

Henoko relocation gets boost from court

Japan orders Okinawa to approve US Marine Corps runway construction

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's Supreme Court on Monday dismissed Okinawa's rejection of a central government plan to build U.S. Marine Corps runways on the island and ordered the prefecture to approve it despite protests by locals who oppose the American troops' presence.

Monday's ruling upheld a high court ruling in March that the central government's plan and its instruction for Okinawa's approval are valid.

It will move forward the suspended construction at a time when Okinawa's strategic role is seen as increasingly important for the Japan-U.S. military alliance in the face of growing tensions with China.

Japan's central government began the reclamation work at the Henoko area on the eastern coast of Okinawa's main island in 2018 to pave the way for the relo-

cation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma from a crowded neighborhood on the island.

The government later found out that approximately 70% of the reclamation site is on soft ground, and submitted a revision to the original plan with additional land improvement.

The Okinawa prefectural government rejected the revision as insufficient and suspended the reclamation work. The ground improvement plan requires tens of thousands of pillars and massive amounts of soil, which opponents have said would damage the environment.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki has called for a significant reduction of the U.S. military on Okinawa, the immediate closure of the Futenma base and the scrapping of a base construction in Henoko.

The Japanese and U.S. governments initially agreed in 1996 to close MCAS Fu-

tenma, a year after the rape of a schoolgirl by three U.S. military personnel led to a massive anti-base movement. But persistent protests and lawsuits between Okinawa and Tokyo have held up the plan for nearly 30 years.

Tokyo and Washington have said the relocation within Okinawa, instead of moving it elsewhere as demanded by many Okinawans, is the only solution.

Okinawa, which accounts for only 0.6% of Japanese land, has been burdened with the majority of the 50,000 American troops based in the country under a bilateral security pact, and 70% of U.S. military facilities are on Okinawa.

The Japanese government in recent years has increasingly stepped up its own defenses to deal with China's growing assertiveness, triggering fear among Okinawan residents that they will be the first to be embroiled in a potential conflict.

Navy christens first Navajo-class support vessel

BY JUAN KING

Stars and Stripes

The Navy recently christened the first of a new class of towing, salvage and rescue vessels designed to put two other ship types into retirement.

The USNS Navajo — the service's first Navajo-class, multimission, common-hull platform — was christened Aug. 26 during a pierside ceremony at Bollinger Shipyards in Houma, La.

The ceremony was attended by senior Navy officials and Bollinger representatives, according to an Aug. 29 company news release.

"Every weld, every beam, every system on this ship was crafted with the thought of the warriors that inspired its name. It is an honor beyond words for Bollinger to partner with the Navy," company president Ben Bordelon said in the release.

Gulf Island Shipyard designed and built the Navajo on a \$63.5 million con-

tract awarded in March 2018, according to the Times of Houma and Thibodaux in November 2019.

On behalf of the Navajo Nation, ship sponsor Jocelyn Billy-Upshaw broke a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

She practiced by breaking two bottles of sparkling wine the day before the ceremony, according to the Navajo Times on Thursday.

"I want to say thank you to the Department of Defense and the entirety of the United States government for recognizing the Navajo veterans, their families and their communities," Billy-Upshaw, a Diné Development Corp. executive and former Miss Navajo, said during the ceremony.

The Navajo recognizes its namesake tribe and the Diné people's contributions throughout American history, according to Bollinger's release.

The ship replaces the Powhatan-class

T-ATF tugs and Safeguard-class T-ARS ships, which began reaching the end of their service period in 2020.

The Navajo will be operated by the Navy's Military Sealift Command and perform other missions including humanitarian assistance, oil-spill response and wide-area search and surveillance operations using unmanned underwater vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles, according to a Department of Defense release Aug. 25.

The ship is expected to deploy early next year, the Navy said in an Aug. 18 news release that did not specify where it will be based.

Contracts have been awarded for nine more Navajo-class ships, according to the Navy.

"The trust bestowed upon us to construct a new class of vessel is both a responsibility and a privilege that we hold dear," Bordelon said.

Red Hill ‘repacking’ leads to pump repair

Honolulu Star-Advertiser

HONOLULU — About 360,000 gallons of fuel have been added to pipelines at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Hawaii as part of an ongoing “repacking” process that will ultimately lead to the defueling of the facility’s jet fuel tanks.

Joint Task Force-Red Hill on Friday said it identified a needed repair during the repacking operation at an “Underground Pump House low point drain.”

The pump, unlike the massive Red Hill storage tanks, is reportedly not located above an aquifer, and the task force said that the break “does not pose a threat to the environment, the aquifer or the community.”

Teams are conducting the repair, the task force said Friday. While the repair was “un-forecasted,” the task force said it anticipated the need for such repairs because of how long the pipelines have been dry.

The Joint Task Force-Red

Hill, made up of 270 military and civilian personnel, on Friday provided an update on the repacking operation in which empty pipelines are filled with fuel to remove air, allowing for the gravity-based defueling of Red Hill’s underground storage tanks.

