

Obamas deliver hope, warnings at DNC

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Warning of a difficult fight ahead, former President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama on Tuesday called on the nation to embrace Kamala Harris in urgent messages to the Democratic National Convention that were at times both hopeful and ominous.

“America, hope is making a comeback,” the former first lady declared. She then tore into Republican Donald Trump, a sharp shift from the 2016 convention speech in which she told her party, “When they go low, we go high.”

“His limited and narrow view of the world made him feel threatened by the existence of two hard-working, highly educated, successful people who also happened to be Black,” Michelle Obama said of Trump.

Barack Obama, the first Black U.S. president, insisted the nation is ready to elect Harris, who is of Jamaican and Indian heritage and would be the nation’s first female president. He also called Trump “a 78-year-old billionaire who hasn’t stopped whining about his problems since he rode

down his golden escalator nine years ago.”

“It’s been a constant stream of gripes and grievances that’s actually gotten worse now that he’s afraid of losing to Kamala,” he said.

The fiery messages from two of the Democratic Party’s biggest stars underscored the urgency of the moment as Harris works to stitch together a broad coalition in her bid to defeat Trump this fall. The vice president is drawing on stars like the Obamas and other celebrities, officials from the far left to the middle, and even some Republicans to boost her campaign.

And while the theme of the night was “a bold vision for America’s future,” the disparate factions of Harris’ evolving coalition demonstrated, above all, that they are connected by a deep desire to prevent a second Trump presidency.

Sens. Chuck Schumer, the Senate Democratic leader, and Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent beloved by progressives, both praised Harris.

Schumer called on voters to elect another Democratic major-

ity to the Senate. “She can’t do it alone,” he said of a prospective President Harris.

Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, said he was eager to work with Harris in the White House as well. Their policy goals, he said, are “not a radical agenda.”

As Democrats addressed the nation from Chicago, Harris faced an estimated 15,000 people in battleground Wisconsin in the arena where Republicans held their convention last month.

She said that she was running “a people-powered campaign.”

“Together we will chart a new way forward,” the vice president said in remarks that were partially broadcast to the DNC. “A future for freedom, opportunity, of optimism and faith.”

Still, it was not all serious on the second night of the four-day convention.

A symbolic roll call in which delegates from each state pledged their support for the Democratic nominee turned into a party atmosphere.

A DJ played a mix of state-specific songs — and Atlanta native Lil Jon ran out during Georgia’s

turn to his hit song with DJ Snake, “Turn Down for What,” to the delight of the thousands inside the cavernous United Center.

And various speakers offered personal stories about Harris, who has served as a California senator and vice president, but remains largely unknown among many voters.

Second gentleman Doug Emhoff, who would become the nation’s first gentleman if his wife wins the presidency, shared details about his relationship with the vice president — their cooking habits, their first date and her laugh, which is often mocked by Republican critics.

Throughout their convention, Democrats have sought to balance a message of unity with an embrace of diversity.

Barack Obama’s speech Tuesday night made perhaps the most forceful case for that model as a logical step forward for a bitterly divided nation. Obama framed the Democrats’ approach as “a new way forward” for a modern society in contrast to a “divisive,” “old” and “tired” strategy of vision offered by the party’s chief opponent, Trump.

Tanker drifting ablaze following attacks in Red Sea

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A Greek-flagged oil tanker traveling through the Red Sea came under repeated attack Wednesday, leaving the vessel “not under command” and drifting ablaze after an assault suspected to have been carried out by Yemen’s Houthi rebels, the British military said.

The attack, the most serious in the Red Sea in weeks, comes during a monthslong campaign

by Houthis targeting ships over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip that has disrupted a trade route through which \$1 trillion in cargo typically passes each year.

In the attack, men on small boats first opened fire with small arms about 90 miles west of the rebel-held Yemeni port city of Hodeida, the British military’s United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said.

Four projectiles also hit the

ship, it added. It wasn’t immediately clear if that meant drones or missiles.

“The vessel reports being not under command,” the UKMTO said, likely meaning it lost all power. “No casualties reported.”

Later, the UKMTO warned the ship was drifting while on fire in the Red Sea.

The Greek shipping ministry later identified the vessel as the tanker Sounion, which had 25

crew members on board at the time of the attack as it traveled from Iraq to Cyprus.

Later Wednesday, the UKMTO reported a second ship being targeted in the Gulf of Aden by three explosions that occurred in the water close to it, though they caused no damage.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack, though it can take them hours or even days before they acknowledge their assaults.

Fatal crash was pilot's 2nd Osprey mishap

By BRIAN McELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An officer killed when an MV-22B Osprey crashed last year over northern Australia also piloted the tiltrotor that went down off Okinawa in 2016, according to the Marine Corps.

Maj. Tobin Lewis, 37, of Jefferson, Colo., was one of two pilots flying the Osprey that crashed Aug. 27, 2023, with 23 aboard on Melville Island, north of Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory.

Lewis, the squadron executive officer and Osprey command pilot, died alongside two other Marines, pilot Capt. Eleanor LeBeau, 29, and crew chief Cpl. Spencer Collart, 21.

