

High court ends protections for 4 countries

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Friday again cleared the way for the Trump administration to strip temporary legal protections from hundreds of thousands of immigrants for now, pushing the total number of people who could be newly exposed to deportation to nearly 1 million.

The justices lifted a lower-court order that kept humanitarian parole protections in place for more than 500,000 migrants from four countries: Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. The court has also allowed the administration to revoke temporary legal status from about 350,000 Venezuelan migrants in another case.

The court did not explain its reasoning in the brief order, as

is typical on its emergency docket. Two justices publicly dissented.

Republican President Donald Trump promised on the campaign trail to deport millions of people, and in office has sought to dismantle Biden administration policies that created ways for migrants to live legally in the U.S. Trump amplified false rumors that Haitian immigrants in Ohio, including those with legal status under the humanitarian parole program, were abducting and eating pets during a debate with then-President Joe Biden, according to court documents.

His administration filed an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court after a federal judge in Boston blocked the administration's push to end the

program. The Justice Department argues that the protections for people fleeing turmoil in their home countries were always meant to be temporary, and the Department of Homeland Security has the power to revoke them without court interference.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote in dissent that the effect of the high court's order is "to have the lives of half a million migrants unravel all around us before the courts decide their legal claims." Justice Sonia Sotomayor joined the dissent.

Jackson echoed what U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani wrote in her ruling that ending the legal protections early would leave people with a stark choice: flee the country or risk losing everything. Her ruling came in

mid-April, shortly before permits were due to be canceled. An appeals court refused to lift it.

The Supreme Court's order is not a final ruling, but it means the protections will not be in place while the case proceeds. It now returns to the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

Talwani, an appointee of Democratic President Barack Obama, did allow revocations of parole, but on a case-by-case basis.

But the Trump administration argued the parole was granted en masse, and the law doesn't require ending it on an individual basis. Taking on each case individually would be a "gargantuan task," and slow the government's efforts to press for their removal, Solicitor General D. John Sauer argued.

Macron warns to not forget Ukraine amid China focus

Associated Press

SINGAPORE — French President Emmanuel Macron warned the United States and a large audience of Indo-Pacific nations on Friday night that they risk a dangerous double standard as they concentrate on a potential conflict with China, if that shift comes at the cost of abandoning Ukraine.

Macron made the remarks as the U.S. is considering withdrawing troops from Europe to shift them to the Indo-Pacific. He warned that abandoning Ukraine would eventually erode U.S. credibility in deterring any potential conflict with China over Taiwan.

In a speech that emphasized France's tight ties to the Indo-Pacific, Macron said that any shifts to developing a more hard-line deterrent stance in

the region is still tied to how the world — and particularly the West — treats other critical issues, including climate change and Israel's ongoing military operations in Gaza.

"If you consider that Russia could be allowed to take a part of the territory of Ukraine without any restriction, without any constraint, without any reaction of the global order, how would you phrase what would happen in Taiwan, what would you do the day something happened in" the Philippines? he asked in a speech delivered in English.

The speech was notable in that Macron delivered it with U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in the audience and as not only France, but countries around the globe are dealing with President Donald

Trump's fluctuating tariff threats. Both Europe and those same Indo-Pacific nations also find themselves increasingly pulled between the competing interests of Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"We want to cooperate. But we don't want to be instructed on a daily basis what is allowed, what is not allowed and how our life will change because of the decision of a single person," Macron said, in an apparent jab at Trump.

Macron and Hegseth are among the world leaders, diplomats and top defense officials in Singapore this weekend for the region's biggest security forum that comes amid concerns of China's growing assertiveness, the global impact of the Russia-Ukraine war and the flare-up of conflicts in Asia.

It's Hegseth's first time at the Shangri-La Dialogue, hosted by the International Institute for Security Studies, which is taking place against the backdrop of heightened rhetoric between Beijing and Washington. The Trump administration has threatened China with triple-digit tariffs, and there's some uncertainty in the region over how committed the U.S. is to the defense of Taiwan, which also faces possible 32% American tariffs.

China claims the self-governing democracy as its own, and Xi hasn't ruled out taking it by force. China sends military aircraft, ships and spy balloons near Taiwan as part of a campaign of daily harassment, and currently has an aircraft carrier in the waters southeast of the island.

Google, DOJ face off on search monopoly

Associated Press

Google returned to federal court Friday to fend off the U.S. Justice Department's attempt to topple its internet empire at the same time it's navigating a pivotal shift to artificial intelligence that could undercut its power.

The legal and technological threats facing Google are among the key issues that will be dissected during the closing arguments of a legal proceeding that will determine the changes imposed upon the company in the wake of its dominant search engine being declared as an illegal monopoly by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta last year.

Brandishing evidence presented during a recent three-week stretch of hearings, Justice Department lawyers will

attempt to persuade Mehta to order a radical shake-up that includes a ban on Google paying to lock its search engine in as the default on smart devices and an order requiring the company to sell its Chrome browser.

Google lawyers are expected to assert only minor concessions are needed, especially as the upheaval triggered by advances in artificial intelligence already are reshaping the search landscape, as alternative, conversational search options are rolling out from AI startups that are hoping to use the Department of Justice's four-and-half-year-old case to gain the upper hand in the next technological frontier.

