

## DOD eyes deploying troops to other rallies

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday said the National Guard could be deployed to immigration protests beyond Los Angeles and suggested the role of troops in immigration enforcement could expand despite concerns from lawmakers about legality.

Hegseth maintained the call-up of 4,000 National Guard members and 700 active-duty Marines was “lawful and constitutional” and said the same legal authorities that the Pentagon used to mobilize the National Guard in California over the objections of its governor could be employed in other cities.

“If there are other riots in places where law enforcement officers are threatened, we would have the capability to surge National Guard there if necessary,” he said in testimony to the Senate Appropriation Committee’s defense subpanel.

Hegseth did not answer when asked whether he would approve a request from the Department of Homeland Security this week to provide military drone surveillance to the agency and authorize military forces to detain or arrest American citizens protesting immigration raids.

“We very much support President Donald

Trump’s focus on defending the homeland, on our southern border, as well as supporting law enforcement officials doing their jobs,” he said.

“So, the answer is yes,” said Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, a member of the subpanel who is also the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Hegseth’s testimony before the subpanel was his second appearance on Capitol Hill this week and came as protests that started in Los Angeles against the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown spread across the country.

U.S. Northern Command confirmed Tuesday that service members have started accompanying federal agents as they conduct immigration raids and arrests in Los Angeles, a move that California has called unlawful.

“Service members are protecting federal assets and personnel while they perform their federal functions,” the command said in a statement. “Military service members will not directly participate in law enforcement activities.”

A federal judge in California has set a hearing for Thursday to hear California’s request to limit Marines and National Guard troops to guarding federal buildings.

Reed pointed out to Hegseth on Wednes-

day that maintaining law and order is a civil function under the Constitution.

Hegseth countered there is “plenty of precedent for U.S. military support.”

In an exchange with Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., Hegseth also refused to answer whether it was appropriate for the Pentagon to deploy the National Guard to Washington, D.C., in response to the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Hegseth only said it was “the right decision” to deploy the National Guard to Los Angeles and criticized former President Joe Biden’s administration for revoking his assignment to protect Biden’s inauguration when Hegseth was a member of the District of Columbia National Guard.

Murphy said Hegseth’s responses appeared to confirm concerns from many Americans that the Trump administration is “not willing to defend against attacks made on our democracy by supporters of the president” but is willing to deploy the National Guard against protesters criticizing the president.

“That’s not how our taxpayer dollars are supposed to work,” he said.

“They’re supposed to be used to defend the United States, no matter the nature of the political affiliation of the protesters.”

## Pentagon allows families to exit Mideast amid tension

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A Senate hearing to discuss U.S. forces in the Middle East was postponed Wednesday as the Defense Department authorized the families of troops stationed in the region to leave in the face of rising tensions with Iran.

Army Gen. Michael Kurilla, commander of U.S. Central Command, was slated to testify Thursday before the Senate Armed Services Committee about American forces in the region. The hearing was postponed less than 24 hours before it was scheduled to take place, according to a Senate webpage.

Earlier in the day, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth authorized “the voluntary departure” of troops’ families from locations across

the Middle East due to rising tensions, according to a defense official.

CENTCOM was working with the State Department and allies in the region to “maintain a constant state of readiness,” according to the defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The State Department also authorized the departure of nonessential personnel and family members from Bahrain and Kuwait.

Tensions in the region have been rising in recent days as talks between the U.S. and Iran over its advancing nuclear program appear to have hit an impasse, The Associated Press reported.

The talks seek to limit Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of some of the crushing economic sanctions that the U.S. has

imposed on the Islamic Republic. Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful.

President Donald Trump, who has previously threatened to use military force against Iran if negotiations failed, gave a less-than-optimistic view about reaching a deal with Iran, telling the New York Post’s “Pod Force One” podcast Monday that he was “getting more and more less confident about” a deal.

Iranian Defense Minister Gen. Aziz Nasirzadeh said Wednesday that he hoped talks with the U.S. would yield results, though Tehran stood ready to respond, the AP reported.

“If conflict is imposed on us, the opponent’s casualties will certainly be more than ours, and in that case, America must leave the region, because all its bases are within our reach,” he said.

# Hegseth: DOD has plan to take Greenland

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth appeared to acknowledge that the Pentagon has developed plans to take over Greenland and Panama by force if necessary but refused to answer repeated questions during a hotly combative congressional hearing Thursday about his use of Signal chats to discuss military operations.

Democratic members of the House Armed Services Committee repeatedly got into heated exchanges with Hegseth, with some of the toughest lines of questioning coming from military veterans as many demanded yes or no answers and he tried to avoid direct responses about his actions as Pentagon chief.

In one back-and-forth, Hegseth did provide an eyebrow-raising answer. Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., asked whether the Penta-

gon has plans to take Greenland or Panama by force if necessary.

“Our job at the Defense Department is to have plans for any contingency,” Hegseth said several times.

It is not unusual for the Pentagon to draw up contingency plans for conflicts that have not arisen, but his handling of the questions prompted a Republican lawmaker to step in a few minutes later.

