

## Senate leaders scramble to avert shutdown

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Senate leaders were scrambling on Friday to save a bipartisan spending deal and prevent a partial government shutdown this weekend as some Republicans pushed back on a rare deal between President Donald Trump and Democrats.

Democrats who are demanding new restrictions on federal immigration raids across the country struck an agreement with Trump on Thursday to separate funding for the Department of Homeland Security from a broad government spending bill and give Congress two weeks to debate the issue. That agreement came after irate Democrats threatened to block the entire spending bill and trigger a shutdown in the wake of the deaths of two protesters at the hands of federal agents in Minneapolis.

Trump said he didn't want a government shutdown and encouraged members of both parties to cast a "much needed Bipartisan 'YES' vote." But pas-

sage of the package was delayed Friday as some Republican senators pushed back on the deal, warning that Republicans should not give away too much leverage on the border issue.

ICE agents and Border patrol agents have been "slandered and smeared," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said in a speech on the Senate floor. "And to the Republican party, where have you been?"

Graham said said he would hold up the deal, for now, unless Republican leaders would give him a vote on his bill preventing local governments from resisting the administration's immigration policies.

Graham has also opposed House language repealing a new law that gives senators the ability to sue the government for millions of dollars if their personal or office data is accessed without their knowledge.

It was unclear if any Democrats would object. Leaving the Capitol just before midnight on Thursday, Senate Majority

Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said there were "snags on both sides" as he and Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York tried to work through any objections.

"Hopefully people will be of the spirit to try and get this done" on Friday, when the Senate was scheduled to reconvene in the late morning.

Schumer said Friday morning that "time is of the essence" and "the abuses of ICE have to come to an end."

Even if the Senate passes the funding measure, it would need House approval before becoming law. The House is not expected to return until Monday, raising the possibility of at least a temporary partial shutdown over the weekend.

The Trump administration is expected to issue guidance to federal agencies on how to proceed.

The unusual bipartisan talks between Trump and Schumer, his frequent adversary, came after the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Alex Pretti in Minneso-

ta last weekend and calls by senators in both parties for a full investigation. Schumer called it "a moment of truth."

"What ICE is doing, outside the law, is state-sanctioned thuggery and it must stop," Schumer said. "Congress has the authority — and the moral obligation — to act."

The standoff has threatened to plunge the country into another shutdown, just two months after Democrats blocked a spending bill over expiring federal health care subsidies. That dispute closed the government for 43 days as Republicans refused to negotiate.

That shutdown ended when a small group of moderate Democrats broke away to strike a deal with Republicans. But Democrats are more unified this time after the fatal shootings of Pretti and Renee Good by federal agents.

Republicans were more willing to make a deal, as well. Several said that after those shootings, they were open to new restrictions.

## DOJ opens civil rights probe into Minnesota shooting

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department has opened a federal civil rights investigation into the shooting of Alex Pretti, the Minneapolis resident killed Saturday by Border Patrol officers, federal officials said Friday.

"We're looking at everything that would shed light on what happened that day and in the days and weeks leading up to what happened," Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said during a news conference. "That's like any investigation that the Department of Justice and the FBI does every day. It means we're looking at video, talking to witnesses, trying to un-

derstand what happened."

The Department of Homeland Security also said Friday that the Federal Bureau of Investigation will lead the federal probe.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem first disclosed the shift in which agency was leading the probe during a Fox News interview Thursday evening.

Her department said earlier this week that Homeland Security Investigations, a unit within the department, would be heading the investigation.

Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin confirmed Friday that the FBI will lead the Pretti probe and that HSI will support them.

Separately, Customs and Border Protection, which is part of DHS, is doing its own internal investigation into the shooting, during which two officers opened fire on Pretti.

DHS did not immediately respond to questions about when the change was made or why. The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Multiple videos that emerged of the shooting show the intensive care nurse had only his mobile phone in his hand as officers tackled him to the ground, with one removing a handgun from the back of Pretti's pants as another officer began firing shots into his back.

# New sanctions target Iran interior minister

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration imposed sanctions Friday against Iran's interior minister, accusing Eskandar Momeni of repressing nationwide protests that have challenged Tehran's theocratic government. The penalties are the latest by the United States and the European Union targeting high-ranking officials over the crackdown.

The administration says Momeni has overseen Iran's law enforcement forces that are responsible for the deaths of thousands of peaceful protesters.

Economic woes sparked the protests in late December before they broadened into a challenge to the Islamic Republic. The crackdown soon followed,

which activists say has killed more than 6,000 people. Iranian officials and state media repeatedly refer to the demonstrators as "terrorists."

The EU on Thursday imposed its own sanctions against Momeni, along with members of Iran's judicial system and other high-ranking officers.

"They were all involved in the violent repression of peaceful protests and the arbitrary arrest of political activists and human rights defenders," according to the EU.

Also Friday, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets imposed sanctions on Babak Morteza Zanjani, an Iranian investor who is accused of embezzling billions of dollars in Iranian oil revenue for the ben-

efit of the Iranian government. Two digital asset exchanges linked to Zanjani that have processed large volumes of funds were penalized, too.

