

## Trump tax returns released after long fight

*Associated Press*

Democrats in Congress released six years of former President Donald Trump's tax returns on Friday, the culmination of a yearslong effort to learn more about the finances of a onetime business mogul who broke decades of political precedent when he refused to voluntarily release the information as he sought the White House.

The returns, which include redactions of some personal sensitive information such as Social Security and bank account numbers, are from 2015 to 2020. They span nearly 6,000 pages, including more than 2,700 pages of individual returns from Trump and his wife, Melania, and more than 3,000 pages in returns for Trump's business entities.

Their release follows a party-line vote in the House Ways and Means Committee last week to make the returns public. Committee Democrats argued that transparency and the rule of law were at stake, while Republi-

cans countered that the release would set a dangerous precedent undermining privacy protections.

Trump did not release his returns when he ran for president, a major break in practice, and had waged a legal battle to keep them secret while he was in the White House. But the Supreme Court refused last month to keep the Treasury Department from turning them over to the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee.

"The Democrats should have never done it, the Supreme Court should have never approved it, and it's going to lead to horrible things for so many people," Trump said in a statement Friday. "The radical, left Democrats have weaponized everything, but remember, that is a dangerous two-way street!"

The returns underscore how Trump used tax law to minimize his liability.

A report by Congress' non-partisan Joint Committee on Taxation released last week

showed Trump paid \$641,931 in federal income taxes in 2015, the year he began his campaign for president. He went on to pay \$750 in 2016 and 2017, nearly \$1 million in 2018, \$133,445 in 2019 and nothing in 2020.

For 2020, the filings released Friday show, more than 150 of Trump's business entities listed negative qualified business income, which the IRS defines as "the net amount of qualified items of income, gain, deduction and loss from any qualified trade or business." In total for that tax year, combined with nearly \$9 million in carryforward loss from previous years, Trump's qualified losses amounted to more than \$58 million for the final year of his term in office.

The release, just days before Trump's fellow Republicans retake control of the House from the Democrats, provide the most detailed picture to date of Trump's finances, which have been shrouded in mystery and intrigue since his days as an up-

and-coming Manhattan real estate developer in the 1980s.

The disclosures, which focus on Trump's time in office and include foreign tax credits and charitable contributions, come a month after Trump launched another campaign for the White House in 2024.

The tax returns show that Trump claimed foreign tax credits for taxes he paid on various business ventures around the world, including licensing arrangements for use of his name on development projects and his golf courses in Scotland and Ireland.

Trump, known for building skyscrapers and hosting a reality TV show before winning the White House, did give some limited details about his holdings and income on mandatory disclosure forms. He has promoted his wealth in the annual financial statements he provides to banks to secure loans and to financial magazines to justify his place on rankings of the world's billionaires.

## Airline breakdown upends holiday leave for troops

*Associated Press*

Amiah Manlove used most of her savings to buy a \$711 airline ticket to go home for the holidays. Then the Army private got stuck midway through the over 4,000-mile journey from Hawaii to Indianapolis and had to sleep on an airport floor.

Manlove, 20, an active-duty soldier stationed in Oahu, was among the many travelers whose holiday plans were upended when Southwest Airlines canceled wave after wave of flights across the country. Her father then spent his rent money to buy her a new flight

after she was stranded at the Phoenix airport.

"This is the only time that I have to come home, the time we were going to cherish most for the next year — and to lose any of it is just devastating," said Manlove, who was finally able to make it home the afternoon of Christmas Day.

While she was stranded, Manlove's family searched frantically for solutions, and her father, a home health aide who relies on disability payments, used the \$650 he saved for rent to purchase the only flight he could find — a one-way flight to

Louisville, Ky., a two-hour drive from Indianapolis.

When he came to pick her up, they were so happy to be reunited that he was in tears before she opened the door to get in the car, she said.

"It was heartbreaking," she said.

Crystal and Steve Molitor in Trout Creek, Mont., said they've been waiting 15 months to see their son, who serves in the Air Force and just returned to the U.S. from being deployed. He is now stationed in Anchorage, Alaska, and his mother said his flight home on Southwest Air-

lines has been canceled at least four times already.

"We lost four plus days and Christmas with him due to their complete incompetence," she said. "We can't extend his trip because he can't change up his leave dates at this point."

After trying unsuccessfully for two days to reach Southwestern, Crystal Molitor said the family finally decided to spend a couple hundred dollars to schedule a flight home for him on a different airline for Thursday, she said.

"I'll just be glad when he's home," she said.

# Putin, Xi vow closer ties amid attacks

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping vowed Friday to deepen their bilateral cooperation against the backdrop of Moscow's 10-month war in Ukraine, which weathered another night of drone and rocket attacks following a large-scale missile bombardment.

Putin and Xi made no direct mention of Ukraine in their opening remarks by videoconference, which were broadcast publicly, before going into private talks. But they hailed strengthening ties between Moscow and Beijing amid what they called "geopolitical tensions" and a "difficult interna-

tional situation," with Putin expressing his wish to extend military collaboration.

