

## Police clear US campus encampments

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Police ordered pro-Palestinian protesters to clear out of a tent encampment at New York University early Friday, a move that follows weeks of demonstrations and police confrontations at college campuses nationwide that have resulted in more than 2,300 arrests.

About a dozen protesters who refused police orders to leave were arrested and about 30 more left voluntarily, according to NYU spokesperson John Beckman. The action, which began at about 6 a.m. at the request of school officials, was conducted “to minimize the likelihood of injury” or the spread of disruption, Beckman said.

Classes will proceed as scheduled on Friday, he said. A larger NYU encampment was dismantled on April 22 and more than

130 protesters were arrested.

Officers from the New York Police Department also moved in to clear a similar encampment at The New School in Greenwich Village on Friday. At least two buildings were closed and students were unable to get in for classes. Deputy Commissioner of Operations Kaz Daughtry posted on X that The New School “has requested our assistance to disperse the illegal encampments inside their university center building and residence hall.”

Video posted by Daughtry showed dozens of helmeted officers massed outside the school on lower Fifth Avenue. No details on arrests at The New School were immediately released. Messages seeking comment were sent to the school.

Meanwhile, at the State University of New York at New

Paltz, police said 133 people were arrested Thursday night as a pro-Palestinian encampment was broken up. University president Darrell P. Wheeler said administrators had hoped to avoid the removal, but it became necessary.

“The present encampment has increased in size since its inception,” Wheeler wrote in a message to the college community. “It is displacing other student groups who have equal rights to use that space.”

Officers wearing face shields and carrying batons dragged away protesters who were seated with their arms locked. A crowd chanted, “Let them go! Let them go!” according to videos posted on social media.

At the University of Tennessee, nine people, including seven students and two people who weren’t affiliated with the

school, were arrested Thursday night after a group gathered on the law school lawn in violation of university policy did not leave after a 9 p.m. deadline, the university said. All nine received citations and were released, Chancellor Donde Plowman said in a statement Friday morning. The students will face sanctions under the student code of conduct.

Earlier in the week, more than 100 people were taken into custody during a crackdown at Columbia University. The encampment at Columbia, set up on April 17, inspired a wave of similar encampments nationwide over the Israel-Hamas war.

The Associated Press has recorded at least 58 incidents since April 18 where arrests were made at campus protests across the U.S.

## Hamas sending delegation to Egypt for further talks

*Associated Press*

BEIRUT — Hamas said Thursday that it was sending a delegation to Egypt for further cease-fire talks, in a new sign of progress in attempts by international mediators to hammer out an agreement between Israel and the militant group to end the war in Gaza.

After months of stop-and-start negotiations, the cease-fire efforts appear to have reached a critical stage, with Egyptian and American mediators reporting signs of compromise in recent days. But chances for the deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of de-

stroying Hamas.

The stakes in the cease-fire negotiations were made clear in a new U.N. report that said if the Israel-Hamas war stops today, it will still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed by nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza. It warned that the impact of the damage to the economy will set back development for generations and will only get worse with every month fighting continues.

The proposal that U.S. and Egyptian mediators have put to Hamas — apparently with Israel’s acceptance — sets out a three-stage process that would bring an immediate six-week

cease-fire and partial release of Israeli hostages, but also negotiations over a “permanent calm” that includes some sort of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, according to an Egyptian official. Hamas is seeking guarantees for a full Israeli withdrawal and complete end to the war.

Hamas officials have sent mixed signals about the proposal in recent days. But on Thursday, its supreme leader, Ismail Haniyeh, said in a statement that he had spoken to Egypt’s intelligence chief and “stressed the positive spirit of the movement in studying the cease-fire proposal.”

The statement said that Hamas negotiators would travel to

Cairo “to complete the ongoing discussions with the aim of working forward for an agreement.” Haniyeh said he had also spoken to the prime minister of Qatar, another key mediator in the process.

The brokers are hopeful that the deal will bring an end to a conflict that has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, caused widespread destruction and plunged the territory into a humanitarian crisis. They also hope a deal will avert an Israeli attack on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza’s 2.3 million people have sought shelter after fleeing battle zones elsewhere in the territory.

# US plans to return to Chad for talks

*Associated Press*

ACCRA, Ghana — The U.S. military plans to return to Chad within a month for talks about revising an agreement that allows it to keep troops based there, an American general said Wednesday.

The U.S. said last month it was withdrawing most of its contingent of about 100 troops from Chad after the government questioned the legality of their operations there. This followed Niger's decision to order all U.S. troops out of the country, dealing a blow to U.S. military operations in the Sahel, a vast region south of the Sahara desert where groups linked to al-Qaida and Islamic State operate.

U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Michael Langley, the commander of U.S. Africa Command, made the comments to reporters in Ghana at the second annual African Maritime Forces Summit, or AMFS.

He said the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Chad was expected to be temporary, and Chad had communicated to Washington that it wanted to continue the security partnership after the presidential election there.

