

US urges China to sway Russia, N. Korea

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. and South Korea have called on China to use its influence over Russia and North Korea to prevent escalation after Pyongyang sent thousands of troops to Russia to aid Moscow's war against Ukraine. Beijing has so far stayed quiet.

In a rare meeting earlier this week, three top U.S. diplomats met with China's ambassador to the United States to emphasize U.S. concerns and urge China to use its sway with North Korea to try to curtail the cooperation, according to a State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday that the sides had "a robust conversation just this week" and that China knows U.S. expectations are that "they'll use the influence that they have to work to curb these activities."

"But I think this is a demand signal that's coming not just from us, but from countries

around the world," he said at a news conference in Washington with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and their South Korean counterparts.

Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said in a statement that China's position on the Ukraine crisis is "consistent and clear."

China strives "for peace talks and political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. This position remains unchanged. China will continue to play a constructive role to this end," Liu said.

The U.S. says 8,000 North Korean soldiers are in Russia near Ukraine's border and are preparing to help the Kremlin fight against Ukrainian troops in the coming days.

China has yet to publicly comment on the move.

Beijing has forged a "no limits" partnership with Moscow, and while it has also been a major ally for Pyongyang, experts say Beijing might not approve of the closer military partnership between Russia and North Ko-

rea because it sees it as destabilizing in the region.

The Russia-North Korea partnership runs contrary to Beijing's goal for a peaceful Korean Peninsula, said Shi Yinhong, an international relations expert at China's Renmin University.

Beijing is "aware of the complexity and danger of the situation," Shi said, noting that the "fact that China hasn't said anything yet on the military alliance agreement between North Korea and Russia indicates that China strongly disagrees with it."

Dennis Wilder, senior fellow for the Initiative for U.S.-China Dialogue on global issues at Georgetown University, called Beijing's "radio silence" on North Korea's move "staggering." He said Beijing must find a balance between supporting Moscow and not angering the West, and that Chinese President Xi Jinping might "for his own sake ignore the whole thing."

Xi has built a personal relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and "he cannot see Putin fail," Wilder said this week at a panel discussion hosted by the Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies.

At the same time, Xi cannot anger the Europeans and Americans when his country's economy is struggling, Wilder said. "So he's not going to say anything publicly about this," Wilder said.

Victor Cha, Korean chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said at the same panel discussion that for China, "there's probably a combination of a little bit of exasperation, a little bit of panic and a little bit of they don't know what to do with regard to the current situation."

It's unclear if Beijing was informed of Pyongyang's move in advance, Cha said. Beijing also could fret over Russia gaining more influence than China over North Korea, Cha said.

Prosecutor: Vet showed 'indifference' in choking death

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Marine veteran Daniel Penny didn't intend to kill a distressed man on a New York subway, but Penny "went way too far" in trying to neutralize someone he saw as a threat and not as a person, a prosecutor told jurors Friday.

"The manner in which the defendant permanently silenced Jordan Neely evinced the defendant's belief that Mr. Neely didn't deserve even the minimum modicum of humanity," prosecutor Dafna Yoran said in an opening statement at Pen-

ny's manslaughter trial.

Penny's "indifference toward Mr. Neely, the man whose life he was literally holding in his hands, caused him to disregard the most basic precautions and needlessly kill him, long after any threat he posed had dissipated," she added.

Defense lawyers were due to give their opening later Friday.

An anonymous Manhattan jury is deciding the manslaughter case surrounding Neely's 2023 death, which prosecutors call a reckless killing but Penny claims was self-defense. The

case has rattled fault lines surrounding race, homelessness, perceptions of public safety and bystanders' responsibility.

Penny's critics see him as a white vigilante killer of a Black man who was behaving erratically and making dire statements but wasn't armed and hadn't assaulted or even touched anyone. Supporters credit the 25-year-old Penny with taking action to protect frightened subway riders — action that he has said was meant to defuse, not kill.

Penny's lawyer Steven Raiser

has said that a conviction "will have a chilling effect on every New Yorker's right and duty to stand up for each other."

Yoran told jurors the case isn't "a referendum on our society's failure to deal with mental illness and homelessness on the subway," nor on police response, on whether Penny had a right to intervene before officers arrived or even on whether his initial decision to use a chokehold was appropriate.

Rather, she said, "He used far too much force for far too long. He went way too far."

Trump, Harris bring fight to Wisconsin

Associated Press

In the waning days of the presidential campaign, Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump zero in on the battleground state of Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, concerns over attempts at outside interference in Tuesday's election sprang up in the state of Georgia.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said his state has been targeted with a video that's "obviously fake" and likely the product of Russian trolls.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency said it is investigating the video.

Musk spent \$119M

Elon Musk, the tech and business titan who is also the world's richest man, has spent at least \$119 million mobilizing Trump's supporters to back the Republican nominee.

Musk's conversion to a self-described "Dark MAGA" Trump warrior is a recent one.

