens Point, WI	71/41/sh	34
Stockton, CA	92/55/s	48
Stroudsburg, PA	66/47/s	35
● Stuart, FL	87/74/t	32
● Sturgis, MI	67/46/sh	41
Tallahassee, FL	77/64/r	28
Thibodaux, LA	84/65/sh	37
Topeka, KS	85/49/t	71
Tuscaloosa, AL	81/59/s	53
Utica, NY	57/43/pc	33
Ventura, CA	61/55/s	51
Victorville, CA	94/57/pc	72
Vineland, NJ	68/48/s	51
Visalia, CA	102/59/s	70
Washington, DC	70/56/s	49
Watertown, SD	69/41/pc	115
Wausau, WI	68/42/sh	28
Waynesboro, PA	69/54/pc	37
White Plains, NY	64/47/s	54
Wichita Falls, TX	87/60/s	53
Wilmington, DE	68/52/s	51
Wilmington, NC	71/55/s	51
Wisconsin Rapids, WI	72/40/sh	35
● Wooster, OH	64/56/pc	48
Worcester, MA	60/42/s	50
York, PA	68/55/s	37

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	92/78/pc
Addis Ababa	79/54/pc	81/55/pc
Algiers	76/59/s	76/49/s
Amman	90/67/pc	83/63/pc
● Amsterdam	54/45/c	55/43/sh
● Ankara	74/49/t	74/51/s
Asuncion	72/47/pc	74/52/pc
Athens	82/65/s	79/63/s
Auckland	60/51/sh	64/46/s
Baghdad	99/74/pc	102/70/pc
Bangkok	93/81/t	95/80/t
Beijing	91/66/pc	95/68/s
Beirut	80/67/pc	76/66/s
● Belgrade	69/43/t	62/44/c
● Berlin	53/41/sh	55/44/sh
Bogota	66/50/r	66/51/r
Brussels	56/45/c	55/44/sh
● Bucharest	75/53/t	61/50/c
● Budapest	64/40/sh	63/38/pc
Buenos Aires	67/49/s	59/49/pc
Cairo	102/66/pc	93/75/pc
Cape Town	66/55/r	64/50/c
Caracas	89/77/r	91/76/sh
Casablanca	76/53/s	76/54/s
Colombo	89/81/r	86/79/r
Copenhagen	57/44/pc	52/40/r
Damascus	93/61/pc	89/59/s
Dublin	60/44/pc	56/43/sh
Geneva	60/42/s	62/45/c
Guatemala City	84/61/pc	84/59/pc
Hanoi	90/79/t	97/80/pc
Harare	81/57/s	82/55/s
Havana	90/73/pc	91/72/sh
● Helsinki	53/48/r	52/43/r
Hong Kong	86/79/c	87/80/sh
Jakarta	92/77/sh	92/77/t
Jerusalem	88/60/s	81/61/pc
Johannesburg	68/43/s	70/42/s
Kabul	74/56/pc	75/57/pc
Khartoum	109/87/pc	110/86/pc
Kyiv	70/53/sh	58/48/sh
Kingston	89/79/pc	89/80/pc
La Paz	56/33/c	56/29/s
Lagos	91/80/t	91/80/t
Lima	76/67/s	74/67/s
Lisbon	68/55/sh	69/55/pc
London	60/45/pc	58/44/sh
Madrid	64/45/sh	69/44/sh
● Manila	100/83/pc	98/82/pc
● Mexico City	74/57/sh	75/55/r
Milan	73/51/s	71/51/pc
Mombasa	89/75/s	89/75/pc
Montevideo	64/48/s	58/43/pc
Montreal	57/42/pc	53/48/r
Moscow	63/54/sh	71/54/pc
● Nairobi	75/61/t	74/60/t
New Delhi	104/83/pc	103/81/pc
● Panama City	88/76/r	91/76/r
Paris	59/47/pc	61/44/sh
Port-au-Prince	94/73/pc	92/72/t
Rio de Janeiro	75/66/s	78/70/c
Riyadh	111/79/pc	106/76/pc
Rome	71/57/s	68/52/sh
San Jose	85/71/r	85/70/r
San Salvador	90/68/pc	91/67/s
Santiago	72/41/pc	75/44/pc
Sao Paulo	72/55/pc	76/59/c
● Sarajevo	70/38/sh	64/39/c
Shanghai	88/70/t	86/69/pc
Singapore	89/80/t	89/80/t
● Stockholm	46/40/r	49/40/sh
Sydney	71/61/sh	68/60/pc
Taipei	86/73/r	78/68/r
Tegucigalpa	90/65/pc	90/65/s
Tehran	87/69/pc	84/65/t
Tokyo	75/62/s	77/65/pc
Toronto	55/44/pc	60/44/r
Tunis	80/64/pc	81/59/s
Vancouver	69/55/pc	64/52/sh
Vienna	56/41/sh	63/44/pc
Warsaw	55/41/r	56/42/sh
● Yerevan	69/50/t	67/48/t
Zagreb	60/34/sh	64/39/pc
Zurich	55/35/pc	60/45/pc

● 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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Poll: Americans say Trump unclear on his Iran war goals

Jason Lange
REUTERS



President Donald Trump's popularity remains below the 40% approval rate he had just before the war started, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll.
ELIZABETH FRANTZ/REUTERS FILE

WASHINGTON – Two out of three Americans think President Donald Trump has not clearly explained why the country went to war with Iran, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll completed on April 11 that also showed his approval rating ticking up from the lowest level of his term. The four-day poll revealed deep concerns about surging gasoline prices and also suggested many voters are casting blame for their troubles on Trump's Republican allies, who will be defending their congressional majorities in the November midterm elections.

More than two months into a conflict that began Feb. 28 with a U.S.-Israeli bombing campaign, some 66% of poll respondents – including one in three Republicans and almost all Democrats – said Trump has not "clearly explained the goals of U.S. military involvement in Iran."

The war, which cooled in recent weeks as both sides floated peace proposals, has driven a roughly 50% increase in gasoline prices across the country. Iran shut down a fifth of the global oil trade by effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz despite efforts by U.S. warships to reopen the waterway for oil tankers.

Some 63% of the country say their household's personal financial situation has taken a hit from recent gas price increases, up from 55% in a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted March 17-19.

Some 36% of Americans approve of Trump's performance, up two percentage points since a late April Reuters/Ipsos poll showed his approval rating at 34%, which was the lowest level of Trump's current term in office.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll had a 3-percentage-point margin of error in either direction based on the number of people surveyed.

Trump's popularity remains below the 40% approval rate he had just before the war started. He started his term in January 2025 with 47% approval after winning the 2024 presidential election on promises to lower costs for Americans.

Three-quarters of the public – including half of Republicans – think his administration bears at least a fair amount of responsibility for the gas price surge, the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll showed. Asked which political party is more responsible, 65% of poll respondents said Republicans were to blame compared to 27% who said Democrats.