The task force is charged with removing 104 million gallons of aviation and marine fuels from the Navy’s controversial, underground World War II-era facility. The repacking paves the

way for defueling of the site’s main underground storage tanks to begin by Oct. 16. The task force has said defueling is scheduled for completion by Jan. 19.

The storage tanks are being emptied after roughly 14,000 gallons of petroleum leaked out of the fuel storage facility and into drinking water that supplies Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and other military sites on west Oahu, detrimentally affecting hundreds of families.

Lawmaker expects Russia-N. Korea-China exercises

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Russia has likely proposed that North Korea participate in three-way naval exercises with China, according to a lawmaker who attended a closed-door briefing with the director of South Korea’s top spy agency Monday.

The briefing came days after Russia’s ambassador to North Korea, Alexander Matsegora, told Russian media that including North Korea in joint military drills between Russia and China “seems appropriate.” Mat-

segora added it was his own point of view and that he wasn’t aware of any preparations, according to Russia’s Tass news agency.

According to lawmaker Yoo Sang-bum, when South Korean National Intelligence Service Director Kim Kyou-hyun was asked about the possibility of such drills, he said Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu likely proposed holding trilateral naval exercises with North Korea and China while meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in July.

Kim Jong Un invited Shoigu to a major military parade in Pyongyang in July while vowing to expand military cooperation with Moscow, which U.S. officials say could involve North Korean supplies of artillery and other ammunition as Russian President Vladimir Putin reaches out to other countries for support in his war against Ukraine. Last week, the White House said Kim and Putin exchanged letters as Moscow looked to Pyongyang for more munitions.

Amid deepening nuclear ten-

sions with Washington, Seoul and Tokyo, Kim Jong Un has been trying to boost the visibility of his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing as he seeks to break out of diplomatic isolation and have Pyongyang be a part of a united front against the United States.

Diplomacy between Pyongyang and Washington has stalled since 2019 over disagreements over the crippling U.S.-led sanctions against North Korea and the North’s faltered steps to wind down its nuclear weapons and missiles program.

F-16 flight training facility to be launched in Romania

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A new training center for F-16 pilots will be launched in Romania, which could eventually host Ukrainian aviators learning to fly the American warplane, officials said last week.

The initiative, which has been in the works for several months, is a joint effort between Lockheed Martin and the governments of Romania and the Netherlands. An opening date hasn’t

been announced.

The center will be located at a Romanian base in Borcea, about 50 miles west of the Black Sea air base at Mihail Kogalniceanu that serves as a hub for U.S. forces in Romania.

“We will train pilots from Ukraine, provided they express their wish,” Romanian Defense Minister Angel Tilvar said Friday.

Still, any training of Ukrainian troops on the base will take time, Tilvar told the Defense

Romania news outlet. In the meantime, the training of Romanian pilots will be the top priority, he said.

OJ Sanchez, a Lockheed vice president, said the center will initially focus on ensuring the effectiveness of Romanians flying the F-16, but eventually other nations will be incorporated.

“Once details are finalized, we are confident the training center will ultimately benefit Romania and other regional F-16 operators, including poten-

tially Ukraine,” Sanchez said in a statement Thursday.

The F-16 is used by numerous countries in the NATO alliance. The aircraft also has been at the top of Ukraine’s wish list for weaponry in its fight against Russia’s full-scale invasion, which began Feb. 24, 2022.

The Netherlands and Denmark have been leading NATO efforts to lay the groundwork for training of Ukrainian pilots on F-16s and delivery of the aircraft to Kyiv.

Biden celebrates jobs, unions on Labor Day

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — President Joe Biden, who often says he's the most pro-union president in history, touted the importance of unions and applauded American workers in building the economy during a Labor Day appearance in Philadelphia on Monday.

The Democratic president spoke about how the economy is recovering from the crippling coronavirus pandemic and what his administration has done to pay for infrastructure improvements, and he cited the importance of unions in building the middle class.

"This Labor Day we're celebrating jobs, good-paying jobs, jobs you can raise a family on, union jobs," Biden told the crowd gathered Monday. Instead of standing at the podium, the presi-

dent held the microphone in his hand and walked around the stage behind signs that read "UNION STRONG."

Labor Day, a holiday honoring workers, comes as the U.S. has added jobs and more people have begun looking for work, the most since January, all news Biden is eager to highlight as he seeks reelection in 2024.

Biden's Labor Day speech came after news last week that America's employers added 187,000 jobs in August, evidence of a slowing but still-resilient labor market despite the high interest rates the Federal Reserve has imposed. Friday's report from the Labor Department also showed that the unemployment rate rose from 3.5% to 3.8%, the highest level since February 2022 though still low by historical standards.

But the rate rose for an encouraging reason: 736,000 people began looking for work last month, the most since January, and not all of them found jobs right away. Only people who are actively looking for a job are counted as unemployed.