"We'll come back for discussions within a month to see in what ways, and what they need, to be able to build further in their security construct and also against terrorism," Langley said.

Government officials in Chad couldn't immediately be reached for comment. The presidential election in Chad is scheduled for Monday, and analysts expect the incumbent to win.

Chad's interim president, Mahamat Deby Itno, seized power after his father, who ran the country for more than three decades, was killed fighting rebels in 2021. Last year, the government announced it was extending the 18-month transition for two more years, which led to protests across the country.

Langley said the withdrawal of U.S. forces was a temporary step "as part of an ongoing review of our security cooperation, which will resume after

Chad's May 6 presidential election."

Both Chad and Niger have been integral to the U.S. military's efforts to counter violent extremist organizations across the Sahel region, but Niger's ruling junta ended an agreement last month that allows U.S. troops to operate in the West African country.

Niger is home to a major U.S. air base, in the city of Agadez, about 550 miles from the capital, Niamey, using it for manned and unmanned surveillance flights and other operations. The U.S. has also invested hundreds of millions of dollars in training Niger's military, since it began operations there in 2013.

## NATO members condemn activities on alliance soil

*Associated Press*

BRUSSELS — NATO countries say they are deeply concerned by a campaign of hybrid activities on the military alliance's soil they attribute to Russia, and which they say constitute a threat to their security.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday in a message posted on the social media platform X that actions including disinformation, sabotage, acts of violence and cyber and electronic interference "will not deter us from supporting Ukraine."

There was no immediate response to a request for comment from the Russian Foreign Ministry on Stoltenberg's statement.

Earlier this year, a U.K.-based think tank said Russia was rebuilding its capacity to destabilize European countries, posing a strategic threat to NA-

TO as its members focus on the war in Ukraine.

"NATO Allies are deeply concerned about recent malign activities on Allied territory, including those resulting in the investigation and charging of multiple individuals in connection with hostile state activity affecting Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the United Kingdom," the North Atlantic Council, the principal political decision-making body within NATO, said.

NATO allies condemned Russia's behavior and called on the country "to uphold its international obligations."

"These incidents are part of an intensifying campaign of activities which Russia continues to carry out across the Euro-Atlantic area, including on Alliance territory and through proxies," the statement read.

## Japan, US, Australia eye deal on more defense R&D

*Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — Japan, the United States and Australia were expected to be in the final phases of preparation to sign a document on a deal to promote joint research and development in the defense field at Thursday's trilateral defense ministers meeting in Hawaii, a senior U.S. Defense Department official told The Yomiuri Shimbun and other media on Tuesday.

The official also said the command-and-control system of U.S. forces in Japan was expected to be reevaluated, with a goal of completing the review by March 2025.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles were expected to attend the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's change of command ceremony. The three were ex-

pected to agree on a deal and sign an agreement before the ceremony.

The document will include agreements on the standardization of equipment and advanced information-sharing on research, development and testing. The official said the deal would enhance the interoperability of equipment and make cooperation more efficient and cost-effective. In January, Japan agreed with Australia to conduct joint research on autonomous underwater vehicles, while working with the United States to analyze technologies to counter hypersonic weapons being developed by China and Russia. Trilaterally, the countries are conducting research on unmanned aerial vehicles linked to fighter jets. The upcoming deal is expected to expand current bilateral cooperation efforts in advanced technologies to a trilateral framework.

# USAF plans new charges against leaker

*The Washington Post*

The U.S. airman convicted in a sprawling leak of classified government secrets that revealed sensitive intelligence about America's allies and adversaries will face military criminal proceedings this month, Air Force officials said Wednesday.

Jack D. Teixeira, a member of the Massachusetts Air National Guard who in March pleaded guilty to a raft of federal crimes, faces charges under the military justice system of obstructing justice and failing to obey a lawful order, service officials said in a statement.

The Air Force intends to hold a hearing to review evidence May 14 at Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts, the officials said. If prosecutors present a sufficient case, the case could then move to a court-martial trial.

It was not immediately clear who would represent Teixeira, of Dighton, Mass., during the military proceedings. Through a spokesperson, members of Teixeira's family declined to comment.

The Air Force's disciplinary proceedings raise the prospect that Teixeira, 22, could face additional time in confinement af-

ter he completes his federal sentence. He faces more than 16 years in prison as part of his plea deal with the Justice Department, and is expected to be sentenced in that case this fall.

Teixeira posted hundreds of classified national security documents on Discord, a chat app popular with video gamers, disclosing U.S. government assessments about matters such as vulnerabilities in Ukrainian air defenses and terrorist plotting in Afghanistan.

The case shocked and embarrassed the Pentagon last year, as images of numerous classified documents spread rapidly

across social media.

Teixeira's acquaintances on Discord previously told The Washington Post that the airman knew that he could get in trouble for sharing classified information but did so anyway to impress them.

