

Cease-fire urged after assassinations

Associated Press

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. — President Joe Biden said late Thursday he's "very concerned" that the violence in the Middle East could escalate, adding that the killing of a top Hamas leader in Iran has "not helped" efforts to negotiate a cease-fire in Israel's war with Gaza.

Biden said he'd had a "very direct" conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier in the day, repeating "very direct" for emphasis.

He added: "We have the basis for a cease-fire. He should move on it and they should move on it now."

Biden spoke on the tarmac of an air base outside Washington after welcoming back to the

United States three Americans who were freed in a prisoner swap earlier in the day.

Netanyahu has said his country was determined to win nothing less than "total victory" against Hamas. He also said that Israel hoped for a cease-fire soon and was working for one.

The assassinations of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday and senior Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur in Beirut on Tuesday risk escalating the fighting into an all-out regional war, with Iran also threatening to respond after the attack on its territory. Israel has vowed to kill Hamas leaders over the group's Oct. 7 attack on Israel that sparked the war.

U.S. Secretary of State Anto-

ny Blinken was among the growing voices internationally calling for a cease-fire in recent days, saying that it was the only way to begin to break the cycle of violence and suffering.

In Doha, Qatar, mourners gathered Friday to hold funeral prayers for Haniyeh as Iran and its regional allies vowed to retaliate against Israel.

With the bodies of Haniyeh and his bodyguard in coffins draped with Palestinian flags, men knelt and prayed while senior leaders of Hamas' Qatar-based political office paid their respects to Haniyeh's family.

That included two men seen as his possible successors: Khalil al-Hayya, a Hamas senior official, and former Hamas chief Khaled Mashaal, a close Haniyeh aide. The head of the Pales-

tinian Islamic Jihad also attended.

The funeral came a day after Israel said it had confirmed that the head of Hamas' military wing, Mohammed Deif, was killed in an July 13 airstrike in Gaza, and a few days after Israel said it had killed Hezbollah commander Shukur in a strike in Lebanon.

Hamas has yet to comment and had previously claimed Deif survived last month's targeted airstrike.

Israel has yet to claim or deny a role in the killing of Haniyeh, but Hamas and its allies say it was responsible. The group said he was killed in a strike Wednesday on a Tehran guesthouse where he was staying while attending the inauguration of Iran's new president.

Venezuela opposition leader's headquarters ransacked

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Half a dozen masked assailants ransacked the headquarters of Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado on Friday in an escalation of violence against President Nicolás Maduro's opponents following the disputed presidential election.

The raid occurred at around 3 a.m., Machado's party said, adding that the assailants broke down doors and hauled away valuable documents and equipment. Images published by Machado's party on social media show several walls covered in black spray paint.

The raid follows threats by top officials, including Maduro, to arrest Machado, who has gone into hiding while still urging Venezuelans and the inter-

national community to challenge last Sunday's election results.

The Biden administration has thrown its support firmly behind the opposition, recognizing candidate Edmundo González as the victor and discrediting the National Electoral Council's official results. Machado has been barred from running for political office for 15 years.

The U.S. announcement late Thursday followed calls from multiple governments, including Maduro's close regional allies, for Venezuela's electoral authorities to release precinct-level vote counts, as it has done during previous elections.

The electoral body declared Maduro the winner on Monday, but the main opposition coalition revealed hours later that it

had collected copies of more than 80% of the country's 30,000 voting tallies — printouts from the electronic voting machines — and that they show González prevailed by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

"Given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela's July 28 presidential election," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

Maduro responded with a quick admonishment: "The United States needs to keep its nose out of Venezuela!"

González, whose location is also unknown, posted a message on X Friday thanking the

U.S. "for recognizing the will of the Venezuelan people reflected in our electoral victory and for supporting the process of restoring democratic norms in Venezuela."

Blinken's announcement came amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts by Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to convince their fellow leftist to allow an impartial audit of the vote. On Thursday, the governments of the three countries issued a joint statement calling on Venezuela's electoral authorities "to move forward expeditiously and publicly release" detailed voting data.

But it's unclear what leverage the countries have over Maduro, who has shown little desire to rethink his entrenched position.

3 newly freed Americans back in US after prisoner exchange

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States and Russia completed their biggest prisoner swap in post-Soviet history on Thursday, with Moscow releasing journalist Evan Gershkovich and fellow American Paul Whelan, along with dissidents including Vladimir Kara-Murza, in a multinational deal that set two dozen people free.

Gershkovich, Whelan and Alsu Kurmasheva, a journalist with dual U.S.-Russia citizenship, arrived on American soil shortly before midnight for a joyful reunion with their families. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris also were at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland to greet them and dispense hugs all around.

