

## Election wins spur Dems' shutdown fight

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Elections this week that energized Democrats and angered President Donald Trump have cast a chill over efforts to end the record-breaking government shutdown, raising fresh doubts about the possibility of a breakthrough despite the punishing toll of federal closures on the country.

Trump has increased pressure on Senate Republicans to end the shutdown — Thursday marked the 37th day — calling it a “big factor, negative” in the poor GOP showings across the country. Democrats saw Trump’s comments as a reason to hold firm, believing his involvement in talks could lead to a deal on extending health care subsidies, a key sticking point to win their support.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune opened what’s seen as a pivotal day in efforts to end the government shutdown by say-

ing the next step hinges on a response from Democrats to an offer on the table.

“It’s in their court. It’s up to them,” Thune, R-S.D., told reporters Thursday.

But Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer held firm in opening remarks Thursday, saying voters “fired a political torpedo at Trump and Republicans” in Tuesday’s election.

“Donald Trump clearly is feeling pressure to bring this shutdown to an end. Well, I have good news for the president: Meet with Democrats, reopen the government,” Schumer said on the Senate floor.

Trump is refusing to meet with Democrats, insisting they must open the government first. But complicating the GOP’s strategy, Trump is increasingly fixated instead on pushing Republicans to scrap the Senate filibuster to speed reopening — a step many GOP senators reject out of hand. He kept up the pres-

sure in a video Wednesday, saying the Senate’s 60-vote threshold to pass legislation should be “terminated.”

“This is much bigger than the shutdown,” Trump said. “This is the survival of our country.”

Senate Democrats face pressures of their own, both from unions eager for the shutdown to end and from allied groups that want them to hold firm. Many see the Democrats’ decisive gubernatorial wins in Virginia and New Jersey as validation of their strategy to hold the government closed until expiring health care subsidies are addressed.

“It would be very strange for the American people to have weighed in, in support of Democrats standing up and fighting for them, and within days for us to surrender without having achieved any of the things that we’ve been fighting for,” said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn.

Meanwhile, talks grind on,

but the shutdown’s toll deepens. On Wednesday, the Federal Aviation Administration announced plans to reduce air traffic by 10% across 40 high-volume markets beginning Friday to maintain safety amid staffing shortages. Millions of people have already been affected by halted government programs and missed federal paychecks.

Grassroots Democratic groups nationwide touted Tuesday’s election results as voter approval of the shutdown strategy — and warned lawmakers against cutting a deal too soon.

“Moderate Senate Democrats who are looking for an off-ramp right now are completely missing the moment,” said Katie Bethell, political director of MoveOn, a progressive group. “Voters have sent a resounding message: We want leaders who fight for us, and we want solutions that make life more affordable.”

## Lawmakers briefed on classified details of boat strikes

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Top Trump administration officials briefed a small group of congressional leaders Wednesday on the growing military campaign to destroy alleged drug-smuggling vessels in the waters off South America, providing one of the first high-level glimpses into the legal rationale and strategy behind the strikes.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth met with a bipartisan group of lawmakers who oversee national security issues for roughly an hour in a secure facility in the Capitol.

Republicans emerged either staying silent or expressing confidence in President Donald Trump’s campaign, which has killed at least 66 people in 16 known strikes in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean.

Democrats said Congress needs more information on how the strikes are conducted and the legal justification for actions that critics say violate international and U.S. law by killing alleged drug smugglers on the high seas.

“What we heard isn’t enough. We need a lot more answers. And I am now asking for an all senators briefing on this issue,”

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said.

Senators were expected to vote Thursday on a resolution that would require congressional approval for any strikes directly on Venezuela.

The Trump administration has provided a trickle of information to Congress since it began destroying vessels in the Caribbean two months ago, but outside of a few classified briefings, much of the information has come from informal talks with members of Trump’s Cabinet and other officials. Despite Congress’ constitutional responsibility to authorize the use

of war powers, the administration has sidestepped lawmakers and declared that members of drug cartels are unlawful combatants it can kill as terrorists.

At the same time, the U.S. military is building up its naval force off South America, raising the specter of an invasion of Venezuela.

The classified briefing was open to the top leaders of both parties in the House and Senate, as well as the Republican chair and ranking Democrat for the committees in both chambers that oversee the military, U.S. intelligence and foreign relations.

# NATO chief downplays effect of US troop cuts in Romania

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — NATO's top official this week downplayed the effects U.S. troop cuts in Romania will have on European security and also talked up the bloc's recent push to churn out more ammunition and other weaponry to counter Russia.

Secretary-General Mark Rutte made the remarks Thursday at the NATO-Industry Forum in the Romanian capital, Bucharest. Alliance efforts to close the arms gap are paying dividends, he said.

"Until recently, Russia was producing more ammunition than all NATO allies put together," Rutte said. "But not any-

more."

Dozens of new production lines have opened across the alliance while existing sites are expanding, he said, adding that ammunition output is now at its highest level in decades.

