

## Ga. soldiers honored for quick response

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

When Army Sgt. Aaron Turner heard gunshots at Fort Stewart echoing inside his battalion headquarters building on Wednesday, he ran toward them, tackling the shooter and knocking the pistol away from him, officials at the Georgia post said.

Another soldier, Master Sgt. Justin Thomas, piled on top of Turner, pinning down the assailant and ending the shooting that left five other soldiers wounded. Unarmed and without protective gear, the non-commissioned officers held down the accused shooter — Sgt. Quornelius Radford — until law enforcement officers arrived and arrested him.

Meanwhile, other members of the 703rd Brigade Support Bat-

talion's headquarters company, which is part of the 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, started treating the five soldiers who had been shot during the 11 a.m. attack, said Brig. Gen. John Lubas, the commander of the 3rd ID and Fort Stewart's top officer.

"No one hesitated," he told reporters Thursday. "These soldiers ... immediately started applying first aid and, most importantly, stopped the bleeding. And when we spoke to the surgeons in the hospitals, it was clear that the actions they took primarily stopping that bleeding before they were loaded up in ambulances ... certainly saved lives."

By Thursday, three of the five gunshot victims had been released from area hospitals and the other two victims were re-

covering from surgeries, the general said. They were expected to make full recoveries, though one victim — a female soldier — was expected to remain in Savannah's Memorial Medical Center for at least several days and had "a bit of a longer road to recovery," Lubas added.

Turner, Thomas and four other soldiers — 1st Sgt. Joshua Arnold, Staff Sgt. Melissa Taylor, Staff Sgt. Robert Pacheco and Sgt. Eve Rodarte — were awarded Meritorious Service Medals by Army Secretary Dan Driscoll on Thursday for their heroic, life-saving actions amid the shooting spree. The Meritorious Service Medal recognizes outstanding noncombat service and is equivalent in rank to the Bronze Star Medal.

Arnold, the top enlisted lead-

er for the 703rd's headquarters company and a combat veteran, said his years of military training immediately took over when he realized the pops he was hearing were gunshots. According to his award citation, Arnold "demonstrated extraordinary selflessness and leadership by providing immediate aid to soldiers in peril during an active-shooter incident, including stopping bleeding to a fellow wounded first sergeant."

Driscoll and other officials declined to speak about what might have motivated Radford to bring a personal weapon into his unit's office and open fire on soldiers with whom he served in same unit.

Radford, 28, of Jacksonville, Fla., was being held Thursday in the Liberty County jail near-by Fort Stewart, O'Connor said.

## Putin seeks Trump summit as deadline looms

*Associated Press*

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday he hopes to meet next week with President Donald Trump, possibly in the United Arab Emirates, although a White House official cast doubt on the summit occurring unless the Kremlin leader also agreed to a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Putin's announcement came on the eve of a White House deadline for Moscow to show progress toward ending the 3-year-old war in Ukraine or suffer additional economic sanctions.

The U.S. was still expected to impose those sanctions Friday on Russia, according to a White House official who was not au-

thorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The same official said a U.S.-Russian summit would not happen if Putin does not agree to meet with Zelenskyy. The official did not specify whether the condition was for Zelenskyy to be present at the possible U.S.-Russia summit or at a subsequent meeting.

Speaking of possible direct talks with Zelenskyy, Putin said he has mentioned several times that he was not against it.

The Kremlin has previously said that Putin and Zelenskyy should meet only when an agreement negotiated by their delegations is close.

Although Putin said the United Arab Emirates was one pos-

sible venue, no location or other details had been determined Thursday morning, according to the White House official.

Ukraine fears being sidelined by direct negotiations between Washington and Moscow, and Zelenskyy said he had phone conversations with several European leaders Thursday amid a flurry of diplomatic activity.

European countries have pledged to back Ukraine for as long as it takes to defeat Russia's invasion.

Putin's foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov, earlier brushed aside the possibility of Zelenskyy joining the summit, something the White House said Trump was ready to consider. Putin has spurned Zelenskyy's previous offers of a meet-

ing to clinch a breakthrough.

Putin made the announcement in the Kremlin about a possible meeting with Trump after meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president of the UAE.

Asked who initiated the possible talks, Putin said that didn't matter and "both sides expressed an interest."

Kirill Dmitriev, the head of Russia's sovereign wealth fund who met with U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff on Wednesday, said a Trump-Putin meeting would allow Moscow to "clearly convey its position," and he hoped a summit would include discussions on mutually beneficial economic issues, including joint investments in areas such as rare earth elements.

# Air Force wants to use Cybertrucks as targets

BY LARA KORTE  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Air Force wants to purchase two Tesla Cybertrucks as targets for precision-guided munitions, citing concerns that adversaries may start using them in the future.

Federal contracting documents posted online show the trucks as part of a larger buy of 33 vehicles that will be sent to White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to support U.S. Special Operations Command.

The Air Force didn't specify makes for the other 31 vehicles on its wish list — which includes sedans, Bongo trucks, pickup trucks and SUVs — but singled

out the Cybertruck because of its unique build, which makes it tougher to destroy.