The leak also exposed serious security gaps that resulted in disciplinary action for at least 15 of Teixeira's colleagues and supervisors. An Air Force investigation completed last year found a "culture of complacency" and lack of supervision within his unit, the 102nd Intelligence Wing, at Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod.

## China claims 2016 access agreement with Philippines

*Associated Press*

TAIPEI, Taiwan — For the first time, China has publicized what it claims is an unwritten 2016 agreement with the Philippines over access to South China Sea islands.

The move threatens to further raise tensions in the disputed waterway, through which much of the world's trade passes and which China claims virtually in its entirety.

A statement from the Chinese Embassy in Manila said the "temporary special arrangement" agreed to during a visit to Beijing by former president Rodrigo Duterte allowed small scale fishing around the islands

but restricted access by military, coast guard and other official planes and ships to the 12 nautical mile limit of territorial waters.

The Philippines respected the agreement over the past seven years but has since reneged on it to "fulfill its own political agenda," forcing China to take action, the statement said.

"This is the basic reason for the ceaseless disputes at sea between China and the Philippines over the past year and more," said the statement posted to the embassy's website Thursday, referring to the actions of the Philippines.

President Ferdinand Marcos

Jr. and Duterte have denied forging any agreements that would have supposedly surrendered Philippine sovereignty or sovereign rights to China. Any such action, if proven, would be an impeachable offense under the country's 1987 Constitution.

However, after his visit to Beijing, Duterte hinted at such an agreement without offering details, said Collin Koh, senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies based in Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and an expert on naval affairs in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly Southeast Asia.

"He boasted then that he not

only got Chinese investment and trade pledges, but also that he secured Philippine fishermen access to Scarborough Shoal," Koh said, referring to one of the maritime features in dispute.

Beijing's deliberate wording in the statement "is noteworthy in showing that Beijing has no official document to prove its case and thus could only rely mainly on Duterte's verbal claim," Koh said.

Marcos, who took office in June 2022, told reporters last month that China has insisted that there was such a secret agreement but said he was not aware of any.

## Jobs report shows slower hiring, wage growth in April

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The nation's employers pulled back on their hiring in April but still added a decent 175,000 jobs in a sign that persistently high interest rates may be starting to slow the robust U.S. job market.

Friday's government report showed that last month's hiring gain was down sharply from the

blockbuster increase of 315,000 in March. And it was well below the 233,000 gain that economists had predicted for April.

Yet the moderation in the pace of hiring, along with a slowdown last month in wage growth, will likely be welcomed by the Federal Reserve, which has kept interest rates at a two-decade high to fight persistent-

ly elevated inflation. Hourly wages rose a less-than-expected 0.2% from March and 3.9% from a year earlier, the smallest annual gain since June 2021.

The Fed has been delaying any consideration of interest rate cuts until it gains more confidence that inflation is steadily slowing toward its 2% tar-

get. Rate cuts by the central bank would, over time, reduce the cost of mortgages, auto loans and other consumer and business borrowing.

Stock prices jumped and bond yields fell Friday after the jobs report was released on hopes that rate cuts might now be more likely sometime in the coming months.



# Former Trump aide Hicks testifies in trial

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Hope Hicks, a former adviser to Donald Trump, took the witness stand Friday in his criminal trial, where prosecutors are expected to question her about her knowledge of hush money payments made during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Hicks, who served as White House communications director, is the first close Trump adviser to testify in the case, which accuses the former president of a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election by silencing women who claimed to have sexual encounters with him.

Hicks, who is testifying for the prosecution under a subpoena, acknowledged she was “really nervous” after stepping up to the microphone. Referring to her former boss as “Mr. Trump,” she told the court she last communicated with him in the summer or fall of 2022.

While no longer in Trump’s inner circle, Hicks spoke about the former president in glowing terms as the prosecutor began

questioning her about her background. Hicks complimented Trump multiple times in the first few minutes of her testimony, describing him as a “very good multitasker, a very hard worker.”

Prosecutors say Hicks spoke with Trump by phone during a frenzied effort to keep allegations of his marital infidelity out of the press after an “Access Hollywood” tape leaked weeks before the 2016 election. In the tape, from 2005, Trump boasted about grabbing women without their permission.

Trump has denied the allegations of extramarital sexual encounters. The presumptive Republican presidential nominee for election this November denies any wrongdoing in the case.

Former Trump attorney and fixer Michael Cohen, the prosecution’s star witness, has yet to take the stand in the hush money trial. But jurors are already hearing Cohen’s words as prosecutors work to directly tie Trump to payments to silence women with damaging claims

about him before the 2016 election.

The second week of testimony in the case was expected to wrap up Friday, a day after jurors heard a potentially crucial piece of evidence: a recording of Trump and Cohen, then his attorney, discussing a plan to pay off an ex-Playboy model who claimed to have an affair with Trump. The former president denies the affair.

Prosecutors have spent the week using detailed testimony about meetings, email exchanges, business transactions and bank accounts to build on the foundation of their case accusing Trump of a scheme to illegally influence the election. They are setting the stage for pivotal testimony from Cohen, who paid porn actor Stormy Daniels \$130,000 for her silence before he went to prison for the hush money scheme.

