

## Russia fires on cities near nuke plant

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Concern about the potential for a radiation leak at Europe's largest nuclear power plant persisted as Ukrainian authorities said Saturday that Russian forces fired on areas just across the river and Russia claimed Ukrainian shelling hit a building where nuclear fuel is stored.

Authorities were distributing iodine tablets to residents who live near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in case of radiation exposure, which can cause health problems depending on the amount a person absorbs.

Much of the concern centers on the cooling systems for the plant's nuclear reactors. The systems require power to run, and the plant was temporarily knocked offline Thursday because of what officials said was fire damage to a transmission line. A cooling system failure could cause a nuclear meltdown.

Russian forces occupied the nuclear plant complex early in the 6-month-old war in Ukraine, and Ukrainian workers have kept it running. The Ukrainian and Russian governments have repeatedly accused the other of shelling the complex and nearby areas, raising fears of a possible catastrophe.

Periodic shelling has damaged the power station's infrastructure, Ukraine's nuclear power operator, Energoatom, said Saturday. "There are risks of hydrogen leakage and sputtering of radioactive substances, and the fire hazard is high," it said.

In the latest conflicting attack reports, the governor of Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, Valentyn Reznichenko, said Saturday that Grad missiles and artillery shells hit the cities of Nikopol and Marhanets, each located about 6 miles and across the Dnieper River from the plant.

But Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Ukrainian forces had fired on the plant from Marhanets. Over the past day, 17 Ukrainian shells hit the plant, with four striking the roof of a building that stores nuclear fuel, he said.

The U.N.'s atomic energy agency has tried to work out an agreement to send a team in to inspect and help secure the plant. Officials said preparations for the visit were underway, but it remained unclear when it might take place.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said it was essential for International Atomic Energy Agency representatives to get to the plant as soon as possible and to

help keep it "under permanent Ukrainian control."

"The situation remains precarious and dangerous," Zelenskyy said in his latest nightly address. "Any repetition of (Thursday's) events, i.e., any disconnection of the station from the grid or any actions by Russia that could trigger the shutdown of the reactors, will once again put the station one step away from disaster."

Ukraine has claimed Russia is using the power plant as a shield by storing weapons there and launching attacks from around it. Moscow, for its part, accuses Ukraine of recklessly firing on the nuclear complex.

The dispute over the plant led Russia late Friday to block agreement on the final document of the 4-week-long review of the U.N. treaty that is considered the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. The draft document of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty review conference criticized Russia's takeover of the Zaporizhzhia plant.

The deputy head of Russia's delegation said the conference became "a political hostage" to countries that were trying "to settle scores with Russia by raising issues that are not directly related to the treaty."

## NATO head: Russia, China interested in Arctic

*Associated Press*

TORONTO — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned Friday about Russia's military buildup in the Arctic and China's increasing interest in that part of the world.

During a visit to Canada's north, Stoltenberg said the shortest path to North America for Russian missiles and bombers is over the North Pole.

He said Russia has set up a new Arctic Command and has opened hundreds of new and former Soviet-era Arctic military sites, including airfields and deep-water ports.

"We see a significant Russian military buildup with new bases, new weapons systems and also using the high north as a test bed for their most advanced weapons, in-

cluding hypersonic missiles," Stoltenberg said at a Canadian military base in Cold Lake, Alberta.

Stoltenberg also noted China has declared itself a "near Arctic" state.

He said Beijing plans to build the world's largest icebreaker and is spending tens of billions of dollars on energy, infrastructure and research projects in the north.

"Beijing and Moscow have also pledged to intensify practical cooperation in the Arctic. This forms part of a deepening strategic partnership that challenges our values and interests," Stoltenberg said.

He also noted climate change is making the Arctic more accessible for militaries and welcomed Canada's recent announcement that it will bolster its spending on de-

fense.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who accompanied Stoltenberg, showcased some of the spending and activities that Canada is making in the north.

Those include promises to allocate billions of dollars for new military equipment and capabilities, including plans to purchase new fighter jets and modernize North America's aging NORAD early-warning system with Washington.

"The ill-fated, unjustifiable decision of Russia to upend nearly 70 years of peace and stability of a rules-based order by invading a peaceful neighbor, has changed the way we need to look at the Arctic," Trudeau said, alluding to the Russian attack on Ukraine.

# Affidavit: Trump mixed classified items

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fourteen of the 15 boxes recovered from former President Donald Trump's Florida estate early this year contained classified documents, many of them top secret, mixed in with miscellaneous newspapers, magazines and personal correspondence, according to an FBI affidavit released Friday.

No space at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate was authorized for the storage of classified material, according to the court papers, which laid out the FBI's rationale for searching the property this month, including "probable cause to believe that evidence of obstruction will be found."

The 32-page affidavit — heavily redacted to protect the safety of witnesses and law enforcement officials and "the integrity of the ongoing investigation" — offers the most detailed de-

scription to date of the government records being stored at Mar-a-Lago long after Trump left the White House. It also reveals the gravity of the government's concerns that the documents were there illegally.