The EU has agreed to list Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization, in a largely symbolic move that adds to pressure on Tehran.

Included in the latest set of U.S. sanctions is the secretary of the Supreme Council for National Security, whom the Treasury Department accuses of being one of the first officials to call for violence against Iranian protesters. The sanctions also target a group of 18 people and companies accused of laundering money from sales of Iranian oil to foreign markets as part of a shadow banking network of

sanctioned Iranian financial institutions.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the department "will continue to target Iranian networks and corrupt elites that enrich themselves at the expense of the Iranian people."

"Like rats on a sinking ship, the regime is frantically wiring funds stolen from Iranian families to banks and financial institutions around the world. Rest assured, Treasury will act," he said in a statement.

Among other things, the sanctions deny the people and firms access to any property or financial assets held in the U.S., limit travel to America and prevent U.S. companies and citizens from doing business with them.

## Trump sues Treasury, IRS for \$10B over leaks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is suing the IRS and Treasury Department for \$10 billion, as he accuses the federal agencies of a failure to prevent a leak of the president's tax information to news outlets between 2018 and 2020.

The suit, filed in a Florida federal court Thursday, includes the president's sons Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr. and the Trump organization as plaintiffs.

The filing alleges that the leak of Trump and the Trump Organization's confidential tax records caused "reputational and financial harm, public embarrassment, unfairly tarnished their business reputations, portrayed them in a false light, and negatively affected President Trump, and the other Plaintiffs' public standing."

In 2024, former IRS contractor Charles Edward Littlejohn of Washington, D.C. — who worked for Booz Allen Hamilton, a defense and national security tech firm — was sentenced to five years in prison after pleading guilty to leaking tax information about Trump and others to news outlets.

Littlejohn gave data to The New York Times and ProPublica between 2018 and 2020 in leaks that appeared to be "unparalleled in the IRS's history," prosecutors said.

The Times reported in 2020 that Trump did not pay federal income tax for many years prior to 2020, and ProPublica in 2021 published a series about discrepancies in Trump's records. Six years of Trump's returns were later released by the then-Democratically controlled House Ways and Means Committee.

## Trump's pick to lead NSA vows to follow law if OK'd

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Army general tapped to lead the U.S. National Security Agency assured lawmakers Thursday that he will follow the Constitution and the law when it comes to using the NSA's powerful surveillance tools.

Lt. Gen. Joshua Rudd, if confirmed by the Senate, would also run the Pentagon's Cyber Command, giving him a critical role in the nation's offensive and defensive cyber operations.

The NSA has been without a permanent director since President Donald Trump fired Gen. Tim Haugh last year.

The questions at Rudd's confirmation hearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee reflected concerns about whether Trump has politicized the use of federal law enforcement and security programs to target his critics and political

opponents.

Rudd has held senior roles in Army special forces and is now the deputy commander of the Indo-Pacific Command.

He told senators that the NSA's mission is critical to protecting the lives of service members and the success of their missions while also keeping the homeland safe from espionage and digital threats.

Rudd assured skeptical Democrats that he would follow the law if asked to turn the NSA's spying programs against Americans simply because of their speech or political beliefs, something forbidden by federal law.

"If confirmed, I will absolutely commit to executing the foreign intelligence mission of the NSA in accordance with the authorities it has been given and within all applicable laws," Rudd said.

# Tens of thousands in South enter 6th day without power

Associated Press

BELZONI, Miss. — Tens of thousands of people entered their sixth day with no electricity Friday as the Carolinas and Virginia prepare for a significant winter storm that could bring more snowfall than some parts of North Carolina have seen in years.

The National Weather Service said arctic air moving into the Southeast will cause already frigid temperatures to plummet into the teens on Friday night in cities like Nashville, Tenn., where many people still lacked power nearly a week after a massive storm dumped snow and ice across the eastern U.S.

More than 230,000 homes and businesses were without electricity Friday morning, with the vast majority of those outages in Mississippi and Tennessee, according to the outage tracking website [poweroutage.us](http://poweroutage.us).

Forecasters say the subfreezing weather will persist in the eastern U.S. and there's high

chance of heavy snow in the Carolinas, Virginia and northeast Georgia this weekend, possibly up to a foot in parts of North Carolina. Snow is also possible along the East Coast from Maryland to Maine.

On Saturday night and early Sunday, forecasters expect intense winds accompanied by moderate to heavy snow that could lead to blizzard conditions for a time before the storm starts to move out to sea Sunday.

With the wave of dangerous cold heading for the U.S. South on Friday, experts say the risk of hypothermia heightens for people in parts of Mississippi and Tennessee who are entering their sixth day trapped at home without power in subfreezing temperatures.

"The longer you're exposed to the cold, the worse it is," said Dr. Hans House, a professor of emergency medicine at the University of Iowa. "The body can handle cold temperatures briefly very well, but the prolonged

exposure is a problem."

People who are more vulnerable — the elderly, infants and those with underlying health conditions — may have started experiencing hypothermia symptoms within hours of being exposed to the frigid temperatures, explained Dr. Zheng Ben Ma, medical director of the University of Washington Medical Center's northwest emergency department. That includes everything from exhaustion to slurred speech and memory loss.