"In the face of increasing geopolitical tensions, the significance of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership is growing as a stabilizing factor," said Putin, whose invasion of a neighboring country has been stymied by fierce Ukrainian resistance and Western military aid.

Putin said military cooperation has a "special place" in the relationship between their countries. He said the Kremlin aimed to "strengthen the cooperation between the armed forces of Russia and China."

In its report on the meeting, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV described the events in

Ukraine as a "crisis." The term marked a departure from China's usual references to the "Ukraine situation," and the change may reflect growing Chinese concern about the direction of the conflict.

In Ukraine, authorities reviewed the toll from a widespread Russian missile attack on power stations and other vital infrastructure Thursday that was the biggest such bombardment in weeks. Four civilians were killed during the barrage, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said in its Friday morning update that Russian forces had un-

leashed a total of 85 missiles and 35 airstrikes on targets across Ukraine in the previous 24 hours. Russia also launched 63 attacks from multiple launch rocket systems.

Following the first waves of missiles Thursday, Russian forces attacked Ukraine with Iranian-made Shahed-131/136 drones on Thursday night and early Friday, all of which were shot down, the Ukrainian air force said.

Some were aimed at Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Friday. Of seven exploding drones launched against the Ukrainian capital, two were shot down on the approach to the city and five over Kyiv itself, according to Klitschko.

## Evidence of Russian crimes mounts as war drags on

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ten months into Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine, overwhelming evidence shows the Kremlin's troops have waged total war, with disregard for international laws governing the treatment of civilians and conduct on the battlefield.

Ukraine is investigating more than 58,000 potential Russian war crimes — killings, kidnappings, indiscriminate bombings and sexual assaults. Reporting by The Associated Press and "Frontline," recorded in a public database, has independently verified more than 600 incidents that appear to violate the laws of war. Some of those attacks were massacres that killed dozens or hundreds of civilians and as a totality it could account for thousands of individual war crimes.

As Karim Khan, chief prosecutor of the International Crimi-

nal Court in The Hague, told the AP, "Ukraine is a crime scene."

That extensive documentation has run smack into a hard reality, however. While authorities have amassed a staggering amount of evidence — the conflict is among the most documented in human history — they are unlikely to arrest most of those who pulled the trigger or gave the beatings anytime soon, let alone the commanders who gave the orders and political leaders who sanctioned the attacks.

The reasons are manifold, experts say. Ukrainian authorities face serious challenges in gathering airtight evidence in a war zone. And the vast majority of alleged war criminals have evaded capture and are safely behind Russian lines.

Throughout the war, Russian leaders have denied accusations of brutality.

Moscow's U.N. ambassador,

Vassily Nebenzia, said no civilians were tortured and killed in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha despite the meticulous documentation of the atrocities by AP, other journalists and war crimes investigators there.

"Not a single local person has suffered from any violent action," he said, calling the photos and video of bodies in the streets "a crude forgery" staged by the Ukrainians.

Such statements have been easily rebutted by Ukrainian and international authorities, human rights groups and journalists who have meticulously documented Russian barbarity since the Kremlin ordered the unprovoked invasion in February.

Part of that effort, the AP and Frontline database called War Crimes Watch Ukraine, offers a contemporaneous catalog of the horrors of war.

The resulting database de-

tails 10 months of attacks that appear to violate the laws of war, including 93 attacks on schools, 36 where children were killed, and more than 200 direct attacks on civilians, including torture, the kidnapping and killing of civilians, and the desecration of dead bodies. Among Russia's targets: churches, cultural centers, hospitals, food facilities and electrical infrastructure. The database catalogs how Russia utilized cluster bombs and other indiscriminate weapons in residential neighborhoods and to attack buildings housing civilians.

An AP investigation revealed that Russia's bombing of a theater in Mariupol, which was being used as a civilian shelter, likely killed more than 600 people. Another showed that in the first 30 days after the invasion, Russian forces struck and damaged 34 medical facilities, suggesting a pattern and intent.

# Biden signs \$1.7T bill funding government

Associated Press

KINGSHILL, U.S. Virgin Islands — President Joe Biden on Thursday signed a \$1.7 trillion spending bill that will keep the federal government operating through the end of the federal budget year in September 2023, and provide tens of billions of dollars in new aid to Ukraine for its fight against the Russian military.

Biden had until late Friday to sign the bill to avoid a partial government shutdown.

The Democratic-controlled House passed the bill 225-201, mostly along party lines, just before Christmas.

The House vote came a day after the Senate, also led by Democrats, voted 68-29 to pass the bill with significantly more Republican support.

Biden had said passage was proof that Republicans and Democrats can work together.

Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the House Republican leader who hopes to become speaker when a new session of Congress opens on Jan. 3, argued during floor debate that the bill spends too much and does too little to curb illegal immigration and the flow of fentanyl into the U.S. from Mexico.

"This is a monstrosity that is one of the most shameful acts I've ever seen in this body," McCarthy said of the legislation.