Their aircraft was assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 363 at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

A Marine Corps accident report released Aug. 9 identified "pilot error and complacency" as the primary cause of the fatal

crash. The Osprey went down after a close call with another aircraft during their approach to a landing zone, according to the report. It also found that squadron leadership had permitted "a culture that disregarded safety of flight."

Lewis also was the commander and pilot of an Osprey that crashed offshore of Camp Schwab, injuring two crewmembers, on Dec. 13, 2016, according to the report and the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

He was not identified publicly by the Marine Corps as the pilot in the Okinawa incident prior to the Aug. 9 report being released.

"Pilot error due to a loss of situational awareness" and not mechanical failure was the primary cause of the Okinawa accident, III MEF spokesman 1st Lt. Owen Hitchcock said Tuesday.

Lewis, a captain at the time, and four other Marines were on board during a nighttime train-

ing mission when the Osprey's propeller cut a refueling hose on an Air Force C-130 tanker.

Rather than risk crashing the Osprey into a residential area near Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Lewis flew the aircraft about 18 miles north and set it down offshore.

That Osprey was assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 with Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, according to the report.

Lewis' Field Flight Performance Board held Dec. 20, 2016, and included in the Australia accident report, found that he made "excessive changes in power" to the aircraft during aerial refueling.

That and "insufficient" safety briefs before the flight contributed to the Okinawa accident, the report states.

Lewis and another pilot made multiple failed attempts to refuel the Osprey during the northbound leg of the flight, ac-

cording to the board's report.

On the second-to-last attempt to connect with the C-130, the drogue, or fuel funnel, came close to hitting the Osprey's nose, and Lewis failed to tell the rest of the crew, the report states.

Lewis then dropped back behind the C-130 for one more attempt, which "resulted in the impact of the right propeller to the left refueling drogue" of the tanker.

The board unanimously recommended Lewis be placed on conditional flight status beginning in February 2017 and receive remedial training. Lewis "completed a comprehensive review of the MV-22 syllabus under the supervision of an experienced pilot," Hitchcock said. He returned to full flight duties in 2019.

U.S. officials told the government of Japan in September 2019 that Lewis had been disciplined, the Mainichi newspaper reported at the time.

Tender helps Australians prepare for nuclear subs

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

An American submarine tender recently arrived in Western Australia, where sailors are training to service U.S. and British nuclear-powered fast-attack boats under a mutual defense pact.

The USS Emory S. Land, a Guam-based tender crewed by American and Australian sailors, pulled into naval base HMAS Stirling, near Perth, on Aug. 16, the Navy announced in a news release that day.

The crew will perform maintenance on a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine over several weeks, the release said, without naming the boat.

"We are unable to provide in-

formation on future operations due to operations security concerns," 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Jamie Moroney said by email Wednesday.

The 2021 AUKUS agreement — so named for Australia, the United Kingdom and United States — aims to position one British and four U.S. nuclear-powered boats as Submarine Rotational Force-West at HMAS Stirling, according to the Australian Defence Department website.

The defense pact's first phase is on track to bring the vessels there on a temporary basis within three years, Australia's non-partisan Lowy Institute reported last month.

The Emory S. Land's visit

marks a step toward Australia becoming able to operate, maintain and support a fleet of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered boats, according to the Navy release.

"For the last six weeks we've had a team of U.S. Sailors embedded in the [Fleet Support Unit] West workshops at HMAS Stirling," Capt. Brent Spillner, commander of the submarine tender, said in the release.

More than 30 Australian sailors, supervised by U.S. personnel, will perform submarine maintenance.

Tasks will include replacing a mast and a hydraulic valve, along with the simulated removal of a pump weighing more than 3,500 pounds, the release

said.

It will be the first time Australians have maintained a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine in Australian waters, Spillner said in the release.

"This is an important milestone and learning opportunity as we work together to establish Submarine Rotational Force-West, where both U.S. and UK submarines will regularly transit through HMAS Stirling, with maintenance and logistics assisted by Australian personnel," he said.

Australian and U.S. sailors have worked side by side on the Emory S. Land to maintain U.S. boats on Guam, Cmdr. Derek Fletcher, repair officer aboard the vessel, said in the release.

Trump vows to 'make America safe again'

Associated Press

HOWELL, Mich. — Former President Donald Trump pledged Tuesday to "Make America Safe Again" while campaigning in Michigan as the Democrats who gathered in Chicago to nominate Kamala Harris branded him a career criminal.

As part of a battleground campaign swing designed to counter the Democratic National Convention, Trump stood alongside sheriff's deputies in the city of Howell and labeled Harris, a former San Francisco district attorney and California attorney general, as the "ring-leader" of a "Marxist attack on law enforcement" across the country.

"Kamala Harris will deliver crime, chaos, destruction and death," Trump said in one of

many generalizations about an America under Harris. "You'll see levels of crime that you've never seen before. ... I will deliver law, order, safety and peace."

Trump has sought in recent weeks to blunt the enthusiasm Harris has attracted since President Joe Biden ended his reelection campaign and endorsed her.

