

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Battle continues for annexed regions

Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — Regions of southern Ukraine that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed saw more heavy fighting Saturday as Ukrainian soldiers pressed a ground campaign to recapture one, and Russian forces exploded long-range missiles and Iranian-made drones in another.

A missile strike also seriously damaged a key energy facility in Ukraine's capital region, the country's grid operator said. Following mounting setbacks, the Russian military has worked to cut off power and water in far-flung populated areas while also fending off Ukrainian counterattacks in occupied areas.

Dmytro Pocishchuk, a hospital medic in the Zaporizhzhia region's capital who has treated dozens of people wounded during Russian attacks in recent weeks, said people sought safety outdoors or in his building's basement when the familiar blasts started at 5:15 a.m. Saturday.

"If Ukraine stops, these bombings and killings will continue. We can't give up to the Russian Federation," Pocishchuk said several hours later. He put a small Ukrainian flag on the broken windshield of his heavily damaged car.

Russia has lost ground in the nearly seven weeks since Ukraine's armed forces opened their southern counteroffensive. Last week, the Kremlin launched what is believed to be its largest coordinated air and missile raids since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Kyiv region Gov. Oleksiy Kuleba said the missile that hit a power site Saturday morning didn't kill or wound anyone. Citing security, Ukrainian officials didn't identify the site, one of many infrastructure targets the Russian military tried to destroy after an Oct. 8 truck bomb explosion damaged the bridge that links Russia to the annexed Crimean Peninsula.

Ukrainian electricity transmission company Ukrenergo said repair crews were working to restore electricity service, but warned residents about further possible outages. Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, urged residents of the capital and three neighboring regions to conserve energy.

"Putin may hope that by increasing the misery of the Ukrainian people, President (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy may be more inclined to negotiate a settlement that allows Russia to retain some stolen territory in the east or Cri-

mea," said Ian Williams, a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a policy organization based in Washington. "A quick look at history shows that the strategic bombing of civilians is an ineffective way to achieve a political aim."

Last week's wide-ranging retaliatory attacks, which included the use of self-destructing explosive drones from Iran, killed dozens of people. The strikes hit residential buildings as well as infrastructure such as power stations in Kyiv, Lviv in western Ukraine and other cities that had seen comparatively few strikes in recent months.

Putin said Friday that Moscow didn't see a need for additional massive strikes but his military would continue selective ones. He said that of 29 targets the Russian military planned to knock out in last week's attacks, seven weren't damaged and would be taken out gradually.

The Institute for the Study of War, a think tank based in Washington, interpreted Putin's remarks as intended to counter criticism from pro-war Russian bloggers who "largely praised the resumption of strikes against Ukrainian cities, but warned that a short campaign would be ineffective."

US is sending \$725M more in military aid to Ukraine

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration will send Ukraine a new \$725 million package of weapons and other military assistance, the White House said Friday, as the U.S. added to a flurry of aid announcements from European allies this week.

The announcement comes on the heels of meetings at NATO, where defense leaders from Europe and around the world pledged weapons and air defense systems to Ukraine as Russia heightened its bombardment of Kyiv and other regions.

Officials said there are no major new weapons in the U.S. package. Instead, the U.S. aid is largely aimed at restocking thousands of rounds of ammunition for the weapons systems Ukraine has been successfully using in its counteroffensive against Russia, as the war stretches into its

eighth month.

The new package includes rounds for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, known as HIMARS, a critical weapon that has improved Ukraine's ability to strike ammunition depots, bridges and other key targets that erode Russia's ability to resupply troops. The U.S. has already sent 20 HIMARS to Ukraine, and has promised 18 more that would be delivered in the coming years.

The aid announcement caps a string of commitments from allies this week. One after another in the last two days, countries large and small detailed new contributions to Ukraine's fight, underscoring the persistent fears among European nations that they could be Moscow's next target.

"Russia's latest assaults have only deepened the determination of the Ukrainian

people and further united countries of goodwill from every region on Earth," said U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at a meeting of defense leaders this week. "Our resolve and steadiness of purpose has only been strengthened."

A senior defense official told reporters at the Pentagon that Ukraine's immediate needs continue to be additional air defenses. The official said that, for example, Russia fired more than 80 missiles at Ukrainian targets during one recent 24-hour period, and Ukrainian air defenses were able to intercept about half of them.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the U.S. assessment of the war, said that the intercepts use a lot of ammunition because its likely Ukrainians fired more than one round at each incoming missile.

DOJ appeals to stop Mar-a-Lago arbiter

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department asked a federal appeals court on Friday to shut down the work of an independent arbiter who was appointed last month to review documents seized during an FBI search of former President Donald Trump's Florida estate.

The appeal is the latest salvo in weeks of litigation over the scope of duties of the arbiter, also known as a special master, who was assigned to inspect the records taken in the Aug. 8 search of Mar-a-Lago and weed out any that may be protected by claims of legal privilege.