In the past, he donated modest sums to both Republicans and Democrats, including \$5,000 to Hillary Clinton in 2016, records show. He didn't contribute to Trump's political efforts until this year, according to federal campaign finance disclosures.

Musk is now leading America PAC, a super political action committee that is spearheading Trump's get-out-the-vote effort.

Opposing trans rights

Trump has made his opposition to transgender rights a central theme in the closing days of the campaign.

The Republican nominee's campaign and aligned political action committees have spent tens of millions of dollars on advertising that attacks Harris for previous statements supporting transgender rights.

Trump has vowed to target transgender people if elected. He has said he would ask Congress to pass a bill stating there are "only two genders" and to ban hormonal or surgical intervention for transgender minors in all 50 states.

Harris has been underscoring that she has supported federal policies that were in place when Trump was president. LGBTQ advocates argue that Trump's rhetoric encourages hostility toward transgender people and fosters misunderstandings about who they are.

Mail-in ballots in Philly

The final day for voters to apply for an early mail-in ballot in a populous suburban Philadelphia county is underway.

Voters in Bucks County, a bellwether whose residents Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris have courted in the presidential campaign's final days, have until 5 p.m. Friday to apply for, receive and cast on the spot a mail-in ballot.

The court-ordered deadline is a three-day extension, stemming from a lawsuit brought by Trump's campaign, the Republican National Committee and GOP Senate candidate David McCormick's campaign this week.

They alleged that voters faced disenfranchisement when they were turned away when county government offices that process the applications closed.

Visit to swing state Wis.

Harris and Trump will host dueling rallies on Friday in the Milwaukee area as part of a final push for votes in swing state Wisconsin.

Milwaukee is home to the most Democratic votes in Wisconsin, but its conservative suburbs are where most Republicans live and are a critical area for Trump as he tries to reclaim the state he narrowly won in 2016 and lost in 2020.

Illegal voting video

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said his state has been targeted with a video that's "obviously fake" and likely the product of Russian trolls "attempting to sow discord and chaos on the eve of the election."

The video, which began circulating on the social media platform X on Thursday afternoon, claims to show a Haitian immigrant with multiple Georgia IDs who says he is plan-

ning to vote multiple times in two counties.

"This is false and is an example of targeted disinformation we've seen this election," Raffensperger said.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency said it is investigating the video.

An Associated Press analysis of the information on two of the IDs confirms it does not match any registered voters in the counties.

The original video was no longer on X, but copycat versions were still being shared.

Liz Cheney is 'war hawk'

Former President Donald Trump launched another attack on former Rep. Liz Cheney late Thursday, calling the Republican former Wyoming congresswoman a "war hawk."

During an event in Glendale, Ariz., with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, the Republican presidential candidate was asked if it is weird to see Cheney campaign against him.

Cheney held the No. 3 GOP leadership position in the House, but lost the job after she voted to impeach Trump for the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. She has since campaigned for Harris.

Trump called Cheney "a deranged person," then added: "But the reason she couldn't stand me is that she always wanted to go to war with people. If it were up to her we'd be in 50 different countries."

'Brat' declared Collins Dictionary's word of the year

Associated Press

LONDON — Collins Dictionary has declared "brat" — the album title that became a summer-living ideal — its 2024 word of the year.

The word, used by singer

Charli XCX as the title of her sixth studio album, has been defined as "characterized by a confident, independent, and hedonistic attitude."

Collins lexicographers said on Friday that in the phrase

"brat summer," it became "one of the most talked about words of 2024."

"More than a hugely successful album, 'brat' is a cultural phenomenon that has resonated with people globally, and 'brat

summer' established itself as an aesthetic and a way of life," the dictionary said.

Collins experts monitor their database to create the list of notable words that reflect the ever-evolving English language.

Officials say record of Biden's 'garbage' comments altered

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — White House press officials altered the official transcript of a call in which President Joe Biden appeared to take a swipe at supporters of Donald Trump, drawing objections from the federal workers who document such remarks for posterity, according to two U.S. government officials and an internal email obtained Thursday by The Associated Press.

Biden created an uproar earlier this week with his remarks to Latino activists responding to racist comments at a Trump rally made by the comedian Tony Hinchcliffe, who referred to the U.S. island territory of Puerto Rico as a "floating island of garbage."

Biden, according to a transcript prepared by the official White House stenographers, told the Latino group on a Tuesday evening video call, "The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters — his — his demonization of Latinos is unconscionable, and it's un-American."

The transcript released by the White House press office, however, rendered the quote with an apostrophe, reading "supporter's" rather than "supporters," which aides said pointed to Biden criticizing Hinchcliffe, not the millions of Americans who are supporting Trump for president.

The change was made after the press office "conferred with the president," according to an internal email from the head of the stenographers' office that was obtained by The AP. The authenticity of the email was confirmed by two government officials who spoke on condition of

anonymity to discuss internal matters.

The supervisor, in the email, called the press office's handling of the matter "a breach of protocol and spoliation of transcript integrity between the Stenography and Press Offices."

