

## Pentagon looks to improve info tracking

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Defense Department does not intend to scale back the number of its military and civilian employees with classified information access, but it plans to better track who is accessing what secrets, a Pentagon official said Wednesday.

A 45-day review of policies and procedures ordered in April by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin found most department officials with clearance are trustworthy, but policies meant to protect national secrets were interpreted differently across the vast, worldwide military organization.

Austin ordered the review in the wake of hundreds of classified documents being leaked to a private group of social media users. Airman 1st Class Jack Teixeira, a 21-year-old with the Massachusetts Air National Guard, is accused of leaking the military documents in a chatroom on Discord.

"The department relies on a culture of trust and accountability for those who are granted access to" classified national security information, Austin wrote in a June 30 memorandum announcing the review's findings. "This review found that the overwhelming majority of [Defense Department] personnel with access to [classified national security information] are trustworthy, and that all DOD components demon-

strate a broad commitment to security."

But the review also found security measures were lax in some organizations for access to specialized facilities where classified information is handled and electronic databases where sensitive data is stored, said a senior defense official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to brief reporters on the review's findings.

A number of changes that Austin ordered in response to the review are designed to make standard the use of existing technological tools to monitor access to Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities, or SCIFs, and track electronic devices entering and exiting those facilities.

The review also recommended all parts of the Defense Department implement systems that track what classified information cleared individuals are accessing via computer systems and install high-level security officials with specialties in classified information.

Those changes should help raise red flags to commanders and managers who see their personnel accessing information that they have no need to see.

"The recommendation is focused on ensuring that we have the right need to know processes and procedures ... to ensure that the information that is available on classified networks is accessed only by those with

a need to know," the senior defense official said. "So, some of that is focused on how do we validate what documents are accessed online? What types of things do you have to have in your digital [credentials] to access certain products?"

Prosecutors in the case against Teixeira allege he used his high-level clearance and his access to a trove of secrets via his work in information technology to steal documents, including some about the Russian war in Ukraine, and post photos of them on the Discord social media platform. Court documents allege he was caught wrongly accessing classified information and admonished for his actions, but prosecutors charged he continued to access information without a need to know after that incident.

Teixeira, who has remained jailed since his April arrest, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The senior defense official said Wednesday that the 45-day review was only loosely related to Teixeira's actions, and that other ongoing Air Force and Justice Department probes could lead to other recommendations about classified information protection.

The official said the Pentagon was not looking to slow the growing number of workers — service members and civilians — with security clearances.

## USS Washington flight deck OK'd ahead of return

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The USS George Washington has completed its flight deck certification, one of the last steps before the aircraft carrier returns to normal operations after a lengthy refit period in Virginia.

The ship and its air wing over three days in late June launched and recovered aircraft 247 times during day and night sorties as part of the qualification, according to a carrier news release on June 30. It also carried out hangar bay drills, nighttime

flight deck training and simulated emergency exercises before returning to Naval Station Norfolk.

"Flight deck certification was our first opportunity for the air wing and the ship team to work together in support of the ship's fundamental mission, launching and recovering aircraft at sea," said Capt. Brad Converse, commander of Carrier Air Wing 1, in the news release.

The certification is required before the George Washington can embark its air wing for at-sea operations. It comes just a

month after the carrier completed an extended, six-year maintenance period at Huntington Ingalls' Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia.

The George Washington arrived in Virginia in August 2017 for scheduled maintenance, including its midlife nuclear refueling and overhaul. The maintenance period was scheduled to last just four years, but complications from the COVID-19 pandemic and other setbacks delayed it significantly.

The shipyard, which built the carrier in the 1980s, officially

"redelivered" the vessel into Navy hands on May 25 following three days of sea trials.

The George Washington also met several other "momentous" milestones last week, including a fuel certification and its first underway replenishment in six years, its commander, Capt. Brent Gaut, said in the news release.

"As always, I am incredibly proud of our USS George Washington Warfighters, and the incredible support from the Carrier Air Wing One team," he said.

# Russia launches missile attack on Ukrainian city

*Associated Press*

LVIV, Ukraine — Russia fired cruise missiles Thursday at a western Ukraine city far from the front line of the war, killing at least five people in an apartment building in what officials said was the heaviest attack on civilian areas of Lviv since the Kremlin's forces invaded the country last year.

Emergency crews with search dogs went through the rubble of the building after the nighttime attack destroyed the roof and the top two floors. At least 36 people were injured, according to authorities.

The youngest of the five people who died was 21 years old and the oldest was 95, according to Maksym Kozytskyi, the governor of Lviv province, said.

"This woman survived the Second World War but, unfortunately, she didn't survive" Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kozytskyi said.

Debris and wrecked parked cars lined the street outside the building, which overlooks a small neighborhood park with swings and other playground equipment.