“It is not your testimony today that there are plans at the Pentagon for taking by force or invading Greenland, correct?” said Rep. Mike Turner, R-Ohio.

As Hegseth started to repeat his answer about contingency plans, Turner added emphatically, “I sure as hell hope that is not your testimony.”

“We look forward to working with Greenland to ensure that it is secured from any potential threats,” Hegseth responded.

Time and again, lawmakers pressed Hegseth to answer questions he has avoided for months, including during the two previous days of hearings on Capitol Hill.

President Donald Trump has said that he wants to take control of the strategic, mineral-rich island nation of Greenland, long a U.S. ally. Those remarks have been met with flat rejections from Greenland’s leaders.

“Greenland is not for sale,” Jacob Isbosethsen, Greenland’s representative to the U.S., said Thursday at a forum in Washington sponsored by the Arctic Institute.

In an effort not to show the Pentagon’s hand on its routine effort to have plans for everything, Hegseth danced around the direct question from Smith, leading to the confusion.

Hegseth’s use of two Signal chats to discuss plans for U.S.

strikes on Houthi rebels in Yemen with other U.S. leaders as well as members of his family prompted dizzying exchanges with lawmakers.

He was pressed multiple times over whether he shared classified information and if he should face accountability if he did.

Hegseth argued that the classification markings of any information about those military operations could not be discussed with lawmakers. That became a quick trap, as Hegseth has asserted that nothing he posted was classified. His questioner, Rep. Seth Moulton, a Massachusetts Democrat and Marine veteran, jumped on the disparity.

“You can very well disclose whether or not it was classified,” Moulton said.

“What’s not classified is that it was an incredible, successful mission,” Hegseth responded.

## At hearing, Joint Chiefs chair breaks with Trump

*The Washington Post*

Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, who since becoming chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in April has assiduously avoided the public spotlight, on Wednesday broke with President Donald Trump’s assessment of the threat posed by Russia and the ongoing protests and violence in Los Angeles.

Caine’s comments during a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing were restrained but significant coming from the nation’s top military officer.

Trump has routinely downplayed alarm about Vladimir Putin’s territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe and, in an address this week, branded those in the U.S. protesting his immigration policies as agents of a “foreign invasion.” But Caine declined to confirm either assessment.

When asked by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., whether Putin intends to “stop in Ukraine,” the general was frank: “I don’t believe so, sir.”

When pressed by Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, to say if he believes the demonstrations and violence in Los Angeles are a sign the United States is “being invaded by a foreign nation,” as Trump told an audience of soldiers Tuesday in North Carolina, Caine said he doesn’t.

When Schatz asked if there has been a “rebellion” against the government, another politically charged term the president and his administration have employed since unrest flared in Southern California, Caine declined to affirm that either. “I think there’s definitely some frustrated folks out there,” he offered.

## US troops begin to directly detain migrants at border

*Associated Press*

EL PASO, Texas — U.S. troops have begun directly detaining immigrants accused of trespassing on a recently designated national defense zone along the southern U.S. border, in an escalation of the military’s enforcement role, authorities said Wednesday.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Chad Campbell described in detail the first detentions by troops last week of three immigrants accused of trespassing in a national defense area near Santa Teresa, N.M.

Those migrants were quickly turned over to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and are now among more than 1,400 migrants to have been charged with illegally entering militarized areas along that border, under a new border enforcement strategy from President Donald Trump’s

administration.

Troops are prohibited from conducting civilian law enforcement on U.S. soil under the Posse Comitatus Act. But an exception, the military purpose doctrine, allows it in some instances.

Authorities “noticed three individuals crossing the protective barrier into the United States,” Campbell said. “A Department of Defense response went to interdict those three individuals, told them to sit down. ... In a matter of three minutes, border patrol agents came in to apprehend. So that three minutes is that temporary detention” by the military.

Trump has designated two national military defense areas along the southern U.S. border, transferring much of the land to oversight by the Department of Defense for three years.

# Weinstein's sex trial ends in split verdict

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The judge in Harvey Weinstein's sex crimes case declared a mistrial on the remaining rape charge after the jury foreperson said he wouldn't continue deliberating.

Deliberations were ended Thursday, a day after the jury delivered a partial verdict in Weinstein's sex crimes retrial. The jury got stuck on a third charge. It was a rape accusation dating to 2013.

The foreman complained that he felt bullied by another juror and said Thursday he wouldn't go back into the jury room.

The panel convicted the ex-studio boss of one of the top charges but acquitted him of another. Both of those charges concerned accusations of forcing oral sex on women in 2006. Those verdicts still stand.

The jury of seven women and five men unanimously reached those decisions last Friday, the foreperson later told the judge. The verdict was delivered Wednesday only because Judge Curtis Farber asked whether there was agreement on any of the charges.

The third charge was over a rape accusation involving a woman who also said she had a consensual relationship with the Oscar-winning producer. Under New York law, the third-degree rape charge carries a lesser penalty than the other two counts.

Weinstein denies all the charges. In an unusual exchange with the judge during some legal arguments before the partial verdict was disclosed Wednesday, he insisted it was unfair to continue the trial after

two jurors came forward with concerns.

