

## Trump urges unity in wake of shooting

*Associated Press*

MILWAUKEE — Donald Trump, somber and bandaged, accepted the GOP presidential nomination on Thursday at the Republican National Convention in a speech that described in detail the assassination attempt that could have ended his life just five days earlier before laying out a sweeping populist agenda, particularly on immigration.

The 78-year-old former president, known best for his bombast and aggressive rhetoric, began his acceptance speech with a softer and deeply personal message that drew directly from his brush with death. Moment by moment, the crowd listening in silence, Trump described standing onstage in Butler, Pa., with his head turned to look at a chart on display when he felt something hit his ear. He raised his hand to his head and saw immediately that it was covered in blood.

“If I had not moved my head at that very last instant, the assassin’s bullet would have perfectly hit its mark,” Trump said.

“And I would not be here tonight. We would not be together.”

Trump’s address, the longest convention speech in modern history at just under 93 minutes, marked the climax and conclusion of a massive four-day Republican pep rally that drew thousands of conservative activists and elected officials to swing-state Wisconsin as voters weigh an election that currently features two deeply unpopular candidates. Sensing political opportunity in the wake of his near-death experience, the often bombastic Republican leader embraced a new tone he hopes will help generate even more momentum in an election that appears to be shifting in his favor.

“The discord and division in our society must be healed. We must heal it quickly. As Americans, we are bound together by a single fate and a shared destiny. We rise together. Or we fall apart,” Trump said, wearing a large white bandage on his right ear, as he has all week, to cover a wound he sustained in the Saturday shooting. “I am running to be president for all of America, not half of America, because there is no victory in winning for half of America.”

While he spoke in a gentler tone than at his usual rallies, Trump also outlined an agenda led by what he promises would be the largest deportation operation in U.S. history. He repeatedly accused people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally of staging an “invasion.” Additionally, he teased new tariffs on trade and an “America first” foreign policy.

Trump also falsely suggested Democrats had cheated during the 2020 election he lost — despite a raft of federal and state investigations proving there was no systemic fraud — and suggested “we must not criminalize dissent or demonize political disagreement,” even as he has long called for prosecutions of his opponents.

He did not mention abortion rights, an issue that has bedeviled Republicans ever since the Supreme Court struck down a federally guaranteed right to

abortion two years ago. Trump nominated three of the six justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Trump at his rallies often takes credit for *Roe* being overturned and argues states should have the right to institute their own abortion laws.

Nor did he mention the insurrection at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in which Trump supporters tried to stop the certification of his loss to Democrat Joe Biden. Trump has long referred to the people jailed for the riot as “hostages.”

Thursday’s RNC program seemed designed to project strength and masculinity in an implicit rebuke of Biden.

Ultimate Fighting Championship President Dana White called Trump “a real American bad ass.”

Kid Rock performed a song with the chorus, “Fight, fight!,” echoing the word Trump mouthed on stage in Pennsylvania as Secret Service agents surrounded him.

And wrestling icon Hulk Hogan described the former president as “an American hero.”

## Biden’s campaign chair acknowledges ‘slippage’

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden’s campaign is insisting anew that he is not stepping aside as he faces the stark reality that many Democrats at the highest levels want him to bow out of the 2024 election to make way for a new nominee and try to prevent widespread party losses in November.

Biden campaign chair Jen O’Malley Dillon acknowledged “slippage” in support for the president, but insisted he is “absolutely” remaining in the

race and that the campaign sees “multiple paths” to beating Trump.

At the same time, the Democratic National Committee’s rulemaking arm opened its meeting Friday, pressing ahead with plans for a virtual roll call before Aug. 7 to nominate the presidential pick, ahead of the party’s convention later in the month in Chicago.

And Democrats, racing time, are considering the extraordinary possibility of Biden stepping aside for a new presi-

dential nominee before their own convention.

Amid the turmoil, a majority of Democrats think Vice President Kamala Harris would make a good president herself.

A poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 6 in 10 Democrats believe Harris would do a good job in the top slot. About 2 in 10 Democrats don’t believe she would, and another 2 in 10 say they don’t know enough to say.

Democrats at the highest

levels have been making a critical push for Biden to rethink his election bid, with former President Barack Obama expressing concerns to allies and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi privately telling Biden the party could lose the ability to seize control of the House if he doesn’t step away from the 2024 race.

New Mexico Sen. Martin Heinrich on Friday called on Biden to exit the race, making him the third Senate Democrat to do so.

# Houthis claim deadly strike in Tel Aviv

*Bloomberg News*

A drone strike killed a man in the heart of Tel Aviv on Friday, in an attack claimed by the Yemen-based Houthi militants.

The Iran-backed group said it attacked Israel's commercial capital with a new type of drone difficult for radar to detect and vowed to target the city and other parts of the country again.