The last victim was pulled from the wreckage hours after the attack, and seven survivors

were rescued, the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs said. About 180 people received psychological support following the attack.

Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said around 60 apartments and 50 cars in the area of strike were damaged. He announced two days of official mourning.

U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink described the attack as "vicious."

"Russia's repeated attacks on civilians are absolutely horrifying," she tweeted.

Ukraine's air force reported it intercepted seven of the 10 Kalibr cruise missiles that Russia fired from the Black Sea toward the Lviv region and its namesake city — more than 500 miles away — around 1 a.m. Thursday.

The Kremlin's forces have repeatedly hit civilian areas during the war, though Russian officials say they choose only targets of military value.

Lviv is near the western border with Poland and is more than 300 miles from the front lines of the war in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promised "a response to the enemy. A tangible one."

## AFRICOM: Claims of US casualties in Somalia false

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

No U.S. troops were injured in an attack Thursday on a convoy in Somalia, where American forces have been supporting the central government's battle against Islamic militants, according to U.S. Africa Command.

Al-Shabab, which has been waging a decadeslong battle for control, claimed on the messaging app Telegram that it had inflicted casualties on U.S. troops on the outskirts of the southern coastal city of Kismayo.

The claims of casualties "are not accurate," AFRICOM spokesperson Kelly Cahalan said Thursday in a statement.

The convoy hit a roadside bomb Thursday morning near Kismayo, Cahalan said, adding that there also were no casualties among the Somali forces.

Al-Shabab has a long history of baseless claims that it killed or injured U.S. troops. Still, the terrorist organization has occasionally struck U.S. forces and targets in Somalia and nearby areas.

The highest-profile attack happened Jan. 5, 2020, when al-Shabab fighters overran an airfield in Kenya used by U.S. forces for operations in Somalia.

The attack killed one U.S. soldier and two American contractors.

Just three months earlier, al-Shabab also launched an assault on U.S. troops based at Baledogle Military Airfield in Somalia.

That attack, described by military officials as the largest on American troops in Somalia in 30 years, involved a truck bomb. The explosion blasted a 20-foot-deep crater along the perimeter of a U.S. outpost.

The ensuing battle resulted in the deaths of about a dozen al-Shabab fighters, as U.S. soldiers repelled the onslaught without any fatalities.

The U.S. military mission in Somalia revolves around training and advising local forces fighting against al-Shabab. Several hundred U.S. troops operate in the country.

The U.S. also carries out periodic airstrikes against terrorist targets there.

Within the Defense Department and beyond, there is a running debate about the threat al-Shabab poses to the West and the merits of having the U.S. military involved in Somalia.

## US releases video of Russian jets harassing Reaper drones in Syria

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Russian fighter jets flew dangerously close to several U.S. drone aircraft over Syria on Wednesday, setting off flares and forcing the MQ-9 Reapers to take evasive maneuvers, the Air Force said. U.S. Air Forces Central released a video of the encounter, showing a Russian SU-35 fighter closing in on a Reaper, and later showed a number of flares moving into the drone's flight path. The flares were attached to parachutes.

Lt. Gen. Alex Grynkeiwich, commander of 9th Air Force in the Middle East, said three of the U.S. drones were operating over Syria after 10:30 a.m. local time, on a mission against the Islamic State which was not detailed, when three of the Russian aircraft

"began harassing the drones."

In a statement, Grynkeiwich said one of the Russian pilots moved their aircraft in front of a drone and engaged the SU-35's afterburner, which greatly increases its speed and air pressure. The jet blast from the afterburner can potentially damage the Reaper's electronics.

"Russian military aircraft engaged in unsafe and unprofessional behavior while interacting with U.S. aircraft in Syria," he said, adding that the actions threaten the safety of the U.S. and Russian forces. "We urge Russian forces in Syria to cease this reckless behavior and adhere to the standards of behavior expected of a professional air force so we can resume our focus on the enduring defeat of ISIS."

# More Americans seek jobless benefits

Associated Press

The number of Americans applying for jobless benefits rose last week, but remains at healthy levels despite the Federal Reserve's attempt to cool the labor market by raising interest rates.

U.S. applications for jobless claims rose by 12,000 to 248,000 for the week ending July 1, from 236,000 the previous week, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The four-week moving average of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 3,500 to 253,250.

Jobless claim applications are seen as a proxy for the number of layoffs in a given week.

For three weeks in late May and early June, jobless claims had appeared to reach a sustained, higher level, above 260,000. Even so, that increase may not have been enough for Fed officials to pivot from raising its main rate at its next meeting.

The U.S. economy has added jobs at a furious pace since more than 20 million jobs vanished when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in the spring of 2020. Americans have enjoyed unusual job security as companies have been reluctant to shed staff in a worker-friendly labor environment.

U.S. employers added a better-than-expected 339,000 jobs in May, surprising economists and painting a mostly encouraging picture of the labor market, even though the unemployment rate rose to a still-healthy 3.7%. Fed officials have said that the unemployment rate needs to rise well past 4% to bring inflation down.

