

## McCarthy scrambles to avert shutdown

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Kevin McCarthy was rushing Friday into a last-ditch plan to keep the federal government temporarily open — but with steep spending cuts of nearly 30% to many agencies and severe border security provisions demanded by his hard-right flank though with almost no chance in the Democratic Senate.

McCarthy announced the legislation ahead of a morning procedural vote that was to test whether the embattled speaker has the support he needs from his slim Republican majority. So far, the right flank has rejected his efforts as they push McCarthy closer to their demands, threaten his ouster and risk a government shutdown.

The Republican speaker all but dared his hold-out colleagues a day before Saturday's almost certain shutdown. The bill would keep operations open through Oct. 31.

"Every member will have to go on record where they stand," the Republican McCarthy said at the Capitol.

Asked if he had the votes, McCarthy quipped, "We'll see."

As soon as the floor debate began, McCarthy's chief Republican critic, Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, announced he would be voting against the package, calling its border security provisions insufficient and urging his colleagues to "not surrender."

The federal government is heading straight into a shutdown after midnight Saturday that would leave 2 million military troops without pay, furlough federal works and disrupt government services and programs that Americans rely on from coast to coast. Congress has been unable to fund the agencies or pass a temporary bill to keep offices open.

While the Senate was pushing ahead Friday with its own widely bipartisan plan favored by Republicans and Democrats to

keep the government open, and bolster Ukraine aid and U.S. disaster accounts, the House has been in political chaos as the hard-right flank seized control.

The White House has declined McCarthy's overtures to meet with President Joe Biden after the speaker walked away from the debt deal they brokered earlier this year that set budget levels.

"Extreme House Republicans are now tripling down on their demands to eviscerate programs millions of hardworking families count on," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

Jean-Pierre said, "The path forward to fund the government has been laid out by the Senate with bipartisan support — House Republicans just need to take it."

Catering to his hard-right flank, McCarthy has returned to the lower spending limits they demanded back in January as part of the deal-making to

help him become the House speaker.

The package would not cut the Defense, Veterans or Homeland Security departments, but would slash almost all other agencies by up to 30% — steep hits to a vast array of programs, services and departments Americans routinely depend on.

It also adds strict new border security provisions that would kick-start building the wall at the Southern border with Mexico, among other measures. Additionally, the package would set up a bipartisan debt commission to address the nation's mounting debt load.

The hard-right led by Gaetz has been threatening McCarthy's ouster, with a looming vote to try to remove him from the speaker's office unless he meets the conservative demands. Still, it's unclear if any other Republican would have support from the House majority to lead the party.

## Autoworkers strikes spread to Chicago and Lansing

*Associated Press*

DETROIT — The United Auto Workers union says its two-week strike against Detroit automakers will spread to 7,000 more workers at a Ford plant in Chicago and a General Motors assembly factory near Lansing, Mich.

Union President Shawn Fain told workers on a video appearance Friday that negotiations haven't broken down but Ford and GM have refused to make meaningful progress. Jeep maker Stellantis was spared from the third round of strikes.

The GM plant in Delta Township, near Lansing, makes large

crossover SUVs such as the Chevrolet Traverse and Buick Enclave. A nearby metal parts stamping plant will remain open, Fain said.

The Chicago Ford plant makes the Ford Explorer and Explorer Police Interceptors, as well as the Lincoln Aviator SUV. The Explorer interceptor is the nation's top selling police vehicle.

"Sadly, despite our willingness to bargain, Ford and GM have refused to make meaningful progress at the table," Fain said in explaining the two new strike locations.

Fain said union bargainers

are still talking to all three companies. "I'm still very hopeful that we can reach a deal that reflects the incredible sacrifices and contributions that our members have made over the last decade," he said.

Stellantis, he said, made significant progress "moments" before the Facebook Live broadcast by agreeing to unspecified cost-of-living pay raises, the right not to cross a picket line and the right to strike over plant closures.

"We are excited about this momentum at Stellantis and hope it continues," Fain said. "Our strategy is working."

Fain said union leaders knew the fight with the companies would be difficult. "We knew that it was unlikely that this would be quick," he said of the strikes.

In a note to workers on Friday, GM manufacturing chief Gerald Johnson wrote that calling more strikes "is just for the headlines, not real progress." The company said it has not yet received a counter offer from union leaders to an economic proposal it made on Sept. 21.

The union went on strike Sept. 15 when it couldn't reach agreements on new contracts with the companies.

# Navy issues reprimands for fuel spill

*Associated Press*

HONOLULU — The Navy on Thursday issued written reprimands to three now-retired military officers for their roles in the spill of jet fuel into Pearl Harbor's drinking water in 2021 but did not fire, suspend, dock the pay or reduce the rank of anyone for the incident.

The spill from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility poisoned thousands of military families and continues to threaten the purity of Honolulu's water supply.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro issued censure letters to the three rear admirals, the Navy said in a news release. He also revoked personal military decorations awarded to five rear admirals, three captains and one commander.