That has involved both dark predictions about what electing Harris would mean for the country and efforts by Trump's advisers to set up events where he can try to draw specific policy contrasts. On Tuesday in Michigan, the subject was crime and public safety.

"Our policemen and women have the backs of law-abiding citizens every day," Trump said. "When we go back to the White House, you're going to

see support the likes of which you haven't seen, certainly in four years."

In excerpts released before his speech, Trump's campaign also said he would call for the death penalty for child rapists and child traffickers; he did not mention that during his remarks.

A campaign official who was not authorized to speak publicly said after Trump's appearance that the former president will make those additional formal policy announcements after the Democratic convention, when the campaign expects they can get more attention.

Trump's event Tuesday was his latest billed as focused on a specific issue. But on these occasions, Trump has spent considerable time attacking Harris personally and taking shots at

Biden, and the same was true after their appearances Monday at the Democratic convention.

"I watched last night in amazement as they tried to pretend everything was great," Trump said, singling out inflation and the U.S.-Mexico border as topics Democrats glossed over. "We have a fool as president," he said of Biden.

Trump presented a bleak portrait of life in the United States and the threat of a Harris presidency, though he was short on specifics and heavy on hyperbole.

"It's just insane," Trump said. "You can't walk across the street to get a loaf of bread. You get shot, you get mugged, you get raped, you get whatever it may be. And you've seen it, and I've seen it, and it's time for a change."

Pro-Palestinian protesters clash with police at DNC

Associated Press

CHICAGO — At least 55 protesters were arrested following violent clashes with police in Chicago on the second night of the Democratic National Convention, a situation the city's police chief called "a danger to our city."

Chicago Police Superintendent Larry Snelling said Wednesday that those arrested outside the Israeli Consulate, about 2 miles from the United Center where Democrats were meeting, "showed up with the intention of committing acts of violence and vandalism."

"As the Chicago Police Department, we did everything that we could to de-escalate that situation," Snelling said during a news conference. "But there's only so much de-escalation that you can attempt before it becomes excessive repetition."

The intense confrontations between pro-Palestinian pro-

testers and officers began minutes into the demonstration, after some protesters charged at a line of police that had blocked their march.

They eventually moved past the officers but were penned in several times throughout the night by police in riot gear who did not allow protesters to disperse.

Snelling said protesters showed up to "fight with the police."

"We were not the initiators of violence, but we responded to it," Snelling said.

He said between 55 and 60 people were arrested. Two people were taken to the hospital, one for knee pain and one with a finger injury, Snelling said. Two officers were injured but they refused medical attention because they did not want to leave fellow officers, Snelling said. He said three journalists were among those arrested.

Blinken ends Mideast visit without cease-fire in Gaza

Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken ended his ninth visit to the Middle East since the war in Gaza began without securing any major breakthrough for a cease-fire deal, warning Tuesday that "time is of the essence" even as Hamas and Israel signaled that challenges remain.

After meetings in fellow mediating countries Egypt and Qatar, Blinken said that because Israel has accepted a proposal to bridge gaps with the militant group, the focus turns to doing everything possible to "get Hamas on board" and ensure both sides agree to key details on implementation.

"Our message is simple. It's clear and it's urgent," he told reporters before leaving Qatar. "We need to get a cease-fire and hostage agreement over the finish line, and we need to do it now. Time is of the essence."

There has been added urgency after the recent targeted killings of militant leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah in Iran and Lebanon, both attributed to Israel, and vows of retaliation that have sparked fears of a wider regional war.

Few details have been released about the so-called bridging proposal put forth by the United States, Egypt and Qatar. Blinken said it is "very clear on the schedule and the locations of (Israeli military) withdrawals from Gaza."

Hamas on Tuesday called the latest proposal a reversal of what it had agreed to, accusing the U.S. of acquiescing to new conditions from Israel. There was no immediate U.S. response.

Blinken's comments on ending his latest Israel-Hamas peace mission were notably bare of the optimism that Biden administration officials expressed going into his trip.

Abortion rights on ballot in Ariz., Mont.

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Voters in Arizona and Montana will be able to decide in November whether they want to protect the right to an abortion in their state constitutions. The Arizona Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that a 200-word summary that abortion advocates used to collect signatures for a ballot measure is valid, clearing the way for the issue to remain on the ballot.

Montana Secretary of State Christi Jacobsen on Tuesday certified Montana's constitutional initiative for the November ballot.

Under both measures, abortions would be allowed until fetal viability — the point at which a fetus could survive outside the womb, typically around 24 weeks.

In Arizona, there are some

exceptions for post-viability abortions to save the mother's life or to protect her physical or mental health. Montana's measure allows later abortions if needed to protect the mother's life or health.

Montana's initiative would enshrine in the constitution a 1999 state Supreme Court ruling that found the constitutional right to privacy includes the right of a patient to receive an abortion from a provider of their choice. Supporters sought to protect the right as Republican lawmakers passed bills to restrict abortion rights.

Voters in more than a half-dozen states will be deciding abortion measures this fall. The U.S. Supreme Court removed the nationwide right to abortion with a 2022 ruling, which sparked a national push to have

voters decide.