The June jobs report, with a far more expansive set of labor data for the Fed to consider, is due out Friday. Analysts surveyed by FactSet expect the economy to have added about 205,000 jobs.

However, the payroll processor ADP on Thursday said its survey showed employers

added 497,000 jobs in June, nearly twice as many as analysts were expecting. That sent markets lower before the bell on the perception that the odds of new rate hikes just went up when the Fed meets later this month.

For the most part, the U.S. economy has been resilient in the face of the Federal Reserve's aggressive rate-hiking campaign in its effort to extinguish persistent inflation not seen since the early 1980s. The rate hikes have slowly helped to suppress inflation, though perhaps not as quickly as the Fed had hoped.

Last week, the government said the U.S. economy grew at a 2% annual pace from January through March, much higher than the previous estimate of 1.3%. That, combined with a resilient labor market, will likely push Fed officials to go through with another rate hike or two before the end of the year as they continue to try to bring down stubborn inflation.

## Trump's valet pleads not guilty in documents case

Associated Press

MIAMI — Donald Trump's valet, Walt Nauta, pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges that he helped the former president hide classified documents from federal authorities.

Nauta was charged alongside Trump in June in a 38-count indictment alleging the mishandling of classified documents. His arraignment was to have happened twice before, but he had struggled to retain a lawyer licensed in Florida and one appearance was postponed because of his travel troubles.

Ahead of his arraignment, Nauta hired Sasha Dadan, a criminal defense attorney and former public defender whose main law

office is in Fort Pierce, where the judge who would be handling the trial is based. She appeared in court with Nauta, alongside his Washington lawyer, Stanley Woodward, who entered the not guilty plea on his behalf.

Nauta answered, "Yes, Your Honor," when he was asked whether he had reviewed the indictment during the brief court appearance.

He and his lawyers exited the courthouse after the arraignment and entered a Black Mercedes-Benz sedan without answering questions from reporters.

Trump pleaded not guilty during his June 13 arraignment to charges including willful retention of national defense information. But Nauta's arraignment was postponed

that day because of the lawyer situation and then was pushed back again last week when a flight from New Jersey he was to have taken was canceled.

The indictment filed by special counsel Jack Smith and his team of prosecutors accuses Nauta of conspiring with Trump to conceal records that the former president had taken with him from the White House after his term ended in January 2021.

Prosecutors allege that Nauta, at the former president's direction, moved boxes of documents bearing classification markings so they would not be found by a Trump lawyer who was tasked with searching the home for classified records to be returned to the government.

## Wis. probes coaster after riders stuck upside down

Associated Press

CRANDON, Wis. — State officials are investigating how eight people became trapped upside down on a roller coaster — some of them for more than three hours — at a festival in Wisconsin.

The roller coaster's cars got stuck near the top of a loop around 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the Crandon International Off-road Raceway. Rescue workers arrived to find eight passengers hanging upside

down from their safety harnesses. Firefighters used ladder trucks to reach them, securing each one before releasing their over-the-shoulder safety bars, the Crandon Fire Department said.

It took nearly three and a half hours to get all the passengers down. One person was taken to a hospital.

According to the fire department, a ride operator said something broke down mechanically on the coaster,

which had been inspected by the state.

The state Department of Safety and Professional Services is responsible for reviewing plans for amusement parks and inspecting rides in Wisconsin. Spokesperson John Beard said in an email that the agency is investigating and dispatched an inspector on Monday to the scene in Crandon, a city of about 1,700 northwest of Green Bay. He had no further information on possible findings.



# US: Nearly half of faucets contain PFAS

Associated Press

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Drinking water from nearly half of U.S. faucets likely contains “forever chemicals” that may cause cancer and other health problems, according to a government study released Wednesday.

The synthetic compounds known collectively as PFAS are contaminating drinking water to varying extents in large cities and small towns — and in private wells and public systems, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Researchers described the study as the first nationwide effort to test for PFAS in tap water from private sources in addition to regulated ones. It builds on

previous scientific findings that the chemicals are widespread, showing up in consumer products as diverse as nonstick pans, food packaging and water-resistant clothing and making their way into water supplies.

Because the USGS is a scientific research agency, the report makes no policy recommendations. But the information “can be used to evaluate risk of exposure and inform decisions about whether or not you want to treat your drinking water, get it tested or get more information from your state” about the situation locally, said lead author Kelly Smalling, a research hydrologist.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in March pro-

posed the first federal drinking water limits on six forms of PFAS, or per- and polyfluorinated substances, which remain in the human body for years and don’t degrade in the environment. A final decision is expected later this year or in 2024.

But the government hasn’t prohibited companies using the chemicals from dumping them into public wastewater systems, said Scott Faber, a senior vice president of the Environmental Working Group, an advocacy organization.