McCarthy is appealing for support from staunch conservatives in the GOP caucus, who have largely blasted the bill for its size and scope. Republicans will have a narrow House majority come Jan. 3 and several conservative members have vowed not to vote for McCarthy to become speaker.

The funding bill includes a roughly 6% increase in spending for domestic initiatives, to

\$772.5 billion. Spending on defense programs will increase by about 10%, to \$858 billion.

Passage was achieved hours before financing for federal agencies was set to expire. Lawmakers had approved two short-term spending measures to keep the government operating, and a third, funding the government through Dec. 30, passed last Friday. Biden signed it to ensure services would continue until Congress sent him the full-year measure, called an omnibus bill.

The massive bill, which topped out at more than 4,000 pages, wraps together 12 appropriations bills, aid to Ukraine and relief for communities recovering from natural disasters.

It also contains scores of policy changes that lawmakers worked to include in the final major bill considered by that session of Congress.

Lawmakers provided roughly \$45 billion for Ukraine and NATO allies, more than even Biden had requested, an acknowledgment that future rounds of funding are not guaranteed when Republicans take control of the House next week following the party's gains in the midterm elections.

Though support for Ukraine aid has largely been bipartisan, some House Republicans have opposed the spending and argued that the money would be better spent on priorities in the United States.

McCarthy has warned that Republicans will not write a "blank check" for Ukraine in the future.

The bill also includes about \$40 billion in emergency spending, mostly to help communities across the U.S. as they recover from drought, hurricanes and other natural disasters.

## EPA finalizes water rules

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — President Joe Biden's administration on Friday finalized regulations that protect hundreds of thousands of small streams, wetlands and other waterways, repealing a Trump-era rule that federal courts had thrown out.

The rule defines which waters are protected by the Clean Water Act.

For decades, the term has been a flashpoint between environmentalists who want to broaden limits on pollution and farmers, builders and industry groups that say extending regulations is onerous for business.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army said the reworked rule is based on definitions that were in place prior to 2015.

## Biden outpacing Trump, Obama with diversity among nominees for judiciary

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For the Biden White House, a quartet of four female judges in Colorado encapsulates its mission when it comes to the federal judiciary.

Charlotte Sweeney is the first openly LGBT woman to serve on the federal bench west of the Mississippi River and has a background in workers' rights. Nina Wang, an immigrant from Taiwan, is the first magistrate judge in the state to be elevated to a federal district seat.

Regina Rodriguez, who is Latina and Asian American, served in a U.S. attorney's office. Veronica Rossman, who came from the former Soviet Union with her family as refugees, is the first former federal public defender to be a judge on the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

With these four women, who were confirmed during the first two years of President Joe Biden's term, there is a breadth of personal and professional diversity that the White House and Democratic senators have promoted in their push to transform the judiciary.

The White House and Democratic senators are closing out the first two years of Biden's presidency having installed more federal judges than did Biden's two immediate predecessors.

The rapid clip reflects a zeal to offset Donald Trump's legacy of stacking the judiciary with young conservatives who often lacked in racial diversity.

So far, 97 lifetime federal judges have been confirmed under Biden, a figure that outpaces both Trump (85) and Barack Obama (62) at this point in

their presidencies, according to data from the White House and the office of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The 97 from the Biden presidency includes Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, that court's first Black woman, as well as 28 circuit court judges and 68 district court judges.

Three out of every four judges tapped by Biden and confirmed by the Senate in the past two years were women.

About two-thirds were people of color.

The Biden list includes 11 Black women to the powerful circuit courts, more than those installed under all previous presidents combined.

There were also 11 former public defenders named to the circuit courts, also more than all of Biden's predecessors combined.



# Suspect in Idaho deaths arrested in Pa.

*Associated Press*

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A suspect in the killings of four University of Idaho students was arrested in eastern Pennsylvania, a law enforcement official said Friday.

Arrest paperwork filed in Monroe County Court said Bryan Christopher Kohberger, 28, was being held for extradition to Idaho on a warrant for first-degree murder.

A law enforcement official confirmed the arrest to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the official could not publicly discuss details of the investigation ahead of a formal announcement expected later Friday.

A Ph.D. student by the same name is listed in the Depart-

ment of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Washington State University, which is a short drive across the state line from the University of Idaho. Messages seeking more information were left for officials at WSU.

The Idaho students — Kaylee Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin — were stabbed to death at a rental home near campus sometime in the early morning hours of Nov. 13. The slayings initially mystified law enforcement, with investigators unable to name a suspect or locate a murder weapon for weeks.

But the case broke open after law enforcement asked the public for help finding a white sedan seen near the home around

the time of the killings. The Moscow Police Department made the request Dec. 7, and by the next day had to direct tips to a special FBI call center because so many were coming in.

Goncalves, 21, of Rathdrum, Idaho; Mogen, 21, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Kernodle, 20, of Post Falls, Idaho; and Chapin, 20, of Mount Vernon, Wash., were members of the university's Greek system and close friends. Mogen, Goncalves and Kernodle lived in the three-story rental home with two other roommates. Kernodle and Chapin were dating and he was visiting the house that night.

