

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## King Charles III vows to continue legacy

*Associated Press*

LONDON — King Charles III vowed in his first speech to the nation as monarch Friday to carry on Queen Elizabeth II's "lifelong service," as Britain entered a new age under a new sovereign. Around the world, the queen's exceptional reign was commemorated, celebrated and debated.

Charles, who spent much of his 73 years preparing for the role of king, addressed a nation grieving the only British monarch most people alive today had ever known. He takes the throne in an era of uncertainty for both his country and the monarchy itself.

He spoke of his "profound sorrow" over the death of his mother, calling her an inspiration.

"That promise of lifelong service I renew to all today," he said in the recorded, 9½-minute address, delivered with a framed photo of the queen on a desk in front of him.

"As the queen herself did with such unswerving devotion, I, too, now solemnly pledge myself, throughout the remaining time God grants me, to uphold the constitutional principles at the heart of our nation," he said.

The king's speech was broadcast on television and streamed at St. Paul's Cathedral, where some 2,000 people attended a service of remembrance for the queen. Mourners at

the service included Prime Minister Liz Truss and members of her government.

As the country began a 10-day mourning period, people around the globe gathered at British embassies to pay homage to the queen, who died Thursday at Balmoral Castle in Scotland.

In London and at military sites across the United Kingdom, cannons fired 96 shots in an elaborate, 16-minute salute marking each year of the queen's life.

In Britain and across its former colonies, the widespread admiration for Elizabeth herself was occasionally mixed with scorn for the institution and the imperial history she symbolized.

On the king's first full day of duties, Charles left Balmoral and flew to London for a meeting with Truss, appointed by the queen just two days before her death.

He arrived at Buckingham Palace, the monarch's London home, for the first time as sovereign, emerging from the official state Bentley limousine alongside Camilla, the queen consort, to shouts from the crowd of "Well done, Charlie!" and the singing of the national anthem, now called "God Save the King." One woman gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Under intense scrutiny and pressure to show he can be both caring and regal, Char-

les walked slowly past flowers heaped at the palace gates for his mother. The mood was both grieving and celebratory.

The seismic change of monarch comes at a time when many Britons are facing an energy crisis, the soaring cost of living, the war in Ukraine and the fallout from Brexit.

As the second Elizabethan Age came to a close, hundreds of people arrived through the night to grieve together outside the gates of Buckingham Palace and other royal residences, as well as British embassies worldwide. Some came simply to pause and reflect.

Finance worker Giles Cudmore said the queen had "just been a constant through everything, everything good and bad."

At Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh, mourner April Hamilton stood with her young daughter, struggling to hold back tears.

"It's just such a momentous change that is going to happen," she said. "I'm trying to hold it together today."

Everyday politics was put on hold, with lawmakers paying tribute to the monarch in Parliament over two days, beginning with a special session where Truss called the queen "the nation's greatest diplomat."

Senior lawmakers will also take an oath to King Charles III.

## Ukraine captures town during counteroffensive

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian forces on Friday claimed new success in their counteroffensive against Russian forces in the country's east, taking control of a sizeable village and pushing toward an important transport junction.

The United States' top diplomat and the head of NATO noted the advances, but cautioned that the war is likely to drag on for months.

Ukraine's military also said it launched new attacks on Russian pontoon bridges used to

bring supplies across the Dnieper River to Kherson and the adjacent region. Ukrainian artillery and rocket strikes have left all the fixed bridges across the river unusable, the military's southern command said.

The Ukrainian military said it took control of the village of Volokhiv Yar in the Kharkiv region and aimed to advance toward strategically valuable town of Kupiansk, which would cut off Russian forces from key supply routes.

Pro-Russian authorities in the Kupiansk district announced

that civilians were being evacuated toward the Russian-held region of Luhansk.

"The initial signs are positive and we see Ukraine making real, demonstrable progress in a deliberate way," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Brussels, a day after visiting Kyiv.

"But this is likely to go on for some significant period of time," he said. "There are a huge number of Russian forces in Ukraine and unfortunately, tragically, horrifically, President (Vladimir) Putin has dem-

onstrated that he will throw a lot of people into this at huge cost to Russia."

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who met with Blinken, said the war is "entering a critical phase."

The gains "are modest and only the first successes of the counteroffensive of the Ukrainian army, but they are important both in terms of seizing the military initiative and raising the spirit of Ukrainian soldiers," Mykola Sungurovsky, a military analyst at the Razumkov Center in Kyiv, told The Associated Press.

# N. Korea vows to never give up nuclear weapons

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stressed his country will never abandon the nuclear weapons it needs to counter the United States, which he accused of pushing to weaken the North's defenses and eventually collapse his government, state media said Friday.

Kim made the comments during a speech Thursday at North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament, where members passed legislation governing the use of nuclear weapons, which Kim described as a step to cement the country's nuclear status and make clear such weapons will not be bargained.