"Taking accountability is a step in restoring trust in our relationship with the community,"

Del Toro said in a statement.

The spill "was not acceptable," and the Navy will continue "to take every action to identify and remedy this issue," he said.

A Navy investigation last year concluded a series of errors caused the fuel to leak into a well that supplied water to housing and offices in and around Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. About 6,000 people suffered nausea, headaches, rashes and other symptoms.

The investigation concluded operator error caused a pipe to rupture when fuel was being transferred between tanks on May 6, 2021, leading 21,000 gallons to spill. Most of this liquid flowed into a fire suppression line and sat there for six months, causing the line to sag. A cart then rammed into the drooping line on Nov. 20, releasing 20,000 gallons of fuel that entered a French drain and the drinking water

well.

The spill came even though the Navy for years reassured Oahu residents their water was safe despite Red Hill's history of leaks, including when 27,000 gallons seeped from one tank.

The water poisoning upset people across Hawaii, including veterans, environmentalists, Native Hawaiians, liberals and conservatives.

Wayne Tanaka, director of the Sierra Club of Hawaii, called the reprimands "outrageous" considering the damage done and the ongoing threat the leak poses to an aquifer underneath the tanks.

"Just to have these written slaps on the wrist is insulting to our people, to our dignity," Tanaka said.

After months of resistance, the military agreed to an order from the state of Hawaii to drain the World War II-era tanks. It has spent the past year repairing

equipment at the facility to safely remove the fuel beginning next month. It expects to finish by Jan. 19.

Three officers received letters of censure from Del Toro: Rear Adm. (retired) Peter Stamatoopoulos, who was the commander of Naval Supply Systems Command during the May and November spills; Rear Adm. (retired) John Korka, who was commander of the Navy Facilities Engineering Command Pacific before the two spills; and Rear Adm. (retired) Timothy Kott, who was the commander of Navy Region Hawaii during the November spill.

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono, a Democrat from Hawaii, said in a statement that true accountability for the disaster would require the Navy to address "systemic command and control failures, and a lack of requisite attention to infrastructure."

## Gen. Milley to step aside as Gen. Brown takes over

*The Washington Post*

Gen. Mark Milley, the Joint Chiefs chairman who clashed with President Donald Trump but found new footing under President Biden, was stepping aside Friday as his successor, Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., takes over the military's top post.

President Biden was scheduled to participate in the event at Joint Base Meyer-Henderson Hall in Virginia alongside other administration and Defense Department officials.

Milley's sometimes tumultuous four-year tenure caps a career that spanned over 43 years. His was one of the most consequential and polarizing tenures of any senior military leader in

recent memory.

He was atop the Pentagon during the Trump administration's chaotic final months, the Biden administration's frantic withdrawal from Afghanistan and the ongoing effort to aid Ukraine as Russia's full-scale invasion draws closer to the two-year mark.

To his frustrated critics, Milley frequently voiced his opinion on hot-button issues, notably defending a policy, implemented after the U.S. Capitol riot, that required military personnel to study domestic extremism.

Supporters have lauded Milley for standing up to what they viewed as Trump's dangerous ambitions.

## Marcos says Philippines will defend its waters

*Associated Press*

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine president said Friday that his country does not want a confrontation but will staunchly defend its waters after its coast guard dismantled a floating barrier placed by China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

It was the first time President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spoken publicly against China's installation of the 980-foot-long barrier at the entrance to Scarborough Shoal which was dismantled at his order.

"We're not looking for trouble, but what we'll do is to continue defending the maritime territory of the Philippines and the rights of our fishermen, who

have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years," Marcos said in response to a question at a news briefing in southern Surigao del Norte province.

The latest flare-up between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes, comes after Marcos decided earlier this year to allow an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defense pact.

After the Philippine coast guard dismantled the rope and net barrier at the mouth of Scarborough Shoal, Filipino fishing boats entered the shallow lagoon and caught about 164 tons of fish in one day, Marcos said.

# House GOP makes case for Biden impeachment inquiry

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans launched a formal impeachment hearing Thursday against President Joe Biden, promising to “provide accountability” as they probe the family finances and lucrative business dealings of his son Hunter and make their case to the public, colleagues and a skeptical Senate.

The chairmen of the Oversight, Judiciary, and Ways and Means committees used the opening hearing to review the constitutional and legal questions involved with impeachment. They are trying to show what they say are links to Biden’s son Hunter’s overseas businesses, though key witnesses said they do not yet see hard evidence of impeachable offenses.

Rep. James Comer, R-Ky, the Oversight chairman, said the

lawmakers have “a mountain of evidence” that will show that the elder Biden “abused his public office for his family’s financial gain.”

Hours after the hearing wrapped, Comer issued subpoenas for additional banking records from the personal and business accounts of Hunter Biden and the president’s brother, James Biden. He said the panel will continue to “follow the money and the evidence to provide accountability.”