Israel's military said the projectile was probably fired from Yemen and was an Iran-built Samad 3 drone repurposed to fly longer distances.

If confirmed, it would mark the first deadly attack on Israel by the Houthis, who have also been assaulting ships much

closer to home in recent months.

The incident comes just ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trip to Washington, his first outside of Israel since its war against Hamas began in October. He's due to meet U.S. President Joe Biden and address Congress on July 24.

The explosion happened near Tel Aviv's sea front and a U.S. embassy branch, according to Israeli emergency services. The Israeli military said no sirens were activated and declined to comment if the American facility was the intended target.

The man who was killed was around 50 and eight people

were injured. The attack happened close to 3 a.m. local time.

"An initial inquiry indicates that the explosion in Tel Aviv was caused by the falling of an aerial target," the Israeli military said.

It later added that the drone was detected and it's investigating why it wasn't shot down.

The Houthis started targeting Israel with drones and missiles shortly after the war in Gaza started. But, at least until now, none of their attacks are thought to have caused significant damage in Israel, with most being intercepted or failing to reach the country, which lies around 1,180 miles from Yemen.

Israel's largely avoided direct retaliation against the Houthis.

Drone warfare has exposed a vulnerability in Israel's vaunted air defenses. The Iron Dome system — which uses interceptors against incoming short-range missiles — is effective against large objects, but many smaller drones are able to slip through.

Dozens of drones, primarily those fired by Hezbollah from Lebanon, have evaded the military's defenses this year and caused casualties and damage in Israel. The army is testing a laser-based system designed for small projectiles, though it won't be ready before 2025.

## UN court: Israel should end presence in occupied Palestinian territories

*Associated Press*

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The top U.N. court ruled Friday that Israel's presence in the Palestinian occupied territories is "unlawful" and called on it to end, pointing to the building and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and east Jerusalem, its annexation and imposition of permanent control over lands and discriminatory policies against Palestinians.

The International Court of Justice was issuing a nonbinding opinion on the legality of Israel's 57-year occupation of lands sought for a Palestinian state; the ruling is likely to have more effect on international opinion than on Israeli policies.

The court's panel of 15 judges from around the world said Israel has abused its status as the occupying power in the West Bank and east Jerusalem by annexing territory, imposing permanent control and building

settlements. It said Israel must end settlement construction immediately.

It said such acts render "Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory unlawful." It says its continued presence was "illegal" and should be ended as "rapidly as possible."

Israel, which normally considers the United Nations and international tribunals as unfair and biased, did not send a legal team to the hearings. But it submitted written comments, saying that the questions put to the court are prejudiced and fail to address Israeli security concerns. Israeli officials have said the court's intervention could undermine the peace process, which has been stagnant for more than a decade.

The court also found that Israel's use of natural resources was "inconsistent" with its obligations under international law as an occupying power.

## Lawmakers call on DOD to ground Osprey again

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Three Massachusetts lawmakers are pressing Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to ground the V-22 Osprey aircraft again until the military can fix the root causes of multiple recent accidents, including a deadly crash in Japan.

In a letter sent to Austin on Thursday, Democratic Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey and Rep. Richard Neal called the decision to return Ospreys to limited flight status "misguided."

In March, Naval Air Systems Command said the aircraft had been approved to return to limited flight operations, but only with tight restrictions in place that currently keep it from doing some of the aircraft carrier, amphibious transport and special operations missions it was purchased for. The Osprey's joint program office within the Pentagon has said those restrictions are likely to remain in place until mid-2025.

The Ospreys had been grounded military-wide for three months following a horrific crash in Japan in November that killed eight Air Force Special Operations Command service members.

There's no other aircraft like the Osprey in the fleet. It is loved by pilots for its ability to fly fast to a target like an airplane and land on it like a helicopter. But the Osprey is aging faster than expected, and parts are failing in unexpected ways. Unlike those of other aircraft, its engines and proprotor blades rotate to a completely vertical position when operating in helicopter mode, a conversion that adds strain to those critical propulsion components. The Japan crash was the fourth fatal accident in two years, killing a total of 20 service members.

The lawmakers' letter, which was accompanied by a long list of safety questions about the aircraft, is among many formal queries into the V-22 program.

# Technology outage causes global disarray

Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany — A global technology outage grounded flights, knocked banks and hospital systems offline and media outlets off air on Friday in a massive disruption that affected companies and services around the world and highlighted dependence on software from a handful of providers.

Cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike said that the issue believed to be behind the outage was not a security incident or cyberattack — and that a fix was on the way. The company

said the problem occurred when it deployed a faulty update to computers running Microsoft Windows.

But hours after the problem was first detected, the disarray continued — and escalated.

Long lines formed at airports in the U.S., Europe and Asia as airlines lost access to check-in and booking services at a time when many travelers are heading away on summer vacations.