"Over weeks of testimony, we heard from a series of well-funded companies eager to gain

access to Google's technology so they don't have to innovate themselves," Lee-Anne Mulholland, Google's vice president of regulatory affairs, wrote in a blog post earlier this month. "What we didn't hear was how DOJ's extreme proposals would benefit consumers."

After the daylong closing arguments, Mehta will spend much of the summer mulling a decision that he plans to issue before Labor Day. Google has already vowed to appeal the ruling that branded its search engine as a monopoly, a step it can't take until the judge orders a remedy.

While both sides of this showdown agree that AI is an inflection point for the industry's future, they have disparate views on how the shift will affect Google.

The Justice Department contends that AI technology by itself won't rein in Google's power, arguing additional legal restraints must be slapped on a search engine that's the main reason its parent company, Alphabet Inc., is valued at \$2 trillion.

Mehta indicated in court Friday that he was still undecided on how much AI's potential to shake up the search market should be incorporated in his forthcoming ruling. "This is what I've been struggling with," Mehta said early in the hearing.

Justice prosecutor David Dahlquist urged the judge to issue forward-thinking remedies that would "pry open" the search market to competition and not allow Google to use its search monopoly to unfairly benefit itself in the AI race.

Tariff ruling threatens \$2T fiscal hole in Trump plan

Bloomberg News

The court ruling that blocked much of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs threatens to blow what some economists estimate as a \$2 trillion hole into the U.S. fiscal outlook over the coming decade, should the judgment stay in place.

The ruling could also present a new obstacle for Republicans who are relying on the revenue to help offset the cost of a roughly \$4 trillion tax cut moving through Congress.

"At face value, this ruling will take away billions of dollars of prospective tariff revenue" annually, said Douglas Elmendorf, a Harvard Kennedy School professor and former director of the Congressional Budget Office — a nonpartisan arm of the U.S. legislature.

A federal appeals court Thursday paused the Court of

International Trade's Wednesday ruling striking down a swath of Trump's levies, and the White House is pushing to overturn the judgment entirely, aiming to appeal to the Supreme Court as soon as Friday.

If the CIT ruling survives appeal, it would remove duties that would have raised nearly \$200 billion on an annual basis, according to estimates by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Citigroup Inc.

Trump and his aides have been relying on that increased revenue to get Republican lawmakers united behind the president's "big beautiful bill" tax-cut package.

The \$2 trillion in added revenue over a decade would have gone some way towards offsetting the cost of the tax cuts, as measured by the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation, as the legislation's spending re-

ductions aren't expected to cover even half the tab.

Failing judicial success, Trump's trade team would have to stitch together duties using executive authority other than the one struck down.

But the process would take months, and decisions could still end up facing legal challenges, economists say. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Fox News Thursday that "anything that the courts do to get in the way both harms the American people in terms of trade and in terms of tariff revenue."

Even a short-term hit to revenue would pose problems: The government is currently barred from raising net new debt, and the Treasury has been using special accounting maneuvers to make good on payments. Monthly customs revenue just hit a record of

over \$16 billion, helping the department's cash flows.

Barclays Plc warned that the court ruling will bring forward the date by when the Treasury will have exhausted its cash and extraordinary measures. That in turn builds pressure on Republicans to get the tax bill done, as it includes an increase in the debt limit.

"The fiscal outlook just got a lot worse as a result of this court ruling," said Ernie Tedeschi, who is director of economics at Yale University's Budget Lab and a former Biden administration official. "Very high tariffs just got less likely."

The Budget Lab also estimated revenues would be about \$2 trillion lower over 10 years — roughly \$700 billion compared with \$2.7 trillion — if the court ruling stands, and current tariff levels remain in place.

Faizan Zaki pushes past his flub to win Scripps Spelling Bee

Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. — Faizan Zaki's enthusiasm for spelling nearly got the better of him. Ultimately, his joyful approach made him the Scripps National Spelling Bee champion.

The favorite entering the bee after his runner-up finish last year — during which he never misspelled a word in a conventional spelling round, only to lose a lightning-round tiebreaker that he didn't practice for — the shaggy-haired Faizan wore the burden of expectations lightly, sauntering to the microphone in a black hoodie and spelling his words with casual glee.

Throughout Thursday night's finals, the 13-year-old from Allen, Texas, looked like a champion in waiting. Then he nearly threw it away. But even a shocking moment of overconfidence couldn't prevent him from seizing the title of best speller in the English language.

With the bee down to three spellers, Sarvadnya Kadam and Sarv Dharavane missed their words back-to-back, putting Faizan two words away from victory. The first was "commelina," but instead of asking the requisite questions — definition, language of origin — to make sure he knew it, Faizan let his showman's instincts take over.

"K-A-M," he said, then stopped himself. "OK, let me do this. Oh, shoot!"

"Just ring the bell," he told head judge Mary Brooks, who obliged.

"So now you know what happens," Brooks said, and the other two spellers returned to the stage.