The special master process has caused some delays to the Justice Department's investigation into the holding of top-secret documents at the home. But a major hurdle was cleared last month when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit lifted a temporary bar on the department's ability to use the seized classified documents as part of its criminal probe.

The move permitted a core aspect of the probe to resume, greatly reducing the odds that the process could have a significant impact on the investigation. Even so, department lawyers returned to the court Friday to ask for the entire special master

review to be shut down, saying the judge who made the appointment had no basis for doing so and that Trump was not entitled to an independent review of the seized records or to claim privilege over them.

"Plaintiff has no plausible claim of executive privilege as to any of the seized materials and no plausible claim of personal attorney-client privilege as to the seized government records — including all records bearing classification markings," according to the department's brief. "Accordingly," they added, "the special-master review process is unwarranted."

Biden pot pardons may affect Ark. legalization

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — There are few surprises expected on Election Day in solidly Republican Arkansas, where Donald Trump's former press secretary is heavily favored in the race for governor and other GOP candidates are considered locks.

But one big exception is the campaign to make Arkansas the first state in the South to legalize recreational marijuana. A proposal to change the state's constitution is drawing millions of dollars from opponents and supporters of legalization, with ads crowding the airwaves.

President Joe Biden's recent announcement that he will pardon thousands of people for simple marijuana possession has

shined a new spotlight on legalization efforts in Arkansas and four other states. Voters in Maryland, Missouri, North Dakota and South Dakota are also taking up measures on recreational marijuana.

Biden's step toward decriminalizing the drug could provide a boost for legalization in some of the most conservative parts of the country, experts say.

"The most powerful elected leader in the world has publicly declared it was a mistake to criminalize people for using cannabis and I think that will go a long way with voters who may be on the fence," said Mason Tvert, partner at VS Strategies, a cannabis policy and public affairs firm.

Biden's announcement only covers peo-

ple convicted under the federal law. But he has called on governors to issue similar pardons for those convicted of state marijuana offenses, which reflect the vast majority of marijuana possession cases.

The moves come as opposition to legalization has softened around the country, with recreational marijuana legal in 19 states, despite resistance at the federal level. Advocates say it shows that states are ahead of the federal government on the issue.

"I think it's an example of state-level leadership and citizens pushing the federal government in the right direction," said Eddie Armstrong, a former state legislator who leads the Responsible Growth Arkansas group campaigning for legalization.

Florida spends nearly \$1M on 2 more migrant flights

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida has paid nearly \$1 million to arrange two sets of flights to transport about 100 migrants who entered the country illegally to Delaware and Illinois, according to documents released Friday by the Florida Department of Transportation.

The flights would be a follow-up to the Sept. 14 flights from Texas to Martha's Vineyard that carried 49 mostly Venezuelan migrants to the Massachusetts island where former President Barack Obama owns a mansion. Local officials weren't told

in advance that the migrants were coming.

Gov. Ron DeSantis claimed responsibility for the flights as part of a campaign to focus attention on what he has called the Biden administration's failed border policies. He was joining Texas Gov. Greg Abbott in the tactic of sending migrants to Democratic strongholds without advance warning.

The two additional sets of flights originally were scheduled for some time before Oct. 3 but apparently were halted or postponed. The contractor hired by Florida later extended the window for the trips until

Dec. 1, according to memos released by the state Department of Transportation.

Vertol Systems Company of Destin, Fla., was hired to organize the flights and sent an employee to the state capital of Tallahassee to pick up a hard copy of a \$950,000 check after the state didn't receive paperwork for a direct deposit to the company's account, according to the documents. Vertol owner James Montgomerie didn't answer a phone call and email seeking comments about the flight plans. DeSantis' office didn't immediately respond to an email requesting comment.

US sending 'elite' disaster response team to Haiti

Miami Herald

MIAMI — The U.S. Agency for International Development is deploying an elite disaster response team to Haiti “as insecurity, gang violence, and the humanitarian situation worsen” throughout the Caribbean nation, a U.S. official said Friday.

The United States and Canada were also flying security assistance into Port-au-Prince on Saturday, including armored vehicles from Canada ordered months ago by the Haitian government to aid the Haitian National Police, several sources said.

The Disaster Assistance Response Team, also known as a DART, is “assessing needs and working closely with the U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince, humanitarian partners, and the Haitian people to determine how to deliver assistance to the most vulnerable,” the official said.

Haiti is embroiled in near-anarchy as gangs continue to blockade the country’s largest fuel terminal and choke off critical roadways, compounding a growing cholera outbreak.

DARTs are typically reserved for severe humanitarian crises and disaster responses. They are comprised of the government’s most highly trained disaster response experts, and are intended to expedite the assessment of needs and delivery of aid.

The 15-member team includes seven ex-

perts who will work in Haiti and eight others working remotely.

Earlier this week, the Biden administration announced it would impose visa limits on individuals who are involved in gang activity, and sent a major U.S. Coast Guard ship to monitor the coast off Haiti’s capital.