“We should be treating this problem where it begins, instead of putting up a stoplight after the accident,” he said. “We should be requiring polluters to treat

their own wastes.”

The heaviest exposures were in cities and near potential sources of the compounds, particularly in the Eastern Seaboard; Great Lakes and Great Plains urban centers; and Central and Southern California. Many of the tests, mostly in rural areas, found no PFAS.

Based on the data, researchers estimated that at least one form of PFAS could be found in about 45% of tap water samples nationwide.

The study underscores that private well users should have their water tested for PFAS and consider installing filters, said Faber of the Environmental Working Group.

## Ohio abortion rights backers clear ballot initiative hurdle

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Groups hoping to enshrine abortion rights in Ohio’s constitution delivered nearly double the number of signatures needed to place an amendment on the statewide ballot this fall, aiming to signal sweeping widespread support for an issue that still faces the threat of needing a significantly increased victory margin.

Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights said they dropped off more than 700,000 petition signatures on Wednesday to Republican Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose’s office in Columbus. LaRose now will work with local election boards to determine that at least 413,446 signatures are valid, which would get the proposal onto the Nov. 7 ballot.

“Today, we take a huge step forward in the fight for abortion access and reproductive freedom for all, to ensure that Ohioans and their families can make their own health care decisions without government interference,” Lauren Blauvelt and Kellie Copeland of Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom, a coalition member,

said in a statement.

The ballot measure calls for the establishment of “a fundamental right to reproductive freedom” with “reasonable limits.” In language similar to a constitutional amendment that Michigan voters approved in November, it would require restrictions imposed past a fetus’ viability outside the womb, which is typically around the 24th week of pregnancy and was the standard under *Roe v. Wade*, to be based on evidence of patient health and safety benefits.

The state’s anti-abortion network has vowed a dogged and well-funded opposition campaign, which could take the price tag for the fight above \$70 million. Protect Women Ohio, the opposition campaign, downplayed the number of signatures submitted, saying they were collected with help from paid signature-gatherers funded in part by the American Civil Liberties Union.

“The ACLU’s attempts to hijack Ohio’s constitution to further its own radical agenda would be pathetic if they weren’t so dangerous,” campaign press secretary Amy Natoce said in a statement.

## US Methodist exodus seen fueled by LGBTQ+ policies

Associated Press

More than 6,000 United Methodist congregations — a fifth of the U.S. total — have now received permission to leave the denomination amid a schism over theology and the role of LGBTQ+ people in the nation’s second-largest Protestant denomination.

Those figures emerge following the close of regular meetings in June for the denomination’s regional bodies, known as annual conferences. The departures began with a trickle in 2019 — when the church created a four-year window of opportunity for U.S. congregations to depart over LGBTQ+-related issues — and cascaded to its highest level this year.

Church law forbids the marriage or ordination of “self-avowed, practicing homosexuals,” but many conservatives have chosen to leave amid a growing defiance of those bans in many U.S. churches and conferences.

Many of the departing congregations are joining the Global

Methodist Church, a denomination created last year by conservatives breaking from the UMC, while others are going independent or joining different denominations.

Some 6,182 congregations have received approval to disaffiliate since 2019, according to an unofficial tally by United Methodist News Service, which has been tracking votes by annual conferences. That figure is 4,172 for this year alone, it reported.

Some annual conferences may approve more departures at special sessions later this year, according to the Rev. Jay Therrell, president of the Wesleyan Covenant Association, a conservative caucus that has advocated for the exiting churches. While most UMC congregations are remaining, many of the departing congregations are large, and denominational officials are bracing for significant budget cuts in 2024.

The split has been long in the making, mirroring controversies that have led to splits in other mainline Protestant denominations.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Woman rescued after days stuck in swamp, police say**

**MA** EASTON — A Massachusetts woman who went missing last week has been found alive in a swampy area of a state park after hikers heard the woman's cries for help, police said.

Emma Tetewsky, 31, was reported missing on June 26, and police in recent days had appealed to the public for help in finding her.

Officers were called Monday evening to Borderland State Park, about 30 miles south of Boston, after hikers called 911 and reported hearing a woman's screams coming from a swampy area of the park, according to Easton Police investigators. Police arrived and heard Tetewsky's cries but couldn't see her. Then, three officers waded about 50 feet through the swamp to reach Tetewsky, authorities said.

Investigators said the woman might have been trapped in the swampy area for at least three days.

Tetewsky was taken to a hospital with what investigators described as serious but not life-threatening injuries.

**Plan to demolish house prompts objections**

**ID** BOISE — Objections have been raised to demolishing the house where four University of Idaho students were killed last year, with members of three of the victims' families signaling it should be preserved until after the trial of the man charged in the deaths.