The president frequently talked about the importance of middle-class workers in the economy, saying that when the middle class does well, "everyone does well."

At the Tri-State Labor Day event in Philadelphia, hundreds of union workers donning their local T-shirts — from the Sheet Metal Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers, Stagehands and others — waited on a warm and muggy morning to see the president speak.

Lenny Nutter, a Philadelphia

resident wearing a yellow Laborers International Union shirt, said he attended the event to support Biden, adding that unions have been more active than they used to be, due in part to the president's policies.

"Unions are adding members, and a lot more work has been given to union workers," Nutter said.

Biden has used executive actions to promote worker organizing, has personally cheered unionization efforts at corporate giants like Amazon and has authorized federal funding to aid union members' pensions.

The 36th annual Tri-State Labor Day Parade and Family Celebration is hosted by the Philadelphia AFL-CIO, whose website says it comprises more than 100 local labor unions representing more than 150,000 workers.

Scott eschews talk of race as top Black GOP candidate

Associated Press

OSKALOOSA, Iowa — Tim Scott seldom specifically brings up race in Iowa. Nor does the Republican presidential candidate have to.

He is often the only Black person at his campaign events in the state. The South Carolina senator introduces himself as the product of early-life mentors who taught him not to be bitter. When race comes up, he often says the U.S. is not fundamentally racist.

"We don't have Black poverty or white poverty. We have poverty," he told an all-white audience Thursday in Oskaloosa after being asked about race. He earlier had spoken about his late grandfather, born into Jim Crow-era South Carolina.

"The brilliance of this nation is that we keep moving forward, even though there are lots of forces who want us to think the problem is that someone doesn't look like you," Scott said.

Scott, the only Black GOP pres-

idential candidate campaigning aggressively in the early-voting state, is betting that his upbeat message of personal responsibility, wrapped in the Christian faith he comfortably cites, is a good fit for Iowa Republicans who might split from former President Donald Trump. So far, Scott and others in the White House race remain far behind Trump.

Scott has been criticized by scholars who say his rejection of systemic racism plays down larger social and political obstacles facing African Americans.

But dozens of Iowa Republicans interviewed over the past several months say his position resonates more coming from Scott than from others.

"It definitely means more from him," said Mary Rozenboom, 77, a retired hospital employee from Oskaloosa who is white. "He's saying, 'This is me. I'm Black. But I succeeded because I worked hard, and those opportunities remain in America.'"

DeSantis' redistricting map is deemed unconstitutional

Associated Press

A Florida redistricting plan pushed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis violates the state constitution and is prohibited from being used for any future U.S. congressional elections since it diminishes the ability of Black voters in north Florida to pick a representative of their choice, a state judge ruled Saturday.

Circuit Judge J. Lee Marsh sent the plan back to the Florida Legislature with instructions that lawmakers should draw a new congressional map that complies with the Florida Constitution.

The voting rights groups that challenged the plan in court "have shown that the enacted plan results in the diminishment of Black voters' ability to elect their candidate of choice in violation of the Florida Constitution," Marsh wrote.

The decision was the latest to strike down new congressional maps in Southern states over

concerns that they diluted Black voting power.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a Republican-drawn map in Alabama, with two conservative justices joining liberals in rejecting the effort to weaken a landmark voting rights law. Not long after that, the Supreme Court lifted its hold on a Louisiana political remap case, increasing the likelihood that the Republican-dominated state will have to redraw boundary lines to create a second mostly Black congressional district.

The Florida case likely will end up before the Florida Supreme Court.

DeSantis, a candidate for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination, was criticized for essentially drawing Democratic U.S. Rep. Al Lawson, who is Black, out of office by carving up his district and dividing a large number of Black voters into conservative districts represented by white Republicans.

Report: Iran slows uranium enrichment

Associated Press

VIENNA — Iran has slowed its enrichment of uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels, a report by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog seen by The Associated Press said Monday.

The confidential report comes as Iran and the United States are negotiating a prisoner swap and the release of billions of dollars in Iranian assets frozen in South Korea. Slowing its enrichment of uranium could serve as another sign that Tehran seeks to lower tensions between it and America after years of tensions since the collapse of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The report by the Interna-

tional Atomic Energy Agency said Iran has 268 pounds of uranium enriched up to 60%, a far-slower growth than in previous counts. An IAEA report in May put the stockpile of 60% uranium at just over 250 pounds. It had 192 pounds in February.

Uranium enriched at 60% purity is just a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. Iran has maintained its program is peaceful, but the IAEA's director-general has warned Tehran has enough enriched uranium for "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to build them.

Iran likely would still need months to build a weapon. U.S. intelligence agencies said in

March that Tehran "is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device." The IAEA, the West and other countries say Iran had a secret military nuclear program it abandoned in 2003.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal limited Tehran's uranium stockpile to 661 pounds and enrichment to 3.67% — enough to fuel a nuclear power plant. The U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the accord in 2018 set in motion a series of attacks and escalations by Tehran over its program.