The United States also plans to push for a vote on Monday on a resolution at the United Nations Security Council that would establish a mechanism to impose international sanctions on gang leaders.

But with violence and disease worsening throughout the country, Haiti’s government is asking for more, including an international rapid response force that can break the gang blockade of the fuel ports.

The U.N. secretary-general has called for international intervention to establish a humanitarian corridor. But, so far, no country has expressed interest in sending military forces.

“In addition to mobilizing the DART, the United States continues to monitor the situation in Haiti closely and is working alongside international partners to determine needs and provide additional assistance,” the U.S. official said. “The American people have a proud and generous history of providing help during times of crisis. USAID remains committed to helping the people of Haiti during this difficult time.”

Mel Gibson can testify at trial of Weinstein

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mel Gibson can testify about what he learned from one of Harvey Weinstein’s accusers, a judge ruled Friday in the rape and sexual assault trial of the former movie mogul.

The 66-year-old actor and director was one of many witnesses, and by far the best known, whose identities were revealed in Los Angeles Superior Court. The judge and attorneys had taken a break from jury selection for motions on what evidence will be allowed at the trial, and who can testify. The witness list for the trial is sealed.

Judge Lisa B. Lench ruled that Gibson can testify in support of his masseuse and friend, who will be known as Jane Doe #3 at the trial. Weinstein is accused of committing sexual battery by restraint against the woman, one of 11 rape and sexual assault counts in the trial against the 70-year-old.

Prosecutors said that after getting a massage from the woman at a California hotel in Beverly Hills in May of 2010, a naked Weinstein followed her into the bathroom and masturbated. Weinstein has pleaded not guilty, and denied any non-consensual sexual activity.

Weinstein’s attorneys argued against allowing Gibson to testify, saying that what he learned from the woman while getting a massage from her does not constitute a “fresh complaint” by the woman under the law by which Gibson would take the stand. A “fresh complaint” under California law allows the introduction of evidence of sexual assault or another crime if the victim reported it to someone else voluntarily and relatively promptly after it happened.

Prosecutors said that when Gibson brought up Weinstein’s name by chance, the woman had a traumatic response and Gibson understood from her that she had been sexually assaulted. Gibson did not remember the timing of the exchange, but the prosecution will use another witness, Allison Weiner, who remembers speaking to both Gibson and the woman in 2015.

Judge Lench said Gibson’s testimony will depend on how the accuser describes the exchange with him when she takes the stand, and she may choose to rule against it at that time.

An email seeking comment from a representative for Gibson was not immediately returned.

Alaska’s Bering Sea snow crab, king crab seasons are canceled

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Alaska officials have canceled the fall Bristol Bay red king crab harvest, and for the first time, have also scrapped the winter harvest of smaller snow crab.

The move is a double whammy to a fleet from Alaska, Washington and Oregon chasing Bering Sea crab in harvests that in 2016 grossed \$280 million, The Seattle Times reported.

The closures reflect conservation concerns about both crab species following bleak summer populations surveys. The decisions to shut down the snow crab and fall king crab harvests came after days of discussions by Alaska Department of Fish and

Game biologists and senior agency officials who faced crabbers’ pleas for at least small fisheries.

“I am struggling for words. This is so unbelievable that this is happening,” said Jamie Goen, executive director of the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, adding that some crabbers will go out of business.

“Management of Bering Sea snow crab must now focus on conservation and rebuilding given the conditions of the stock,” the department said in a Monday statement.

Snow crab populations declined after a 2019 Bering Sea warming that scrambled the broader marine ecosystem. Last year’s snow crab harvest of 5.6 million pounds was the smallest in over 40 years.

Biden touts efforts to lower drug costs

Associated Press

IRVINE, California — President Joe Biden highlighted his administration's efforts to lower prescription drug costs on Friday as part of his three-state Western tour this week, as he confronts a sobering inflation report in the waning weeks before midterm elections.

Biden visited a community college in Irvine, Calif., to meet with older adults and tout his administration's efforts to reduce inflation and drive down costs. The trip came on the heels of an announcement that millions of Social Security recipients will get an 8.7% boost in their benefits in 2023, a historic increase but a gain that will be eaten up in part by the rising cost of everyday living.

Biden said that still, seniors "are going to get ahead of inflation next year. For the first time in 10 years Social Security checks are going to go up while Medicare premiums go down." "It's a big deal for seniors," he added.

Despite the president's efforts, inflation is rising, and Republicans are capitalizing on higher prices, seeing openings in California and elsewhere to potentially pick up U.S. House seats.

Biden acknowledged the issue on Thursday, saying that "Americans are squeezed by the cost of living. It's been true for years, and folks don't need a report to tell them they're being squeezed."

He also returned to a metaphor he used

often during his first year in office, talking about issues that Americans discuss around the "kitchen table," touting his administration's efforts to lower costs even as inflation rises.

"From prescription drugs, to health insurance, to energy bills, and so much more," he said. "We're standing up for working people and their right to get a raise and get a better job."