Shanon Gray, an attorney for the family of Kaylee Goncalves, one of the stabbing victims, said

the university is disregarding families' requests that the home be left standing until after the trial of Bryan Kohberger, which is set to begin in October, the Idaho Statesman reported.

The bodies of Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin were found Nov. 13 at the rental home across the street from the University of Idaho. Kohberger is charged with four counts of murder in connection with their deaths.

The owner of the property donated it to the school after the killings, and the university announced that it was planning to demolish the home. University spokesperson Jodi Walker said the school wants the house gone before the fall semester begins.

**Police: Man missing since 2015 came home next day**

**TX** HOUSTON — A Texas man who went missing as a teenager in 2015 returned home the next day but he and his mother deceived officers by giving false names over the ensuing eight years, police said Thursday.

Houston police detectives said prosecutors have declined to bring false report charges against Janie Santana and her son, Rudolph "Rudy" Farias IV, but that their investigation is continuing.

The announcement came a week after police said they found Farias after receiving a call about a person lying on the ground in front of a southeast Houston church.

Authorities had not previously said where Farias, now 25, spent the eight years since he was reported missing after taking his two dogs for a walk near his family's home in northeast

Houston. He was hospitalized after police found him last week and detectives interviewed him and his mother on Wednesday.

**Actor out of prison in case tied to cult-like group**

**CA** DUBLIN — The television actor Allison Mack, who pleaded guilty for her role in a sex-trafficking case tied to the cult-like group NXIVM, has been released from a California prison, according to a government website.

Mack, best known for her role as a young Superman's close friend on "Smallville," was sentenced to three years behind bars in 2021 after pleading guilty two years earlier to charges that she manipulated women into becoming sex slaves for NXIVM leader Keith Raniere.

Online records maintained by the Federal Bureau of Prisons said Mack, 40, was released Monday from a federal prison in Dublin, Calif. Her release was first reported by the Albany Times-Union.

Mack avoided a longer prison term by cooperating with federal authorities in their case against Raniere, who was ultimately sentenced to 120 years in prison after being convicted on sex-trafficking charges.

**Woman dies after alligator attack near lagoon**

**SC** HILTON HEAD ISLAND — A South Carolina woman died Tuesday after she was attacked by an alligator while walking her dog near a golf course, authorities said.

The 69-year-old woman, who has not been named, was found dead in the Spanish Wells community of Hilton Head Island,

the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

The woman was found at the edge of a lagoon bordering a golf course. An alligator appeared to be guarding the woman, interrupting emergency rescue efforts, the sheriff's office said.

The alligator was removed and the woman's body was recovered. An autopsy is pending.

The dog was found safe, said Maj. Angela Viens, a sheriff's office spokesperson.

**Governor fills high court seat with party chairman**

**AR** LITTLE ROCK — Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Monday named state Republican Party chairman and former federal prosecutor Cody Hiland to the Arkansas Supreme Court, giving it a conservative majority as justices prepare to take up a challenge to her education overhaul.

Hiland was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the death of Justice Robin Wynne last month and will hold the seat until 2025 when a newly elected justice takes office. Hiland can't run in next year's election for the seat since he was appointed.

Arkansas' Supreme Court seats are nonpartisan, but conservative groups have spent heavily over the years trying to flip control of the court.

Hiland had been nominated as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas by President Donald Trump in 2017 and served in that position through 2020. He has served as state GOP chairman since December. He also worked on Sanders' campaign for governor as a senior adviser.

— From wire reports

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# Morgan adjusts to dual role with US

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — Her night's work on the pitch finished, Alex Morgan walks into the post-match news conference in her San Diego Wave uniform, barefoot and with her left ankle still taped up, with 3-year-old daughter Charlie in tow.

Morgan veers from soccer superstar to mom and back to soccer superstar.

"Why is my tummy hurting?" Charlie interjects while Morgan is discussing the Women's World Cup that begins this month in New Zealand and Australia. "I don't know. Too many snacks," her mother responds, pushing something out of her daughter's reach, segueing between topics with the ease of taking a pass and putting the ball into the back of the net.

Motherhood will bring a new element for Morgan's fourth World Cup appearance. The American star, who is married to MLS player and San Diego-area native Servando Carrasco, gave birth to Charlie on May 7,

2020, 10 months to the day after she and the United States won their second straight World Cup.

"I feel a little more calm going into my fourth one," Morgan said, explaining that she knows what it takes to make it all the way to the final match, to take care of the little things and "just enjoy each moment."

"This is my first World Cup as a mom, so I just want to also represent mom athletes and the accomplishments and strides we've been able to make in women's soccer. I think it is amazing. I'm really excited for this," she said.

Morgan and her American teammates will try to become the first country to win the Women's World Cup three straight times. She's not only one of the most-experienced veteran leaders, but also one of three first-time moms, along with Julie Ertz and Crystal Dunn.