Four out of five Americans said they expect gas prices to rise further. Republicans are defending narrow majorities in the U.S. House and the Senate in the midterms. Their hopes of keeping control of the House have been bolstered by recent court rulings that could lead to voting district boundaries that are more favorable to Republicans. Republican strategists say the party's chances would further improve if gasoline prices came down.

But with no agreement in sight between Washington and Tehran, about three in 10 Americans already expect to cut back on summer vacation plans if gas prices hold firm, the poll found. Many expect to cancel their trips or travel shorter distances.

Trump has repeatedly promised gas prices will fall when the war ends, though analysts warn that is unlikely to happen quickly. The public isn't sure who has the upper hand in the conflict. Only one in three say America has the advantage, while about one in seven say Iran has it, the Reuters/Ipsos poll showed. The rest said they weren't sure or that neither side has an advantage.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll was conducted online and gathered responses from 1,254 U.S. adults nationwide.

Rare shelter for displaced LGBTQ+ people in Lebanon offers a home

Catherine Cartier and Emilie Madi
REUTERS



Mohammed, a gay man displaced from southern Lebanon, who spoke to Reuters on condition that his last name not be used, closes the door at a temporary shelter for displaced people in Beirut.
RAGHED WAKE/REUTERS

BEIRUT – Mohammed's life as a gay man in conservative south Lebanon was already rife with challenges. But Israeli strikes on his hometown in March were the final straw, pushing him to flee to a rare shelter in Beirut hosting LGBTQ+ people.

Most of the more than one million people displaced by the war between Israel and Lebanese armed group Hezbollah live with relatives or have rented apartments.

Another 124,000 have sought refuge in government shelters, and the most vulnerable are eking out a living in the streets.

But those options are rarely available to members of Lebanon's LGBTQ+ community, who are often rejected by their families, face discrimination by government authorities and may be struggling financially.

Though Lebanon was generally considered a relative safe haven for the LGBTQ+ community in the Middle East, recent incidents, including the disruption of a drag show in 2023 by an angry mob, have left LGBTQ+ people feeling vulnerable, activists say.

Israeli air raids hit the building where Mohammed was living with his brother near the port city of Sidon just two weeks after the war started on March 2.

Mohammed, who spoke to Reuters on condition that his last name not be used, said his relatives had never accepted his sexuality and barred him from having visitors over.

After their home was bombed, he fled to the Lebanese capital, where he now shares a room in a shelter run by LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations Helem and Mosaic.

"It was like a safe place. I even felt a sense of psychological relief when I arrived," Mohammed said.

Few options for displaced LGBTQ+ people

Government shelters are designed to host families and regularly exclude those not considered part of a conventional family unit, said Doumit Azzi, Helem's communications coordinator.

As a result, the shelter opened by Helem and Mosaic is often the only recourse for LGBTQ+ people in Lebanon.

Its rooms are furnished with donated items including bunk beds to maximize the number of people it can host. An LGBTQ+ person who lives elsewhere brings hot meals for residents.

The shelter's location is kept secret to avoid backlash from conservative members of Lebanese society.

Although the shelter is only a temporary home, Mohammed said he can live authentically there.

"I'm Mohammed, that's it. Just the way I want to be, not the way others want me to be."

The war has compounded the dangers for the LGBTQ+ community, the shelter's staff said. Despite a ceasefire announced on April 16, continuing hostilities have kept many from returning home.

A hotline run by Mosaic has been receiving around 100 calls a day seeking help, according to Samar, a social worker with the organization who also asked her last name not be used.

"In normal times and without war, there are many risks to LGBTQ people, especially related to protection. What if there's a war?" she said.

She told Reuters that crises often exacerbated gaps in Lebanon's social protection systems and deepened discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

Trans people especially vulnerable

Transgender people are particularly vulnerable because they struggle to obtain legal documents that recognize their gender.

Another resident at the shelter is an Egyptian who asked to be identified by the name Mina for security reasons, and arrived in January after fleeing Egypt, where he faced persecution as a transgender man.

But in Beirut, he has also run into discrimination.

He was recently asked for his papers at a checkpoint that he assumed was government-run, but his only identification card said he was a woman.

"I am a trans man, they were looking at the document and then at me, and things were said that shouldn't be said" because of how offensive they were, Mina said.

In the quiet hallways of the shelter, he feels safe.

"We try to treat each other in a cooperative way, we help each other and we try to be friends," he said. "If one of us needs help, the other stands by him."

FINANCIAL MARKETS

AI fervor edges out Iran war impasse

Wall St. inches to higher close as oil prices jump

Stephen Culp and Ragini Mathur
REUTERS

NEW YORK – U.S. stocks closed slightly higher on May 11, with AI optimism fueling upward momentum even as the earnings-driven fervor of the recent rally eased in the home stretch of reporting season and as crude prices rose, stoking inflation worries as U.S.-Iran peace negotiations stalled.

All three major U.S. stock indexes advanced and the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq eked out their latest in a series of all-time closing highs.

Semiconductors handily outshone other sectors, with the PHLX Semiconductor index jumping 2.6%, suggesting the AI wave is showing few signs of abating.

"The semis and AI infrastructure trade has taken on a life entirely of its own," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategy analyst at Baird in Louisville. "And there's so much momentum and chasing to get in on some of these names that it seems almost somewhat divorced from any sort of like headline or announcement."

But some market watchers believe the rally is about to run out of momentum.

Investor Michael Burry warned on May 11 that stocks are likely about to crash. In a post on his Substack, Burry, one of the biggest winners of the 2008 financial meltdown, said that the 2026 rally in tech stocks is about to end with a thud. "The market has jumped the shark," he wrote.

First-quarter reporting period is nearing the finish line, with 440 of the companies in the S&P 500 having reported. Of those, 83% have topped earnings expectations, according to LSEG IBES.

As of May 8, analysts estimated first-quarter S&P 500 earnings growth, on aggregate, of 28.6% year-on-year. That's nearly double the 14.4% first-quarter growth estimates as of April 1.

"The strength of the rally largely is a function of earnings growth, which is superb," said Terry Sandven, chief equity strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management in Minneapolis.

"Market watchers are looking ahead to next week, when the big-box retailers report, to get a sense of if there's any change in consumer spending behavior following, you know, elevated prices at the gas pump."

But as earnings season nears the finish line, focus returns to macroeconomics and geopolitical developments.

President Donald Trump dismissed Iran's response to a U.S. peace proposal, causing crude prices to spike and stoking concerns that a prolonged conflict will keep putting upward pressure on inflation, particularly at the gasoline pump, where consumers are feeling the pinch.

On that point, investors will pay close attention to economic indicators this week, particularly the Labor Department's Consumer Price Index and the retail sales report from the Commerce Department, scanning the data for signs that the ongoing surge in energy prices is metastasizing into broader inflation or affecting consumer spending.