It’s a high-stakes opening act for Republicans, taking place just before a potential federal government shutdown, as they begin a process that can lead to the ultimate penalty for a president, dismissal from office for what the Constitution describes as “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

The White House pushed back with statements through-

out the hearing saying nothing can distract from the Republicans’ inability to govern as the shutdown loomed. Spokesperson Sharon Yang called the hearing a “baseless stunt” and said, “President Biden will always stay focused on the priorities of the American people — not these political games.”

The more than six-hour hearing came as House Republicans face scattered resistance to an impeachment inquiry from their own ranks and deep reluctance in the Senate from Republicans who worry about political ramifications and say Biden’s conviction and removal from office are unlikely.

As the hearing began, Democrats displayed a screen showing the days, hours and minutes left until the government shuts down as Congress struggles to fund the government before Saturday’s deadline.

## Sen. Dianne Feinstein dies at 90

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, a centrist Democrat who was elected to the Senate in 1992 in the “Year of the Woman” and broke gender barriers throughout her long career in local and national politics, has died. She was 90.

Three people familiar with the situation confirmed her death to The Associated Press on Friday.

Feinstein, the oldest sitting U.S. senator, was a passionate advocate for liberal priorities important to her state — including environmental protection, reproductive rights and gun control — but was also known as a pragmatic lawmaker who reached out to Republicans and sought middle ground.

She was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1969 and became its first female president in 1978, the same year Mayor George Moscone was gunned down alongside Supervisor Harvey Milk at City Hall by Dan White, a disgruntled former supervisor. Feinstein found Milk’s body.

After Moscone’s death, Feinstein became San Francisco’s first female mayor. In the Senate, she was one of California’s first two female senators, the first woman to head the Senate Intelligence Committee and the first woman to serve as the Judiciary committee’s top Democrat.

Her tendency for bipartisanship helped her notch legislative wins throughout her career. But it also proved to be a liability in her later years in Congress, as her state became more liberal and as the Senate and the electorate became increasingly polarized.

Amid concerns about her health, Feinstein stepped down as the top Democrat on the Judiciary panel after the 2020 elections, just as her party was about to take the majority.

## National Security Agency starting an artificial intelligence security center

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The National Security Agency is starting an artificial intelligence security center — a crucial mission as AI capabilities are increasingly acquired, developed and integrated into U.S. defense and intelligence systems, the agency’s outgoing director announced Thursday.

Army Gen. Paul Nakasone said the center would be incorporated into the NSA’s Cybersecurity Collaboration Center, where it works with private industry and international partners to harden the U.S. defense-industrial base against threats from adversaries led by China and Russia.

“We maintain an advantage in AI in the United States today. That AI advantage should not be taken for granted,” Nakasone said at the National Press Club, emphasizing the threat from Beijing in particular.

Asked if the U.S. has detected either Russia or China trying to influence the 2024 U.S. presidential elections, Nakasone said, “We haven’t seen that yet.” He noted that a number of elections will take place around the world before that and said the U.S. would work with partners and allies to help deter any such efforts.

China has in recent months stepped up cyber operations focused on U.S. and allied institu-

tions that may include pre-positioning malware designed to disrupt military communications, cybersecurity researchers say. On Wednesday, the U.S. and Japan issued an alert saying Chinese hackers were targeting government, industrial, telecommunications and other entities that support their militaries.

Nakasone was asked about using AI to automate the analysis of threat vectors and red-flag alerts — and he reminded the audience that U.S. intelligence and defense agencies already use AI.

“AI helps us, but our decisions are made by humans. And that’s an important distinction,” Nakasone said.



# Nagorno-Karabakh population flees amid government crisis

Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia — More than 70% of Nagorno-Karabakh's original population has fled to Armenia as the region's separatist government said it will dissolve itself and the unrecognized republic inside Azerbaijan will cease to exist by year's end after a three-decade bid for independence.

By Friday morning 84,770 people had left Nagorno-Karabakh, according to Armenian officials, continuing a mass exodus from the region of ethnic Armenians that began Sunday. The region's population was around 120,000 before the exodus began.

The moves came after Azerbaijan carried out a lightning offensive last week to reclaim full control over the breakaway region and demanded that Armenian troops in Nagorno-Karabakh disarm and the separatist

government disband.

A decree signed by the region's separatist President Samvel Shakhramanyan cited a Sept. 20 agreement to end the fighting under which Azerbaijan will allow the "free, voluntary and unhindered movement" of Nagorno-Karabakh residents to Armenia.

Some of those who fled the regional capital of Stepanakert said they had no hope for the future.

"I don't want to live with the Azerbaijanis," said Narine Karamyanyan, 50. "Maybe there are some people who will return to their homes. I don't want that. I want to live as an Armenian."

During the three decades of conflict in the region, Azerbaijan and separatists inside Nagorno-Karabakh, alongside allies in Armenia, have accused the other of targeted attacks, massacres and other atrocities,

leaving people on both sides deeply suspicious and fearful.

While Azerbaijan has pledged to respect the rights of ethnic Armenians in the region, most are now fleeing as they do not believe the Azerbaijani authorities will treat them fairly and humanely or guarantee them their language, religion and culture.