While Iran has slowed the enrichment, the IAEA reported other problems with trying to

monitor its program. An IAEA report seen by the AP said Iran had denied visas for agency officials, while the "de-designation of experienced agency inspectors" also challenged its work.

The IAEA also hasn't been able to access surveillance camera footage since February 2021 under Iranian restrictions, while the only recorded data since June 2022 has been from cameras at a workshop in the Iranian city of Isfahan.

Iran has not acknowledged the visa denials previously. Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment over the reported visa denials.

China's Xi to skip G20 summit; relations icy

Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping is apparently skipping this week's Group of 20 summit in India as bilateral relations remain icy.

Instead, Premier Li Qiang will represent China at the Sept. 9-10 gathering, the Foreign Ministry said Monday in a one sentence notice on its website.

Relations between China and India have grown frosty over their disputed border, and three years ago the tensions resulted in a clash in the Ladakh region that killed 20 Indian and four soldiers. It turned into a long-running standoff in the rugged mountainous area, where each side has stationed tens of thousands of military personnel backed by artillery, tanks and fighter jets. Frictions have also risen over trade and India's growing strategic ties with China's main rival the United States. Both India and China have expelled the other's journalists. India recently overtook China as the world's most pop-

ulous nation and the two are rivals in technology, space exploration and global trade.

Asked why Xi would not be attending the summit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning declined to answer.

"The G20 is a major forum for international economic cooperation. China has always attached great importance to and actively participated in relevant activities," Mao told reporters at a daily briefing.

"Premier Li Qiang will elaborate on China's views and propositions on G20 cooperation, promote the G20 to strengthen solidarity and cooperation and work together to address global economic and development challenges," she said.

She said China is ready to work with all parties "to jointly promote the success of the G20" summit and "make positive contributions to promoting the stable recovery of the world economy and promoting sustainable development."

Asian leaders besieged by issues at summit

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Southeast Asian leaders led by Indonesian host President Joko Widodo are gathering in their final summit this year, besieged by divisive issues with no solutions in sight: Myanmar's deadly civil strife, new flare-ups in the disputed South China Sea, and the longstanding United States-China rivalry.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings will open Tuesday in the Indonesian capital Jakarta under tight security. The absence of U.S. President Joe Biden, who typically attends, adds to the already somber backdrop of the 10-state bloc's traditional show of unity and group handshakes.

ASEAN foreign ministers gathered Monday ahead of the leaders' summit. Mohammad Mahfud, Indonesia's coordinating minister in charge of political, legal and security affairs, told the region's top diplomats that their "community's strength is being challenged by one crisis after another."

A lack of progress in efforts to resolve the Myanmar crisis "left a negative mark on ASEAN," he said and warned that accelerating geopolitical tension and rivalries "could lead to open conflict that our region will be forced to face."

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said a five-point plan crafted by the leaders in 2021 to help bring Myanmar back to normalcy will be reviewed.

After discussions Tuesday, the ASEAN heads of state would meet Asian and Western counterparts from Wednesday to Thursday, providing a wider venue that the U.S. and China, and their allies, have used for wide-ranging talks on free trade, climate change and global security. It has also become a battleground for their rivalries.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang was set to join the meetings, including the 18-member East Asia Summit. There, he would meet U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Board votes to ban trans girls from school teams

AK ANCHORAGE — The Alaska state board of education on Thursday voted to support banning transgender girls from competing on high school girls athletic teams, sending the issue to the attorney general.

Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy, who appointed the members of the state education board, has said the regulation is needed to ensure fairness in girls sports. The proposal now goes to another Dunleavy appointee, Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor, a Republican, to determine whether it should go into effect.

On Thursday, the board met in special session and approved on a 7-1 vote a regulation saying, "If a separate high school athletics team is established for female students, participation shall be limited to females who were assigned female at birth."

Law blocked for parents to OK kids' social media

AR LITTLE ROCK — A federal judge on Thursday temporarily blocked Arkansas from enforcing a new law that would have required parental consent for minors to create new social media accounts, preventing the state from becoming the first to impose such a restriction.

U.S. District Judge Timothy L. Brooks granted a preliminary injunction that NetChoice — a tech industry trade group whose members include TikTok, Facebook parent Meta, and X, formerly known as Twitter — had requested against the law. The

measure, which Republican Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed into law in April, was set to take effect Friday.

Arkansas' law is similar to a first-in-the-nation restriction signed into law earlier this year in Utah. That law is not set to take effect until March 2024. NetChoice last year filed a lawsuit challenging a California law requiring tech companies to put kids' safety first by barring them from profiling children or using personal information in ways that could harm children physically or mentally.