Producer prices and industrial output are also on this week's economic calendar.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 95.31 points, or 0.19%, to 49,704.47, the S&P 500 gained 13.91 points, or 0.19%, to 7,412.84 and the Nasdaq Composite gained 27.05 points, or 0.10%, to 26,274.13.

Among the 11 major sectors of the S&P 500, energy stocks boasted the largest percentage gains, while communication services were the biggest laggards.

Companies slated to report this week include tech networking giant Cisco and semiconductor equipment maker Applied Materials, while heavyweights Nvidia and Walmart are due to report later in the month.

Media major Fox Corp rose 7.6% after beating third-quarter revenue estimates.

U.S. issues more sanctions over oil

Measure a response to aiding Iranian shipments

Andrea Shalal and Daphne Psaledakis
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – The U.S. government on May 11 announced sanctions against three people and nine companies, including four based in Hong Kong and four in the United Arab Emirates, for aiding Iran's shipment of oil to China. The ninth company is based in Oman.

The Treasury move follows sanctions announced on May 8 on individuals and companies aiding Iranian purchases of weapons and components used to make drones and ballistic missiles. It comes days before President Donald Trump's planned meeting with Xi Jinping, where he is expected to press the Chinese leader to help resolve the standoff with Iran and reopen the critical Strait of Hormuz.

Treasury said the new designations by the Office of Foreign Assets Control were aimed at individuals and entities that helped Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps sell and ship its allotment of Iranian oil to China using a series of front companies.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the Trump administration would continue to ratchet up pressure on Tehran to deprive the Iranian government and military of funding for weapons, its nuclear program or support for proxies in the region.

"Treasury will continue to cut the Iranian regime off from the financial networks it uses to carry out terrorist acts and to destabilize the global economy," Bessent said. The IRGC, which is designated by Washington as a terrorist organization, relies on shell companies to arrange and receive payment for its allotment of Iranian oil shipments, Treasury said. The action May 11 builds on sanctions imposed in July 2025 on Golden Globe, a Turkey-based cover company that Treasury said handles hundreds of millions of dollars in IRGC oil sales annually.

The three people sanctioned by the United States work for the IRGC's Shaid Purja'fari oil headquarters, coordinating payments through Golden Globe, Treasury said.

The companies targeted include:

- Hong Kong-based Hong Kong Blue Ocean Ltd and Hong Kong-based Hong Kong Sanmu Ltd, both of which Treasury described as cover companies that arrange the sale and shipment of Iranian oil.
- Dubai-based Ocean Allianz Shipping LLC and Sharjah-based Atic Energy FZE, which facilitated shipments of Iranian oil on five sanctioned shadow fleet tankers in 2025.
- Oman-based Zeus Logistics Group, which arranged vessels to carry Iranian oil cargoes.
- Hong Kong-based Jiandi HK Ltd, which signed a deal with the IRGC to purchase tens of millions of dollars of Iranian oil.
- Hong Kong-based Max Honor International Trade Co Ltd, which purchased millions of barrels of Iranian oil from the IRGC in 2025.
- Dubai-based Blanca Goods Wholesaler LLC
- Dubai-based Universal Fortune Trading LLC, which Treasury said had also been used as a front company by the National Iranian Oil Company.

Lebanon urges U.S. to put pressure on Israel

REUTERS

BEIRUT – Lebanon's president has urged the United States to put pressure on Israel to cease fire and stop home demolitions in south Lebanon, the presidency said on May 11, as the death toll from Israeli attacks rose.

Lebanon's health ministry said 74 people had been killed by Israeli strikes in the last three days despite a truce announced last month in fighting between Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah and the Israeli military, a spokesperson said. Tehran said it had demanded security for Lebanon as part of a proposal for ending the wider war with the U.S. and reopening the Strait of Hormuz. President Donald Trump has rejected Iran's proposal.

The Hezbollah-Israel conflict reignited on March 2 when the group opened fire at Israel in support of Tehran.

Hostilities have continued since Trump declared a ceasefire on April 16, mostly in south Lebanon, where Israel is occupying a self-declared security zone, saying it aims to guard against Hezbollah attacks. The Lebanese health ministry spokesperson said the victims since May 9 had been killed in various Israeli strikes, including one that killed at least seven people in the southern town of Saksakiyeh.

It said 2,869 people had been killed since March 2, including 584 medics, women and minors.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, in a meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa, "stressed ... the necessity of pressure on Israel to halt fire and military operations and the destruction and bulldozing of homes," the presidency said. Israel has been demolishing villages in the south, saying it is acting against Hezbollah militants embedded in civilian areas.

Aoun and Issa also reviewed "developments related" to a third round of talks due in Washington between Lebanese and Israeli government representatives, the presidency said.

Washington last month hosted two rounds of talks between the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors to Washington, the highest-level contacts between Israel and Lebanon in decades. The United States will facilitate the third round on May 14 and 15, the State Department said.

Lebanon's delegation will be headed by former ambassador to Washington Simon Karam. Aoun, who nominated Karam for the role, gave him his directives during a meeting on May 9, the presidency said.

Hezbollah has demanded the government cancel the talks. Israel last week carried out its first strike on Beirut's Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs since the ceasefire was declared. Israel says the strike killed the commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan force. Hezbollah has not confirmed his death.

Israel says Hezbollah has launched hundreds of rockets and drones at Israel since March 2. Some 1.2 million people have been driven from their homes. Israel says 17 of its soldiers have been killed, along with two civilians.

Ukraine

Continued from Page 1NN

wounded in a Ukrainian attack on Russia's southern Belgorod region, Russian state news agency TASS cited the regional governor as saying on May 11.

The General Staff of Ukraine's military, in a May 11 morning report, said 180 battlefield clashes had been recorded along the front line over the previous 24 hours.

The General Staff said on that afternoon that Russian troops had carried out 38 new assaults on Ukrainian positions, adding: "Artillery shelling of border areas continues."

Regional governors in Ukraine reported on May 11 that at least three people had been killed in the southeastern Zaporizhzhia and southern Kherson regions over the past 24 hours.

Ukrainian authorities on May 11 named Zelenskyy's powerful former chief of staff as a suspect in a major corruption probe, a move likely to pile pressure on the president's office at a sensitive moment in the war with Russia.

Kyiv's political class was rocked by a wide-ranging investigation last year that had fueled public anger and prompted the ex-top adviser and Zelenskyy's right-hand man, Andriy Yermak, to resign.

In a statement, Ukraine's anti-graft agencies said Yermak is suspected of participating in a criminal group that laundered around $10.5 million through an elite housing development outside the capital, Kyiv.

The agencies did not name Yermak, in line with Ukrainian law, but he was widely identified by local media. Speaking to Ukrainian outlet Radio Liberty, he denied owning real estate in the development but did not comment further.

The case is part of a broader probe into high-level graft first unveiled last November, when a former Zelenskyy business partner was accused of running a $100 million kickback scheme at the state atomic agency.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius attend a joint press conference, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv on May 11. PROVIDED BY UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SERVICE VIA REUTERS

A former deputy prime minister and close associate of Zelenskyy's was also charged as part of the investigation.