Trump’s defense has worked to poke holes in the credibility of prosecutors’ witnesses, and show that Trump was trying to protect his reputation and fam-

ily — not his campaign — by keeping the women quiet. The defense also suggested that Trump was, in fact, the victim of extortion.

The recording played Thursday was secretly made by Cohen shortly before the 2016 election. Cohen is heard telling Trump about a plan to purchase the rights to former Playboy model Karen McDougal’s story from the National Enquirer so that it would never come out. The tabloid had previously bought McDougal’s story to bury it on Trump’s behalf.

In the recording, Cohen revealed that he had spoken to then-Trump Organization Chief Financial Officer Allen Weisselberg about “how to set the whole thing up with funding.”

Trump can be heard responding: “What do we got to pay for this? One-fifty?”

Trump suggested the payment be made with cash, prompting Cohen to object by repeatedly saying “no.” Trump then says “check” before the recording cuts off.

## 100,000 migrants expected to enroll in ‘Obamacare’

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roughly 100,000 immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children are expected to enroll in the Affordable Care Act’s health insurance next year under a directive the Biden administration released Friday.

The move took longer than promised to finalize and fell short of Democratic President Joe Biden’s initial proposal to allow those migrants to sign up for Medicaid, the health insurance program that provides nearly free coverage for the nation’s poorest people.

But it will allow thousands of people, known as “Dreamers,” to access tax breaks

when they sign up for coverage after the Affordable Care Act’s marketplace enrollment opens Nov. 1, just days ahead of the presidential election.

“I’m proud of the contributions of Dreamers to our country and committed to providing Dreamers the support they need to succeed,” Biden said in a statement Friday.

While it may help Biden boost his appeal at a crucial time among Latinos, a crucial voting bloc that he needs to turn out to win the election, the move is certain to prompt more criticism among conservatives about the president’s border and migrant policies.

## Heavy rains near Houston flood roads, close schools

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Officials in Southeast Texas, including the Houston area, on Friday urged residents to prepare for worsening flooding after days of heavy rains that have led to high-water rescues and mandatory evacuation orders.

“This threat is ongoing and it’s going to get worse. It is not your typical river flood,” Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, the top elected official in the county, said Friday.

Officials said 26 people and 30 pets have been rescued from flood waters in the Houston area. Hidalgo said a school bus carrying children northeast of Houston also required a rescue after driv-

ing near high waters.

Hidalgo on Thursday issued a mandatory evacuation order for those living along portions of the river and called the situation “life-threatening” and “catastrophic.”

Multiple roads north of the Houston remained closed on Friday due to flooding, according to the Texas Department of Transportation. A section of U.S. Highway 59 between Cleveland and Shepherd, about 50 miles north-east of Houston, was also closed.

The National Weather Service reported the river was at 66.2 feet Friday morning and expected to crest at 76.6 feet on Saturday. The flood stage for the river is 58 feet, according to the weather service.

# Knicks advance with victory over 76ers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — With a frenzied Philly crowd clamoring for defense, Josh Hart hesitated for just a second after Jalen Brunson passed him the ball from the left wing before Hart realized the 76ers weren't playing any D on him.

Left alone at the top of the arc, Hart let it fly.

"I was able to get my feet set and just shoot an open uncontested shot," he said.

Hart raised his arms and extended three fingers on each hand on his go-ahead 3-pointer with 24.4 seconds left that was finally enough to help send the New York Knicks past the Philadelphia 76ers 118-115 in Game 6 on Thursday night and into the second round of the playoffs.

Brunson had 41 points and 12 assists to lead the Knicks, who are set for an Eastern Conference semifinal matchup with Indiana. The Pacers beat Mil-

waukee in six games and advanced to the second round for the first time in 10 years.

Game 1 is Monday night in New York.

The Knicks are through to the second round in consecutive years for the first time since the postseasons from 1992-2000, and even then, nobody did what Brunson did in this series by scoring 40 points or more in each of the final three games. He became the first Knick to do that since Bernard King 40 years ago, and the first NBA player to score 40 or more to close out a series since Michael Jordan for Chicago against Cleveland in 1989.

In a series defined by tight games, Hart hit the clutch shot that made it 114-111 and again had "Let's go Knicks! Let's go Knicks!" chants echoing throughout Philly's home court. Joel Embiid scored a bucket but fouled out on the next posses-

sion. Donte DiVincenzo sealed New York's win with two free throws.

"The fourth quarter was just one big play after the next," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said.

Naturally, the former Villanova Wildcats trio of Hart, DiVincenzo and Jalen Brunson saved the Knicks from a first-half collapse that was nearly enough to force a Game 7. DiVincenzo scored 23 points in 48 minutes and Hart had 16.