His comments came on the heels of last week's Pentagon announcement that it was ending the rotation of a U.S. Army brigade to Romania. That plan calls for the U.S. not to backfill a brigade from the 101st Airborne Division as its nine-month rotation in Romania now draws to a close.

About 1,000 U.S. soldiers are slated to remain in Romania.

The reduction involves about 3,000 soldiers, 700 of whom were based in Romania. Other

elements from the brigade were dispersed to different countries on NATO's eastern flank, according to U.S. Army Europe and Africa.

Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia were among the countries of focus for the brigade. The Army began sending brigades to Romania on a rotational basis in the aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Some security analysts have said the decision to end the mission in Romania amounts to bad timing given the Kremlin's ongoing military campaign in neighboring Ukraine. Rutte, however, said it was a minor shift that won't affect NATO security.

## Ukraine says drones again hit a Russian oil refinery

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian drones struck a major oil refinery in Russia's Volgograd region for the second time in almost three months, Ukraine's general staff said Thursday. Russian officials did not confirm the attack, although the local governor said drones started a fire at an unspecified industrial facility in the region.

Ukraine's general staff said in a statement that the attack took place the previous day.

The refinery is the largest producer of fuel and lubricants in Russia's Southern Federal District, processing more than 15 million tons of crude annually — about 5.6% of the country's total refining capacity, according to Ukrainian officials.

Russia and Ukraine have traded almost daily assaults on each other's energy infrastructure as U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to stop the nearly four-year war make no impact on the battlefield.

Ukraine's long-range drone strikes on Russian refineries aim to deprive Moscow of the oil export revenue it needs to pursue its full-scale invasion.

Russia wants to cripple the Ukrainian power grid, seeking to deny civilians access to heat, light and running water in what Kyiv officials say is an attempt to "weaponize winter."

Also, saboteurs inside Russia burned dozens of locomotives in a bid to hamper the logistics of Russia's armed forces, Ukraine's military intelligence said Thursday.

It was not possible to independently verify the claim.

## New system to counter Russian drones deployed to NATO's eastern flank

*Associated Press*

Poland and Romania are deploying a new weapons system to defend against Russian drones, following a spate of incursions into NATO airspace in recent months that exposed the alliance's vulnerabilities and put Europe on edge.

The Merops system, which is small enough to fit in the back of a midsize pickup truck, can identify drones and close in on them, using artificial intelligence to navigate when satellite and electronic communications are jammed.

As well as being deployed in Poland and Romania, Merops will also be used by Denmark, NATO military officials told The Associated Press, part of a move to boost defenses on the alliance's eastern flank.

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The need for such technology became acute after around 20 Russian drones flew into Polish airspace in early September. Multimillion-dollar jets were scrambled to respond to drones which cost tens of thousands of dollars. Romania later faced a drone incursion, while drones temporarily closed airports in Copenhagen, Munich, Berlin and Brussels. There were also sightings near military bases in Belgium and Denmark.

While the origin of the drones

could not always be traced to Russia or linked to its war in Ukraine, the urgent need to bolster defenses is clear. A protracted drone battle — or full-scale war as in Ukraine — would drain Western coffers and limited stocks of missiles.

"What this system does is give us very accurate detection," said Col. Mark McLellan, assistant chief of staff operations at NATO Allied Land Command. "It's able to target the drones and take them down and at a low cost as well. ... It's a lot cheaper than flying an F-35 into the air to take them down with a missile."

U.S. military leaders in Europe are also advocating for the creation of an Eastern Flank Deterrence Line, a layered zone of defenses along NATO's border.

# FAA to impose shutdown-related flight cuts

Associated Press

The Federal Aviation Administration announced Wednesday that it would reduce air traffic by 10% across 40 “high-volume” markets to maintain travel safety as air traffic controllers exhibit signs of strain during the ongoing government shutdown.

Airports in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago along with hubs across the U.S. are among the 40 that will see flights cut starting Friday due to the government shutdown, according to a list distributed to the airlines.

The airports impacted cover the busiest across the U.S. — including Atlanta; Denver; Dal-

las; Orlando, Fla.; Miami; and San Francisco. In some cities — such as New York, Houston and Chicago — multiple airports will be affected.

The FAA is imposing the flight reductions to relieve pressure on air traffic controllers who are working without pay during the government shutdown and have been increasingly calling off work.

Controllers already have missed one paycheck and are scheduled to again receive nothing next week as the shutdown drags on and the financial pressure on them mounts.

The FAA has been delaying flights at times when airports or its other facilities are short on

controllers.

Passengers should start to be notified about cancellations Thursday. Airlines said they would try to minimize the impact on customers, some of whom will see weekend travel plans disrupted with little notice.

United Airlines said it would focus the cuts on smaller regional routes that use smaller planes. United, Delta Air Lines and American Airlines said they would offer refunds to passengers who opt not to fly, even if they purchased tickets that aren’t normally refundable.

The head of Frontier Airlines recommended that travelers buy backup tickets with another

airline to avoid being stranded. The cuts could represent as many as 1,800 flights and upward of 268,000 seats combined, according to an estimate by aviation analytics firm Cirium.