After six years of separatist fighting ended in 1994 following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Nagorno-Karabakh came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces, backed by Armenia. Then, during a six-week war in 2020, Azerbaijan took back parts of the region in the south Caucasus Mountains along with surrounding territory that Armenian forces had claimed earlier. Nagorno-Karabakh was internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan's sovereign territory.

# Putin orders top Wagner commander to lead units

Associated Press

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered one of the top commanders of the Wagner military contractor to take charge of "volunteer units" fighting in Ukraine, signaling the Kremlin's effort to keep using the mercenaries after the death of their chief, Yevgeny Prigozhin.

In remarks released by the Kremlin on Friday, Putin told Andrei Troshev that his task is to "deal with forming volunteer units that could perform various combat tasks, primarily in the zone of the special military operation" — a term the Kremlin uses for its war in Ukraine.

Deputy Defense Minister Yonus-Bek Yevkurov was also present at the meeting late Thursday, a sign that Wagner mercenaries will likely serve under the Defense Ministry's command. Speaking in a conference call with reporters on Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Troshev now works for the Defense Ministry and referred questions about Wagner's possible return to Ukraine to the military.

Wagner fighters have had no significant role on the battlefield since they withdrew after capturing the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut in the war's longest and bloodiest battle.

The meeting appeared to reflect the Kremlin's plan to redeploy some Wagner mercenaries to the front line in Ukraine following their brief mutiny in June and Prigozhin's suspicious death in a plane crash Aug. 23. The private army that once counted tens of thousands of troops is a precious asset the Kremlin wants to exploit.

Troshev, is a retired military officer who has played a leading role in Wagner since its creation in 2014.

# Man is shot, wounded as tempers flare in New Mexico over conquistador statue

Associated Press

ESPANOLA, N.M. — Chaos erupted Thursday as a gunshot rang out during a protest in northern New Mexico where officials had planned to install a statue of Spanish conquistador Juan de Oñate, an event that county officials had already postponed anticipating that tempers would flare.

One man was struck by the gunfire and rushed to the hospital as Rio Arriba County sheriff's officials took the suspected shooter, 23-year-old Ryan Martinez, into custody. Authorities said they were not currently seeking any other suspects in connection with the shooting.

Oñate has been a controver-

sial figure in New Mexico's history for generations, with activists targeting the statue and other likenesses of the Spaniard for his oppressive and sometimes brutal treatment of Native Americans during his country's conquest of what is now the Southwestern United States. Some Hispanics have pointed to the statue as a symbol of their heritage.

Although the county had postponed the installation of the statue the previous day because of public safety concerns, people still turned out.

Protesters arrived Tuesday and pitched tents. They placed offerings on and around the empty pedestal to Oñate: pot-

tery, corn stalks, votive candles, a basket of vegetables. Banners read, "not today Oñate," and "celebrate resistance not conquistadores."

The man who would later draw and fire a gun used profanity in arguments with protesters and was told by law enforcement officers to leave. Video captured by onlookers showed the man jumping a short wall and heading toward the crowd as others grabbed him.

One person yelled, "Hey, hey, hey. Let him go!" as he broke free and jumped back over the wall. That's when he pulled a gun from his waistband and fired a single shot before running off. Screaming ensued.

# Montgomery runs wild as Lions beat Packers

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — David Montgomery never beat the Green Bay Packers during his four seasons with the Chicago Bears.

Now with a different NFC North team, Montgomery made the most of his new situation and helped the Detroit Lions take early command of the division with a 34-20 victory at Lambeau Field on Thursday night.

"It just felt real different coming in with the group of guys that I'm with," said Montgomery, who rushed for 121 yards and three touchdowns. "I'm blessed to come out here with these guys and get the 'dub.' That's big for me. I can tell my son that I beat the Packers, so I'm excited to say that and excited to be a part of this team."

Montgomery carried the ball 32 times after sitting out the Lions' victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Sunday with a thigh bruise. He became the first Lion to rush for three touchdowns at Green Bay and the first Detroit player to top 100 yards rushing with three TDs since James Stewart in 2000.

"He was balling," Lions receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown said. "We can count on him whenever. Give him the ball; he's going

to make something happen."

The Lions (3-1) beat the Packers (2-2) for a fourth straight time, a streak that also includes the final game of last season, when Detroit denied Green Bay a playoff spot in Aaron Rodgers' last game with the Packers.

Detroit has built on the momentum from that season-ending victory by getting off to a fast start this year that now includes road victories over the Packers and the reigning Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs.

"Send us anywhere, line us up against anyone and we feel like we can go in there and beat them," said Lions quarterback Jared Goff, who went 19 of 28 for 210 yards with a touchdown and an interception. "That's a good feeling to have."

Rodgers' replacement, Jordan Love, threw for a touchdown and ran for another as he tried to rally the Packers in the second half. He finished 23 of 36 for 246 yards and had two passes intercepted by Jerry Jacobs.