"It's pretty special just to have my daughter with me in

the environment and with the national team. There's going to be three moms on the roster, which is great," Morgan said. "I think that we've just made strides in women's soccer with the support that we've gotten from the federation, from our club teams, from coaches and sponsors. So, I think that that all allows us to be able to compete at the highest level."

Having just turned 34, Morgan is busier than ever. She's adeptly juggling motherhood with pursuing another World Cup title while helping make the Wave a popular draw. She started a foundation to help girls and women on and off the field and is active around town, whether it's throwing out a ceremonial first pitch at a San Diego Padres game or helping to open a soccer store she's an investor in. She also helped lead the successful fight against the American governing body for equal pay and prize money.

Morgan, who is from the San Gabriel Valley east of Los An-

geles, was traded from Orlando to the expansion Wave in December 2021. She was reunited with Wave President Jill Ellis, who coached the United States to World Cup titles in 2015 and 2019. Morgan was a fixture on both teams.

Morgan has helped elevate soccer's popularity in San Diego as the Wave's marquee attraction. The Wave play at San Diego State's year-old 35,000-seat Snapdragon Stadium and set National Women's Soccer League attendance records of 30,854 for a home opener, on March 25, and 26,215 for a playoff game last fall.

Coach Casey Stoney called Morgan "an ultimate pro" and said she's more than just the focal point of the Wave's attack.

"As a player, as a leader, she's been huge," Stoney said. "As an ambassador in the community and what she gives back, even bigger. You know, people come to most games to see her, to watch her, to meet her, and she's an incredible role model."

## All England Club trying to blend past with present

*Associated Press*

WIMBLEDON, England — Tennis fans in New York can gather to see live TV coverage of the last three days of Wimbledon at an outdoor watch party at Brooklyn Bridge Park from July 14-16, featuring the women's final and the men's semifinals and final. Online registration for 1,500 free tickets for each day ends Thursday; walk-ins will be allowed, too.

So much of that paragraph would have been incomprehensible to anyone around for the initial edition of the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament in 1877, from the television broadcast to the trans-Atlantic appeal to the online element to, even, the participation of women in the competition: They were not allowed to play singles until 1884 or doubles until 1913.

The creation of "The Hill in New York" — touted as "a quintessential Wimbledon experience from afar," replete with gin and tonics, strawberries and cream, fish and

chips, tea and scones and, naturally, a merchandise shop with the same towels, hats and other official tournament paraphernalia sold at the actual competition site — is one of many ways in which the All England Club (full name: All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club) is setting one foot in the modern age, such as the retractable roofs on Centre Court and No. 1 Court that permitted play as rain fell Tuesday and Wednesday, while keeping another solidly rooted in its famous past.

"At Wimbledon, we're always conscious of finding the balance between respecting our heritage and tradition," Club chief executive Sally Bolton said, "alongside the pursuit of innovation and bringing in new audiences to share in the magic of The Championships."

Even the way they refer to the two-week event by those two words is a nod to earlier times. As is the continued use of grass courts, the only major tournament to still do

so (the U.S. Open and Australian Open have shifted from grass to hard courts; the French Open is played on red clay.) As is the use of "fortnight" to describe the two weeks.

And yet the fact that it is now a fully 14-day event is a nod to today. Until last year, Wimbledon's schedule was spread over 13 days; the middle Sunday was set aside as a day of rest, used for play only in cases of extreme rain delays during Week 1 to make up a backlog of contests. Now those Sundays will always have matches.

That, like the New York event that began in 2022, is just one of the ways in which the All England Club is adapting to the present — and has its eyes on the future.

"We recognize that we're a global event and we have audiences all over the world," Bolton said in an interview. "But as we think about growth, there are certain countries where we think that there's quite a bit more potential to grow that audience, and the U.S. is a great example of that."



# Heptathlete Hall has world title on mind

Associated Press

Heptathlete Anna Hall isn't one to hold back her emotions. Those grimaces or dances reveal her precise thoughts about a particular jump, throw or run.

She's an open book, too — with her journal. The reigning world bronze medalist encourages her coaches to scan her entries for insight into her workout mindset. (The doodles happen to be a nice bonus.)

The fun-loving, candy-chomping 22-year-old from Colorado who labels herself a "big goof-ball" is emerging as the next big name in track and field. She might even be the one to break Jackie Joyner-Kersey's nearly 35-year-old world heptathlon record.

"What I see are all the tools to rewrite the record books," Joyner-Kersey said in a phone interview on the eve of the U.S. championships that start Thursday at Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore. "You're seeing greatness in motion without even knowing the greatness is before you, because of her natural ability. When you see Anna compete, she competes with joy."

She may even have with her a package of Nerds Gummy Clusters, her candy of choice for an energy boost in between the seven events spread over two days of competition. She will for sure be

clowning around with her coaches, family, fans in the stands and her competitors.

Just Hall being Hall.