The truck doesn't sustain the amount of damage expected from a major impact, the Air Force wrote, and tests need to reflect real-world situations.

"The Cybertruck's aggressively angular and futuristic design, paired with its unpainted stainless steel exoskeleton, sets it apart from competitors typically using painted steel or aluminum bodies," the Air Force wrote. "Additionally, its 48V electrical architecture provides superior power and efficiency, a feature that rivals are only beginning to develop."

When Tesla CEO Elon Musk unveiled the long-anticipated futuristic pickup truck in 2019, the bulky build drew comparisons to armored vehicles.

Musk said the body was built from the same stainless steel alloy used in SpaceX rockets. He also said the windows were unbreakable — a claim disproven on stage when Tesla's chief designer threw a metal ball and broke two windows.

Tesla later posted a YouTube video showing the Cybertruck's exoskeleton withstanding gunfire from a tommy gun, pistol and shotgun.

The Air Force didn't specify which adversaries it thinks may

use Cybertrucks. In 2024, the strongman leader of the Russian republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, posted a video of a gun-mounted Cybertruck that he said had been sent to the front lines of Russia's war in Ukraine.

A new Cybertruck costs between \$70,000 and \$80,000, with the top-tier "Cyberbeast" variant topping \$100,000.

Federal documents didn't specify how much the Air Force is willing to pay for the targets but noted that they don't need to be in working condition. For testing and training, they just need to have working tires and be able to roll.

## 'Fit box' brings gym-style workouts to Navy in Naples

BY ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Sailors at Naval Support Activity Naples looking to keep fit now have a new option to get an outdoor workout, without giving up weights and other typical gym equipment.

On Monday, Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation Naples opened an outdoor training center, or "fit box," at the base's Capodichino site.

The box, actually a converted cargo container, features barbells, weights, sleds, kettlebells, a climbing rope, pullup bars and other fitness equipment needed to keep sailors ready for the tactical demands of their job, said Austin Holmes, MWR Naples fitness director.

The pop-up outdoor gym enables MWR "to reach out and get more active duty (sailors) engaged and hopefully at optimal level," Holmes said.

Two more boxes are located

at the base's Support Site, which includes family and unaccompanied housing, and another is at an NSA Naples detachment in the Italian town of Gaeta, he added.

In March, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered a rapid services-wide review of physical fitness, body composition and grooming standards.

In June, the Army adopted a new fitness test that introduced "updated scoring standards that emphasize readiness and combat effectiveness," the service said in a statement released on June 6.

The fit boxes in Naples, which are sold by the veteran-owned company BeaverFitUSA and cost about \$56,000 each, are unlocated and not staffed.

Sailors and other community members ages 12 and older have access to the boxes at almost any time of the day or night by signing in through an attached QR code.

## Texas soldier charged in attempted leak to Russia

BY ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

AUSTIN, Texas — A 22-year-old Fort Bliss soldier was arrested Wednesday after attempting to provide Russia with military combat operations and details on Army tanks that he gained through his top-secret security clearance.

Spc. Taylor Adam Lee is charged with attempting to transmit national defense information to a foreign adversary and exporting controlled technical data without a license, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas.

Lee had his first appearance in federal court Wednesday following his arrest by FBI agents in El Paso.

He served as a tank crew member with the 1st Armored Division, which uses tanks and other armored vehicles, according to Fort Bliss.

In this job, Lee would have

had access to and knowledge of tank functions, strengths, weaknesses and standard operations.

"This arrest is an alarming reminder of the serious threat facing our U.S. Army," Brig. Gen. Sean Stinchon, commander of the Army Counterintelligence Command, said in a statement.

Beginning in May, Lee tried to provide his Army credentials and send U.S. defense information to Russia's Ministry of Defense.

In June, Lee used the internet to send technical information on the M1A2 Abrams tank to the Russian Federation and offer his assistance, according to federal prosecutors.

"The USA is not happy with me for trying to expose their weaknesses," federal prosecutors said he told the Russians. "At this point I'd even volunteer to assist the Russian Federation when I'm there in any way."

# Trump imposes tariffs on more countries

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump began imposing higher import taxes on dozens of countries Thursday just as the economic fallout of his monthslong tariff threats has begun to cause visible damage to the U.S. economy.

Just after midnight, goods from more than 60 countries and the European Union became subject to tariff rates of 10% or higher. Products from the EU, Japan and South Korea are taxed at 15%, while imports from Taiwan, Vietnam and Bangladesh are taxed at 20%. Trump also expects the EU, Japan and South Korea to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in the United States.

"I think the growth is going to be unprecedented," Trump said Wednesday. He said the U.S. was "taking in hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs," but did not provide a specific figure for revenues because "we don't even know what the final number is" regarding the rates.

Despite the uncertainty, the White House is confident that the onset of his tariffs will provide clarity about the path for the world's largest economy. Now that companies understand the direction the U.S. is headed, the Republican administration believes it can ramp up new investments and jump-start hiring in ways that can rebalance America as a manufacturing power.

