

Harris urges Americans to reject divisions

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Kamala Harris summoned Americans on Thursday to reject political division and instead chart what she called a “new way forward,” as she accepted her party’s nomination while blending biography with warnings about electing Donald Trump again to the White House.

Taking the stage to a thunderous standing ovation as she closed out the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, the vice president argued that her personal story and background as a prosecutor made her uniquely qualified to protect Americans’ interests against a former president she cast as only having his own interests in mind.

“Our nation with this election has a precious, fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past,” Harris said. “A chance to chart a new way forward. Not as members of any

one party or faction, but as Americans.”

The daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, Harris became the first Black woman and person of South Asian descent to accept a major party’s presidential nomination and she would become the first female president if elected. Harris did not explicitly reference the historic firsts she would set in her 40-minute speech, and she only mentioned the words “Democrat” or “Republican” in the context of discussing a bipartisan border bill that Trump helped scuttle earlier this year, which she promised to sign into law if elected.

Her address — and the Democratic convention at large — was intended to appeal to a broad swath of Americans, not just partisans already energized by Harris’ ascension after President Joe Biden ended his re-election bid.

She made several implicit appeals to the large swath of vot-

ers who just weeks ago were disaffected with both of their options for the White House, particularly those disaffected with Trump, underscored by the appearances of several people who have broken with the 45th president, while embracing the policies and approach of Biden, the 46th.

She was joined for the traditional balloon drop by a large blended and mixed-race family. Earlier, two of her grandnieces had led the packed United Center in teaching people how to pronounce her name, which means lotus in Sanskrit.

“America, the path that led me here in recent weeks was no doubt unexpected,” Harris said. “But I’m no stranger to unlikely journeys.”

As she took the stage, she saw a sea of female delegates and Democratic supporters wearing white — the color of women’s suffrage, the movement that culminated with American women securing the right to

vote in 1920.

Harris’ address came on her 10th wedding anniversary to her husband, Doug Emhoff, whom she called “Dougie” on stage and who blew her a kiss from the stands at the start of her remarks.

She and other speakers directly appealed to Republicans

Harris made a direct call to Republicans who don’t support Trump to put aside party labels and to support her over Trump, who denied his loss to Biden in the 2020 election, which inspired the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection.

“I know there are people of various political views watching tonight, and I want you to know I promise to be a president for all Americans,” Harris said. “I promise to be a president for all Americans to hold sacred America’s constitutional principles, fundamental principles, from the rule of law and fair elections to the peaceful transfer of power.”

Ukraine says it used US glide bombs in Kursk

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine’s military says it used high-precision glide bombs provided by the United States to carry out strikes in Russia’s Kursk region while also claiming to have recaptured some territory in the eastern region of Kharkiv, where Russia launched an offensive in the spring.

Ukraine’s Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleschuk issued a video Thursday night purporting to show a Russian platoon base being hit in the Kursk region. He said the attack with GBU-39 bombs result-

ed in Russian casualties and the destruction of equipment.

The video showed multiple explosions and plumes of smoke rising at the site.

Separately, Ukraine’s 3rd Separate Assault Brigade said its forces took nearly three-quarters of a square mile in the Kharkiv region. Details were not divulged about the timing, scale, and area of the offensive, and it’s hard to predict if it will have any more impact on the battlefield.

Ukraine’s forces have gained new momentum this month after delayed deliveries of U.S.

weaponry were finally released. Kyiv launched a shock offensive into Russia’s western Kursk region on August 6, while simultaneously intensifying a drone war against military and fuel targets that sparked blazes deep in Russia this week.

On Friday some new details emerged about damage and injuries caused by some of those attacks.

A Ukrainian drone attack targeting a distant Russian air base in its Volgograd region caused significant damage to an airfield that reportedly housed glide bombs used by Moscow in

the war, satellite photos showed.

Meanwhile, an attack on a cargo ferry at the port of Kavkaz in Russia’s Krasnodar region on Thursday injured 13 people, Russia’s state news agency Tass reported Friday.

Citing health officials, Tass said that four of the injured have been hospitalized and one other person remained unaccounted for.

Ukraine’s gains have reshaped the battlefield and buoyed the morale of Ukrainians 2½ years after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion

Trump uses border to contrast with Dems

Associated Press

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz. — On a dirt road below the shrub-dotted hills of Arizona, Donald Trump used a stretch of wall and a pile of steel beams to draw a visual contrast between his approach to securing the border and that of his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump brought along grieving mothers, the sheriff of Cochise County and the head of the Border Patrol union to echo his tough-on-border security message at Thursday's visit, which was themed "Make America Safe Again."

"To my right is what we call Trump wall. This was wall that was built under President Trump," said Paul Perez, the president of the Border Patrol union. "To my left, we have what we call Kamala wall. It's just sitting there doing nothing,

lying down."