News outlets in Australia — where telecommunications were severely affected — were pushed off air for hours. Hospitals and doctor's offices had

problems with their appointment systems, while banks in South Africa and New Zealand reported outages to their payment system or websites and apps.

At Hong Kong's airport, Yvonne Lee, 24, said she only found out her flight to Phuket in Thailand was postponed to Saturday when she arrived at the airport, saying the way it was handled would "affect the image of Hong Kong's airport very much."

Her already short five-day trip would now have to be further shortened, she said.

Some athletes and spectators descending on Paris ahead of the Olympics were delayed as was the arrival of their uniforms and accreditations, but Games organizers said disruptions were limited and didn't affect ticketing or the torch relay.

"This is a very, very uncomfortable illustration of the fragility of the world's core internet infrastructure," said Ciaran Martin, a professor at Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government and former Head of Britain's National Cyber Security Centre.

## Court blocks remainder of Biden's student debt plan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court blocked the implementation of the Biden administration's student debt relief plan, which would have lowered monthly payments for millions of borrowers.

In a ruling Thursday, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals granted a motion for an administrative stay filed by a group of Republican-led states seeking to invalidate the administration's entire student loan forgiveness program. The court's order prohibits the administration from

implementing the parts of the SAVE plan that were not already blocked by lower court rulings.

The ruling comes the same day that the Biden administration announced another round of student loan forgiveness, this time totaling \$1.2 billion in forgiveness for roughly 35,000 borrowers who are eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

The PSLF program, which provides relief for teachers, nurses, firefighters and other public servants who make 120

qualifying monthly payments, was originally passed in 2007. But for years, borrowers ran into strict rules and servicer errors that prevented them from having their debt cancelled. The Biden administration adjusted some of the program's rules and retroactively gave many borrowers credits towards their required payments.

Borrowers who are enrolled in the SAVE plan, which was the subject of Thursday's ruling, will be placed into interest-free forbearance while the case works its way through the legal

system, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said Thursday.

"Today's ruling from the 8th Circuit blocking President Biden's SAVE plan could have devastating consequences for millions of student loan borrowers crushed by unaffordable monthly payments if it remains in effect," Cardona said in a statement. "It's shameful that politically motivated lawsuits waged by Republican elected officials are once again standing in the way of lower payments for millions of borrowers."

## US: Housing provider sexually abused migrant kids

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Employees of the largest housing provider for unaccompanied migrant children in the U.S. repeatedly sexually abused and harassed children in their care for at least eight years, the Justice Department said Thursday, alleging a shocking litany of offenses that took place as the company amassed billions of dollars in government contracts.

Southwest Key Programs Inc.

employees, including supervisors, raped, touched or solicited sex and nude images of children beginning in 2015 and possibly earlier, the Justice Department said in a lawsuit filed this week. At least two employees have been indicted on criminal charges related to the allegations since 2020.

It was not immediately clear how many children are currently in Southwest Key's vast network of shelters across three states, which have room for

more than 6,300 children. A Justice Department spokesperson declined to comment beyond the lawsuit announcement when asked whether the department recommended that children be removed from the shelters or that the nonprofit's contracts be terminated.

"In some cases, Southwest Key employees threatened children to maintain their silence," the lawsuit states. "In harassing these children, these Southwest Key employees exploited the

children's vulnerabilities, language barriers, and distance from family and loved ones."

In a statement, Southwest Key said it was reviewing the complaint and disputed the portrayal of its care for children.

The nonprofit is the largest provider of housing for unaccompanied migrant children, operating under grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It has 29 child migrant shelters: 17 in Texas, 10 in Arizona and two in California.

# Rally shooter had pics of Trump, Biden

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The 20-year-old Pennsylvania man who tried to assassinate Donald Trump had photos on his phone of the former Republican president, President Joe Biden and other officials, including Attorney General Merrick Garland and FBI Director Chris Wray, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Investigators searching Thomas Matthew Crooks' devices have also found that the shooter looked up the dates for the Democratic National Convention as well as Trump's appearances, according to the people who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss details of the ongoing probe.

The FBI has been searching for clues into what drove Crooks to open fire at Saturday's campaign rally in Butler, Pa., in an attempt to assassinate the GOP presidential nominee. The FBI has said they are investigating the shooting as a potential act of domestic terrorism but have yet to find a clear ideological motive. The FBI gained access to Crooks' cellphone, scoured his computer, home and car, and interviewed more than 100 people so far.

Crooks killed one rallygoer and seriously wounded two others. Trump suffered an ear injury but was not seriously hurt, appearing just days later at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee with a bandage over the wound.