So far, however, there are signs of self-inflicted wounds to the U.S. as companies and consumers brace for the impact of the new taxes. Hiring began to stall, inflationary pressures crept upward and home values in key markets started to decline after the initial tariff rollout in April, said John Silvia, CEO of Dynamic Economic Strategy.

Many economists say the risk is that the American economy is steadily eroded.

Total construction spending has dropped 2.9% over the past year.

Germany, which sends 10% of its exports to the U.S. market, saw industrial production sag 1.9% in June as Trump's earlier rounds of

tariffs took hold.

The lead-up to Thursday fit the slapdash nature of Trump's tariffs, which have been rolled out, walked back, delayed, increased, imposed by letter and renegotiated.

A leading group of Indian exporters said that will affect nearly 55% of the country's outbound shipments to America and force exporters to lose long-standing clients.

The Swiss executive branch, the Federal Council, was expected to meet Thursday after President Karin Keller-Sutter and other Swiss officials returned from a hastily arranged trip to Washington in a failed bid to avert a 39% U.S. tariffs on Swiss goods.

## Trump plans 100% tariff on computer chips to spark growth

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he will impose a 100% tariff on computer chips, raising the specter of higher prices for electronics, autos, household appliances and other essential products dependent on the processors powering the digital age.

The announcement came more than three months after Trump temporarily exempted most electronics from his ad-

ministration's most onerous tariffs.

The Republican president said companies that make computer chips in the U.S. would be spared the import tax. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of computer chips increased the price of autos and contributed to higher inflation.

Big Tech already has made collective commitments to invest about \$1.5 trillion in the U.S. since Trump moved back into the White House in Janu-

ary. That figure includes a \$600 billion promise from Apple after the iPhone maker boosted its commitment by tacking another \$100 billion on to a previous commitment made in February.

Now the question is whether the deal brokered between Cook and Trump will be enough to insulate the millions of iPhones made in China and India from the tariffs that the administration has already imposed and reduce the pressure on the company to raise prices on the new

models expected to be unveiled next month.

Since taking over from Biden, Trump has been deploying tariffs to incentivize more domestic production. Essentially, the president is betting that the threat of dramatically higher chip costs would force most companies to open factories domestically, despite the risk that tariffs could squeeze corporate profits and push up prices for mobile phones, TVs and refrigerators.

## Gaming platform Roblox faces flood of sexploitation lawsuits

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA — A DeKalb County mother is the first of many Georgia parents to sue online gaming company Roblox alleging it puts profit before safety and allows predators to target and abuse children, her attorney says.

The mother's lawsuit, filed Monday in Gwinnett County State Court, claims Roblox is liable for the sexual exploitation, or sexploitation, of her 9-year-old son, who was groomed through the company's online gaming

platform. The boy was sent pornographic content, harassed and coerced into sending explicit images of himself to adults posing on Roblox as children, the suit says.

Matthew Dolman, an attorney representing the mother, said Roblox is about to face a flood of similar cases across the country. He said several others involving Atlanta-area families will be filed in coming weeks and he expects there to be around 150 such cases nationally within a few months.

"Roblox is the worst," Dolman

said in comparison to other interactive online platforms. "Roblox has just continued to materially misrepresent facts and state that this is a safe product, knowing full well there's a number of law enforcement investigations, arrests and documented incidents of perpetrators not only grooming children, but actually meeting up with the children."

Several reported incidents of children being exploited through Roblox by predators are included in the DeKalb mother's complaint. They include the arrest in

2022 of a Clayton County man accused of luring a 13-year-old girl from Kansas to his home and raping her.

A spokesperson for Roblox said they cannot comment on pending litigation, though the company is "deeply committed" to the safety of its millions of users. They said Roblox continuously monitors and addresses inappropriate content and behavior and partners with law enforcement and other organizations to combat the sexual exploitation of children.



# Netanyahu to seek approval for expanded Gaza offensive

Associated Press

TELAVIV, Israel — The Israeli Security Cabinet was set to meet Thursday to discuss a possible expansion of military operations in the Gaza Strip, a move that would draw fierce opposition internationally and from many in Israel, including the families of hostages held by Hamas.

An Israeli official said the Security Cabinet was expected to hold a lengthy debate and approve an expanded military plan to conquer all or parts of Gaza not yet under Israeli control. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity pending a formal decision, said that whatever is approved would be implemented gradually to increase pressure on Hamas.

In Gaza, where Israel's 22-month offensive has already killed tens of thousands of people, displaced most of the population, destroyed vast areas and caused severe and widespread hunger, Palestinians braced for further misery.

"There is nothing left to occupy," said Maysaa al-Heila, who is living in a displacement camp. "There is no Gaza left."

At least 42 Palestinians were killed in Israeli airstrikes and shootings across southern Gaza on Thursday, according to local hospitals.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been meeting this week with advisers to discuss what his office said are ways to "further achieve Israel's goals in Gaza" after the breakdown of ceasefire talks last month.

