

Teen, father charged in school shooting

Associated Press

WINDER, Ga. — The 14-year-old suspect in a shooting that killed four people at a Georgia high school and his father will stay in custody after back-to-back court hearings Friday morning where their lawyers declined to seek bail.

At Colt Gray's hearing, the teen was advised of his rights along with the charges and penalties he faced for the shooting at the school where he was a student.

After the hearing, he was escorted out in shackles at the wrists and ankles. The judge also set another hearing for Dec. 4.

Shortly afterward, his father, Colin Gray, was brought into court. Colin Gray, 54, was charged Thursday in connection with the shooting for letting

his son possess a weapon. Nine people were also hurt in Wednesday's attack at Apalachee High School in Winder, outside Atlanta.

According to arrest warrants obtained by The Associated Press, Colt Gray is accused of using a "black semi-automatic AR-15 style rifle" to kill two students and two teachers at the school. Authorities have not offered any motive or explained how he obtained the gun or got it into the school.

Colin Gray has been charged with involuntary manslaughter and second-degree murder related to the shooting, Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Hosey said.

"His charges are directly connected with the actions of his son and allowing him to possess a

weapon," Hosey said.

It's the latest example of prosecutors holding parents responsible for their children's actions in school shootings. In April, Michigan parents Jennifer and James Crumbley were the first convicted in a U.S. mass school shooting. They were sentenced to at least 10 years in prison for not securing a firearm at home and acting indifferently to signs of their son's deteriorating mental health before he killed four students in 2021. The Georgia shootings have also renewed debate about safe storage laws for guns and have parents wondering how to talk to their children about school shootings and trauma.

Colt Gray was charged as an adult with four counts of murder in the deaths of Mason Scher-

merhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14, Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53.

A neighbor remembered Schermerhorn as inquisitive when he was a little boy. Aspinwall and Irimie were both math teachers, and Aspinwall also helped coach the school's football team. Irimie, who immigrated from Romania, volunteered at a local church, where she taught dance.

Colt Gray denied threatening to carry out a school shooting when authorities interviewed him last year about a menacing post on social media, according to a sheriff's report obtained Thursday.

Conflicting evidence on the post's origin left investigators unable to arrest anyone, the report said.

Ukraine presses US to allow strikes deeper in Russia

Associated Press

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Ukraine needs the ability to strike deep within Russia now, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told U.S. and allied military leaders Friday as Kyiv more fervently pressed the West to loosen weapons use restrictions and allow it to target Russian air bases and launch sites far from the border.

Zelenskyy made the case during an in-person meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. He appeared to make inroads with some of the defense leaders from the 50-plus partner nations who regularly gather to coordinate weapons aid for the war.

His request comes after a series of recent deadly Russian

airstrikes, including against a Ukrainian military training center that killed more than 50 and wounded hundreds this week. On Friday, the Kremlin fired five ballistic missiles at the city of Pavlohrad, injuring at least 50 people, regional Gov. Serhii Lysak said.

"We need to have this long-range capability, not only on the divided territory of Ukraine, but also on the Russian territory, so that Russia is motivated to seek peace," Zelenskyy said. "We need to make Russian cities and even Russian soldiers think about what they need: peace or Putin."

The question remained whether Zelenskyy could convince President Joe Biden that the U.S. should ease its restrictions as well. While Biden has

allowed Ukraine to fire U.S.-provided missiles into Russia in self-defense, the distance has been limited to largely cross-border operations deemed a direct threat, out of concerns about further escalating the conflict. At the meeting Friday, multiple countries seemed to be persuaded that Ukraine should get the green light, which could add pressure on the Biden administration.

"Many countries (are) in favor," said Lithuania's defense minister, Laurynas Kasciunas. "Many, many. But the question is not the number of countries, but countries who give (those) missiles."

By announcing Lithuania's support, Kasciunas said, "I hope it will help to convince other countries."