Jury-room strains started leaking into public view Friday, when a juror asked to be excused because he felt another was being treated unfairly. Then Monday, the foreperson complained that other jurors were pushing people to change their minds and talking about information beyond the charges.

The man raised concerns again Wednesday. In a closed-door discussion with prosecutors, defense lawyers and the judge, the foreperson said another juror was yelling at him for sticking to his opinion and at one point vowed, "You going to see me outside."

"I feel afraid inside there," the foreperson told the judge and attorneys, according to a

transcript.

Weinstein's initial conviction five years ago seemed to cement the downfall of one of Hollywood's most powerful men in a pivotal moment for the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct.

But that conviction was overturned last year, and the case was sent back for retrial in the same Manhattan courthouse.

Weinstein's accusers said he exploited his Tinseltown influence to dangle career help, get them alone and then trap and force them into sexual encounters.

His defense portrayed his accusers as Hollywood wannabes who willingly hooked up with him to court opportunity, then later said they were victimized to collect settlement funds and #MeToo approbation.

## Hundreds of laid-off CDC employees being reinstated

Associated Press

NEW YORK — More than 460 laid-off employees at the nation's top public health agency received notices Wednesday that they are being reinstated, according to a union representing the workers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services confirmed reinstatement notices went out to the former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employees, but provided few details.

About 2,400 CDC employees lost their jobs in a wave of cuts across federal health agencies in early April, according to a tally at the time.

Whole CDC programs were essentially shut down, including some focused on smoking, lead poisoning, gun violence, asthma and air quality, and workplace safety and health. The entire office that handles Freedom of Information Act requests was

shuttered. Infectious disease programs took a hit, too, including programs that fight outbreaks in other countries, labs focused on HIV and hepatitis in the U.S. and staff trying to eliminate tuberculosis.

An estimated 200 of the reinstated workers are based in the CDC's National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and Tuberculosis Prevention, HHS officials confirmed. Staffers at a CDC lab that does testing for sexually transmitted diseases are being brought back, said one CDC employee who wasn't authorized to discuss what happened and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Also reinstated are an estimated 150 employees at the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, including people staffing a lab that works on lead poisoning, according to the union and employees.

## Kennedy's new CDC panel includes vaccine critics

Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on Wednesday named eight new vaccine policy advisers to replace the panel he abruptly dismissed earlier this week.

They include a scientist who researched mRNA vaccine technology and became a conservative darling for his criticisms of COVID-19 vaccines, a leading critic of pandemic-era lockdowns and a professor of operations management.

Kennedy's decision to "retire" the previous 17-member Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices was widely decried by doctors' groups and public health organizations, who feared the advisers would be replaced by a group aligned with Kennedy's desire to reassess — and possibly end — longstanding vaccination recommendations.

On Tuesday, before he an-

nounced his picks, Kennedy said: "We're going to bring great people onto the ACIP panel — not anti-vaxxers — bringing people on who are credentialed scientists."

The new appointees include Vicky Pebsworth, a regional director for the National Association of Catholic Nurses, who has been listed as a board member and volunteer director for the National Vaccine Information Center, a group that is widely considered to be a leading source of misinformation.

Another is Dr. Robert Malone, the former mRNA researcher who emerged as a close adviser to Kennedy during the measles outbreak. Malone, who runs a wellness institute and a popular blog, rose to prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic as he relayed conspiracy theories around the outbreak and the vaccines that followed.



# Russia's military losses top 1 million

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — The number of Russian troops killed or wounded in Ukraine has topped 1 million, military officials in Kyiv said Thursday, describing the huge price that Moscow has paid for its 3-year-old invasion.

The claim by the General Staff of the Ukrainian armed forces is in line with Western intelligence estimates.

The U.K. Defense Ministry also said in a statement posted Thursday on X that Russia has suffered over 1 million casualties, including roughly 250,000 killed since it launched the

full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

On June 3, the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington said Russia likely would hit the mark of 1 million casualties this summer in what it called “a stunning and grisly milestone.”

Russia last reported its military casualties early in the war when it acknowledged that about 6,000 soldiers had been killed. Earlier this year, the General Staff of the Russian armed forces claimed that Ukrainian military losses had topped 1 million.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy last spoke of Ukrainian military losses in February, when he said in an interview that 45,100 troops had been killed and about 390,000 injured.

The mutual claims of the other side's losses couldn't be independently verified.

The casualty estimates came as Russian forces pummeled Ukraine with drones and other weapons, killing three people and injuring scores of others despite pressure to accept a ceasefire.

According to the Ukrainian air force, Russia launched 63

drones and decoys at Ukraine overnight. It said that air defenses destroyed 28 drones while another 21 were jammed.

Ukrainian police said two people were killed and six were injured in the past 24 hours in the eastern Donetsk region, the focus of the Russian offensive. One person was killed and 14 others were also injured in the southern Kherson region, which is partly occupied by Russian forces, police said.

The authorities in Kharkiv said 18 people, including four children, were injured by Russian drone attacks overnight.