Detroit led 27-3 at halftime and had outgained Green Bay 284 yards to 21 as the half ended with boos from the crowd. It was the Lions' highest-scoring first half against the Packers in the series' 188-game history.

The Packers had staged an

improbable rally earlier in the week, trailing New Orleans 17-0 on Sunday before scoring 18 points in the final 11 minutes for a one-point victory.

Green Bay faced a halftime deficit of at least 17 points in back-to-back weeks for the first time in franchise history. This time, it was too much to overcome.

"I think just offensively as a whole we've just got to start faster," Love said. "We don't start fast and we kind of get behind and it's hard running the ball. We get put in situations where you've got to throw the ball. So I think we've just got to start faster."

Love got the Packers within 10 points. His 1-yard touchdown pass to Christian Watson capped a season-long 86-yard drive to open the second half.

Jayden Reed ended the third quarter with a 44-yard catch that set up Love's 9-yard touchdown run with 14:52 left in the game to make it 27-17.

Detroit responded with a 14-play, 75-yard drive, capped by Montgomery's 1-yard touchdown run on fourth-and-goal, that took nearly nine minutes off the clock and put the game away.

The Lions were prepared to

settle for a 30-yard field goal that would have kept it as a two-score game, but they got a first down when Green Bay's Quay Walker received an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for running forward and leaping across the line in an attempt to block the kick.

Considering the way the game started, it was surprising it was still competitive in the fourth quarter.

Rudy Ford intercepted Goff on the third play from scrimmage to set up a field goal. Detroit then scored 24 points on its next four drives to delight the sizeable contingent of Lions fans who decorated the Lambeau Field stands in Honolulu blue.

Goff's 24-yard touchdown pass to a wide-open St. Brown put the Lions ahead for good. Montgomery scored on runs of 3 and 2 yards, while Riley Patterson kicked field goals of 33 and 37 yards.

The second quarter was nearly halfway over and the Lions already led 24-3 when the Packers finally got their initial first down thanks to a Detroit penalty. The Packers didn't get a first down on their own merits until 7 seconds remained before halftime.

## China wins bronze in League of Legends tournament

Associated Press

HANGZHOU, China — China's League of Legends team hung on Friday to take bronze in the Asian Games esports event, overcoming a strong challenge from Vietnam.

Once talked about as possible

contenders for the gold, China's team was blanked Thursday by South Korea. The South Korean team was powered by Lee "Faker" Sang-hyeok, a 27-year-old player known to most as the League of Legends GOAT — Greatest Of All Time.

South Korea's League of Legends team has yet to lose a game in the tournament and takes on Taiwan later Friday in the gold-medal match.

The esports competition features five PC games and two mobile games, covering both

multiplayer online battle arena, or MOBA, and single-player genres.

League of Legends is one of the most popular games, where two teams of five champions face each other in a bid to destroy the other's base.

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# With new rules, MLB to draw more than 70M fans

Associated Press

NEW YORK — More than 70 million fans will attend Major League Baseball games for the first time in six years, a post-pandemic rebound for a sport that instituted its biggest on-field changes in decades.

A pitch clock to speed play — game times are down 24 minutes to 2:40 for nine-inning games — limits on defensive shifts to increase offense, new social spaces at ballparks and technology innovations to speed entry have factored into a 9.2% rise in average attendance to 29,176. Expanding the playoffs to 12 teams, which began last year, led to more than half the teams remaining in mathematical contention.

“Getting back above 70 million is an accomplishment for us,” baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Wednesday. “I think it’s the playoff format, balanced schedule, the rule changes this year in terms of the product, the stuff clubs have done locally in terms of seating options.”

Still, the average attendance is below the record high of 32,785 in 2007 and MLB hasn’t reached 30,000 since 2017.

“We want to be a 70-plus-million-fan business year after year. We want that to become routine for us,” Manfred said. “I think we need to be a little realistic about the effect of, particularly in some of our bigger markets, smaller ballparks limit your ability to get to the absolute peak that you saw some years ago.”

Attendance is based on tickets sold, not fans who actually walk through turnstiles. The league brought in 68.55 million fans through Wednesday and advance sales for weekend series meant 70 million is essentially assured.

Twenty-four teams were up, led by NL champion Philadelphia and Cincinnati. Of the six clubs with decreases, just two dropped by six figures: the Chicago White Sox and Washington.

Combined with the minors, baseball will top 100 million fans. Minor leagues drew around 32.1 million for 7,884 dates, an average of 4,076 and up 3.9%.

Marketing throughout the sport has been revolutionized.

“In the ’90s and 2000s, generally when you would try to market a fan coming to a ballpark, you would do so through traditional marketing methods and that would include everything from putting billboards out there or putting radio spots or TV spots or print ads,” Atlanta Braves President Derek Schiller said. “We don’t do a whole lot of that at all anymore. Most of the marketing is done as a customized and as much as possible, a one-to-one type of relationship.”