Ukraine is now in the midst of its first offensive operations of the war while facing a significant threat from Russian forces near a key hub in the Donbas, and Kyiv is seeing that its time is running short to shore up ongoing military support before the U.S. presidential election in November.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine's surprise assault inside Russia's Kursk territory has led to the capture of about 800 miles of Russian territory and killed or injured about 6,000 Russian soldiers. But it has not drawn away President Vladimir Putin's focus from taking the Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk, which provides critical rail and supply links for the Ukrainian army. Losing Pokrovsk could put additional Ukrainian cities at risk.

Israeli forces appear to have withdrawn from Jenin camp

Associated Press

JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank — Israeli forces appeared to have withdrawn from three refugee camps in the occupied West Bank by Friday morning, after a more than weeklong military operation that left dozens dead and a trail of destruction.

Overnight, Israeli armored personnel carriers were seen leaving the Jenin refugee camp from a checkpoint set up on one of the main roads. An Associated Press reporter inside the camp saw no evidence of any remaining troops inside as dawn broke Friday.

After days largely trapped in their homes, residents of the Jenin camp emerged to take stock of the damage from what officials said was the most destructive assault in years. Twisted rebar protruded from the concrete of col-

lapsed buildings. Walls still standing were pockmarked by bullets and shrapnel.

During the operation, Israeli military officials said they were targeting militants in Jenin, Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camps in an attempt to curb recent attacks against Israeli civilians. They say such attacks have become more sophisticated and deadly since Israel launched its campaign in Gaza in response to Hamas' attack on Israel nearly 11 months ago.

Troops were pulled out of the Tulkarem camp by Friday morning and had left Al-Faraa earlier, but in a statement the Israeli military suggested that the operation wasn't yet over.

"Israeli security forces are continuing to act in order to achieve the objectives of the counterterrorism operation," the military said in a statement.

Hundreds of Israeli troops have been involved for more than a week in what has been their deadliest operation in the occupied West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began, employing what the United Nations called "lethal war-like tactics."

The main focus has been the Jenin refugee camp, a densely built district home to around 20,000 Palestinians where armed groups — including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, but also other factions advocating "resistance" to Israel's occupation — have a powerful presence.

Fighting in Jenin accounts for 21 of 39 Palestinians who local health officials say have been killed during the Israeli push in the West Bank. The military says most have been militants.

The fighting has had a devastating effect on Palestinian civilians living in Jenin.

Shooter's sanity is at issue as trial begins

Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — A man who gunned down 10 people in a supermarket mass shooting was not insane when he unleashed terror in a Colorado college town but a calculated killer who knew what he did was wrong, a prosecutor told jurors Thursday in an opening statement swiftly disputed by the defense attorney.

Years of legal wrangling over the mental state of Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa during the March 2021 shooting will likely continue through his three-week trial.

Alissa's attorney argued that his client, who has been diagnosed with treatment-resistant schizophrenia, suffered from hallucinations — hearing screaming voices, seeing people who weren't there and believing he was being followed — in the run-up to the shooting at the King Soopers grocery store in Boulder.

Alissa has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. No one, including Alissa's lawyers, disputes he was the shooter.

"We're not running from that. But if you're going to point the finger at this guy, you deserve to hear the truth about him. This man, Ahmad Alissa, is an ill individual," said his attorney, Samuel Dunn, in his opening statement.

A prosecutor argued Alissa was able to determine right from wrong and therefore sane.

"The victims were random, but the murders were absolutely deliberate and intentional," Boulder County District Attorney Michael Dougherty told jurors.

NY seeking to charge Weinstein with more sex crimes as Britain drops case

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Spared from prosecution in Britain on Thursday, Harvey Weinstein now faces the prospect of a new indictment in New York, where prosecutors retrying the disgraced movie mogul's rape case are taking steps to potentially charge him with up to three additional sex assaults.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service, which authorized two charges of indecent assault against Weinstein in 2022, announced Thursday that it decided to discontinue the proceedings because there was "no longer a realistic prospect of conviction."

tion."