Later, standing next to the trophy with confetti at his feet,

Faizan said: "I'm definitely going to be having nightmares about that tonight."

Even pronouncer Jacques Bailly tried to slow Faizan down before his winning word, "éclaircissement," but Faizan didn't ask a single question before spelling it correctly, and he pumped his fists and collapsed to the stage after saying the final letter.

The bee celebrated its 100th anniversary this year, and Faizan may be the first champion who's remembered more for a word he got wrong than one he got right.

"I think he cared too much about his aura," said Bruhat Sama, Faizan's buddy who beat him in the "spell-off" tiebreaker last year.

Faizan had a more nuanced explanation: After not preparing for the spell-off last year, he overcorrected, emphasizing speed during his study sessions.

Although Bruhat was fast last year when he needed to be, he followed the familiar playbook for champion spellers: asking thorough questions, spelling slowly and metronomically, showing little emotion. Those are among the hallmarks of well-coached spellers, and Faizan had three coaches: Scott Remer, Sam Evans and Sohum Sukhantankar.

None of them could turn Faizan into a robot on stage.

"He's crazy. He's having a good time, and he's doing what he loves, which is spelling," Evans said.

Said Zaki Anwar, Faizan's father: "He's the GOAT. I actually believe that. He's really good, man. He's been doing it for so long, and he knows the dictionary in and out."

US inflation gauge cools; little sign of tariff impact

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A key U.S. inflation gauge slowed last month as President Donald Trump's tariffs have yet to noticeably push up prices, while American incomes jumped.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that consumer prices rose just 2.1% in April compared with a year earlier, down from 2.3% in March and the lowest since September. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 2.5% from a year earlier, below the March figure of 2.7%. Economists track core prices because they typically provide a better read on where inflation is headed.

The figures show inflation is still declining from its postpandemic spike, which reached the highest level in four decades in July 2022. Economists and some business executives have

warned that prices will likely head higher as Trump's widespread tariffs take effect, though the timing and impact of those duties are now in doubt after they were struck down late Wednesday in court.

On a monthly basis, overall prices and core prices both increased just 0.1% from March to April. The cost of big-ticket manufactured goods rose a hefty 0.5%, though that increase was offset by a 0.1% decline in other goods, such as groceries. The cost of services rose just 0.1% from March to April.

At the same time, incomes — before adjusting for inflation — rose a healthy 0.8%. Much of that gain reflected an increase in Social Security benefits for some retired teachers, firefighters and federal workers whose incomes previously weren't fully counted toward Social Security benefits.

Ex-assistant testifies 'Diddy' had sexually assaulted her

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Sean "Diddy" Combs' former personal assistant testified Thursday that the hip-hop mogul sexually assaulted her, threw her into a swimming pool, dumped a bucket of ice on her and slammed a door against her arm during a torturous eight-year tenure.

The woman, testifying at Combs' sex trafficking trial under the pseudonym "Mia," said Combs put his hand up her dress and forcibly kissed her at his 40th birthday party in 2009, forced her to perform oral sex while she helped him pack for a trip and raped her in guest quarters at his Los Angeles home in 2010 after climbing into her bed.

"I couldn't tell him 'no' about anything," Mia said, telling jurors she felt "terrified and confused and ashamed and scared"

when Combs raped her. The assaults, she said, were unpredictable: "always random, sporadic, so oddly spaced out where I would think they would never happen again."

If she hadn't been called to testify, Mia said, "I was going to die with this. I didn't want anyone to know ever."

Speaking slowly and haltingly, Mia portrayed Combs as a controlling taskmaster who put his desires above the well-being of staff and loved ones. She said Combs berated her for mistakes, even ones other employees made.

"It was chaotic. It was toxic," said Mia, who worked for Combs from 2009 to 2017, including a stint as an executive at his film studio. "It could be exciting. The highs were really high and the lows were really low."

Chaos seen at Gaza food distribution sites

Associated Press

NUSEIRAT, Gaza Strip — Chaos erupted again Thursday as tens of thousands of desperate Palestinians in the Gaza Strip tried to collect food from distribution sites run by a new U.S.- and Israeli-backed foundation. Multiple witnesses reported a free-for-all of people grabbing aid, and they said Israeli troops opened fire to control crowds.

In central Gaza, Associated Press video showed smoke bombs arching through the air around a distribution center, and gunfire was audible as an Israeli tank moved nearby. Witnesses said it was Israeli troops who fired the projectiles to clear large crowds of Palestinians after the center ran out of supplies Thursday.

"I came to get a sack of flour ... a sardine tin or anything," said Mahmoud Ismael, a man on

crutches from an earlier leg injury who said he walked for miles to get to the center, only to leave empty-handed.

"There is no food in my house, and I can't get food for my children," he said.

Turmoil has plagued the aid system launched this week by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which runs three distribution centers in the territory. Israel has slated GHF to take over food distribution in Gaza despite opposition from the United Nations and most humanitarian groups.

Over the past three days, there have been reports of gunfire at GHF centers, and Gaza health officials have said at least one person has been killed and dozens wounded.