The shooter had also searched for information about major depressive disorder, according to three people familiar with the investigation. But investigators have not yet determined whether he was actually diagnosed with the disorder, one of the people said. Studies have shown that the vast majority of people with mental illnesses are not violent, and experts say most people who are violent do not have mental illnesses.

On a conference call with reporters Sunday, Kevin Rojek, the special agent in charge of the Pittsburgh field office, said: "We have no indication of any mental health issues."

Crooks used an AR-style rifle, which authorities said was purchased legally by his father. In-

vestigators also found he brought multiple loaded magazines. He also bought 50 rounds on the day of the shooting. Authorities found a bulletproof vest in his car and another rudimentary explosive device at his home. Over the past few months he had received several packages there, including some that had potentially hazardous material.

The shooting raised serious questions about why law enforcement was unable to stop the man from getting on a roof and opening fire. Multiple investigations into the security failures are underway, including a Department of Homeland Security inspector general's probe into the Secret Service's handling of security.

## Thousands celebrate life of man killed during rally

Associated Press

FREEPORT, Pa. — Thousands of mourners paid their respects at a Pennsylvania banquet hall Thursday to the family of a former fire chief who was shot and killed during the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump.

Trump sent a note of condolence hailing Corey Comperatore as a hero, a copy of which was displayed at the visitation. He did not attend the memorial, which was the second of two public events memorializing and celebrating Comperatore's life. Hundreds of people gathered Wednesday at a vigil for him at an auto racing track.

A private funeral was scheduled for Friday. Trump is not going to the funeral because of Secret Service concerns, according to a source who was not authorized to speak publicly.

The crowd on Thursday appeared to be a mix of friends, neighbors and strangers who wanted to show their apprecia-

tion for the man who officials said spent his final moments shielding his wife and daughter from gunfire at the campaign rally.

Fire trucks and police vehicles filled the parking lot outside the building. Sharpshooters were positioned on top of the event hall and on nearby buildings as people waited in line to enter.

Comperatore, 50, worked as a project and tooling engineer, was an Army reservist and spent many years as a volunteer firefighter after serving as chief, according to his obituary.

Trump suffered an ear injury but was not seriously hurt and has been participating this week in the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

Trump honored Comperatore during his speech Thursday night accepting the party's presidential nomination, displaying his firefighting gear on the convention stage, kissing his helmet and heralding the ex-chief as "an unbelievable person."

## Temps cause soda cans to explode on some flights

Los Angeles Times

Extreme heat is causing canned carbonated drinks to explode while being opened by flight attendants on some Southwest Airlines flights, according to airline officials.

"We're aware of the issue and have been taking steps to keep onboard beverages cooler, especially in our airports experiencing extreme temperatures," said Chris Perry, spokesman for Southwest Airlines. "It's a cross-functional effort between our airport teams and those in the air."

The incidents have mostly occurred on flights out of airports in Phoenix and Las Vegas, which have been gripped by brutal heat waves. Other cities include Austin, Texas, Houston, Dallas and Sacramento, Calif.

The airline did not know how many incidents have been reported so far or how many employees have been hurt by the exploding cans.

"But one incident is already

too many," Perry said. "That's why we are addressing it."

He said no passengers have been hurt.

CBS News, which reported the story first, said about 20 flight attendants had been injured by the rupturing cans, including one who needed stitches.

Perry said part of the problem might have to do with the way Southwest stores and loads drinks on planes. Unlike other airlines, he said, Southwest does not stock perishables on board and rarely uses air-conditioned catering trucks.

In an effort to address the exploding cans problem, he said, the airline implemented a series of procedures that include using coolers and directing ground crews to return carbonated cans with a temperature of 98 degrees or more back to the warehouse to cool down. Flight attendants have also been asked not to open cans that appear deformed.

# US reporter gets 16 years in Russian prison for espionage

Associated Press

YEKATERINBURG, Russia — Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was convicted Friday of espionage and sentenced to 16 years in a maximum-security prison on charges that his employer and the U.S. government have rejected as fabricated.

The swift conclusion of the secretive trial in Russia's highly politicized legal system could potentially clear the way for a prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington.

Gershkovich, his head shaved and looking thin, was calm as he stood in a glass defendants' cage in the Sverdlovsk Regional Court. He listened impassively to the verdict but gave an occasional smile. When Judge Andrei Mineyev asked him if he had any questions about the verdict, he replied "No, your honor."

After Mineyev finished reading the verdict, someone in the courtroom shouted, "Evan, we love you!"

Closing arguments took place behind closed doors and Gershkovich did not admit any guilt, according to the court's press service. Prosecutors requested an 18-year sentence, but the judge opted for a shorter term.

"This disgraceful, sham conviction comes after Evan has spent 478 days in prison, wrongfully detained, away from his family and friends, prevented from reporting, all for doing his job as a journalist," Dow Jones CEO and Wall Street Journal Publisher Almar Latour and Editor in Chief Emma Tucker said in a statement.