"We have explained our decision to all parties," the CPS said in a statement. "We would always encourage any potential victims of sexual assault to come forward and report to police, and we will prosecute wherever our legal test is met."

At the same time, the Manhattan district attorney's office in New York has begun presenting evidence to a grand jury of up to three previously uncharged allegations against Weinstein — two sexual assaults in the mid-2000s and another sexual assault in 2016.

The New York grand jury's

term expires Friday, and a vote on an indictment could happen by the end of the week, though it's possible the process could extend beyond that. Prosecutors said they would seek to combine any new charges with ones previously brought against Weinstein so that they could be tried together.

In April, New York's top court overturned Weinstein's rape and sexual assault convictions and ordered a new trial. The state's Court of Appeals found that the judge in the 2020 trial unfairly allowed testimony from women whose claims against Weinstein weren't part of the case.

Trump: Tariffs will solve child care costs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Former President Donald Trump suggested to business leaders Thursday that his plans to increase tariffs on foreign imports would solve seemingly unrelated challenges such as the rising cost of child care in the U.S.

The Republican presidential nominee promised to lead what he called a “national economic renaissance” by increasing tariffs, slashing regulations to boost energy production and drastically cutting government spending as well as corporate taxes for companies that produce in the U.S.

Trump was asked at his appearance before the Economic Club of New York about his plans to drive down child care costs to help more women join the workforce.

“Child care is child care; it’s

something you have to have in this country. You have to have it,” he said. He said his plans to tax imports from foreign nations at higher levels would “take care” of such problems.

“We’re going to be taking in trillions of dollars, and as much as child care is talked about as being expensive, it’s — relatively speaking — not very expensive, compared to the kind of numbers we’ll be taking in,” he said.

Trump has embraced tariffs as he appeals to working-class voters who oppose free-trade deals and the outsourcing of factories and jobs. But in his speech Thursday and his economic plans as a whole, Trump has made a broader — to some, implausible — promise on tariffs: that they can raise trillions of dollars to fund his agenda without those costs being passed along to consumers in the form

of higher prices.

His campaign attacks Democratic nominee Kamala Harris’ proposals to increase corporate tax rates by saying they would ultimately be born by workers in the form of fewer jobs and lower incomes. Yet taxes on foreign imports would have a similar effect with businesses and consumers having to absorb those costs in the form of higher prices.

The U.S. had \$3.8 trillion worth of imports last year, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Trump in the past has talked about universal tariffs of at least 10%, if not higher, though he has not spelled out details about how these taxes would be implemented.

Kimberly Clausing, an economist at the University of California, Los Angeles, has repeatedly warned in economic analyses

about the likely damage to people’s finances from Trump’s tariffs. She noted that Trump wants tariffs to pay for everything, even though they can’t.

“I believe Trump has already spent this revenue, to pay for his tax cuts (which it doesn’t), or to perhaps end the income tax (which it cannot),” she said in an email. “It is unclear how there would be any revenues left over to fund child care.”

Child care is unaffordable for many Americans and financially precarious for many day care operators and their employees. Democrats in Congress have long argued the child care industry is in crisis and requires a drastic increase in federal aid — and some Republicans have joined them. Trump pointed to his tariff ideas as well as efforts he announced to reduce what he described as “waste and fraud.”

Campaign says Harris raised \$361M in August

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris raised more than double what former President Donald Trump took in from donors in August, her campaign announced Friday: It raised \$361 million from nearly 3 million donors in her first full month as a candidate.

Trump’s team announced Wednesday he brought in \$130 million over the same period. Harris’ team says it ended the month with \$404 million on hand for the final sprint to Election Day, \$109 million more than Trump’s campaign says it had at the end of August.