The document makes clear how the haphazard retention of top-secret government records, and the apparent failure to safeguard them despite months of entreaties from U.S. officials, has exposed Trump to fresh legal peril just as he lays the groundwork for another potential presidential run in 2024.

"The government is conducting a criminal investigation concerning the improper removal and storage of classified information in unauthorized spaces, as well as the unlawful concealment or removal of government records," an FBI agent wrote on the first page of the affidavit.

Documents previously made public show that federal agents

are investigating potential violations of multiple federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defense information under the Espionage Act. The other statutes address the concealment, mutilation or removal of records and the destruction, alteration or falsification of records in federal investigations.

The affidavit does not provide new details about 11 sets of classified records recovered during the Aug. 8 search at Mar-a-Lago but instead concerns a separate batch of 15 boxes that the National Archives and Records Administration retrieved from the home in January. The Archives sent the matter to the Justice Department, indicating in its referral that a review showed "a lot" of classified materials, the affidavit says.

The affidavit made the case to a judge that a search of Mar-a-Lago was necessary due to the

highly sensitive material found in those 15 boxes. Of 184 documents with classification markings, 25 were at the top-secret level, the affidavit says. Some had special markings suggesting they included information from highly sensitive human sources or the collection of electronic "signals" authorized by a special intelligence court.

And some of those classified records were mixed with other documents, including newspapers, magazines and miscellaneous print-outs, the affidavit says, citing a letter from the Archives.

Affidavits routinely remain sealed during pending investigations. But in an acknowledgment of the extraordinary public interest in the investigation, U.S. Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart on Thursday ordered the department by Friday to make public a redacted version of the affidavit.

# Fed chair suggests inflation fight far from over

Associated Press

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell delivered a stark warning Friday about the Fed's determination to fight inflation with more sharp interest rate hikes: It will likely cause pain for Americans in the form of a weaker economy and job losses.

The message landed with a thud on Wall Street, sending the Dow Jones Industrial Average down more than 1,000 points for the day.

"These are the unfortunate costs of reducing inflation," Powell said in a high-profile speech at the Fed's annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole. "But a failure to restore price stability would mean far greater pain."

Investors had been hoping for a signal from Powell that the Fed might soon moderate its rate increases later this year if inflation were to show further signs of easing. But the Fed chair indicated that that time may not be near, and stocks tumbled in response.

The Dow Jones average finished down 3% on Friday, its worst day in three months. The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite shed nearly 4%. Shorter-term Treasury yields climbed as traders built up bets for the Fed to stay aggressive with rates.

Some on Wall Street expect the economy to fall into recession later this year or early next year, after which they expect the Fed to reverse itself and reduce rates.

A number of Fed officials, though, have pushed back against that notion. Powell's remarks suggested that the Fed is aiming to raise its benchmark rate — to about 3.75% to 4% by next year — yet not so high as to tank the economy, in hopes of slowing growth long enough to conquer high inflation.

After raising its key short-term rate by a steep three-quarters of a point at each of its past two meetings — part of the Fed's fastest series of hikes since the early 1980s — Powell said the Fed might ease up on that pace "at some point," suggesting that any such slowing

isn't near.

Powell said the size of the Fed's rate increase at its next meeting in late September — whether one-half or three-quarters of a percentage point — will depend on inflation and jobs data. An increase of either size, though, would exceed the Fed's traditional quarter-point hike, a reflection of how severe inflation has become.

The Fed chair said that while lower inflation readings that have been reported for July have been "welcome," he added that, "a single month's improvement falls far short of what (Fed policymakers) will need to see before we are confident that inflation is moving down."

On Friday, an inflation gauge that is closely monitored by the Fed showed that prices actually declined 0.1% from June to July. Though prices did jump 6.3% in July from 12 months earlier, that was down from a 6.8% year-over-year jump in June, which had been the highest since 1982.

# Racial gaps seen in monkeypox vaccinations

Associated Press

The Biden administration said Friday there's enough monkeypox vaccine available now but health officials say the shots aren't getting to some of the people who need the protection the most.

About 10% of monkeypox vaccine doses have been given to Black people, even though they account for one-third of U.S. cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The new numbers come from 17 states and two cities, and represent the most comprehensive details yet on who has been getting the two-dose vaccines. Similar disparities had been reported previously by a few states and cities.

Most U.S. monkeypox cases have been in men who have sex with men, but officials

have stressed that anyone can catch the virus.

Experts offered several possible explanations for the disparity. It may be related to how and where shots are being offered and publicized. It may be that some Black men don't trust doctors and government public health efforts. Or they may be less willing to identify themselves as a person who is at higher risk of catching the disease.

The gap is an echo of disparities seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, when certain racial groups were a disproportionately large share of cases but a smaller fraction of the people initially receiving vaccinations, said Dr. Yvens Laborde, director of global health education at Ochsner Health in New Orleans.