"We will continue to do everything possible to press for Evan's release and to support his family. Journalism is not a crime, and

we will not rest until he's released. This must end now," the statement added.

Gershkovich, 32, was arrested March 29, 2023, while on a reporting trip to the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg. Authorities claimed, without offering any evidence, that he was gathering secret information for the U.S.

He has been behind bars since his arrest, which will be counted as part of his sentence. Much of that was spent in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison — a czarist-era lockup used during Josef Stalin's purges, when executions were carried out in its basement. He was transferred to Yekaterinburg for the trial.

Gershkovich was the first U.S. journalist taken into custody on espionage charges since Nicholas Daniloff in 1986, at the height of the Cold War.

## Zelenskyy urges more Britain help

Associated Press

LONDON — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Britain's new government to help Ukrainian forces attack deeper inside Russia to stop deadly missile strikes on his country, as he gave a rare address by a foreign leader to a U.K. Cabinet meeting.

Zelenskyy said "long-range capability" to destroy sites where Russian weapons are concentrated is key to Ukraine's defense.

"I ask you to show your leadership" in lifting restrictions on Ukraine's use of Western weapons, Zelenskyy told Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Russia has deployed devastating firepower as it pursues a summer offensive in eastern Ukraine, reducing villages to rubble and pushing back Ukrainian troops in places. It has also launched missile and drone attacks across Ukraine, killing dozens and hitting targets including a Kyiv children's hospital.

Some of Kyiv's allies are reluctant to let Ukraine use their weapons to strike Russian territory because of concerns that the West could be drawn into direct conflict with Russia. The British government has said it's up to Ukraine how to use missiles supplied by the U.K., as long as international law is upheld.

In an interview with the BBC, Zelenskyy said he was seeking clarification about Ukraine's ability to use Storm Shadow missiles supplied by Britain against targets in Russia. The Storm Shadow is an air-launched cruise missile with a range of more than 155 miles.

## Vietnam party leader Trong dies at 80

Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party and the country's most powerful politician, has died following months of ill health, official media said Friday. He was 80.

"General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party Nguyen Phu Trong passed away at 13:38 on July 19, 2024, at the 108 Central Military Hospital due to old age and serious illness," the Nhan Dan newspaper said.

Official media said a state funeral would be held.

Trong had dominated Vietnamese politics since 2011, when he was elected party chief. During his tenure, he worked to consolidate the Communist Party's power in Vietnam's single-party political system. In the decade before he took the top role in Vietnamese politics, the balance of power had shifted more toward the governmental wing led by then-Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

Born in 1944 in Hanoi, Trong

was a Marxist-Leninist ideologue who earned a degree in philosophy before becoming a member of the Communist Party at the age of 22. He viewed corruption as the single gravest threat in maintaining the party's legitimacy.

"A country without discipline would be chaotic and unstable," Trong said in 2016 after being re-elected to the party's helm. Officially, Vietnam has no top leader, but the Communist Party chief is traditionally seen as the most powerful.

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# A's plan to leave \$30M in public money on the table

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Oakland Athletics executive Sandy Dean told the Las Vegas Stadium Authority on Thursday that the club does not expect to spend the entire \$380 million in public money allocated to build a new stadium in Las Vegas.

Dean said the A's plan to spend \$350 million of those funds, leaving \$30 million on the table. He also told the authority that the club plans to finance \$300 million of the stadium cost, but no lenders have been secured.

"We've had strong interest from a number of companies that want to participate in that portion of the project," Dean said.

The other \$850 million needed to build the \$1.5 billion stadium would come from private equity.

The A's have hired New York-based Galatioto Sports Partners to help find investors.

A 30-year non-relocation agreement was discussed but not acted upon at Thursday's board meeting. A's officials have asked for up to seven games over two years that oth-

erwise would be played in Las Vegas to possibly be played internationally or at special U.S. sites such as the Field of Dreams in Iowa. No more than four of those games in a year would be played outside Las Vegas.

The A's hope to open the 33,000-seat ballpark for the 2028 season.

They addressed the financing to supplement the public funding approved by the Democratic-controlled Nevada Legislature in a special session last June and signed by Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo. Dean and Steve Hill, president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, said after the meeting that the financing will be in place for the John Fisher-owned ballclub.

"The Fisher family could do all of the required equity for the project," Dean said.

Hill said the lease agreement will be discussed at the Aug. 15 stadium authority meeting, but he said he didn't expect votes to occur on the documents required for construction until Dec. 19. Hill said he expected the ballpark to be completed on

schedule.

"This town knows how to build major projects and knows how to build them fast," Hill said. "This is a relatively conservative pace. Allegiant Stadium was built in less time than the A's have budgeted to build this baseball stadium. That's different construction, but there's plenty of time to do that. Everything's on track."