But almost a week in and the situation is nearing a turning point, he explained: Younger people who are generally healthy could potentially begin to fall victim to these symptoms as well.

"Once you get into days six, seven, upwards of 10, then even a healthy, resilient person will be more predisposed to experiencing some of those deleterious effects of the cold temperature," he said.

## Former Fed member selected as next chair

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Friday that he will nominate former Federal Reserve official Kevin Warsh to be the next chair of the Fed, a decision likely to result in sharp changes to the powerful agency that could bring it closer to the White House.

Warsh would replace current chair Jerome Powell when his term expires in May. Trump chose Powell to lead the Fed in 2017 but this year has relentlessly assailed him for not cutting interest rates quickly enough.

The appointment, which requires Senate confirmation, amounts to a return trip for Warsh, 55, who was a member of the Fed's board from 2006 to 2011. He is currently a fellow at the right-leaning Hoover Institution and a lecturer at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

In some ways, Warsh is an unlikely choice for the Republican president because he has long been a hawk in Fed parlance, or someone who typically supports higher interest rates to control inflation. Trump has said the Fed's key rate should be as low as 1%, far below its current level of about 3.6%, a stance few economists endorse.

During his time as governor, Warsh objected to some of the low-interest rate policies that the Fed pursued during and after the 2008-09 Great Recession. He also expressed concern at that time that inflation would soon accelerate, even though it remained at rock-bottom levels for many years after that recession ended.

More recently, however, in speeches and opinion columns, Warsh has said he supports lower rates.

## Trump threatens tariffs on countries selling oil to Cuba, pressuring Mexico

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order that would impose a tariff on any goods from countries that sell or provide oil to Cuba, a move that could further cripple an island plagued by an energy crisis.

The order would primarily put pressure on Mexico, a government that has acted as an oil lifeline for Cuba and has constantly voiced solidarity for the U.S. adversary even as Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has sought to build a strong relationship with Trump.

Trump was asked by a reporter Thursday whether he was trying to "choke off" Cuba, which he called a "failing nation."

"The word 'choke off' is awfully tough," Trump said. "I'm not trying to, but, it looks like it's something that's just not going to be able to survive."

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez and a number of other Cuban officials condemned Trump's executive order. Rodríguez called it a "brutal act of aggression against Cuba and its people ... who are now threatened with being subject-

ed to extreme living conditions."

He accused the U.S. of resorting to "blackmail and coercion to try to force other countries to join its universally condemned blockade policy against Cuba."

This week has been marked by speculation that Mexico would slash oil shipments to Cuba under mounting pressure by Trump to distance itself from the Cuban government.

Since the Venezuela operation, Trump has said no more Venezuelan oil will go to Cuba and the Cuban government is ready to fall.



# Ukraine braces for brutal weather, attacks

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine waited for signs on Friday that Russia is abiding by a commitment that President Donald Trump said it made to temporarily halt attacks on Ukraine's power grid, as Kyiv and other regions are gripped by one of the most bitter winters in years.

Trump said late Thursday that Russian President Vladimir Putin had agreed to his request not to target the Ukrainian capital and other places for one week, as the region experiences frigid temperatures that have brought widespread hardship to civilians.

"I personally asked President Putin not to fire on Kyiv and the cities and towns for a week during this ... extraordinary cold," Trump said during a Cabinet meeting at the White House, adding that Putin has "agreed to that."

Trump didn't say when the call with Putin took place or

when the moratorium would go into effect, and the White House didn't immediately respond to a query seeking clarity about the scope and timing of any limited pause.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed Friday that Trump "made a personal request" to Putin to stop targeting Kyiv for a week until Feb. 1 "in order to create favorable conditions for negotiations," Peskov said.

The mention of Feb. 1 was confusing since that is only two days away — not a week. Also, the cold weather is expected to get worse next week, with temperatures dropping even further.

Asked if Moscow agreed to Trump's proposal, Peskov said, "Yes, of course." But he refused to answer further questions about whether the agreement covered only energy infrastructure or all aerial strikes, and when the halt on strikes on Kyiv

was supposed to start.

Over the past week Russia has struck Ukrainian energy assets in the southern Ukrainian city of Odesa and northeastern Kharkiv. It also hit the Kyiv region on Jan. 28, killing two people and injuring four.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was skeptical about Putin's readiness for such a concession as Russia's all-out invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022, approaches its four-year anniversary next month with no signs that Moscow is willing to reach a peace settlement despite a U.S.-led push to end the fighting.

"I do not believe that Russia wants to end the war. There is a great deal of evidence to the contrary," Zelenskyy said Thursday in comments made public on Friday.

He said that Ukraine is ready to halt its attacks on Russia's energy infrastructure, including oil refineries, if Moscow also

stops its bombardment of the Ukrainian power grid and other energy assets.

While there was no official word on whether those conciliatory steps had been taken, the grinding war of attrition dragged on.

Russia fired 111 drones and one ballistic missile at Ukraine overnight, injuring at least three people, the Ukrainian Air Force said. The Russian Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said that its air defenses overnight shot down 18 Ukrainian drones over several Russian regions, as well as the illegally annexed Crimea and the Black Sea.