The Israeli military said it has facilitated the entry of nearly 1,000 truckloads of supplies into Gaza recently and accused the

U.N. of failing to distribute the goods. It claimed Hamas was responsible for the crisis by stealing aid and refusing to release the remaining hostages.

The military's spokesman, Brig. Gen. Efeef Defrin, said the army will continue "to provide for the humanitarian needs of the civilian population while taking necessary steps to ensure that the aid does not reach the hands of Hamas."

With media not allowed to access the centers, the circumstances remain unclear.

The distribution points are guarded by armed private contractors, and Israeli forces are positioned in the vicinity. On Tuesday, the Israeli military said it fired warning shots to control a crowd outside one center.

Dr. Khaled Elser, a surgeon at Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis, told the

AP he treated two people wounded at distribution centers on Thursday — a 17-year-old girl and a man in his 20s. Both had gunshot wounds in the chest and stomach, he said, adding that other casualties had come in from the centers but that he did not have an exact number.

In a statement Thursday, GHF said no shots had been fired at any of its distribution centers the past three days and there have been no casualties, saying reports of deaths "originated from Hamas."

Separately on Thursday, Israeli strikes in Gaza killed at least 34 people, according to local health officials. Israel said it would establish 22 more Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank. Most of the international community views settlements as illegal and an obstacle to resolving the decades-old conflict.

Liverpool car-ramming suspect appears in court

Associated Press

LONDON — A man charged with multiple counts of intentionally causing grievous bodily harm for ramming a vehicle into a crowd of Liverpool soccer fans celebrating their team's Premier League championship was ordered held in custody Friday at his first court appearance.

Paul Doyle, wearing a black suit, white shirt and gray tie, looked emotional as he arrived in court. He only spoke to confirm his name, address and birth date in a hearing in Liverpool Magistrates' Court. He did not enter a plea.

Doyle, 53, is accused of dangerous driving and six serious offenses alleging he caused or tried to cause grievous bodily harm. The charges carry a maximum sentence of life in prison if he is convicted.

The father of three bowed his head as the charges were read. The counts are related to two boys, two women and two men who were among the 79 people injured Monday. The victims ranged in age from 9 to 78, police said. Seven people remained hospitalized Thursday.

District Judge Paul Healey ordered that the victims' names not be published.

Doyle's case was transferred to Liverpool Crown Court, where a different judge scheduled an Aug. 14 hearing for him to enter pleas to the charges. His trial date was tentatively scheduled for Nov. 24 and is expected to last three to four weeks.

Doyle's defense lawyer did not ask for bail.

The driver was believed to have acted alone and terrorism was not suspected, Merseyside Police said.

ISIS claims its first attack on Syrian army since Assad's fall

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for two attacks in southern Syria, including one on government forces that an opposition war monitor described as the first on the Syrian army to be carried out by the extremists since the fall of Bashar Assad.

ISIS said in a statement on Thursday that in one attack, a bomb targeting a "vehicle of the apostate regime" detonated, leaving seven soldiers dead or wounded.

It said the attack occurred "last Thursday," or May 22, in the al-Safa area in the desert of the southern province of Sweida.

In a separate statement, the group said another bomb attack occurred this week in a nearby area, targeting members of the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army.

It claimed that it killed one fighter and wounded three.

There was no comment from the government on the claims. A spokesperson for the Free Syrian Army didn't immediately respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the attack on government forces killed one civilian and wounded three soldiers, describing it as the first such attack to be claimed by ISIS against Syrian forces since the 54-year rule by the Assad family ended in December.

ISIS, which once controlled large parts of Syria and Iraq, is opposed to the new authority in Damascus led by President Ahmad al-Sharaa, who was once the head of al-Qaida's branch in Syria and fought battles against ISIS.

Braves' Sale fastest to 2,500 strikeouts

Associated Press

Chris Sale became the fastest pitcher to reach 2,500 strikeouts, pitching six scoreless innings as the Atlanta Braves beat the Philadelphia Phillies 9-3 on Thursday night to split a doubleheader.

The Phillies won the afternoon game 5-4.

Sale (3-3) struck out Edmundo Sosa in the sixth inning for his eighth strikeout to reach the milestone. He did it in 2,026 innings, surpassing the record of 2,107 $\frac{2}{3}$ set by Randy Johnson.

Sale became the 40th pitcher in major league history to reach 2,500 strikeouts and joined Clayton Kershaw, Justin Verlander and Max Scherzer as the only active pitchers to have reached that plateau.

Sosa was the last hitter Sale faced. He allowed just two hits in six shutout innings.

Austin Riley had a double, a homer and four RBIs, Ozzie Albies homered and drove in three. Luke Williams had a pair of RBIs for the Braves, who snapped a three-game losing skid.

Zack Wheeler (6-2) allowed six runs in 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings for the Phillies, who lost for just the

second time in their past 13 games.

Blue Jays 12, Athletics 0: Ernie Clement homered and had five RBIs, Bo Bichette homered and drove in three runs and Toronto used an eight-run second inning to rout the struggling Athletics.

José Berríos (2-2) and two relievers combined on a four-hitter as the Blue Jays recorded their second straight shutout and fourth of the season. All four have come since May 20.