The stadium authority is using the template that led to the 2020 opening of Allegiant Stadium, home of the NFL's Raiders.

That template included personal seat licenses, which also allow fans to secure seats for other events, such as concerts. The Raiders raised nearly \$550 million through PSLs.

Dean said though the A's have PSLs at their disposal, the club hasn't decided where to offer them for purchase.

"The Raiders had amazing success with PSLs," Dean said. "Football and baseball are really different because there are so many more games in baseball and that makes an individual season ticket for baseball (more) meaningfully compared to football for the same price."

# Dodgers and Cubs to open 2025 MLB season

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Los Angeles Dodgers and Shohei Ohtani will open the 2025 season in Tokyo against the Chicago Cubs on March 18 and the Athletics will start the home portion of their first season in Sacramento against the Cubs on March 31.

All 30 teams are scheduled for March 27, marking the earliest opening day other than international games, Major League Baseball announced Thursday. There were games on March 28 in 2019 and this season.

Each team will play six games against its prime interleague rival instead of four, increasing matchups between the New York Yankees and Mets, the Dodgers and Los Angeles Angels, Cubs and Chicago White Sox, and Athletics and San Francisco Giants. What is being called a Rivalry Weekend is scheduled for May 16-18 and includes the prime interleague rivalries along with Pittsburgh vs Philadelphia, Colorado vs. Arizona, Detroit vs. Toronto and Houston vs. Texas.

In the third straight season of a return to a balanced schedule, a team will play 13 games against each division rival and six or seven against each other club in its league for a total of 62. The remaining 48 games are against interleague opponents, with a single three-game series against each of the 14 other clubs in the opposite league. Teams will be home against the same interleague opponents they hosted in 2023.

The American League used a balanced schedule from 1977-2000 and the National League from 1993-2000.

The All-Game will be at Atlanta's Truist Park on July 15. The regular season ends Sept. 28.

# All-Star Game viewers up 6% to 7.44M after falling to a record low last year

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Paul Skenes, Shohei Ohtani, Jarren Duran and the rest of this year's All-Stars drew 7,443,000 viewers on Fox, up 6% from the 2023 game but the second lowest for the event.

The American League's 5-3 victory at Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday night saw an increase from the 7,006,000 viewers for the National League's 3-2 win

last year at Seattle. The 2022 game in Los Angeles was watched by 7.51 million.

This year's game had a 3.8 rating and 12 share, down from a 3.9/12 last year. The rating is the percentage of television households tuned to a program and the share is the percentage tuned to a program among those households with televisions on at the time.

An additional 116,000 viewers

watched Spanish-language coverage on Fox Deportes, up 36% from 85,000 last year.

The Home Run Derby on Monday night, won by the Los Angeles Dodgers' Teoscar Hernández, drew 5.45 million viewers on ESPN, down 11% from 6.11 million last year and 6.88 million in 2022. This year's derby was opposite the first night of the Republican National Convention.

# Many NFL stars have something to prove

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Rodgers knows all eyes are on him. That's nothing new for the four-time NFL MVP.

But the New York Jets quarterback enters this season, his 20th in the league, with plenty to prove after missing all but four snaps last year because of a torn Achilles tendon.

"I think if I don't do what I know I'm capable of doing, we're all probably going to be out of here," Rodgers, 40, said of the lofty expectations on him and the Jets, who are trying to end the NFL's longest active playoff drought at 13 seasons.

"I like that kind of pressure, though," he said. "It's a tough market to play in, it's not for everybody. I relish that opportunity, but that's the way the NFL is."

He isn't alone in the spotlight as training camps open.

Pittsburgh's Russell Wilson, San Francisco's Christian McCaffrey, Cleveland's Deshaun Watson, Jacksonville's Trevor Lawrence and Philadelphia's Saquon Barkley are among NFL stars with something to prove because of injuries, mediocre play or needing to justify big contracts.

■ **Aaron Rodgers, QB, Jets** — Rodgers' much-hyped arrival in the Big Apple quickly went sour when he was injured in the season opener and New York couldn't recover. He was in the headlines again this offseason when he was mentioned as a potential running mate for Robert Kennedy Jr. and when he skipped mandatory minicamp to go on a previously planned

trip to Egypt. But he'll get another chance to turn around the franchise's fortunes — and perhaps save the jobs of coach Robert Saleh and general manager Joe Douglas in the process.

■ **Russell Wilson, QB, Steelers** — Wilson went from being a touchdown-tossing machine during his 10 seasons in Seattle, where he helped the Seahawks win a Super Bowl, to an underwhelming two-year stint in Denver. The 35-year-old QB was released by the Broncos in March after looking like a shell of his playmaking self, signed with the Steelers for the veteran minimum of \$1.2 million and will have to beat out Justin Fields for the starting gig.