Biden also signed an executive order that will direct the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to look for additional ways to lower drug costs.

The Inflation Reduction Act signed into law earlier this year already requires that Medicare begin bargaining over the price of a handful of drugs starting next year.

Walker denies past support for US abortion ban

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Georgia's Republican Senate candidate Herschel Walker on Friday denied his previous support for an outright national ban on abortion, though he has insisted at various points throughout the campaign that it was a proposal he endorsed.

Walker, a staunch anti-abortion politician recently accused by a former girlfriend of encouraging and paying for her 2009 abortion, was asked during a debate with Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock about his support for "a complete ban on a national level." He said the moderator had misstated his position.

Walker's claim contradicted statements he had made repeatedly on the campaign

trail, including in July when he said "that's a problem" that there is no national ban.

Walker said Friday that his position is the same as Georgia's state law, the so-called heartbeat bill that bans abortion at six weeks, before many women know they're pregnant. That law went into effect this year after the Supreme Court overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortions nationwide.

The debate in Georgia's marquee Senate contest was held just days before in-person early voting begins Monday. The outcome will help determine which party controls the Senate for the next two years of President Joe Biden's term.

The heated exchange on abortion was one of many that highlighted stark differ-

ences between the two men on policy, personality and governing philosophy. The debate covered a wide range of topics, including abortion, personal integrity, crime and student loans, and forced both men to answer attacks that have flooded voters' television screens and social media feeds for months.

Walker, a Georgia football icon making his first bid for public office, leaned heavily on assertions that Warnock is a puppet of President Joe Biden, saying the Nov. 8 midterm election is about what those two "had done to you and your family" in an inflationary economy. Warnock, who is senior pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, answered that the election is a choice about "who is ready to represent Georgia."

Independent threatens Dems in Ore. governor's race

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — Oregon is typically known as a bastion of West Coast liberalism, where Democrats are easily elected and a Republican hasn't served as governor since the early 1980s.

But with an unusually competitive three-way contest for governor, the Democratic candidate's success is hardly a guarantee this year. As mail-in ballots become available to voters next week, Oregon is becoming the unlikely site of one of the most competitive governor's races in the country.

The main reason for the race's unpredictability is Betsy Johnson, a longtime former Democratic lawmaker with a fondness for salty language who is aiming to become the first unaffiliated governor elected in Oregon in almost a century.

Polls show Johnson with double-digit support, and Democrats have called her a spoiler who is taking votes from their nominee, Tina Kotek — and could lead to a GOP victory. Her bid has been aided by GOP donor and Nike co-founder Phil Knight, who donated at least \$3.75 million to Johnson's campaign before giving \$1

million in recent weeks to Republican candidate Christine Drazan.

The tight contest between Kotek and Drazan, with Johnson trailing, has caught the attention of the White House. On Friday, President Joe Biden visited Portland to campaign with Democrats and urge voters to back Kotek.

During a phone bank for Oregon Democrats in a crowded union hall, Biden grabbed Kotek's hand and the two walked to the center of the room as volunteers cheered.

"What a governor does matters," he said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Street to be renamed in honor of Fats Domino

LA NEW ORLEANS — The New Orleans street where one of the founders of rock 'n' roll spent most of his life is being renamed in his honor. Caffin Avenue will now be known as Antoine "Fats" Domino Avenue.

Domino sold more than 110 million records, with hits including "Blueberry Hill" and "Ain't That a Shame" — originally titled "Ain't It A Shame."

Domino died Oct. 24, 2017, of natural causes at the age of 89. He survived the massive flooding that followed Hurricane Katrina's landfall on Aug. 29, 2005, but had to be rescued by boat from his home, where he tried to ride out the storm. The area was flooded again by Hurricane Rita a month later.

School custodian made 137 voyeuristic videos

WA VANCOUVER — A school custodian in Vancouver, Wash., was arrested after investigators reported finding 137 videos he had allegedly secretly filmed in restrooms over nearly a decade.

James Mattson, 38, was booked on suspicion of 137 counts of first-degree voyeurism, The Columbian reported.

Vancouver Public Schools said that Mattson is on unpaid leave, pending termination proceedings.

Mattson has worked for Vancouver Public Schools since 2007 and has worked at various schools in the district.

According to court records, a criminal investigation began Oct. 5 after a woman dating

Mattson reported finding a video on his computer of a girl changing clothes in a locker room.

Steinbeck's letter to son sells for over \$32K

MA BOSTON — A heartfelt letter written by author John Steinbeck offering paternal advice to his teenage son who was experiencing love for the first time has sold at auction for more than \$32,000.

The two-page, handwritten letter, dated Nov. 10, 1958, went for \$32,426 to a collector who wishes to remain anonymous, Boston-based auction house RR Auction said.

The letter is remarkable because the Nobel Literature Prize laureate author doesn't simply brush off his then 14-year-old son Thomas' feelings as childish puppy love. He urged his son to embrace the experience, but he warned of let-downs.