"I feel like the way that I compete in a multi-event is a little bit unorthodox," said Hall, whose pre-competition routine includes drinking grape juice for good luck. "I'm bouncing around between every event and dancing. I'm trying to be loose and just trying to enjoy it."

Each season, Hall scribbles goals on sticky notes and posts them all over her mirror. That way, they're constantly seen.

Last year, one of her goals was earning a podium spot at the world championships in Eugene. She did just that by taking home a bronze medal in the event won by Belgium's Nafissatou Thiam.

About this season's sticky-note goals on her mirror: "Top secret," she said.

But they're not too hard to decipher. Make the U.S. team for worlds — the top three earn spots — and she would be among the favorites next month in Budapest, Hungary. An American woman hasn't won the heptathlon title at worlds since Joyner-Kersey in 1993.

And yes, Joyner-Kersey's world record is very much on Hall's mind. Joyner-Kersey set the mark of 7,291 points in taking

home gold at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. It's a performance Hall has watched over and over again.

Really, though, that's a quest for down the road. Hall's concentration is simply on her events Thursday, which include 100 hurdles, high jump, shot put and the 200. Day 2 on Friday is the long jump, javelin and finally the 800, which is simultaneously her favorite and least favorite event.

"It's not so much about chasing a giant score," Hall explained. "We're just using this as a steppingstone so we can get right back to training for worlds."

Hall's in peak form, recording a career-best score of 6,988 points on May 28 in Götzis, Austria. That performance moved her to No. 5 on the women's all-time world list. That performance was also enough to convince her team to put her plans for the 400-meter hurdles on hold, an event she was hoping to run at nationals.

"I love the hurdles but my coaches ultimately decided that we have a real shot at winning (at worlds)," explained Hall, whose father, David, was a quarterback at Michigan along with playing basketball and being a decathlete. "So it would be taking that for granted to not put all of our eggs in that basket and go for that."

Hall has a bittersweet history with Hayward Field.

The sweet — that bronze at worlds last summer on the famed Oregon track.

The bitter — hitting a hurdle at the 2021 Olympic trials before the Tokyo Games and breaking a bone in her left foot (her jump foot). She had a screw put in and was sidelined for 12 weeks.

It took an emotional toll, too.

"There's an added level of fear of, 'OK, I'm supposed to stick this foot as hard as I can into the ground and jump off of it,'" explained Hall, who went to the University of Georgia before transferring to Florida and setting several school records. "But there's a screw in there and it hurts and it swells sometimes after practice and it doesn't feel normal. So yeah, that was very difficult."

She made peace with the track by winning the NCAA heptathlon title. That relieved any sort of pressure going into worlds and allowed her to capture bronze.

In the stadium at worlds was Joyner-Kersey, who's gotten the chance to know Hall and her family. She believes gold is in Hall's future.

That world record, too.

"I've watched many multi-eventers over the years. But I have not seen one like Anna," Joyner-Kersey said. "There's no give-up in her. She reminds me of myself."

## Source: Mavericks get G. Williams in 3-team trade

Associated Press

The Dallas Mavericks are acquiring Grant Williams from Boston in a sign-and-trade deal that includes the San Antonio Spurs, a person with knowledge of the agreement said Wednesday night.

Dallas is sending guard Reggie Bullock and a 2030 pick swap to the Spurs, while the Mavericks and Celtics will receive multiple second-round picks, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no

trades could be finalized before Thursday.

Williams' contract is for \$54 million over four years.

The Mavericks made it clear they thought their roster needed work after missing the playoffs when the pairing of Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving faltered in the two months after the blockbuster deal that brought Irving from Brooklyn in February.

Irving and the Mavs have agreed on a \$126 million, three-year contract that should be-

come official when free-agent deals can be signed. Center Dwight Powell also is set to return.

The 6-foot-6 Williams will change the look of the Dallas frontcourt with the lanky, offensive-minded Christian Wood not expected to return. The 24-year-old averaged career highs of 8.1 points and 4.6 rebounds in his fourth season with the Celtics.

Dallas wants to rediscover the defensive mentality that helped fuel a run to the Western

Conference finals in 2022. But it will have to be with a new set of key defensive pieces. The departure of Bullock comes after Dorian Finney-Smith went to the Nets in the Irving deal.

Bullock averaged 7.2 points for the Mavericks last season, a drop from 8.6 in his first season in Dallas. The 3-and-D specialist shot 40% from three-point range in the 2022 playoffs, making 2.9 per game before dropping to 1.9 at a 38% clip in the 2022-23 regular season.

# Pitch clock may have led to better defense

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The pitch clock may be bothering players as they step to the plate, but they like it a whole lot better once they put on their gloves and take the field.

While the rules changes put in place this year to speed up the pace of play have garnered plenty of attention for how they've affected hitters and pitchers, some players and managers have said the new guidelines are also positively impacting defense.