Hart atoned for a missed free throw late in Game 5 that would have put the Knicks up by four. Nursing a three-point lead, Tyrese Maxey pulled up from 35 feet to tie it at 97 with 8.1 seconds left and the Sixers went on to win the game.

"I felt that loss is on my shoulders," Hart said. "I had a day and a half to think about that. That's really all I thought about."

The 76ers — who trailed by 22 in the first half before taking a 54-51 lead at the break — have another long summer off to think about one more wasted season of Embiid's prime.

Embiid finished with 39 points and 13 rebounds. Buddy Hield had 20 points.

After dropping 45 points in Game 5, Maxey was a non-factor in the first half and finished with 17.

"This series probably could have went the exact opposite the way it did," 76ers coach Nick Nurse said. "But it didn't."

Despite Philadelphia's best efforts to keep rowdy Knicks fans at home, Wells Fargo Center sounded more like Madison Square Garden in the waning moments. Knicks fans crowded near New York's tunnel after the game and held their phones high to capture video of their favorite team headed to the locker room.

## Pacers celebrate 1st playoff series win in a decade

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — T.J. McConnell and Obi Toppin complemented one another's play perfectly Thursday night.

They were still trading fist bumps long after the Indiana Pacers celebrated a rare series-clinching victory.

Toppin scored 21 points, McConnell added 20 points and nine assists and they led the Pacers to a 120-98 rout over the Milwaukee Bucks in Game 6. They will face New York — who edged Philadelphia late Thursday — in their first Eastern Conference semifinal in a decade.

"It means a lot," McConnell said. "Not getting into the playoffs since the bubble, not being able to advance since 2014, we take great pride in being able to advance and extend our season. Milwaukee has a great team and, if I can be honest with you, I think our bench has taken a couple steps back competitive wise and I think tonight all of us went out there with the mentality we're going to take it to another level."

Did they ever.

Nobody was better than McConnell. He finished with a playoff career best scoring total

while matching his playoff career high in assists and coming up four steals — all following a dismal Game 5 in Milwaukee.

But McConnell wasn't going to allow one bad game to derail this milestone moment for Indiana. The 4-2 series victory came exactly 30 years after Indiana won its first NBA playoff series, a 3-0 sweep over Orlando.

"T.J. actually helped me today, told me to be aggressive, told me to be myself," said Toppin, who also produced a playoff career high scoring total. "Everybody did their jobs today. From the starters to the bench,

everybody had a good game."

The short-handed Bucks also played again without two-time league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, who never returned to action after straining his left calf April 9.

Damian Lillard, meanwhile, returned from a strained right Achilles tendon and played well enough — but was not nearly as dominant as he was in the first two games when he scored 69 points. Lillard finished with 28 points on 7-of-16 shooting.

Bobby Portis Jr. added 20 points and 15 rebounds for Milwaukee.

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# Maple Leafs top Bruins, force Game 7

Associated Press

TORONTO—William Nylander scored twice, Joseph Woll made 22 saves and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Boston Bruins 2-1 on Thursday night to force a seventh game in the first-round Eastern Conference series.

“We battled and competed,” said Nylander, who sat the first three games of the series because of an undisclosed ailment. “And Woll was incredible.”

Toronto has overcome a 3-1 series deficit, also staving off elimination with a 2-1 victory in overtime in Boston on Tuesday night, to send the series back to Boston for a winner-take-all finale Saturday night. The series winner will face the Florida Panthers.

Morgan Rielly assisted on both goals.

Jeremy Swayman stopped 24 shots for the Bruins, who also blew a 3-1 lead against the Flor-

ida Panthers last year in the first round before losing in Game 7 following a record-setting regular season. Morgan Geekie spoiled Woll’s shutout bid with 0.1 seconds left.

Bruins coach Jim Montgomery wants to see more from his team in the decider and called out forward David Pastrnak by name.

“Your best players need to be your best players this time of year,” Montgomery said. “I think the effort is tremendous and they need to come through with some big-time plays in big-time moments.”

“I think (captain Brad) Marchand has done that in the series. Pasta needs to step up.”

Said Pastrnak: “I maybe didn’t get enough shots. I should maybe have a little bit more of a shooting mentality. Usually, that always helps me.”

Toronto was without Auston Matthews for the second

straight game after the star center was pulled from Game 4 because of an illness.

Nylander opened the scoring with 54.8 seconds left in the second period. The Swedish winger took a pass from Timothy Liljgren in the offensive zone before weaving away from his check and firing a shot that glanced off Bruins defenseman Charlie McAvoy in front and beat Swayman on the short-side.

“Big-time stuff,” Toronto coach Sheldon Keefe said. “What you’re looking for from a player of his calibre.”

The goal set off wild celebrations inside an electric Scotiabank Arena — and outside the rink as Maple Leaf Square turned into a mosh pit of blue and white.

Toronto made it 2-0 with 2:13 left in the game when Nylander moved in alone after taking a pass from Matthew Knies and

slid a backhand between Swayman’s pads.