"If we're not careful, the same thing will happen here" with monkeypox, he said.

Available information suggests that Black men are a growing proportion of monkeypox cases, said Caitlin Rivers, a Johns Hopkins University expert on government response to epidemics.

"This is a problem that is not resolving," she said.

The Biden administration said Friday it has shipped enough monkeypox vaccine to deliver the first of two doses to the group at highest risk of infection. That's an estimated 1.6 million men who have sex with other men, but the CDC does not have a racial breakdown of the group. The administration expects to have enough for second doses available by the end of next month.

# La. woman denied an abortion wants ban clarified

Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — A pregnant Louisiana woman who was denied an abortion — even though her fetus has a rare and fatal condition — demanded on Friday that Gov. John Bel Edwards and the legislature call a special session to clarify the state's restrictions on the procedure.

Nancy Davis, who is 15 weeks pregnant, said she will travel out of state next week for a "medically necessary" abortion. A state law currently in effect bans all abortions except if there is substantial risk of death or impairment to the woman if she continues her pregnancy and in the case of "medically futile" pregnancies. Davis, 36, and abortion-rights advocates for months have criticized the legislation as vague and confusing.

Their concerns are being echoed in numerous other states that, like Louisiana, passed so-called trigger laws when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the

landmark 1973 decision guaranteeing a constitutional right to abortion. Roughly a dozen states currently ban abortions at all stages of pregnancy, with some allowing for narrow exceptions such as in cases of rape, incest or when the pregnant woman's life is in danger.

"Ms. Davis was among the first women to be caught in the crosshairs of confusion due to Louisiana's rush to restrict abortion, but she will hardly be the last," Ben Crump, an attorney for Davis, said during a news conference held on the state's Capitol steps Friday.

Ten weeks into Davis' pregnancy, doctors at Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge diagnosed the fetus she is carrying with acrania, a rare and fatal condition in which the baby's skull fails to form in the womb. Davis was told that if she brought the pregnancy to full term and gave birth, the baby would likely survive for a very short amount of time — anywhere from several minutes to a week.

The physicians advised Davis to get an abortion, but said they could not perform the procedure.

"Basically, they said I had to carry my baby to bury my baby," Davis said. "They seemed confused about the law and afraid of what would happen to them."

If a doctor performs an illegal abortion in Louisiana, they could face up to 15 years in prison.

In a statement last week to news outlets, spokesperson Caroline Isemann said Woman's Hospital was not able to comment on a specific patient, but reiterated that it is the hospital's mission to provide the "best possible care for women" while complying with state laws and policies.

Since then, the law's author, Sen. Katrina Jackson, and other legislators have said that Davis qualifies for an abortion and that the hospital "grossly misinterpreted" the statute.

# Mississippi residents prepare for possible flooding

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — The rental home that Suzannah Thames owns in Mississippi's capital city was filled with dirty, snake-infested flood water when the Pearl River overflowed its banks in 2020.

On Friday, Thames pointed to a column on the front porch to show how deep the water was then — about up to her waist. She's now getting ready for another inundation, days af-

ter storms dumped torrential rainfall in Mississippi and other parts of the Deep South.

Hydrologists predict the Pearl River near Jackson will crest by Tuesday somewhat short of the levels it reached two years ago. Emergency officials are telling people in low-lying areas to prepare for flooding of homes and businesses.

Thames hired a crew to move furniture, appliances and other belongings out of the three-

bedroom home that she now rents to a newly married couple — a medical student and engineer who will temporarily stay in a short-term vacation rental.

Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba has urged residents in flood zones to pack enough belongings to get them through several days of evacuation. He said law enforcement officers will increase patrols to protect property.

# Parties try to use student debt plan to their benefit

*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA, S.C. — To Democrats championing the White House's student loan forgiveness plan, it was the long-awaited delivery of one of President Joe Biden's campaign promises.

To Republicans — and even some in the president's own party — it was an ill-advised move that was unfair to those who had diligently paid back their loans or decided not to go to college.

In the student debt relief plan, both parties see an opportunity to boost their own political message ahead of the critical November midterm elections. While Democrats contended that the loan forgiveness would provide a lifeline for struggling working-class families, Republicans charged that it's a giveaway to the "elites."

For the midterms, the elitist rhetoric tactic "plays right in line with the GOP's current brand of grievance and victimization politics," conservative strategist Chip Felkel said, "giving them another rallying point to fire up their base and maybe attract some like-minded independents who see this action as 'unfair.'"

Both the White House and some of Biden's top allies argued that it was instead

Republicans who were focused on the elite and that the potential beneficiaries of the student loan debt relief include more than just the wealthy.

"Who paid the piper?" asked U.S. House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, one of Biden's top congressional allies, pointing to Republican-passed tax cuts for the wealthy and big corporations in 2017 under the Trump administration as the real iniquity. "I think a lot of low-income people that we are trying to help today, those families paid for that tax cut while rich people and big corporations got off tax-free. ... This is an attempt on the part of this administration to once again help working families."