"If there is a difference in interpretation, the Press Office may choose to withhold the transcript but cannot edit it independently," the supervisor wrote, adding, "Our Stenography Office transcript — released to our distro, which includes the National Archives — is now different than the version edited and released to the public by Press Office staff."

The edit of the transcript came as the White House scrambled to respond to a wave of queries from reporters about Biden's comments. The president's remarks clashed with Vice President Kamala Harris' near-simultaneous speech outside the White House in which she called for treating Americans of differing ideologies with respect.

The Trump campaign quickly moved to fundraise off the quote, and the next day, Trump himself held a photo op inside a garbage truck to try to capitalize on Biden's criticism.

Harris on Wednesday distanced herself from Biden's comments — making the clearest break from the president since she took over for him at the top of the Democratic ticket just over three months ago. "Let me be clear," she told reporters, "I strongly disagree with any criticism of people based on who they vote for."

The supervisor declined to comment and referred questions to the White House press office.

Shootings kill 2, wound 6 during Halloween in Fla.

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Two people were killed and six others were wounded in two shootings by a single gunman that took place among thousands of costumed revelers during a Halloween street celebration in downtown Orlando early Friday, authorities said.

Officers responded to a report of shots fired in the city's downtown bar and restaurant district shortly after 1 a.m. as costumed celebrants fled on foot. A second shooting minutes later happened within a short distance of officers and they quickly made an arrest, the city's police Chief Eric Smith said during a briefing Friday morning.

The six wounded, who range in age from 19 to 39, were transported to a hospital for

treatment and were in stable condition, Smith said.

A 17-year-old male suspect was taken into custody, said Smith, who showed video from street security cameras and a police body camera showing the two shootings and the suspect's arrest at the second shooting location.

After the first shooting, police used security video to put out a description of the suspect, but the second shooting happened near police and officers saw the attack, Smith said.

"Whatever his mindset was, he was going to shoot no matter what," Smith said, noting that the suspect's motivation is part of the ongoing investigation.

A handgun was recovered at the arrest scene and there are no other suspects, he said.

US employers added just 12,000 jobs last month

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America's employers added just 12,000 jobs in October, a total that economists say was held down by the effects of strikes and hurricanes that left many workers temporarily off payrolls. The report provided a somewhat blurry view of the job market at the end of a presidential race that has pivoted heavily on voters' feelings about the economy.

Last month's hiring gain was down significantly from the 223,000 jobs that were added in September. But economists have estimated that Hurricanes Helene and Milton, combined with strikes at Boeing and elsewhere, had the effect of pushing down net job growth by tens of thousands of jobs in October.

Friday's report from the Labor Department also showed that the unemployment rate remained at 4.1% last month. The

low jobless rate suggests that the labor market is still fundamentally healthy, if not as robust as it was early this year. Combined with an inflation rate that has tumbled from its 2022 peak to near prepandemic levels, the overall economy appears to be on solid footing on the eve of Election Day.

The government did not estimate how many jobs were likely removed temporarily from payrolls last month. But economists have said they think the storms and strikes caused up to 100,000 jobs to be dropped. Reflecting the impact of the strikes, factories shed 46,000 jobs in October.

In a cautionary sign for future hiring, though, temporary job placement firms added 49,000 jobs last month. On the other hand, health care companies added 52,000 in October, and state and local governments tacked on 39,000.

Shock turns to anger as Spain recovers

Associated Press

CHIVA, Spain. — The death toll from historic flash floods in Spain climbed to least 205 people Friday, with many more believed to be missing, as the initial shock gave way to anger, frustration and a wave of solidarity.

Spanish emergency authorities said 202 of the victims were in the eastern region of Valencia, and officials warned that more rain is expected in the coming days.

The damage from the storm Tuesday and Wednesday recalled the aftermath of a tsunami, with survivors left to pick up the pieces as they mourn loved ones lost in Spain's deadliest natural di-

saster in living memory.

Many streets were still blocked by piled-up vehicles and debris, in some cases trapping residents in their homes. Some places still don't have electricity, running water, or stable telephone connections.

"The situation is unbelievable. It's a disaster and there is very little help," said Emilio Cuartero, in Masanasa, on the outskirts of Valencia city. "We need machinery, cranes, so that the sites can be accessed. We need a lot of help. And bread and water."

In Chiva, residents were clearing debris from mud-filled streets. The Valencian town received more rain in eight hours on Tuesday than it

had in the preceding 20 months, and water overflowed a gully that crosses the town, tearing up roads and homes.

The mayor, Amparo Fort, told RNE radio that "entire houses have disappeared, we don't know if there were people inside or not."

So far, 205 bodies have been recovered — 202 in Valencia, two in neighboring Castilla La Mancha and one in Andalusia in the south. Members of the security forces and 1,700 soldiers from the emergency unit are searching for an unknown number of missing people. Officials fear more bodies could be found in wrecked vehicles and flooded garages.