Forecasters say Kyiv, which recently endured severe power shortages, will see a brutally cold stretch starting Friday that is expected to last into next week.

Temperatures in some areas will drop to minus 22 degrees, the State Emergency Service said.

## Court: Hong Kong firm can't run Panama Canal's ports

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY — Panama's Supreme Court ruled late Thursday that the concession held by a subsidiary of Hong Kong's CK Hutchison Holdings to operate ports at either end of the Panama Canal is unconstitutional, an outcome that advances a U.S. aim to block any influence by China over the strategic waterway.

The court's ruling followed an audit by Panama's comptroller, which alleged irregularities in the 25-year extension of the concession granted in 2021.

The Trump administration made blocking China's influence over the Panama Canal one of its priorities in the hemisphere.

Panama was U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's first

overseas stop as the United States' top diplomat.

Despite the insistence by Panama's government and the canal authority that China has no influence over its operations, Rubio made clear that the U.S. viewed the operation of the ports as a national security issue for the U.S.

President Donald Trump had gone so far as to say Panama should return the canal to U.S. control.

The court's brief statement gave no guidance on what would happen to the ports now.

CK Hutchison's subsidiary, Panama Ports Company, said it has not been notified yet about the decision but insisted its concession was the result of transparent international bidding.

## Venezuela eases state control over oil industry

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez on Thursday signed a law that opens the nation's oil sector to privatization, reversing a tenet of the self-proclaimed socialist movement that has ruled the country for more than two decades.

The reform will undoubtedly be her government's signature policy as it positions the oil sector — Venezuela's engine — to lure the foreign investment needed to revamp a long-crippled industry. Rodríguez enacted the measure less than a month after the brazen seizure of then-President Nicolás Maduro in a U.S. military attack in Venezuela's capital, Caracas.

Rodríguez, facing oil workers and ruling-party supporters,

signed the bill less than two hours after the National Assembly approved it. At the same time, the U.S. Department of Treasury officially began to ease punishing economic sanctions on Venezuelan oil, which were imposed by the first Trump administration, and expanded the ability of U.S. energy companies to operate in the South American nation.

Rodríguez on Thursday also spoke with President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who a day earlier explained to U.S. senators in a hearing how the administration is planning to handle the sale of tens of millions of barrels of oil from Venezuela and oversee where the money flows. Venezuela has the largest proven reserves of crude in the world.

## Vonn crashes in final race before Games

Associated Press

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland — U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn crashed Friday in her final downhill race before the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics and was left limping and keeping weight off her left knee — a troublesome development in the 41-year-old's spectacular skiing comeback.

Vonn — who was expected to be one of the stars of the Games but now faces uncertainty over her status — lost control when landing a jump in a World Cup race held in difficult conditions with low visibility and ended up tangled in the safety nets on the upper portion of the course.

The race was canceled after three of the first six competitors crashed.

Vonn eventually got up after receiving medical attention and walked away gingerly, taking weight off her left knee and using her poles to steady herself. She clicked her skis back on but stopped to check her left knee.

She eventually made it to the finish area and limped into a tent for medical attention. Vonn was then airlifted away by helicopter — dangling from a rope across the Swiss Alps.

Before she entered the tent, Vonn had an anxious expression on her face and her eyes were closed during a long embrace with teammate Jacqueline Wiles, who was leading the race when it was canceled.

Vonn has been the leading World Cup downhiller this season with two victories and three other podium finishes. She returned last season after a partial right knee replacement.

## Djokovic, Alcaraz win epic semis, advance to Australian Open final

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Novak Djokovic finally beat one of the two men who have been blocking his path to an unprecedented 25th Grand Slam singles title when he edged Jannik Sinner in five sets Friday to reach the Australian Open final.

To get that coveted No. 25, he'll next have to beat the other: top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz.

They're both chasing history in Sunday's championship decider, with the 22-year-old Alcaraz striving to become the youngest man ever to complete a career Grand Slam.

The top-ranked Alcaraz also had to come through a grueling five-setter. He fended off No. 3 Alexander Zverev 6-4, 7-6 (5), 6-7 (3), 6-7 (4), 7-5 in a match that started in the warmth of the afternoon Friday and, five hours and 27 minutes later, became the longest semifinal ever at the Australian Open.

That pushed the start of Djokovic's match against Sinner back a couple of hours, and the 38-year-old Djokovic finally finished off a 3-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 win just after 1:30 a.m.

"It feels surreal," Djokovic said of his four-hour, nine-minute triumph. "Honestly, it feels like winning already tonight. I know I have to come back ... and fight the No. 1 of the world. I just hope that I'll have enough gas to stay toe-to-toe with him.

"That's my desire. Let the God decide the winner."

Djokovic was at the peak of his defensive powers, fending off 16 of the 18 breakpoints he

faced against the two-time defending Australian Open champion. It ended a run of five losses to Sinner, and a run of four semifinal exits for Djokovic at the majors.

"Had many chances, couldn't use them, and that's the outcome," Sinner said. "Yeah, it hurts, for sure."