Biden's plan will erase \$10,000 in federal student loan debt for those with incomes below \$125,000 a year, or households that earn less than \$250,000. It will also cancel an additional \$10,000 for those who received federal Pell Grants to attend college, and it will pause federal student loan repayments.

The rhetoric from both parties over the student debt loan relief also likely reflects the education levels of their core constituencies, though plenty of people who attended college classes and took out student loans did not end up graduating from college.

# Missouri school district reinstates spanking if parents give approval

*Associated Press*

A school district in southwestern Missouri decided to bring back spanking as a form of discipline for students — if their parents agree — despite warnings from many public health experts that the practice is detrimental to students.

Classes resumed Tuesday in the Cassville School District for the first time since the school board in June approved bringing corporal punishment back to the 1,900-student district about 60 miles southwest of Springfield. The district had dropped the practice in 2001.

The policy states that corporal punishment will be used only when other forms of discipline, such as suspensions, have failed and then only with the superintendent's permission.

Superintendent Merlyn Johnson told

The Springfield News-Leader the decision came after an anonymous survey found that parents, students and school employees were concerned about student behavior and discipline.

"We've had people actually thank us for it," he said.

Parent Khristina Harkey told The Associated Press on Friday that she is on the fence about Cassville's policy. She and her husband did not opt-in because her 6-year-old son, Anakin Modine, is autistic and would hit back if he were spanked. But she said corporal punishment worked for her when she was a "troublemaker" during her school years in California.

"There are all different types of kids," Harkey said. "Some people need a good butt-whipping. I was one of them."

# Hawaii issued 1 gun carry permit since court ruling

*Associated Press*

HONOLULU — In Hawaii, it has traditionally been practically impossible to obtain police permission to carry a loaded gun in public. And so far that hasn't changed, even after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling making it easier to get such permits. Since the decision in June, only one permit has been granted.

The Honolulu Police Department, the state's largest, hasn't even updated its process for people to seek a permit. It has 333 pending applications. Among them is one from Hawaii Rifle Association President Kainoa Kaku.

Until now, "I never saw the point" in applying, Kaku said, because it would have been a waste of time and money because virtually no one ever was approved. He said he's extremely disappointed the department isn't moving more quickly to issue new rules.

"This Supreme Court decision is almost two months old in a couple of days, and we need to start seeing it," he said.

Hawaii has among the nation's strictest gun laws and lowest rates of gun violence. County police chiefs have the discretion to determine whether to issue a carry permit. Without such a license, people in Hawaii are only allowed to keep firearms in the home and can transport them — unloaded and locked up — to shooting ranges, hunting areas and other limited locations such as for repairs.

The Supreme Court ruling says local governments can't require those seeking a license to carry a gun in public to demonstrate a particular need, such as a direct threat to their safety.

Prior to the ruling, Hawaii police chiefs issued only six carry permits in 21 years, according to state data.

And since the ruling, Maui County is the only place where a single permit application has been approved. Alana Pico, a spokesperson for the department, confirmed the approval of one application but the department didn't immediately respond to a public records request seeking more information.

The Big Island's police force is the only one other than Maui to have updated its permit rules since the high court decision. The Kauai Police Department is still working on its regulations.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Blind judge drives car for 1st time on track**

**MI** MT. MORRIS — A blind Michigan judge went for a drive and a sheriff rode shotgun.

As 100 people watched, Richard Bernstein of the Michigan Supreme Court drove a car on a dirt track at the Genesee County fairgrounds, northwest of Flint.

“I’ve always wanted that feeling of what it’s like to hit the gas or what it’s like to turn on the ignition and what it’s like to operate a steering wheel,” Bernstein, 47, told WNEM-TV.

Sheriff Chris Swanson was in the passenger seat giving directions and encouragement. They wore helmets.

**Officers kill fugitive who pulled gun at funeral**

**WV** NUTTER FORT — A man being sought by U.S. Marshals and other law enforcement agencies was fatally shot at a northern West Virginia funeral service for his father after he pulled a gun on officers attempting to apprehend him, authorities said.

Harrison County Sheriff Robert Matheny said officers had a warrant for the man’s arrest.

The man was spotted leaving the funeral home as a pallbearer.

After letting him help take the casket to a hearse, officers tried to arrest him. The man then pulled a gun and was shot, Clarksburg Police Chief Randy Hartley told The Exponent Telegram.

WBOY-TV reported that his sister, Evelyn O’Dell, identified him as Jason Owens, the son of

Junior Arnie Owens, whose funeral was being held.

**School paper closed over LGBTQ stories**

**NE** GRAND ISLAND — Administrators at a Nebraska school shuttered the school’s award-winning student newspaper just days after its last edition that included articles and editorials on LGBTQ issues.