The visit was the fourth in a series of events held in battleground states this week to try to draw the focus away from Democrats' celebration of Harris' presidential nomination in Chicago. Speakers at the convention on Wednesday night accused Trump of using the border to stir up his base by demonizing immigrants.

Joining Thursday's border visit were the mothers of children who were killed during the Biden administration in cases where the suspects are immigrants in the country illegally. Trump frequently highlights attacks involving immigrants to fuel concerns about the Biden administration policies, though some studies have found that people living in the U.S. illegally are less likely than native-born Americans to have been arrested for violent, drug and proper-

ty crimes.

"I just really, really, really want everybody to please take into consideration how important border control is because we're losing very innocent people to heinous crimes," said Alexis Nungaray, the mother of 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray, who was strangled to death in Houston in June.

At the Arizona event, snipers stood nearby at an elevated position, their eyes and weapons pointed toward Mexico, a day after Trump held his first outdoor rally since an assassination attempt last month. Security forces were also visible on the Mexican side of the border, including several men with rifles and tactical gear. Others wore uniforms identifying them as members of the Mexican state police.

"What Biden and Kamala have done to the families here

with me and so many others, thousands and thousands of others, not only killed, but also really badly hurt, badly hurt to a point where they'll never lead a normal life again. It's shameful, and it's evil," Trump said.

The Biden administration did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the wall materials that were lying there at the site during the visit.

In his tour of battleground states this week, Trump has traveled to Pennsylvania, Michigan and North Carolina and will hold events in Las Vegas and the Phoenix suburb of Glendale on Friday. His running mate, Sen. JD Vance of Ohio, spoke at the same location near the border a few weeks ago.

Elected Democratic officials argued Wednesday night at the convention that their party is the one offering real leadership on border issues.

How do you pronounce Kamala? Her grandnieces explain at convention

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The final night of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago included a tutorial on pronouncing Kamala Harris' name — featuring none other than the candidate's grandnieces.

The actress Kerry Washington introduced the girls by saying "it's come to my attention that there are some folks who struggle — or pretend to struggle — with the proper pronunciation of our future president's name."

She added, "Confusion is understandable. Disrespect is not. So tonight we are going to help everyone get it right."

Out came Amara, 8, in a pink pant suit and Leela, 6, in a light

blue frilly dress. They're the daughters of Harris' niece Mee-na Harris.

"First you say 'comma' like the comma in a sentence," Amara said.

"Then you say 'la' like la-la-la-la," added Leela.

"OK, let's practice," Washington said.

Amara pointed stage left and said, "Everybody over here say comma!"

Leela turned to stage right and said, "Everybody over here say la!"

The United Center roared in response — "Comma! La!"

Some of the speakers at the Democratic National Convention have stumbled over Harris' first name, including former

President Bill Clinton who said it as "CAM-UH-LA" in his speech on Wednesday night.

Others played it safe. When Leon Panetta spoke, a reporter spotted that the teleprompter said "Comma-la."

Republican candidate Donald Trump has relished opportunities to mangle the pronunciation, which Democrats describe as a sign of disrespect.

He usually says "Kah-MAH-la." When asked why, Trump said last month that he had heard Harris' first name said "about seven different ways."

"I said, 'Don't worry about it, it doesn't matter what I say,'" Trump said. "I couldn't care less."

Man arrested in threats against Trump

Associated Press

BISBEE, Ariz. — A southern Arizona man was arrested for allegedly making death threats against Donald Trump on social media, authorities said Thursday, the same day the Republican former president and 2024 candidate was in the area to visit the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Cochise County Sheriff's Office identified the suspect as Ronald Lee Syvrud, 66, from Benson. It's in the same county as the border area that Trump was visiting in the afternoon and that his running mate Sen. JD Vance went to recently.

The sheriff's office said Syvrud was arrested around 2:30 p.m. during a traffic stop.

Fed indicates interest rate cuts ahead

Associated Press

JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. — With inflation nearly defeated and the job market cooling, the Federal Reserve is prepared to start cutting its key interest rate from its current 23-year high, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said Friday.

Powell did not say when rate cuts would begin or how large they might be, but the Fed is widely expected to announce a modest quarter-point cut in its benchmark rate when it meets in mid-September.

“The time has come for policy to adjust,” Powell said in his keynote speech at the Fed’s annual economic conference in Jackson Hole. “The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will de-

pend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks.”

His reference to multiple rate cuts was the only hint that a series of reductions is likely, as economists have forecast. Powell emphasized that inflation, after the worst price spike in four decades inflicted pain on millions of households, appears largely under control:

“My confidence has grown,” he said, “that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2%.”