"Since Roe was overturned, extreme anti-abortion politicians have used every trick in the book to take away our freedoms and ban abortion completely," Martha Fuller, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Montana, said in a statement. "During that time, we have been working together to put this issue before voters."

Recent decisions from the Arizona Supreme Court come ahead of a Thursday ballot printing deadline. Montana's ballot must be certified by Thursday.

Arizona's justices sided with Republican lawmakers in a separate case concerning the abortion ballot measure last week to allow a voter information pamphlet to refer to an embryo or fetus as an "unborn human be-

ing." That language will not appear on the ballots.

In another case, the justices ruled a legislative proposal to let local police make arrests near the state's border with Mexico will appear on the ballot for voters to decide. The court had rejected a challenge from Latino groups that argued the ballot measure violated a rule in the state constitution that says legislative proposals must cover a single subject.

In the latest abortion measure case, Arizona Right to Life sued over the petition summary, arguing it was misleading.

The high court justices rejected that argument, as well as the claim that the petition summary for the proposed amendment failed to mention it would overturn existing abortion laws if approved by voters.

Sen. Scott wins Fla. primary as he seeks 2nd term

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — U.S. Sen. Rick Scott has handily won Florida's Republican primary against two other opponents, moving on to face Democratic former U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell in November.

Mucarsel-Powell also won her election comfortably against three other candidates. This November, Scott has to

first win a second term in the U.S. Senate before reaching his larger goal — winning Senate leadership, after retiring Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., steps down.

The Florida primary also reaffirmed support for firebrand U.S. Rep. Matt Gaetz and picked the nominees to replace retiring Republican U.S. Rep. Bill Posey in an election where

local and state races were the main draw for voters in some areas.

Meanwhile, the Florida secretary of state's office reported that some counties were having technical difficulties reporting results.

The office said it was receiving accurate information on votes from individual counties but that the counties were hav-

ing difficulty reporting them on public-facing websites.

Some results were not immediately available on county websites, but the glitch didn't affect vote totals, elections officials said.

After his win, Scott said in an emailed statement: "I am proof that the American dream is alive, and I intend to fight like hell to make sure it stays alive."

Incumbents Barrasso, Hageman win Wyo. primaries

Associated Press

Wyoming Republican primary voters opted Tuesday to stick with long-serving U.S. Sen. John Barrasso and U.S. Rep. Harriet Hageman, the first-term congresswoman who ousted Liz Cheney two years ago.

Barrasso beat Reid Rasner, a financial adviser from the Casper area, and is now heavily favored to win the general elec-

tion and a third full term in the Republican-dominated state.

An orthopedic surgeon and former state lawmaker from Casper, Barrasso was first appointed to the Senate in 2007 after the death of Sen. Craig Thomas. He was elected to finish Thomas' term the following year.

Barrasso has risen to prominence as chair of the Senate Republican Conference, the

third-ranking GOP position in the chamber, and ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

He has been an outspoken critic of the Biden administration's policies on immigration and, especially, fossil fuel development and air pollution regulations that affect Wyoming, a major producer of coal, oil and natural gas.

"It's the Wyoming economy. It's preserving our jobs, our economy, protecting our resources, our values, representing the folks of Wyoming," Barrasso said by phone after AP called the race.

"There is a war out of Washington against the hidden America, the people that put the food on the table and the energy that turns on the lights and puts fuel in your vehicle."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

DC official arrested on bribery charge

DC WASHINGTON — A District of Columbia councilmember known for promoting antisemitic conspiracy theories accepted over \$150,000 in bribes in exchange for pressuring D.C. employees to extend city contracts for violence intervention services, authorities alleged in court records unsealed Monday.

Trayon White Sr., a Democrat who ran an unsuccessful mayoral campaign in 2022, was arrested Sunday on a federal bribery charge and released from custody after a brief court appearance Monday. His attorney declined to comment on the allegations against him.

White agreed in June to accept roughly \$156,000 in kickbacks and cash payments in exchange for pressuring government agency employees to extend two companies' contracts worth over \$5 million, prosecutors said.

Wildfires burned food in wild horses' habitats

ID BOISE — The Bureau of Land Management's Boise office announced Monday that it will gather nearly 100 mustangs from Southwest Idaho rangeland after wildfires burned the vegetation the wild horses need to survive.

In a news release, officials said the Owyhee and Four Rivers field offices would begin an emergency roundup next week. They plan to gather about 40 mustangs from the Sands Basin Herd Management Area near Marsing and about 50 from the Four Mile area north of Emmett.

BLM officials said there is not enough vegetation in either area to support the current mustang populations.

According to the news release, both herd management areas were "nearly completely burned" by lightning-caused fires. The Jump fire, which ignited near Jump Creek in Owyhee County on Aug. 5, burned nearly 26,000 acres. That include a large swath of the 11,700-acre Sands Basin mustang habitat, which BLM officials said can support between 33 and 64 horses.

The Paddock fire, which started during the same thunderstorm, burned nearly 190,000 acres. Some of that included the 18,800-acre Four Mile Herd Management Area, which can support between 37 and 60 horses.