The Athletics have lost three straight and 14 of 15, getting outscored 117-44 in that span.

The A's have been outscored by 101 total runs this season. They've lost by 10 or more runs an MLB-worst seven times.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a two-run homer and George Springer added a solo shot for Toronto. Alejandro Kirk reached base four times, scored twice and drove in a run with a sacrifice fly.

The A's have allowed at least one home run in 11 consecutive games, giving up 25 total homers in that span. Athletics opponents have hit 84 home runs this season.

Berríos struck out nine in six innings to win for the first time since April 7 at Boston.

Athletics left-hander Jacob Lopez (0-3) allowed seven runs and six hits in 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings, his third straight losing start.

Rays 13, Astros 3: Junior Caminero homered and drove in a career-high six RBIs to lead Tampa Bay to a win over Houston.

The game was tied 3-all with no outs and two on in the seventh when Yandy Díaz's RBI single put the Rays on top. Tampa Bay made it 5-3 when Jonathan Aranda reached and Díaz scored on a fielding error by first baseman Victor Caratini.

Caminero then connected off Bryan King (3-1) on his 11th homer this season to push the lead to 8-3.

The 21-year-old Caminero, who finished a triple shy of the cycle, drove in two more runs on a double in Tampa Bay's five-run eighth that made it 13-3.

Jose Altuve and Yainer Diaz hit solo homers for the Astros, whose four-game winning streak was halted.

Nationals 9, Mariners 3, 10 Innings: Josh Bell hit a three-

run homer in a seven-run 10th inning in Washington's victory over Seattle.

The Nationals set a franchise record for runs in an extra inning.

Rookie Daylen Lile got the outburst started against Collin Snider (1-1) with a sacrifice fly to deep right that came just a few feet shy of a home run. Luis Garcia Jr. doubled home a pair of runs before Bell hit eighth home run of the season and second in two days.

For a good while, it appeared Nationals starter MacKenzie Gore would require little offensive support, considering MLB's strikeout leader racked up eight strikeouts across six shutout innings to up his season total to 101.

Gore was buoyed, too, by James Wood's two-RBI double to left field in the sixth inning, and was in line for the victory that instead went to Nationals reliever Jose A. Ferrer (2-2).

But in the seventh, the Mariners drew back even. Leody Taveras and Ben Williamson had back-to-back RBI singles to tied it at 2.

Piastri, Norris eye Verstappen's hold on Spanish Grand Prix

Associated Press

MONTMELO, Spain — Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris have just three points between them at the top of the F1 standings as the McLaren pair aim to break Max Verstappen's hold on the Spanish Grand Prix this weekend.

Verstappen has driven his Red Bull to victory at the race for the last three seasons, using the high-speed track as a step-

ping stone toward his haul of four straight world championships so far.

But McLaren has put Verstappen's reign in Spain — and overall title hopes — in jeopardy.

Piastri and Norris have won six of the eight races so far in 2025, building on McLaren's constructors championship from last year. Now the question is if — or when — one of them will emerge as the team's best

shot to dethrone Verstappen for the driver's title.

Verstappen has won two races this year and is the only driver to stop a McLaren sweep so far. Piastri leads the standings with 161 points, with Verstappen in third place with 136.

"You have got to say that McLaren have to be favorite, they have looked incredibly strong throughout the early races," Red Bull team principal

Christian Horner said Friday. "We have got to make sure to keep in touch, and to beat them you have to start taking points off them."

Piastri said that while Red Bull puts all its energies into Verstappen winning — with his new teammate Yuki Tsunoda clearly well behind — he and Norris make each other better even if they do take points off one another.

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Texas Tech tops Ole Miss in women's CWS

Associated Press

NiJaree Canady pitched a two-hitter with 10 strikeouts, and No. 12 seed Texas Tech edged unseeded Mississippi 1-0 on Thursday night in the first Women's College World Series appearance for both teams.

Canady, last year's USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year, led Stanford to the national semifinals two straight years before transferring to Texas Tech. She led the Red Raiders to their first Big 12 regular season and tournament titles.

Canady was dominant against Ole Miss in a game delayed 75 minutes by lightning and rain. She retired the first 16 batters she faced, and struck out the side in the first and seventh innings. She blew a fastball by Rebels' slugger Lexi Brady for the game's final out.

"You just know when the game starts, she's a competitor," Texas Tech coach Gerry Glasco said. "You have been around athletes enough, no matter what sport, you just run across people that can turn it up at game time. And she's that player."

Texas Tech (51-12) will play UCLA on Saturday for a spot in the semifinals. Ole Miss (42-20) will face Oregon in Friday's elimination game.

For the first time in her three seasons at the World Series, Canady won't have to work her way through the loser's bracket.

"It was definitely a goal of mine just to come back, have a day off tomorrow," she said. "So, definitely huge. To be able to give this team a rest, I feel like is going to be really good."

Angelina DeLeon ended Canady's run with a sixth-inning single up the middle and moved to second on an infield single by Taylor Malvin. But Canady struck out Jaden Pone looking and got Lair Beutae to foul out to third.