The trade unfolded despite relations between Washington

and Moscow being at their lowest point since the Cold War after Russian President Vladimir Putin's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Negotiators in back-channel talks at one point explored an exchange involving Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, but after his February death ultimately stitched together a 24-person deal that required significant concessions from European allies, including the release of a Russian assassin, and secured freedom for a cluster of journalists, suspected spies, political prisoners and others.

Biden trumpeted the exchange, by far the largest in a series of swaps with Russia, as a diplomatic feat while welcoming families of the returning Americans to the White House. But the deal, like others before

it, reflected an innate imbalance: The U.S. and allies gave up Russians charged or convicted of serious crimes in exchange for Russia releasing journalists, dissidents and others imprisoned by the country's highly politicized legal system on charges seen by the West as trumped-up.

"Deals like this one come with tough calls," Biden said. He added, "There's nothing that matters more to me than protecting Americans at home and abroad."

All told, six countries released at least one prisoner and a seventh, Turkey, participated by hosting the location for the swap, in Ankara.

Biden placed securing the release of Americans held wrongfully overseas at the top of his foreign policy agenda for the six months before he leaves office.

Police in UK brace for protests

Associated Press

LONDON — Several suspects arrested in violent protests that erupted after the fatal stabbing of three children in northwest England were due in court Friday as officials braced for more clashes that Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned and blamed on "far-right hatred."

Starmer vowed to end the mayhem and said police across the U.K. would be given more resources to stop "a breakdown in law and order on our streets."

Demonstrations are being promoted online over the coming days in towns and cities including Sunderland, Belfast, Cardiff, Liverpool and Manchester, using phrases including "enough is enough," "save our kids" and "stop the boats."

John Woodcock, the British government's adviser on political violence and disruption, said there was a "concerted and coordinated" attempt to spread the violence.

"Clearly, some of those far-right actors have got a taste for this and are trying to provoke similar in towns and cities across the U.K.," he told the BBC.

The attack Monday on children at a Taylor Swift-themed summer holiday dance class shocked a country where knife crime is a long-standing and vexing problem, though mass stabbings are rare.

Axel Rudakubana, 17, has been charged with murder over the attack that killed Alice Dasilva Aguiar, 9, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Bebe King, 6, in the seaside town of Southport in northwest England. He also has been charged with 10 counts of attempted murder for the eight children and two adults who were wounded.

Kremlin says intelligence operatives were among Russians freed in swap

Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia — New details emerged Friday on the largest prisoner swap since the Cold War, with the Kremlin acknowledging for the first time that some of the Russians held in the West were from its security services. Families of freed dissidents, meanwhile, expressed their joy at the surprise release.

While journalists Evan Gershkovich and Alsu Kurmasheva and former Marine Paul Whelan were greeted by their families and President Joe Biden in Maryland on Thursday night, President Vladimir Putin embraced each of the Russian returnees at Moscow's Vnukovo

Airport, and promised them state awards and a "talk about your future."

Among the eight returning to Moscow was Vadim Krasikov, a Russian assassin who was serving a life sentence in Germany for the 2019 killing of a former Chechen fighter in a Berlin park. German judges said the murder was carried out on orders from Russian authorities.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Friday that Krasikov is an officer of the Federal Security Service, or FSB — a fact reported in the West even as Moscow denied any state involvement.

He also said Krasikov once

served in the FSB's special Alpha unit, along with some of Putin's bodyguards.

"Naturally, they also greeted each other yesterday when they saw each other," he said, underscoring Putin's high interest in including Krasikov in the swap.

Peskov also confirmed that the couple released in Slovenia — Artem Dultsov and Anna Dultsova — were undercover intelligence officers commonly known as "illegals." Posing as Argentine expats, they used Ljubljana as their base since 2017 to relay Moscow's orders to other sleeper agents and were arrested on espionage charges in 2022.

Trump making his campaign about race

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Donald Trump has found tremendous success from the very first moment he stepped onto the presidential stage by stoking racial animus.

Democrats expressed new outrage this week at the former president's derisive and false charge that Vice President Kamala Harris, who is of Jamaican and Indian heritage, only recently "turned Black" for political gain. Some Republicans — even from within Trump's own campaign — seemed to distance themselves from the comment.

But Trump's rhetoric this week, and his record on race since he entered politics nearly a decade ago, indicate that divisive attacks on race may emerge as a core GOP argument in the three-month sprint to Election Day — whether his allies want them to or not.

A Trump adviser, granted anonymity Thursday to discuss internal strategy, said the campaign doesn't need to focus on "identity politics" because the case against Harris is that she is "so liberal it's dangerous." The adviser pointed to Harris' record on the border, crime, the economy and foreign policy.

In a sign that Trump may not be coordinating his message with his own team, the Republican presidential nominee doubled down on the same day with a new attack on Harris' racial identity. He posted on his social media site a picture of Harris donning traditional Indian attire in a family photo.