Ex-NFL player accused of urinating on passenger

MA BOSTON — A former NFL player accused of drunkenly hitting one man and urinating on another during a flight from Boston to Dublin has been arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, the Massachusetts State Police said Monday.

Gosder Cherilus, a first-round pick of the Detroit Lions in 2008 who also played for the Indianapolis Colts and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, was arrested early Sunday after the Delta Air Lines flight returned to Logan International Airport.

Troopers ordered the 40-year-old from Wakefield, near Boston, to leave the plane but he "became irate and uncooperative," police said. He was then arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and disturbing a

flight crew.

According to the police report, he appeared drunk when he boarded the plane, allegedly argued with the flight crew about his seat and an hour into the flight urinated on an elderly passenger. He then hit another passenger and took that passenger's seat before passing out, the report says.

Woman who killed alleged trafficker gets 11 years

WI KENOSHA — A Milwaukee woman who said she was legally allowed to kill a man because he was sexually trafficking her was sentenced Monday to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty to a reduced count of reckless homicide.

A Kenosha County judge sentenced Chrystul Kizer, 24, to 11 years of initial confinement followed by 5 years of extended supervision in the 2018 death of Randall Volar, 34. She was given credit for 570 days, about one and a half years, of time served.

The judge did not make Kizer eligible to participate in any early release programs at the Department of Corrections, and she should be released in 2033, according to the Wisconsin State Public Defender's office.

Judge sidelined for making teen wear jail clothes

MI DETROIT — A Detroit judge who ordered a teenager into jail clothes and handcuffs on a field trip to his courtroom will be off the bench while undergoing "necessary training," the court's chief judge said Thursday.

Meanwhile, the girl's mother

said Judge Kenneth King was a "big bully."

"My daughter is hurt. She is feeling scared," Latoreya Till told the Detroit Free Press.

She identified her daughter as Eva Goodman. The 15-year-old fell asleep in King's court Tuesday while on a visit organized by a Detroit nonprofit.

King didn't like it. But he said it was her attitude that led to the jail clothes, handcuffs and stern words.

"I wanted this to look and feel very real to her, even though there's probably no real chance of me putting her in jail," he explained to WXYZ-TV.

King has been temporarily removed from his criminal case docket and will undergo "necessary training to address the underlying issues that contributed to this incident," said William McConico, the chief judge at 36th District Court.

Hunter recovering after being mauled by bear, shot

AK ANCHORAGE — A hunter in Alaska was hospitalized after being mauled by a brown bear and shot during an effort to fend it off, authorities said Monday.

The bear attack occurred Saturday on the Kenai Peninsula, southwest of Anchorage, Alaska State Troopers said.

The hunter, a 32-year-old man, was seriously injured both in the mauling and in the shooting. He and a hunting companion opened fire, and he was shot in the leg. It was not immediately clear who fired the shot that struck him, troopers spokesman Tim DeSpain said in an email.

The bear was killed.

— From wire reports

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SMU buries past as ACC debut draws near

Associated Press

DALLAS — Southern Methodist University athletic director Rick Hart gets goosebumps pretty easily these days.

Whether it's reflecting on the nearly year-old celebration of getting into the Atlantic Coast Conference or what's about to happen on the football field his office overlooks, Hart's emotions flow freely.

Even then, Hart says he can't really relate to the donors who spent nearly four decades waiting for the Mustangs to regain relevance after the devastating effects of the only so-called death penalty administered by the NCAA. He wasn't around in 1987, or the 25 years that followed.

Hart didn't know about the alumni who shunned the program out of embarrassment in the wake of the recruiting violations, or the reaction almost a decade later when SMU wasn't invited to the Big 12 party that led to the breakup of the Southwest Conference.

So when the Mustangs open the season Saturday at Nevada—and when they play their first ACC game, at home Sept. 28 against No. 10 Florida State—there will be plenty of folks who wondered if such days would ever come.

Not that they're necessarily expecting a return to the Pony Express days of running backs Eric Dickerson and Craig James and quarterback Lance McIlhenney, but a seat at the big table sure is nice.

"I can't even predict what that's going to look like, feel like," Hart said. "Just for the people who do have the point of view and perspective."

David Miller, chairman of the school's Board of Trustees, is one of them. Even though the former SMU basketball player lived in Denver when his alma mater's 1987-88 football seasons were wiped out, Miller was never that far removed.

Now he's high on the list—if not at the top—of those responsible for SMU's return to a power conference.

"This is a transformational op-

portunity for SMU," Miller said. "It's an opportunity not only to enhance our athletic programs. It's an opportunity to, I think, reposition the university's overall brand."

The death penalty badly damaged that brand. The pay-for-play scandal went all the way to the office of the late Texas Gov. Bill Clements, an SMU alum who led the trustees during the time the NCAA said the Mustangs were repeat offenders. Gone was the 1987 season, and the school canceled the following season amid the sanctions.

Miller was angry at his alma mater back then, a stance that softened as he came to accept the widely held belief that plenty of schools in the old SWC were up to many of the same tricks. Nearly the entire board of trustees quit, and the university president was fired. Enrollment suffered, as did morale.