“They’re obviously very desperate, fighting for their lives,” Marchand said. “So that’s always the toughest game to get. We know that. But I thought tonight was better than last game. ... If someone told us at the start of the season that we’d be Game 7 at home against Toronto, we’d take that all day.”

Woll is the first goalie in NHL history to have each of his first four career playoff starts come in elimination games. Thatcher Demko (2020), Michael Hutchinson (2020) and Manny Fernandez (2003) are the only other netminders to have their first three starts come in win-or-go home contests.

The Bruins had just one shot on target through 27 minutes.

“Gives me a lot of confidence,” Woll said. “Guys were laying out blocking shots and coming up big.”

## Woods accepts a special exemption to US Open

Associated Press

Tiger Woods accepted a special exemption for the U.S. Open at Pinehurst No. 2, the first time the three-time champion has needed an exemption to play.

Woods has been exempt for every U.S. Open since he first played in 1995 as the reigning U.S. Amateur champion. His five-year exemption from winning the 2019 Masters expired last year.

The exemption was expected and likely to be the first of many. The USGA is particular about who is exempt from qualifying, last awarding one in 2021 to Phil Mickelson.

Jack Nicklaus, with four U.S. Open titles among his 18 professional majors, received a record eight special exemptions, including five in a row until he

stopped playing the U.S. Open after 2000 at Pebble Beach.

Arnold Palmer received five U.S. Open exemptions, the last one in 1994 when he returned to Oakmont near his hometown for a tearful farewell.

Woods won the 2000 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach by 15 shots, a record margin of victory for any major champion. He added another title in 2002 at Bethpage Black in New York, and he famously won his third U.S. Open at Torrey Pines in 2008 just a week before he had reconstructive surgery on his left knee.

The U.S. Open is June 13-16 at Pinehurst No. 2, which is staging the Open for the fourth time. Woods tied for third, two shots behind the late Payne Stewart, in 1999.

## Wallace takes 1-shot lead at Byron Nelson with a 63

Associated Press

McKINNEY, Texas — Matt Wallace was relegated to watching the Masters amid a self-described “terrible” season when he found himself pondering what makes some of the best golfers in the world so good.

Asked if Scottie Scheffler was among the players he was watching, Wallace stumbled over his words just a bit.

“Well, him, but, I mean, so good that it’s difficult to take a lot from him because he’s playing unbelievable golf,” Wallace said. “It’s not as realistic for everyone else out there.”

Well, maybe Wallace can take advantage of the world No. 1 sitting out his hometown tournament awaiting the birth of his first child.

The one-time PGA Tour win-

ner shot an 8-under 63 for a one-shot lead over seven players in the first round of the CJ Cup Byron Nelson on Thursday.

Taiga Semikawa, a 23-year-old from Japan playing on a sponsor exemption, settled for 64 after a three-putt par on the par-5 18th just before a rain-delayed round with preferred lies was suspended by darkness with nine players on the course.

Taylor Pendrith, Alex Noren, Chesson Hadley, Jake Knapp, Davis Riley and Kelly Kraft also were at 7 under at TPC Craig Ranch, just north of Scheffler’s hometown of Dallas.

Defending champion Jason Day was in a large group trailing by three after he and Jordan Spieth struggled down the stretch playing in the same threesome. Spieth was 3 under.



# Orioles win series against the Yankees

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Ryan Mountcastle and Jorge Mateo each homered and drove in two runs to lift the Baltimore Orioles to a series-deciding 7-2 victory over the New York Yankees on Thursday.

Ryan McKenna also connected and Jordan Westburg's two-run triple helped the Orioles complete a four-run fifth to chase Yankees starter Carlos Rodon (2-2) and secure a third win of the four-game set, the first this season between likely AL East contenders.

Righty Kyle Bradish allowed one run in 4½ innings in his first start after beginning the season on the 15-day injured list with a UCL strain. Keegan Akin (1-0) retired four batters while allowing a run in middle relief.

Gleyber Torres hit his first home run but also made the Yankees' third error of the series to help extend the game's decisive inning.

Rondon yielded all seven Baltimore runs — six earned — on eight hits in his shortest outing of 2024.

He escaped his bases-loaded, no-out jam in the second before Mountcastle's solo shot in the third, and Mateo's and McKenna's in the fourth.

**Giants 3, Red Sox 1:** Mike Yastrzemski had a visit from his grandfather Carl and then homered into the Fenway Park bullpen like the Hall of Fame outfielder so often did in his heyday, and San Francisco beat Boston.

Ryan Walker (3-2) pitched a perfect sixth inning to help the Giants avoid the sweep and snap Boston's four-game winning streak. Camilo Doval pitched the ninth for his sixth save.

Tyler O'Neill walked twice and hit a wall-scraping popup to drive in Boston's only run.