Steinbeck died in 1968. Thomas Steinbeck died in 2016. The text of the letter has been published worldwide.

Man pleads guilty to bombing romantic rival

MD BALTIMORE — An Ohio man who seriously wounded a romantic rival in Maryland by planting a homemade bomb inside a gift-wrapped box on the victim's front porch has pleaded guilty to federal weapons charges.

Clayton Alexander McCoy, 32, of Chesterland, Ohio, pleaded guilty in Baltimore to transporting explosives with intent to injure and to possession of an

unregistered firearm/explosive device in connection with the 2020 explosion at the victim's home in Carroll County, Md.

As part of McCoy's guilty plea, he admitted building a pipe bomb at his home in Ohio and driving it to the victim's home, intending to kill the man, U.S. Attorney Erek Barron said in a news release. McCoy knew the victim and his girlfriend through a live action role-playing battle game called Dagorhir, according to court documents.

In October 2020, McCoy expressed romantic feelings for the woman, who informed McCoy that she was in a relationship and did not share McCoy's romantic feelings, prosecutors said. McCoy then devised a plan to build and deliver a bomb to the woman's boyfriend with the intent to remove him as a romantic rival, prosecutors said.

Officials: Man set 25 truck fires in 8 states

MI DETROIT — A Michigan man has been arrested on a federal criminal complaint alleging he set 25 fires on semitrailers in eight states over more than two years, all belonging to the same trucking company, prosecutors said.

Viorel Pricop, 64, of Allen Park, was arrested and charged with one count of arson of property in interstate commerce.

An affidavit said 25 trailers owned by Phoenix-based Swift Transportation were set ablaze while stopped at fuel stations or rest areas from June 2020 through last month.

Pricop was convicted in 2018 in Michigan for transportation

of stolen goods and sentenced to two years in prison in an investigation and prosecution in which Swift cooperated, prosecutors said.

The fires happened at locations from Barstow, Calif., to McCalla, Ala., with most occurring along Interstates 10 and 40, prosecutors said. Police have learned of six fires in California, three in Arizona, nine in New Mexico, three in Texas and one each in Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama.

Severed finger at crime scene helps ID suspect

NC BURLINGTON — A severed finger left behind at the scene of an attempted home invasion in North Carolina led investigators to a suspect in the case, police said.

Burlington officers responded to a report of an attempted home invasion after a resident encountered an armed man who tried to force his way into the house, police said in a news release.

Police said the two struggled and the man's gun went off, grazing the resident's chest, before the resident was able to shut the door on his hand. The resident was not seriously injured.

Crime scene investigators found a finger, believed to have been severed when the resident forced the door shut, inside the suspect's glove, which fell off during the struggle, police said.

Investigators used fingerprints to identify and arrest the suspect, Vernon Wilson, 67, of Hillsborough, police spokesperson Emily-Lynn Adkins said by telephone.

— From Associated Press



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Padres take NLDS series lead over Dodgers

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Until Friday night, San Diego Padres fans had never seen a home playoff victory in person since Petco Park opened in 2004.

Blake Snell, Trent Grisham and the Padres' lights-out bullpen finally gave them the chance to go crazy.

Snell pitched five-hit ball into the sixth inning and Grisham homered at festive Petco Park, helping the Padres top the Los Angeles Dodgers 2-1 for a 2-1 lead in the NL Division Series.

San Diego could advance to its first NL Championship Series since 1998 with one more win Saturday night. Joe Musgrove is set to start for his hometown Padres, with Tyler Anderson starting for the NL West champion Dodgers.

The Padres noticed the energy from the fans well before the game started.

"There are going to be a lot of hoarse voices coming back (Saturday)," manager Bob Melvin said. "To keep up that pace the whole game, that was pretty cool."

With Snell working 5½ innings and Josh Hader finishing a scoreless performance by San Diego's bullpen, the 111-win Dodgers were pushed to the brink of a mas-

sive disappointment. Los Angeles went 14-5 against San Diego in the regular season, and it has defeated the Padres in nine straight series dating back to last year.

"The core of this group has been in this position before, and we're going to approach it like it's the way it is. It's win or go home," manager Dave Roberts said. "We've got to play better baseball. When we do have opportunities to cash in, we've got to take advantage of them."

San Diego stranded two runners in each of the first four innings and 10 total. But Jake Cronenworth's RBI single in the first and Grisham's drive to right in the fourth proved to be enough.

The sellout crowd of 45,137 roared when Hader struck out Trayce Thompson swinging for the final out. The four-time All-Star, who was acquired in an Aug. 1 trade with Milwaukee, also got the save in San Diego's 5-3 victory Wednesday, working 1½ innings.

"The crowd was legit," Snell said. "That's probably the best crowd I've ever pitched in front of."

Nick Martinez got two outs and Luis García and Robert Suarez each worked an inning before Hader closed out Game 3 for a six-hitter. San Diego's bullpen

has thrown 13 straight scoreless innings in this series.