According to the Fed’s preferred measure, inflation fell to 2.5% last month, far below its peak of 7.1% two years ago and only slightly above the central bank’s 2% target level.

The Fed chair also said that rate cuts should maintain the

economy’s growth and sustain hiring, which slowed last month. Continued growth could boost Vice President Kamala Harris’ presidential campaign, even as most Americans say they are dissatisfied with the Biden-Harris administration’s economic record, largely because average prices remain far above where they were before the pandemic.

“We will do everything we can,” Powell said, “to support a strong labor market as we make further progress toward price stability.”

By cutting rates, he said, “there is good reason to think that the economy will get back to 2% inflation while maintaining a strong labor market.”

A rate cut in mid-September,

coming less than two months before the presidential election, could bring some unwelcome political heat on the Fed, which seeks to avoid becoming entangled in election-year politics. Former President Donald Trump has argued that the Fed shouldn’t cut rates so close to an election. But Powell has repeatedly underscored that the central bank would make its rate decisions based purely on economic data, without regard to the political calendar.

In what amounted to a claim of victory, Powell noted in his speech Friday that the Fed had succeeded in conquering high inflation without causing a recession or a sharp rise in the unemployment rate, which many economists had long predicted.

Court rejects GOP push to block 41K Ariz. voters

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court on Thursday rejected a Republican push that could have blocked more than 41,000 Arizona voters from casting ballots for president in the closely contested swing state, but allowed some parts of a law requiring proof of citizenship to be enforced.

The 5-4 order came after emergency appeal filed by state and national Republicans. It sought to give full effect to voting measures that were enacted after President Joe Biden won the state over Republican Donald Trump with less than 11,000 votes. The measures have drawn fierce opposition from voting rights advocates.

The case could be one of multiple election disputes to come before the high court with the November election less than 90 days away.

Conservative Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch would have

allowed the law to be fully enforced. But Justice Amy Coney Barrett would have joined with the court’s three liberals in fully rejecting the push, the order states.

The justices did not detail their reasoning in a brief order, as is typical in emergency appeals.

The order allows the enforcement of restrictions that bar people from voting in state and local elections if they don’t provide proof of citizenship when they register while the legal fight continues in lower courts.

State voter registration forms submitted without “documentary proof of citizenship” will now be rejected by Arizona counties, Secretary of State Adrian Fontes said. People can still register to vote in presidential and congressional elections with a different federal form that requires people to swear they are citizens under penalty of perjury, but does not require proof.

Speculation swirls over RFK Jr., Trump alliance

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Robert F. Kennedy Jr. withdrew from the ballot in Arizona late Thursday, a day before he and Donald Trump were set to appear miles apart in the Phoenix area as speculation grows that Kennedy could drop his independent presidential bid and endorse the Republican nominee.

Kennedy was scheduled to speak at 2 p.m. Eastern time in Phoenix “about the present historical moment and his path forward,” according to his campaign. Hours later, Trump was to hold a rally in neighboring Glendale.

Trump, campaigning Thursday in southern Arizona at the U.S.-Mexico border, said that “no plans have been made” for Kennedy to appear with him on Friday. But he noted they would be in the same city at the same time.

On Thursday evening, Trump’s campaign made an unusual announcement, teasing

that he would be joined by “a special guest” at his Glendale event.

Hours later, when he called into Fox News Channel after the Democratic National Convention wrapped, Trump said of Kennedy, “I have no idea if he’s going to endorse me.”

But he noted that they were going to be in the same state and said, “It’s possible we will be meeting tomorrow and we’ll be discussing it.”

Representatives for Trump’s campaign did not respond to messages about whether Kennedy would be the guest and the Kennedy campaign did not immediately return a message seeking comment if he would be joining Trump.

Kennedy’s Arizona withdrawal, confirmed by a spokesperson for the secretary of state, came less than a week after Kennedy submitted well more than the required number of signatures to appear on the ballot.

Tropical storm watch issued for all of Hawaii's Big Island

Associated Press

HONOLULU — A tropical storm is expected to deliver strong winds and heavy rain to Hawaii this weekend, particularly to the Big Island and Maui, as it passes south of the island chain.

The National Weather Service on Thursday evening issued a tropical storm watch for Hawaii County, which includes all of the Big Island, in anticipation of Tropical Storm Hone.

The August storm has evoked memories of the powerful hurricane south of Hawaii that helped fuel a deadly wildfire that destroyed Maui's Lahaina town last summer, but the weather service said that Hone was not creating the same conditions.

Separately, to Hone's east,

Hurricane Gilma was moving west across the Pacific, but it was too early to tell whether it would affect the islands.