Carl Yastrzemski visited his grandson in the visitor's clubhouse before the game, but reportedly did not stay to see Mike

come up in the third inning of a scoreless, hitless game and line a 1-1 pitch from Josh Winckowski over the short wall in right field. Although there were plenty of Giants fans in the crowd for the team's first trip to Boston in five years, even the Red Sox fans stood and cheered for the opponent with the familiar last name.

The Red Sox tied it in the bottom half when O'Neill doubled off the Green Monster and Rafael Devers came around from first base to score. But San Francisco went ahead in the seventh on three straight singles that chased Zack Kelly (0-1), and then made it 3-1 on Nick Ahmed's sacrifice fly.

The elder Yastrzemski hit 237 of his 452 career homers at Fenway Park during a 23-year career as the Red Sox left fielder. Mike now has two of his 90 career homers in six interleague games at the ballpark.

**Marlins 5, Rockies 4 (10):** Jesús Sánchez hit a game-winning single in the bottom of the 10th inning and host Miami beat Colorado and swept their three-game series.

The Marlins got two of their three victories in the series in 10 innings. They earned a 7-6 win in the opener on Monday.

Sánchez's two-out opposite-field line drive to left off reliever Jalen Beeks scored automatic runner Luis Arraez from second.

Justin Lawrence (1-2) struck out Bryan De La Cruz before Beeks retired Jazz Chisholm Jr. on a fly out to center and walked Josh Bell.

Arraez had two hits and Bell homered, while Miami starter Edward Cabrera and five relievers struck out 16. Burch Smith (1-0) pitched the 10th.

Cabrera was lifted with no outs in the fifth after his fourth walk loaded the bases. Cabrera gave up four runs and three hits.

**Mets 7, Cubs 6 (11):** Francisco Lindor delivered a pair of two-run doubles off the bench,

rallying host New York past Chicago in 11 innings for a split of their four-game series.

Right fielder Starling Marte made two rocket throws in extra innings, cutting down Cubs runners at the plate to end the 10th and 11th. Brandon Nimmo had two RBIs for the Mets, who overcame a 4-0 deficit to salvage a 3-4 homestand.

Daniel Palencia (0-1) drilled Harrison Bader with a pitch to begin the bottom of the 11th. Lindor, who didn't start after leaving Wednesday night's game early with flu-like symptoms, lashed a sharp grounder inside third base and down the left-field line to score automatic runner Brett Baty and Bader.

Nick Madrigal gave Chicago a 6-5 lead in the top of the 11th with a run-scoring double on the first pitch from Danny Young (1-0) in his Mets debut.

Mets closer Edwin Díaz pitched two hitless innings, retiring all five batters he faced in his first outing of more than one inning since missing last season following knee surgery.

Christopher Morel hit a three-run homer for the Cubs, who stole six bases. Pete Crow-Armstrong, traded by the Mets in July 2021 a year after they drafted him in the first round, had two RBIs.

**Rangers 6, Nationals 0:** Nathan Eovaldi pitched 5½ shutout innings before leaving with groin tightness and Ezequiel Duran's two-out double was the first of three consecutive RBI hits in the second inning as host Texas beat Washington.

Eovaldi (2-2) limited the Nationals to two hits and two walks while throwing 92 pitches — 13 short of his season high. He struck out eight for the fourth time this year, his season high. He won for the first time since April 3 and for the first time in four home starts this year.

Jacob Latz, David Robertson and Jonathan Hernández finished off the four-hit shutout, Texas' second this season.

The Rangers won a second straight series, which the defending World Series champions had not done since winning the first two series of the season.

The Nationals failed to move above .500 for the first time since July 1, 2021. Arriving in Texas after scoring 33 runs in a four-game sweep at Miami, the Nats scored two runs in three games.

Duran's double was his second RBI of the season, first since opening day. He'd sat out the previous three games after going 6 for 38, dropping his batting average from a season-high .429 to .200.

Evan Carter and Marcus Semien followed with RBI singles off rookie Mitchell Parker (2-1), making his fourth major league start.

**Astros 8, Guardians 2:** Jon Singleton homered and had three RBIs and Jose Altuve added three hits to lead host Houston to a win over Cleveland.

The victory gives the Astros, who are last in the AL West at 11-20, consecutive series wins for the first time this season.

Houston trailed 2-1 with one out in the sixth inning when Jeremy Peña tripled on a ball that deflected off the glove of center fielder Gabriel Arias. There were two outs when Singleton knocked a ball from Logan Allen (3-2) into the front row in right field to put the Astros up 3-2.

Singleton has started the last three games at first base because slumping veteran José Abreu has been optioned to Houston's spring training facility to help the 2020 AL MVP get back on track.

Singleton has homered twice this week. The lefty hit his only two homers of 2023 in the same game on Aug. 11. He also shined in the bottom of the sixth when Peña grabbed a grounder hit by Arias and he scooped up the throw to first by extending into the splits.

# College football eyes postseason future

Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — With the expanded College Football Playoff locked in through 2031, questions still remain about what the rest of the postseason will look like.

One thing is certain, there will still be bowls.