Sen. Cynthia Lummis, a Wyoming Republican who has endorsed Trump, was among a number of lawmakers on Capitol Hill who said Thursday that the rhetoric around race and identity is not "helpful to

anyone" this election cycle.

"People's skin color doesn't matter one iota," Lummis said in an interview.

It's been less than two weeks after President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid and endorsed Harris. Trump has had to pivot from campaigning against an 81-year-old white man showing signs of decline to facing a 59-year-old Black woman who is drawing much larger crowds and new enthusiasm from Democratic donors.

Trump went to the National Association of Black Journalists convention on Wednesday. In an appearance carried live on cable news and shared widely online, he falsely suggested Harris misled voters about her race.

"I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black. So, I don't know,

is she Indian or is she Black?" he said Wednesday.

At a Pennsylvania rally hours later, Trump's team displayed yearsold news headlines describing Harris as the "first Indian-American senator" on the big screen in the arena. And Ohio Sen. JD Vance, Trump's running mate, told reporters traveling with him that Harris was a "chameleon" who changed her identity when convenient.

Harris attended Howard University, the historically Black institution where she pledged the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and has often talked throughout her career about being both Black and Indian American.

Trump's team argued that his message on race is part of a broader pitch that may appeal to some Black voters, although very few allies defended his specific rhetoric this week.

Harris campaign raises a massive \$310M in July

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign announced Friday that it raised \$310 million last month, an eye-popping sum showing that donors who once seemed spooked about the prospects for November's election with President Joe Biden are now offering mountains of cash to boost his former No. 2.

The haul by Harris, the Democratic National Committee and affiliated entities far outpaced that of Republican former President Donald Trump, whose campaign and assorted committees said they took in \$138.7 million for July.

The vice president's campaign also says it entered August with \$377 million in cash on hand, which it described as the most for any presidential candidate at this point in the cycle. It

was also well above the \$327 million Trump's team announced having to start the month.

"The tremendous outpouring of support we've seen in just a short time makes clear the Harris coalition is mobilized, growing, and ready to put in the work to defeat Trump this November," Harris campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez said in a statement. "Our money is going to the work that wins close elections."

Trump's totals for July were augmented by an assassination attempt against the former president during a rally in Pennsylvania, which galvanized some of his fiercest supporters, and by his subsequent revealing of his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

Harris celebrates the late Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday eulogized U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee as a "force of nature" as memorials for the longtime Democratic lawmaker drew to a close.

Harris took time away from her presidential campaign to describe Jackson Lee, who represented Houston in Congress, as a coalition builder and expert in the legislative process. Harris joked about hiding in the hall when Jackson Lee walked by because she was so intense.

"She always expected in all of us that we would rise to a point of excellence, knowing that life was too short and there's too much to be done," Harris said. She said she called Jackson Lee, who died July 19 at age 74 after being treated for pancreatic cancer, a few days before then to express her gratitude for their

friendship.

"To honor her memory, let us continue to fight," Harris said.

Harris is poised to be the first Black woman to be a major party's presidential candidate, and Jackson Lee was one of Congress' most prominent Black women during her nearly three decades in Washington. Jackson Lee helped lead federal efforts to protect women from domestic violence and recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday.

More than 50 members of the U.S. House attended Thursday's funeral service. New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, the House Democratic leader, said Jackson Lee was a "voice for the voiceless."

The crowd of several hundred in the church cheered and often stood during the service and at times people yelled out, "Thank you Sheila."

Increasing wind, heat, risk of storms face wildfire fight

Associated Press

CHICO, Calif. — Firefighters battling California's largest wildfire of the year are preparing for treacherous conditions entering the weekend when expected thunderstorms may unleash fire-starting lightning and erratic winds that could erode progress made over the past week. Dry, hot conditions posed similar threats across the fire-stricken West.

Weather, fuels and terrain will pose challenges for the 6,000 firefighters battling the Park Fire, which has spread over 614 square miles since allegedly being started by arson in a wilderness park in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of the Sacramento Valley city of Chico.

The fire's push northward has brought it toward the rugged lava rock landscape surrounding Lassen Volcanic National Park, which has been

closed due to the threat.

After days of benign weather, increasing winds and a surge of monsoonal moisture were expected to increase fire activity and bring a chance of thunderstorms Friday night into Saturday, said Ryan Walbrun, incident meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Walbrun said there was little prospect of beneficial rains from the storms and the forecast for next week calls for continued warming and drying.

"As we look forward in time, we're really just entering the peak of fire season in California," he said.

The Park Fire, which has destroyed at least 480 structures and damaged 47, is one of almost 100 large fires burning across the western U.S.

A wildfire on the edge of metro Denver crept within a quarter-mile of evacuated homes, but authorities said Thursday

they were hopeful that hundreds of threatened residences could be saved despite sweltering temperatures and firefighters suffering heat exhaustion.