Expanding military operations would further isolate Israel internationally, after several of its closest Western allies have called on it to end the war and facilitate more humanitarian aid. In Israel, families of the hostages have called for mass protests Thursday, fearing an escalation could doom their loved ones.

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people and killed around 1,200 in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. Most of the hostages have been released

in ceasefires or other deals but 50 remain inside Gaza, around 20 of them believed by Israel to be alive.

Almost two dozen relatives of hostages set sail from southern Israel toward the maritime border with Gaza on Thursday, where they broadcast messages from loudspeakers.

Yehuda Cohen, the father of Nimrod Cohen, an Israeli soldier held in Gaza, said from the boat that Netanyahu is prolonging the war to satisfy extremists in his governing coalition. Netanyahu's far-right allies want to escalate the war, relocate most of Gaza's population to other countries and reestablish Jewish settlements that were dismantled in 2005.

Israel's military offensive has killed over 61,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals who keep and share detailed records.

# Massive wildfire in California gains size

Associated Press

SANTA MARIA, Calif. — Rising temperatures on Wednesday posed new challenges for firefighters who have made incremental progress against a massive wildfire in central California that injured four people as it became the biggest blaze in the state so far this year.

More than 870 remote homes and other structures at the northern edge of Los Padres National Forest are threatened by the Gifford Fire, which grew only slightly overnight after burning out of control for days.

The fire has scorched at least 131 square miles of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, with just 9% containment. It surpassed the 126-square mile Madre Fire, which erupted last month in southeastern San Luis Obispo County, as the state's largest fire of 2025.

Crews working in steep, inaccessible terrain were dealing with temperatures in the mid-90s on Wednesday and above 100 on Thursday, said Capt. Scott Safechuck with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

"We have hot weather, and we have low relative humidity," Safechuck said Wednesday. "So we expect extreme fire behavior." Luckily, winds are expected to remain relatively calm, he said.

Wildfire risk will be elevated through the weekend across much of inland California as the heat wave intensifies. The southern part of the state has seen very little rain, drying out vegetation and making it "ripe to burn," the National Weather Service for Los Angeles warned in a statement. Triple-digit temperatures are forecast for the Sacramento Valley.

# Report: Ultra-processed foods make up more than half of American's calories

Associated Press

Most Americans get more than half their calories from ultra-processed foods, those super-tasty, energy-dense foods typically full of sugar, salt and unhealthy fats, according to a new federal report.

Nutrition research has shown for years that ultra-processed foods make up a big chunk of the U.S. diet, especially for kids and teens.

For the first time, however, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed those high levels of consumption, using dietary data

collected from August 2021 to August 2023.

The report comes amid growing scrutiny of such foods by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who blames them for causing chronic disease.

"We are poisoning ourselves, and it's coming principally from these ultra-processed foods," Kennedy told Fox News earlier this year.

Overall, about 55% of total calories consumed by Americans age 1 and older came from ultra-processed foods during that period, according to the report. For adults, ultra-pro-

cessed foods made up about 53% of total calories consumed, but for kids through age 18, it was nearly 62%.

The top sources included burgers and sandwiches, sweet baked goods, savory snacks, pizza and sweetened drinks.

Young children consumed fewer calories from ultra-processed foods than older kids, the report found. Adults 60 and older consumed fewer calories from those sources than younger adults. Low-income adults consumed more ultra-processed foods than those with higher incomes.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Raw milk sickens 21, including 6 children

**FL** TALLAHASSEE — Six children are among 21 people who have E. coli or campylobacter infections after consuming raw milk from a farm in Florida, public health officials said.

Seven people have been hospitalized, and at least two of them are suffering severe complications, the Florida Department of Health said.

It did not specify if any of the six infected children under 10 are among those being treated in hospitals, nor how many people were infected by E. coli, campylobacter or both bacteria.

“Sanitation practices in this farm are of particular concern due to the number of cases,” reads the state advisory, which did not identify the farm linked to the cluster of infections in northeast and central Florida.

Raw milk appears to be gaining in popularity, despite years of warnings about the health risks of drinking unpasteurized products.

The Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said raw milk is one of the “riskiest” foods people can consume.

## Agency warns wild pigs’ flesh turning ‘neon blue’

**CA** SALINAS — Dan Burton has trapped hundreds of wild pigs for clients of his wildlife control company in Salinas, but even he was startled when he cut one of them open and found blue meat inside.

“I’m not talking about a little blue,” said Burton, owner of Ur-

ban Trapping Wildlife Control. “I’m talking about neon blue, blueberry blue.”

Burton immediately relayed the disturbing discovery to Monterey County officials and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The agency is now warning trappers and hunters to keep an eye out for possibly contaminated wildlife in the area and not to consume the tainted meat, over concerns the blue meat is a sign that the animal may have consumed poison.

The startling find suggests the wild animals have been exposed to anticoagulant rodenticide diphacinone, a popular poison used by farmers and agriculture companies.