Alcaraz and Sinner have split the last eight major titles since Djokovic won his last title at the 2023 U.S. Open.

Nobody knows how to win more at Melbourne Park than Djokovic. He has won all 10 times he's played in the Australian Open final.

He said he saw Alcaraz after the first of the semifinals was over and he congratulated him on reaching his first final at Melbourne Park.

"He said sorry to delay," Djokovic later explained. "I told him 'I'm an old man; I need to go earlier to sleep!'"

Djokovic, aiming to be the oldest man in the Open era to win a Grand Slam title, was kept up late.

"I'm looking forward to meeting him on Sunday," he said.

### Medical timeout

Alcaraz was two points from victory in the third set but was hampered by pain in his upper right leg and his medical timeout became contentious.

He said initially it didn't feel like cramping because the pain seemed to be just in one muscle, the right adductor, and he needed an assessment.

He navigated the third and

fourth sets and was behind in the fifth after dropping serve in the first game. He kept up the pressure but didn't break back until Zverev was serving for the match. He then won the last four games.

"I think physically we just pushed each other to the limit today. We pushed our bodies to the limit," Alcaraz said. "Just really, really happy to get the win, that I came back. I just rank this one in the top position of one of the best matches that I have ever won."

### Believe

Asked how he was able to recover despite being so close to defeat, Alcaraz admitted he was struggling but said kept "believing, believing, all the time."

"I've been in these situations, I've been in these kind of matches before, so I knew what I had to do," he said. "I had to put my heart into the match. I think I did it. I fought until the last ball."

Zverev was demonstrably upset about the timeout in the third set, taking it up with a tournament supervisor, when his rival was given the three-minute break for treatment and a massage on the leg.

After the match, he maintained that he didn't think it was right, but he didn't think it should overshadow the match.

"I don't want to talk about this right now, because I think this is one of the best battles there ever was in Australia," he said. "It doesn't deserve to be the topic now."

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# Knueppel, Hornets edge Mavs despite Flagg's 49-point effort

Associated Press

DALLAS — Kon Knueppel made two free throws with 4.1 seconds left for a career-high 34 points and the Charlotte Hornets beat the Dallas Mavericks 123-121 on Thursday night, spoiling Duke roommate Cooper Flagg's 49-point game.

Flagg, who turned 19 in December, broke the NBA record for points in a game by a teen. Cliff Robinson set the previous record of 45 at age 19 for New Jersey in a game against Detroit on March 9, 1980.

Flagg set career highs with 20 field goals on 29 shots, and also had 10 rebounds.

Knueppel grabbed an errant pass by Flagg near midcourt with seven seconds left and the score tied. He drove to the basket and was fouled by Flagg as the ball lodged between the rim and the backboard. Flagg's shot at the buzzer to send it to overtime hit the back of the rim.

Knueppel made eight 3-pointers to set a rookie record for the Hornets, who have won five consecutive games for their longest winning streak since a five-game run in February 2023.

Brandon Miller scored 23 points, his ninth straight game with at least 20 points, for Charlotte. LaMelo Ball added 22, hitting six 3-pointers.

**Heat 116, Bulls 113:** Norman Powell scored 21 points, Bam Adebayo had 20 points and 12 rebounds and Miami held on to win at Chicago.

Ayo Dosunmu had 23 points to lead the Bulls, who trailed by 13 in the fourth quarter and were down 104-92 with 8:02 left before outscoring the Heat 21-12 the rest of the way to make it close.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 19 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Chicago.

Nikola Vucevic had 15 points and 10 rebounds, Matas Buzelis finished with 16 points, Kevin Huerter had 15 and Coby White 14 for the Bulls.

**Wizards 109, Bucks 99:** Kyshawn George scored 23 points, Alex Sarr added 16 points and 17 rebounds, and host Washington beat short-handed Milwaukee.

Amid swirling trade rumors, Milwaukee's two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo missed a second straight game with a calf strain.

Khris Middleton and Bub Carrington each added 13 points for Washington, which held a 61-43 rebounding advantage in its second straight win.

Myles Turner scored 21 points and grabbed 14 rebounds for Milwaukee, which lost its fourth straight and seventh out of its last eight games.

**76ers 113, Kings 111:** Tyrese Maxey scored 40 points, including the winning layup with 1.3 seconds remaining, Joel Embiid had 37 points and Philadelphia rallied to edge visiting Sacramento.

Paul George added 15 points for Philadelphia,

which came back from an 11-point deficit in the fourth-quarter.

Dennis Schroder scored 27 points and DeMar DeRozan added 25 for the Kings, who have lost seven in a row.

**Rockets 104, Hawks 86:** Kevin Durant scored 31 points as visiting Houston beat short-handed Atlanta, ending its four-game winning streak.

The Rockets dominated the second half after leading only 43-42 at halftime. Jabari Smith had 14 points and Reed Sheppard added 13. Sheppard's 3-pointer gave the Rockets their first 20-point lead, 90-70.

CJ McCollum led Atlanta with 23 points. Nick-ail Alexander-Walker had 20 and Corey Kispert added 17.