"I think anytime you hold a lineup like that down like we have here, that's hard to do," Melvin said. "But we feel like it's a really deep bullpen, a lot of power arms pitching well toward the end of the season, into the postseason, inspired even a little bit more so."

Garcia, Suarez and Hader each hit 100 mph.

"One hit could potentially throw the game the other way," Melvin said. "All our relievers felt that. You don't see 100 mph often, especially out of three guys in a row."

The Dodgers were 1-for-9 with runners in scoring position and stranded seven.

"They're pitching good right now. We're not hitting," Freddie Freeman said. "So we've got to hit (Saturday). The last two games we're not hitting."

The Padres hadn't hosted a playoff game with fans in the stands since the 2006 NLDS. Long-suffering fans made up for that gap by filling the downtown ballpark and raucously supporting a franchise that has made only seven trips to the postseason in its 54 seasons.

San Diego won a home wild-card series against St. Louis after

the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, but fans weren't allowed in. San Diego was then swept in the NLDS by the eventual World Series champion Dodgers in the Texas bubble.

Waving yellow rally towels, the fans began chants of "Beat L.A.!" right after the national anthem.

Mookie Betts momentarily silenced the crowd with a leadoff single, but Snell struck out the side to a massive ovation.

Juan Soto, picked up at the trade deadline in a blockbuster deal with Washington, doubled with one out in the first and scored on Cronenworth's two-out single off Tony Gonsolin.

Grisham, who struggled at the plate during the regular season, homered for the third time this postseason when he drove a pitch from Andrew Heaney onto the whiskey deck atop the right-field wall leading off the fourth.

The Dodgers closed to 2-1 on Betts' sacrifice fly in the fifth after Thompson opened the inning with a single and Austin Barnes doubled.

Los Angeles had the bases loaded with two outs in the third before Will Smith popped out.

Snell allowed Max Muncy's one-out double in the sixth and Melvin came on with the hook.

Phillies rout Braves to pull within 1 win of NLCS

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Rhys Hoskins raised his arms in triumph, and then spiked his bat in celebration — a raw, emotional moment destined for Philadelphia's rich sports history.

Hoskins then trotted around the bases in front of a rabid crowd of 45,538 fans already in a tizzy over the Phillies' first home playoff game in 11 years. The whole thing felt like an out-of-body experience for the veteran slugger.

"It's just the moment, man," he said. "I didn't know what I did until a couple innings later, really."

Hoskins burst out of his postseason malaise with a three-run homer and slammed his bat in celebration, and Bryce Harper hit

a two-run shot that sent Philadelphia to a 9-1 win over the Atlanta Braves in Game 3 of their NL Division Series on Friday night.

Harper added an RBI double as Philadelphia took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five matchup against the reigning World Series champions. The Phillies could advance to the NL Championship Series with a Game 4 win at home on Saturday.

Harper had a bit of Tug McGraw in him when he relayed a rallying cry to Hoskins.

"He said, 'We ain't losing,'" Hoskins said. "I think it's the belief that he has in us. It's the belief we have in each other."

Hoskins turned to Harper on the dais and asked him, "You want to do it again?"

"Let's do it again," Harper said.

"Let's do it again," Hoskins replied.

Phillies fans should save the rally towels — the Phillies played like a team that wants to keep Red October alive.

Bryson Stott got the rally going in the third inning with an RBI double off Braves rookie Spencer Strider. Kyle Schwarber was then walked intentionally.

Hoskins, mired in a 1-for-19 postseason slump, crushed a 93.8 mph fastball into the left-field seats for a 4-0 lead. Hoskins raised his arms sky high, slammed his bat into the grass and skipped his way to first base.

The exit velocity? It took about 2 seconds for Harper to hurdle over the dugout rail and toss his helmet in the air. Hoskins leapt into a violent elbow forearm exchange — think Bash Brothers — with Stott as he crossed the plate.

Guardians top Yankees in 10 innings, tie ALDS

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Little hits turn into big wins for the Cleveland Guardians.

José Ramírez hustled to reach third base leading off the 10th inning with a popup that dropped in left field, 200 feet from home plate. Oscar Gonzalez drove him in with the tie-breaking run on an even shorter opposite-field flare to right, then scored on Josh Naylor's double, the only hard-hit ball of the inning.

"It's not an easy way to win, but it doesn't mean you can't," Guardians manager Terry Francona said after Cleveland overcame a two-run deficit to beat the New York Yankees 4-2 on Friday. The victory evened the best-of-five AL Division Series at one game apiece.

Winner Emmanuel Clase pitched 2⅓ innings, his most in the major leagues, and combined with Trevor Stephan and

James Karinchak for 4⅓ innings of one-hit relief. Cleveland, 29th among the 30 big league teams in home runs, stopped a six-game postseason losing streak to the Yankees.

"We just try to find a way on base," Naylor said. "If it's a bloop hit, it's a bloop hit. If it's a hard-hit single, double, whatever the case it, we just try to hustle, try to make things happen on the field, try to put pressure on the defense."