## Tooth of about 30-foot dinosaur found in creek

**AL** TUSCALOOSA — A “shiny” fossil found in an Alabama creek has been identified as the tooth of a large dinosaur that doesn’t quite belong at the site, experts said.

Hadrosaurs were land-dwellers, but the tooth surfaced in a spot that was underwater during the age of dinosaurs, according to the Alabama Museum of Natural History.

The tooth was discovered in gravel by Dr. John Friel, director of the Alabama Museum of Natural History, as he accompanied a group of fossil enthusiasts to a creek about a 50-mile drive southwest from the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa.

Two university paleontologists were included in the group that day, and both confirmed it was likely a hadrosaur tooth, he said.

Technically, it’s just the base

of a tooth, but it is still more than a half inch long. Hadrosaurs were duck-billed herbivores that grew to about 30 to 50 feet in length.

## University to lay off over 360 workers after cuts

**CA** STANFORD — Stanford University will lay off at least 363 employees this fall as part of \$140 million in budget cuts driven by rising costs and changes in federal funding policies, including a steep revision to the endowment tax.

The layoffs will affect a wide range of staff roles, such as academic operations managers, IT business analysts, librarians and administrative associates, according to a WARN notice filed with the California Employment Development Department on July 31.

In a letter accompanying the notice, Stanford Vice President for Human Resources Elizabeth Zacharias cited “ongoing economic uncertainty in 2025,” which she said has created “serious operational and financial challenges for higher education institutions.”

## City’s homicide numbers lowest in recent memory

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia has recorded the fewest homicides in recent memory this year — a rate of violence that, after reaching record highs just three years ago, has plummeted to a pace the city has not seen since the 1960s.

Violence in the city began to decline in 2023, and it has continued to fall ever since.

Through July, 134 people

were killed in homicides — a striking drop compared to the 319 people killed during the same period in 2021.

This year the city is on pace to record the fewest number of people shot in the last decade. And while the number of victims has declined only slightly compared to last year, it has dropped by more than half compared to 2021, when the city’s gun violence peaked.

## Gunman at NFL HQ had suffered concussion

**CA** LOS ANGELES — The mother of the man who killed four people at a Manhattan office tower home to the NFL told 911 dispatchers during a 2022 incident when he threatened to kill himself that he suffered from a sports-related concussion and other issues, new information released by Las Vegas police Tuesday revealed.

Shane Tamura, 27, had a documented history of mental health problems and carried a handwritten note in his wallet when he carried out the shooting that claimed he had chronic traumatic encephalopathy, known as CTE, investigators said.

He fatally shot three people in the building lobby before taking an elevator to the 33rd floor, killing a fourth victim and then ending his own life, according to police.

He accused the football league of hiding the dangers of brain injuries linked to contact sports. Tamura didn’t play professional football but played during his high school years in Southern California, where he grew up.

— From wire reports

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# Pawol will be MLB's 1st female umpire

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Jen Pawol is set to become the first woman to umpire in Major League Baseball when she works games this weekend between the Miami Marlins and Atlanta Braves.

Pawol will work the bases in Saturday's doubleheader at Truist Park and the plate Sunday, MLB told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

"This historic accomplishment in baseball is a reflection of Jen's hard work, dedication and love of the game," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement. "She has earned this opportunity, and we are proud of the strong example she has set, particularly for all the women and young girls who aspire to roles on the field."

Pawol, a 48-year-old from New Jersey, worked spring training games in 2024 and this year. She will become the fifth umpire to debut this year.

"Baseball's done a great job of being completely inclusive,"

Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "I'll be watching. It's good for the game."

MLB's move comes 28 years after the gender barrier for game officials was broken in the NBA, 10 years after the NFL hired its first full-time female official and three years after the men's soccer World Cup employed a female referee. The NHL still has not had any women as on-ice officials.

"I think if she is a good enough umpire, obviously she deserves to be here," Toronto pitcher Kevin Gausman said.

Pawol in 2024 became the first woman to umpire big league spring training games since Ria Cortesio in 2007. Cortesio spent nine years in the minor leagues, including the last five in the Double-A Southern League, then was released after the 2007 season.

"We had seen her in spring training a lot," Philadelphia Phillies star Trea Turner said. "I don't know much about her

or statistics or anything like that, but if she's doing a great job, I love seeing the opportunity for her, and I'm happy for her. I talked to her a little bit in spring training and she seems like a great person and I wish her all the best."

Pawol was an all-state softball and soccer player in New Jersey for three seasons in each sport at West Milford High School. She went to Hofstra on a softball scholarship and became a three-time all-conference pick and was on the USA Baseball women's national team in 2001.

Pawol got a master's degree and was living in the Binghamton area of New York and taking teacher certification classes at Elmira College while still playing on the side.

"I wasn't really satisfied," she said last year. "Coming off of a huge competitive career, just playing locally, I wasn't getting my fix. And I remember looking at the umpire and being like, 'I think that's it. I got

to go for that.'"