## Casualties mount past 240 after Air India plane crash

*Associated Press*

AHMEDABAD, India — An Air India passenger plane bound for London crashed into a medical college in the northwestern city of Ahmedabad after takeoff Thursday, killing more than 180 people in one of India's worst airline disasters in decades, officials said.

Ahmedabad's Civil Hospital had received 186 bodies of passengers from the plane that had more than 240 people on board, Dr. Dhaval Gameti said, and he had examined the lone survivor of the crash. He identified the survivor as Ramesh Viswashkumar.

“He was disoriented with multiple injuries all over his body,” Gameti told The Associated Press. “But he seems to be out of danger.”

Black smoke billowed from the site where the plane crashed and burst into flames near the airport in Ahmedabad, a city of more than 5 million and the capital of Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state.

Firefighters doused the smoking wreckage of the plane, which would have been

fully loaded with fuel shortly after takeoff, and adjacent multistory buildings with water. Charred bodies lay on the ground and parts of the fuselage were scattered around the site. Indian army teams were assisting civil authorities to clear debris and help treat the injured.

A video on social media showed the jet slowly descending as if it were landing. As soon as it disappeared out of view behind rows of houses, a giant fireball filled the sky. The AP was able to verify the video by matching up the flight path of the plane from the runway with the crash site and the nearby residential area.

At the crash site, the tail cone of the aircraft with damaged stabilizer fins still attached to it was lodged near the top of one of the buildings.

In a social media post, Modi called the crash “heartbreaking beyond words” and said “my thoughts are with everyone affected.”

City police chief G.S. Malik told the AP that the dead could include both passengers and those on the ground.

“Exact figures on casualties are being ascertained,” he said.

Sambit Patra, a lawmaker from Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, said Gujarat's former chief minister, Vijay Rupani, was among the dead.

Divyansh Singh, vice president of the Federation of All India Medical Association, said at least five students from the medical college were killed on the ground and 50 others were injured. Singh said some of them were in critical condition and many people are “feared buried in the debris.”

Air India said the flight bound for London Gatwick Airport was carrying 242 passengers and crew, with 169 Indians, 53 Britons, seven Portuguese and one Canadian aboard. The Boeing 787-8 crashed into a residential area called Meghani Nagar five minutes after taking off at 1:38 p.m., said Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, the director general of the directorate of civil aviation.

The first crash of a Boeing 787 This is the first crash of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, ac-

cording to the Aviation Safety Network database. Boeing said it was “working to gather more information.”

India's aviation regulatory body said the aircraft gave a mayday call, signalling an emergency, but then did not respond to the calls made by the airport traffic control.

Aviation consultant John M. Cox, the CEO of Safety Operating Systems, told the AP from Los Angeles that while the first images of the crash were poor, it appeared the aircraft had its nose up and was not climbing, which is one of the things that investigators would look at.

“At this point, it's very, very, very early; we don't know a whole lot,” he said. “But the 787 has very extensive flight data monitoring — the parameters on the flight data recorder are in the thousands — so once we get that recorder, they'll be able to know pretty quickly what happened.”

The wide-body, twin-engine aircraft was introduced in 2009, and more than 1,000 have been delivered to dozens of airlines.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Robotaxi service closer to launch in state capital**

**TX** AUSTIN — Elon Musk says Tesla is “tentatively” set to begin providing robotaxi service in Austin, Texas, on June 22.

In a post on his X social media platform, Musk said the date could change because Tesla is “being super paranoid about safety.”

Investors, Wall Street analysts and Tesla enthusiasts have been anticipating the rollout of the driverless cabs since Musk said earlier this year that the service would launch in the Texas capital sometime in June.

Last month, Musk told CNBC that the taxis will be remotely monitored at first and “geofenced” to certain areas of the city deemed the safest to navigate. He said he expected to initially run 10 or so taxis, increase that number rapidly and start offering the service in Los Angeles, San Antonio, San Francisco and other cities.

Musk has been promising fully autonomous, self-driving vehicles “next year” for a decade.

**Raid at meat production plant sparks protests**

**NE** OMAHA — Immigration authorities raided an Omaha meat production plant Tuesday morning and took dozens of workers away in buses, leaving company officials bewildered because they said they had followed the law.

The raid happened around 9 a.m. at Glenn Valley Foods in south Omaha, an area where nearly a quarter of residents were foreign born according to the 2020 census.

A small group of people came out to protest the raid, and some of them even threw rocks at officials’ vehicles as a white bus carrying workers pulled away from a plant.

Chad Hartmann, president of the food packaging company, said the front office was stunned by the aggressive nature of federal officials’ raid and confused by why the company was targeted.

The plant uses E-Verify, the federal database used to check the immigration status of employees. When he said as much to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers who carried out the raid, they told him the E-Verify system “is broken.”

**Settlement said to raise auto insurance rates**

**NC** RALEIGH — North Carolina automobile insurance rates are poised to increase statewide by a 5% average this fall as part of an agreement reached between state regulators and the insurance industry.

The settlement announced on Monday by Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey is lower than the average 22.6% rate increase for private passenger vehicles that had been originally requested in February by the North Carolina Rate Bureau, which represents insurance companies.