Guardia Civil has rescued

more than 4,500 people trapped by the floods, said Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska in a news conference from Valencia.

The regional authorities, who are in charge of the response to the tragedy, asked the central government to mobilize an additional 500 soldiers, who will be deployed on Saturday.

"I have been there all my life, all my memories are there, my parents lived there ... and now in one night it is all gone," Chiva resident Juan Vicente Pérez told The Associated Press near the place he lost his home. "If we had waited five more minutes, we would not be here in this world."

Death toll from Israel strikes in Gaza, Lebanon rises

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli airstrikes on Friday killed at least 24 people in northeastern Lebanon, the country's news agency said, raising the death toll from eight there.

It was the latest deadly toll in the area since the conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah escalated last month.

Israel's military has said that its operation in Lebanon is targeting Hezbollah's military in-

frastructure.

Lebanon's state National news Agency reported four airstrikes in different villages across country's northeast, saying rescuers were still searching for survivors in Younine, a town in the Bekaa Valley, from the rubble of a targeted house.

Hussein Haj Hassan, a Lebanese lawmaker representing the region in Baalbek-Hermel region, said that 60,000 people have already fled their homes in the area due to Israeli bombardment.

The death toll from Israeli strikes in the central Gaza Strip rose to 25, including five children, as more bodies were recovered.

Sixteen people had initially been reported killed in two strikes on Thursday on the Gaza Strip's central Nuseirat refugee camp, but officials from the Al-Aqsa hospital said bodies continued to be brought in.

Overall, the hospital said they had received 21 dead from the strikes, including some transferred from the Awda

hospital, where they had been brought the day before.

One of the strikes killed an 18-month-old and his 10-year-old sister — the children's mother was missing as of Friday while the father was killed by an Israeli airstrike four months ago, the family told The Associated Press at Aqsa hospital.

Strikes on a motorcycle in Zuwaida and on a house in Deir al-Balah on Friday killed four more, the hospital officials said.

Concrete roof collapses at Serbian railway station

Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia — A concrete roof above the entrance of a railway station in the northern Serbian city of Novi Sad collapsed Friday, killing at least eight people.

Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said that at least four other people were hospitalized with serious injuries, while rescuers established contact with two peo-

ple still buried under piles of concrete.

Ambulances and other emergency teams were dispatched to the downtown station and bulldozers were removing the debris looking for survivors. Some 80 rescuers were at the scene as heavy machinery removed large parts of the rubble.

Surveillance camera footage showed people moving in and

out of the building and sitting on benches on a sunny day before the concrete canopy suddenly collapsed on them. The building was recently renovated.

Dacic said the rescue operation was "extremely hard" and that it would last several hours.

Prime Minister Milos Vucelic said "this is a black Friday for us, for all of Serbia."

Vucelic said the roof was

built in 1964 and an investigation was underway to determine what happened and who is responsible for the tragedy.

Serbia's state railway company said the accident happened at 11:50 a.m. local time. The company said the construction that stands above the entrance into the station was not part of the reconstruction recently carried out on the station building.

Wilson's TD catch lifts Jets past Texans

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Move over, Odell Beckham Jr. — Garrett Wilson might have snatched your spot among the NFL's greatest catches.

With one hand, of course.

Wilson made a dazzling 26-yard go-ahead touchdown catch early in the fourth quarter and the New York Jets snapped a five-game losing streak by beating the Houston Texans 21-13 on Thursday night.

"I just kind of lobbed one up there and he made an unbelievable catch," quarterback Aaron Rodgers said. "That was a huge play. ... That's a game-changing play."

Rodgers had three touchdown passes, including another earlier one-handed score by Wilson and a 37-yard throw to recently acquired Davante Adams, and the Jets (3-6) won for the first time in four games under interim head coach Jeff Ulbrich.

With the Jets trailing 10-7 and facing third-and-19 from the Texans 26, Rodgers tossed the ball up toward Wilson in the end zone. The star wide receiver jumped and reached up with his right hand with both legs spread in the air — looking like the Michael Jordan "Jumpman" logo.

The play was initially called an incomplete pass, but Ulbrich challenged.

"Oh, my goodness," Ulbrich said. "I mean, I was talking to the ref when they were reviewing it. I was like, 'Just for the sake of posterity, you have to say that's in just so it goes down in history.'"

A video replay review confirmed that Wilson's shin was

down in the end zone and a touchdown was called to give the Jets a 14-10 lead with 12:54 remaining.

It sent the fans at MetLife Stadium into a frenzy after they had little to cheer for until that point.

Wilson's catch was reminiscent of former Giants great Beckham's one-handed grab against Dallas in 2014.

"For it to even come up in that convo, I'm blessed," Wilson said. "I'm honored."

It also helped make up for a Jets touchdown that wasn't when rookie Malachi Corley made a mental mistake that negated his first NFL score.

With the Jets at the Texans 19 early in the second quarter, Corley took the toss from Rodgers and zipped down the right sideline. Corley sped into the end zone, but just before he crossed the goal line, he dropped the ball out of his right hand to celebrate.