The law spells out conditions where North would be inclined to use its nuclear weapons, including when it determines that its leadership is facing an imminent "nuclear or non-nuclear attack by hostile forces." The law requires North Korea's military to "automatically" execute nuclear strikes against enemy forces, including their "starting point of provocation and the command," if Pyongyang's leadership comes under attack.

The law also says North Korea could use nukes to prevent an unspecified "cata-

strophic crisis" to its government and people, a loose definition that experts say reflect an escalatory nuclear doctrine that could create greater concerns for neighbors.

Kim also criticized South Korea over its plans to expand its conventional strike capabilities and revive large-scale military exercises with the United States to counter the North's growing threats, describing them as a "dangerous" military action that raises tensions.

Kim has made increasingly provocative threats of nuclear conflict toward the United States and its allies in Asia, also warning that the North would proactively use its nuclear weapons when threatened. His latest comments underscored the growing animosity in the region as he accelerates the expansion of his nuclear weapons and missiles program.

"The purpose of the United States is not only to remove our nuclear might itself, but eventually forcing us to surrender or weaken our rights to self-defense through giving up our nukes, so that they could collapse our government at any time," Kim said in the speech published by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

## Military shortens its timeline for draining fuel tank farm in Hawaii

*Associated Press*

HONOLULU — The U.S. military on Wednesday said it now expects to remove fuel from a leaky Hawaii fuel tank farm in July 2024, five months earlier than its initial plan.

Critics have lambasted the U.S. Department of Defense's original timeline to remove the fuel from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility by December 2024, saying the tanks posed a threat to Oahu's water supply and needed to be drained sooner.

The state Department of Health ordered the fuel removed after jet fuel from the facility poured into a drinking water well in November and poisoned thousands of peo-

ple in and around Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The health department, which regulates underground fuel storage tanks in Hawaii, said it was reviewing the new plan.

"We are focused on ensuring that defueling takes place as quickly and safely as possible," Kathleen Ho, the state's deputy director of environmental health, said in a statement. "There is a continued threat to our aquifer and residents every day that fuel remains in the Red Hill tanks."

The military said in a news release that it moved up the projected completion date after determining some actions could be conducted in parallel.

## US sanctions 4 Iranian firms on drone claims

**By J.P. LAWRENCE**

*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. sanctioned four firms the government says are connected to Iran's military drone program, including a transportation company accused of helping fly drones to Russia.

That company, Tehran-based Safiran Airport Services, coordinated Russian military flights between Iran and Russia to transport aerial drones and personnel to use in the war against Ukraine, a Treasury Department statement said.

"The United States is committed to strictly enforcing our sanctions against both Russia and Iran, and holding accountable Iran and those supporting Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine," Brian E. Nelson, undersecretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, said in the statement Thursday.

U.S. spy agencies said transport planes departing Iran on Aug. 19 delivered at least two types of unmanned aerial vehicles to Russia capable of carrying munitions for attacks on radars, artillery and other military targets, The Washington Post reported last week.

Tehran has denied supplying Russia with drones for use in the war in Ukraine, which saw Kyiv launch a counteroffensive in the southern Kherson region last week.

Iran's drone program, among the world's most technologically advanced, could provide a boost to Russia's historically underfunded force, analysts told Stars and Stripes in July.

Smaller suicide drones like those provided by Iran to its proxy groups in Yemen, Iraq and Syria have had an outsized impact on those conflicts, Samuel Bendett, a research analyst at the Washington, D.C.-based think tank CNA, said in July.

The other three companies sanctioned are said by the Treasury Department to be closely linked with the Iranian government's drone production, including the Paravar Pars Company, which the U.S. says reverse-engineered Israeli and U.S. drone technology.

The Design and Manufacturing of Aircraft Engines company and the Baharestan Kish Company also were sanctioned.

# DOJ may appeal order for special master

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department is preparing to appeal a judge's decision granting the appointment of an independent arbiter to review records seized in a criminal investigation by the FBI from former President Donald Trump's Florida home.

Citing national security concerns and other factors, the department also asked U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon to put on hold her directive prohibiting it from using the seized classified records for investigative purposes while it contests her ruling.

"Without a stay, the government and public also will suffer irreparable harm from the undue delay to the criminal investigation," department lawyers said in a motion

Thursday in which they announced their intent to appeal the order to the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The 21-page Justice Department filing lays bare the government's concern about the impact it believes will be caused by the judge's order, which temporarily halted core aspects of its criminal investigation. It also the department's objections to the planned appointment of a "special master" to conduct an independent review of the records taken from Mar-a-Lago.

Already, the department said, the intelligence community has paused its separate risk assessment that the judge had permitted to continue because of "uncertainty regarding the bounds of the Court's order."