Zelenskyy's communications adviser, Dmytro Lytvyn, told reporters it was too early to comment.

Yermak was widely seen as Ukraine's second most powerful person after Zelenskyy, wielding outsize influence across much of Ukrainian politics despite holding an unelected position.

The former film producer and entertainment lawyer frequently appeared at the president's side at public events, and had also been Kyiv's lead negotiator in U.S.-backed peace talks with Russia.

Iran

Continued from Page 1NN

warning banks about attempts to evade existing curbs.

Trickle of shipping through Hormuz

Traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is at a trickle compared with before the war. Shipping data on Kpler and LSEG showed that three tankers laden with crude exited the waterway last week, with trackers switched off to avoid an Iranian attack.

A second Qatari LNG tanker was attempting to transit the strait, the data showed, days after the first such cargo crossed under an arrangement involving Iran and Pakistan. Sporadic flare-ups around the strait in recent days have tested the ceasefire.

Iran's Qalibaf seized on the mounting discontent in the United States, warning that a prolonged war would deepen the burden on Americans. "The longer they drag their feet, the more American taxpayers will pay for it," he said in his post on X. Washington has also struggled to build international support, with NATO allies refusing to send ships to reopen the waterway without a full peace deal and an internationally mandated mission.



Sporadic flare-ups around the Strait of Hormuz in recent days have tested a ceasefire that has paused all-out warfare in the Middle East since it took effect in early April. REUTERS FILE

Hakan Fidan, the foreign minister of Turkey, which has been liaising closely with the United States, Iran and mediator Pakistan since the start of the war, will hold talks in Qatar on May 12 on the conflict and on ensuring navigational safety in the strait, a Turkish diplomatic source said.

The war is also exposing rifts within the Middle East, with some U.S. allies taking a more direct role in the conflict. The United Arab Emirates, which has borne the brunt of Iranian counter-attacks, has carried out military strikes on Iran, the Wall Street Journal reported on May 11, citing people familiar with the matter.

The strikes, which the UAE has not publicly acknowledged, included an attack on a refinery on Iran's Lavan Island last month, the Journal said.

Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

At the time of the April 8 strike on Lavan, the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company called it an "enemy attack." The next day, Iran's Mizan news agency reported it was carried out by Mirage fighter jets used by the UAE.

Trump is expected to arrive in Beijing on May 13, where Iran is set to be among the topics discussed with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Trump has been leaning on China to use its influence to push Tehran toward a deal with Washington.

Voting

Continued from Page 1NN

includes two majority-Black districts out of seven. Both are held by Black Democrats. The lower court decided that a prior map had intentionally discriminated against Black voters and unlawfully diluted their voting power. Alabama officials had argued in Supreme Court filings that Alabama's court-ordered map shared the same constitutional defects as Louisiana's.

Alabama's Republican Attorney General Steve Marshall in a social media post called the order a "major victory at the U.S. Supreme Court."

"For too long, unelected federal judges have had more say over Alabama's elections than Alabama's voters," Marshall wrote. "That ended today."

Deuel Ross, a lawyer at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund who represents a group of plaintiffs in the case, said his clients were "deeply disappointed that the Supreme Court has temporarily cleared the way for Alabama to use an intentionally discriminatory map."

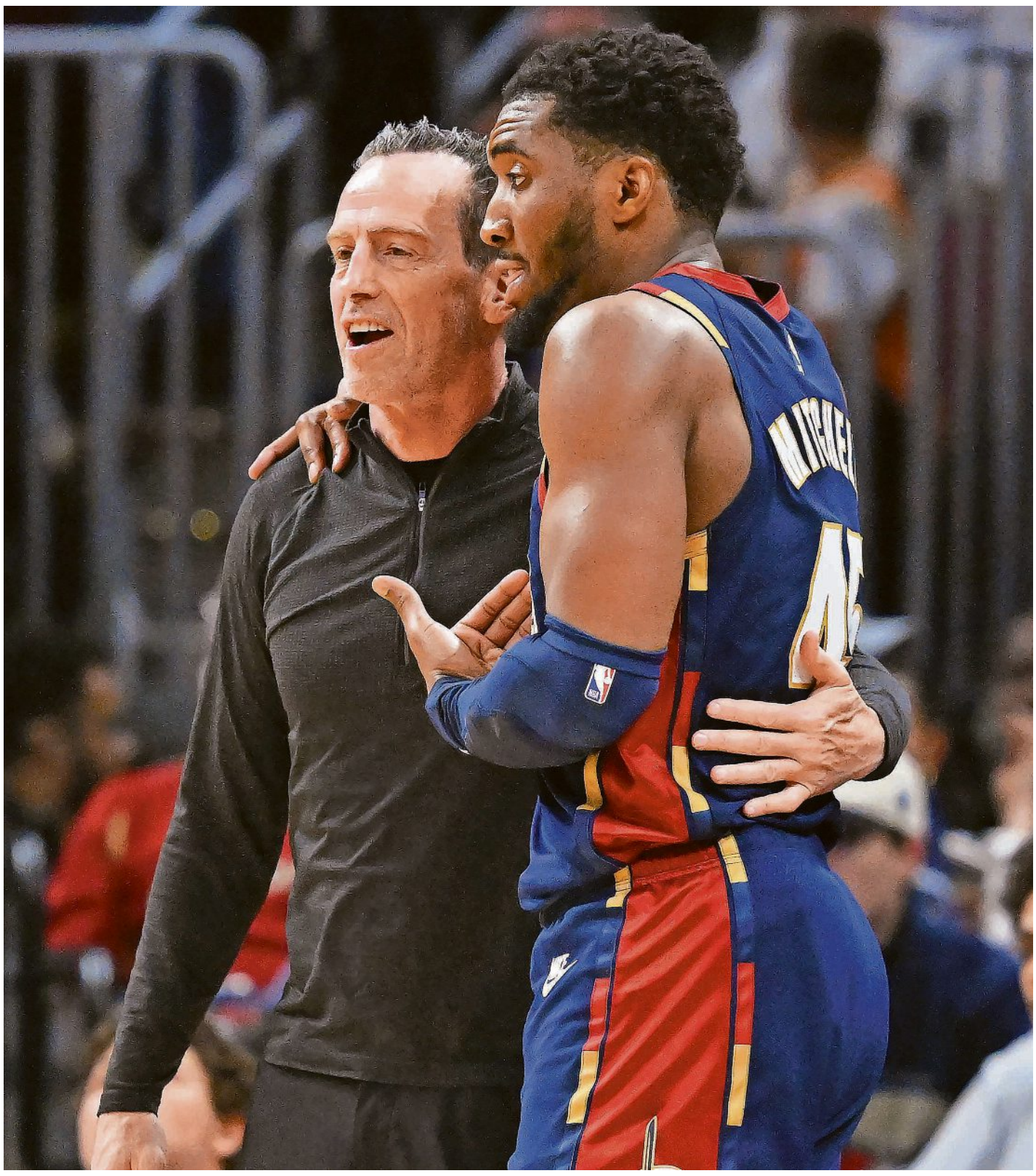
"The court's decision interferes with the ongoing election and puts the validity of the votes of thousands of early voters into doubt," Ross said. "We will consider all of our options to reinstate the court-ordered map and protect the rights of voters."