“I’m not aware in my 35-year history in the aviation market where we’ve had a situation where we’re taking these kinds of measures,” FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford said Wednesday. “We’re in new territory in terms of government shutdowns.”

Air traffic controllers have been working unpaid since the shutdown began Oct. 1. Most work mandatory overtime six days a week.

## Guard deployment in DC extended through February

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Washington D.C. National Guard will be deployed to the nation’s capital through the end of February, according to formal orders reviewed by The Associated Press.

The formal order, dated Nov. 4, extends the original order from Aug. 11 and says the Guard members will be in the city at least through Feb. 28. The order states the additional duty is in response to the emergency de-

clared in August by President Donald Trump and under directions from the “Secretary of War to protect federal property and functions in the District of Columbia and to support federal and District law enforcement.”

Hundreds of National Guard troops have been in Washington since August, which launched what Trump said was a crime-fighting mission that also included the federal takeover of the local police department.

That order expired in September, but the roughly 2,000 National Guard troops from D.C. and at least eight states remain in the city.

The D.C. National Guard is the single largest contributor of troops with 949 soldiers that make up the task force that totals 2,375 troops.

Some have been armed and providing a military presence in public spaces, especially in the federal parks around the city and at subway stations as well

as the Amtrak train station.

The National Guard task force appears to have spent a large portion of its time on yardwork and landscaping efforts around the nation’s capital. In an update provided in early October, task force officials boasted that troops cleared 1,150 bags of trash, spread 1,045 cubic yards of mulch, removed 50 truckloads of plant waste, cleared 7.9 miles of roadway, painted 270 feet of fencing and pruned 400 trees.

## Judge orders immigration facility make improvements

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A federal judge on Wednesday ordered authorities to improve a Chicago-area immigration facility after a group of detainees sued, alleging they were being kept in “inhumane” conditions.

The order will be in effect for 14 days. It requires officials to provide detainees at a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in the west Chicago suburb of Broadview

with a clean bedding mat and sufficient space to sleep, soap, towels, toilet paper, toothbrushes, toothpaste, menstrual products and prescribed medications.

“People shouldn’t be sleeping next to overflowing toilets,” U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman said. “They should not be sleeping on top of each other.”

The temporary restraining order says the holding rooms at the facility must be cleaned

twice a day. Detainees must be allowed to shower at least every other day and should have three full meals and bottled water upon request.

Advocates have raised concerns about Broadview’s conditions for months, and the facility has drawn scrutiny from members of Congress.

Lawyers and relatives of people held there have called it a de facto detention center, and tense demonstrations have

been held there for several weeks.

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security said detainees are provided with water and three meals a day, have phones to communicate with their family members and lawyers and are not denied access to proper medical care.

The judge said he found the witnesses “highly credible,” adding he was moved by the seriousness of the conditions.



# Pelosi will not seek reelection to House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi will not seek reelection to the U.S. House, bringing to a close her storied career as not only the first woman in the speaker's office but arguably the most powerful in American politics.

Pelosi, who has represented San Francisco for nearly 40 years, announced her decision Thursday.

"I will not be seeking reelection to Congress," Pelosi said in a video address to voters.

Pelosi, appearing upbeat and forward-looking as images of her decades of accomplishments filled the frames, said she would finish out her final year in office. She left those who sent her to Congress with a call to action to carry on the legacy of agenda-setting in the U.S. and around the

world.

"My message to the city I love is this: San Francisco, know your power," she said. "We have made history. We have made progress. We have always led the way."

Pelosi said, "And now we must continue to do so by remaining full participants in our democracy and fighting for the American ideals we hold dear."

The decision, while not fully unexpected, ricocheted across Washington, and California, as a seasoned generation of political leaders is stepping aside ahead of next year's midterm elections. Some are leaving reluctantly, others with resolve, but many are facing challenges from newcomers eager to lead the Democratic Party and confront President Donald Trump.

An architect of the Affordable Care Act and a leader on the in-

ternational stage, Pelosi, 85, came to politics later in life, a mother of five mostly grown children. She has long fended off calls for her to step aside. But after Pelosi quietly helped orchestrate Joe Biden's withdrawal from the 2024 presidential race, she has decided to pass the torch, too.

Pelosi's decision comes as her husband of more than six decades, Paul Pelosi, was gravely injured three years ago when an intruder demanding to know "Where is Nancy?" broke into the couple's home and beat him over the head with a hammer. His recovery from the 2022 attack is ongoing.

Pelosi's legacy as House speaker comes not only because she was the first woman to have the job but also because of what she did with the gavel, seizing the enormous powers that come with

the suite of offices overlooking the National Mall.

During her first tenure, from 2007 to 2011, she steered the House in passing landmark legislation into law — the Affordable Care Act, the Dodd-Frank financial reforms in the aftermath of the Great Recession and a repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy against LGBTQ+ service members.