Police stop man for bull riding shotgun in car

NE NORFOLK — Norfolk Police Capt. Chad Reiman said it didn't take long for officers to track down a modified Ford Crown Victoria sedan with a bull riding shotgun after a 911 call about it driving on the main highway entering the city of roughly 24,000 Wednesday morning.

The car that Lee Meyer has driven in parades across the area for years has half the windshield and roof removed to make room for his bull, named Howdy Doody, to ride along. A yellow metal cattle gate serves as the passenger side door — allowing for the Watusi bull to be tied up — and a set of longhorns serves as a hood ornament.

A sign on the side of Meyer's car from a parade in Burwell late last month declared that Howdy Doody's eye-catching ride was judged the Best Car Entry in Nebraska's Big Rodeo Parade.

Reiman said Meyer told him that when he went to that parade, he drove Howdy Doody in

a proper trailer, so it wasn't clear why he decided to load the bull into his car Wednesday and drive the 36 miles from his home in Neligh to Norfolk.

Death probed as festival floods strand thousands

NV RENO — Authorities in Nevada were investigating a death at the site of the Burning Man festival where thousands of attendees remained stranded Saturday night as flooding from storms swept through the Nevada desert.

Organizers closed vehicular access to the counterculture festival and attendees trudged through mud, many barefoot or wearing plastic bags on their feet. The revelers were urged to shelter in place and conserve food, water and other supplies.

The Pershing County Sheriff's Office said the death happened during the event but offered few details as the investigation continued, including the identity of the deceased person or the suspected cause of death, KNND-TV reported.

Vehicle gates will not open for the remainder of the event, which began on Aug. 27 and was scheduled to end Monday, according to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Judge: Logging of old forests violates laws

OR PENDLETON — A federal judge has found that a Trump-era rule change allowing for the logging of old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest violates several laws.

U.S. Magistrate Judge An-

drew Hallman on Thursday found that the U.S. Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act when it amended a protection that had been in place since 1994.

The findings came in response to a lawsuit filed by multiple environmental groups over the change.

Hallman recommended that the Forest Service's environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact should be vacated, and that the agency should be required to prepare a full environmental impact statement related to the change.

Disabled students get help after settlement

PA HARRISBURG — Students with disabilities in Pennsylvania will now receive free support through the public education system for an additional year beyond what current policy dictates.

Under a settlement announced Thursday, the state's Department of Education will change its policy to allow students with disabilities to continue in K-12 public education until they turn 22. Previously, students would age out of the program at the end of the school year during which they turned 21.

The new policy takes effect Sept. 5 and will continue offering students support services to help them transition into adulthood, as well as supports such as speech therapy and occupational therapy.

— From wire reports

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No. 8 Florida State whips No. 5 LSU

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Sitting in his hotel room the night before Florida State's season opener, Jordan Travis imagined how it would go against LSU.

Big plays? Yes. Touchdowns? Sure. A blowout? Absolutely.

"I envisioned all of this," he said.

Travis accounted for five touchdowns, including three to Michigan State transfer Keon Coleman, and the eighth-ranked Seminoles throttled No. 5 LSU 45-24 on Sunday night in the most anticipated matchup of college football's opening weekend.

The Seminoles delivered a dominant second half to extend their winning streak to seven and established themselves as an early season favorite to make the College Football Playoff.

"I told them before the day that they're built for a time like this, this stage, two top-10 teams in the country," coach Mike Norvell said. "That second half, that was a glimpse of what this team can do and where I think it can go."

They won this one primarily on fourth down. FSU stopped the Tigers twice on fourth

down in the first half, including once at the goal line, and scored the go-ahead touchdown one play after Travis connected with Lawrence Toafili for 41 yards on fourth-and-2.

Travis ran in on the ensuing play to put the Seminoles ahead 24-17 and send most of the 65,429 in attendance into a frenzy.

Roughly 80% of those on hand were draped in garnet and gold. They got exactly what they wanted: a blowout to kickstart the program's most hyped season in nearly a decade. LSU was a 2½-point favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

FSU won its final six games last season and then surprisingly returned nearly everyone for coach Norvell's fourth season, including Travis, standout receiver Johnny Wilson and stud pass rusher Jared Verse.

But the star of the opener was Coleman, who left East Lansing, Mich., for greener grass in Tallahassee. He finished with nine catches for 122 yards, including scoring plays of 40, 21 and 7 yards.

"Really just thankful for the opportunity and coach saying yes to me and believing in me," Coleman said.

Added Norvell: "I'm grateful for me saying

yes, too."

Wilson added seven receptions for 104 yards and would have had better numbers had it not been for two drops.

Travis was at his best in the second half, connecting on 11 of 13 passes as the Seminoles took the lead for good. He sent most of the LSU faithful to the exits when he found South Carolina transfer Jaheim Bell down the sideline for a 44-yard score with 7 minutes remaining.

Travis completed 23 of 31 passes for 342 yards and the four TDs. He and Coleman hooked up on a 40-yarder to start the scoring, added a 21-yarder late in the second to tie the game at 14 and then connected on a 7-yard fade in the fourth.