Physical tickets have gone the way of flannel uniforms and pitchers batting. Long collectors items, World Series tickets were last printed in 2019.

MLB says 92% of tickets were digital this year, up from 86% last season. The trend started before the pandemic, with 14% digital in 2017 and 41% in 2019.

“Five years ago, you had to meet your friend off the train or in the parking lot, hand out your tickets, try to find a way to get to a gate that wasn’t backed up,” MLB chief operations and strategy officer Chris Marinak said. “The new experience is that you just email your tickets, you walk through a facial recognition gate where you never have to take out your phone and you tell your friend to meet you at your seats.”

Tickets may soon disappear entirely, replaced by facial recognition software similar to what’s used in Global Entry. Philadelphia started a pilot program of Go-Ahead Entry at the Citizens Bank Park first base gate last month. More teams are likely to adopt it for 2024.

“It seems preposterous if you were to look five years ago that someone would be entering the stadium with just their face and their entire family walking in with them and by next year that will be at most MLB ballparks,” Philadelphia Phillies vice president and chief technology officer Sean Walker said.

Teams also have given ballpark food much thought. Mobile food orders are available for all 30 clubs, including 25 through the MLB Ballpark app, four through Uber Eats and Seattle through a website. Twelve clubs provide for grab-and-go food.

Following a wave of ballpark construction that started in the early 1990s, a new trend of renovation is reducing seating sections and replacing them with fan gathering spaces.

“Anyone thinking about a baseball game has to think beyond that core of baseball fan that’s going to come regardless,” Toronto Blue Jays President Mark Shapiro said. “We have to have a more compelling fan experience.”

Colorado opened The Rooftop high above Coors Field in 2014, spending \$10 million to convert 3,500 seats to a party deck.

Cleveland undertook a major renovation for the 2015 and 2016 seasons at Progressive Field that included a two-story bar in right field called “The Corner” and new drink railings below it. They became among the most sought-after seats. More changes are planned for left field in 2024 and 2025.

## Red Sox: Wakefield undergoing treatment

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Red Sox say announcer and former knuckleballer Tim Wakefield is undergoing treatment for a disease they did not specify and asked for fans to respect his privacy after his illness was outed without his consent by ex-teammate Curt Schilling.

The team issued a statement on Thursday after Schilling said on a podcast that Wakefield had brain cancer, leading to an outpouring of support for Wakefield — and criticism of Schilling. The Red Sox noted that they were releasing the statement with the permission of Wakefield and his wife, Stacy.

“Unfortunately, this information has been shared publicly without their permission,” the team said. “Their health is a deeply personal matter they intended to keep private as they navigate treatment and work to tackle this disease. Tim and Stacy are appreciative of the support and love that has always been extended to them and respectfully ask for privacy at this time.”

Wakefield, 57, retired in 2012 with a 200-192 record and 4.41 ERA in more than 3,000 major league innings. He was a part of Boston’s 2004 and ’07 World Series championships and was inducted into the team’s Hall of Fame in 2016.

He has worked for NESN, the Red Sox broadcast network, since 2012 and remained active in Boston charities, including the Red Sox Foundation.

Schilling, who was Wakefield’s teammate from 2004-07, retired in 2009. He worked as an ESPN analyst before he was fired in 2016 for anti-transgender social media posts. Other posts have expressed support for lynching journalists and the Jan. 6 insurrection.



# Orioles secure AL East title with win

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Anthony Santander homered, DL Hall worked out of a sixth-inning jam and the Baltimore Orioles clinched the AL East title with a 2-0 victory over the Boston Red Sox on Thursday night.

Dean Kremer (13-5) allowed two hits and a walk in 5½ innings, and the Orioles reached 100 wins for the sixth time in team history and first since 1980.

Now the Orioles — two years after losing 110 games — will enter the postseason as the top seed in the American League.

It was a night of celebration at Camden Yards. The team announced on the scoreboard after the third inning that it had reached an agreement with the state keeping the Orioles in Baltimore for at least the next 30 years. The team's lease at Camden Yards was set to expire at the end of 2023.

Santander's homer off Chris Sale (6-5) gave the Orioles a 1-0 lead in the first.

Tyler Wells pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his first save of the season.

**Mariners 3, Rangers 2:** J.P. Crawford lined a two-run double with two out in the ninth inning, lifting host Seattle to the win and preventing Texas from clinching a playoff berth for at least one day.

Crawford went the other way and drove a 1-1 pitch over the head of left fielder Evan Carter. Cal Raleigh and Dylan Moore scored to keep Seattle's playoff hopes very much alive.

The Mariners (86-73) pulled within one game of idle Houston in the race for the final AL wild card. Seattle also holds the tiebreaker over the Astros.

Adolis García and Leody Tavares homered for the AL West-leading Rangers (89-70). Aroldis Chapman (6-5) got the loss.

Julio Rodríguez hit his 32nd homer for Seattle. Andrés Muñoz (4-7) earned the victory.