Hone, which means "sweet and soft" in Hawaiian and is pronounced hoe-NEH, was expected to bring sustained winds of 20 to 30 mph and gusts of 50 mph to Maui and the Big Island. Oahu and Kauai were forecast to get slightly weaker winds.

The Big Island's east coast and southeastern corner were expected to get 4 to 8 inches of rain Saturday night through Sunday night. Maui could get 2 to 4 inches of rain.

These predictions could change depending on the storm's course. Early Friday, the storm was about 670 miles east-southeast of Hilo and about 880 miles east-southeast of Ho-

nolulu. It was moving west at 16 mph with maximum sustained winds of 45 mph.

The Aug. 8, 2023, Lahaina fire was fueled by powerful winds whipped up by a combination of a hurricane passing some 500 miles to the south and a very strong high pressure system to the north of the islands. The weather service issued a red flag warning at the time, something it does when warm temperatures, very low humidity and strong winds combine.

Laura Farris, a weather service meteorologist in Honolulu, said some drier air was expected to move in to the western end of the state this weekend, which presents fire risk concerns.

"But it's not even close to what we saw last year," Farris said.

Updated COVID-19 vaccines get approval

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. regulators approved updated COVID-19 vaccines on Thursday, shots designed to more closely target recent virus strains — and hopefully whatever variants cause trouble this winter.

With the Food and Drug Administration's clearance, Pfizer and Moderna are set to begin shipping millions of doses. A third U.S. manufacturer, Novavax, expects its modified vaccine version to be available a little later.

"We strongly encourage those who are eligible to consider receiving an updated COVID-19 vaccine to provide better protection against currently circulating variants," said FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks.

The agency's decision came a bit earlier than last year's rollout of updated COVID-19 vaccines, as a summer wave of the virus continues in most of the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention already has recommended this fall's shot for everyone age 6 months and older. Vaccinations could be available within days.

While most Americans have some degree of immunity from prior infections or vaccinations or both, that protection wanes. Last fall's shots targeted a different part of the coronavirus family tree, a strain that's no longer circulating — and CDC data shows only about 22.5% of adults and 14% of children received it.

Skipping the new shot is "a hazardous way to go," because even if your last infection was mild, your next might be worse or leave you with long COVID symptoms, said Dr. Robert Hopkins Jr. of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.

US Postal Service proposes changes to save \$3B per year, starting in 2025

Associated Press

The U.S. Postal Service wants to save \$3 billion annually on changes that reflect its greater reliance on streamlined regional networks — while retaining local mail delivery times of one to three days and allowing customers to track some delivery schedules with greater precision.

Election mail won't be affected, officials said.

The proposal, announced Thursday, would adjust mail delivery times while maintaining a commitment to a maximum five-day delivery for the flagship Ground Advantage program nationwide and a maximum three-day delivery for local first-class mail.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said the changes to take place next year are necessary to

"enable us to operate more efficiently and reliably, grow our business and give us a chance for a viable future" after an 80% drop in first-class mail since 1997 and a corresponding growth in packages. All told, the Postal Service has amassed more than \$87 billion in losses from 2007 through 2020.

The details were unveiled by the Postal Service ahead of a Sept. 5 meeting in which the proposed changes will be discussed with stakeholders before they are submitted to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Election mail and holiday shipments won't be affected because the proposed changes would not take place until the next calendar year, officials said. Medications also should continue to be delivered at their current speed, or faster, under

the proposal, officials said.

The proposal reflects the Postal Service's move to overhaul its processing and transportation network with an emphasis on regional hubs, something that is already beginning to take place in Atlanta; Richmond, Va.; and Portland, Ore. Changes to better utilize existing ground networks mean the Postal Service must adjust pickup and drop-off times between post offices and processing plants, a process that will increase the speed of some of the mail, officials said.

Postal customers who live closer to regional hubs will see the greatest reductions in transit time for mail; transit times for some rural customers could grow while still falling within existing service standards, an official said.

Indian PM Modi meets with Zelenskyy

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his role “as a friend” to bring peace to Ukraine in a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday, during a brief visit that many in Ukraine hope will pave the way for an Indian role in peace mediation.

The leaders discussed at length Ukraine’s peace formula, which prioritizes territorial integrity and the withdrawal of

Russian troops, according to the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“We say it very loudly and clearly that we support the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Modi said through a translator. “It’s our highest priority.”

A video clip of the meeting was published on the Ukrainian president’s Telegram.

Modi added that during his visit to Russia last month, he told Russian President Vladi-

mir Putin “that problems cannot be resolved on the battlefield.”

“The only way of resolving problems is through dialogue and diplomacy,” he said, adding that “it must be done without losing any time.”

Zelenskyy called Modi’s visit “friendly” and “symbolic” because Modi came the day before Ukraine’s Independence Day.