The rate changes will take effect on new and renewed policies starting Oct. 1.

“With factors such as distracted driving, excessive speeding and increased automobile repair costs putting upward pressure on insurance

rates, I am happy that we were able to hold the average increase to 5%,” Causey said in a news release.

**Amazon to spend \$20B on data centers in state**

**PA** HARRISBURG — Amazon said Monday that it will spend \$20 billion on two data center complexes in Pennsylvania, including one it is building alongside a nuclear power plant that has drawn federal scrutiny over an arrangement to essentially plug right in to the power plant.

Kevin Miller, vice president of global data centers at Amazon’s cloud computing subsidiary, Amazon Web Services, told The Associated Press that the company will build another data center complex just north of Philadelphia.

One data center is being built next to northeastern Pennsylvania’s Susquehanna nuclear power plant, where it intends to get its power. The other will be in Fairless Hills at a logistics campus, the Keystone Trade Center, on what was once a U.S. Steel mill.

**Vote OKs arrest should homeless refuse shelter**

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — Homeless people who reject three offers of shelter will be eligible for arrest on trespassing after the San Jose City Council voted Tuesday for a policy change they hope will encourage unhoused people to trade in their tents on sidewalks for beds indoors.

The vote was 9-2 in favor of adding a “responsibility to shelter” provision to the city’s en-

campment code of conduct, which also includes expectations that homeless people will not pitch tents near schools and playgrounds or block public rights of way.

The proposal by San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan is eye-opening because it comes from a liberal city headed by a Democrat in the left-leaning San Francisco Bay Area. It is among the stricter anti-encampment deterrents proposed by elected officials since the Supreme Court in 2023 made it easier to ban homeless people from camping on public property.

**Suit seeks to ban Musk from offers to pay voters**

**WI** MADISON — A government watchdog group in Wisconsin filed a lawsuit Wednesday seeking to prohibit billionaire Elon Musk from ever again offering cash payments to voters in the battleground state like he did in this spring’s hotly contested Supreme Court race.

Musk handed out \$1 million checks to three Wisconsin voters, including two in person just days before the state’s April 1 Supreme Court election, in an effort to help elect conservative candidate Brad Schimel. Two weeks before the election, Musk’s political action committee, America PAC, offered \$100 to voters who signed a petition in opposition to “activist judges,” or referred someone to sign it.

Schimel lost to Democratic-backed Susan Crawford by 10 percentage points. Her victory cemented the 4-3 liberal majority on the Wisconsin Supreme Court until at least 2028.

— From wire reports

STARS  AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# Pacers rally past Thunder for 2-1 lead

*Associated Press*

INDIANAPOLIS — Every time Indiana has lost a game in the last three months, it has simply come back to win the next one.

Even in the NBA Finals — against a huge favorite who the Pacers now have in some trouble.

Bennedict Mathurin scored 27 points off the bench, Tyrese Haliburton finished with 22 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds, and Indiana retook the lead in the series by beating the Oklahoma City Thunder 116-107 in Game 3 on Wednesday night.

“This is the kind of team that we are,” Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. “We need everybody to be ready. It’s not always going to be exactly the same guys that are stepping up with scoring and stuff like that. But this is how we’ve got to do it.”

Pascal Siakam scored 21 for Indiana, which enjoyed a whopping 49-18 edge in bench points. The Pacers, who lost Game 2 in Oklahoma City, improved to 10-0

since mid-March in the game immediately following a loss.

“So many different guys chipped in,” Haliburton said.

Jalen Williams scored 26 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 24 and Chet Holmgren had 20 for the Thunder, who led by five going into the fourth.

Game 4 is back in Indiana on Friday night.

“We had a lot of good stretches of the game,” OKC coach Mark Daigneault said. “But they had more good stretches than we did — and outplayed us over the course of 48 minutes.”

History says the Pacers are in control now. In the 41 previous NBA Finals that were tied at a game apiece, the Game 3 winner went on to hoist the trophy 33 times — an 80.5% clip.

Advantage, Indiana.

It was back-and-forth much of the way. There were 15 ties; to put that in perspective, there were 13 ties in the five-game entirety of last year’s finals between Boston and Dallas. The last time there

was a finals game with more ties: Game 1 between Cleveland and Golden State in 2018, which was knotted 17 times.

TJ McConnell finished with 10 points, five assists and five steals for the Pacers. Since all those stats started being charted, nobody had ever come off the bench and done all that in an NBA Finals game.

“Just getting a win in general in the playoffs and in the finals, it’s really hard,” McConnell said.

“So, obviously, happy about this one, but have to move on. Have to still correct some stuff and make some adjustments.”

Before Mathurin did it in Game 3, the last player who scored 27 points off the bench in a finals game was Jason Terry for Dallas in 2011 — doing so in the Game 6 title-clinching win over Miami.

“We just had guys make plays after plays,” Haliburton said. “Our bench was amazing.”

Mathurin has had four 20-point games in these playoffs.

The Thunder knew he had the capability.