After umpiring NCAA softball from 2010-16, she attended an MLB umpire tryout camp in 2015, was invited to the Umpire Training Academy at Vero Beach, Fla., and was offered a job in the Gulf Coast League in 2016. She's been working in the minor leagues since, including for the 2023 Triple-A championship game.

Violet Palmer became the NBA's first female referee when she worked Dallas' opener at Vancouver on Oct. 31, 1997. Shannon Eastin became the NFL's first female on-field official on Sept. 9, 2012, for San Diego's game at St. Louis as a replacement when regular officials were locked out, and Sarah Thomas was the NFL's first regular female on-field official when she served as line judge for Kansas City's game at Houston on Sept. 13, 2015.

MLB has 76 full-time staff umpires and uses fill-ins on crews for openings created by injuries and vacations.

## Playing both sides becoming routine for Jags' Hunter

*Associated Press*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Playing both sides of the ball is now part of Travis Hunter's regular practice routine with the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The 2024 Heisman Trophy winner and the second overall pick in this year's NFL draft played offense and defense during training camp Tuesday. He wore a teal, No. 12 jersey at receiver and then threw on a white, loose-fitting, No. 12 penny when it was time to line up at cornerback.

"It's funny seeing him (go) back and forth," quarterback Trevor Lawrence said. "It's pretty crazy. Never seen anything like it."

Hunter had a minor issue with the sideline swap. Offen-

sive teammates grabbed his baggy covering on several occasions, which helped them keep Hunter at bay during running plays; it won't be a problem during games since he won't have to change jerseys.

Hunter first switched back and forth during a scrimmage Saturday night, playing 17 snaps with the first-team offense and 21 with the first-team defense. He got similar work Tuesday.

It's the kind of versatility Jacksonville envisioned when it gave up a second-round pick and a 2026 first-rounder to move up three spots and select Hunter.

"It might not be every single day, but I would say it would probably be a little bit more nor-

mal than not," coach Liam Coen said.

The Jaguars planned for months to get to the point where Hunter was working interchangeably on both sides. They used him solely at receiver to open organized team activities in May and then expanded his usage as the team stacked practices.

By the start of training camp last month, he was working a day on offense and then a day on defense. But getting him to do both within minutes, sometimes seconds, was the next step.

"Hopefully, more offense," Lawrence quipped. "Just the way he plays, the energy he plays with. Even just little things like interacting with the fans and the juice he brings into

the stadium. That stuff does mean something.

"Not everyone necessarily has that personality, but he has something about him that's just special. The energy he brings and the energy he plays with and the joy and all that stuff — the way he runs around — it's fun to watch and it's fun to play with a guy like that. I think he's starting to play a lot faster now that he knows the system and can play free."

Jacksonville intends to use him primarily as a slot receiver on offense and as an outside cornerback in certain packages on defense.

It's unclear how much Hunter will play in the preseason opener against Pittsburgh on Saturday.



# Guardians nearly get first no-no in 44 years

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gavin Williams came within two outs of Cleveland's first no-hitter in 44 years before Juan Soto homered with one out in the ninth inning, and the Cleveland Guardians completed a three-game sweep of the reeling New York Mets with a 4-1 win Wednesday.

Williams (7-4) walked three and struck out six, including Francisco Lindor to lead off the ninth. But Soto homered just beyond the leaping grasp of center fielder Angel Martínez two pitches later.

The Guardians have not thrown a no-hitter since Len Barker twirled a perfect game on May 15, 1981. Their no-hitter drought is the longest in the majors.

Cleveland got early runs on a pair of homers, with David Fry hitting a solo shot in the second and Martínez adding a two-run home run in the third. Gabriel Arias made it 4-0 with an RBI triple in the sixth.

**Nationals 2, Athletics 1:** CJ Abrams singled home rookie Robert Hassell III with the winning run in the ninth inning, and host Washington defeated the Athletics to stop a six-game losing streak.

A's starter Jeffrey Springs retired his first 15 batters before Riley Adams tied the score 1-all with a leadoff homer in the sixth. Tyler Soderstrom had opened the top of the inning with his 20th home run.

Nearly three years after his major league debut, Nationals right-hander Cade Cavalli finally returned from injury to make his second career start. He pitched 4½ scoreless innings and left to a standing ovation.

**Yankees 3, Rangers 2:** Paul Goldschmidt put the Yankees ahead with a pinch-hit solo homer in the seventh inning and visiting New York ended its five-game losing streak with a victory over Texas.

The Yankees (61-54) avoided being swept in the Rangers'

home park for the first time since 2010, and kept Texas from moving past them for the American League's third and final wild-card spot.

Mark Leiter Jr. (5-6) got the win after coming on with a runner on in the sixth and getting a flyout before a double-play grounder to end the inning. That came after his cousin, Rangers rookie starter Jack Leiter, struck out three and walked four in 3½ innings while allowing two runs (one earned).

**Blue Jays 20, Rockies 1:** Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had four hits, including a home run, and Davis Schneider went deep twice as visiting Toronto capped its Coors Field onslaught with a victory over Colorado.