Officials in India and Ukraine say the visit’s focus was on boosting economic ties and

cooperation in defense, science and technology. But analysts say it could also be an attempt by Modi to strike a more neutral stance after what has been seen as a lean toward Russia.

The meeting started with both leaders visiting a memorial commemorating hundreds of Ukrainian children who have been killed over more than two years of war. Zelenskyy published a video on Telegram showing the two hugging each other after shaking hands.

New Zealand official blasts neglect of Pacific Islands

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Western nations, including the United States and New Zealand, failed to understand swiftly enough the geopolitical importance of island nations in the South Pacific, leaving a power vacuum that allowed other countries to increase their diplomatic influence, New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters said.

Peters made the remark in an interview with The Associated Press in his parliamentary of-

fice in the capital, Wellington, on Thursday, ahead of an annual summit in Tonga next week of leaders of Pacific nations, including Australia and New Zealand. Crises of sovereignty, climate change and foreign influence in some of the world’s smallest and most remote nations are expected to take center stage.

The region of tropical islands and atoll nations, once overlooked by many Western governments, has become a focus of competition in recent years

among the world’s largest governments for influence, resources and power. The Pacific Islands Forum has exploded in importance as a result, drawing diplomatic and civil society observers from across the globe.

Leaders of tiny Pacific nations are being courted by China with bilateral sweeteners such as infrastructure funding, export markets and security help, leading Australia and New Zealand in recent months to push for the Pacific-style consensus diplomacy of the forum.

But they are facing a different landscape than before — in part, Peters said, because of the failures of previous governments of which he was not a part.

“If you are not there as an influence, then other influences that don’t share your values might seriously fill the vacuum, and that has happened,” said Peters, 79, who is also deputy prime minister, a former foreign minister and the country’s longest-serving current lawmaker.

Biden to dispatch national security adviser to China

Associated Press

BUELLTON, Calif. — President Joe Biden will dispatch his national security adviser Jake Sullivan to China next week as the White House aims to manage the complicated U.S.-China relationship, according to the White House.

Sullivan’s three-day visit with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang

Yi that’s set to begin Tuesday is expected to raise U.S. concerns about China’s support for Russia’s military industrial complex as Moscow’s war in Ukraine grinds on, Chinese military assertiveness in the South China Sea, provocative action by North Korea, the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, and Beijing’s tensions with Taiwan.

The Chinese are likely to raise concerns about American tariffs as Beijing continues to repair its economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Biden in May slapped major new tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, advanced batteries, solar cells, steel, aluminum and medical equipment.

Sullivan and Wang are also

expected to discuss cooperation between the two countries on stemming the flow of precursor chemicals used to make fentanyl, maintaining communication between the two countries, and artificial intelligence. This will be Sullivan’s ninth meeting with Yi and his predecessors over the course of the administration.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Yankees' pitcher Cole gets his 150th win

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Judge hit his major league-leading 48th homer and Gerrit Cole allowed one hit in six innings to become the fourth active pitcher to reach 150 career wins as the New York Yankees beat the Cleveland Guardians 6-0 Thursday.

Judge homered for the third straight game and is on pace to finish with 61, two years after hitting 62 to break Roger Maris' single-season AL record.

Cole joined Justin Verlander (260), Max Scherzer (216) and Clayton Kershaw (212) and reached the milestone in his 311th start.

Nationals 8, Rockies 3: Patrick Corbin pitched six innings to earn career win No. 100, Juan Yezzer hit a three-run home run and host Washington beat Colorado to take the rubber game of the series.

Luis Garcia Jr. and Jose Tena had two hits each for the Nationals, who have won three of their last four games.

In his sixth try for the milestone win, Corbin (3-12) allowed one run on four hits. He walked one batter and struck out a season-high eight.

Cubs 10, Tigers 2: Miguel Amaya hit his first career grand slam and drove in a personal-best five runs, and host Chicago pounded Detroit to take the three-game series.

Justin Steele (4-5) struck out a season-high 10 in seven innings, and the Cubs came away with an easy win as they try to make up ground in the race for the National League's third wild card. They are 11-7 in August.

Amaya gave the Cubs a 4-0 lead in the second with his drive to left against reliever Kenta Maeda (2-6). He also capped a four-run seventh with an RBI single off the ivy in left-center, though he got thrown out stretching for a double.

Cardinals 3, Brewers 0: Rookie Victor Scott II had three hits and scored the run that snapped

a scoreless tie in the seventh, leading host St. Louis to a victory over Milwaukee.

Masyn Winn and Alec Burleson each added two hits apiece in the nine-hit attack for St. Louis.

The Cardinals won the final two games to take the series after losing seven of their previous nine games.

The Central Division-leading Brewers had won six consecutive games before the consecutive losses to the second-place Cardinals, who still trail Milwaukee by 10 games.