The Quarry Fire southwest of the Denver suburb of Littleton encroached on several large subdivisions. Neighborhoods with nearly 600 homes were ordered to evacuate after the fire, of unknown origin, spread quickly Tuesday afternoon and overnight when relatively few firefighters were yet on the scene.

Five firefighters were injured Wednesday, including four who had heat exhaustion, said Mark Techmeyer, a spokesperson with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

The fire was in steep terrain that made it difficult to access but had been held to about a half-square mile with no houses yet destroyed, authorities said.

US added just 114K jobs in July

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. hiring decelerated last month in the face of high interest rates as employers added an unexpectedly weak 114,000 jobs.

Friday's Labor Department report showed a drop from the 179,000 jobs created in June. Forecasters had expected to see 175,000 jobs in July. The unemployment rate rose to 4.3%, the highest since October 2021, as the number of jobless Americans rose by 352,000.

The economy had proven unexpectedly sturdy in the face of the Federal Reserve's campaign to tame inflation with high interest rates. The Fed raised its benchmark rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023, taking it to a 23-year high. But the higher borrowing costs appear to be taking a toll.

The unemployment rate has risen for four consecutive months. It's jump to 4.3% in July crossed a trip wire that historically has signaled that the United States is in recession — though economists say the gauge probably is not reliable in the postpandemic economy.

In another sign that the labor market is cooling, average hourly wages rose just 3.6% from July 2023, the smallest year-over-year gain since May 2021 and a development likely to ease inflationary pressure in the economy.

Jobs gains were also concentrated in a few industries. Health care and social assistance firms added 64,000 jobs last month, accounting for 56% of hiring. Restaurants, hotels and bars added nearly 26,000 jobs.

The economy is weighing heavily on voters' minds as they prepare for the election in November. Many are unimpressed with the strong job gains of the past three years, exasperated instead by high prices.

Arrests at Mexico border drop 30% in July

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Arrests of migrants for illegally crossing the border to the United States from Mexico plummeted about 30% in July to a new low for Joe Biden's presidency, U.S. authorities said, raising prospects that a temporary ban on asylum may be lifted soon.

The U.S. Border Patrol continued making arrests Wednesday, the last day of July. But the monthly tally was expected be around 57,000 when all are tallied, down from 83,536 arrests in June, the previous low mark of Biden's presidency, according to two U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity be-

cause figures had not been released publicly. It would be the lowest monthly tally since 54,771 arrests in September 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic slowed movement across borders in many countries, including to the United States.

Even before Biden's Democratic administration invoked powers to suspend asylum on June 5, border arrests had fallen by about half from a record-high of 250,000 in December amid increased Mexican enforcement. Since June 5, arrests have fallen by half again, helping the White House fend off attacks by former President Donald Trump and other Republicans that Democrats, including

Vice President Kamala Harris, have allowed the border to spiral out of control.

A volley of ads launched Tuesday underscores the prominence of immigration as a campaign issue in November's election.

The Trump campaign launched its first television ad of the general election cycle, dubbing Harris the "border czar" for an early assignment as vice president to address root causes of immigration in Central America and blaming her for a surge in illegal crossings under Biden's watch. After displaying headlines about crime and drugs, the video brands Harris as "Failed. Weak. Dangerously liberal."

Biles wins all-around gymnastics gold

Associated Press

PARIS — Simone Biles huddled with Sunisa Lee. She looked to her husband Jonathan Owens in the stands. Lost in the moment. And maybe a touch frantic.

The American gymnastics star knew she was trailing Brazil's Rebeca Andrade and Algeria's Kaylia Nemour through two rotations during the Olympic all-around final Thursday.

After a sloppy uneven bars that included a mistake Biles can never remember making in competition, she sat in a chair, closed her eyes, ignored the sea of cameras around her and attempted to refocus.

She and Lee tried to do the math. How bad was it? They weren't sure. It had been a long time since it was this tight.

Biles checked with Owens, who reassured Biles that she was fine, even though she was in third. His wife of 15 months might not have believed him in the moment.

"I've just never been so stressed before," Biles said.

Maybe because she hadn't been pushed — not in a long time, anyway — the way Andrade pushed inside an electric Bercy Arena.

Yet the jitters eventually faded. The 27-year-old who is redefining what a gymnast can do and how long she can do it went to work.

One stoic beam routine and one floor exercise that is unlike anything ever done in her sport later, Biles found herself accepting a gold medal from IOC president Thomas Bach for a second time, this time with Lee standing next to her with a bronze.

Eight years ago in Rio de Janeiro, Biles was a teenage prodigy. Now, she's an icon. One who remains peerless even when she's not perfect.

Biles now has nine Olympic medals, six of them gold. And while she says she doesn't keep track of these things, she sort of does. The GOAT necklace she rocked in the aftermath isn't a coincidence, even if she maintains she's just "Simone Biles

from Spring, Texas, that loves to flip."