The first-place Blue Jays finished with five homers and 24 hits to set a major league record with 63 hits in a three-game series. They established a franchise mark with 45 runs in the three-game set.

**Cardinals 5, Dodgers 3:** Shohei Ohtani homered for his 1,000th career hit and struck out a season-high eight in four innings on the mound, but visiting St. Louis rallied late to beat Los Angeles.

Jordan Walker had three hits for the Cardinals, including an RBI single that tied the score with two outs in the eighth. St. Louis took a 4-3 lead on the same play when rookie third baseman Alex Freeland made a costly throwing error.

**Cubs 6, Reds 1:** Seiya Suzuki homered, Cade Horton threw 5½ scoreless innings and host Chicago prevented a Cincinnati sweep.

The sixth-inning solo shot was Suzuki's 27th home run of the season, moving him into a tie with teammate Pete Crow-Armstrong for seventh in the majors and fourth in the National League. The outfielder finished 2-for-2 on the day with a pair of RBIs and a walk, also scoring Nico Hoerner on a third-inning sacrifice fly.

**Giants 4, Pirates 2:** Dominic Smith hit a go-ahead double in the ninth inning, and visiting San Francisco rallied for a win over Pittsburgh.

Jung Hoo Lee hit a one-out double down the right-field line off Dennis Santana (3-4). Smith, pinch hitting for Christian Koss, brought Lee in with another double to right to make it 3-2 and Patrick Bailey extended the lead with an RBI single.

**Orioles 5, Phillies 1:** Coby Mayo hit a three-run homer, Jeremiah Jackson doubled in a run for his first extra-base hit and RBI in the majors as Baltimore avoided a sweep in Philadelphia.

After the Phillies scored 18 runs in winning the first two games of the series, Orioles left-hander Trevor Rogers (5-2) put a stop to it, allowing one run on eight hits with six strikeouts over six innings.

**Twins 9, Tigers 4:** Luke Keaschall drove in three runs for the second straight game as visiting Minnesota beat Detroit.

Keaschall is hitting .393 in his nine-game major league career, which was interrupted in April by a broken arm. He returned Tuesday and has four hits and six RBIs in his first two games back.

**Rays 5, Angels 4:** Junior Caminero hit his 29th and 30th homers, Christopher Morel had a go-ahead shot and six Tampa Bay pitchers combined to strike out 16 in the Rays' victory over host Los Angeles.

Caminero hit a career-long 447-foot shot with a man on in the first, and had a solo homer in the third. Morel was 0 for 6 with six strikeouts in the series before hitting his solo homer in the seventh.

**Marlins 6, Astros 4:** Xavier Edwards went 4 for 5 with a double, Graham Pauley and Heriberto Hernández each hit a solo homer and host Miami beat Houston to snap a seven-game losing streak against the Astros.

Janson Junk (6-2) allowed three runs on five hits with two walks and two strikeouts in five

innings. The Marlins are 8-2 in Junk's 10 starts since joining the rotation June 20.

**Royals 7, Red Sox 3:** Jonathan India hit a three-run homer and Michael Wacha scattered five hits over six innings to help visiting Kansas City beat Boston.

Wacha (6-9) allowed two runs while walking none and striking out three to earn his second consecutive victory and help the Royals avoid the three-game sweep.

**Brewers 5, Braves 4:** Blake Perkins doubled, hit a homer and drove in two RBIs, Andrew Vaughn also homered and visiting Milwaukee beat Atlanta for its sixth straight win.

Jose Quintana (9-4) allowed three runs on seven hits with seven strikeouts in six innings. Jared Koenig and Abner Uribe each threw a scoreless inning of relief. Trevor Megill earned his 26th save despite giving up a solo homer to Michael Harris II in the ninth.

**Padres 3, Diamondbacks 2:** Jose Iglesias followed Ryan O'Hearn's tying homer with a run-scoring single in the ninth inning and visiting San Diego rallied to beat Arizona.

With Arizona leading 2-1, O'Hearn led off the ninth with a tying homer off Kyle Backus (0-2), his first off a left-hander this season. Xander Bogaerts, who hit a solo homer in the seventh, followed with a double and moved to third on a sacrifice bunt, coming around to score on Iglesias' single.

**Mariners 8, White Sox 6:** Julio Rodríguez hit a three-run homer during a five-run second inning for host Seattle in a win over Chicago.

Rodríguez, who on Sunday became the first player in major league history with 20 home runs and 20 stolen bases in each of his first four seasons, went deep on a hanging sweeper from starter Jonathan Cannon (4-9). Cal Raleigh drove in two runs with a single immediately before Rodríguez's homer.

# Ohio State's QB competition unsettled

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — After the first quarter of Ohio State's preseason practices, the competition between Julian Sayin and Lincoln Kienholz for the starting quarterback spot remains too close to call.

"The competition continues," coach Ryan Day said. "They both have had good moments and moments where they're growing. I will say I've been pleased with the progress. It's going to go right down to the wire."

"The positives of having a competition is that you know every day you got to bring it. The guys are always on edge, they're uncomfortable, they're working at it. I think that's healthy for the entire building."