The staff of Northwest Public Schools’ 54-year-old Saga newspaper was informed May 19 of the paper’s elimination, the Grand Island Independent reported. Three days earlier, the newspaper had printed its June edition, which included an article titled, “Pride and prejudice: LGBTQIA+” on the origins of Pride Month and the history of homophobia.

It also included an editorial opposing a Florida law that bans some lessons on sexual orientation and gender identity, dubbed by critics as “Don’t Say Gay.”

Officials overseeing the district have not said when or why the decision was made to eliminate the student paper. But an email from a school employee to the Independent canceling the student paper’s printing services May 22 said it was “because the school board and superintendent are unhappy with the last issue’s editorial content.”

**2 arrested as K-9 finds 500 pounds of meth**

**CA** FRESNO — Two men were arrested after a K-9 officer located 500 pounds of methamphetamine in their SUV during a traffic stop

in Southern California, authorities said.

A California Highway Patrol officer pulled over a 2017 Land Rover for an unspecified violation in Bakersfield, the CHP said in a statement.

“After noticing indicators of criminal activity, the officer deployed his canine, which alerted to the odor of narcotics,” the statement said.

A search of the SUV turned up cardboard boxes filled with meth, according to the CHP.

**Man charged after mother set on fire**

**NC** WINSTON-SALEM — A North Carolina man was charged with murder after police said he poured gasoline on his mother and set her on fire.

Winston-Salem police said patrol officers responded to reports of someone being set on fire on Lyons Street, news outlets reported.

Officers found Joanna Parker, 72, in flames on her porch and they were able to put out the fire, police said. She was taken to a hospital, where she died.

Investigators determined that James Parker, 48, got upset with his mother, so he poured gasoline on her and set her on fire, police said. He was charged with murder.

**Sheriff: Man at gorge didn’t plan shooting**

**WA** GEORGE — The Grant County Sheriff’s Office now says a man arrested at the Gorge Amphitheatre in Washington state wasn’t planning a mass shooting as investigators previously believed.

Jonathan Moody of Ephrata was arrested after suspicious actions led Live Nation security to detain Moody and disarm him of two 9 mm pistols, according to sheriff’s officials.

Sheriff’s officials said while the investigation is not finished, “What we can say is that we now don’t feel that his intent was to cause a mass shooting,” the Yakima Herald Republic reported.

Previous information from the Sheriff’s Office said that he was seen inhaling an unknown substance or gas from a balloon and then loading two 9 mm pistols from the trunk of his car.

**Woman arrested after racist rant, assault**

**TX** PLANO — A woman was arrested and faces a possible hate crime charge after she was captured on video in a racist rant and assault on women of South Asian descent in a suburban Dallas parking lot, officials said.

Plano police said in a statement that Esmeralda Upton, 58, of Plano, was arrested and charged with misdemeanor assault and terroristic threat charges.

The statement said the incident also was being investigated as a hate crime.

The incident happened outside a Plano restaurant. A widely circulated video recorded by the women of Indian descent showed Upton unleashing a profanity-laced rant on them, challenging their presence in the United States, threatening to shoot them and physically assaulting the woman shooting the video.

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# Tagovailoa, Hurts enter pivotal season

*Associated Press*

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — During the special teams period of Wednesday's joint practice between the Eagles and the Dolphins, the quarterbacks from both teams gathered on the Dolphins practice field.

Among them were Tua Tagovailoa, Miami's starter, and Jalen Hurts, Philadelphia's starter, both wearing red jerseys with the No. 1 on the back.

"I talked to him during practice. They were telling me it was hot," Tagovailoa later joked.

The two have been linked since their time as Alabama quarterbacks. And in their young careers, they have used each other as resources to navigate the NFL landscape.

Tagovailoa and Hurts, both entering their third NFL seasons, are at a pivotal juncture: This is the year that they both need to show they can lead their respective franchises for the foreseeable future.

"I remember last season, we'd been texting each other quite a large amount," Tagovailoa said after Wednesday's practice. "For me, when I ended up playing the Saints, he played the Saints prior. I texted him about that. He gave me some tips. He texted me about playing another team. I gave him some tips."

The next day, Hurts was asked about how

his relationship with Tagovailoa has grown.

"The friendship we have and being able to talk about who we're seeing in the league and just being a companion throughout the process of that," Hurts said, "I want to see him win, and I know he wants to see me win."

The Dolphins and Eagles haven't played each other since Tagovailoa and Hurts became starters. Miami and Philadelphia faced off in Saturday's preseason finale at Hard Rock Stadium.

Hurts, who was the Crimson Tide's quarterback for two seasons (2016-2017) was drafted by the Eagles 53rd overall in the second round of the 2020 draft. He sat behind Carson Wentz for much of his rookie season before replacing a struggling Wentz in Week 13.

Tagovailoa replaced Hurts after halftime of the national championship game against Georgia in the 2017 season and took over as Alabama's starter afterward. He said that competing with Hurts and the rest of the players in the Crimson Tide's quarterback room helped prepare him for the NFL.