Jayden Daniels wasn't nearly as effective for LSU in a showdown of two of the top three preseason Heisman Trophy favorites. He was 22-for-37 passing for 347 yards, with an interception and a 75-yard score in the waning minutes. He ran 15 times for 64 yards and was on the receiving end of the hit of night: FSU's Tatum Bethune hammered him to the ground after he attempted to leap another defender.

Uiagalelei's 5 total TDs lead Oregon State to rout

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — DJ Uiagalelei once again looked like the heralded recruit who showed so much promise early in his career at Clemson in his debut for Oregon State.

Uiagalelei got off to a fast start for his new team, throwing three touchdown passes and running for two more to lead No. 18 Oregon State to a 42-17 victory over San Jose State on Sunday.

The former five-star recruit lost his starting job at Clemson late last season and transferred to Oregon State where he had a spectacular debut.

"I had fun today," he said. "It was exciting. It was just fun to be out there and be able to play football again."

Uiagalelei completed all three passes on his opening drive and capped it with a 1-yard TD run. He added a 14-

yard TD pass to Jack Velling on his third drive and ran it in again from the 1 on the next possession to give Oregon State a 21-3 lead over the Spartans (0-2).

He then added two deep strikes in the second half, a 31-yarder to Jeremiah Noga in the third quarter when he had about 5 seconds to throw the ball without any pressure.

"I could have made a sandwich back there," he said. "The o-line played an unbelievable game today, the running backs ran really well. I thought it was a good team win today."

He added a 28-yarder to Anthony Gould in the fourth quarter to match his career high with five combined touchdowns.

Uiagalelei finished 20-for-25 for 239 yards to help the Beavers start the season on the right note as they try to build on last

year's 10-win campaign under coach Jonathan Smith.

Damien Martinez added 145 yards rushing for the Beavers.

Rutgers 24, Northwestern 7: The visiting Wildcats lost to the Scarlet Knights in the team's first game since a hazing scandal led to a coaching change, investigations and multiple lawsuits.

Rutgers quarterback Gavin Wimsatt threw a touchdown and ran for another as the Scarlet Knights dominated the time of possession, controlling the ball for almost 38 minutes.

The loss in interim coach David Braun's first game is Northwestern's 12th straight dating back to last season. Braun replaced longtime coach Pat Fitzgerald, who was first suspended and then fired after allegations of hazing surfaced in the summer and spread to other programs at the university.

Northwestern, which finished last season 1-11, had one positive moment — scoring with about 20 seconds to play on a 1-yard pass by backup quarterback Brendan Sullivan to Caleb Komolafe. Cincinnati transfer Ben Bryant started and finished 20-for-35 passing for 169 yards and two interceptions. He was sacked five times. The Rutgers defense only allowed 201 yards.

The Scarlet Knights (1-0, 1-0 Big Ten) scored on their first two drives, with Wimsatt (17-for-29 for 163) hitting Ian Strong on an 11-yard pass to cap the first and running 6 yards for the second. The first TD was initially called incomplete but a review showed Strong had a foot down in the end zone. Jai Patel added a 32-yard field goal on the third drive after Braun gambled on a fake punt. Kyle Monangai scored on a 15-yard run in the third quarter.

Palou wins to clinch 2nd IndyCar title in 3 years

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Chip Ganassi stopped Alex Palou before Sunday's race at Portland International Raceway and encouraged his driver to use the race to close out the IndyCar championship.

Palou told the boss he planned to do it with a walk-off win. And he delivered.

Palou is now a two-time IndyCar champion with Ganassi following a dominant run Sunday that gave him his series-leading fifth win of the season.

"He likes to win, he told me that. He told me before the race. I said 'Let's go wrap this up today.' He looked at me and said, 'I'm going to wrap it up with a win,'" Ganassi said. "I said 'OK, great.' He called his shot today."

Ganassi then at last addressed Palou's future with the team, which has been uncertain and at times contentious the last 14 months.

"Alex Palou is going to be in

our car, I can tell you that, for sure," Ganassi said.

That wasn't so clear even last month, with Palou scheduled to join Arrow McLaren Racing in 2024 as an IndyCar driver. He already spent this year as McLaren's test and reserve driver in Formula One, but has had an apparent change of heart regarding his future.

"I am going to enjoy it as much as possible, the win from today, the championship," Palou said in declining to discuss the contractual fight between driver, McLaren and Ganassi.

McLaren has filed a lawsuit in the United Kingdom seeking at least \$20 million in damages and to recoup money already advanced to Palou. McLaren claims it gave Palou an advance on his 2024 salary and covered his legal fees last year during mediation in Palou's attempt to join McLaren this year.

The settlement reached last September kept Palou in a Ga-

nassi car in IndyCar for this season, but allowed him to do F1 work with McLaren on non-conflicting weekends.