Cleveland was set to host Game 3 on Saturday night. There was no travel day because a rainout Thursday had pushed Game 2 back a day.

"Good starting rotation, a great bullpen. They got nasty stuff down there," Yankees slugger Aaron Judge said.

Judge went 0-for-5 with four strikeouts and dropped to 0-for-8 with seven strikeouts and a walk in the series. He is 2-for-37 with 27 strikeouts

against Cleveland in three playoff series, including all four of his four-strikeout postseason games.

"Just a little late," Judge said. "When you're a little late, you're missing pitches that you usually do some damage on. You're swinging at stuff that you usually don't."

Fresh off setting the AL home run record with 62, he was booed by some fans in the sellout crowd of 47,355 after whiffing against Stephan in the seventh.

"It's the Bronx, man," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "Great hitters go 0-for on a given day."

First pitch was at 1:08 p.m. in the first early afternoon postseason start in the Bronx since Game 2 of the 2006 Division Series against Detroit. Shadows crept across the field from the first-base side in the middle innings on a cloudless afternoon,

reminiscent of so many World Series games at old Yankee Stadium in the 1940s and '50s.

Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run, opposite-field homer to right in the first off 2020 AL Cy Young Award winner Shane Bieber, Stanton's 10th homer in 20 postseason games.

Cleveland tied the score against All-Star Nestor Cortes when Andrés Giménez had an RBI single in the fourth, and Amed Rosario homered into the Yankees bullpen in the fifth.

Lou Trivino, Jonathan Loáisiga, Wandy Peralta and Clay Holmes followed Cortes and combined for four hitless innings.

Clase threw 33 pitches, 10 more than his regular-season high. He entered after Karinchak walked the bases loaded in the eighth, then retired Kyle Higashioka on an inning-ending lineout to Ramírez at third.

NASCAR playoff round begins, focus back on the track

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — There has been a NASCAR reset, on the track at least, with the third round of the playoffs beginning Sunday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and a new Cup champion set to be crowned after four races.

Kyle Larson was knocked out of contention for consecutive championships after being eliminated at Charlotte, nosed out by two points by Chase Briscoe of Stewart-Haas Racing — a team now accused of race manipulation and fined \$300,000 by NASCAR over the last week.

The back and forth of penalties, suspensions and accusations between NASCAR and Stewart-Haas Racing, which fields a Ford for Kevin Harvick, one of the most outspoken critics of its new Next Gen car, has team co-owner Tony Stewart too furious to even comment. Stewart even said he wouldn't go to another NASCAR race if he doesn't have sponsorship commitments.

But Larson — the hottest driver in the country last year — was also edged out of the playoffs by his own Hendrick Motorsports teammate, William Byron.

NASCAR had missed Bryon intentionally spin Denny Hamlin under caution and levied punishment two days later. But an appeals panel ruled NASCAR could only fine Byron and not essentially change the score post-race by deducting points, restoring 25 playoff points for Byron and pushing him into the playoffs.

The favorite to succeed Larson? Maybe Chase Elliott, who was headed to what would have been a career-high sixth win of the season at Charlotte until a late caution and overtime. NASCAR's four-time most popular driver won the title in 2020, and Larson's win last season made it two straight Cup championships for Rick Hendrick.

Christopher Bell just might be the dark horse to pick at the betting window — the round opens in Las Vegas, after all. Listed as an 8-1 favorite by FanDuel Sportsbook for the title, Bell was the best driver of the first round with an average finish of fourth in the first three races.

Back-to-back poor finishes to open the second round put the Joe Gibbs Racing driver on the verge of elimination, but when the late cautions at Charlotte flipped the race,

Bell pounced and earned the victory and the automatic berth into the third round.

"This whole last two weeks, I had been extremely deflated, just kind of down in the dumps," Bell said after his Charlotte win. "Now I can promise you I'm as excited as ever heading into these next three races."

There are just four spots in the Nov. 6 finale at Phoenix Raceway, which will end NASCAR's most competitive season in decades. Counting a pair of exhibition victories by Brad Keselowski and Ryan Blaney, the first season of the Next Gen car has produced 21 different winners.

Two drivers are still sidelined with concussions; Alex Bowman, winner at Las Vegas this spring, said this week he'll miss the next three races. Bowman and Kurt Busch were both hurt in what should have been routine hits into the wall, but the rear of the Next Gen is so stiff that drivers are absorbing an extraordinary amount of the impact.

NASCAR thinks it has a fix for the rigidity of the rear of the Next Gen, with changes possible by the start of next season. That means there's still four races to go with the current design.

Husso, Red Wings shut out Canadiens

Associated Press

DETROIT — Elmer Soderblom scored a third-period goal in his NHL debut, Ville Husso made 29 saves and the Detroit Red Wings won in Derek Lalonde's first game as a head coach, beating the Montreal Canadiens 3-0 on Friday night.

Soderblom, a 2019 draft pick, played in the Swedish Hockey League the past two seasons. He's the tallest player in franchise history at 6-foot-8.