In a dissent, liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor emphasized that the lower court's ruling concerning Alabama's map was more expansive than the case involving Louisiana and included a finding of unconstitutional discrimination by intentionally diluting the votes of Black voters in Alabama. The majority's decision to set aside the lower court's ruling is therefore "inappropriate and will cause only confusion as Alabamians begin to vote in the elections scheduled for next week," Sotomayor wrote in a dissent that was joined by her two fellow liberal justices.

She said the lower court "remains free on remand to decide for itself whether Callais has any bearing on its Fourteenth Amendment analysis or if its prior reasoning is unaffected by that decision," referring to the court's April 29 decision, called Louisiana v. Callais. In 2023, the court had upheld the lower court's decision that the state's Republican-drawn electoral map diluted Black voters' power, violating the Voting Rights Act.

SPORTS EXTRA

NBA PLAYOFFS



Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell embraces coach Kenny Atkinson during the fourth quarter of Game 4 of a second-round playoff series against the Detroit Pistons at Rocket Arena on May 11 in Cleveland. JASON MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

CAVS EVEN SERIES WITH PISTONS

Donovan Mitchell ignited a 24-0 run for Cleveland, including the first 22 points of the third quarter, and the Cavs scorched the Detroit Pistons 112-103 in Game 4 of the Eastern Conference semifinals on May 11 at Rocket Arena to tie the best-of-seven series at 2-2. Mitchell finished with 43 points, an NBA record-tying 39 in the second half, after going 1-for-8 from the field in the first half. Game 5 is May 13 at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit. **STORY, PAGE 2NS**

Report: Spurs' Wembanyama will not be suspended after ejection

Lorenzo Reyes USA TODAY

The San Antonio Spurs, largely because Victor Wembanyama's second quarter ejection, missed out on the chance in Game 4 to take a commanding lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

Now, they can breathe a sigh of relief.

According to ESPN's Shams Charania, Wembanyama has avoided suspension over the right elbow he threw at Minnesota Timberwolves forward Naz Reid on Sunday, May 10 in Game 4, an eventual 114-109 Minnesota victory.

This news comes as a massive relief for San Antonio, which is now in a 2-2 tie in the series. Wembanyama is the team's best player and arguably the player in the entire NBA who most impacts games on both ends of the floor.

Once he left the game, the Timberwolves attacked the paint more freely because of the void Wembanyama left down low.

Wembanyama committed the foul with 8:39 to play in the second quarter.

During the play, Wembanyama was battling with Reid and Jaden McDaniels after Wembanyama hauled in a rebound. Reid and McDaniels both tried to grasp for the ball, trying to pry it from Wembanyama's hands. Wembanyama then cocked his right elbow and flung it toward Reid, striking him around the neck.

Reid instantly fell to the court as McDaniels continued trying to wrap up the ball. Officials blew the whistle and separated both sides. They eventually reviewed the play, determining that the contact was "unnecessary and excessive," and elevated the call to flagrant foul penalty two, which results in an automatic ejection.

Wembanyama appeared to be surprised on the bench, seemingly unaware of the rule around a flagrant foul two. It marked the first ejection of Wembanyama's career.



Spurs star Victor Wembanyama left Game 4 early on May 10 with four points against the Timberwolves. DAVID BERDING/GETTY IMAGES

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Missouri RB Hardy in stable condition after shooting

Calum McAndrew
Columbia Daily Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

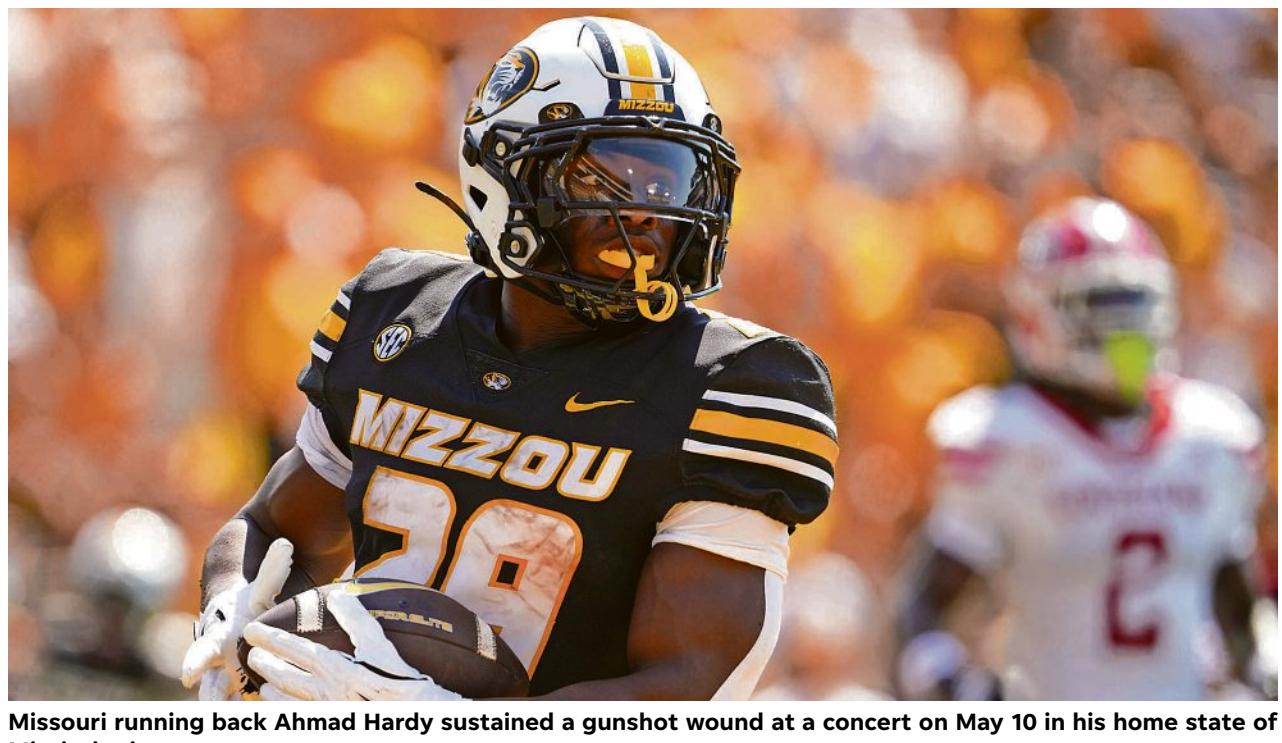
Missouri football running back Ahmad Hardy sustained a gunshot wound at a concert early Sunday morning in his home state of Mississippi. He underwent surgery and is currently in stable condition, per the team.