"There's no question the priority coming out of the death penalty had to be re-establishing the university's, what I'm going to call, academic integrity," Miller said. "And athletics took a back seat. We're talking about three decades."

What followed was three mostly brutal decades for the football program. The Mustangs won 13 games total in their seven remaining SWC seasons. They lost 95-21 at Houston that first year back. They didn't have a winning season again until 1997.

The demise of the mostly Texas-based league led to nine seasons in the Western Athletic Conference and eight in Conference USA before a relative boost in the American Athletic, where SMU spent 11 seasons.

Even against weaker competition, SMU had a winning record just once in the first 20 seasons after the death penalty. June Jones changed that, and took the Mustangs to four consecutive bowl games before the program lost its momentum.

Hart arrived in the middle of Jones' six-plus seasons, and even

though one of the pioneers in pass-happy college offenses quit two games into a 1-11 season in 2014, Jones gets plenty of credit from Dickerson and others for the U-turn in the long road back.

Dickerson, a Pro Football Hall of Fame running back who finished third in Heisman Trophy voting when Georgia's Herschel Walker won it in 1982, was essentially estranged from his alma mater after the death penalty.

The five-time NFL All-Pro questioned his school's commitment to football, and didn't shield university President R. Gerald Turner from criticism. Turner—who took over in 1995, just as the SWC disbanded—was another key figure in conversations that led to an ACC invitation.

Dickerson said he and his friends saw a commitment to buildings on campus—he cited the presidential library for George W. Bush on the Dallas campus—but neglect toward the athletic department.

"I think Dr. Turner now sees that his legacy, he's got a great legacy of the university being a top university, of the buildings and all that kind of stuff," Dickerson said. "You want to have the whole gamut, especially when you've got the money to do it."

Financial resources never seemed to be a question at a small private college known for producing power brokers in business. The 73-year-old Miller is the perfect example.

He's the billionaire founder of EnCap Investments, an oil and gas private equity firm. Miller's name is on the basketball court at Moody Coliseum, which he called home as a player from 1968-72 after choosing the scholarship offer from SMU over others because of the education he figured he would get.

While fundraising was a problem in the years after the death penalty, time has helped heal that wound. In the week after the ACC announcement last Sept. 1, SMU raised \$100 million to help fund the transition.

Miller said most of those pledges were already in place as the school closed in on the formal ACC invitation, and he's confident the money will keep flowing even as SMU forgoes media rights in its new league for essentially the next decade.

Of the \$270 million the athletic department needs over that time, almost half is in place. A year ago, the school said it has a \$2 billion endowment and about 12,000 students.

"We don't want to just be competitive," Miller said. "We want to be successful and compete for championships. And that's going to require further investment. Four or five years down the road, it's a given that we'll have another substantial campaign to support our competitiveness in the ACC. And who knows what the landscape looks like in four or five years?"

The landscape is already dramatically different from the 1980s, starting with athletes being able to accept money for endorsements and use of their name, image or likeness.

SMU has confidence in its collective, called "The Boulevard" in reference to the tailgating scene near Ford Stadium, where officials hope the fans now have more reason to make the walk instead of letting pre-game festivities carry on past kickoff.

The Mustangs also feel strongly about their ability to recruit despite this year's entrance of Texas and Oklahoma into the Southeastern Conference, which opened the doors to recruit-rich Texas even more widely for the football powers.

There's also the momentum of the first conference title since 1984 in SMU's final American Athletic season, regardless of the obvious step up in class with ACC competition.

"We love where we're positioned," Hart said. "We've already demonstrated that we shouldn't pick and choose our spots. We should expect that we can recruit alongside anybody else in Texas."

Sinner playing after failing doping tests

Associated Press

No. 1-ranked men's tennis player Jannik Sinner will be playing in the U.S. Open — which begins in New York next week — even though word just emerged that he tested positive twice in March for a banned anabolic steroid called Clostebol.

It's a case that no one knew about until Tuesday and one that has drawn all sorts of questions — and, in some instances, criticism — from other players who wonder whether there was a double standard at play because of Sinner's success, are confused about why this was all kept under wraps and want to know why Sinner was allowed to keep competing before there was a resolution.

"I will now put this challenging and deeply unfortunate period behind me," Sinner said in a statement posted on social media. "I will continue to do everything I can to ensure I continue to comply with the (sport's) anti-doping (program)

and I have a team around me that are meticulous in their own compliance."

Not everyone is completely ready to just move forward. And it will be interesting to see how much scrutiny Sinner receives — from other athletes, from spectators, from the media — during the year's last Grand Slam tournament, where he will be the top-seeded man.

"Different rules for different players," 2021 Wimbledon semifinalist Denis Shapovalov wrote on social media.

Here is a look at some of the issues connected to what happened with Sinner:

What is Clostebol?

Clostebol is an anabolic steroid that can be found in ointments and sprays sold over the counter in some countries, such as Italy, and used to treat cuts or scrapes.

It is considered a performance enhancer, and several athletes in various sports have been suspended after testing

positive; one high-profile example was San Diego Padres star Fernando Tatis Jr., who received an 80-game ban from Major League Baseball in 2022.