A video review showed he had not gotten into the end zone before he dropped it. So, Corley was credited with an 18-yard run and a fumble. And because it rolled out of the side of the end zone, it was a touchback and a turnover.

"First of all, you can't do that," Ulbrich said about what he told Corley. "Second of all, you owe us one."

Rodgers finished 22 of 32 for 211 yards. His 37-yard touchdown pass to Adams, who earlier was cleared after being checked for a possible head injury, put the Jets up 21-10 with 2:56 left. It was Adams' first touchdown catch since being acquired from Las Vegas earlier this month.

Ka'imi Fairbairn made a 29-yard field goal with 39 seconds left to make it an eight-point game, but Adams recovered the onside kick and the Jets were able to take a knee and seal the win.

C.J. Stroud was 11 of 30 for 191 yards for the Texans (6-3), who played without injured receivers Stefon Diggs and Nico Collins. It was the first of three consecutive prime-time games for Houston, with a Sunday night home matchup against on Nov. 10 next and a Monday night meeting at Dallas on Nov. 18.

"It's embarrassing to come out here in a prime-time game and get embarrassed like that is never fun," Stroud said. "We have to be better in a lot of areas and that starts with me. There are plays I've got to make, throws I've got to make."

Fairbairn missed two field goals for Houston. With the Texans trailing 14-10, Fairbairn made it a one-point game when he kicked a 43-yarder — but Eric Watts was called for unnecessary roughness on the attempt, so Houston opted to accept the penalty and keep the ball.

The Jets made a defensive stand and the Texans were forced to try a 27-yard attempt, but Fairbairn doinked his kick off the left upright — keeping it 14-10.

Joe Mixon's 3-yard touchdown run capped a 98-yard drive for the Texans, who took a 7-0 lead late in the second quarter.

The Jets tied it on their opening possession of the second half when Rodgers completed a 21-yard pass to Wilson, who snagged the ball with one hand and ran into the end zone for the

tying touchdown.

Riley Patterson, who signed to the active roster hours before the game to replace the injured Greg Zuerlein, hit the left upright on the extra point, but the ball deflected inside and cleared the crossbar.

Fairbairn's 54-yarder put the Texans back up, 10-7 with 4:11 left in the third quarter.

"The most frustrating part is that we were the better team," Houston right tackle Tytus Howard said. "We let that game get away from us, especially in the second half."

Slow start

Rodgers was 7 of 14 in the first half for just 32 yards — his fewest in an opening two quarters with 10 or more attempts in his career. His previous low was 37 on 12 attempts against Denver on Nov. 1, 2015, while with Green Bay.

"I played about as bad as I could in the first half," Rodgers said, "and knew it had to get better from there."

Injuries

Texans: Texans LG Kenyon Green was ruled out at halftime after injuring a shoulder.

Jets: LG John Simpson left in the second quarter with a groin injury and didn't return. ... Backup OL Jake Hanson also left shortly before halftime with a hamstring injury. ... CB Michael Carter II left with a back injury.

Up next

Texans: Host Detroit on "Sunday Night Football" on Nov. 10.

Jets: At Arizona on Nov. 10

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Grizzlies win big over struggling Bucks

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Ja Morant had 26 points, 14 assists and 10 rebounds and helped the Memphis Grizzlies build a 31-point second-half cushion and beat the Milwaukee Bucks 122-99 on Thursday night.

Santi Aldama added 19 points and nine rebounds, while Scotty Pippen Jr. and Jaylen Wells finished with 16 points each as the Grizzlies snapped a two-game skid. Memphis ended the night shooting 52%, including Morant going 9 for 16. Seven Grizzlies players finished in double figures.

Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 37 points and 11 rebounds, connecting on 17 of 22 shots. Brook Lopez scored 12 and Bobby Portis Jr. finished with 11 points.

Milwaukee has lost four straight.

Rockets 108, Mavericks 102: Jalen Green had 23

points and 12 rebounds, Alperen Sengun added 17 points and 12 rebounds, and visiting Houston held off a fourth-quarter Dallas rally to win.

The Rockets led by 23 points late in the third quarter before the defending Western Conference champions cut Houston's lead to 103-100 with a minute to play.

Dillon Brooks also had 17 for the Rockets, and Tari Eason scored 15 off the bench for the Rockets, whose reserves outscored the Mavericks' 33-21.

Luka Doncic led Dallas with 29 points, including 15 in the fourth quarter.

Kyrie Irving scored 28, and Klay Thompson was the only other Maverick to score in double figures with 12 points.

Spurs 106, Jazz 88: Victor Wembanyama had 25 points and nine rebounds to lead visiting San Antonio to a victory over Utah.

Wembanyama also had sev-

en assists, five steals, and five blocks, getting at least five in five categories for the second time in his career. Chris Paul added 19 points, 10 assists, and six rebounds for the Spurs.