Autopsies showed all four were likely asleep when they were attacked. Some had defensive wounds and each was

stabbed multiple times. There was no sign of sexual assault, police said.

Police said Thursday the rental home would be cleared of "potential biohazards and other harmful substances" to collect evidence starting Friday morning.

It was unclear how long the work would take, but a news release said the house would be returned to the property manager upon completion.

Fears of a repeat attack prompted nearly half of the University of Idaho students to switch to online classes for the remainder of the semester, abandoning dorms and apartments in the normally bucolic town for the perceived safety of their hometowns.

## New York opens its first legal recreational weed dispensary

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — The first legal dispensary for recreational marijuana in New York rung up its first sales on Thursday, opening up what is expected to be one of the country's most lucrative markets for cannabis — underscored by the dozens of unauthorized shops that have operated in the open for years.

The opening of the first state-sanctioned dispensary, which is operated by the nonprofit Housing Works, paves the way for a string of openings expected in the coming months in New York. The state legalized recreational marijuana use in March 2021.

A line of hundreds snaked around the block, many giddy with excitement over the opening. The whiff of marijuana filled the air.

Lino Pastrana was among those waiting his turn after the store opened to the public at 4:20 Thursday afternoon.

"This is historical. It's really important for us who buy and smoke weed because we can buy quality, instead of buying random weed that you don't know what it's mixed with," Pastrana said.

That's something he risked, he said. "You can buy weed anywhere in New York," he said, saying that he expects to buy his merchandise from legal dispensaries from now on.

That's exactly the hope of New York marijuana regulators, who say that a supervised industry will help ensure that cannabis users are buying safe products.

That, too, was the hope of Housing Works officials, who said that having a marijuana business will help fund its programs.

"We're absolutely thrilled to be the first and hopefully setting a model that other folks will have to follow," said Charles King, the chief executive officer

of Housing Works, a minority-controlled social-service agency that serves people with HIV and AIDS, as well as those who are homeless and formerly incarcerated.

The lower Manhattan store is the first of 36 recently licensed dispensaries to open, with an additional 139 licenses yet to be issued by the state Office of Cannabis Management and 900 applicants still awaiting word. Among the first round of licensees were eight nonprofits that included Housing Works.

The cannabis storefront abuts the sprawling urban campus of New York University, whose students could provide a ready supply of customers.

"This location is a perfect location. We're between the West Village, the East Village," King said at a news conference Thursday morning. "Tourists can come by here easily. So we think we're going to ring up a lot of sales here."

## Bats saved after freeze

*Associated Press*

HOUSTON — Hundreds of bats lost their grip and plunged to the pavement underneath a bridge in Houston after going into hypothermic shock during the city's recent cold snap, according to wildlife rescuers who saved them by administering fluids and keeping them warm in incubators.

The Mexican free-tailed bats that roost at Houston's Waugh Bridge went into shock when temperatures plunged below freezing last week, the Houston Humane Society said.

The society's Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Center rescued hundreds of bats from beneath the bridge, along with another group of bats elsewhere in the Houston area that also went into hypothermic shock, said center director Mary Warwick. She said some were recuperating in dog kennels in the attic of her home. Nearly 700 of the estimated 1,500 rescued bats were to be released on Wednesday.

# China faces bumpy road back to normal

Associated Press

BEIJING — After three years of quarantines pushed them close to shutting down, restaurant owner Li Meng and his wife are hoping for business to rebound after China rolled back severe anti-virus controls.

As sales slowly revive, they face a new challenge: Diners are wary about the country's wave of infections. On Wednesday night at 8 p.m., only three of their 20 tables were filled.

China is on a bumpy road back to normal life as people return to schools, shopping malls and restaurants following the abrupt end of some of the world's most severe restrictions even as hospitals are swamped with feverish, wheezing COVID-19 patients.

"Many are still watching because they are afraid of being infected," Li said. "Dining out can be put off for now."

The ruling Communist Party began to drop testing, quarantine and other restrictions in November trying to reverse a deepening economic slump.

The "zero COVID" strategy confined millions of families to their homes for weeks at a time, shut down most travel into and out of China and emptied bustling streets in major cities. That kept its infection rate low but crushed economic growth and fueled protests.

"People are going back to work, and I've seen children in the malls," said Yang Mingyue, a 28-year-old Beijing resident. "Everything is back to normal. It's really pleasant."

The ruling party is shifting toward joining the United States and other governments in trying to live with the disease instead of stamping out transmission. It has launched a campaign to vaccinate elderly people, which experts say is needed to prevent a public health crisis.

On Tuesday, the government announced it would relax restrictions on travel out of China and resume issuing passports for tourist travel for the first time in nearly three years. That sets up a possible flood of Chinese travelers going abroad at a time when other governments are alarmed by the rise in infections.

The United States, Japan and other governments have announced virus test requirements for travelers arriving from China. They cite the lack of information from Beijing about the spread of the virus and possible mutations into new forms.