Pelosi became the first speaker to regain the office in some 50 years, and her second term, from 2019 to 2023, became potentially more consequential than the first. Trump was impeached by the House — twice — first in 2019 for withholding U.S. aid to Ukraine as it faced a hostile Russia at its border and then in 2021 days after the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. The Senate acquitted him in both cases.

## California Republicans sue over US House redistricting

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California Republicans filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday to block a new U.S. House map that California voters decisively approved at the ballot.

Proposition 50, backed by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, is designed to help Democrats flip as many as five congressional House seats in the midterm elections next year. The lawsuit claims the map-makers improperly used race as a factor to favor Hispanic voters "without cause or evidence to justify it," and asks the court to block the new boundaries ahead of the 2026 elections. The complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, is funded by the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The Supreme Court has ruled that "states may not, without a compelling reason backed by evidence that was in fact considered,

separate citizens into different voting districts on the basis of race," the lawsuit says.

There have been two analyses showing there were no voting rights problems that warranted the redrawing of the map, it adds.

The lawsuit also alleges that state lawmakers and a mapmaking consultant admitted in public statements that they intentionally redrew some districts to have a Latino majority. In one of the news releases from state Democrats, lawmakers said that the new map "retains and expands Voting Rights Act districts that empower Latino voters" while making no changes to Black majority districts in the Oakland and Los Angeles areas, the lawsuit says.

Democrats said the measure is their best chance to blunt Texas Republicans' move to redraw their own maps to pick up five GOP seats at President Donald Trump's urging.

## Officials look for victims, answers after UPS crash

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The grim task of finding victims from the firestorm that followed the crash of a UPS cargo plane in Louisville, Ky., entered a third day Thursday as investigators gather information to determine why the aircraft caught fire and lost an engine on takeoff.

The inferno consumed the enormous plane and spread to nearby businesses, killing at least 12 people, including a child and three UPS crew on the plane, and ending any hope of finding survivors in the crash at UPS Worldport, the company's global aviation hub.

The plane had been cleared for takeoff Tuesday when a large fire developed in the left wing, said Todd Inman, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, which is leading the investigation. But determining why it caught fire and why the engine fell off could take investigators

more than a year.

The plane gained enough altitude to clear the fence at the end of the runway before crashing just outside Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, Inman said. The cockpit voice recorder and data recorder have been recovered, and the engine was discovered on the airfield, he said.

The crash and explosion had a devastating ripple effect, striking and causing smaller blasts at Kentucky Petroleum Recycling and hitting an auto salvage yard.

The child who was killed was with a parent at the salvage yard, according to Gov. Andy Beshear. He predicted that that death toll would rise, saying authorities were looking for a "handful of other people" but "we do not expect to find anyone else alive."

University of Louisville Hospital said two people were in critical condition in the burn unit; 18 were treated and discharged at that hospital and medical facilities.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Popular ice cream bars recalled in many states

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — Häagen-Dazs issued a limited voluntary recall of some of its ice cream bars after a batch was found to contain undeclared wheat, posing a risk for those with allergies.

On Monday, the FDA announced the recall for Häagen-Dazs Dark Chocolate Mini Bars. The product, the recall stated, could cause life-threatening reactions in people with wheat allergies or sensitivities.

“Those with an allergy or severe sensitivity to wheat run the risk of serious or life-threatening allergic reaction if they consume these products,” the FDA said in its advisory.

The recall applies to six-count packages with the batch code LLA519501. The best by date is Jan. 31, 2027.

## 2 charged with setting off fireworks at Harvard

**MA** BOSTON — Two men who were in the Boston area for college Halloween parties last weekend set off fireworks inside of an empty Harvard Medical School building, authorities said Tuesday in announcing their arrests.

Logan David Patterson, 18, and Dominick Frank Cardoza, 20, were taken into custody Tuesday on federal charges of conspiracy to damage by means of fire or an explosive.

Hours later, they were escorted into U.S. District Court in Boston in handcuffs as relatives of at least one of them looked on. Judge Jessica Hedges asked if they understand the process,

and both said they did. She then ordered them released pending trial and forbid them from possessing explosives or visiting Harvard while free.

The explosion happened at around 2:45 a.m. Saturday on the fourth floor of Harvard Medical School’s Goldenson Building, which houses labs and offices associated with the school’s neurobiology department. The building was empty and no one was injured.

## Conservative Anglican leader takes leave

**SC** MOUNT PLEASANT — The top leader of the Anglican Church in North America — a conservative denomination that broke away from the more liberal Episcopal Church about 15 years ago — has taken a leave of absence after facing allegations of sexual and other misconduct, which he denies.

Archbishop Stephen Wood announced the leave Monday while he awaits the outcome of a church disciplinary process triggered by a formal complaint, called a presentment, of alleged misconduct against him.

The presentment has not yet been made public, but an investigative report by The Washington Post said it alleged Wood tried to kiss a former children’s ministry director at his parish in 2024, shortly before he was elected archbishop. The presentment alleged Wood made other comments and acted in ways that made her uncomfortable since 2021, and made thousands of dollars in payments to her from church funds, the Post said. The presentment also in-

cludes allegations that he bullied staffers and plagiarized sermons, the Post reported.