This third season with Ganassi for Palou — and fourth in IndyCar since the 26-year-old from Barcelona moved to the United States after a short stint racing in Japan — turned out to be the best of his career.

Palou locked up the title with one weekend remaining in the 17-race schedule, marking the first time in IndyCar the championship has been settled before the finale since the late Dan Wheldon won in 2005. Sebastien Bourdais in 2007 won the Champ Car title with one race remaining before the two series unified.

"I never thought I'd be an IndyCar champion and to be a two-time IndyCar champion just feels amazing, like a dream," Palou said. "It was an amazing weekend. We just raced how we've been doing all season."

Palou led IndyCar in nearly every measurable statistic this year: wins, poles, podiums, top-five finishes, top-10 finishes, races led and laps completed. In fact, Palou finished all but two laps all season and could have had a sixth victory, but was spun on pit road during the Indianapolis 500 and had to drive his way back to a fourth-place finish in a race he seemed poised to win.

His lowest finish all season was eighth, twice.

"It's been an amazing season, we've just had the best cars everywhere, we've been able to maximize our results," Palou said. "We wanted to win the championship and have it settled so now we can relax."

Pato O'Ward finished fourth for McLaren and was followed by Indianapolis 500 winner Josef Newgarden and Rinus VeeKay was sixth for his best finish of the season. Juri Vips finished 18th in his IndyCar debut.

Larson takes opening NASCAR playoff race at Darlington

Associated Press

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Kyle Larson had led plenty of laps around Darlington through the years, just not the last one. He finally accomplished that Sunday with a victory at the Southern 500.

Larson, the 2021 Cup Series champion, came into this event having been in front for 715 career laps at the track "Too Tough To Tame" without taking the checkered flag.

"This is a track I really enjoy, suits my style," Larson said. "I just hadn't won yet. Was good to do it today."

Especially because it puts his No. 5 Chevrolet into the second round of the NASCAR Cup playoffs no matter where he finishes at the two remaining first-round races at Kansas and Bristol the next two weeks.

Larson led the final 55 laps for his first career win at Darlington.

"Adding this trophy to the collection is amazing," Larson continued. "This is one of three or four crown jewels."

Larson didn't have the fastest car at the Southern 500, just one that got out front at the right time while other contenders fell away.

Denny Hamlin led a race-best 177 of 367 laps and looked headed for the win before he felt vibrations for what he told his crew was a loose wheel and had to pit on consecutive laps.

"We controlled the race until we had some trouble," said Hamlin, who won the first two stages. "That's just part of it."

Tyler Reddick led 90 laps, yet lost the lead to Larson coming off pit road. Kevin Harvick, seeking the first victory of his final season, challenged Harvick for the lead with less than 60 laps remaining, but was penalized when he could not avoid entering the pits moments after they were closed by NASCAR after a caution came out.

Harvick was penalized and couldn't recover. He said he didn't have time to get back on the track before the commitment line.

It was a successful run at the track for Larson after several close calls. He has had three seconds and two thirds in his 11 previous Cup Series races at Darlington. In May, Larson was racing for the lead late when he was hit by Ross Chastain and wound up 20th.

"This has been one of my favorite tracks

my whole career," Larson said. "Been really, really fast here my whole career, just usually in the wall."

The victory was also the 299th all-time for Hendrick Motorsports and the 500th motorsports win for the Hendrick engine program.

Larson won for the third time this season and took his eighth race in seven playoff appearances.

Cliff Daniels, crew chief for Larson's No. 5 Chevrolet, said he and his driver have dealt with lots of Darlington heartbreak through the years and were glad to end that.

"This track and this race has been circled on our calendar for a long time," Daniels said.

Playoff drivers took the first seven spots. Tyler Reddick was second, followed by Chris Buescher, William Byron, Chastain, Brad Keselowski and Bubba Wallace.

Harvick ended 19th and Hamlin 25th. The rest of the playoff field was Kyle Busch in 11th, Joey Logano in 12th, Ricky Stenhouse Jr. in 16th, Martin Truex Jr. in 18th, pole-sitter Christopher Bell in 23rd and Michael McDowell in 32nd.

Gauff, 3 American men reach quarters

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Coco Gauff is the first American teen since Serena Williams more than two decades ago to reach the U.S. Open quarterfinals two years in a row, so the 19-year-old from Florida knows her way out of trouble on a tennis court.

As the second set slipped away against Caroline Wozniacki in the fourth round Sunday at Arthur Ashe Stadium, Gauff needed a chance to think things through after handing over a break with a pair of double-faults and a stumble that left her doing the splits.

So Gauff turned in the direction of the near-constant chatter coming from Brad Gilbert, one of her two coaches sitting in a front-row seat, and said, "Please stop." A couple of minutes later, Gauff said, "Stop talking."