The ruling party faces increased pressure to get consumers out of their homes and spending as global demand for Chinese exports weakens after the Federal Reserve and European central banks raised interest rates to cool economic activity and tame surging inflation.

China's retail sales in November fell 5.9% from those of a year earlier. Imports tumbled 10.9% in a sign of a deepening downturn in Chinese domestic demand. Exports fell 9% in November from those of a year earlier. Forecasters say China's economy probably contracted in the final quarter of the year.

# South Korea's rocket launch causes UFO scare

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's military confirmed it test-fired a solid-fueled rocket Friday after its unannounced launch triggered brief public scare of a suspected UFO appearance or a North Korean missile launch.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement that the rocket launch was part of its efforts to build a space-based surveillance capability and bolster its defense posture.

It said it didn't notify the general public of the launch in advance because it involved sensitive military security issues.

A twisty tendril of vapor in white-to-red ombre could be seen snaking behind a bright white light in parts of South Korea's sky Friday evening. South Korean social media and internet sites were abuzz with mes-

sages by citizens who said they saw a soaring object, rainbow-colored vapor trail or other mysterious lights. Some also posted photos and videos.

"What is this? Is this a UFO? I'm scared," said one Twitter user. Another said they suspected it was a North Korean missile launch and worried about a war. Others suspected it was a drone light show or a supernatural phenomenon.

South Korean emergency offices and police received hundreds of citizens' reports of witnessing of a suspicious flying object and mysterious lights across the country, according to local media.

The South Korean rocket launch came four days after the South accused the North of flying five drones across the rivals' border Monday for the first time in five years.

# Suu Kyi found guilty again

Associated Press

BANGKOK — A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi of corruption Friday, sentencing her to seven years in prison in the last of a string of criminal cases against her, a legal official said.

The court's action leaves her with a total of 33 years to serve in prison after a series of politically tinged prosecutions since the army toppled her elected government in February 2021.

The case that ended Friday involved five offenses under the anti-corruption law and followed earlier convictions on

seven other corruption counts, each of which was punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine.

The 77-year-old Suu Kyi has also been convicted of several other offenses, including illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions, breaching the country's official secrets act, sedition and election fraud.

Suu Kyi's supporters and independent analysts say the numerous charges against her and her allies are an attempt to legitimize the military's seizure of power while eliminating her from politics.

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# Prescott passes for 2 TDs as Cowboys win

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Dak Prescott and the Dallas Cowboys know they have some things to clean up. Starting a two-game road swing to wrap up the regular season with a victory is all that matters.

Prescott threw for 282 yards and two touchdowns to Dalton Schultz and the Cowboys beat the banged-up and resting Tennessee Titans 27-13 on Thursday night for their sixth win in seven games.

The Cowboys (12-4) posted their first back-to-back 12-win seasons since 1994 and 1995, when Dallas won the last of its five Super Bowl titles. Fans were chanting "Let's go Cowboys!" throughout the game.

"This was a game we needed to get, and we got it done," Dallas coach Mike McCarthy said. "Whether we get any style points (or not), that's OK. We're still at 12 wins."

The Cowboys still need to finish the regular season by winning at Washington with Philadelphia (13-2) losing out for a chance at a second straight NFC East title. Otherwise, they will be locked into the No. 5 seed in the NFC.

Ezekiel Elliott had a 1-yard touchdown run, his ninth straight game with a rushing TD. That made him the fifth player with such a streak since 2000, joining Shaun Alexander (2005), Priest Holmes (11 in 2002), Jonathan Taylor in 2021 and LaDainian Tomlinson (18 between 2004-05).

The Titans (7-9) lost their sixth straight

hours after placing quarterback Ryan Tannehill on injured reserve, ending his season unless they reach the AFC championship. They have 22 players on injured reserve and lead the NFL using at least 83 different players.

This game was meaningless for Tennessee in the standings, with next week's regular-season finale at Jacksonville deciding the AFC South title. So the Titans scratched seven starters, not counting two others put on IR with Tannehill. Those watching included Derrick Henry, the NFL's second-leading rusher.

"I'm sure that everybody expected us to just lay down," Titans coach Mike Vrabel said. "I know that we didn't do that."

The Titans gave Joshua Dobbs, signed Dec. 21 off Detroit's practice squad, his first NFL start instead of rookie Malik Willis, their third-round pick in April. The former University of Tennessee star played his last college game on this field, a 2016 Music City Bowl win over Nebraska for a very long wait between starts.

"Oh man, it was a long time, that's for sure," Dobbs said. "It definitely was a long time. A lot of working out and you're like, 'Dang, I don't even know.'"

Dobbs had more yards passing by halftime than Willis managed in any of his first three starts. Dobbs finished with 232 yards and the first TD pass of his career, a 7-yarder to Robert Woods, that pulled the Titans within 17-13 late in the third.

The Cowboys scored the final 10 points. Prescott capped a 75-yard drive with his second TD pass to Schultz for a 24-13 lead early in the fourth. Brett Maher added his second field goal for the final margin.