Wood, 62, a married father of four, has denied the allegations.

## Man stabbed in chest at Bronx subway stop

**NY** NEW YORK — A man was left clinging to life after he was stabbed in the chest at a subway stop in New York’s Bronx borough, police said Wednesday.

MTA employees were taking a train out of service at the Bedford Park Boulevard station — the last stop on the B line on weekdays — when the victim stumbled into the empty car about 10:10 p.m. Tuesday, police said.

The wounded man collapsed on the train and workers called 911. Medics rushed the victim to St. Barnabas Hospital in critical condition.

Cops were working to determine the identity of the victim, who is believed to be in his 30s.

No one saw the man get stabbed and it wasn’t immediately clear exactly where the attack took place before he showed up on the train.

## Hunters bagging grouse at a good clip

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota’s ruffed grouse hunting — widely considered the best in the nation — appears to be holding up this fall despite signs of natural population decline for the state’s most popular game bird.

Participants in the annual National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt around Grand Rapids in early October bagged an aver-

age of 0.93 grouse per day, slightly exceeding the 10-year average. That was up from last year and the 10-year daily average of 0.85 grouse per hunter.

But this year’s spring drumming counts were down statewide and hunters have been reporting seeing smaller densities of the birds.

Participants in the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt harvested 158 grouse over two days, mainly on public land in typical fall weather, said Stefan Nelson, forest wildlife specialist for the host Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society.

This year’s grouse season in Minnesota will be the longest on record — stretching from Sept. 13 to Jan. 4.

## Judge reportedly drove wrong way on highway

**IA** IOWA CITY — A powerful Iowa judge has been charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated after witnesses say she drove the wrong way on a highway Tuesday night while passed out behind the wheel.

Adria Kester, 55, chief judge of the state’s Second Judicial District, was released from the Boone County Jail on Wednesday morning, court records show.

A criminal complaint said motorists called 911 after 8 p.m. on Tuesday night to report a truck slowly driving eastbound in the westbound lanes on U.S. Highway 30 near Boone. One of the witnesses reported the driver looked unconscious and slumped over the steering wheel, and drove into the highway median.

— From wire reports

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# Cowboys' Kneeland, 24, dies in apparent suicide

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — Police in a Dallas suburb said 24-year-old Dallas Cowboys defensive end Marshawn Kneeland was found dead of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound after evading authorities in his vehicle and fleeing the scene of an accident on foot.

Frisco police said Thursday that they are investigating a possible suicide. They said Kneeland didn't stop for Texas Department of Public Safety troopers in a chase that was joined by Frisco police Wednesday night.

Authorities lost sight of the vehicle before locating it crashed minutes later. During the search after Kneeland fled the crash site on foot, officers said they received word that Kneeland might be suicidal. He was found dead early Thursday morning, about three hours after the crash. Police didn't say where Kneeland's body was found.

The Cowboys had confirmed Kneeland's death Thursday morning before more details emerged.

"I am shattered to confirm that my client and dearest friend Marshawn Kneeland passed away last night," Kneeland's agent Jonathan Perzley said. "Marshawn poured his heart into every snap, every practice and every moment on the field. To lose someone with his talent, spirit and goodness is a pain I can hardly put into words."

Kneeland's death came just days after he recovered a blocked punt in the end zone in a 27-17 loss to the Arizona Cardinals.

Kneeland was in his second season with Dallas. He was a 2024 second-round draft pick out of Western Michigan.

Kneeland's mother, Wendy Kneeland, died suddenly while he was preparing for the draft. He had his mother's ashes in a necklace he wore after joining

the Cowboys, according to The Dallas Morning News.

His rookie season was off to a promising start before he was sidelined for five games by a knee injury.

"Marshawn was a beloved teammate and member of our organization," the Cowboys said. "Our thoughts and prayers regarding Marshawn are with his girlfriend Catalina and his family."

Kneeland had his first career sack in the season opener against the Philadelphia Eagles. He played in seven games this season, missing two with an ankle injury.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic news of the passing of Cowboys' Marshawn Kneeland," the NFL said. "We have been in contact with the Cowboys and have offered support and counseling resources."

Miami Dolphins receivers coach Robert Prince, who had the same position with Dallas

when Kneeland was a rookie last year, had tears in his eyes as he met with reporters Thursday.

"We spent a lot of time (together) when he was injured and working out in the weight room," Prince said. "We'd shoot the breeze. He was a Western Michigan kid and I coached with the Lions for a while so we had some Michigan-type stories. Good kid. I'm sorry to hear that about him."

Kneeland had a career-high 57 tackles along with 4½ sacks in nine games as a senior with the Broncos.

"My heart is absolutely broken over the loss of Marshawn Kneeland," Western Michigan coach Lance Taylor said. "His leadership, energy and smile were infectious, and he left a lasting impact on everyone in our program. Having coached him during my first season here, we developed a special bond that went far beyond football."