The department gave the judge until next

Thursday to stay her original order, saying it would otherwise ask the federal appeals court to do so.

Though such an appeal will almost certainly result in further delays to its underlying investigation, the department made clear throughout its motion its belief that it would be "injured" beyond repair if the judge's order was permitted to stand.

The judge gave the Trump team until Monday morning to respond to the Justice Department motion.

The FBI has been investigating for months what it says was the unlawful retention of national defense information at Mar-a-Lago as well as efforts to obstruct the probe. It is not clear whether Trump or anyone else will face charges.

# SC senators reject near-total abortion ban

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina senators rejected a ban on almost all abortions Thursday in a special session called in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* after five Republicans, including all the chamber's women, refused to support it.

The 30 Republicans in the 46-member chamber had a majority to pass the ban, but did not have the extra votes to end a threatened filibuster by Republican Sen. Tom Davis.

Davis, the chief of staff for former Gov. Mark Sanford before being elected to the Senate in 2009, was joined by the three Republican women in the Senate, a fifth GOP colleague and all Democratic senators to oppose the proposed ban.

Davis said he promised his daughters he would not vote to make South Carolina's current six-week abortion ban stricter because women have rights, too.

"The moment we become pregnant we lost all control over what goes on with our bodies,"

Davis said, recalling what his daughters told him. "I'm here to tell you I'm not going to let it happen."

After a recess to work through their options, Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey conceded the abortion ban likely couldn't pass.

"We were never going to pass a total abortion ban," Massey said. "We never had the votes to pass even what the House passed."

Senators did pass a few changes to the six-week ban, including cutting the time that victims of

rape and incest who become pregnant can seek an abortion from 20 weeks to about 12 weeks and requiring that DNA from the aborted fetus be collected for police. The bill goes back to the House, which passed a ban with exceptions for rape or incest.

South Carolina's six-week ban is currently suspended as the state Supreme Court reviews whether it violates privacy rights. In the meantime, the state's 2016 ban on abortions 20 weeks after conception is in effect.

# Mich high court: Abortion question to be on ballot

Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — Voters will determine whether to place abortion rights in the Michigan Constitution, the state Supreme Court declared Thursday, settling the issue a day before the fall ballot must be completed.

Abortion rights would be guaranteed if the amendment passes on Nov. 8. A 1931 state law makes it a crime to perform most abortions, but the law was suspended in May and a judge this week followed up by striking it down as unconstitutional.

Though appeals of that decision are likely, the law would be trumped if voters approve the amendment in the fall election.

A state elections board on Aug. 31 deadlocked along party lines on whether the abortion initiative should appear on the ballot, with Republicans voting no and Democrats voting yes. The 2-2 tie meant the measure wasn't certified for the ballot.

Supporters submitted more than 700,000 signatures, easily clearing the minimum threshold. But Republicans and abortion

opponents argued the petitions had improper or no spacing between certain words and were confusing to voters.

"What a sad marker of the times," Chief Justice Bridget McCormack said in a brief statement that accompanied the Supreme Court's 5-2 order. McCormack said "there is no dispute" that every word was legible and in the correct order.

Republican members of the Board of State Canvassers "would disenfranchise millions of Michiganders not because

they believe the many thousands of Michiganders who signed the proposal were confused by it, but because they think they have identified a technicality that allows them to do so, a game of gotcha gone very bad," McCormack said. The majority was made up of McCormack, three other Democratic justices and a Republican justice. Two Republicans dissented.

The court directed state canvassers, who were expected to meet again, to sign off on the ballot question.



# California fires threatening communities

*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — Firefighters on Friday struggled to control raging California wildfires that have grown explosively during extreme heat and forced thousands of residents to flee mountain communities at both ends of the state.

The Fairview Fire in Southern California covered about 37 square miles of Riverside County and was just 5% contained. Two people died while fleeing flames on Monday and at least 11 structures have been destroyed. More than 18,000 homes were threatened by the fire fed by shifting winds, officials said Thursday evening.

To the north in the Sierra Nevada, the

Mosquito Fire burned out of control, scorching at least 20 square miles and threatening 3,600 homes in Placer and El Dorado counties, while blanketing the region in smoke.

Flames jumped the American River, burning structures in the mountain hamlet of Volcanoville and moving closer to the towns of Foresthill, home to about 1,500 people, and Georgetown, population 3,000. Fire spokesperson Chris Vestal called the fast-moving blaze an “extreme and critical fire threat.”

Stefani Lake evacuated her hilltop home near Georgetown Thursday after sheriff’s deputies knocked on doors telling people to get out. “The dogs are in the back of the car,

I’ve got a room for the night, so I’m ready to leave,” Lake told the Sacramento Bee.

About 100 miles to the east, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection warned the Reno area that air quality could be very unhealthy to hazardous due to smoke from the Mosquito Fire.