Texas Tech's Lauren Allred got the game's first hit in the

fourth inning, singling inside the third base line off the Rebels' Aliyah Binford.

Allred scored on a double by Alana Johnson and a throwing error by the left fielder to give Canady all the run support she needed.

Binford allowed four hits and did not give up an earned run.

Oklahoma 4, Tennessee 3: Ella Parker hit a three-run, walk-off homer to lift Oklahoma. Parker's second homer of the game off Tennessee ace Karlyn Pickens came with two outs and strengthened the Sooners' chances of winning a fifth straight national title.

"I wasn't trying to make any moment too big," Parker said. "I thought all the batters before that did a good job staying loose throughout the moment and not letting the moment get too big."

Some fans thought the game was already over before Parker's shot. That didn't sit well with Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso.

"The one thing that we noticed, and I'm just going to be really honest, is I was watching people leave the game, and it was in the seventh," Gasso said. "And I shared that with the team — not that that had anything to do with anything — but people thought we were done. One thing, if you're watching us through the season — we're never done."

Pickens, a National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) first-team All-American, had dominated most of the game with pitches regularly hitting 75 mph.

She faltered late. Ailana Agbayani opened Oklahoma's half of the seventh with a walk. Pickens retired the next two hitters before Oklahoma's pair of first-team All-Americans came through. Kasidi Pickering singled and moved Agbayani to third before Parker's blast to center ended the game.

Second-seeded Oklahoma (51-7) advanced to face No. 6

seed Texas for a spot in the semifinals. Oklahoma has beaten Texas in the championship series two of the past three years. Both programs jumped from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference this season.

Seventh-seeded Tennessee (45-16) will face Florida in an elimination game on Friday. Instead of having a day to rest Pickens, the Volunteers will have a short turnaround after Pickens threw 129 pitches.

Oklahoma pitcher Sam Landry, a second-team All-American, hung tough and got the win, despite trailing nearly the entire game. She scattered eight hits and allowed just one earned run.

Tennessee led 3-1 and loaded the bases with one out in the seventh, but Oklahoma turned a double play and the Volunteers did not score.

UCLA 4, Oregon 2: Jessica Clements hit a two-run walk-off home run with two outs in UCLA's victory.

"I feel on top of the world," Clements said. "That was awesome."

Clements' blast off Oregon reliever Elise Sokolsky lifted ninth-seeded UCLA (55-11) into a matchup with No. 12 Texas Tech on Saturday. The Bruins are challenging for a record 13th World Series title.

"Game 1 is the biggest one," UCLA coach Kelly Inouye-Perez said. "Our ability to get this one is something I'm very proud of."

Kaitlyn Terry got the win for UCLA. She gave up four hits and one earned run in seven innings.

Sokolsky took the loss in relief of Lyndsey Grein, leaving No. 16 Oregon (53-9) to play unseeded Mississippi on Friday in an elimination game.

Oregon's Kedre Luschar hit a single that scored Kaylynn Jones in the third inning to put the Ducks up 1-0.

UCLA's Alexis Ramirez cranked a two-run home run in

the fourth — just her fifth of the season — to put the Bruins up 2-1.

In the seventh, with UCLA still leading 2-1, the Bruins appeared to have the second out when Oregon's Paige Sinicki was called out on a play at the plate. The call was overturned because of obstruction by Ramirez, and the run tied the score at 2.

Texas 3, Florida 0: Joley Mitchell homered twice and Teagan Kavan allowed just two hits to lead sixth-seeded Texas.

Mitchell homered in the second and sixth innings off Florida ace Keagan Rothrock, becoming the first Texas player to hit multiple home runs at the World Series.

"Kind of a clean slate for me," said Mitchell, who didn't face Rothrock in last year's WCWS game between the teams. "I knew I needed to be on time, and that's kind of just the forefront of my thoughts."

Texas (52-11) next faces second-seeded Oklahoma, which has beaten Texas in the championship series two of the past three years.

Florida (48-16) will play Tennessee in an elimination game on Friday.

Kavan's shutout was her third in two years of World Series action at Devon Park.

Back-to-back home runs by Mitchell and Katie Stewart in the sixth ended Rothrock's day. She was pulled after throwing 105 pitches. Three of the five hits she allowed were home runs.

The Gators were hitless through three innings against Kavan, who improved to 25-5. Florida finally broke through in the fourth inning when Korbe Otis lined a base hit off Mitchell's glove at first base.

Texas led 1-0 in the fifth, but threatened against Rothrock, putting runners on first and second with two out. She struck out Reese Atwood looking to end the inning.

Commanders' Jayden Daniels bulking up

Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — Jayden Daniels evades the topic as if he's an oncoming pass rusher and ducks away from the questions as if he's avoiding a sack.

It sure looks as if the Washington Commanders' franchise quarterback has bulked up, adding some muscle after his AP Offensive Rookie of the Year season. He just won't say how much and insists it was not a particular mission of his.

"That's up for grabs — I don't know," Daniels said after an off-season practice session. "I was just working out. It wasn't about this amount or much. Just go out there, have a plan and naturally just put on weight."