## 11 NFL teams angling to add Germans to fanbases

Associated Press

It seems like the NFL can't get enough of Germany.

Berlin will be the third German city to host a regular-season game when the Indianapolis Colts and Atlanta Falcons square off Sunday at Olympiastadion. A fourth location could soon be announced for next year.

The Colts and Falcons won't be alone in the German capital. Nine other teams with commercial rights in the country through the NFL's global markets program will also be in town to host events around the city in attempts to win over local fans. Germany is the most sought-after country in the program: 11 of the league's 32 teams have rights there. Mexico is next with 10 teams, while Great Britain has nine.

"We don't think it's crowded. Germany is a big country, 80-plus million people living here," Alexander Steinforth, the general manager of NFL Germany, told The Associated Press in an interview.

"If you look at the numbers, you still have a lot of potential to tap into — sports fans that are not NFL fans yet. And even if you look at

the NFL fans, it's less than 50% who have already picked their team. So most of the people here are fans of the league."

The ratio is slowly changing as teams engage fans and the sport gains in popularity.

"But I still believe there is a lot of opportunity for NFL teams in general here in the market," Steinforth said.

Berlin will also host a game in 2027 and 2029. An announcement is expected soon for next season and 2028.

"We're right now in the process of finalizing a deal with another city in Germany, which we'll announce in the next couple of weeks. Super excited about a setup which I think will bring to life the best that Germany has to offer," said Steinforth, who declined to specify any location.

Munich hosted Germany's first regular-season game in 2022. Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers beat the Seattle Seahawks 21-16 after an eventful week in which Brady was both gifted Bavarian lederhosen and quizzed about his divorce.

Frankfurt then hosted two games in 2023. It was back to Munich last season. Germany

so far is the only country outside the United States to have held games in multiple cities.

"The games in Munich as well as in Frankfurt made a lot of cities raise their hand saying, 'Let's talk.' That's when Berlin got really active," Steinforth said.

Berlin has invested \$14.3 million as part of the deal — for stadium upgrades as well as investments in flag and tackle football, Steinforth said. The league has also pointed to studies showing boosts to the local economies.

Olympiastadion will be sold out at 72,000 fans for Sunday, Steinforth added.

Munich, Frankfurt and Düsseldorf were originally the cities selected as finalists to host games.

The NFL's broadcast partner in Germany, RTL, will also air Sunday's game on its children's channel, TOGGGO, commercial free and with commentary geared toward kids.

"These are the kinds of initiatives that really help us to tap into new audiences, and ensure that we're also reaching the next generation of NFL fans," Steinforth said.



# Irish host Navy trying to solve FG woes

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman has watched missed extra points and errant field goals for two seasons.

He knows it's time to give that problem the boot.

The 10th-ranked Irish saw it happen again in last weekend's 25-10 victory over Boston College as three different kickers missed attempts, and Freeman knows it must change if they hope to stay in the playoff picture.

"There's a technique to kicking a football," Freeman said. "But there's a human element when all of a sudden, you're out there on Saturday that can mess with your mind, mess with your head and get you to revert back to a technique that isn't producing consistent results. So we have to really have a plan of attack for the human element that happens."

The next chance comes Saturday when Notre Dame (6-2, No. 10 CFP) hosts rival Navy (7-1).

But this is hardly a new issue for the Irish.

Last season, Mitch Jeter strug-

gled with injuries all year — and it showed as the Irish went just 15 of 27 on field goals including two that were blocked in a stunning 16-14 loss to Northern Illinois.

Still, Jeter delivered when it mattered most — making the decisive kick in the waning seconds against Penn State to give Notre Dame a 27-24 victory and a trip to the national championship game.

Could it happen again? Perhaps. Injuries again have taken a toll on the Irish.

Noah Burnette, a transfer from North Carolina, sat out two games with a hip injury and then missed an extra point against Boston College. Things went from bad to worse when Freeman started using his other options. Erik Schmidt missed a 35-yard field goal attempt and Marcello Diomedes missed an extra point.

At least all those misses didn't cost them a victory, like the botched extra point after Notre Dame scored the go-ahead touchdown with 2:53 left against then-No. 16 Texas A&M. The Aggies took advantage by rallying

for a 41-40 victory.

"We owe it to the team to be able to make extra points," Freeman said.

Notre Dame already has missed four PATs this season, compared with one in 16 games last year, and is 5-for-8 on field goals with a season long of 48. The misses came from 31, 31 and 35 yards.

Finding an in-season solution won't be easy. Burnette, Diomedes and Schmidt are the only kickers listed on the roster and, given the circumstances, it seems unlikely they would give punter James Rendell a shot. Unlike a couple of years ago, adding a soccer player or holding an open tryout wouldn't work either.

"It's an NCAA rule that before the season, you set your rosters at 105," Freeman said. "There are guys that you can declare grandfathered in that were previously on your roster, but once your rosters are set, you can't add anybody to your roster, so that's why we can't do anything about that right now."