A timeline for his return to football activities is currently unknown.

"Ahmad is deeply loved by his teammates, coaches, friends, family and fans," Missouri football posted to its official social media account. "We will continue to stand beside him and his family through this difficult time, offering our love, prayers, strength and support. A timeline for his return to football activities is unknown at this time. Mizzou Athletics will provide more information on his status when it becomes available."

Hardy is a junior from Oma, Mississippi, and played at Lawrence County High School in Monticello. He emerged as one of the best running backs in the country in his first season with the Tigers in 2025, running for an SEC-leading 1,649 yards and 16 touchdowns.

It was immediately unclear where the concert was or how many people were impacted in the shooting.



Missouri running back Ahmad Hardy sustained a gunshot wound at a concert on May 10 in his home state of Mississippi. ED ZURGA/GETTY IMAGES

NHL: STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS

AVALANCHE 5, WILD 2 (AVALANCHE LEAD SERIES 3-1)

Avs push Wild to brink, win Game 4

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA



Jack Drury (18) of the Avalanche skates with the puck against Yakov Trenin of the Wild during the third period in Game 4 at Grand Casino Arena on May 11 in St. Paul, Minnesota. DAVID BERDING/GETTY IMAGES

Parker Kelly scored the go-ahead goal with 8:28 left in the third period and the Colorado Avalanche pulled away for a 5-2 win over the Minnesota Wild in Game 4 of their Western Conference semifinal series on Monday in Saint Paul, Minn.

Nathan MacKinnon and Brock Nelson added empty-net goals in the final minute for the Avalanche, who seized a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series. Colorado's Nazem Kadri and Ross Colton also scored, Martin Necas had two assists, and Mackenzie Blackwood made 19 saves.

Danila Yurov and Nico Sturm tallied for the Wild, who will try to stave off elimination when the series shifts back to Denver for Game 5 on Wednesday night.

Minnesota goaltender Jesper Wallstedt allowed three goals on 32 shots.

The score was tied at 2-all when Kelly forced a turnover by the Wild and capitalized on a one-timer from the slot. His rising shot produced his first career playoff goal.

Minnesota pulled Wallstedt for an extra skater with less than two minutes to go, but Blackwood withstood the pressure. Colorado capitalized on an empty-net goal by MacKinnon with 32.6 seconds left and another one by Nelson with 7.3 seconds remaining.

Minnesota opened the scoring on the power play with 10:14 to go in the first period.

Brock Faber ripped a one-timer from just inside the blue line in the middle, and Yurov deflected it into the back of the net for his first career playoff goal.

The Avalanche answered with a power-play goal of their own with 13:52 remaining in the second period. Kadri fired an initial shot from the right circle that Wallstedt stopped, but the rebound kicked right back to him and he scored on the second attempt.

Colton gave Colorado a 2-1 lead with 13:04 left in the third period. Nicolas Roy had the puck in the right circle and zipped it across the slot for Colton, who punched in a shot.

The Wild answered to even the score at 2-all with 10:45 left.

Quinn Hughes fired a backhand pass to Sturm, who buried a one-timer from the right circle.

MacKinnon left the game late in the second period after taking a puck to the face.

He held a towel over his mouth and nose as he left, but he returned to action at the start of the third period.



Avalanche center Nathan MacKinnon lies on the ice after taking a puck to the face. MATT KROHN/IMAGN IMAGES

Colorado 5, Minnesota 2

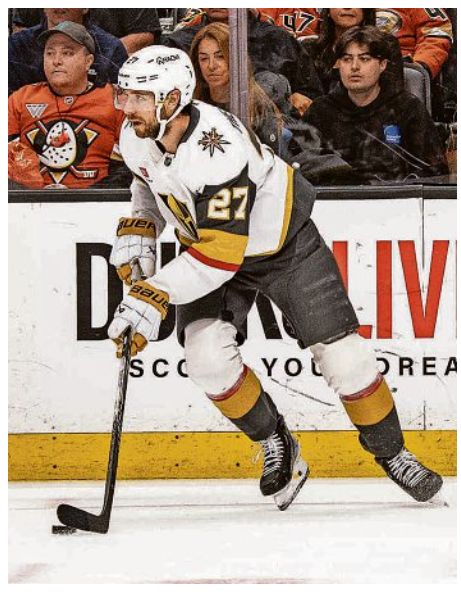
Colorado	0	1	4 –	5
Minnesota	1	0	1 –	2

First Period–1, Minnesota, Yurov 1 (Faber, Tarasenko), 9:46. Penalties–Colton, COL (Roughing), 0:48. Yurov, MIN (Roughing), 0:48. Manson, COL (Butt-ending), 7:07.
Second Period–1, Colorado, Kadri 2 (Necas), 6:08. Penalties–Bogosian, MIN (Interference), 2:42. Trenin, MIN (Closing Hand on Puck), 6:01. Colorado bench, served by Colton (Too many men), 10:48. Kelly, COL (Cross-checking), 15:39.
Third Period–1, Colorado, Colton 1 (Roy), 6:56. 1, Minnesota, Sturm 1 (Hughes), 9:15. 1, Colorado, Kelly 1 (Drury), 11:32. 1, Colorado, MacKinnon 6 (Necas), 19:27. 1, Colorado, Nelson 2, 19:52. Penalties–M.Foligno, MIN (Cross-checking), 20:00.
Shots on Goal–Colorado 10-11-13–34. Minnesota 4-8-9–21.
Power-play opportunities–Colorado 1 of 2; Minnesota 1 of 4.
Goalies–Colorado, Blackwood 1-0-0 (21 shots-19 saves). Minnesota, Wallstedt 5-4-0 (32-29).
A–19,136 (18,064).

DUCKS AT GOLDEN KNIGHTS (SERIES TIED 2-2)

Golden Knights optimistic heading home for Game 5

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA



Golden Knights defenseman Shea Theodore skates with the puck against the Ducks during the second period in Game 4 on May 10. CORINNE VOTAW/IMAGN IMAGES

Despite coming in off a 4-3 loss Sunday at Anaheim that evened their Western Conference semifinal series at 2-2, the Vegas Golden Knights remained a calm and confident group heading into Game 5 against the Ducks on Tuesday in Las Vegas.

And for good reason. Been there, done that.

The Pacific Division champion Golden Knights found themselves in a similar situation in their first-round series against the Utah Mammoth. With the set tied 2-2, Vegas pulled out a dramatic 5-4 double-overtime win in Game 5 on a short-handed goal by Brett Howden en route to a six-game series win.

That victory gave Vegas a 5-2 record all-time in Game 5s in best-of-seven series that are tied 2-2. The Golden Knights, who won the 2023 Stanley Cup, have a perfect 5-0 series record when winning Game 5 in that situation.