The fire’s cause remained under investigation. Pacific Gas & Electric notified the state Public Utilities Commission that the U.S. Forest Service placed caution tape around the base of a PG&E transmission pole but that no damage could be seen. PG&E said unspecified “electrical activity” occurred close in time to the report of the fire on Sept. 6.

## SC Democrats call on US Senate nominee to quit race

*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The South Carolina Democrat vying to oust Republican U.S. Sen. Tim Scott is facing calls from within her own party to fold her campaign, following the publication of additional leaked audio in which she appears to make disparaging remarks about her constituents.

The calls for state Rep. Krystle Matthews to withdraw just two months ahead of the general election came Thursday in reaction to leaked audio published by conservative activist group Project Veritas of Matthews speaking to one of its members, without her knowledge.

Sitting in a restaurant, Matthews, who is Black, is heard saying that she represents a “mostly white” district, adding, of white voters: “I keep them right here — like under

my thumbs. ... Otherwise, they get out of control — like kids.” “You ought to know who you’re dealing with,” Matthews goes on to say. “You’ve got to treat them like s—. That’s the only way they’ll respect you.”

In a statement, Matthews acknowledged her voice on the recording, calling Project Veritas a “satirical MAGA Powered news outlet.”

The compilation also features more of Matthews’ conversation, parts of which were previously published by Project Veritas.

At the time of the earlier release, ahead of South Carolina’s June primary runoff, Matthews confirmed to The Associated Press that it was her voice on the tape but said the edited audio of a “tongue-in-cheek” exchange didn’t reflect the full picture.

Matthews won the runoff to face Scott, who is seeking what he’s said will be his final Senate term and is among South Carolina’s most popular politicians. The Black Republican is widely expected to win the general election in South Carolina, where no Democrat has won a statewide race in more than 15 years.

On Thursday, Democrats including gubernatorial nominee Joe Cunningham said he concurred with state Rep. Justin Bamberg, who in an op-ed published online called Matthews “toxic.”

“If any of our white counterparts had said the same thing with regards to blacks, the minority community, including myself, would be up in arms calling for that member’s immediate resignation,” Bamberg added.

## Disabled people file suit over sidewalks in Portland

*Associated Press*

PORTLAND, Ore. — People with disabilities in Portland, Ore., have sued the city, saying they can’t navigate its sidewalks because of sprawling homeless encampments.

The federal class action lawsuit says the city has violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by allowing homeless people’s tents to block city sidewalks, making it difficult for people using wheelchairs, walkers or canes to use them.

“The entire class of persons with disabilities are regularly deprived of the benefits of services of the city of Portland,” said John DiLorenzo, lead counsel for the plaintiffs.

The suit was filed Tuesday in U.S. District

Court in Portland.

The plaintiffs include nine people with disabilities and a caretaker. Among the plaintiffs is Keith Martin, a 71-year-old Portland resident who has used a wheelchair since having a stroke three years ago.

“I couldn’t get to my breakfast in the morning because there was a tent covering the whole sidewalk,” Martin said. “I was forced onto the street and narrowly missed a streetcar that came around the corner.”

Oregon’s homelessness crisis has been fueled by a housing shortage, the coronavirus pandemic and high drug addiction rates. Federal data from the latest National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 9% of teens and adults in Oregon had illicit drug use dis-

orders in 2020. That year, the state also ranked last in access to drug addiction treatment, according to the survey.

The class action suit seeks to require the city to clear all sidewalks of tent encampments and debris, and to “construct, purchase, or otherwise provide for emergency shelters in which to house the unsheltered persons” who may be affected.

Such measures would make sidewalks accessible for people with disabilities in a safe manner while providing a safe place for unhoused people, DiLorenzo said.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler’s office said the mayor is meeting with the city attorney before providing comment.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Prep coach on leave after video shows punch**

**AL** MOBILE — A first-year Alabama high school football coach was placed on leave after video surfaced that appeared to show a man striking a player in a locker room, news outlets reported.

Blount High School coach Josh Harris was placed on administrative leave during an investigation into the video, which circulated online, said Rena Phillips, a spokeswoman for Mobile County's public schools.

The video shows a man dressed in purple, one of Blount's colors, punching a player, who responds with a loud cry, WPMI-TV reported. It's unclear when the video was made. Harris is a graduate of Blount and played quarterback at Tuskegee.

**Bird flu forces egg farm to kill 3M chickens**

**OH** TOLEDO — An outbreak of bird flu that has led to the deaths of 43 million chickens and turkeys this year across the U.S. has been found at a giant egg-laying operation in Ohio, state and federal agriculture officials said.

The case confirmed in Ohio's Defiance County has affected roughly 3 million chickens, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The egg-laying farm has started euthanizing all of its flock, said Dennis Summers, the state's veterinarian.