**Braves 5, Cubs 3:** Max Olson hit his major league-leading 54th homer, and host Atlanta clinched home-field advantage throughout the postseason.

Austin Riley had three hits and scored two runs as the Braves (103-56) won for the sixth time in seven games. The NL East champions can match the franchise record for wins with a season-ending sweep of the Nationals.

Chicago has dropped 13 of 19 to fall out of position for an NL wild card. With the three-game sweep by the Braves, the Cubs (82-77) fell a half-game behind Miami for the third wild card.

Kyle Wright (1-3) got the win for Atlanta, and Raisel Iglesias earned his 32nd save.

Seiya Suzuki had three hits and two RBIs for the Cubs. Marcus Stroman (10-9) was charged with four runs, two earned, and four hits in two innings.

**Blue Jays 6, Yankees 0:** Chris Bassitt reached 200 innings for the first time, Brandon Belt hit a three-run homer and host Toronto moved one step closer to an AL wild card.

Daulton Varsho and Matt Chapman each hit a solo homer for the Blue Jays (88-71), who entered in position for the second AL wild card, a half-game ahead of Houston and two games ahead of Seattle.

The Yankees (81-78) were blanked for the 10th time and remained one victory from assuring their 31st consecutive winning season.

Bassitt (16-8) allowed five hits over 7½ innings.

Yankees right-hander Luke Weaver (3-6) gave up two runs and six hits in four innings.

**White Sox 3, Diamondbacks 1:** Arizona lost to Andrew Vaughn and the White Sox, delaying the Diamondbacks' bid for an NL wild card for at least another day.

Arizona (84-75) is in position for the second NL wild card and its first postseason appearance

since 2017. The Diamondbacks would have clinched Thursday with both a win and a Cubs loss at Atlanta.

Vaughn and Yoán Moncada homered for Chicago (61-98). Tanner Banks (1-4) got the win, and Bryan Shaw earned his fourth save in five chances.

Diamondbacks rookie Bryce Jarvis (2-1) was charged with two runs in 2½ innings.

**Pirates 3, Phillies 2:** Kyle Schwarber homered and Bryce Harper was ejected during Philadelphia's loss to Pittsburgh.

Schwarber launched his 46th homer, matching last year's NL-leading total, with a first-inning drive into the second deck.

Jared Triolo had two hits and two RBIs for Pittsburgh. Ortiz (5-5) struck out four in five innings, and David Bednar earned his 38th save in 41 chances.

Matt Strahm (9-5) took the loss.

**Brewers 3, Cardinals 0:** Brewers rookie Garrett Mitchell doubled, walked twice and scored in his first big league game since April.

Corbin Burnes, Julio Teheran (3-5) and Ethan Small combined on a six-hitter for the NL Central champions. Burnes struck out four and walked one in four innings in his final tuneup for the postseason.

The Brewers reinstated Mitchell from the 60-day injured list. The 24-year-old Mitchell, a 2020 first-round pick, hurt his left shoulder on a slide into third base on April 18.

Dakota Hudson (6-3) was charged with three runs and seven hits in five-plus innings.

**Rockies 14, Dodgers 5:** Brenton Doyle drove in four runs and Elehuris Montero scored four times, leading host Colorado to the victory.

Montero, Charlie Blackmon and Sean Bouchard homered for the Rockies. Chris Flexen (1-8) earned the win.

With a two-run homer in the

first inning, J.D. Martinez became the fourth Dodgers player this season with at least 100 RBIs, a franchise record. Ryan Yarbrough (8-7) got the loss.

**Athletics 2, Twins 1:** Rookie Ryan Noda hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning, sending the visiting Athletics to the victory against the AL Central champions.

Noda's 16th homer helped Oakland rebound after Minnesota tied the game in the sixth.

Lucas Erceg (4-4) won in relief of Luis Medina, who allowed one run over six innings. Trevor May worked around Matt Wallner's one-out double for his 21st save in 24 chances.

Kenta Maeda (6-8), who will likely be used in relief in the postseason, took the loss in relief of Sonny Gray. Maeda allowed one hit — Noda's homer — in 3½ innings.

**Tigers 8-7, Royals 0-3:** Miguel Cabrera hit his 511th career homer and Detroit finished a shutout in the completion of a suspended game, and Spencer Torkelson hit a three-run shot to lead the Tigers to the victory in the regularly scheduled matchup.

Cabrera, who is retiring after the season, tied Mel Ott for 25th on the home run list. The 40-year-old slugger has 373 homers for Detroit, tying Norm Cash for second behind Al Kaline's 399.

At 54-105, the Royals have their most losses since 2005.

Miguel Díaz (1-0) pitched two innings for the win in the suspended contest. José Cisnero (3-4) got the win in the second game.

Kansas City's Cole Ragans (5-2) pitched 6½ innings of four-run ball in the scheduled matchup. Jonathan Bowlan (0-1) got the loss in the suspended game.

Play was suspended because of rain after four innings and an 80-minute wait on Wednesday night.