Collin Sexton led the Jazz with 16 points, and John Collins added 14 points and 11 rebounds. Utah played without starting forward Lauri Markkanen who was out with back spasms.

Patty Mills made three straight 3-pointers to power a 13-0 run that gave Utah a 30-19 lead going into the second quarter. The Jazz did not trail again before halftime.

San Antonio erased a double-digit deficit twice and went ahead for good midway through the third behind a 12-0 run. Julian Champagine and Keldon Johnson combined for three baskets off steals over four possessions to cap the run and give the Spurs a 63-55 lead.

The Spurs led by 20 points in the fourth quarter.

Suns 125, Clippers 119: Devin Booker scored 40 points, Kevin Durant added 18, and visiting Phoenix rallied from a 21-point deficit to beat Los Angeles.

Booker made a corner 3-pointer to put Phoenix ahead 108-105 with 5:15 remaining as the Suns scored 73 points in the second half to take their second win in eight days at the Clippers' new arena.

Booker and Durant got going in the third to get the Suns back in it, combining for 20 points. Royce O'Neale, who finished with 21 points, and Ryan Dunn, who had 16, also had some timely long-distance shots after the break.

James Harden had 25 points, 10 rebounds and 13 assists, but Los Angeles faltered again one night after giving away a late lead in a one-point loss at Portland.

Harden becomes 20th player with 26,000 career points

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The points continue to come for James Harden, who became the 20th player in NBA history to reach 26,000 points in his career in the Los Angeles Clippers' 125-119 loss to the Phoenix Suns on Thursday night.

Harden was more worried about the points the Clippers have been giving up, having squandered double-digit leads in both games of a back-to-back. Los Angeles led by as

many as 21 on Thursday, following a wasted 10-point advantage in a 106-105 defeat to Portland the night before.

"It's definitely frustrating, just 'cause we was up double digits in both games," Harden said. "Last night, we didn't (play well) and we still had a double-digit lead. Tonight, we played well, especially in that first half and up 20-something. Like, it's there. We just got to find ways to not lose it and continue to play our brand of bas-

ketball."

Harden joined the elusive group when he made his second free throw with 1:25 remaining in the fourth quarter. It came in his first triple double of the season and 78th of his career, tying Wilt Chamberlain for seventh in NBA history, as Harden finished with 25 points, 10 rebounds and 13 assists.

Harden also had six turnovers, including fumbling the ball away when the score was tied at 105 with 5:20 remaining.

Phoenix ended up turning that mistake into a 3-pointer from Devin Booker and a lead it would not relinquish.

"You've seen the usage rate I got, it's going to happen," Harden said. "Like, turnovers is gonna happen. ... But the ones that is unforced, I gotta control those a lot better. But I don't think it's necessarily turnovers that lost the game. That third quarter, defensively, they just didn't feel us, defensively, our presence."

Magic star Paolo Banchero suffers torn right oblique

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Orlando Magic star Paolo Banchero has a torn right oblique, the team said Thursday night after he had further testing in

Cleveland.

President of Basketball Operations Jeff Weltman said Banchero will be out indefinitely and be re-evaluated in four-to-six weeks.

Banchero was injured Wednesday night in the fourth quarter of Orlando's victory at Chicago. He scored a career-high 50 points against Indiana on Monday night and is

averaging 29 points, 8.8 rebounds and 5.6 assists in five games this season.

Banchero was the first overall pick in the 2022 NBA draft.

Dodgers have eye on back-to-back titles

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Dodgers' first game of the season in South Korea was overshadowed afterward by Shohei Ohtani's interpreter hinting at his stealing from the Japanese superstar. Their last postgame was a beer- and champagne-fueled celebration of the franchise's eighth World Series title.

In between came a multitude of injuries, especially to the rotation as well as Mookie Betts' broken hand and Freddie Freeman's sprained ankle, Ohtani's historic 50/50 feat, the franchise's 11th NL West title in 12 seasons, and compiling the best record in the majors.

Then came the playoffs, where the Dodgers proved a resilient bunch.

They trailed rival San Diego 2-1 in the NL Division Series and rallied to win in five games.

They were pushed to six games in the NLCS by the New York Mets before advancing.

They were about to lose the World Series opener until Freeman delivered the first walk-off

grand slam in Series history. They ran through eight pitchers to eke out a 7-6 victory over the New York Yankees to close out the Series in five games.

"We just kept going. Even in the postseason, I don't think anyone had us picked. I don't think they had us picked to get out of the first series," manager Dave Roberts said. "For us to go out there and fight and scratch and claw and win 11 games in October, that's a credit to our guys."

Investing a billion dollars to acquire Ohtani and fellow Japanese player Yoshinobu Yamamoto last offseason certainly paid off, even if Ohtani's playoff performance didn't match what he did during the regular season when his offense carried the Dodgers.

Ohtani reached career highs in home runs, stolen bases and RBIs and is the favorite to win NL MVP honors. In the playoffs, he went 2 for 19 with no RBIs and had one single after partially dislocating his shoulder in Game 2 of the World Series.