The highly pathogenic disease has returned to the Midwest earlier than authorities expected after a lull of several months with recent cases in In-

diana, Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

There also have been several detections in western states over the summer.

**Gas-powered leaf blowers to be banned**

**WA** SEATTLE — The Seattle City Council has voted unanimously to plan the phasing out of gasoline-powered leaf blowers for city departments and contractors by 2025 and businesses and residents by 2027, "or later, if necessary."

The resolution asks city departments to develop plans and design a public-education strategy around the transition, The Seattle Times reported.

The new policy would require city workers, as well as Seattle businesses and residents, to use electric leaf blowers, rakes and brooms instead.

**Cruise ship makes 1st voyage on Mississippi**

**IA** DUBUQUE — A large cruise ship is making its way down the Mississippi River with stops in several Iowa cities.

The Viking Mississippi stopped Tuesday in Dubuque and pulled ashore Wednesday in Davenport with another stop planned in Burlington.

The ship owned by Viking Cruises is on its first voyage down the Mississippi, having left St. Paul, Minn., on Sept. 3 with a scheduled arrival Saturday in St. Louis, according to the Dubuque Telegraph Herald.

The ship is 450 feet long with five decks and can host 386 guests in 193 rooms. It has a crew of 148 people.

**Man suffers punctured arms in bear mauling**

**AK** ANCHORAGE — A Michigan man suffered serious puncture wounds to his arms during a bear mauling in Alaska, but he was able to stop the attack using pepper spray on the grizzly, officials said.

Nicholas Kuperus, 33, contacted Alaska State Troopers about the attack. Troopers said they transported him to a waiting ambulance in the community of Glennallen.

Kuperus and his fellow hunters surprised the female grizzly with three cubs while hunting in the upper East Fork Indian River area, troopers said.

The sow mauled Kuperus in the attack about 60 miles north of Glennallen, but troopers say he stopped and deterred the attack with the pepper spray, also called bear spray.

**Inmate charged in attack on 2 officers**

**DE** SMYRNA — An inmate at a Delaware prison attacked two correctional officers last month and has been charged with assault and other offenses, state police said.

Korah Pitts, 22, of Penns Grove, N.J., attacked two correctional officers as they performed their normal duties at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center on Aug. 18, Delaware State Police said in a news release.

Pitts used an improvised weapon to strike the officers multiple times in the head, police said. Additional officers arrived and restrained Pitts. The officers were taken to a hospital

with injuries to their heads and faces, police said.

Pitts was arrested and charged with reckless assault in a detention facility with serious injury, first-degree assault intentionally causing injury to an officer, resisting arrest, promoting prison contraband and other offenses.

**Catawba Nation opens sports book in casino**

**NC** KINGS MOUNTAIN — Another sports-gambling venue opened in North Carolina, this time at the temporary casino opened by the Catawba Nation last year along Interstate 85 near the South Carolina border.

The sports book inside the Catawba Two Kings Casino in Kings Mountain will be open 24 hours a day — just like the rest of the gambling facility. Thirty betting kiosks and betting voucher redemption services also will be available.

The state's other two sports books opened in March 2021 at casinos operated by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee and Murphy.

The Catawba sports book opened two days before the National Football League began its regular season. Betting also will be offered for auto racing, baseball, basketball, boxing and soccer, among other sports.

Catawba Two Kings hopes "that a new audience in the Charlotte region and beyond will discover the casino as they come to wager on their favorite teams," Trent Troxel, vice president of the Catawba Nation Gaming Authority, said in a news release.

— From Associated Press

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# Bills blow out Rams in NFL opener

*Associated Press*

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The Buffalo Bills have fallen short in enough playoff games in recent years to know the season is long and the opener doesn't mean much in January.

They still felt justified in their championship aspirations after going into the Super Bowl winners' stadium and completely wrecking their banner-raising party on the NFL's opening night.

"We're going to make the plane do backflips on the way home tonight," Bills linebacker Von Miller said. "We're going to celebrate this win, because you have to, but then we're going to go back to the lab."

Josh Allen passed for 297 yards while accounting for four touchdowns, Miller had two of Buffalo's seven sacks, and the Bills stamped themselves as a clear contender for the Rams' crown with a 31-10 victory over Los Angeles on Thursday night.

Gabe Davis, Isaiah McKenzie and Stefon Diggs caught TD passes as the two-time defending AFC East champions began the NFL's 103rd season by overcoming four turnovers and running away with a blowout victory in the same arena where the Rams won it all nearly seven months ago.

Allen went 26-for-31 with two intercep-

tions. He also rushed for 56 yards, scrambling for a 4-yard TD when he stretched the ball over the line with 13:27 to play.

The star quarterback took his share of hits, but he also dished them out and showed off a mean stiff-arm while Buffalo's offense under new coordinator Ken Dorsey largely dominated the champs. The Bills went 9-for-10 on third downs and racked up 413 total yards, eventually pulling away after three first-half turnovers kept it close early.