# Europe sweeps opening session in Ryder Cup to put USA in hole

Associated Press

GUIDONIA MONTECELIO, Italy — Europe gave the Americans a rude welcome and a harsh reminder why it has been 30 years since they last won the Ryder Cup away from home, sweeping the opening session for the first time before a delirious crowd at Marco Simone.

So thorough was this beating Friday morning that no match reached the 18th hole.

Jon Rahm holed a 30-foot putt from off the second green and hit a tee shot that banged off the bottom of the pin at the par-3 seventh. Viktor Hovland got his side going early, chipping off the tight grass of the fringe, over a ridge and into the cup on the opening hole.

Rory McIlroy delivered the final dagger, a tee shot to 2 feet on the par-3 17th hole as he and Tommy Fleetwood — “Fleetwood Mac” for this Ryder Cup — handed Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele their first loss in foursomes.

European captain Luke Donald looked like a genius by leading off with foursomes, the more

difficult format of alternate shot. Europe has started the Ryder Cup at home with fourballs every time since 1993, which also was the last time Europe lost at home.

He felt his side statistically was stronger in foursomes and he wanted a fast start. McIlroy said Donald had Europe play three-hole matches in practice to develop a sense of urgency.

Whatever the plan, it worked to near perfection.

“All week, all we’ve been talking about is getting off to fast starts ... something Luke has drilled into us,” McIlroy said. “We were ready to go from the first tee shot, obviously, as you can see in how everyone played.”

U.S. captain Zach Johnson also had a plan for the five sessions, only this beating was so thorough it brought to mind what heavyweight Mike Tyson once said of Evander Holyfield. “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.”

The Americans were bloodied, all right. They never led at any point in the four matches.

Johnson’s plan included sitting Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas, a partnership that went 3-1 outside Paris in the last Ryder Cup in Europe. Also sitting was PGA champion Brooks Koepka and U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark. That’s a combined 11 career majors on the bench.

“It was just the first go-around here. We’ll have to make some adjustments across the board. We’ll be fine. Not sweating it,” Schauffele said.

Schauffele and Cantlay had been 5-0 in foursomes at the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup, and it looked like their match would go down to the wire. Europe was 1 up when it got out of position on the 15th and McIlroy hit a wedge to 20 feet for a par putt. Cantlay had 25 feet for birdie.

Cantlay ran his putt about 4 feet by the hole, and then it flipped — Fleetwood holed perhaps their biggest putt, while Schauffele missed the 4-footer. Instead of an even match with three holes to play, Europe was 2 up and headed to another point.

# Players put hit in past, go bowling

Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — Travis Hunter and the Colorado State safety whose late hit sent the Colorado standout to the hospital have put the incident behind them by meeting up for a conversation before going bowling.

Hunter and defensive back Henry Blackburn went to a bowling alley in the Boulder area on Wednesday to roll a few frames. The outing served as a way to make peace once and for all. Blackburn posted a video of them shaking hands and embracing.

On Thursday night, Hunter posted a video on YouTube of the two players hanging out on a bench, talking and getting to know each other, before heading to the lanes to knock down some pins.

Hunter, who has been a star on both offense and defense, was running a deep route in the first quarter of the Sept. 16 game against the Rams when he was hit by Blackburn shortly after the ball sailed by him. Blackburn drew a penalty on the play as Hunter stayed down on the turf.

Hunter briefly returned to the game before leaving to go to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a lacerated liver.

Blackburn and his family received death threats in the wake of the double-overtime win by the Buffaloes, with Colorado State coach Jay Norvell mentioning that police were contacted. Colorado coach Deion Sanders condemned the threats, saying “he does not deserve a death threat over a game.”

In his online streaming show, Hunter also came to the defense of Blackburn, who grew up in Boulder: “He did what he was supposed to do. It’s football. Something bad is going to happen on the field sooner or later. You’ve got to get up and fight again.”

# Court hearing set as Oregon State and Washington State seek Pac-12 control

Associated Press

A hearing has been set for Nov. 14 in Oregon State and Washington State’s legal fight with the Pac-12 and its departing members to gain control of the conference and its assets.

The preliminary injunction hearing will be held in Washington Superior Court in Whitman County in front of the same judge who granted a temporary restraining order to the two schools earlier this month.

Judge Gary Libey’s ruling blocked a board of directors

meeting with conference Commissioner George Kliavkoff and university leaders from schools that have announced plans to leave the Pac-12 next year.

The latest filing in the case was dated Wednesday.

Still to be determined is who should be allowed to make up conference’s board and vote on business matters that could impact the future of the league.

Oregon State and Washington State contend that eight schools — Arizona, Arizona State, Colorado, Utah, Oregon, Washing-

ton, Stanford and California — forfeited their right to be on the board when they announced their intentions to join other conferences next year.

Oregon State and Washington State leaders have said they would like to rebuild the Pac-12, take control of its assets — and liabilities — along with its intellectual property. The schools fear the departing members could stand in the way of keeping the Pac-12 alive, possibly even voting to dissolve the conference.