Sinner submitted a urine sample that showed traces of Clostebol during the Indian Wells tournament in California in March; an out-of-competition sample eight days later also tested positive.

Why wasn't he banned from competing?

Sinner was provisionally suspended for the two positive results, but he appealed those bans, saying that he inadvertently was exposed to the steroid. He argued that one member of his team purchased a spray that contained Clostebol in Italy, then gave it to another team member — a physiotherapist — who cut a finger. Sinner said the physiotherapist then gave him a massage, which transmitted the substance to Sinner.

The International Tennis In-

tegrity Agency (ITIA), which handles anti-doping and anti-corruption investigations for the sport, accepted his explanation, as did an independent tribunal.

Was he punished at all?

Because one of the positive tests came during a tournament, Sinner had to forfeit \$325,000 in prize money and 400 ranking points he earned by getting to the semifinals at Indian Wells.

What are other players saying?

Plenty of players hopped on social media to offer their takes on the latest high-profile doping case in tennis, a list that includes suspensions reduced on appeal for Grand Slam champions Maria Sharapova and Simona Halep.

Nick Kyrgios, the Wimbledon runner-up in 2022, called the situation "ridiculous" and said he thought a ban was warranted.

Blues' offer sheets land young players from Oilers

Associated Press

The St. Louis Blues signed defenseman Philip Broberg and forward Dylan Holloway to two-year contracts Tuesday after the Edmonton Oilers declined to match the offer sheets for the restricted free agents.

Broberg signed for a total of \$9.16 million and Holloway \$4.58 million. The Blues sent second- and third-round picks to Edmonton as compensation.

Blues general manager Doug Armstrong defended the rarely used move of issuing offer sheets by saying, "If there is a GM code not to do offer sheets, nobody emailed it to me." And it made no difference to him who was managing the Oilers.

"I'd do it to my mother if she was managing the Oilers," Arm-

strong said. "My job is to take care of the St. Louis Blues fans and the St. Louis Blues organization. And we saw an opportunity to do that."

Later in the day, the NHL Players' Association said it is reviewing the Flyers' decision to place 32-year-old forward Ryan Johansen on unconditional waivers for the purpose of terminating his contract due to a material breach.

In an email to The Associated Press, the NHLPA said: "The Philadelphia Flyers' actions raise significant concerns. We are currently reviewing the matter."

The Flyers did not disclose what the material breach was in announcing the move, while saying they had no further com-

ment.

Johansen never appeared in a game with Philadelphia after revealing he had a hip injury upon being acquired by the Flyers along with a first-round draft pick in March in a trade that sent Sean Walker to Colorado.

Johansen's agent, Kurt Overhardt, posted a message on X calling the Flyers' move "disappointing," and adding he's contacted the NHLPA to defend and protect his client's rights. Overhardt added, Johansen is scheduled to have surgery on what he called "a severe hockey injury," and noted his client "has worked in good faith with the club, its medical staff and authorized third party physicians."

The 14-year NHL player has one year left on his contract, and is due to make \$8 million, with Nashville on the hook for paying half of his salary. Johansen has topped 60 points six times and had 13 goals and 23 points in 63 games with Colorado last year.

In Seattle, the Kraken agreed to sign center Matty Beniers to a seven-year, \$49.98 million contract in locking up the first draft pick in franchise history and former Calder Trophy winner through the 2030-31 season. The No. 2 pick in the 2021 draft out of Michigan was a restricted free agent.

In Edmonton, the salary capped Oilers opted not to keep their two youngest players even after clearing space by trading veteran Cody Ceci.

Guardians outlast Yankees in 12 innings

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Pinch-hitter Lane Thomas delivered a tie-breaking double to spark a six-run 12th inning, and the Cleveland Guardians outlasted the New York Yankees 9-5 on Tuesday night in the longest major league game this season.

“Sometimes that’s all it takes to get something going like that,” said the slumping Thomas, who drove in his first run since July 28. “We left some guys on in the game today and maybe just saved it all for one inning.”

Both teams began the night in first place, and the tense opener of their three-game series at Yankee Stadium had the feel of a potential playoff preview.

Juan Soto and Aaron Judge hit back-to-back homers in the first, but Cleveland came right back and the game was tied at 3 after four innings. Despite numerous chances on both sides, neither offense managed to score again until the 12th.

Thomas was hitting .113 (6-for-53) in 16 games with the Guardians when he batted for Bo Naylor leading off the 12th and lined a 2-2 sinker from left-hander Tim Mayza (0-2) into right field to score automatic runner Daniel Schneemann from second.

“I think it was huge for him,” Cleveland manager Stephen Vogt said. “Obviously, it’s a huge hit for us. We left a couple of people in scoring position tonight. It was just something that we needed and for him to come through, I know that’s going to be big for him. And it catapulted that huge inning.”

Jose Ramírez, intentionally walked in the 10th, followed with an RBI single off Michael Tonkin. After a walk to Tyler Freeman, David Fry laced a bases-loaded triple that made it 8-3.