"There's a lot to learn, but that second half, that's who we want to be, going out there and executing that way," Allen said. "We were 90% on third down. That's a recipe for success."

Matthew Stafford passed for 240 yards with one TD and three interceptions on a bruising night for the Rams, who lost a season opener and fell below .500 for the first time in coach Sean McVay's six seasons in charge.

"Very humbling night, but one where you look yourself in the mirror and say you have to be better," McVay said. "We weren't ready to go. That's on me. ... There were a lot of decisions I made that didn't put us in the best position to succeed. It was a very humbling night."

The Bills' seven sacks were the most allowed in McVay's tenure with the Rams,

who lost two starters from last year's offensive line and attempted to replace them internally. Miller came through, but he was just one contributor on a night when Buffalo didn't even need to blitz once to keep Stafford in check.

Super Bowl MVP Cooper Kupp had 13 catches for 128 yards and a touchdown, but the Rams' night went quickly downhill. Los Angeles could not keep up with Allen's creative playmaking or the Bills' pass rush, and its only major offseason addition on offense — receiver Allen Robinson — had one catch on two targets.

Los Angeles trailed 17-10 after three quarters, but Buffalo ran away with two long TD drives early in the fourth. The Rams got shut out in the second half, ending a streak of 89 consecutive halves with a point since November 2019.

"We could play a whole lot better than that, no doubt," Stafford said. "The one thing that gives me a good feeling is knowing the guys in that locker room and knowing we're going to band together."

Miller made an immediate impact in his debut for the Bills, who signed him away from the Rams after he won a ring in his half-season in LA. But he was just one part of a defense that yielded only 177 yards before Los Angeles' final, meaningless drive.

## Team's past complicates Commanders' fresh start

*Associated Press*

ASHBURN, Va. — When Washington takes the field Sunday against the Jacksonville Jaguars, the NFL franchise will play a game that counts as the Commanders for the first time.

It's the culmination of a rebranding process that has lasted more than two years and will coincide with pomp, circumstance and a redone fight song for a team looking to move beyond its past. Though as the organization tries to revive its reputation, and coach Ron Rivera attempts to build a winning culture, scandals from the past continue to get in the way and hinder that process.

Most notable is a congressional investigation into workplace culture, including the impending release of information from owner Dan Snyder's nearly 11 hours of testimony that would immediately overshadow anything and everything on the football and business sides. Team president Jason

Wright referred to it as "ghosts of Christmas past" and expects to see progress after several months without one of them popping up.

With that appearing to be wishful thinking for now, the Commanders forge ahead knowing it's an uphill battle to get fans back in the stands and earn respect around the league.

"It goes in cycles," Rivera said. "Does it make what I do harder? Yeah, it really does because all that stuff that's happened, that's important. It is. But to me, as a football coach, what I have to do is I've got to make this team presentable as a football team on the football field and in the community."

The pandemic certainly clouded that effort, with the name change from Redskins to Washington Football Team in the summer of 2020 coming out of a national reckoning on racism and sponsors pressuring to drop the old moniker after decades of criticism

from Native American advocacy groups. Rivera, known for his community involvement in his previous stop with Carolina, lamented not being able to get out into the Washington area with players to engage with fans and cited that as "the next big thing" that might help.

It won't hurt, and there already seems to be movement recapturing the fanbase. Wright said the team has already sold more tickets for this season than all of 2021 combined.

After missing the playoffs 17 of the past 22 years, winning is the easy answer for helping the Commanders brand in the football department.

Off the field, that effort is muddled by investigations into sexual harassment and other workplace misconduct by the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform and another looking into financial dealings commissioned by the NFL.



# Tide give Texas chance for turnaround

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas coach Steve Sarkisian doesn't recall watching the last time Alabama and Texas met on the field, and most of the Longhorns were too young to remember much of anything about that game.

But to a man, they pretty much all know this about the Crimson Tide's 37-21 victory to win the 2009 season national championship: That's the game where "Colt got hurt."

Three words describe the early injury to standout quarterback Colt McCoy and the ripple effect it had through more than a decade of "What ifs..." within a Texas program that floundered while Alabama established perhaps the greatest dynasty in college football history.

On Saturday, top-ranked Alabama (1-0) and Texas (1-0) meet for the first time since that January 2010 game. A victory over the heavily favored Crimson Tide could be a huge step in what Longhorns fans hope is a rebuild back into a champion-

ship contender.

"Ultimately, this is about us," said Sarkisian, who was the offensive coordinator at Alabama when the Tide won the 2020 national championship.

"Teams can sometimes be enamored with an opponent," he said. "We need to be enamored with us."

It's easy to be in awe of Alabama, even at a big-brand program like Texas.