Freeman doesn't want to ro-

tate his kickers even though the resumes are spotty.

Burnette is 20-for-22 on extra points and 5-for-6 on field goals. Schmidt, a freshman, is 12-for-13 on extra points and missed both of his field-goal attempts. Diomedes, a junior, is 2-for-3 on extra points but has not yet attempted a field goal.

Freeman said they've looked good in practice. He just needs them to execute in games.

"It's starting to trend more toward the mental side," Freeman said. "There's added pressure, and it's easy to say, 'Don't feel the pressure. Don't worry about the pressure.' It's easy to say, but that's really hard to do. And we have to continue to equip them with tools that help them in that moment."

He added: "We can try to simulate (the pressure) in practice. I can yell and scream. That's one way to simulate pressure, but that has nothing — that's not even close to the pressure they feel when they have to make a field goal, especially after you've missed some. It's a challenge, but we've got to fix it."

# Ovechkin scores his 900th goal as Caps defeat Blues

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Alex Ovechkin scored his 900th career NHL goal and the Washington Capitals beat the St. Louis Blues 6-1 on Wednesday night.

Ovechkin's 900th goal came 2:39 into the second period, when he caught Jakob Chychrun's rebound off the boards and backhanded it past Jordan Binnington.

The 40-year-old is the only player in NHL history to reach that milestone, and the bench cleared to commemorate his achievement as Binnington tried to hide the milestone puck by tucking it away in his pants. Linesperson Michel Cormier recovered the puck.

Anthony Beauvillier and Tom

Wilson each scored twice, John Carlson also scored and Jakob Chychrun had three assists for Washington, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

Alexey Toropchenko had the lone goal for the Blues, who have lost eight of their last nine.

**Maple Leafs 5, Mammoth 3:** John Tavares snapped a tie in the third period, and host Toronto beat the Utah for their third consecutive win.

Tavares, William Nylander, Matthew Knies and Matias Maccelli each had a goal and an assist for Toronto. Nylander has five goals and 11 assists during an eight-game point streak.

Maple Leafs goaltender Anthony Stolarz stopped 21 shots.

Mikhail Sergachev, Michael

Carcone and Dylan Guenther scored for Utah, which was coming off a 2-1 overtime win at Buffalo on Tuesday night.

**Flames 5, Blue Jackets 1:** Nazem Kadri scored a goal in his 1,000th NHL game and host Calgary beat Columbus.

Morgan Frost, Blake Coleman, Adam Klappa and Mikael Backlund also scored for Calgary, which remains last in the league's overall standings, despite winning consecutive games for the first time. Dustin Wolf made 42 saves.

Kirill Marchenko scored for the Blue Jackets, who have lost back-to-back games after a four-game winning streak.

**Blackhawks 5, Canucks 2:** Tyler Bertuzzi scored three goals

in the third period for his fourth career hat trick and visiting Chicago beat Vancouver Canucks.

Ilya Mikheyev also scored and Connor Bedard added an empty-net goal and an assist for the Blackhawks, while Ryan Donato contributed a pair of assists. Spencer Knight stopped 43 shots.

**Sharks 6, Kraken 1:** Macklin Celebrini had a goal and two assists as visiting San Jose beat Seattle.

Ethan Cardwell, John Kingberg, Will Smith, Ty Dellandrea and Tyler Toffoli also scored for the Sharks, who put away the game with three goals in the first four minutes of the third period.

Yaroslav Askarov made 28 saves to help San Jose (5-6-3) win for the third time in four games.

# Cunningham leads Pistons past Jazz

Associated Press

DETROIT — Cade Cunningham scored 19 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter as the Detroit Pistons won their fourth straight, beating the Utah Jazz 114-103 on Wednesday night.

Jalen Duren added 22 points and 22 rebounds for the Pistons, which improved to 6-2, and Ausrar Thompson added 18.

Detroit, which came into the game second in field-goal defense at 42.9%, held Utah to 38.4% (33-86).

Former Piston Svi Mykhailiuk scored a career-high 28 for the Jazz, who have lost four of five. Lauri Markkanen added 25 and Jusuf Nurkic had 17 rebounds.

**Cavaliers 132, 76ers 121:** Donovan Mitchell scored a season-high 46 points, Jarrett Allen had 24 points and 10 rebounds and Cleveland pulled away in the second half for a home victory over Philadelphia.

Evan Mobley added 23 for Cleveland, which won its second straight.

Cavaliers All-Star point guard Darius Garland had eight points in 26 minutes in his season debut. Garland missed the first seven games after offseason surgery on his left big toe.

Philadelphia, which never led in the game, got 27 points apiece from Tyrese Maxey and Quentin Grimes.

Mitchell followed up Sunday's 37-point, eight 3-pointer performance against Atlanta by going 15 of 21 from the floor, 6 of 11 from long distance and making all eight of his foul shots against a 76ers squad that dropped games on back-to-back nights.