"They've been through so much as a team," Vegas coach John Tortorella said Monday. "Gone through all the processes, all the things you go through in a playoff series. So they're experienced at it."

Howden, who has scored a team-high seven playoff goals, added, "We're feeling good about our game, and we feel like we have another step, too, so looking forward to (Tuesday) night."

The Golden Knights, who cruised to a 6-2 victory in Game 3, weren't satisfied with garnering a split of the two games on the road and regaining home-ice advantage.

"I think going in you're not looking to split," Howden said. "Not satisfied with just getting the one win after winning the first game. We were really looking to win the next game, but that's the way it went, and now we've got a best-of-three series and we've got home ice."

Tortorella was asked if he was satisfied with the performance of his team over the first four games of the series.

"I think our game's growing, yes, but it's going to have to grow some more," Tortorella said. "It's not complicated. It's big plays ... guys stepping up at certain times. The stakes are high now when you're getting to the short strokes of the series."

One bright spot for Vegas from Sunday was Tomas Hertl snapping a 29-game goal drought that dated back to March 4. Hertl scored 24 goals to go with 34 assists in the regular season.

"You know with goal-scorers, an empty-netter, 6-on-5, it doesn't matter," Tortorella said. "Hopefully it releases him a little bit. He's been close for quite a while. He bangs one in and hopefully that will help him as we move forward."

Meanwhile, Anaheim got a big game from Cutter Gauthier. The winger, who led the team in goals (41) and points (69) during the regular season, had been held off the scoresheet in the Vegas series until he dished three assists in Game 4.

SABRES AT CANADIENS (CANADIENS LEAD SERIES 2-1)

Sabres out to overcome their 'self-inflicted' issues

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA



Sabres goalie Alex Lyon makes a save against the Canadiens during the first period in Game 3 on May 10 at the Bell Centre. ERIC BOLTE/IMAGN IMAGES

The Buffalo Sabres know they have not been at the level that helped them get to the top of the Atlantic Division in the regular season. After winning Game 1 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series against the Montreal Canadiens, the Sabres fell 5-1 in Game 2 before a 6-2 setback in Game 3 on Sunday.

They now find themselves down 2-1 in the best-of-seven set heading into Game 4 on Tuesday in Montreal.

Buffalo opened the scoring 53 seconds into Game 3, quieting a raucous crowd in Montreal. But poor puck decisions and straying away from their tight defensive structure against the Canadiens' speedy and dynamic offense resulted in the Sabres chasing the game the rest of the night.

"Very much self-inflicted. It's all on our decisions and our will and our compete," winger Alex Tuch said. "We've got to look ourselves in the mirror and get back to the game we know we can play and the game that's been successful for us."

Tuch has already begun to face the mirror. The 30-year-old led Buffalo with seven points (four goals, three assists) in the first round against the Boston Bruins but has been held without a point against Montreal.

He's known for his strong two-way play, including an elite ability to strip pucks and force turnovers while also putting the puck in the net. But in Game 3, he looked nothing like that player.

"I don't think we want to forget about that feeling last night. Me personally, I think that was probably – it's definitely my worst defensive game in the playoffs," Tuch said. "So I'm not going to forget that feeling. But yeah, I think it's only 2-1 in the series. We have to come out flying (Tuesday). No excuses, we've just got to be a lot better."

Meanwhile, the Canadiens are looking for a third straight victory in the series to push the Sabres to the brink of elimination.

Sunday marked the first time in this postseason that Montreal has won consecutive games.

"It's the biggest game for them," Canadiens defenseman Kaiden Guhle said. "They don't want to go down 3-1. I think we just have to keep playing our game. Don't overthink it too much. Not that we were nervous (before), but we might have been playing on our heels a little bit. We've got to play on our toes, keep bringing it to them and keep playing our game. We'll be just fine."

Montreal has been doing just that, and has benefited from some welcome secondary scoring. Forward Alex Newhook has been the biggest contributor on that front, with four of his team-leading five goals coming over the past two games.

"I'm feeling good," Newhook said. "We're getting scoring from everyone. Contributions from everyone. I believe in myself."

HORSE RACING

Iron Honor early favorite for Preakness

Jason Frakes
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Iron Honor was made the 9-2 morning-line favorite during Monday's draw for the Preakness Stakes, set for May 16, at Laurel Park in Laurel, Maryland.

Iron Honor drew the No. 9 post in a full field of 14 horses for the $2 million, Grade 1 Preakness.

Iron Honor, trained by Chad Brown, will enter the Preakness off a seventh-place finish in the Grade 2 Wood Memorial on April 4 at Aqueduct.

The Preakness is being held at Laurel Park because of renovations at Pimlico Race Course, the traditional host track located in Baltimore.

Post time is set for 7:01 p.m., and NBC will have live coverage from 4-7:30 p.m.

There will be no Triple Crown on the line, as Kentucky Derby winner Golden Tempo will skip the Preakness.

Trainer Cherie DeVaux announced last week that Golden Tempo will point toward the Belmont on June 6 at Saratoga.

Only three horses who competed in the Kentucky Derby are entered in the Preakness — Ocelli (third in the Derby), Incredibolt (sixth) and Robusta (14th). Great White also was in the field at Churchill Downs but was scratched after tossing his jockey just before going into the starting gate.

Incredibolt was a late addition to the Preakness field Monday.

"He came out of the Derby in good shape, and we have been clocking the field of (Preakness) horses and we thought it would be the right opportunity to try the horse back," trainer Riley Mott said.

Preakness post positions, horse, trainer, jockey, odds

1. Taj Mahal, Brittany Russell, Sheldon Russell, 5-1
2. Ocelli, Whit Beckman, Tyler Gaffalione, 6-1
3. Crupper, Donnie Von Hemel, Junior Alvarado, 30-1
4. Robusta, Doug O'Neill, Rafael Bejarano, 30-1
5. Talkin, Danny Gargan, Irad Ortiz Jr., 20-1
6. Chip Honcho, Steve Asmussen, Jose Ortiz, 5-1
7. The Hell We Did, Todd Fincher, Luis Saez, 15-1
8. Bull by the Horns, Saffie Joseph Jr., Micah Husbands, 30-1
9. Iron Honor, Chad Brown, Flavien Prat, 9-2
10. Napoleon Solo, Chad Summers, Paco Lopez, 8-1
11. Corona de Oro, Dallas Stewart, John Velazquez, 30-1
12. Incredibolt, Riley Mott, Jaime Torres, 5-1
13. Great White, John Ennis, Alex Achard, 15-1
14. Pretty Boy Miah, Jeremiah Englehart, Ricardo Santana Jr., 15-1

Jason Frakes: 502-582-4046; jfrakes@courier-journal.com. Follow on X @KentuckyDerbyCJ.