Daniels is happy to let others talk about his weight, and that extends to his teammates and coaches. They notice, chalking it up to him being a competitor

looking to gain another edge.

Kliff Kingsbury, back for a second season as offensive coordinator, has not seen what Daniels is lifting but observes the 24-year-old looking a little thicker.

"He's still pretty lean, but he's definitely worked really hard at his fitness and the weight room," Kingsbury said. "He knows what he has to do to protect himself and where he feels comfortable playing. But the arm strength: He looks better, and you can tell he's stronger. There's no doubt."

That wasn't a message from the coaching staff coming off Daniels leading the way in the Commanders exceeding all expectations to make the playoffs and go on an improbable run to the NFC championship game. Kingsbury wanted Daniels to get some rest rather than rush

back into preparing for his second professional season.

Easier said than done. A year since being the second pick in the draft and going through an entirely new process, Daniels took some time to reflect and adjusted his priorities.

"You just have so much time and freedom to kind of do what you want," Daniels said. "It was difficult trying to navigate that, but you on lean on people closest to you and obviously you've got to keep the end goal in mind. You're trying to get better each and every day, and you're trying to progress each and every season, each and every month and snap."

Part of getting better was absolutely getting some more upper-body heft — especially given Daniels' penchant to escape the pocket and run for big gains and given reigning Super Bowl

champion Philadelphia, Dallas and the New York Giants have no shortage of bruising defenders ready to hit him.

"Put on a little muscle, huh?" center Tyler Biadasz said. "For sure. He said what he was going to do, and he did it."

Daniels upon arriving in Washington developed the reputation as a player who arrives early to the team facility and stays late. No one around the Commanders anticipates that will change now that he may be a few pounds heavier.

"I haven't gotten, like, side by side in the mirror or anything, but he's doing great," coach Dan Quinn said. "You can sense when people are going for it, and he's certainly one that is. ... There is no flinch in Jayden Daniels. He is as focused and relentless as you could (be) about getting better."

Pickett: Browns' quarterback battle not contentious

Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — Kenny Pickett realizes that almost all the offseason attention devoted to the Cleveland Browns is on the quarterback competition.

Pickett wants to make one thing abundantly clear, though — even though it is a competition, things haven't gotten heated inside the quarterback room.

"I think the outside world makes it a lot bigger than it is. Of course, we're all competing, but you become friends with everybody," Pickett said Wednesday after the Browns completed their second day of organized team activities.

"I think it's a great media headline, but when you get in the building in a quarterback room and at least all the ones I've been in, you really become friends with these guys, and we're just pushing each other."

Pickett and Joe Flacco got the majority of the snaps with the veterans.

Third-round pick Dillon Gabriel got one series of 11-on-11 drills on the main field, while fifth-round selection Shedeur Sanders had none.

Gabriel and Sanders got most of their work with the other rookies on the adjacent field.

Even though he is 40 years old, Flacco is the slight favorite to be under center when Cleveland hosts the Cincinnati Bengals on Sept. 7 in the season opener.

"It's funny, it's like every time I go out here in the offseason, I've done it a million times, but it's like there's a little piece of you that's like, 'all right, let's see if I still know how to read it and let it go and do all those things.' So it's good to get back out there and start doing it again," said Flacco, the AP Comeback Player of the Year in 2023, after he went 4-1 as a starter and led the Browns to the playoffs for only the third time since their return in 1999.

Even though Flacco said this is the first quarterback competition of this magnitude he has experienced since being a sophomore in high school in Audubon, N.J., he isn't focused too much on it at this stage of the offseason.

"I'm just going out there and doing what I do, and everything else is kind of out of my control. So all I can do is go out there and play football and that's what I'm doing," Flacco said.

Cleveland acquired Pickett in a trade with the Eagles when the league year opened in March. Pickett started one game last season for the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia while backing up Jalen Hurts. He was 14-10 as a starter in two years with the Steelers after being Pittsburgh's first-round pick in 2022.

Pickett admitted that there are more similarities between the Eagles' and Browns' offenses than most people realize. The

biggest thing he has focused on is getting up to speed with the terminology.

"I think it has gone well. They're doing a great job of getting everyone reps to get experience with the offense and get a feel for everybody," he said.

Pickett and Flacco both have developed a good rapport with Jerry Jeudy.

The sixth-year wide receiver had one of the day's best catches on a deep route from Flacco on one of the first plays during 11-on-11 drills.

"It's been good. I don't think there were many dropped balls," Jeudy said. "So quarterbacks were putting balls right on the money and receivers were making plays. We're going to keep doing that."

Gabriel had a pass tipped at the line of scrimmage and picked off by first-round pick Mason Graham. Both Gabriel and Sanders fared well in 7-on-7 drills against rookies.

McDavid, Oilers head to Stanley Cup Final

Associated Press

DALLAS — Connor McDavid had the breakaway goal that swung the momentum back to the Edmonton Oilers, and their captain happily touched the trophy they got after wrapping up another Western Conference title.

McDavid got that big goal in the second period after an earlier assist, 40-year-old Corey Perry scored again and the Oilers are going to their second Stanley Cup Final in a row after beating the Dallas Stars 6-3 on Thursday night in Game 5 to wrap up the West final.