The pitch clock in particular — an idea meant to make it easier for fans to stay focused on the field — may be keeping fielders locked in, too.

"I think it's helping defensively a lot, just because you don't have the down time to really kind of walk around," said Seattle Mariners second baseman Kolten Wong, a two-time Gold Glove winner. "You're not cleaning dirt, you're constantly back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. So, I'm a big fan of it."

The pitch clock adopted this year — along with limits on infield shifts and several other rules — gives pitchers 15 seconds between deliveries if there are no baserunners and 20 seconds with someone aboard.

There's no doubt that games

are faster. The average game length of 2 hours, 40 minutes is the shortest since 1984. Games had lasted an average of at least 3 hours every year from 2012-22.

That change was expected. But some players and coaches said they've been pleasantly surprised by how it's changed things on defense.

Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell, asked this season about left fielder Christian Yelich's improving glove work, landed on the clock as a key contributor. After ranking among the bottom 10 left fielders last year with minus-5 Outs Above Average, Yelich is third this season with 3 OAA, per Baseball Savant.

"It's definitely not something I'd thought of, but I think it's easier to play defense now the way the game is structured because it's just faster-paced," Counsell said. "That's best for defenders. I don't think hitters like it still, to be honest with you. And pitchers don't like it. But I think it's great for defenders."

Counsell said the lengthy delays between pitches in previous seasons could make it tough for fielders to maintain their focus.

"It's still your job, but (the slow pace) was making it really

hard, I think especially for outfielders," Counsell said.

Arizona Diamondbacks first baseman Christian Walker indicated it was an issue for infielders as well.

"When you've been standing out there for 15-20 minutes and you get a ground ball hit at you, I know that's been a challenge in the past, in long innings, staying locked in," Walker said.

It's hard to find empirical evidence to support or dispute the theory. The league-wide fielding percentage of .986 through Tuesday's games is the highest in the sport's history, but that may not be the best indicator. Fielding percentages have been rising steadily for decades thanks in part to improved field conditions and equipment, and last year's fielding percentage was .985. The metric also relies on subjective decisions by official scorers and doesn't factor for a player's range.

It's also hard to pull trends from advanced defensive metrics because of the limits placed on infield shifts between the 2022 and '23 seasons.

That leaves it up to the notoriously unreliable eye test to determine whether there's any difference.

"I don't think I've necessarily noticed that," New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone

said. "My gut, or hearing you ask that question and knowing myself as a fielder, I would think it's a good thing. You know, being able to keep it moving. I know we always liked a pitcher that worked fast, right? It felt like you were more on your toes, more alert. So I would think there's something to that, but it's not necessarily something that I've taken away from it so far."

Boone's opinion is something of a consensus.

When players and managers were asked by The Associated Press if they believed the pitch clock had impacted fielding, they often said they hadn't really considered that possibility. Then, after thinking about it for a little bit, many of them at least partially agreed with Counsell's opinion.

"There's more action," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "They're not on their heels as much, they're ready for the ball to be put in play, things are happening quicker, less standing around."

Brewers infielder Owen Miller has noticed that as well.

"I think just the flow of the game is a lot better," Miller said. "You just have less time in between pitches, so especially infielders are a little bit lighter and quicker on their feet."

## Robert, Alonso lead Home Run Derby field in Seattle

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Chicago White Sox All-Star Luis Robert Jr. and two-time champion Pete Alonso of the New York Mets are set to participate in baseball's Home Run Derby in Seattle on Monday.

Robert earned the top seed in an eight-player field announced Wednesday that includes Seattle's Julio Rodríguez, 2018 American League MVP Mookie Betts, Toronto's Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Tampa Bay's Randy Arozarena, Texas' Adolis García and Baltimore's Adley Rutschman. Alonso, who won in 2019 and 2021, will try to join Ken Griffey Jr. (1994, 1998 and 1999) as the only three-time

champions.

Robert will go against the eighth-seeded Rutschman (11 home runs) in the first round, with second seed Alonso facing the seventh-seeded Rodríguez (13). Third-seeded Betts (23) meets six seed Guerrero Jr. (13), and fourth-seeded García (21) faces five seed Arozarena (16).

The seeding was determined by home run totals through Tuesday. Tiebreakers went to the player with the most homers since June 15.

"I'm pretty sure I'm going to feel very happy during those two days," Robert said. "It's going to be very special for me."

Robert posted on Instagram hours before

the official announcement that he would participate in the Home Run Derby. The Cuban outfielder was also selected to his first All-Star team.

"If he's happy about it, I'm happy about it," manager Pedro Grifol said. "It's a great experience. I remember Salvy (Salvador Perez) doing it over there in Kansas City. He was pretty pumped about it, and he had a really good time."

Robert and countrymen Arozarena and García are participating for the first time. They will try to join two-time champion Yoenis Céspedes as the only Cuba natives to win the Derby.