“College football cannot have a postseason that only provides 12 opportunities,” Nick Carporelli, executive director of Bowl Season, the organization that advocates for bowl games, said Thursday. “That’s contrary to every other NCAA sport. And the leadership of college athletics has been very clear in recent years that they want more opportunities for student athletes to compete in the postseason, not less across all sports.”

Carporelli has some ideas to keep bowl games robust and relevant, including creating more freedom for games to make the most interesting matchups. Though the biggest change could come from outside the bowl system as college

football moves to a more professionalized model and player compensation agreements mandate postseason participation.

The CFP expands from four to 12 teams this season. It could jump to 14 teams starting as soon as 2026. Even in a four-team system, the playoff decreased the focus on the bowls and prompted discussion about how meaningful they were.

While the dozens of bowl games played around Christmas and New Year’s still draw a healthy amount of eyeballs to TVs, player opt-outs have become commonplace.

“I still believe at their core, kids like playing football,” said Carporelli, who was attending a Fiesta Bowl event that included Big 12 and Mountain West Conference meetings earlier this week. “They’ve been presented with reasons why not to in recent years. And I think that’s very unfortunate for sure.”

Carporelli believes the future of college football includes rev-

enue sharing with players and possibly name, image and likeness compensation deals that set terms similar to pro sports contracts.

“As player compensation becomes the norm, at some point in time, I think it’s reasonable to expect that there’s going to be some obligation on the part of the student-athlete receiving the compensation to perform the duties as assigned,” he said. “In my mind, 12 regular-season games, a bowl game or playoff.”

This year there will be 36 bowl games played outside the College Football Playoff, which will also include four first-round games played on campus sites.

Carporelli said he doesn’t believe the bowl eligibility minimum of six victories will change. Whether there will still be a need for three dozen bowl games for the 2026 season and beyond is to be determined.

Even the bowls outside the playoff structure have contractual agreements with confe-

rences that run concurrent to the CFP’s original 12-year deal, which expires after the 2025 season. All those games are about to become free agents.

Conferences prefer to lock in numerous bowl partnerships to guarantee eligible teams a spot in the postseason.

Carporelli would like to encourage more flexibility in the bowl selection process, allowing the games the ability to make compelling matchups with the available teams — more similar to way bowls operated 30 or 40 years ago — instead of being locked into predetermined conference deals.

“It would be the conferences that would need to make that decision,” he said. “Anything is possible.”

“At the highest level, the CFP has decided that there’s not going to be any certainty there outside of five conference champions to be in that system. I don’t see any reason why that can’t translate to the next level of bowl games.”

## Georgia’s Kirby Smart agrees to contract extension

Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Georgia’s Kirby Smart agreed to a contract extension Thursday that makes him the highest-paid coach in college football with an annual salary of \$13 million.

Smart got a bump in salary of \$1.75 million annually as part of the deal, which ties him to the Bulldogs through 2033. He could also receive up to \$1.55 million per year in bonuses based on the new 12-team playoff structure, an increase from \$1.3 million under the previous terms.

Georgia also gave athletic director Josh Brooks a one-year extension to 2030 that raises his salary by \$100,000 per year, taking it to \$1.275 million over the course of the contract.

Brooks is also eligible for up

to \$200,000 in bonuses based on the overall performance of the athletic program.

Smart surpassed Clemson’s Dabo Swinney, who is set to make \$11 million in 2024, as the nation’s highest-paid coach.

Smart’s new deal takes the place of a 10-year extension worth more than \$110 million that he signed in 2022 coming off his first national title. That contract started with \$10.25 million in base salary and included annual raises, taking the total compensation to \$12.25 million in 2031.

“I continue to be grateful and humbled by our administration’s commitment to our football program,” Smart said in a statement. “The current culture in collegiate athletics is ever-changing and as challenging as

it has ever been, so I truly appreciate the leadership that our team is continually provided.”

Smart, who played defensive back at Georgia in the 1990s, has guided the program to unprecedented heights since he took over as coach in 2016.

The Bulldogs won back-to-back national titles during the 2021 and ’22 seasons, and made a strong run at an unprecedented three-peat this past season before taking their only loss to Alabama in the Southeastern Conference title game.

Under Smart, Georgia has compiled a dazzling record of 94-16 that includes a 56-9 mark in the SEC. The Bulldogs have won a pair of SEC titles, finished in the Top 10 of The Associated Press rankings the last seven seasons, and perennially landed

high-ranked recruiting classes throughout his tenure.

With a strong group of returning players, led by quarterback Carson Beck, Georgia is expected to remain a leading national championship contender in 2024.

“I have an immense pride for representing my alma mater and look forward to that relationship continuing for many years to come,” Smart said.

The Bulldogs have lost only two games in the last three seasons, both to Alabama and now-retired coach Nick Saban.

Georgia President Jere W. Morehead said Smart has set “the definition of excellence for all of college football.”

The 43-year-old Brooks has served as the head of Georgia’s athletic department since 2021.