■ **Christian McCaffrey, RB, 49ers** — All McCaffrey has done in his first seven NFL seasons is prove himself, overcoming a few injuries along the way to establish himself as perhaps the league's most dynamic player. But last season's AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year reset the market for running backs this offseason by signing a record-setting contract extension worth \$38 million over two years and will be featured on the cover of EA Sports Madden NFL 25. The 28-year-old McCaffrey will have to keep playing at that video game-like level as the 49ers seek a Super Bowl return.

■ **Deshaun Watson, QB, Browns** — After being acquired from Houston and getting a five-year, fully guaranteed \$230 million deal from Cleveland in 2022, Watson has made just 12 starts. He was suspended by the NFL for 11 games in 2022 for vi-

olating the personal conduct policy after being accused of sexual assault and harassment by two dozen women. He missed 11 games last season after breaking a bone in his right shoulder.

■ **Trevor Lawrence, QB, Jaguars** — The 2021 No. 1 overall pick got a five-year, \$275 million contract extension last month that includes \$142 million guaranteed and a \$37.5 million signing bonus — making him one of the highest-paid quarterbacks in NFL history. While Lawrence insisted his new deal doesn't add pressure, he'll need to continue to make significant progress on the field while trying to lead the Jaguars back into the playoffs after narrowly missing out last season.

■ **Saquon Barkley, RB, Eagles** — A two-year contract dispute ended with Barkley leaving the Giants and heading to the NFC East-rival Eagles on a three-year, \$37.75 million deal. The dynamic playmaker can dominate when healthy, but that has been an issue in recent seasons. Barkley will get a chance to prove he's still a top running back in the Eagles' Jalen Hurts-led offense. And he'll get to face the Giants twice a season.

■ **Daniel Jones, QB, Giants** — Speaking of the Giants, the quarterback they hoped would be the face of their franchise heads into the season with lots of uncertainty. Jones has shown flashes of what made him the No. 6 overall pick in 2019, prompting New York to give him a four-year, \$160 million contract extension in the 2023 offseason. But a neck injury and

a torn ACL limited him to six games. GM Joe Schoen said on a recent episode of HBO's "Hard Knocks" that "this is the year" for Jones to show whether he's the Giants' long-term solution.

■ **Tee Higgins, WR, Bengals** — After failing to reach an agreement on an extension, Higgins is set to play this season on the \$21.8 million franchise tag he signed last month. He'll try to set the market for himself for next offseason in free agency. He'll have to bounce back from an injury-plagued 2023, when he had 42 catches for 656 yards and five TDs in 12 games — all career lows.

■ **Chase Young, DE, Saints** — The 2020 AP Defensive Rookie of the Year while with Washington hasn't developed into a consistent game-altering player, with injuries playing a large part. The Saints are his third team in his five NFL seasons, including a nine-game stint last season with the 49ers after a midseason deal. Young, who had offseason neck surgery, will be counted on to boost New Orleans' pass rush after signing a one-year deal.

■ **Tua Tagovailoa, QB, Dolphins** — Tagovailoa could play this season on the final year of his rookie deal after the QB said last month he was "antsy" about getting a new contract done. He led the NFL with 4,624 yards passing last season, bouncing back from two concussions that cut short his 2022 season. He might need another prove-it season with a return to the post-season before he cashes in next offseason — with Miami or elsewhere.

## Utah State fires coach Anderson for contract violations

Associated Press

LOGAN, Utah — Utah State fired coach Blake Anderson for "significant violations of his contractual obligations" on Thursday, 16 days after the school informed him that he

would be dismissed following an external review that found he failed to comply with Title IX policies regarding the reporting of sexual misconduct cases.

"These reporting requirements include a prohibition on

employees outside the USU Office of Equity from investigating issues of sexual misconduct, including domestic violence," the school said. "Additionally, Anderson failed to manage the team in a manner that reflects

USU's academic values."

Nate Dreiling, who had been Utah State's defensive coordinator and defensive ends coach, was elevated on July 2 to interim coach for the upcoming season.

# Daniel Brown leads by 1 at British Open

Associated Press

TROON, Scotland — The wind caught just about everyone off guard Thursday in the British Open. It came from the opposite direction off the Irish Sea, accompanied by occasional rain, and made Royal Troon a tougher test than anyone was expecting.

Turns out that wasn't even the biggest surprise.

Daniel Brown made his major championship debut a memorable one. He birdied two of the last three holes for a 6-under 65, giving him a one-shot lead over Shane Lowry with just enough spectators left in the Scottish twilight to celebrate his amazing day.

It was getting too dark to take a photo of his name atop the leaderboard, and that doesn't interest the 29-year-old from England, anyway.

"I'm going to try and keep my feet on the ground a bit and take on the job again tomorrow," Brown said.