"The dude had to be the first into the weight room. He had to be the first out onto the field. Like sprints, he had to be first," Tagovailoa said of Hurts. "So it really tells you how he goes about his life. It tells you about

how he kind of sees things and how he looks at things. Obviously he's a competitor. He never wants to be last, so that should tell you a lot about him."

Hurts, known for his strength as a runner even in college, showed improvement as a pocket passer last year, his first full season as a starter.

Hurts threw for 3,144 yards and 16 touchdowns with nine interceptions last year. He led the team in rushing yards (784) and rushing touchdowns (10). Now, he has to prove that he can take the next step to lead Philadelphia's offense with his legs and his arm.

And he is in a great position to do so, with one of the league's best offensive lines and an elite receiving group that includes A.J. Brown and former Alabama receiver DeVonta Smith.

Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said Hurts has shown improvement in his vision and decision-making throughout training camp, adding that his session against the Dolphins Wednesday was his best practice since joining the franchise.

"What he was doing with the football and being able to go through reads and the progressions that fast and getting the ball to where it needed to go, I thought, was unbelievable," Sirianni said.

## 49ers still have quarterback, offensive line quandaries

*Associated Press*

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers still face the same two major questions at the end of the exhibition season as they did at the start of training camp.

Now the Niners will have to wait until the start of the regular season for answers on whether untested quarterback Trey Lance is ready to take over the offense and whether the offensive line will be dependable enough to give Lance a chance at success.

Lance finished the exhibition season on Thursday night playing three mostly unproductive series behind a suspect line in a 17-0 loss to the Houston Texans.

"I would love to get Trey more practice and everything and more experience, so I would always want more of that, but we've run out of those games and he's just ready to go as he can be," coach Kyle Shanahan said Friday. "He needs to get in these real games now and start playing. There's going to be times he makes some mistakes and he has to learn from them

and find a way to still win the game and overcome some of those things as he learns on the run. I'm glad he did get some experience in this preseason."

Lance ended up playing five drives in the preseason, completing 11 of 16 passes for 141 yards and one TD, leading the Niners to two scores. He was sacked twice and ran it only two times for 8 yards.

Shanahan said the biggest thing for Lance was getting out of the preseason healthy after breaking a finger in the final exhibition game last year in an injury that lingered all season.

Staying healthy this season may depend on the play of the offensive line, which struggled during the exhibition season with All-Pro left tackle Trent Williams sitting out.

Questions remain at the other four spots starting at left guard where 2021 second-round pick Aaron Banks struggled as he tries to fend off a challenge from undrafted rookie Jason Poe.

Shanahan said Banks showed improve-

ment Thursday night from the previous week and said the issues were with the entire offense in Houston.

"I know there was definitely a couple that he missed, but I also thought it was a full offense there," Shanahan said. "There was a couple I thought we could have got rid of the ball a lot sooner. And there was a couple that the quarterback didn't have a chance on, so as a whole, it wasn't good enough. When you ask him in particular, I thought he did improve from the week before."

Jake Brendel got all of the time at center with the starting unit after Daniel Brunskill got hurt, but has started only three games since entering the NFL in 2016.

Rookie fourth-round pick Spencer Burford ran with the starters at guard all summer, but remains a question mark headed into the season.

Right tackle Mike McGlinchey injured his knee, but hopes to be able to return in time for the opener.

# Bills didn't talk to alleged victim in probe

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The attorney for a California teenager who has accused a Buffalo Bills rookie and two of his former college teammates of gang rape last fall said Friday the NFL team has not contacted him for details despite saying it had conducted a “thorough investigation.”

The Bills selected Matt Araiza out of San Diego State in the sixth round of the NFL Draft in April, and named him their starting punter this week. A person familiar with the case told the AP the team was not aware of the allegations against Araiza in April. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not commented publicly about the allegations.

Executives from two different teams told the AP they became aware of Araiza's involvement in an incident during the draft process, but neither person knew the extent of the allegations.

Dan Gilleon, who represents the California teenager, said he has not heard from team officials since first informing them of the allegations against Araiza in late July, when he says he had a phone conversation

with Buffalo team counsel Kathryn D'Angelo.

“She seemed like she was concerned. She says she'll get back to me, and then she never did,” said Gilleon, who posted and then deleted a screenshot on social media of the email he says he sent to D'Angelo. “I even followed up and said, ‘Hey, you guys haven't talked to me and called me back like you said you would.’ And they just ignored that, too.”

After the Bills declined multiple requests for comment on Friday, coach Sean McDermott was clearly shaken when he addressed the situation following a 21-0 preseason loss at Carolina.

“It's a situation that's extremely serious. Just hard to go through. It's not a situation that I or we take lightly whatsoever,” he said. “I can tell you this: my heart, my thoughts and prayers go out to the people involved. And that includes Matt. It includes both sides here. The victim and everyone involved.”