Chip Honcho gets his ear rubbed by exercise rider Roberto Howell as they wait to take to the track from the backside at Churchill Downs on April 17. MATT STONE/COURIER JOURNAL-USA TODAY NETWORK

GOLF

Spieth has career Grand Slam in sight

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Jordan Spieth is not a grillmaster. There isn't much time in his schedule as a professional golfer to become great at a hobby; he rates himself "probably a 15-handicap" when it comes to smoking meat.

But spending time over the charcoals last fall got him thinking about a lesson he could take into improving his golf swing.

"I was smoking chicken in the fall on a big smoker I have and it got up to 155 quickly and then takes a while," Spieth recalled Monday. "I was like, man, this kind of feels like – I was working on (swing) stuff and I was – it kind of feels like what I'm trying to do in the swing. I go play and it's a little bit out of the barriers that we call sustainable. Kind of outside the margins that we call OK.

"... I don't know how – if it's that way for everybody and just seemed that way for me right now where, you know, it's there, it's there. It's like close. It's matching what I want to do. It feels good and it's producing right stuff."

Spieth is beginning to see the results of some stop-start swing progress, and though he doesn't have a top-10 finish on the PGA Tour this year to show for it, he's still going to be a popular face at the PGA Championship this week at Aronimink Golf Club.

His T12 at the Masters and T18 at the Cadillac Championship two weeks ago could be signs that the three-time major winner is able to contend at majors again, with the PGA Championship the only one missing from his resume for the career Grand Slam.



Jordan Spieth prepares to take a shot during a practice round for the PGA Championship on May 11 at Aronimink Golf Club. BILL STREICHER/IMAGN IMAGES

While admitting "it would be amazing" to wrap up the feat and become the seventh player to achieve the modern Grand Slam, Spieth said he can't let that affect his preparation.

"As far as the career Grand Slam, this tournament's always highlighted. If I can win one more tournament in my life, it would obviously be this one for that reason," Spieth told reporters. "But the easiest way to do that is to not try to, in a weird way, you know. Just go out and get ready for the first hole, get a good game plan in and attack it the way it needs to be attacked.

"My game has been getting better and better. It's plenty good to have a chance to win. It's about working my way into contention."

Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy are the six who've collected a Masters, U.S. Open, Open Championship and PGA Championship in their careers. Arnold Palmer and Tom Watson were a PGA Championship shy of the milestone, as Spieth is now.

The sport saw 59 years go by with just one player, Woods, added to that list between Nicklaus finishing the feat in 1966 and McIlroy winning his long- sought Masters in 2025. The Northern Irishman went more than 10 years between his previous major title and his first green jacket, so Spieth did not want to draw a comparison.

"My situation was certainly different than his at Augusta, so I think that was unique to him," Spieth said of McIlroy. "Rory's was obviously a very unique final round and his history of having led there and stuff like that, so I don't think it would feel similar.

"For me, it would just be like, look, I've been kind of – I went on a run of feeling like I was contending or having a good chance of contending at every major for a number of years and then it was periodic, and I feel like I'm close to being able to go back to doing that again. So I just want to give myself a chance."

Spieth won the Masters and U.S. Open back-to-back in 2015, then added the Open Championship in 2017. He has just seven top-10s at majors ever since, including a T3 behind a victorious Brooks Koepka at the 2019 PGA Championship.

NFL NOTEBOOK

Cowboys slated for 2 marquee games

WIRE REPORTS

There is no denying the intrigue and anticipation for the start of the John Harbaugh era with the New York Giants. Apparently, the NFL believes this is a team and a moment worthy of prime time.

The Giants will open the 2026 regular season at home on Sunday Night Football on Sept. 13 against the Dallas Cowboys. Harbaugh's first game with Big Blue will feature Jaxson Dart vs. Dak Prescott, who played just one half, but the Cowboys lost their QB1's first start to the Giants in last year's finale since his rookie season.

The Philadelphia Eagles are playing the Cowboys on Thanksgiving on Nov. 26 in a schedule leak first reported by NBC Sports Philadelphia's Ryan Fowler, then confirmed by the NFL.

Report: Chargers, veteran tight end Njoku agree to 1-year deal

The Los Angeles Chargers have agreed to terms with tight end David Njoku on a one-year contract worth up to $8 million, NFL Network reported.

Njoku, 29, has played all nine of his NFL seasons in Cleveland. He ranks second among Browns tight ends in all-time touchdowns (34) and pass receptions (384). Only Hall of Famer Ozzie Newsome (47; 662) amassed more, from 1978-90.

He had revealed in an Instagram post in February that he would enter free agency and not return to the Cleveland Browns.

Njoku, a 2017 first-round selection (29th overall) from the University of Miami (Fla.) made an immediate impact, hauling in 88 receptions for 1,025 yards and eight touchdowns in his first two pro seasons. He peaked in 2023, accumulating career bests for catches (81), yards (882) and touchdowns (six) and earning his lone Pro Bowl selection.

However, he missed 11 total games in 2024 and 2025 due to injury and his production slipped. Last season, rookie Harold Fannin Jr. became the prime target at tight end, catching 72 balls for 731 yards and six touchdowns while Njoku finished with 33 receptions for 293 yards and four scores.

Jaguars sign veteran RB Abdullah

The Jacksonville Jaguars signed veteran running back Ameer Abdullah. No terms of the deal were disclosed.

Abdullah, who turns 33 next month, is entering his 12th season in the league after being drafted by the Detroit Lions in the second round of the 2015 NFL Draft.

He landed on season-ending injured reserve after a rib issue sustained in the San Francisco 49ers' preseason opener against the Denver Broncos Aug. 9 but was released on an injury settlement ten days later and signed with the Indianapolis Colts.

Abdullah compiled just 14 carries and 16 catches for 159 total yards and a touchdown in 13 games (0 starts) in a crowded Colts' backfield last season. However, he is expected to bring a veteran presence to a young Jacksonville running back core that includes Bhayshul Tuten and Chris Rodriguez Jr., as well as add value with his special teams experience, having tallied 4,346 career yards on kick returns.

For his career, Abdullah has rushed for 2,054 yards and nine TDs, and caught 219 passes for 1,567 yards and 11 scores in 154 regular-season games (26 starts) for the Detroit Lions (2015-18), Minnesota Vikings (2018-21), Carolina Panthers (2021), Las Vegas Raiders (2022-24) and Colts.

Jacksonville also waived running back Ja'Quinden Jackson and placed undrafted free agent offensive lineman Jordan White on the reserve/retired list.

Report: Steelers agree to 4-year extension with kicker Boswell

The Pittsburgh Steelers have agreed to terms on a four-year extension with veteran kicker Chris Boswell, according to a report from ESPN.

The deal is reportedly for four years and $28 million, matching the highest average annual salary for a kicker in NFL history ($7 million), per ESPN, with the identical extension that Dallas Cowboys kicker Brandon Aubrey agreed to in April. Boswell was entering the final season under contract but is now signed through 2030. Boswell, 35, has played his entire 11-year career in Pittsburgh.