“He seems to have a game like this in every series. He’s a talented player,” Daigneault said. “He was really aggressive. He did a great job. McConnell did a great job. Their bench really came in the game and was excellent.”

The Thunder were 61-2 when leading going into the fourth quarter in the regular season. They’re 1-2 when leading going into the fourth quarter in this series. Indiana — at home in an NBA Finals game for the first time in 25 years, with Caitlin Clark, Reggie Miller, Oscar Robertson and many other stars in the crowd — simply owned the final 12 minutes.

The Pacers outscored Oklahoma City 32-18 in the fourth, holding the Thunder to 35% shooting with the game and control of the series on the line.

“There’s a lot of areas we can clean up,” Thunder forward Chet Holmgren said. “Everybody who stepped out there can be better.”

## OKC in familiar territory, falling behind in series again

*Associated Press*

INDIANAPOLIS — Game 1, a loss on the opposition’s final shot. Game 2, an easy win. Game 3, another loss to fall behind in the series again.

This formula is not the one that would be considered optimal by Oklahoma City, especially in the NBA Finals. But if there is some consolation for the overall No. 1 seed in these playoffs, it’s this: the Thunder have been in this exact spot before and found a way to prevail.

That resiliency will be tested yet again, after the Indiana Pacers beat OKC 116-107 on Wednesday night to take a 2-1 series lead in these finals. Game 4 is in Indianapolis on Friday night.

“I thought it was an uncharac-

teristic night in a lot of ways for us,” Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. “We got to learn from it and then tap back into being who we are in Game 4. If we do that, I think we’ll have a much better chance to win.”

It was not very Oklahoma City-like in Game 3. It blew a fourth quarter lead for the second time in the series, gave up 21 points off turnovers and let the Pacers’ bench run wild — outscoring the Thunder reserves 49-18.

“We’ll watch it. It wasn’t all bad,” Daigneault said. “But we definitely have to play our style and impose our will for more of the 48 minutes if we want to come on the road and get a win.”

There are uncanny similarities between the first three

games of this series and the first three games of the Western Conference semifinal matchup against the Denver Nuggets:

■ In Game 1 of the West semifinals, Aaron Gordon hit a 3-pointer with about 3 seconds left to give Denver a win in OKC. In Game 1 of the NBA Finals, Tyrese Haliburton hit a jumper with 0.3 seconds left to give Indiana a win in Oklahoma City.

■ In Game 2 of the West semifinals, the Thunder evened things up with an easy win. In Game 2 of the NBA Finals, they also evened things up with an easy win.

■ In Game 3 of the West semifinals, the Nuggets — at home for the first time in that series — played from behind for most of the night before

fighting into overtime and eventually getting a win for a 2-1 series lead. In Game 3 of the NBA Finals, the Pacers — at home for the first time in the series — trailed for much of the first half before eventually getting a win for a 2-1 series lead.

OKC dug its way out of that hole against Denver. And now, the same task awaits — with an NBA title at stake.

“I wouldn’t say that now is the time for emotions, to be thinking about how you’re feeling, emotional this, emotional that,” Thunder forward Chet Holmgren said. “You kind of have to cut that out and look at the substance of what it is. We have a great opportunity here and the great thing is we have another game coming up, Game 4.”



# NASCAR driving south to grow fan base

Associated Press

NASCAR's first international Cup Series race of the modern era is all about the eyeballs, specifically new fans in the Mexico City market.

NASCAR will be on the track Friday for the first of three days of racing at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodríguez, one of the most popular stops on the Formula 1 calendar and Ben Kennedy's newest project.

The great-grandson of NASCAR founder Bill France Sr., Kennedy has taken the family business beyond its comfortable confines before.

Kennedy in 2022 moved the preseason exhibition Clash from its longtime home at Daytona International Speedway in Florida to a temporary track built inside Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. This year, he moved the Clash to The Madhouse — the historic Bowman Gray Stadium, which had last hosted a Cup race in 1971, in Winston-Salem, N.C.

NASCAR under Kennedy also returned to North Wilkesboro Speedway in North Carolina for

the first time since 1977 when the All-Star race was moved there three years ago. He allowed dirt at Bristol Motor Speedway, a hybrid road course and oval at Charlotte Motor Speedway, alongside his biggest undertaking: NASCAR's first street race, held in downtown Chicago.

Kennedy also had his eyes set on expanding internationally, which will come Sunday with the first points-paying international race in the Cup Series since 1958. It is only third time in 77 years that NASCAR's top series will run an event that counts in the championship outside the United States. The last two times were in Canada; the Cup Series has also held exhibitions in Japan and Australia.

"Our biggest opportunity to grow as a sport is international," Kennedy said when he announced Mexico City was replacing one of the two races on the schedule allocated to Richmond International Raceway.

"The U.S. is always going to be our mainstay and our next opportunity was to expand inter-

nationally," he said. "We said we've wanted to do this for a long time, but also needed to make sure it was the right time, the right partners and the right location. Mexico City checked every box. To be in one of the biggest cities globally — over 20 million people that live in the city — is a massive opportunity for us to bring the sport."