That was while Wozniacki was grabbing four consecutive games to go up a break in the third set. And then, just as the match seemed to be slipping away thanks in part to a slew of

unforced errors, Gauff straightened out her strokes and pulled away. She collected the last six games for a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 victory over Wozniacki, the 33-year-old mother of two who recently came out of retirement.

"I was getting frustrated. It wasn't really directed at him. It was just that I needed to reset," the sixth-seeded Gauff said. "In that moment, I just didn't want to hear anything. I just wanted to think about what I was doing."

Her next opponent will be No. 20 seed Jelena Ostapenko, the 2017 French Open champion. Ostapenko beat defending champion Iga Swiatek 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 on Sunday night, after 23-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic picked up a 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 victory over qualifier Borna Gojo.

Djokovic faces No. 9 Taylor Fritz of the U.S. on Tuesday. It'll be Djokovic's 13th quarterfinal at Flushing Meadows, and Fritz's first.

Gauff, whose best showing at a major was reaching the final at

the 2022 French Open before losing to Swiatek, has now won 15 of her past 16 matches.

Against Wozniacki, the 2018 Australian Open champion and twice the runner-up in New York, Gauff was trying to find the right balance between being the aggressor (what she wanted) and not going for too much (what Gilbert wanted).

It was the hottest day of the event so far, with the temperature reaching 90 degrees, and Gauff kept missing the mark in the second set, to the tune of 22 unforced errors. But she cleaned that up considerably down the stretch, with just eight miscues in the last set. Also key in the third: Gauff compiled an 11-2 edge in winners.

"She's always been a great athlete. She's always had the backhand, the serve, the fighting spirit," Wozniacki said. "I feel like right now, it's all kind of coming together for her."

There is guaranteed to be at least one American man in the semifinals for the second year in a row. That's because No. 10

Frances Tiafoe, who got to that stage 12 months ago, and unseeded Ben Shelton set up a quarterfinal meeting with victories on Sunday.

Fritz made it three men from the United States in the quarterfinals — the most since Andre Agassi, James Blake and Robby Ginepri got there in 2005 — by overwhelming Swiss qualifier Dominic Stricker 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-4.

In the day's first match in Ashe, the 20-year-old Shelton hit a pair of aces at 149 mph — the fastest by anyone all tournament — in a single game and earned a debut trip to the quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows by eliminating No. 14 Tommy Paul 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

When the match ended, the muscle-shirt-wearing Shelton flexed his left biceps while standing under the section of seats where his father, a former touring pro who now coaches Ben, mother and sister were.

"Straight adrenaline," Shelton said about those big lefty serves.

Dodgers top Braves to avoid sweep; AL West still tight

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Rookie right-hander Bobby Miller threw a career-best seven innings of three-hit ball, and the Los Angeles Dodgers avoided a four-game sweep with a 3-1 victory over the Atlanta Braves on Sunday to complete their meeting of the NL's top two teams.

Miguel Rojas had an RBI double and Mookie Betts added a run-scoring single in the fifth for the Dodgers, who prevented Atlanta from sweeping a four-game series at Dodger Stadium for the first time. James Outman added an RBI single in the eighth for Los Angeles.

Matt Olson hit his 44th home run in the seventh to pull even with Shohei Ohtani for the major league lead, but Atlanta's six-

game winning streak ended with only its second loss on a 10-game West Coast trip. The Braves still have the majors' best record at 90-46.

Mets 6, Mariners 3: Pete Alonso homered twice and drove in four runs, reaching 40 homers and 100 RBIs for the second consecutive season as host New York topped first-place Seattle.

Jeff McNeil also went deep — after finishing a homer shy of the cycle Saturday night — and the Mets took two of three games from the Mariners to hand them their first series loss since Aug. 11-13 against Baltimore. Seattle went into Monday's action leading the AL West by one game over Houston.

Alonso hit an RBI single in the first inning before his two-run

shot in the third made him the fifth player in major league history with at least three 40-homer seasons in his first five campaigns, joining Hall of Famers Ralph Kiner and Eddie Mathews as well as Ryan Howard and Albert Pujols.

Yankees 6, Astros 1: Prized rookie Jasson Domínguez hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the sixth inning to help New York complete a three-game sweep of host Houston.

It was the second home run in three career games for the 20-year-old Domínguez, who became the youngest Yankees player to go deep in his major league debut Friday night when he hit a two-run shot off Justin Verlander in his first at-bat.

Houston's weekend slide

came after a five-game winning streak and it left the Astros a game behind the first-place Mariners and tied for second with Texas in a tight AL West.

Rangers 6, Twins 5: Adolis García homered leading off the bottom of the ninth inning after striking out his first four times up, lifting struggling Texas over visiting Minnesota.

García drove in his 100th run of the season on his 34th homer, a 430-foot drive into the second deck in left field.

Texas ended up squandering three leads before finally winning for just the fourth time in 16 games. The Rangers pulled within a game of Seattle, which leads the AL West after Texas spent 140 consecutive days atop the division.