Dallas led only 10-6 at halftime thanks to three turnovers, including two interceptions off Prescott by two-time All-Pro safety Kevin Byard that set up field goals by Randy Bullock. That gave Prescott a career-high 14 picks, tying him with now-benched Raiders quarterback Derek Carr for most in the NFL.

That's despite Prescott missing five games with a broken thumb. The Dallas quarterback has been picked off in six consecutive games for the first time in his career.

"Whether it's off your guy's hands or whether I throw it behind the receiver and the cornerback makes the play, they're all frustrating and somehow or another they've got to stop," Prescott said.

Prescott took advantage of the ailing Titans defense, finding CeeDee Lamb for 11 catches for 100 yards. Lamb also became only the third Cowboys player with 100 catches in a season, joining Michael Irvin (111 in 1995) and Jason Witten (110 in 2012).

When undrafted rookie cornerback Tre Avery was flagged for grabbing Michael Gallup on third-and-19, Prescott threw a 6-yard TD pass to Schultz on the next play midway through the third for a 17-6 lead.

## No. 12 Washington holds off No. 21 Texas in Alamo Bowl

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Michael Penix, Jr. threw for 287 yards and two touchdowns and No. 12 Washington held off No. 21 Texas 27-20 on Thursday night in the Valero Alamo Bowl.

Texas scored 10 late points, pulling within seven on Bert Auburn's 26-yard field goal with 1:40 remaining, then failed on an onside kick try. The Longhorns (8-5) stopped the Huskies (11-2) on the ensuing possession and took over on their own 16 with 32 seconds and got to the Washington 40 on the final play of the game.

"Another big night for the '22 Huskies," Washington coach Kalen DeBoer said. "It starts with these guys up here (Penix, Wayne Taulapapa, Bralen Trice). They all played huge, huge roles

in what happened tonight. It was a culmination of everything we've worked on. The things we've tried to improve, especially in the latter half of the season."

Penix finished the season with 4,641 yards passing to break the 20-year-old Washington season mark of 4,458 set by Cody Pickett.

And while Washington relied heavily on the pass game, it had success on the ground with 158 yards, including a 46-yard option TD run by Wayne Taulapapa in the first quarter.

"We were just trying to feel out the game, feel out how the adjusted and reacted to our pass option," Penix said. "I was like, 'OK, I'm going to hand off this time and see how they adjust to it. I knew handing it off to Wayne, we had a

good box, and he'll make anything happen."

Penix led back-to-back scoring drives of 75 and 90 yards in the second half to stretch the Huskies' lead to 17. He was 32 of 55, completed passes to eight receivers, and connected with Taj Davis and Jalen McMillan for scores.

Texas was without star running back Bijon Robinson, and rushed for just 51 yards. Robinson, who led the Longhorns with 1,580 yards and 18 TDs, skipped the game to prepare for the NFL draft.

Sarkisian said the game plan was to throw the ball extensively.

Texas had cut a 10-point halftime deficit to 13-10 on a 34-yard pass play from Quinn Ewers to Jonathon Brooks on the opening possession of the second half. Ewers was 31 of 47 for 369 yards.



# Tr transcendent soccer star Pelé dies

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Pelé was remembered for a life beyond the field, for transcending the sport of soccer and becoming perhaps the most well-known person on Earth.

“Before Pelé, ‘10’ was just a number,” current Brazil forward Neymar wrote following the soccer great’s death Thursday at the age of 82. “That line, beautiful, is incomplete. I would say that before Pelé, soccer was just a sport. Pelé changed everything. He transformed soccer into art, entertainment. He gave voice to the poor, to the Black and above all he gave Brazil visibility. Soccer and Brazil elevated their standing thanks to the King! He is gone, but his magic will endure.”

Pelé scored 12 goals in 14 World Cup matches and is the only three-time world champion, winning titles in 1958, 1962 and 1970. His death was especially impactful for generations of Brazilian players who idolized him.

“Today, Brazil waves goodbye to one of its most illustrious children,” wrote Romário, a 1994 World Cup champion who used Pelé’s full name in his post. “Edson Arantes do Nascimento made the world bow to his

talent and took Brazilian soccer to the altar of gods. Throughout his life, Pelé inspired generations of athletes and deserves every tribute.”

Ronaldo, who led Brazil to a fifth World Cup title in 2002, described Pelé as “Unique. Genius. Skilled. Creative. Perfect. Unmatched.”

“What a privilege to come after you, my friend,” Ronaldo wrote. “Your talent is a school through which every player should go. Your legacy transcends generations. And that is the way you will continue to live.”

Pelé was a revered sports figure to a level probably not comparable to any athlete other than Muhammad Ali. As comfortable mingling with heads of states and celebrities as he was evading defenders, Pelé made an impact in capitals across continents.

“As one of the most recognizable athletes in the world, he understood the power of sports to bring people together,” former U.S. President Barack Obama wrote.

President Joe Biden tweeted: “For a sport that brings the world together like no other, Pelé’s rise from humble beginnings

to soccer legend is a story of what is possible.”