The Crimson Tide have last season's Heisman Trophy winner in quarterback Bryce Young, last season's Bronco Nagurski Award winner in linebacker Will Anderson, and more than a decade of crushing opponents under coach Nick Saban.

That 2010 win over Texas was the first of Saban's six national titles at Alabama. Texas hasn't won even a Big 12 title in that stretch and has fired three head coaches since that game.

Texas has a freshman quarterback in Quinn Ewers, two freshmen starting on the offensive line, and a defense that

ranked No. 100 nationally last season. Beat Alabama with a talented but young lineup like this one, and Texas could really take off.

Saban expects to play a Texas team that at least thinks it's ready to take flight.

"When you're playing on the road, you gotta overcome their emotion, their intensity — the crowd — all kinds of challenges," Saban said.

It won't be long before this game is a more regular matchup. Texas is set to join the Southeastern Conference in 2025.

"It's one game," Sarkisian said. "I think one of the biggest mistakes people make is this is going to be the game that is going to define our program.

"It might," Sarkisian said. "It might not."

## On the edge

Kelvin Banks was one of Sarkisian's most critical recruits after the 5-7 finish in 2021 and the freshman left tackle hasn't disappointed. He's already in the starting lineup. But there's no time to grow into the role.

Banks' job will be to protect Ewers' blind side from Alabama edge rush linebacker Anderson, one of the most dominant players in college. Anderson had 17½ sacks last season.

## Heisman hunt

The game features one Heisman Trophy winner in Young and another player who wants to be in the conversation: Texas pre-season All-America running back Bijan Robinson. The fluid and deceptively fast Robinson ran for 1,127 yards last season before a dislocated elbow forced him to miss most of the last three games. But he'll be running behind a line that starts two freshmen.

Robinson totaled 111 yards and scored twice in Texas' opening win over Louisiana-Monroe.

"Bijan's a great running back. Everybody knows that, everybody sees that. He's quick, elusive, finds holes that not an average back can find," Alabama linebacker Henry To'oTo'o said.

# Basketball medals from 1972 Olympics won't go in Hall

Associated Press

Members of the 1972 U.S. Olympic basketball team have talked about finally retrieving those silver medals they vowed to never accept and left behind in Germany.

No, they still don't want them for themselves.

They believe the medals belong in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, but the latest attempt to get them from the International Olympic Committee has been thwarted.

To get the medals a home in the Hall of Fame — which is holding its induction ceremony for the Class of 2022 this weekend — the IOC told the players they first have to accept them.

"If we have to accept them, then that's not going to be an option," said Tom Burleson, a center from North Carolina State who played on the team.

It's the same non-starter it was 50 years

ago Friday.

The Americans' first loss in Olympic competition remains one of the most complicated and controversial finishes ever — there's little question it's part of the sport's history, which the Hall preserves.

It's not that the IOC disagrees with the Hall of Fame option. The Olympic governing body would let members of the team do what they want with the medals — once they've followed the organization's procedure for obtaining them.

Tom McMillen, a forward from Maryland and a member of the 1972 team, said the IOC saying players having to accept the medals is "sort of ridiculous" and came up with a possible solution to the impasse: Have a third-party accept the medals so they could be placed in the Hall of Fame.

"What we talked about was, given what the IOC's position is, we could say, 'OK,

give us the medals,' and then we reject them by giving them to the Naismith museum," said McMillen, now president and CEO of the LEAD1 Association, representing college Football Bowl Subdivision athletic directors and programs.

The sting of the loss still lingers.

The game was restarted — twice — during what even the players struggle to define as errors by the officials or an outright attempt to cheat them.

Referees initially put time back on the clock after the Soviets argued they had called a timeout and the horn had sounded. The clock was still being reset when the ball was put into play and the Soviets didn't score, so R. William Jones, the secretary general of FIBA, again ordered the clock reset to 3 seconds.

Given another chance, the Soviets fired a long pass to Aleksander Belov, who scored to give the Soviets a 51-50 victory.

# Swiatek, Jabeur advance to women's final

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Getting to a Grand Slam final is no longer new to Ons Jabeur. She figures it's time to add a major trophy to her list of groundbreaking accomplishments.

And she's sure she is more ready to do it at the U.S. Open than she was at Wimbledon two months ago.

Jabeur reached a second consecutive Slam title match without needing to produce her best tennis Thursday night, taking full advantage of a shaky showing by Caroline Garcia to win their semifinal at Flushing Meadows 6-1, 6-3.

"Feels more real, to be honest with you, just to be in the final again. At Wimbledon, I was kind of just living the dream, and I couldn't believe it," Jabeur said after ending No. 17 Garcia's 13-match winning streak, which included a victory over Coco Gauff. "Now maybe I know what to do."