When McDavid accepted the Clarence S. Campbell Bowl, he gladly put his hands on it this time.

"It's pretty obvious I think," McDavid said about what was different from the end of last year's West final. "Don't touch it last year, you don't win. Touch it this year, hopefully we win."

Edmonton scored on its first two shots, and jumped ahead 3-0 in the first 8:07 on way to eliminating the Stars in the

West final for the second year in a row.

The Oilers get another rematch, against defending Stanley Cup champion Florida after a seven-game series last June after the Panthers had won the first three games. Game 1 is Wednesday night in Edmonton.

Dallas was within a goal when Thomas Harley had a one-timer blocked by Mattias Ekholm, the Oilers defenseman playing for the first time this postseason. McDavid gathered the long ricochet well past center ice, stayed ahead of speedy Roope Hintz and beat goalie Casey DeSmith with 5:32 left in the second period.

"That's a Connor McDavid kind of play and that's just the player he is," Perry said.

Mattias Janmark, Jeff Skinner, Evander Kane and Kasper Kapanen also scored for Edmonton, the last an empty-netter in the closing seconds. Leon Draisaitl and Jake Walman each had two assists.

Jason Robertson scored twice and Hintz had a goal for the

Stars, who ended their season in the West final for the third year in a row. Wyatt Johnston and Harley each had two assists.

"You've got to keep knocking on the door," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "We chased every single game in this series and that's a tough way to play hockey against that team. It was the story of the entire series, but the fourth goal, Connor's goal ... puck bounces into the neutral zone, he's coming off the bench, he's not missing that. It's game over."

DeSmith had taken over in net after starting goalie Jake Oettinger was pulled following Janmark's goal that made it 2-0 only 7:09 into the game.

Edmonton goalie Stuart Skinner had 14 saves. DeSmith, who hadn't played since April 26 in Game 1 of the first round against Colorado, stopped 17 of 20 shots.

Perry scored on a power play, assisted by McDavid and Draisaitl, only 2:31 in the game. His seven goals are the most by any player age 39 or older in a single postseason, and the 2007 Stan-

ley Cup champion with Anaheim when he was 22 is now going to his fifth Final in the past six seasons.

That was McDavid's 100th assist in 90 playoff games, the second-fastest player in NHL history to reach that mark. Wayne Gretzky had 100 assists in his first 70 playoff games, and no other player has reached the mark in fewer than 125 games.

Robertson scored a minute into the third period to get the Stars within a goal again. Kane then scored on a shot that went off the skate of Dallas defenseman Esa Lindell and past DeSmith.

Jeff Skinner, the 33-year-old forward who has played 1,078 regular-season games over 15 years with three teams, scored his first career postseason goal for the 3-0 lead.

His playoff debut was in the first-round opener against Los Angeles on April 21, but he didn't play again until Thursday when the Oilers were without injured forwards Zach Hyman and Connor Brown.

Brunson, Towns carry Knicks to 111-94 win over Pacers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — From Jalen Brunson's sizzling start to the "Knicks in 7! Knicks in 7!" chants at the finish, this was New York's night.

Maybe it can still be the Knicks' series.

Brunson scored 32 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 24 points and 13 rebounds despite a bruised left knee and the Knicks stayed alive in the Eastern Conference finals by beating the Indiana Pacers 111-94 on Thursday in Game 5.

The Knicks won on their home floor for the first time in the series and prevented the Pacers from earning the second NBA Finals trip in franchise history. Indiana will try again Saturday night at home.

"It's a testament to our team answering the call," Towns said.

New York extended its first trip to the conference finals since 2000 and kept alive hopes of becoming the 14th team to overcome a 3-1 deficit to win a series. No team has won a conference finals series after dropping the first two games at home.

Two nights after giving up 43 points in the first quarter, the Knicks held the Pacers to just 45 in the first half and limited Tyrese Haliburton, who had 32 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds Tuesday, to just eight points and six assists.

Brunson, outplayed by his point guard counterpart Tues-

day, rebounded with his franchise-record 21st postseason game of 30 or more points with the Knicks.

"Our backs were against the wall. So, I mean, we've got to give it everything we got," Brunson said.

Benedict Mathurin scored 23 points off the bench for the Pacers, who had won six straight road games. Indiana shot 40.5% from the field in by far its lowest-scoring game of the postseason.

"We obviously didn't play with the level of force that we needed to," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "We lost the rebound battle. We lost the turnover battle. We didn't shoot well. They had a lot to do with it. So, give them a lot of credit,

and we're going to have to play better."

Brunson scored 14 on 6-for-9 shooting in the first quarter as the Knicks held a 27-23 lead — giving up 20 fewer points than in the first quarter of Game 4, when they trailed 43-35.

Towns, who was questionable to play after hurting his left knee in a collision late in Game 4, picked up the slack with 12 in the second, when Brunson was scoreless.

Brunson came back with the Knicks' first eight of the third quarter as they opened a 20-point lead midway through the period. The Pacers cut that in half before New York regained control with a 12-0 burst, highlighted by Brunson's four-point play, to make it 86-64.