**Suns 114, Pistons 96:** Dillon Brooks scored a career-high 40 points, Grayson Allen added 24 and host Phoenix beat Eastern Conference-leading Detroit.

The Suns kept a comfortable lead through much of the fourth, winning for the fifth time in seven games. They are 10 games above .500 for the first time this season at 29-19.

The Pistons lost for just the third time in 12 games. Cade Cunningham led Detroit with 26 points, and Jalen Duran had 23 points and 13 rebounds.

**Nuggets 107, Nets 103:** Jamal Murray scored nine of his 27 points in the final 2:26, and the Nuggets spoiled Michael Porter Jr.'s return to Denver with a win over Brooklyn.

Porter had a season-high 38 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Brooklyn, which has lost seven straight.

Tim Hardaway Jr. tied a season high with seven 3-pointers on his way to 25 points and Peyton Watson scored 19 for Denver, which snapped a three-game home losing streak.

Porter was drafted 14th overall by the Nuggets in 2018 and played six seasons in Denver, helping the franchise win its first NBA title in 2023. He was traded to Brooklyn in the offseason and leads the Nets in scoring.

**Timberwolves 123, Thunder 111:** Anthony Edwards scored 26 points and Minnesota matched a season high with 22 3-pointers in a win over visiting Oklahoma City.

Jaden McDaniels scored 21 points, including 5 of 5 from 3-point range, for the Timberwolves. Naz Reid added 18 off the bench for Minnesota.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had a game-high 30 points for Oklahoma City. Chet Holmgren added 15 points, while center Isaiah Hartenstein scored 11 points in his return to action after missing 16 games with a calf injury.

## No. 8 Cyclones blow out Buffs

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Freshman Jamarion Batemon scored 17 points off the bench to lead six Iowa State players in double figures as the No. 8 Cyclones took a big early lead in a 97-67 rout of Colorado on Thursday night.

Iowa State (19-2, 6-2 Big 12) won by 30 points for the second time in three games and has beaten all but two of its opponents by double digits. The Buffaloes (12-9, 2-6), who have dropped six straight and eight of their past 10, suffered their most lopsided conference loss since rejoining the Big 12 in 2024.

Colorado's Sebastian Rancic opened the scoring with a 3-pointer, and then Iowa State outscored the Buffaloes 30-1 over the next 6½ minutes and the rout was on.

Batemon, scoreless in Saturday's game against Oklahoma State, hit a 3-pointer and converted a four-point play on consecutive possessions, and then Tamin Lipsey's 3 and Nate Heise's dunk put the Cyclones up by 26 points eight minutes into the game.

Milan Momcilovic scored 16 points for the Cyclones. Lipsey had 14 points and five assists and Joshua Jefferson had 13 points, eight rebounds and five assists. Freshmen Dominykas Pleta and Kilian Toure had 12 points apiece.

**No. 9 Illinois 75, Washington 66:** At Champaign, Ill., Keaton Wagler had 22 points and eight assists and the Illini extended their winning streak to 10.

David Mirkovic added 19 points and six rebounds and Ben Humrichous had 14 points for Illinois (18-3, 9-1 Big Ten), which has the longest active winning streak in the conference.

Wagler has scored in double figures in 13 straight games and in 18 games overall this season.

Freshman Hannes Steinbach had 15 points and 12 rebounds for Washington (11-10, 3-7), which has lost six of eight.



# Seattle GM built team with shrewd moves

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — John Schneider was hired a little over 16 years ago as general manager of the Seattle Seahawks, a job he has held since.

Schneider added the title of president of football operations in 2024. But when asked Thursday if he could have imagined being in charge of the Seahawks' personnel for that long, the 54-year-old had a simple answer: "No."

"It's a total blessing," Schneider said Thursday. "I read this really cool article the other day about culture as an artifact of relationships. Is it that hard to just treat people the right way, work your (butt) off and do it the way you want to do it?"

With the Seahawks preparing to face the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl, it's clear that Schneider's approach was successful this season. His shrewd moves in free agency and the NFL Draft helped the

Seahawks build a deep, talented roster that won 14 games in the regular season and two home playoff games as the NFC's top seed.

Schneider brought in quarterback Sam Darnold on a three-year, \$100.5 million contract while also signing veteran defensive end DeMarcus Lawrence and wide receiver Cooper Kupp, among others.

Darnold made his second straight Pro Bowl and stabilized the most important position on the field. Lawrence, in his 12th season, had 11 tackles for loss, six sacks and returned two fumbles for touchdowns.

"When you're bringing people into your building, especially in free agency, you want to make sure that the quality of the person, do we know exactly what we're getting?" Schneider said. "So we had a great background with those guys, the character, the person, the work ethic, love of the game, the grit, all the things you've heard for

years and years."

The Seahawks have also benefited from a bold move Schneider made four years ago.

In March of 2022, Schneider traded quarterback Russell Wilson to Denver for a package of draft picks and players. Schneider used those picks to select All-Pro cornerback Devon Witherspoon, left tackle Charles Cross and a pair of edge rushers, Boye Mafe and Derick Hall.

If that wasn't enough, Schneider has a strong record with first-round draft picks in recent years.