A quarterback competition the season after winning the College Football Playoff championship is routine at Ohio State. The circumstances, though, are different.

In 2015, Cardale Jones and J.T. Barrett both had experience as they battled. Jones led the Buckeyes to the title when he started the Big Ten championship and both CFP games after Barrett broke his ankle against Michigan.

Sayin and Kienholz have a combined 34 pass attempts and 90 college snaps. They are competing to replace Will Howard, who transferred from Kansas State and threw for a Big Ten-high 4,010 yards and 35 touchdowns in leading the Buckeyes to their sixth national title.

Quarterbacks coach Billy Fessler is looking for consistency, especially as Ohio State starts getting more into situational scenarios during practices the next two weeks.

"We have to be great on third down and in the red zone. That's where quarterbacks make their money," Fessler said.

"We're in a spot where we're getting more and more of those situations every day. So it's an opportunity for those guys to go out and compete."

Sayin has shown better arm strength, though Kienholz has more athleticism after playing three sports in high school.

Sayin originally committed to Alabama as the top-rated quarterback in the Class of 2024 and was taking classes when Nick Saban retired. Sayin then entered the transfer portal last spring and came to Ohio State. He played in four games, including the CFP first-round contest against Tennessee, and was 5-for-12 for 84 yards and one touchdown while taking 27 snaps.

The sophomore is the slight favorite to emerge as the starter for the Aug. 30 opener against Texas, but he hasn't paid any attention to the outside hype.

"I feel like I'm developing in my footwork accuracy and mechanics. It's just all about building confidence. You make a great play, you start to build that confidence," Sayin said.

The last snaps Kienholz took in a game were in the 2023 Cotton Bowl against Missou-

ri after starter Devin Brown was injured in the first half. Kienholz struggled, as he completed only six of 17 passes for 86 yards.

The junior had a great offseason, however, and was one of eight Ohio State players named an Iron Buckeye, which goes to players who excel during offseason workouts.

"As a freshman going in there, I didn't really know a whole lot. I didn't really know how protections worked and I mean, now that's something that I feel like I'm pretty good at, and I go out and execute that well," Kienholz said. "I've been in the offense for three years now, so it's something that I think just more time, more reps and film study, it's helped me get better."

Freshman Tavien St. Clair is also getting snaps, but is still getting up to speed with the offense. He did come in as an early enrollee and participated in spring practices.

Besides quarterback, Day and the coaching staff are looking for some of the positions to get an established starting group toward the end of the week. Day used a phrase from safeties coach Matt Guerrieri in comparing this week to the third round of a golf tournament, which is typically called moving day.

"This is moving week. We want to have our identity and it doesn't need to be in stone, but the players can tell us what we're doing and what our identity is coming out of this week," Day said.

## Shelton enters finals with win over No. 2 seed Fritz

Associated Press

TORONTO — Fourth-seeded Ben Shelton beat second-seeded Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-3 in an all-American semifinal match Wednesday night in the National Bank Open.

Shelton will face 11th-seeded Karen Khachanov of Russia, a 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (4) winner over top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany in the first semifinal in Masters 1000 hard-court event.

"I've seen so many big improvements in my game this week, that's what I'm most happy about, how I'm executing, how little I'm hesitating, how I'm returning," Shelton said. "There are a lot of things to be proud about and beating two top-10

guys back-to-back is huge for me."

The 22-year-old Shelton is seeking his third career ATP Tour title. He won in Tokyo on hard courts in 2023 and Houston last year on clay.

The 26-year-old Fritz has 10 career victories, winning this year on grass at Stuttgart and Eastbourne.

Khachanov, a seven-time tour winner, survived a match point.

Zverev, the 2017 champion with 24 tour titles, is No. 3 in the world.

Zverev was the top seed with top-ranked Jannik Sinner — the 2023 winner — and No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz skipping the expanded event.

In the WTA National Bank Open in Montreal, Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko rallied to beat ninth-seeded Elena Rybakina 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (4) and reach the final where she'll face Japanese star Naomi Osaka, a 6-2, 7-6 (7), winner over 16th-seeded Clara Tauson of Denmark in the second semifinal.

The 18-year-old Mboko dropped down to the court after Rybakina's shot sailed long on match point as the crowd — lined with "Allez Vicky" — erupted. Mboko saved a match point in the third set and broke Rybakina twice to force the tiebreaker.

Mboko, ranked 85th in the world, is seeking her first WTA

Tour title and trying to join Faye Urban (1969) and Bianca Andreescu (2019) as the only Canadians to win the home event in the open era.

She upset top-seeded Coco Gauff 6-1, 6-4 on Saturday to reach the quarterfinals, then topped Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-4, 6-2 on Monday. At 2 hours, 46 minutes, the match Wednesday was the longest of Mboko's short tour career.

Mboko overcame 11 double-faults and battled through a wrist injury after stumbling awkwardly to the ground in the second game of the third set. She'll move up to at least 34th in the world after starting the year outside the top 300.