McDermott said he was surprised and shocked by some of the revelations that have come out over the past day, and repeatedly stressed the team has work to do. Asked

what work needed to be done, he answered by saying, “It's just a matter of trying to find the truth at the end of the day.”

McDermott said it was his decision to not have Araiza play, saying he felt it was not the right thing to do. While he said Araiza would travel back with the team, McDermott declined to answer a question on Araiza's status on the roster.

Previously, Buffalo's only comment on the lawsuit came a day earlier in saying it was aware of the allegations and had conducted its own investigation.

“The facts of the incident are not what they are portrayed in the lawsuit or in the press,” Araiza said in a statement released through his agent, Joe Linta. “I look forward to quickly setting the record straight.”

Quarterback Matt Barkley handled the team's punting duties against Carolina.

It was unclear if the Bills investigation was finished before they named him to their opening-day roster and the team statement provided no details, a familiar lack of transparency that raises fresh scrutiny on how NFL teams conduct internal reviews into allegations of misconduct.

# Schauffele's burst trims Scheffler's East Lake lead

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Masters champion Scottie Scheffler is playing every bit like the No. 1 player in golf and was on the verge of turning the Tour Championship into a rout.

Three holes by Xander Schauffele changed everything going into the weekend at East Lake.

Schauffele holed a pair of birdie putts, and then drilled a 4-iron just over the bunker and right by the hole on the par-5 18th, rolling in a 5-foot eagle putt.

The birdie-birdie-eagle finish — Scheffler had to settle for pars — gave Schauffele a 7-under 63 as he went from a six-shot deficit to two shots behind Friday.

Schauffele rarely gets overly excited and this was no exception.

“It was nice to pick up some shots late here, but it's just a

positioning battle going into Sunday,” he said. “There's a lot of golf to be played on this property.”

Scheffler wasn't overly concerned. He rarely is.

“I'm just going to go out there and do my thing and try and play good golf,” Scheffler said. “Xander obviously has a great track record around here, but paying attention to what other guys do on the golf course has never served me too well.”

Scheffler, who had a 66, was at 19-under par.

He started at 10-under par as the No. 1 seed in the FedEx Cup — Schauffele started four shots behind as the No. 4 seed — and had few complaints except for not making every birdie chance, and they were ample.

Scheffler played bogey-free. The four putts from 10 feet or closer that he missed? He saw those only as opportunities, a reminder that he was playing

the kind of golf that carried him to an amazing stretch of four wins in two months — capped by the Masters — in the spring.

Starting the day with a five-shot lead, Scheffler made birdies from 5 feet on the par-3 second hole and then pounded driver on the next hole so perfectly positioned that he had a flip wedge into 5 feet for another birdie. At that point, he was ahead by eight shots.

Jon Rahm also had a 63 and worked his way closer to the top at 13 under. He was being interviewed when he looked up at a TV screen to see if Scheffler had made another birdie.

He still was six shots behind. Defending champion Patrick Cantlay (66) and Sungjae Im (65) were seven shots back.

Rahm wasn't sure if he put himself back in the mix, but his 63 made it feel more reasonable.

“But he's playing good golf,

right? And we're going to have to keep on going and play good golf, as well,” Rahm said. “It's going to take a really strong weekend from me and hopefully not a strong one from Scottie. That's kind of what we're looking for.”

Schauffele seemed to find that at the end. He was six behind when he hit his approach to 12 feet behind a back left pin on the 16th and made the birdie. From the fairway on the 17th, his wedge spun back to 4 feet.

The 4-iron was bold and paid off.

“It was a little right of where I wanted, but it had the distance and the shape. I hit it really well, so I wasn't very worried about it,” Schauffele said. “Just trying to make sure to cover that corner and I hit it solid so I knew it was going to cover. For it to go to 5, 6 feet was definitely a bonus.”

# Canha, Alonso rally Mets past Rockies

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mark Canha hit two clutch doubles and Pete Alonso singled home the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning to give the New York Mets a 7-6 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Friday night.

Brett Baty launched his second major league homer and Starling Marte had a two-run triple for the NL East leaders, who have won the first two games of the four-game series.

Canha put the Mets ahead 4-3 with an RBI double in the sixth. Elias Díaz laced a three-run double that gave the Rockies a 6-4 advantage in the eighth, but Canha tied it with a two-run double in the bottom half.

Brandon Nimmo worked a one-out walk in the ninth against Colorado closer Daniel Bard (3-4), who hit Marte with the next pitch. After Francisco Lindor lined out to a diving Sam Hilliard in shallow left Alonso fell behind 0-2 before hitting a single between third base and shortstop to score Nimmo.

**Yankees 3, Athletics 2:** Gerrit Cole (10-6) struck out 11 on the way to his first win since July 17, Aaron Judge hit a three-run homer in the fifth for No. 49 on the season and New York won at Oakland.