"What Shohei's done to our

ball club, the Dodger fan base domestically, globally, I just don't think you can quantify," Roberts said.

"He was playing with one arm in the postseason. So most guys would probably tap out, but he was going to not be denied at playing and posting and being in the lineup."

The Dodgers made some key pickups at the July trade deadline, including pitchers Jack Flaherty — who was one of three healthy starters in the playoffs — and Michael Kopech as well as utilityman Tommy Edman, whose offense in the NLCS earned him MVP honors.

Ohtani's former interpreter is on his way to jail on bank and tax fraud charges when he's sentenced in December. Ohtani is going back to being a two-way sensation next year when he resumes pitching after he spent this season recovering from a second elbow surgery.

The Dodgers have eight players who became free agents when the World Series ended: Walker Buehler, Flaherty, Kiké Hernández, Teoscar Hernán-

dez, Daniel Hudson, Joe Kelly, Kevin Kiermaier and Blake Treinen.

Hudson announced his retirement after Wednesday night's victory, while Kiermaier had already said he planned to retire.

The Dodgers hold team options on Austin Barnes and Miguel Rojas for next season. Clayton Kershaw has a player option and has said he plans to be back after a toe injury kept him out of the playoffs.

But for now the celebration continues.

After winning a neutral-site World Series against Tampa Bay in 2020 and being denied a parade because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Dodgers have pent-up energy to burn.

"I'm sure there's no asterisk on this one," Roberts said.

They were to commemorate their championship with a downtown parade and Dodger Stadium celebration Friday, which would have been Fernando Valenzuela's 64th birthday. The 1981 NL Cy Young Award and Rookie of the Year winner died last week.

Soto and Burnes among 136 who become free agents

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Outfielder Juan Soto, pitchers Corbin Burnes, Walker Buehler and Max Fried and first baseman Pete Alonso were among 136 players who became free agents Thursday morning.

Third baseman Alex Bregman, outfielder Anthony Santander and shortstop Willy Adames also went free.

There were 64 more players with pending option decisions who could become free agents by Monday, the fifth day after the World Series.

Teams and players can start discussing contract terms at 5:01 p.m. EST on Monday, after the deadline for teams to make \$21.05 million qualifying offers

to eligible free agents.

Pitcher Justin Verlander became a free agent after he failed to pitch 140 innings this year, the amount that would have triggered his ability to exercise a \$35 million conditional player option. If he had exercised the option, the New York Mets would have been obligated to give an additional \$17.5 million to Houston as part of last year's trade that sent the three-time Cy Young Award winner back to the Astros.

St. Louis declined options on three right-handed pitchers: Kyle Gibson (\$12 million), Lance Lynn (\$10 million) and Keynan Middleton (\$6 million). Each gets a \$1 million buyout.

Boston pitcher Lucas Giolito

exercised a \$19 million player option rather than take a \$1 million buyout and go free.

Milwaukee said a \$12 million mutual option had been declined on pitcher Wade Miley, who is recovering from Tommy John surgery last May.

Among those with pending club options are Atlanta DH Marcell Ozuna (\$16 million), and Yankees first baseman Anthony Rizzo (\$17 million) and reliever Luke Weaver (\$2.5 million).

Yankees pitcher Gerrit Cole can opt out but the team can void the opt-out by adding a \$36 million salary for 2029.

Those with player options include pitchers Blake Snell of San Francisco (\$30 million, of

which \$15 million would be deferred), Nick Martinez of Cincinnati (\$12 million), Sean Manaea of the New York Mets (\$13.5 million), Jordan Montgomery of Arizona (\$22.5 million), Nathan Eovaldi of Texas (\$20 million) and Michael Wacha of Kansas City (\$16 million), along with Chicago Cubs first baseman/outfielder Cody Bellinger (\$27.5 million).

Snell and Flaherty are ineligible for the qualifying offers. A free agent can be made a qualifying offer only if he has been with the same team continuously since opening day and has never received one before. Qualifying offers began after the 2012 season, and only 13 of 131 have been accepted.

Penguins top Ducks in OT to end skid

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Sidney Crosby scored his second goal of the game 2:35 into overtime as the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Anaheim Ducks 2-1 on Thursday night to end a six-game losing streak.

Crosby found himself in alone on Lukas Dostal and hit the brakes before roofing the puck over the Ducks' goaltender for the 93rd game-winning goal of his career.

Alex Nedeljkovic made 22 saves for Pittsburgh, which out-shot Anaheim 46-23. Dostal stopped 44 shots to keep the Ducks in it, but it still wasn't enough.

Alex Killorn scored his second goal of the season for the Ducks, who ended an East Coast trip with a 1-2-1 mark.

Anaheim led going into the third period before Crosby tied it with a redirect off a point shot from Matt Grzelcyk 1:47 into the final frame.

Flyers 2, Blues 1: Bobby Brink redirected Joel Farabee's feed past goalie Jordan Binnington with 3:01 left in host Philadelphia's victory over St. Louis.