Joel Embiid did not play on Wednesday as Philadelphia is not having him play on consecutive nights early in the season due to left knee issues.

**Celtics 136, Wizards 107:** Jaylen Brown scored 35 points and host Boston shook off a double-digit first-quarter deficit to

beat Washington and send the Wizards to their sixth straight loss.

Brown scored 16 points in the first quarter and had five rebounds and five assists before leaving the game with two minutes remaining in the third and Boston leading by 19 points. Neemias Queta had 15 points and 12 rebounds for the Celtics, who had lost two in a row at home.

Washington has not beaten the Celtics in nine tries since March 2023.

**Knicks 137, Timberwolves 114:** OG Anunoby scored 25 points, Jalen Brunson had 23 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds, and host New York spoiled Anthony Edwards' return to the Minnesota lineup with a victory.

Josh Hart added 18 points for the Knicks, who controlled the second half and improved to 5-0 at Madison Square Garden.

The Knicks outworked the Timberwolves, turning 21 offensive rebounds into 31 second-chance points, and outscored them 83-56 after trailing by four at halftime.

**Nets 112, Pacers 103:** Michael Porter Jr. had 32 points and 11 rebounds, and the Brooklyn Nets overcame the loss of leading scorer Cam Thomas to claim their first victory of the season in a road win over Indiana.

Porter made 10 of 20 shots, including four 3-pointers, as the Nets pulled away in the fourth quarter in a game of spurts that featured 12 lead changes and 10 ties. His final three-point play pushed the Nets ahead 110-103 with 22.1 seconds remaining.

**Rockets 124, Grizzlies 109:** Amen Thompson had 28 points and 10 rebounds, Alperen Sengun added 20 points and 16 rebounds, and visiting Houston defeated Memphis.

Jabari Smith Jr. and Tari Eason scored 16 apiece as Houston won its fifth straight game.

Thompson and Sengun each had seven assists.

**Pelicans 101, Mavericks 99:** Saddiq Bey had season highs with 22 points and nine rebounds to lead visiting New Orleans past Dallas.

Dallas rookie Cooper Flagg's running shot down the lane with 2 seconds left banged off the back of the rim with New Orleans' Trey Murphy III grabbing the contested rebound.

Flagg was the Mavericks' leading scorer for the first time with 20 points to go with nine rebounds. P.J. Washington had 15 points and 11 rebounds for Dallas (2-6), which has lost three straight.

**Nuggets 122, Heat 112:** Nikola Jokic had 33 points, 16 assists and 15 rebounds for his fifth triple-double of the season and Denver continued their mastery of Miami with a home win over the Heat.

It was Denver's 11th straight regular-season win over the Heat.

Aaron Gordon added 24 points for the Nuggets, who improved to 4-0 at home this season.

Miami hasn't won a game in the Mile High City during the regular season since Nov. 30, 2016. They did beat the Nuggets in Game 2 of the 2023 NBA Finals. Denver won the series in five games for its only title.

Norman Powell had 23 points for Miami, which finished a four-game trip with a 1-3 mark. Bam Adebayo didn't play in the second half due to a left foot injury. The Heat were outbounded by a 68-44 margin.

**Kings 121, Warriors 116:** Russell Westbrook posted his NBA-record 204th career triple-double and Dennis Schroder sparked a key fourth-quarter spurt that gave Sacramento a home win over Golden State in a matchup of short-handed teams.

Schroder hit three 3-pointers in the 11-0 run that broke a 104-

all tie in the fourth quarter, and the Kings held on to win the opener of a five-game homestand.

Will Richard scored 30 points and Moses Moody added 28 for the Warriors. Jonathan Kuminga scored 24 but missed a shot in the lane with 24 seconds left with Golden State down three.

**Trail Blazers 121, Thunder 119:** Deni Avdija had 26 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, and Portland erased a 22-point deficit in a home victory over Oklahoma City.

Tru Holiday added 22 points, including two clutch free throws that put Portland ahead 121-118 with six seconds left. Jerami Grant scored 20 off the bench as the Blazers handed the defending NBA champions their first loss of the season.

Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 35 points and Aaron Wiggins added 27. Oklahoma City was without several players who played Tuesday night, as Chet Holmgren, Lu Dort and Alex Caruso all sat out.

**Lakers 118, Spurs 116:** Luka Doncic had 35 points, 13 assists, nine rebounds and five steals, and Los Angeles rallied in the fourth quarter before surviving a frantic final second for a home victory over San Antonio.

The Lakers finished the game on a 21-10 run, but the Spurs got one last chance when Marcus Smart committed an inbound violation after Kelly Olynyk's put-back layup with 1.2 seconds left.

Deandre Ayton had 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers, who extended their impressive start to the season with a furious rally from a nine-point deficit midway through the fourth quarter. Doncic scored eight points in the fourth, including a clutch go-ahead 3-pointer with 2:31 to play.

Victor Wembanyama had 19 points and eight rebounds before fouling out with 1:39 to play for the Spurs, who have lost two straight after a 5-0 start.