Maybe, but she's also the third woman to become a two-time Olympic champion, joining Larisa Latynina of the Soviet Union in 1956 and 1960 and Vera Caslavskaya of Czechoslovakia in 1964 and 1968. Oh, and the oldest to finish atop the all-around podium since then 30-year-old Maria Gorokhovskaya of the Soviet Union won the first-ever Olympic all-around in Helsinki in 1952.

The sport then is not what it is now. The days of "little girls in pretty boxes" are long gone. Biles has fueled that transformation one performance at a time. There's a reason stars like the U.S. men's basketball team and Kendall Jenner flocked to watch her Thursday.

When Biles tried to downplay her impact, Lee corrected her.

"Honestly Simone, I think a lot of it has to do with you," Lee said.

Even if her 39th world or Olympic medal didn't come as easily as most of the 38 before it.

She misjudged a transition on uneven bars, the weakest of her four events, letting go of the upper bar too soon and forcing her to reach for a larger-than-expected gap.

While she didn't fall — Biles muscled her way back into the routine — it blunted her momentum and led to major deductions that left her behind Andrade through two rotations.

The deficit didn't last.

Biles responded with a largely wobble-free 14.566 on the balance beam, the highest of the night among the 24 finalists, while Andrade was forced to do a major balance check during her slightly easier set that dropped her down to second heading into floor exercise, Biles' signature event.

Andrade, the silver medalist behind Lee in 2021, needed the best floor set of her life to catch Biles. It didn't quite happen.

"I don't want to compete with Rebeca no more," Biles said. "I'm tired. Like, she's way too close. I've never had an athlete that close."

Katie Ledecky wins record 13th medal with a silver

Associated Press

NANTERRE, France (AP) — Another romp for Canadian teenager Summer McIntosh. A gold medal for American Kate Douglass. And, to cap things off, a record-breaking night for Katie Ledecky.

With a silver in the 4x200-meter freestyle relay Thursday night, Ledecky collected the 13th medal of her stellar career to become the most decorated

woman in swimming history.

She would've preferred it to be gold, but that went to an Australian squad led by individual gold medalists Mollie O'Callaghan and Ariarne Titmus.

Still, in her next-to-last event of these games, Ledecky broke the mark she shared with fellow Americans Dara Torres, Natalie Coughlin and Jenny Thompson. The 27-year-old now has eight golds, four sil-

vers and one bronze over four Olympics, with every intention of swimming on to Los Angeles in 2028.

McIntosh cruised to victory in the 200 butterfly, dealing American Regan Smith a familiar silver-medal finish.

But Douglass put the U.S. on the top of the podium in the 200 breaststroke, a race that essentially served as a changing of the guard.

Longtime American star Lilly King, competing in her final Olympics, finished last in the final. She made her way over several lane ropes to give a hug to Douglass, one of the world's most versatile swimmers and now a gold medalist.

It was the fourth swimming gold for the world's most dominant swimming nation, to go along with 11 silver medals and six bronzes.

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Boxers who had faced gender claims win, stirring controversy

The Washington Post

VILLEPINTE, France — Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan won her opening Olympic boxing bout on Friday, beating Sitora Turdibekova of Uzbekistan 5:0 in the women's 57-kilogram division.

Lin and fellow women's boxer Imane Khelif of Algeria were disqualified from the world championships held last year by the International Boxing Association for supposedly failing gender eligibility tests, and their presence at the Paris Olympics has become a divisive international issue.

Lin entered the ring at the North Paris Arena to a chorus of cheers from the French crowd. Her headgear became dislodged in the first minute during a clinch, but she won the first round on four of five scorecards.

Lin is well-known in international competitions for being

taller and more slender than most of her fellow competitors at 57 kilos while using her quickness and superior reach to land significant punches. The two-time Olympian won the final two rounds 5:0 on all five cards against Turdibekova.

On Thursday, Imane Khelif and Angela Carini exchanged a few brisk punches in their 46 seconds of competition in the Paris ring. They were enough to persuade Carini that her Olympic debut was finished.

The Italy boxer abruptly walked away from her Algerian opponent and went to her corner, abandoning her bout — an extremely rare occurrence in Olympic boxing.

Carini didn't shake Khelif's hand after the referee formally raised it, but she cried in the ring after sinking to her knees. Minutes afterward, a still-tearful Carini said she quit because

of the pain from those opening punches.

"I felt a severe pain in my nose, and with the maturity of a boxer, I said 'enough,' because I didn't want to, I didn't want to, I couldn't finish the match," Carini said.

Lin won world championships in 2018 and 2022, but the IBA abruptly disqualified her during last year's competition before the final.

The IBA also disqualified Khelif from last year's world championships for what it said were elevated levels of testosterone.

Both Lin's and Khelif's passports say they are female, and they have no eligibility issues with the International Olympic Committee, which runs the Olympic boxing tournament in the permanent absence of the banished IBA. Khelif also is a two-time Olympian.