Athletics 3, Rays 1: Osvaldo Bido struck out six in five innings and won his third straight start, leading host Oakland to a victory over Tampa Bay.

Lawrence Butler, Miguel Andujar and Darell Hernaiz had two hits apiece to help Oakland split the four-game series.

Bido (5-3) has been one of the A's top pitchers over the last two months and stepped up again against the Rays. He allowed one run and two hits while matching the longest winning streak by an A's starting pitcher this season. JP Sears and Mitch Spence have also won three consecutive starts.

Pirates 7, Reds 0: Paul Skenes struck out nine in six dominant innings, Bryan De La Cruz hit a three-run double during a six-run fifth inning and host Pittsburgh beat Cincinnati.

Skenes (8-2), the rookie who started last month's All-Star game, allowed just two hits and one walk after going 1-1 with a 4.15 ERA in his previous three starts. Through 17 starts and 92 innings, Skenes has struck out 110.

Ben Heller pitched two innings and Chris Stratton worked the ninth to finish the five-hit shutout, the Pirates' ninth of the season. The Reds were blanked for the 11th time this season while losing for the fifth time in their last seven games.

De La Cruz had two doubles and a single. He entered the game with no extra-base hits in 66 plate appearances since the Pirates acquired him on July 30 in a trade with Miami.

Braves 3, Phillies 2: Rookie Spencer Schwellenbach retired 19 hitters in a row and host Atlanta took two of three in their series with NL East-leading Philadelphia.

After Schwellenbach (5-6) surrendered a one-out single to Bryce Harper in the first, he didn't allow another hitter to reach safely until Bryson Stott's infield hit off the pitcher's glove with two outs in the seventh.

J.T. Realmuto followed with a run-scoring double to the gap in right-center, cutting into Atlanta's 3-1 lead and ending Schwellenbach's night. Pierce Johnson struck out Brandon Marsh to end the threat and worked around two walks in the eighth, retiring Trea Turner on an inning-ending double play.

Raisel Iglesias struck out the side in the ninth for his 28th save in 30 chances.

Blue Jays 5, Angels 3: Ernie Clement homered for the third time in his last three games and Toronto used a five-run second inning to build an early lead.

Clement's homer came on an out-of-the-strike zone, eye-level fastball from right-hander Mike Baumann. According to MLB, it was the second-highest pitch hit for a home run since pitch tracking began in 2008.

The Blue Jays, who swept a three-game road series against Los Angeles last week, have won four straight meetings and eight of 10.

Niko Kavadas hit a three-run home run, his first, off Toronto right-hander Tommy Nance with two outs in the ninth inning, but the Angels lost for the eighth time in 10 games hours after they announced a two-year contract extension for general manager Perry Minasian.

Astros 6, Orioles 0: Spencer

Arrighetti outpitched Corbin Burnes, Ben Gamel drove in two runs in his Houston debut and the Astros extended their lead in the AL West to a season-high 5½ games with a victory over host Baltimore.

Arrighetti (6-11) allowed three hits in six innings, striking out six with one walk. Burnes (12-6) permitted five earned runs in 5⅓ innings in the second straight rough outing for the Baltimore ace. He allowed a career-high eight runs in his previous start against Boston.

Houston has won nine straight road games, its longest streak since an 11-game run in 2018.

Gamel, acquired off waivers from the New York Mets, delivered RBI singles in the fourth and sixth, when Houston did all its scoring. The Astros are 62-39 since their 7-19 start, and they've opened a comfortable lead over second-place Seattle in the AL West. Houston was 10 games behind after losing to the Chicago White Sox on June 18.

The Orioles, meanwhile, fell 1½ games behind the AL East-leading New York Yankees.

Mets 8, Padres 3: Luis Severino outdueled Dylan Cease and visiting New York beat San Diego in the opener of a four-game series between NL playoff contenders.

Pete Alonso and Jeff McNeil had three hits apiece and Mark Vientos drove in three runs for the Mets, who improved to 4-0 against the Padres this season and have won six of nine overall. The Mets had 17 hits.

The Padres came into the day tied with division rival Arizona for the top wild card spot while the Mets were two games behind the Atlanta Braves for the final spot.

Coupled with Wednesday's 11-4 loss to Minnesota, the Padres have dropped consecutive games for the first time since the All-Star break. They are 22-8 in that span.

Mariners fire manager Scott Servais

Associated Press

SEATTLE — With growing speculation that a managerial change could take place, Scott Servais learned he would no longer be in charge of the Seattle Mariners from a news alert flashed across a television screen — not from his bosses.

It was a clumsy misstep by the Mariners on Thursday. Just another error during a two-month span in which the club collapsed, falling from seemingly being on its way to a division title to sitting on the fringes of playoff contention in the American League.