The weekend includes the second-tier Xfinity Series and the NASCAR Mexico Series. It's a strong return to a market that devours the entire F1 weekend ticket package within an hour of them becoming available.

Mexicans have proven to be rabid motorsports fans but haven't gotten a chance to see NASCAR's big names since 2008, the final year of a four-year run of Xfinity races. Kyle Busch, Denny Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr. were winners during the four-year stretch.

Daniel Suarez, the former Xfinity champion and native of Monterrey, is NASCAR's face of the event. Suarez raced the circuit 13 times with a different layout in the NASCAR Mexico

Series, and three of his starts were wins.

"I'm super excited for the event. I'm super excited to live the moment because the first time is going to only happen once," Suarez said. "I'm really trying to be as present as possible, enjoy the moment and try to execute the best possible weekend that we can. We know that we are capable of winning the race, but that's not the goal. The goal is the execution of the entire weekend, and hopefully the win is the result of the execution part."

The planning that has gone into Mexico City, one of 38 events on the Cup schedule, began about a year ago. NASCAR has worked on myriad details, beginning with how to get nearly 200 trucks hauling race cars and equipment from Michigan International Speedway into Mexico City.

NASCAR official Tom Bryant has spearheaded the organizational logistics and made multiple trips to the border crossing in Laredo, Texas, to meet with customs officials from both nations.

## Female athletes appeal NCAA antitrust settlement

Associated Press

Eight female athletes filed an appeal Wednesday of a landmark NCAA antitrust settlement, arguing that women would not receive their fair share of \$2.7 billion in back pay for athletes who were barred from making money off their name, image and likeness.

U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken approved the settlement last week, clearing the way for direct payments from universities to athletes and the end of the NCAA's amateurism model.

The athletes who appealed the settlement competed in soccer, volleyball and track. They are Kacie Breeding of Vanderbilt; Lexi Drumm, Emma Appleman, Emmie Wannemacher, Riley Hass, Savannah Baron and Eliza-

beth Arnold of the College of Charleston; and Kate Johnson of Virginia. They have standing to appeal because they previously filed objections to the proposed settlement.

Ashlyn Hare, one of the attorneys representing the athletes, said in a statement that the settlement violates Title IX, the federal law that bans sex-based discrimination in education.

"We support a settlement of the case, but not an inaccurate one that violates federal law. The calculation of past damages is based on an error that ignores Title IX and deprives female athletes of \$1.1 billion," Hare said. "Paying out the money as proposed would be a massive error that would cause irreparable

harm to women's sports."

The law firm representing the plaintiffs in the settlement issued a statement saying the appeal would delay payments to hundreds of thousands of athletes by a minimum of several months.

"These attorneys are pursuing an appeal based on a Title IX issue that Judge Wilken already disposed of correctly, quickly and multiple times," the statement said.

The House settlement figures to financially benefit football and basketball stars at the biggest schools, who are likely to receive a big chunk of the \$20.5 million per year that colleges are permitted to share with athletes over the next year. Some athletes in other sports that don't make money for

their schools could lose their partial scholarships or see their roster spots cut.

"This is a football and basketball damages settlement with no real benefit to female athletes," Hare said. "Congress has expressly rejected efforts to exempt revenue-generating sports like football and basketball from Title IX's antidiscrimination mandate. The NCAA agreed with us. Our argument on appeal is the exact same argument the conferences and NCAA made prior to settling the case."

The appeal was filed by the law firm Hutchinson Black and Cook of Boulder, Colo., and was first reported by Front Office Sports. It would be heard by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

# McCutchen moves up Pirates' HR list in win

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Andrew McCutchen hit a milestone three-run home run in the fifth inning to help the Pittsburgh Pirates defeat the Miami Marlins 5-2 on Wednesday.

McCutchen's shot to left-center field off Cal Quantrill was his sixth of the season and 241st in 12 seasons with the Pirates, moving him past Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente into third place on the franchise's career list. Willie Stargell (475) and Ralph Kiner (301) are ahead of McCutchen.

The homer put the Pirates ahead 4-0 after they scored a run on catcher Nick Fortes' throwing error in the second inning. Pittsburgh took two of three in the series, went 6-3 on the homestand and sent the Marlins to their eighth loss in 10 games.

Bailey Falter (5-3) allowed one run — on rookie Heriberto Hernandez's first career homer — on five hits in 5½ innings. The left-hander is 4-0 with a 1.61 ERA in eight starts since the beginning of May.

**Braves 6, Brewers 2:** Spencer Schwellenbach pitched his first career complete game, Michael Harris II and Ronald Acuña Jr. each hit two-run homers and visiting Atlanta beat Milwaukee.

The Braves took two of three from the Brewers, their first series victory since winning two of three at Boston from May 16-18.

Schwellenbach (5-4) allowed five hits, struck out nine and walked none while throwing 105 pitches, 76 for strikes. He has worked at least six innings in seven consecutive starts.

**Diamondbacks 5, Mariners 2:** Eugenio Suárez hit a go-ahead grand slam, Eduardo Rodríguez (2-3) pitched into the seventh inning and host Arizona swept a three-game series from Seattle with a win.