Cole allowed one run on three hits over 7 1/3 innings to snap a six-start winless stretch in which he'd gone 0-4 since beating Boston last month.

**Orioles 2, Astros 0:** Rookie Kyle Bradish (2-5) pitched eight strong innings before two relievers completed the four-hitter to lead Baltimore to a win at Houston.

**Red Sox 9, Rays 8:** Xander Bogaerts hit a three-run homer, and host Boston stopped Tampa Bay's six-game winning streak.

**Dodgers 10, Marlins 6 (10):** Mookie Betts homered twice and hit a go-ahead double in Los Angeles' five-run 10th inning in a win at Miami.

**Cubs 4, Brewers 3 (10):** Ian Happ hit two two-run homers for Chicago's only hits in a win at Milwaukee.

**Rangers 7, Tigers 6:** Nathaniel Lowe, Ezequiel Duran and Mark Mathias homered in the first three innings, and host Texas held on to beat Detroit.

**Mariners 3, Guardians 2 (11):** Mitch Haniger singled home the winning run in the 11th inning to lead host Seattle past Cleveland.

**Phillies 7, Pirates 4:** Bryce Harper hit a two-run single in his first at-bat after a 52-game absence due to a broken left thumb,

helping streaking Philadelphia beat visiting Pittsburgh.

**Reds 7, Nationals 3:** Donovan Solano hit a two-run double off Cade Cavalli in the pitching prospect's big league debut, and Cincinnati won at Washington.

**Diamondbacks 7, White Sox 2:** Josh Rojas hit a three-run double and Emmanuel Rivera had a two-run homer in a six-run inning, and Arizona won at Chicago.

**Padres 13, Royals 5:** Kim Ha-seong homered and drove in five runs, and San Diego won at Kansas City.

**Twins 9, Giants 0:** Gilberto Celestino hit a bases-clearing double and Gary Sánchez added two-run home run, all in a six-run third inning, as host Minnesota snapped a six-game skid.

**Angels 12, Blue Jays 0:** Mike Trout hit a two-run home run to become the highest-scoring player in team history, Reid Detmers and four relievers combined on a six-hitter, and Los Angeles won at Toronto to halt a six-game losing streak.

**Braves 11, Cardinals 4:** Spencer Strider (8-4) pitched six strong innings and William Contreras hit a three-run double as visiting Atlanta won its fourth straight.

## M's sign Rodríguez to deal that may be worth \$409.3M

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Julio Rodríguez and the Seattle Mariners are set on a long-term relationship in the Pacific Northwest, agreeing to a \$209.3 million contract starting next season that could be worth \$409.3 million over 15 years.

The deal announced Friday for the 21-year-old All-Star outfielder includes seven seasons, a five-year player option, an eight-year club option with award escalators and the possibility the option could extend to 10 years. If Rodríguez earns two MVP awards by 2028 or finishes among the top five in voting four times, the deal could be worth \$469.6 million over 17 seasons — including postseason award bonuses.

If the Mariners turns down a one-time team option for 2030-37 — which must be exercised

after the 2028 World Series — there is a mutual option that could be exercised after the 2029 Series calling for \$168 million from 2030-36. There also is a player option that guarantees \$90 million from 2030-34.

“Julio is among the most exciting players in the game and has only scratched the surface of what’s to come,” Seattle president of baseball operations Jerry Dipoto said in a statement.

“We feel the uniqueness of this deal befits the person. His infectious personality and ability on the field are only surpassed by his character away from it. We are thrilled that generations of Mariners fans will have the privilege of watching him play in T-Mobile Park for many years to come.”

The contract for the All-Star rookie calls for a \$15.3 million signing bonus payable within 60

days and salaries of \$4 million next year, \$10 million and \$18 million annually from 2025-29. He gets a full no-trade provision.

Seattle's option calls for \$25 million annual salaries from 2030-37. Rodríguez has a player option that could be exercised after the 2029 World Series, a provision calling for \$18 million annually from 2030-34. There is a mutual option that could add \$168 million from 2030-36.

“He’s learned a lot over the last 4½, five months about Major League Baseball and things he needed to work on and continue to improve upon,” Mariners manager Scott Servais said Friday. “Really good teammate. I mean, you can go on and on describing where he’s at. But there’s a lot of baseball, really good baseball ahead of him and I know that’s what excites me

and the organization.”

Rodríguez has become a star in his first season with the Mariners. He blossomed from starting spring training as the possible opening day starter in center field to an All-Star in his first season.

Rodríguez entered Friday hitting .269 with 20 home runs, 64 RBIs, 23 stolen bases and an OPS of .799. When he homered on Wednesday, Rodríguez became the fastest player in American League history to reach the mark of 20 homers and 20 stolen bases, surpassing Mike Trout.

Rodríguez is the leading candidate for the AL Rookie of the Year and has helped the Mariners be in playoff position entering the final stretch of the regular season with a chance to end the longest postseason drought in major pro sports.