“In what has been one of my least favorite days in my professional life, the worst part of it was the fact that Scott and (hitting coach Jarret DeHart) found out about this over the crawl of a news channel,” Mariners executive vice president of baseball operations Jerry Dipoto said. “That, it crushes me and I know it hurts them a great deal.”

Servais was let go in the midst

of his ninth season in charge of the Mariners, but only after the team had squandered a 10-game lead in the AL West and now finds itself trying to play catch-up with only five weeks left in the regular season.

The team tabbed former Seattle catcher Dan Wilson to take over for Servais, who was the second manager in baseball let go this season following Pedro Grifol with the Chicago White Sox. Wilson is the manager moving forward, not an interim for the rest of the season.

“It has been a very difficult two-month stretch, a particularly tough 10 days, but trying to do what we can do with a team that is telling us we need to do something a little different than what we have,” Dipoto said.

The decision to move on from the 57-year-old Servais came on the heels of a disastrous 1-8 road trip that dropped the Mariners to 64-64 after being 13 games over .500 in mid-June.

The Mariners entered Thursday five games behind Houston

in the AL West and 7½ games back in the wild-card standings. But nothing in the way Seattle has played since leading the division by 10 games on June 18 has provided optimism that there will be a turnaround over the final five weeks of the regular season.

“Where we were in the middle of June and where we are today, it’s hard to believe actually how quickly it all dissolved for us and the way our team has played,” Dipoto said.

Servais arrived in Seattle before the 2016 season, brought on in lockstep with Dipoto. Servais was 680-642 during his time with Seattle, going through a significant rebuild midway through his tenure that ultimately made the Mariners competitive — but not good enough. He was the second-longest tenured manager in franchise history behind only Lou Piniella.

Servais released a statement late Thursday via the team thanking players, ownership and fans for his time with the

Mariners.

“To the city of Seattle, you embraced my family and me and we are forever grateful for your support. As this chapter closes, I leave with pride in what we’ve accomplished together and excitement for what the future holds,” Servais said.

This season, the Mariners have been hurt by a lack of offense that has been particularly painful considering Seattle’s pitching staff has been statistically the best in baseball most of the season.

Seattle’s pitching ranks first in baseball in ERA, WHIP and batting average against. Meanwhile, the Mariners are 30th in batting average, 29th in slugging and have the most strikeouts in the league. Seattle has scored two runs or less 48 times in 128 games this season and is 6-42 in those games.

The 55-year-old Wilson’s first game in control will be Friday night when the Mariners open a series against the San Francisco Giants.

Florida State, ACC complete court-ordered mediation

Associated Press

Florida State and the Atlantic Coast Conference completed mediation mandated by a Florida judge, according to a court filing posted Thursday, as the legal battle between the school and the league it has been a member of for 32 years appears poised to drag into the football season and beyond.

According to the filing, representatives of the school and conferences mediated in person on Aug. 13.

“Although the parties did not resolve this matter, the parties continue discussions,” the two-sentence joint notice of mediation compliance stated.

Florida State Board of Trustees v. the Atlantic Coast Conference was filed in December

and is one of four active cases in three states involving the league and two of its most high-profile member schools.

Florida State and Clemson are both searching for an affordable way out of the ACC, challenging what they consider to be exorbitant exit fees and a contract that binds member schools to each other and the conference through media rights. Florida State says leaving the ACC now could cost more than half a billion dollars.

The ACC has countersued both schools, saying neither has the right to sue and are breaching their contractual agreements by doing so.

Leon County Judge John Cooper, who is overseeing FSU’s lawsuit against the ACC,

ordered the two sides into non-binding mediation in April, a common practice by the judge to try to initiate a quick resolution in a case that could take years to play out in court.

Neither the conference nor the school is permitted to speak publicly about what was discussed in a mediation session, but ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips has been consistent in his message.

“We’re going to fight,” he said during an ESPN interview earlier this week. “And that’s the way it should be when you sign an agreement twice — willingly sign — and that you are part of a group that comes together and decides that this is what you want to do for the next 20 years. And you should be held account-

table for that.”

The ACC’s media rights contract with ESPN runs through 2036, though the network has an option to end the deal in 2027. ACC members also signed a grant of rights that runs concurrent with the ESPN deal and hands over the broadcast rights to the school’s home football games through the length of the agreement.

Florida State and Clemson say the value of the deal leaves them at a disadvantage when compared to schools in the Southeastern Conference and Big Ten.

Neither school has notified the conference that it intends to withdraw. Doing so would require one-year notice, according to conference bylaws.

Richardson leads scoring drive, throws interception for Colts

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Anthony Richardson led a touchdown drive on his first series against Bengals backups Thursday night, but the rest of his night was a struggle.