On Saturday, with a championship on the line, Jabeur will go up against No. 1-ranked Iga Swiatek, who grabbed the last four games, and 16 of the last 20 points, to come back and beat No. 6 Aryna Sabalenka 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

The first step for Swiatek to turn things around came when she headed to the lock-

er room after the first set — to use the bathroom and think about what to adjust on court.

"I needed to get it together," said Swiatek, a 21-year-old from Poland who already owns two trophies from the French Open's red clay, including one this June, but never had been past the fourth round on New York's hard courts.

Sabalenka dropped to 0-3 in Grand Slam semifinals for her career and 12-11 in three-setters this year. She broke for a 4-2 lead in the third set — and 17 minutes later, it was over, as Swiatek surged to the finish.

"She was just going for it," said Sabalenka, who wore large blue mirrored sunglasses and a black cap pulled low to her news conference. "She was hitting every ball and putting me under pressure and playing really aggressively."

Swiatek has emerged as a dominant figure in women's tennis, with a 37-match winning streak that brought her six titles in one stretch. If she can defeat Jabeur, Swiatek will become the first woman since Angelique Kerber in 2016 to win two majors in one season.

The No. 5-seeded Jabeur, a 28-year-old from Tunisia, was the runner-up at the All England Club in July and now will be the

first African woman to participate in a final at the U.S. Open in the professional era, which dates to 1968.

"After Wimbledon, (there was) a lot of pressure on me," Jabeur said following a win that took barely more than an hour, "and I'm really relieved that I can back up my results."

The men's semifinals were Friday: No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz of Spain vs. No. 22 Frances Tiafoe of the United States, and No. 5 Casper Ruud of Norway vs. No. 27 Karen Khachanov of Russia.

With four-time major champion Arantxa Sánchez Vicario in her guest box — they traded thumbs-up signals at match's end — Jabeur improved to 6-0 in semifinals this season and earned her tour-leading 92nd victory in all since the start of 2021. No. 91 came when she defeated Ajla Tomljanovic, who eliminated Serena Williams in the third round.

To Jabeur's surprise, and delight, she heard Tuesday's victory over Tomljanovic on Tuesday was drawing viewers back home, even though there also was a Champions League game between Juventus and Paris St. Germain on TV.

"In Tunisia, it's all about soccer," she said.

# Correa's late home run helps Twins down Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Carlos Correa responded to booing Yankees fans with a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the eighth inning, and the Minnesota Twins beat New York 4-3 on Thursday night to avoid a four-game sweep.

Correa's two-out drive off former Fordham pitcher Greg Weissert followed an unsuccessful video review called by the Yankees after what New York thought should have been the third out.

The Yankees maintained Wandy Peralta (2-4) got to first in time on the flip from first baseman Marwin Gonzalez on Jake Cave's grounder, but replays showed Peralta trapped the ball with his glove against his body.

One out later, Correa con-

nected on a 1-2 slider for his 18th homer, his second in two days. It gave Minnesota a 4-2 lead and he pounded his chest in the direction of his dugout while rounding third base.

Griffin Jax (6-3) pitched a hitless inning. Minnesota held on to stop a 10-game losing streak at Yankee Stadium dating to May 2019.

**Nationals 11, Cardinals 6:** Yadier Molina homered twice on a day he paired with St. Louis pitcher Adam Wainwright to tie the major league record of 324 starts by a battery in the loss to visiting Washington.

The 41-year-old Wainwright and 40-year-old Molina matched the mark set by Detroit's Mickey Lolich and Bill Freehan from 1963-75.

**Marlins 6, Phillies 5:** First

baseman Rhys Hoskins' two-base error allowed Miami to tie it in the ninth and Brian Anderson's followed with an RBI single that sent the visitors past Philadelphia to a snap a nine-game losing streak.

Philadelphia led 5-4 when Garrett Cooper led off the ninth with a double off David Robertson (4-3).

**White Sox 14, Athletics 2:** Yoán Moncada went 5-for-6 with two home runs and five RBIs, Dylan Cease stuck out nine in six scoreless innings and visiting Chicago hammered Oakland.

The 14 runs were a season high for Chicago, which has won seven of its last nine games. Chicago had 21 hits, including 10 extra-base hits.

**Brewers 2-4, Giants 1-2:** Garrett Mitchell hit an RBI

double and host Milwaukee withstood Freddy Peralta's early exit to beat San Francisco and complete a doubleheader sweep.

In the opening game, Corbin Burnes (10-6) struck out 14 and allowed three hits in eight shutout innings.

Peralta left the second game due to fatigue in his right shoulder after walking Tommy La Stella to lead off the third inning. The Brewers led 3-0 at the time.

**Reds 4, Cubs 3:** Jonathan India hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the ninth inning to lift visiting Cincinnati over Chicago.

Diaz (6-2) got five outs for the victory. Ian Gibaut worked around a hit in the ninth for his first save. Mark Leiter Jr. (2-7) was the loser.