This year's first-round pick, left guard Grey Zabel, upgraded the offensive line. Defensive tackle Byron Murphy II, taken in the first round in 2024, had seven sacks.

In 2023, when he also took Witherspoon, Schneider drafted Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who blossomed into the NFL's leader in yards receiving this season.

"Man, Spoon is a heartbeat

guy; the whole building feels him," Schneider said. "They're just these completely different personalities, but in their own right. Everybody just totally respects Jax, the way he handles himself. It was amazing to have two guys that we thought were top five to seven players in that draft."

Seattle has one of the youngest rosters in the NFL, but at the moment, Schneider isn't focused on the future beyond Feb. 8 in Santa Clara, Calif., when his team will meet the Patriots with the Lombardi Trophy on the line.

It's a rematch of the Super Bowl 11 years ago, when Schneider's Seahawks fell agonizingly short of repeating as champions — by losing to New England.

"Tried not to think about that too much," Schneider said. "That was an amazing game, though. But no, it really doesn't (matter). It's, OK, what's the next team we're playing?"

## Pats QB Maye says shoulder not a concern

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Drake Maye wasn't shocked by the attention paid to the shoulder issue that landed him on the Patriots' injury report less than two weeks before the Super Bowl.

"No, I wouldn't say I was surprised," Maye said Thursday.

"It's the right shoulder of a starting quarterback on an NFL team. It's pretty simple."

Although Maye was listed as limited on Thursday, he said he went through a normal practice session as New England returned to the field to begin preparing to face the Seattle Seahawks in the Super Bowl. He was added to the injury report on Wednesday, when the Patriots estimated him as a limited participant.

Speculation about Maye's injury began to spread the day after New England's AFC championship game win at Denver, with observers pointing to a scramble by Maye late in the third quarter that ended

with him making an awkward slide on his right side.

Maye grabbed at his throwing shoulder after the play. Following a handoff to Rhamondre Stevenson on the next play, he then shrugged his shoulder slightly in the huddle, as if loosening it up. On the ensuing play, Maye completed a 31-yard pass to Mack Hollins.

Maye insisted during a radio appearance on Tuesday that any issue with his shoulder was the result of season-long wear and tear and that he didn't hurt it during the game.

He reiterated that stance Thursday.

"Got out there moving around for a good bit today," Maye said. "We did a jog through, so I'm feeling good and looking forward to being ready to go. This is the game you dream of playing, so looking forward to getting out there and playing in the Super Bowl."

Maye went 10 of 21 for 86 yards against the Broncos. He also ran 10 times for 65

yards and a touchdown.

The second-year QB has not missed a game this season.

Patriots coach Mike Vrabel said his concern about Maye's shoulder was minimal.

"Not much. I try not to have a whole lot of concern," Vrabel said. "I just want to try to prepare the football team, make sure that everybody's ready, that we all have a plan. ... We've tried to map out the week here, week and a half, and not look at the end of it, but focus on what we can do today."

The Patriots practice again on Friday and are off Saturday before traveling to Santa Clara, Calif., for Super Bowl week.

"I think that's why you spend time and why you have good trainers," Maye said. "It's one of those things where it's a long season, and sometimes things show up. I do whatever I can to feel 100%. I'm sure I'll get, if not there, as close as you can — 99%."

# Kane now highest-scoring US-born player

Associated Press

DETROIT — Patrick Kane became the highest-scoring U.S.-born player in NHL history in the Detroit Red Wings' 4-3 loss to the Washington Capitals, who got the decisive goal from Nic Dowd in a shootout on Thursday night.

Alex DeBrincat scored with 1:40 left and again with 51.1 seconds remaining, pulling the Red Wings into a 3-all tie after goaltender Josh Gibson went to the bench to add an extra skater. DeBrincat had some good fortune on the tying goal, dumping the puck and having it carom off the end boards and toward the crease, where it went off Charlie Lindgren and into the net.

After a scoreless overtime, Detroit's Lucas Raymond started the shootout with a goal and Washington's Dylan Strome matched it. Kane converted on Detroit's second chance and Ryan Leonard scored for the Capitals.

After Dylan Larkin was denied, Dowd took advantage with the game-ending goal.

Strome scored a tiebreaking goal midway through the third period and Declan Chisholm made it a two-goal lead with 5:16 left, but the cushion wasn't comfortable for the Capitals.

Dowd made it 1-0 early in the first period and Lindgren finished regulation with 17 saves. Gibson also stopped 17 shots.

Kane surpassed Mike Modano with an assist for his 1,375th point. He passed the puck from the boards to DeBrincat in the left circle, and DeBrincat set up Ben Chiarot for a tying goal from the point midway through the second period.

**Penguins 6, Blackhawks 2:** Egor Chinnakhov and Anthony Mantha scored on rushes in a 31-second span of a four-goal second period for host Pittsburgh in a victory over Chicago.

Connor Dewar scored twice, Ben Kindel and Ryan Shea added goals, and Arturs Silovs made 17 saves. Mantha, Shea and Noel Acciari each had two assists.

Connor Murphy and Connor Bedard scored for Chicago.