"I wanted to get a good first shift, get things going, so I felt I did that," Soderblom said. "And I just built off of that."

Husso, acquired from St. Louis in a trade during the offseason, had his fourth shutout.

Michael Rasmussen had an empty-net

goal and two assists. Olli Maatta also had an empty-netter.

Lalonde, Tampa Bay's former top assistant, replaced Jeff Blashill after the Red Wings failed to make the playoffs for the sixth consecutive season.

Jake Allen made 37 saves for Montreal. The Canadiens opened at home Wednesday night with a 4-3 victory over Toronto.

Jets 4, Rangers 1: Mark Scheifele scored twice and host Winnipeg beat New York to win its season opener.

Sam Gagner also scored and Kyle Connor added an empty-netter for the Jets. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 40 shots.

Lightning 5, Blue Jackets 2: Steven Stamkos scored twice, and Corey Perry and

Ross Colton each had a goal and an assist, as visiting Tampa Bay got its first win of the season.

Cal Foote also scored for the Lightning, and Vladislav Namestnikov, Alex Killorn and Mikhail Sergachev each added two assists. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 26 shots.

Hurricanes 2, Sharks 1: Sebastian Aho scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:58 remaining in the third period and visiting Carolina handed San Jose its third straight loss to open the season.

Martin Necas scored his second goal in two games for Carolina to tie it late in the second period before Aho won it in the third when he deflected a point shot from Brett Pesce past James Reimer.

Mordecai, SMU overpower Navy

Associated Press

DALLAS — Tanner Mordecai passed for 336 yards and three touchdowns, and he rushed for 74 yards and a score to help SMU beat Navy 40-34 on Friday night.

All four of Mordecai's touchdowns went for 20-plus yards. Mordecai raced up the middle for a 60-yard touchdown run to begin SMU's 20-point scoring run in the third quarter. Mordecai also had a short pass to Jordan Kerley, who used two good blocks along the sideline to race for a 33-yard touchdown.

Mordecai connected with Roderick Daniels Jr. from 27 yards out for a 40-20 lead midway through the fourth. SMU recovered Navy's onside kick with 2:30 left but went three-and-out before the Midshipmen scored with nine seconds left to cap the scoring.

Dylan Goffney had a team-high four catches for 116 yards, including a 24-yard touchdown for SMU (3-3, 1-1 American Athletic Conference).

Quarterback Tai Lavatai carried it 25 times for 121 yards and two touchdowns for Navy (2-4, 2-2). Lavatai was 9-for-22 passing for 137 yards with two touchdowns and an interception.

Navy's third pass attempt of the game went to Vincent Terrell Jr. for a 24-yard touchdown with 14 seconds left before half-time. Navy opened the second half with a 75-yard drive, ending in Lavatai's 15-yard touchdown run.

NFL: Watson's status unchanged despite facing yet another lawsuit

Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — Deshaun Watson's status with the NFL has not changed even though the suspended Cleveland Browns quarterback has been named in a new civil lawsuit by another woman alleging sexual misconduct two years ago.

Watson is almost halfway through serving an 11-game suspension for alleged sexual misconduct while he played for the Houston Texans. Two dozen women previously claimed he was sexually inappropriate during massage therapy sessions.

On Thursday, a 26th woman filed a lawsuit in Texas that alleges Watson pressured her into performing a sex act after a massage in 2020. Watson has settled 23 of 24 previous lawsuits filed against him. One was dropped.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said the latest lawsuit does not impact Watson's current standing. However, the 27-year-old could face more discipline if he is found to have further violated the league's conduct code.

"We will monitor developments in the newly-filed litigation; and any conduct that warrants further investigation or possible additional sanctions would be addressed within the Personal Conduct Policy," McCarthy said in an email Friday.

In other NFL news:

■ Tom Brady was fined by the NFL on Friday for trying to kick Atlanta's Grady Jarrett following the play in which the Fal-

cons defensive tackle was flagged for a disputed roughing-the-passer penalty, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback was fined \$11,139, according to the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because fines aren't announced until Saturday.

Jarrett was flagged for slinging Brady to the ground during Tampa Bay's 21-15 victory over Atlanta on Sunday. It appeared Brady tried to kick Jarrett as both players were getting up, but he didn't make contact.

Busch stepping away from racing

LAS VEGAS — NASCAR champion Kurt Busch will miss the rest of this season with a concussion and will not compete full-time in 2023.

The 44-year-old made his announcement Saturday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, his home track and where he launched his career on the bullring as a child. He choked up when he said doctors told him "it is best for me to 'shut it down.'"

"I know I am not 100% in my ability to go out and race at the top level in the NASCAR Cup Series," Busch said. "These are the best of the best drivers, and lately, I haven't felt my best."

Busch said Tyler Reddick will replace him in the No. 45 Toyota at 23XI Racing next season.

"If I'm cleared, maybe you'll see me at a few select races" next season, Busch said.