Pelé’s greatest impact was in Brazil, a unifying figure celebrated during the 2014 World Cup.

“I saw Pelé play, live, at Pacaembu and Morumbi (stadiums),” former Brazil President and current President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva wrote. “Play, no. I saw Pelé give a show. Because when he got the ball he always did something special, which often ended in a goal. ... Few Brazilians took the name of our country as far as he did. As different from Portuguese as one’s language was, foreigners from the four corners of the planet soon found a way to pronounce the magic word: ‘Pelé.’”

For a half-century, people who knew the name of only one soccer player knew Pelé.

French soccer star Kylian Mbappé tied Pelé for sixth in career World Cup goals with a hat trick in this month’s loss to Argentina in the final. Four years ago, Mbappé became only the second teenager — after Pelé — to score a goal in a World Cup final.

“The king of football has left us but his legacy will never be forgotten,” Mbappé wrote.

## Curry, Henry, Kupp, Judge among most bet-on athletes

*Associated Press*

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Did you win money betting on Saint Peter’s, the longest-of-longshots men’s college basketball team that got to the Elite Eight in the national championship tournament this year?

If so, you’ve got plenty of company.

According to DraftKings sportsbook, customers won more money betting on Saint Peter’s than on any other team in 2022. And the Peacocks’ 67-64 victory over Purdue on March 25 was the top-winning game for customers at BetMGM.

Did you lose money betting on the New York Yankees, Green Bay Packers or the Alabama Crimson Tide? Plenty of others did too.

Several of the nation’s leading sportsbooks provided year-end data to The Associated Press giving a look at how people bet in 2022. None would provide actual dollar figures, terming that proprietary information.

Other moneymakers for DraftKings included North Carolina, Gonzaga, Kansas and Providence in the NCAA tournament;

and the San Francisco 49ers, Minnesota Vikings and Washington Commanders in the NFL.

Big money-losers for DraftKings customers included the defending Super Bowl champion Los Angeles Rams, who did not even qualify for the playoffs in an injury-marred 2022 season; the Denver Broncos, a trendy pre-season Super Bowl pick whose trade for veteran quarterback Russell Wilson has backfired in a 4-11 season so far; the struggling Tom Brady-led Tampa Bay Buccaneers; Brady’s former team, the New England Patriots; the Miami Dolphins; and the NBA’s Golden State Warriors and Brooklyn Nets.

In terms of the total amount of money wagered, Golden State’s Steph Curry was the most bet-on player of 2022 for DraftKings, followed by the Rams’ Cooper Kupp, the reigning Super Bowl MVP; the Yankees’ Aaron Judge, the American League MVP; the Tennessee Titans’ Derrick Henry; Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce; the Dallas Mavericks’ Luka Dončić; The Milwaukee Bucks’ Giannis Antetokounmpo;

the Denver Nuggets’ Nikola Jokic; Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Ja’Marr Chase; and the Boston Celtics’ Jayson Tatum.

In terms of the sheer number of bets, Titans running back Derrick Henry was first, followed by Kelce and Cleveland Browns running back Nick Chubb.

Others on the list included New York Giants running back Saquan Barkley, Indianapolis Colts running back Jonathan Taylor and Las Vegas Raiders wide receiver Davante Adams.

The most bet-on players for customers of Caesars Sportsbook were Curry; Dončić; Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow; Tatum; and Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford.

Caesars’ most bet-on teams were the Yankees; Warriors; Los Angeles Dodgers; New York Mets and Phoenix Suns.

At BetMGM, the most bet-on players were Judge, Curry and Dončić.

A World Cup soccer game in which the U.S. beat Iran 1-0 was the third-most profitable game for customers this year at BetMGM.

# Morant hands out career-best 17 assists in win

Associated Press

TORONTO — Ja Morant had a career-high 17 assists and scored 19 points and the Memphis Grizzlies won for the first time in three games, beating the struggling Toronto Raptors 119-106 on Thursday night.

Dillon Brooks scored 25 points, Desmond Bane had 16 before fouling out and Steven Adams had 14 points and 17 rebounds. Memphis won its third straight north of the border after losing its previous seven trips to Canada.

Pascal Siakam had 25 points and 10 rebounds for Toronto before fouling out, extending his career-best streak with 25 or more to six. Gary Trent Jr. scored 20 points and O.G. Anunoby had 16 as Toronto's home losing streak reached five. The Raptors have lost eight of 10 overall.

**Celtics 116, Clippers 110:** Jayson Tatum had 29 points and 11 rebounds, Jaylen Brown also scored 29 points and Boston beat Los Angeles.

Derrick White scored 15 points and blocked Paul George's layup with 33 seconds left and Boston leading by three.

Brown hit two free throws down the stretch and Tatum made one to ice it.

**Pacers 135, Cavaliers 126:** Tyrese Haliburton scored 29 points, Buddy Hield made a 3-pointer three seconds into the game and added 25, and Indiana beat Cleveland.