Garnet Hathaway also scored and Sam Ersson made 20 saves to help Philadelphia win consecutive games for the first time this season. St. Louis has lost three straight and four of five.

Hathaway opened the scoring midway through the first period on a nice feed from Ryan Poehling who weaved through the defense and slid a backhand pass to his linemate.

Ersson followed up his shut-

out Tuesday night at Boston with another strong performance. His only blemish came midway through the third when Nathan Walker snapped a shot past him off a carom off Flyers defenseman Travis Sanheim's skate on a shot by Philip Broberg.

Capitals 6, Canadiens 3: Alex Ovechkin scored his 858th career goal and had two assists as host Washington beat Montreal to continue its strong start.

Ovechkin is 37 goals away from breaking Wayne Gretzky's record. After making Cayden Primeau the 176th goaltender he has scored on, Ovechkin is on pace for 45 this season, which would put him at 895 and perhaps beyond this spring.

Before scoring with 7:33 left in the third period, Ovechkin set up goals by Tom Wilson and Aliaksei Protas. Wilson ended an 0-for-22 power-play drought with his team-leading sixth goal of the season.

Brandon Duhaime and Jakub Vrana scored less than a minute apart, and new dad Connor McMichael also had a goal for the Capitals, who improved to 7-2-0. They last won seven of their first nine games in 2015-16.

Montreal's Cole Caufield scored his 10th to tie New Jersey captain Nico Hischier for the league lead. Brendan Gallagher and Nick Suzuki had the other goals for the Canadiens, and Primeau stopped 28 shots.

Maple Leafs 4, Kraken 1: William Nylander scored twice, Joseph Woll made 24 saves and host Toronto beat Seattle.

Matthew Knies and Auston

Matthews, with a bank-shot empty-netter, also scored to help Toronto improve to 6-4-1. Matthews also had an assist.

Eeli Tolvanen scored for Seattle. Joey Daccord stopped 26 shots.

Knies opened the scoring late in the first period, and Nylander scored twice in the second.

Tolvanen spoiled Woll's bid for his second career shutout with 3:28 left in regulation and Daccord on the bench for an extra attacker.

Hurricanes 8, Bruins 2: Jack Roslovic and Andrei Svechnikov each scored twice and Carolina returned home for the first time in more than two weeks to rout Boston for their fifth straight victory.

Carolina scored three times in a 52-second span in its fourth goal first period.

Martin Necas had a goal and an assist, Dmitry Orlov, Sean Walker and Jesperi Kotkaniemi also scored, and Seth Jarvis had two assists. Pyotr Kochetkov made 13 saves.

Brad Marchand and Hampus Lindholm scored, but the Bruins fell to 1-4-1 in their last six games. Jeremy Swayman was pulled after allowing six goals on 22 shots before the midway mark.

Roslovic scored 6:28 into the game. After Marchand tied it, the Hurricanes had rapid-fire goals from Svechnikov, Orlov and Necas, with two of those on power plays.

Oilers 5, Predators 1: Leon Draisaitl scored two goals and assisted another as visiting Edmonton beat Nashville.

Viktor Arvidsson, Corey Perry and Zach Hyman also scored, and Calvin Pickard made 26 saves for the Oilers, who have won three of their past four.

Edmonton played its first game since losing team captain Connor McDavid to an ankle injury in the first period of Monday night's 6-1 loss to the Blue Jackets.

Filip Forsberg scored, and Juuse Saros made 24 saves for the Predators.

Playing in his first career NHL game, Edmonton's Noah Philp picked up the secondary assist on Perry's first-period goal for his first NHL point.

Sharks 3, Blackhawks 2: Will Smith scored twice for his first NHL goals, and host San Jose beat Chicago.

The Sharks have won three straight after going winless in their first nine games, while the Blackhawks have dropped five of their last six.

On a power play midway through the second period, Smith — the fourth overall pick in the 2023 draft — scored the winning goal with a wrist shot off the crossbar.

Ryan Donato and Tyler Bertuzzi scored 50 seconds apart in the first period to give Chicago a 2-1 lead, with Connor Murphy assisting on both goals. Donato's goal was 37 seconds after Smith opened the scoring.

Alexander Wennberg tied the game at 2 early in the second for San Jose.

Mackenzie Blackwood and Petr Mrazek each stopped 26 shots, but Blackwood will be credited with the win.

Costas retiring from baseball play-by-play after 42 years

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After 42 seasons, Bob Costas is retiring from baseball play-by-play.

Costas had done games for MLB the past couple seasons for MLB

Network and TBS Sports. His final games were the American League Division Series between the New York Yankees and Kansas City Royals.

Costas' contract with TBS

expired at the end of the season, but his plans to retire from baseball play-by-play had been in the works for over a year.

The Athletic was the first to

report on Costas' baseball play-by-play retirement. Costas plans to address his decision at a future date.

Baseball has always been Costas' favorite sport.