Basketball team seeks No. 1 seed

Associated Press

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, France — The U.S. Olympic men's basketball team had a 23-point lead over Serbia with seven seconds remaining in its opening contest at the Paris Games earlier this week. Had this been the Golden State Warriors with such a lead in the final moments, Stephen Curry would have simply let time expire.

Here, he shot a 3-pointer instead. He wasn't running up the score. He was playing by Olympic rules.

Point differential is a tiebreaker used in FIBA competitions, including the Olympics, and basically it means the more you win by, the better you'll fare if a tiebreaker is necessary.

It already has come into play at the Paris Games as far as which teams will make the quarterfinals, and the U.S. is mindful going into its group-stage finale against Puerto Rico on Saturday that a loss would hurt its seeding for the knockout round.

"In FIBA, point differential is a big thing," U.S. guard Derrick White said Friday before the team practiced in Paris. "Even in the first two games, we were focusing on not taking the foot off the gas like you do in the NBA sometimes. It's a little different than what we're used to, but it's all part of the tournament."

The U.S. has outscored its first two opponents at the Olympics by 43 points — Serbia by 26, South Sudan by 17. A win on Saturday would finish off a 3-0 showing in group play and almost certainly would guarantee the Americans the No. 1 seed going into Tuesday's quarterfinals.

How much does that matter? "A lot," U.S. coach Steve Kerr said Friday. "... We want the one seed. It gives you the best matchup in the quarterfinals."

US men bounced from Olympic soccer tournament after 4-0 loss to Morocco

Associated Press

PARIS — The United States was eliminated from the Olympic men's soccer tournament on Friday after a 4-0 loss to Morocco in the quarterfinals.

Soufiane Rahimi, Ilias Akhomach, Achraf Hakimi and Mehdi Maouhoub scored the goals at Parc des Princes that ended U.S. hopes of a medal at the Paris Games.

Morocco, which enjoyed fervent support in the French capital, will play the winner of Japan vs. Spain in the semifinals in Marseille on Monday.

The U.S. qualified for the quarterfinals of the Olympics for the first time since Sydney 2000 but was outclassed by a polished Morocco team that had

already beaten Argentina in the group stage.

Rahimi scored a penalty in the 29th minute and Akhomach doubled the lead in the 63rd.

Hakimi rolled in the third after a solo run in the 70th.

Maouhoub, a substitute, finished off the rout with a penalty in second-half stoppage time.

Morocco dominated the chances in the first half, but needed a penalty to find a breakthrough after Nathan Harriel fouled Rahimi in the box. Despite protests from the American players, referee Yael Falcón Pérez pointed to the spot and Rahimi fired low to the left and beyond the dive of Patrick Schulte.

Miles Robinson had a golden

chance to level the game in the 59th when collecting a knockdown from about six yards out, but shot wide.

That miss proved even more costly when Morocco extended its lead four minutes later through Akhomach, who slotted past Schulte from close range after Abde Ezzalzouli's cross.

Hakimi, who plays his club soccer for PSG, added a third shortly after — carrying the ball to the edge of the box before firing into the bottom right hand corner.

Morocco made it 4-0 in stoppage time when Harriel handled in the box and, after a VAR review, a second penalty was awarded and Maouhoub converted.

Guardians blast Orioles in series opener

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — David Fry hit a three-run homer, José Ramírez had a two-run shot and the Cleveland Guardians hammered the Baltimore Orioles 10-3 on Thursday night in a matchup of two of the AL's division leaders.

Bo Naylor added a three-run blast as the Guardians outthrew the Orioles, who lead the majors with 172 homers.

Fry homered in the third off Trevor Rogers (2-10), who went $4\frac{2}{3}$ innings in his debut for the Orioles after being acquired in a trade Tuesday from Miami. The left-hander allowed five runs and six hits.

Ramírez hit his 28th homer in the seventh, giving him homers in three straight games for the first time since 2021.

Naylor's eighth homer capped a five-run seventh when the Guardians blew it open.

Ben Lively (10-6) gave up two runs and four hits in six innings to become Cleveland's first 10-game winner. He's the first Guardians pitcher to reach 10 wins in his first 19 games with the club since Shane Bieber in 2018.

Royals 7, Tigers 1: Vinnie Pasquantino homered twice, Seth Lugo gave up just four hits over eight innings and visiting Kansas City beat Detroit.

Bobby Witt Jr. also homered

for the Royals, who are 4-0 on their current road trip. Detroit has lost four in a row and been outscored 25-5 in those games.

Lugo (13-5) gave up one run, struck out three and walked one after going 1-3 in July. He is 7-0 with a 1.31 ERA in nine starts against the AL Central this season.

Keider Montero (1-5) allowed four runs on six hits in a career-high seven innings. The rookie, one of Detroit's only two healthy starting pitchers, allowed three runs before he got an out, but settled down.