Haliburton was 6 for 8 from 3-point range and Hield, who leads the NBA in 3-pointers, was 5 for 6. The Pacers finished 19 of 31 from beyond the arc.

**Mavericks 129, Rockets 114:** Luka Dončić followed his 60-point triple-double two nights earlier with 35 points in his NBA-best eighth triple-double of the season, and Dallas beat Houston.

Dončić, who recorded the NBA's first game with 60 points and 21 rebounds to go with 10 rebounds on Tuesday against the New York Knicks, had 12 rebounds and 13 assists in 34 minutes as Dallas ran its winning streak to a season-best five games. He clinched the triple-double with his 10th assist with 5:37 remaining in the third quarter, giving him consecutive triple-doubles twice this season.

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**Hornets 121, Thunder 113:** LaMelo Ball had 27 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists and Charlotte beat Oklahoma City for just its third victory in the last 14 games.

P.J. Washington added 25 points on 10-of-13 shooting and Charlotte got a huge game from rookie center Mark Williams with career highs of 17 points and 13 rebounds to go along with two blocks.

Mason Plumlee added 14 points and nine rebounds for the Hornets. They outscored the Thunder 18-10 in the final 4:14 to break open a tie game.

**Spurs 122, Knicks 115:** Keldon Johnson scored 30 points and San Antonio overcame a season-high 41 points from Julius Randle to beat New York 122-115, handing the Knicks their fifth straight loss.

Spurs guard Romeo Langford added a career-high 23 points for the Spurs, who were without injured starter Devin Vassell. Tre Jones added 13 points and Jeremy Sochan had 12.

# Vasilevski helps Lightning beat Rangers in shootout

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Andrei Vasilevski made 45 saves through overtime, Alex Killorn scored the winner in the sixth round of the shootout, and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the New York Rangers 2-1 on Thursday night.

Tampa Bay won the shootout 2-1.

Brayden Point scored in regulation and in the shootout for the Lightning. Nikita Kucherov got his 38th assist on Point's goal.

New York's Igor Shesterkin stopped 39 shots in regulation and OT. Mika Zibanejad scored for the Rangers.

**Senators 4, Capitals 3, OT:** Alex DeBrincat tied the game and scored in overtime to help Ottawa snap Washington's five-game winning streak.

Tim Stutzle scored with 15.3 seconds remaining in the second period, starting Ottawa's comeback from a two-goal deficit. DeBrincat tied it with 5:43 left in regulation and won it 1:31 into 3-on-3 OT.

Alex Ovechkin scored his 23rd goal of the season and 803rd of his career for Washington.

**Flyers 4, Sharks 3, OT:** Tony DeAngelo scored 1:10 into overtime to complete Philadelphia's rally from two goals down in the third period.

The Flyers tied the game with 2:05 to play in regulation after pulling the goalie. Travis Konecny's shot deflected off a San Jose defenseman and into the net for his second goal of the game.

Philadelphia won it when Ivan Provorov set up DeAngelo in transition for a tap-in.

**Sabres 6, Red Wings 3:** Kyle Okposo scored three times, Casey Mittelstadt had two goals and the Sabres earned their fifth straight victory.

Jeff Skinner also scored for Buffalo, and Owen Power, Zemgus Girgensons and JJ Peterka each had two assists. Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 28 saves and won his third straight start.

**Kings 5, Avalanche 4, SO:** Adrian Kempe scored the shootout winner, and the Kings rallied from two goals down in the third period to snap a nine-game losing streak to the Avalanche.

Trailing 4-2 entering the third, Alex Iafallo scored on the power play at 1:11. Then Sean Walker tied it from the slot with 5:40 left on Kevin Fiala's 26th assist.

**Stars 4, Wild 1:** Wyatt Johnston scored the go-ahead goal for Dallas early in the third period.

Tyler Seguin had two goals and Jamie Benn also scored for the Stars, who outshot

Minnesota 43-25. Jake Oettinger made 24 saves for his third straight victory.

**Coyotes 6, Maple Leafs 3:** Jack McBain scored two late goals, and Arizona earned its third straight win.

McBain broke a tie when he converted a cross-ice feed from Lawson Crouse with 6:17 remaining. McBain and Barrett Hayton scored into an open net in the final moments as the Coyotes became the first team to beat Toronto (22-8-6) twice this season.

**Blues 3, Blackhawks 1:** Calle Rosen, Josh Leivo and Brendon Saad scored, sending St. Louis to the win.

Jordan Binnington stopped 21 shots for the Blues, who also won 5-2 in Chicago on Nov. 16.

**Islanders 2, Blue Jackets 1:** Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Mathew Barzal scored in the second period, sending the Islanders to the victory.

Ilya Sorokin finished with 20 saves as the Islanders won their third straight game.

**Panthers 7, Canadiens 2:** Florida captain Aleksander Barkov recorded a hat trick in the first period and helped his team snap a three-game losing streak.

**Jets 4, Canucks 2:** Mark Scheifele had three goals and Winnipeg snapped a three-game losing streak.