**Islanders 2, Rangers 1:** Carson Soucy scored against the team that traded him 72 hours earlier, Matthew Schaefer got the 14th goal of his stellar rookie year and the New York Islanders defeated the Rangers.

Soucy became the first player to score for the Rangers and the Islanders at Madison Square Garden in the same season. The Islanders swept the back-to-back set between the crosstown rivals after winning 5-2 at home on Wednesday night.

**Sabres 4, Kings 1:** Alex Tuch had his fourth career hat trick to push his season goals total to 22, leading surging Buffalo to a victory over visiting Los Angeles.

Alex Lyon made a season-high 37 saves for his 10th consecutive victory to break the franchise record set by Gerry Desjardins in December 1976.

**Lightning 4, Jets 1:** Darren Raddysh and Yanni Gourde each had a goal and two assists to lead Tampa Bay to a victory over visiting Winnipeg.

Nikita Kucherov scored his 27th goal on an empty-netter and added his 55th assist. Dominic James also scored for Tampa Bay, which improved to 16-1-1 in its past 18 games. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 22 shots to extend his streak without a regulation loss to 14 games (13-0-1).

**Bruins 6, Flyers 3:** Fraser Minten and Casey Mittelstadt each had a goal and two assists as Boston beat visiting Philadelphia.

Pavel Zacha, Viktor Arvidsson, Tanner Jeannot and Marat Khushnutdinov also scored for the Bruins, while Jeremy Swayman made 33 saves to win his seventh game in nine starts this month.

**Canadiens 7, Avalanche 3:** Nick Suzuki scored power-play and short-handed goals and added an assist to help host Montreal beat struggling Colorado.

The NHL-leading Avalanche have lost six of eight to fall to 35-8-9.

**Hurricanes 5, Mammoth 4:** Jordan Staal's goal with 29.4 seconds left gave Carolina three goals in the final two minutes for a victory over visiting Utah.

Andrei Svechnikov and Shayne Gostisbehere each had two goals and an assist for the Hurricanes, who stretched their points streak to six games. Brandon Bussi stopped 21 shots to become the first NHL goalie with 20 wins in his first 24 games.

**Devils 3, Predators 2 (OT):** Nico Hischier scored 42 seconds into overtime to give New Jersey a win over visiting Nashville after the Devils' Jack Hughes left the game in the first period and didn't return.

Hischier's slap shot from just beyond the left faceoff circle beat Nashville's Justus Annunen high to the glove side for the winner. Dawson Mercer picked up the assist on Hischier's eighth career overtime goal. Hischier leads the Devils with 18 goals and 23 assists in 54 games.

Hughes left the game after three shifts in the first period. The team did not announce any injury status for the 24-year-old center.

**Wild 4, Flames 1:** Danila Yurov and Vinnie Hinostroza scored in the first period as

Minnesota went on to beat visiting Calgary.

Minnesota is tied with Tampa Bay for the second-most points in the NHL at 72. Colorado has 79 points.

Playing the only road game of their final nine contests before the Olympic break, the Flames got a third-period goal from Morgan Frost. Calgary dropped to 0-3-2 in its past five games. Devin Cooley stopped 20 shots.

**Blues 5, Panthers 4:** Jimmy Snuggerud scored on a power play with 7.6 seconds left to give St. Louis a victory over visiting Florida, spoiling Matthew Tkachuk's best game in his return from adductor muscle surgery.

Tkachuk, who grew up in St. Louis, scored his first two goals of the season and picked up his 400th career assist.

Jordan Kyrou had a goal and two assists to help St. Louis end a five-game losing streak. Jake Neighbours, Jonatan Berggren and Oskar Sundqvist also scored, and Joel Hofer made 17 saves.

**Oilers 4, Sharks 3 (OT):** Zach Hyman scored 1:06 into overtime after Evan Bouchard tied it with 59 seconds left in regulation as Edmonton stormed back from a three-goal deficit in the third period to beat visiting San Jose.

Leon Draisaitl had a goal and two assists and Connor McDavid also scored and assisted on Hyman's winner for the Oilers, who trailed 3-0 after one period. Connor Ingram stopped 17 shots after a rough start.

**Kraken 5, Maple Leafs 2:** Shane Wright scored two goals and Seattle extended its winning streak to three games with a win over visiting Toronto.

Wright, the fourth overall pick in the 2022 NHL draft, had the second multigoal game of his career. He hadn't scored in his last 13 games before netting his eighth and ninth of the season.

**Stars 5, Golden Knights 4 (SO):** Jason Robertson and Mikko Rantanen scored in the shootout and Dallas escaped with a victory at Vegas after it blew a three-goal lead in the third period.

Vegas' Mitch Marner forced overtime when he kept the puck from leaving the offensive zone and then blasted a shot from the left point with 48.7 seconds left.

**Canucks 2, Ducks 0:** Nikita Tolopilo made 32 saves, Drew O'Connor opened the scoring with 9:42 left and Vancouver beat visiting Anaheim.

Tolopilo was denied his first NHL shutout after missing the first 2:11 of the second period because of concussion protocol after he was run over by Ryan Poehling late in the first period.