Maikel Garcia started the game with a single and stole second and third without throws. Witt walked and Pasquantino lined his 13th homer into the right-field stands for a 3-0 lead.

Braves 4, Marlins 2: Austin Riley and Matt Olson hit first-inning home runs, Orlando Arcia added a shot in the third and host Atlanta beat Miami.

The Braves have won five of their past six games.

Charlie Morton (6-6) allowed just one run on five hits in six innings. He had six strikeouts and two walks. Morton allowed the leadoff batter to reach five times in six innings, but kept the Marlins off the scoreboard with the exception of an unearned run in the fifth.

Marcell Ozuna was 2 for 4 with a run, and Olson was 1 for 4

with two RBIs. Leadoff man Jorge Soler was 0 for 3 with a walk in his first home appearance after rejoining the Braves on Tuesday after a trade with the Giants. Soler was the MVP of the 2021 World Series for Atlanta.

Braves closer Raisel Iglesias picked up his 23rd save after A.J. Minter pitched a perfect eighth.

Cubs 5, Cardinals 4: Pinch-hitter Mike Tauchman doubled in Dansby Swanson with the winning run as host Chicago scored three times in the ninth inning to rally for a win.

With Chicago down 4-2, Cody Bellinger hit a solo homer with one out. After Nico Hoerner singled and stole second, Swanson followed with his second RBI single of the night to tie it. Tauchman lined St. Louis closer Ryan Helsley's 2-2 fastball down the left field line for the win.

Helsley (4-4) blew a save for the third time in 36 chances. Reliever Nate Pearson (1-1) tossed two scoreless innings for the win.

Rookie Masyn Winn hit a two-run homer, then Nolan Arenado added an RBI single in a three-run seventh inning to put St. Louis ahead 4-2.

Paul Goldschmidt hit his 17th homer in the first, then added a single and double. The veteran

first baseman has nine hits in his last 20 at bats (.450) over five games.

Rockies 5, Angels 4 (10): Jake Cave hit a tying two-run home run with two outs in the ninth inning and visiting Colorado scored on an error in the 10th to beat Los Angeles.

Cave homered off Hunter Strickland, the right-hander who is being used to finish off games after closer Carlos Estevez was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies on Saturday.

Michael Toglia added a two-run home run for the Rockies, who have won consecutive games following a five-game losing streak. Colorado won a series for the third time in four tries since the All-Star break.

With Jacob Stallings at second base to open the 10th inning for Colorado, Sam Hilliard attempted a sacrifice bunt. Angels right-hander Hans Crouse (4-3) threw the ball wide of first base, allowing Hilliard to score the go-ahead run.

Logan O'Hoppe and Mickey Moniak hit home runs for the Angels, who have lost five of their past seven games. Right-hander Carson Fulmer gave up two runs on three hits over six innings for Los Angeles in his fourth start of the season.

Stickland has one save and one blown save since taking over as closer.

Bookmaker to plead guilty in sports gambling case

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A Southern California bookmaker who took thousands of sports bets from the ex-interpreter for baseball star Shohei Ohtani has agreed to plead guilty to running an illegal gambling business, U.S. authorities announced Thursday.

Mathew Bowyer's business operated for at least five years in Southern California and Las Vegas and took wagers from

more than 700 bettors, including Ohtani's former interpreter Ippei Mizuhara, the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles said in a statement.

Bowyer has agreed to plead guilty to running an illegal gambling business, money laundering, and subscribing to a false tax return, the statement said.

"Mr. Bowyer is looking forward to accepting responsibility for his actions," said Diane Bass, Bowyer's attorney.

The prosecution against Bowyer follows several sports betting scandals that emerged this year, including one that prompted Major League Baseball to ban a player for life for the first time since Pete Rose was barred in 1989.

Operating an unlicensed betting business is a federal crime. Meanwhile, sports gambling is illegal in California, even as 38 states and the District of Columbia allow some form of it.

Bass said in March that she'd been working with federal prosecutors to resolve her client's case and confirmed an October raid at his home. She said Mizuhara was placing bets with Bowyer on international soccer but not baseball.

"Mr. Bowyer never had any contact with Shohei Ohtani, in person, on the phone, in any way," Bass told the AP in March. "The only person he had contact with was Ippei."

NFL training camps see battles at QB

Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — Aidan O'Connell at Purdue and Gardner Minshew at Washington State were used to fighting for their jobs, and little has changed in the NFL.

O'Connell wasn't promised the starting job even after going 5-4 in the second half of last season, and Minshew found himself on the free-agent market even after showing in three different spots he could be effective if not consistent.

And now they are battling each other to be the Raiders' starting quarterback, and neither has created separation.

Coach Antonio Pierce, typically loquacious, was succinct when asked Tuesday about the state of the position. "Status quo," he said.