The Diamondbacks trailed 2-0 after five innings, but scored five runs in the sixth for a second straight game to take control.

Corbin Carroll and Ketel Marte led off the sixth with back-to-back singles, Josh Naylor walked with one out and then Suárez launched a slider 410 feet off Bryan Woo (5-4) into the left-center seats to give Arizona a 4-2 lead.

**Phillies 7, Cubs 2:** Kyle Schwarber homered, Alec Bohm hit a solo shot and had four RBIs, and Jesús Luzardo struck out 10 in six innings to lead host Philadelphia to a victory over Chicago.

Luzardo (6-2) didn't walk a batter in this one, allowed only one run and recorded his fourth double-digit strikeout game in his 15th start. It was a much-needed rebound after he had given up 20 runs combined in his last two starts.

**Guardians 11, Reds 2:** Carlos Santana slugged his sixth career grand slam and host Cleveland beat Cincinnati, snapping the Reds' five-game win streak and denying manager Terry Francona a season sweep of his former team.

Santana's third-inning slam came on the 15th anniversary of his major league debut. It was his eighth homer this season and made it 5-0, helping the Guardians salvage the finale of this three-game series.

**Blue Jays 5, St. Louis 2:** Ernie Clement homered and Spencer Turnbull (1-0) worked two scoreless innings to win his Toronto debut as the visiting Blue Jays beat St. Louis for a three-game sweep.

Clement finished with three hits but did not take the field in the ninth at third base after suffering an apparent leg injury. He dove for a grounder in the eighth and needed some attention but finished the inning.

**Angels 6, Athletics 5:** Jo Adell homered in a wild six-run sixth inning and host Los Angeles overcame two homers by Brent Rooker to beat the Athletics and sweep a three-game series.

Adell's two-run shot capped a

rally that saw A's starter JP Sears ejected after giving way to reliever Grant Holman (4-2) with one out. Holman walked Mike Trout on a 3-2 pitch he believed was a strike to load the bases. Holman hit Taylor Ward to bring in a run and Jorge Soler followed with a two-run single. That's when Sears was tossed after yelling animatedly from the dugout.

**Dodgers 5, Padres 2:** Teoscar Hernández broke a sixth-inning tie with a three-run homer and Michael Conforto also went deep for visiting Los Angeles, which beat San Diego to take two of three games in the first series this season between the NL West rivals.

Rookie right-hander Ben Casparius got through four innings in his second start of the season, with just one rough patch. He allowed five straight Padres to reach in the second but they got just one run, thanks largely to center fielder Andy Pages throwing out Gavin Sheets at the plate on a 99 mph throw on the fly to catcher Will Smith.

**Orioles 10, Tigers 1:** Jordan Westburg hit a three-run homer during a seven-run eighth inning and host Baltimore pulled away to a rout over Detroit.

Zach Eflin (6-2) allowed a run over 6½ innings for his third consecutive victory. Keegan Akin struck out pinch-hitter Jahmai Jones to strand two and escape the seventh when it was a one-run game.

**Mets 5, Nationals 0:** David Peterson pitched a six-hitter for the first nine-inning complete game of his professional career, and host New York beat Washington for its fifth straight win.

Brandon Nimmo homered twice and Juan Soto went deep against his former team for the second consecutive night. Pete Alonso put the Mets ahead in the first inning with his major league-high 63rd RBI, his 20th in the past 10 games.

**Red Sox 4, Rays 3:** Rookie Marcelo Mayer hit two of host

Boston's four solo home runs and the Red Sox outlasted Tampa Bay.

Abraham Toro added a go-ahead homer in the fifth inning, and Jarren Duran also hit one to help Boston earn its second series win over the Rays this season.

**Twins 6, Rangers 2:** Byron Buxton launched a 479-foot home run, the second-longest in the majors this season, to power host Minnesota past Texas.

Buxton's three-run shot to center field off starter Jack Leiter (4-3) was the longest of his 144 career homers, and it gave the Twins a 3-2 lead in the third inning. The only big league home run hit farther this year was a 484-foot drive by Angels star Mike Trout on April 19.

**Yankees 6, Royals 3:** Aaron Judge homered for the third consecutive game, Clarke Schmidt allowed just two hits over six innings and visiting New York cruised to a victory over Kansas City.

Paul Goldschmidt added a pair of RBIs during a five-run second inning for the Yankees, who improved to 5-0 against the Royals this season. New York is 12-3 against them since the start of last season, including its playoff series win.

**Astros 10, White Sox 2:** Christian Walker homered among his three hits and had a season-high four RBIs to lead host Houston over Chicago.

Jose Altuve added two hits to give him 2,300 in his career, joining Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman (2,342) as the only active players with at least 2,300.

**Giants 10, Rockies 7:** Mike Yastrzemski's two-run double in the eighth inning keyed another San Francisco rally, and the visiting Giants beat Colorado for their seventh straight victory.

Willy Adames homered and drove in three early runs for San Francisco, but it trailed 6-3 entering the eighth before coming back against reliever Tyler Kinley (0-3).