The Colts quarterback got his first significant chunk of playing time with the rest of the offensive starters in the final preseason game. He showed he still has work to do on his accuracy and consistency.

The fourth overall pick in the 2023 draft played the first five offensive series, finishing 8 for 14 for 86 yards in Indianapolis' 27-14 victory over Cincinnati.

Most of it came on the first drive after a Cincinnati punt when Richardson directed an 80-yard drive, completing 7 of 8 passes for 65 yards and finishing it with a 9-yard scoring toss to Adonai Mitchell.

His one incompletion was a throw that sailed through the hands of tight end Drew Ogle-

tree in the end zone.

It got worse from there.

Bengals safety Jordan Battle picked off Richardson's pass and went in 9 yards for a TD. The third drive stalled when Richardson missed Mitchell on third-and-6 from the Colts 35.

Then he missed Mitchell again deep on third down to force another punt. On his last drive before giving way to Sam Ehlinger, he put the Colts in the hole with a sack and fumble. On third-and-15, he picked up just 3 yards on a scramble.

Bears 34, Chiefs 21: Backup quarterback Tyson Bagent ran for a touchdown on the opening drive of the Bears' game against host Kansas City, and Chicago went on to win in a preseason finale in which both teams sat nearly all their starters.

The game was halted briefly after the first play of the second half, when Bears cornerback Douglas Coleman III made a

tackle along the Kansas City sideline and was left motionless on the ground. He was tended to by doctors as players from both teams took a knee, and eventually was immobilized on a stretcher and driven out of Arrowhead Stadium.

Bagent was 3 of 6 for 57 yards along with his TD run. The second-year pro has been competing with Brett Rypien, who took over late in the first quarter against Kansas City, for the job of backing up first overall draft pick Caleb Williams.

Reddy Steward picked off two passes for Chicago, bringing one back 48 yards for a touchdown.

Carson Steele had the most impressive night for the Chiefs. The undrafted rookie from UCLA made a good case to back up Isiah Pacheco, running four times for 50 yards. That included a 31-yard, tackle-breaking run to set up his own TD plunge.

Rodgers to sit out Jets' last game of preseason

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Aaron Rodgers' first game snaps since his season-ending injury will officially come on Sept. 9 during the Monday Night Football opener against the 49ers.

On Thursday, Jets head coach Robert Saleh told reporters that the team's plans will be consistent with what they've done the first two games of the preseason.

That means Rodgers and other starters will not participate in the preseason finale against the Giants.

"If you watched any other practices, I think there's been plenty of hitting and tackling and whatnot going on," Jets tight end Tyler Conklin said. "Like it's been said a thousand times, we have probably the best defense in football."

"So I mean, going up against those guys every single day, the way we've practiced every single day, the physicality we've practiced with the amount of reps we've took. Obviously, it isn't as official as a game would be and you're not getting tackled to the ground, or sometimes we are, but preseason football is just different."

"It's just not [like] the regular season. It's obviously real football, but it's just different. I don't think it's really a huge deal, to be honest."

Many teams' perspectives about the preseason changed when the league went from a 16- to 17-game regular-season schedule in 2021. Every team now plays three preseason games outside of the two participants for the Pro Football Hall of Fame game, who play four.

Like some other teams around the league, the Jets have valued health over their starters receiving game reps.

Chiefs make Humphrey highest-paid center in NFL with 4-year, \$72M deal

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Kansas City Chiefs and Creed Humphrey have agreed to a four-year, \$72 million extension that makes him the highest-paid center in NFL history, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Thursday night.

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the contract had yet to be signed, said Humphrey will be guaranteed \$50 million. Those numbers outpace both the total value of the five-year, \$60 million deal the Saints signed with Erik McCoy and the \$42 million in guarantees that Frank Rag-

now got on his four-year, \$54 million contract with the Lions.

"We've had a lot of good dialogue and I'm pretty sure we will put pen to paper soon," Chiefs general manager Brett Veach said Thursday night during a preseason game against Chicago. "Needless to say, we're extremely excited to continue Creed's career here. He's been great for our organization, and look, we have been very fortunate to have a really good group of young guys and hopefully, we are able to get a little bit more work done with some of these other young guys as well."

Humphrey was picked by the Chiefs in the second round of

the 2021 draft and instantly moved into the starting lineup, where he not only solidified the interior of a rebuilt offensive line but developed a fast rapport with quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

He also has proven to be dependable, starting all 51 regular-season games over the past three seasons. The last two have ended with Humphrey earning trips to the Pro Bowl, which he skipped while helping the Chiefs win back-to-back Super Bowls.

They open the regular season against the Ravens on Sept. 5 in a rematch of the AFC championship game.