“Really cool to see,” Fry said about Thomas’ clutch swing. “I think we were all thinking he was going to do it. It’s all we

need. We just need one to kind of let everybody loosen up and get the rest of the big hits.”

Scott Barlow allowed Judge’s two-run double before finishing a game that lasted 4 hours, 5 minutes — the longest in the big leagues this year.

Diamondbacks 3, Marlins 1: Corbin Carroll and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. homered, Eduardo Rodriguez (2-0) allowed one run and six hits over 5½ innings and visiting Arizona beat Miami.

Arizona, which finished with four hits, improved to a major league-best 30-13 since July 1. Carroll also singled and scored on Joc Pederson’s base hit, and Geraldo Perdomo walked twice.

Braves 3, Phillies 1: Marcell Ozuna homered and Reynaldo López pitched five strong innings in his return from the injured list, leading host Atlanta to a win over Philadelphia.

In the opener of a crucial three-game series, the six-time reigning division champs pulled within six games of Philadelphia. The rivals will meet six more times over the next 12 games, a stretch that gives the depleted Braves a chance to further close the gap.

Orioles 9, Mets 5: James McCann homered and drove in three runs against his former team to help power visiting Baltimore past New York.

Anthony Santander opened the scoring in the first inning with his 37th homer, a two-run shot off struggling Jose Quintana (6-9). Ramón Urías and Eloy Jiménez also had RBIs for the Orioles, who finished the day a half-game ahead of the Yankees for first in the AL East after New York lost to Cleveland in 12 innings.

Brewers 3, Cardinals 2: Frankie Montas pitched seven sparkling innings and Devin Williams escaped a jam in the ninth, helping NL Central-leading Milwaukee beat host St. Louis for its sixth straight win.

Montas (6-8) allowed one hit — Alec Burleson’s single in the

fourth — in his fourth start since he was acquired in a trade with Cincinnati. He struck out three and walked one.

Angels 9, Royals 5: Tyler Anderson (10-11) outlasted Cole Ragans in a matchup of All-Star pitchers, and Zach Neto hit a go-ahead homer for visiting Los Angeles, which ended Kansas City’s five-game winning streak.

Anthony Rendon, Kevin Pillar and Logan O’Hoppe drove in two runs apiece for the Angels, who had lost three straight and six of seven overall. Nolan Schanuel walked three times, and Jo Adell and Jack Lopez each drove in a run.

Red Sox 6, Astros 5: Jarren Duran went 4-for-4, capped by a tiebreaking homer with two outs in the eighth inning that sent visiting Boston to a win over Houston.

The game was tied at 5 when Duran drove a fastball from Caleb Ort (1-1) over the wall in left-center, matching his season high for hits. He also walked once and scored three times.

Giants 4, White Sox 1: Robbie Ray (3-2) matched his season high with nine strikeouts over 6½ innings and host San Francisco beat Chicago.

Heliot Ramos drove in two runs as the Giants (65-63) won their third straight game to remain 3½ games behind Atlanta for the final NL wild-card spot.

Padres 7, Twins 5: Jurickson Profar hit a three-run homer in the eighth inning, and host San Diego beat Minnesota.

Manny Machado also went deep as San Diego won its second straight against Minnesota in a matchup of playoff contenders. Jake Cronenworth had two hits and scored two runs.

Dodgers 6, Mariners 3: Pinch-hitter Jason Heyward broke an eighth-inning tie with a three-run homer and host Los Angeles rallied for a victory over Seattle.

Heyward lined a high 99 mph fastball from All-Star closer An-

drés Muñoz (2-5) over the short wall in the right-field corner to give the Dodgers their first lead. It was his second pinch-hit homer this season and the third of his career.

Blue Jays 10, Reds 3: José Berríos (12-9) struck out seven in seven innings to win his third straight start, George Springer hit two of Toronto’s season-high five home runs and host Toronto beat Cincinnati.

Springer launched a two-run drive in the second inning and a solo shot in the fifth to give him 16 homers this season. It was his third multi-homer game of the year and the 24th of his career.

Pirates 4, Rangers 0: Mitch Keller (11-7) limited Texas to three singles through seven-plus innings following his two poorest starts of the season to lead visiting Pittsburgh to a win.

Keller (11-7) struck out nine to equal a season high and walked none while throwing 98 pitches as the Pirates won for the fourth time in their last six games following a season-long 10-game losing streak.

Rockies 3, Nationals 1: Austin Gomber (4-8) gave up one run and three hits in seven innings, Ryan McMahon had two hits and drove in a run, and visiting Colorado beat Washington.

Brenton Doyle and Ezequiel Tovar each had two hits and scored a run for Colorado, which has won three of its last four.

Cubs 3, Tigers 1: Cody Bellinger hit a two-run double and Dansby Swanson homered to lift host Chicago over Detroit.

Bellinger went 2-for-4 to lead the Cubs. Javier Assad (6-3) pitched 5½ innings for Chicago, allowing just one run on six hits and striking out seven.

Rays 1, Athletics 0: Jose Siri homered with two outs in the eighth inning to break up a scoreless pitchers’ duel and help Shane Baz (1-2) earn his first victory in more than two years, and visiting Tampa Bay held off Oakland.