When pressed for more, Pierce said, "I'm going to keep saying it — somebody just take it and say, 'I'm the guy, AP.' Make it clear and evident and we'll make that decision at that point."

Las Vegas isn't the only team with questions as the sport's most important and visible position.

Quarterbacks are competing for starting jobs in Denver and New England, and expected starters in Pittsburgh and Minnesota are being pushed to keep those spots.

■ **Broncos:** The Broncos drafted a quarterback high, selecting Bo Nix 12th. He is competing with journeyman Jarrett

Stidham, though trade acquisition Zach Wilson is somewhere in the mix. Wilson was the No. 2 overall pick in 2021 by the New York Jets, but failed to live up to expectations, becoming expendable after Aaron Rodgers signed there last year.

Unless the Broncos decide to immediately put the offense in the hands of their first-round pick, Stidham could be in the best position to win the job.

The Broncos might not be in the situation if former general manager John Elway had drafted quarterback Josh Allen instead of edge rusher Bradley Chubb in 2018 with the fifth selection. Elway rued the decision not to take Allen in a recent podcast, calling it his most egregious mistake as the GM.

Denver has been searching for a quality starting quarterback since, most notably signing Russell Wilson in 2022 to a five-year, \$242 million contract extension. After winning only 11 of his 30 starts, the Broncos opted to release Wilson, even though it meant paying most of his \$39 million salary this year with the Steelers on the hook for just the veteran minimum of \$1.21 million.

■ **Steelers:** In Pittsburgh, Wilson gave the Steelers a high-profile quarterback to go with what has been a playoff roster. It also caused 2022 first-round pick and two-year starter Kenny Pickett to search for another home, and the Steelers honored that request by shipping him

across the state to the Philadelphia Eagles.

But the Steelers weren't done. They traded for Justin Fields, who showed flashes of stardom but also struggled with inconsistency in three seasons with the Chicago Bears. One of the NFL's most athletic quarterbacks, he gives the Steelers a running element that Wilson can no longer match.

A calf injury put Wilson behind schedule this training camp. He finally received his first live repetitions Tuesday.

■ **Patriots:** First-year Patriots coach Jerod Mayo is keeping an open mind regarding his QB situation as New England still searches for a replacement for Tom Brady.

The club drafted Drake Maye third overall this year, and Mayo has not ruled out naming him the starter going into the season, though he provided plenty of caveats. That includes Jacoby Brissett, whom Mayo acknowledged is the likely starter but also mentioned Joe Milton and Bailey Zappe.

"All those guys will have opportunities to go out there and be the starting quarterback in Week 1," Mayo said.

That said, Brissett has done little to dispel the idea he won't be atop the depth chart, at least to begin the season. He is back in New England, where he began his NFL career as a backup in 2016 before moving on to four teams over the following seven years.

■ **Vikings:** Sam Darnold hopes he has found a home — for now, at least — after signing with the Vikings. Taken third overall in 2018 by the Jets, Darnold has become more of a journeyman than franchise quarterback, and in Minnesota he will likely be a bridge QB.

Minnesota drafted J.J. McCarthy 10th overall after he led Michigan to the national championship with the idea he would be the quarterback of the future and not necessarily the present.

The Vikings' ideal scenario is for Darnold to play well enough to be the starter all season, taking advantage of an offense led by wide receiver Justin Jefferson and running back Aaron Jones. McCarthy would follow the model in Kansas City in which Patrick Mahomes sat for a year behind Alex Smith.

But if Darnold falters, McCarthy could find himself behind center earlier than anticipated.

■ **Raiders:** Pierce said he not only plans to play O'Connell and Minshew in preseason games to help determine the starter, but will make sure both quarterbacks have the first-team offense to work with for a more accurate evaluation.

Both quarterbacks know what it's like to compete for the job. O'Connell rose from a walk-on at Purdue to become a two-year record-setting starter. Minshew had the starting position for only one year of college.

Judge overturns verdict in 'Sunday Ticket' lawsuit

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge overturned a jury's \$4.7 billion verdict in the class-action lawsuit filed by "Sunday Ticket" subscribers against the NFL and has granted judgment to the NFL.

U.S. District Judge Philip Gu-

tierrez ruled Thursday that the testimony of two witnesses for the subscribers had flawed methodologies and should have been excluded.

"Without the testimonies of Dr. (Daniel) Rascher and Dr. (John) Zona, no reasonable jury could have found class-wide in-

jury or damages," Gutierrez wrote at the end of his 16-page ruling.

On June 27, the jury awarded \$4.7 billion in damages to residential and commercial subscribers after it ruled the NFL violated antitrust laws in distributing out-of-market Sunday

afternoon games on a premium subscription service.

The lawsuit covered 2.4 million residential subscribers and 48,000 businesses in the United States who paid for the package on DirecTV of out-of-market games from the 2011 through 2022 seasons.