A one-time winner on the European tour, he arrived at Royal Troon having failed to make the cut in seven straight tourna-

ments dating to March until a couple of good events. One was the final qualifying to earn a spot in his first major, the other at the Scottish Open when he made the cut and finished 61st.

But this day was all about the wind — yes, it was fierce, but it was different. Instead of players trying to make a score on the downwind front nine and keep it together on the way back, it was tough from start to finish.

Rory McIlroy found that to be the case. He shot 78 with two double bogeys. Ditto for U.S. Open champ Bryson DeChambeau, who went out in 42 on his way to a 76. Every major is tough on Tiger Woods, 48, who had a 79 for his highest start in a major since an 80 in the 2015 U.S. Open at Chambers Bay.

Lowry motored along, putting as well as he has all year, soaking up the warm applause all while reminding himself it was only a good start and three more rounds were ahead of him. But he sure knew what to expect.

"Fortunately enough, I came here two weeks ago and I played this wind on the second day that I played here. I saw the golf

course in every wind possible I could see it," Lowry said. "Yeah, I guess that was a good thing to do, and it's out there paying off a little bit today."

Justin Thomas is off to a great start for the second straight week in Scotland, even if his score doesn't look that way. He had a 68 — he shot 62 last week in the Scottish Open — and feels as though he played better because the misses are more severely punished at Troon.

The group at 69 included PGA champion Xander Schauffele and Justin Rose, who also played bogey-free with greater appreciation of this Open because he had to endure 36-hole final qualifying just to get in.

Throw in the occasional rain, and Masters champion Scottie Scheffler found it plenty difficult after battling to a 70.

"I don't know if confusing is the right word, just challenging, especially when you get the rain involved," he said. "When you get a wet ball into the wind, it's amazing how short it goes. I think it was No. 2 today, I had 165 to the pin off a slight upslope, and I hit a hold 5-iron,

which for me usually goes about 205. It went probably 155 at the most. And I striped it."

Lowry, the Open champion at Royal Portrush five years ago, hit his stride around the turn. He birdied the seventh from about 10 feet and hit wedge to 10 feet at the par-3 eighth, the famed "Postage Stamp" that caused so much damage for a 123-yard hole.

He also made two big pars, including a 25-foot putt on the 10th, before holing a 20-foot birdie putt on the 11th to reach 4 under. Lowry ended his round with a wedge to 5 feet for his 66.

The applause kept getting louder. Lowry kept reminding himself it was only Thursday.

"For some reason I felt like he crowd were getting very excited out there," he said. "It was late in the afternoon — a few pints of Tennent's were had out there ... and it felt more like the weekend. I just kept on telling myself there's a lot more to do and there's a few days left, so I just kind of stayed in my lane and hit some good shots, and I was pretty happy with how I handled myself."

## Sources: Westbrook to Nuggets after Clips trade

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Clippers sent Russell Westbrook to the Utah Jazz on Thursday in a sign-and-trade deal for point guard Kris Dunn.

The Jazz are expected to buy out the former NBA MVP's contract so Westbrook can sign with the Denver Nuggets, according to ESPN.

Utah also got the right to swap second-round draft picks in 2030, the draft rights to center Balsa Koprivica and cash.

Westbrook, a nine-time All-Star and the 2017 MVP for Oklahoma City, was traded for the fifth time in his career. He has now been traded to Utah by both

franchises in his native Los Angeles in the past 18 months.

Westbrook, 35, has reportedly opted into the final year of his contract with the Clippers, who were to pay him just over \$4 million. The point guard averaged a career-low 11.1 points per game while mostly coming off the bench last season for the Clippers, who were bounced by Dallas in the first round of the playoffs while Kawhi Leonard was injured.

"Russ is an all-time great, and we were fortunate to have him here," Clippers president of basketball operations Lawrence Frank said in a statement.

## Bronny James continues strong play with 13 points

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Lakers rookie Bronny James put together his second promising Summer League performance in a row Thursday night, scoring 13 points in Los Angeles' 93-89 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

The son NBA career scoring leader LeBron James had eight first-half points on 3-of-5 shooting. He ended the game by making 5 of 10 shots, including 1 of 3 from 3-point range.

James also had five rebounds, three assists and two blocked shots.

James, taken 55th in this year's draft, had struggled

throughout summer league until he scored 12 points Wednesday night in an 87-86 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. Until then, James was 7 for 31 from the field this summer and 4 for 19 in two games at Las Vegas.

James averaged 4.8 points, 2.8 rebounds and 2.1 assists last season in his lone year of college basketball at Southern California, appearing in the team's final 25 games.

He wasn't able to start the season after needing a procedure to fix what was diagnosed as a congenital heart defect, which was found after he went into cardiac arrest during a workout last summer.