The massive Harris war chest is being used to fund a \$370 million paid media effort for the final two months of the campaign, and to pay for its more than 2,000 field staff spread through more than 310 offices in battleground states.

Harris’ fundraising builds on

the \$310 million she raised in July, the overwhelming majority of which came in after she took over President Joe Biden’s campaign after he dropped out that month. The ticket swap has helped the Democratic party reverse the fundraising edge Trump had developed in the prior months, when voter doubts about Biden’s fitness for another term dampened donor — and voter — enthusiasm.

“In just a short time, Vice President Harris’ candidacy has galvanized a history-making, broad and diverse coalition — with the type of enthusiasm, energy and grit that wins close elections,” Harris campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez said in a statement. “As we enter the final stretch of this election, we’re making sure every hard-earned dollar goes to winning over the voters who will decide this election.”

Vance laments that school shootings are ‘fact of life’

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance said Thursday that he lamented that school shootings are a “fact of life” and argued the U.S. needs to harden security to prevent more carnage like the shooting this week that left four dead in Georgia.

“If these psychos are going to go after our kids we’ve got to be prepared for it,” Vance said at a rally in Phoenix. “We don’t have to like the reality that we live in, but it is the reality we live in. We’ve got to deal with it.”

The Ohio senator was asked by a journalist what can be done to stop school shootings. He said further restricting access to guns, as many Democrats advocate, won’t end them, noting they happen in states with both lax and strict gun laws. He touted efforts in Congress to give schools more money for security.

“I don’t like that this is a fact of life,” Vance said. “But if you are a psycho and you want to make headlines, you realize that our schools are soft targets. And we have got to bolster security at our schools. We’ve got to bolster security so if a psycho wants to walk through the front door and kill a bunch of children they’re not able.”

Vance said he doesn’t like the idea of his own kids going to a school with hardened security, “but that’s increasingly the reality that we live in.”

He called the shooting in Georgia an “awful tragedy,” and said the families in Winder, Ga., need prayers and sympathy.

Earlier this year, Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, toured the Florida classroom building where the 2018 Parkland high school massacre happened.

Hunter Biden enters surprise guilty plea

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — President Joe Biden's son, Hunter, pleaded guilty Thursday to federal tax charges, a surprise move meant to spare his family another painful and embarrassing criminal trial after his gun case conviction just months ago.

Hunter Biden's decision to plead guilty to misdemeanor and felony charges without the benefits of a deal with prosecutors caps a long-running saga over his legal woes that have cast a shadow over his father's political career. It came hours after jury selection was supposed to begin in the case accusing him of

failing to pay at least \$1.4 million in taxes.

The president's son was already facing potential prison time after his June conviction on felony gun charges in a trial that aired unflattering and salacious details about his struggles with a crack cocaine addiction. The tax trial was expected to showcase more potentially lurid evidence as well as details about Hunter Biden's foreign business dealings, which Republicans have seized on to try to paint the Biden family as corrupt.

"I will not subject my family to more pain, more invasions of privacy and needless embar-

assment," Hunter Biden said in an emailed statement after he entered his plea. "For all I have put them through over the years, I can spare them this, and so I have decided to plead guilty."

Although President Joe Biden's decision to drop out of the 2024 presidential election muted the potential political implications of the tax case, the trial was expected to carry a heavy emotional toll for the president in the final months of his five-decade political career.

"Hunter put his family first today, and it was a brave and loving thing for him to do," defense attorney Abbe Lowell told re-

porters outside the federal courthouse in Los Angeles.

Hunter Biden, 54, quickly responded "guilty" as the judge read out each of the nine counts. He showed no emotion as he walked out the courthouse holding his wife's hand. He ignored questions shouted at him by reporters before climbing into an SUV and driving off.

The charges carry up to 17 years behind bars, but federal sentencing guidelines are likely to call for a much shorter sentence. He faces up to \$1.35 million in fines. Sentencing is set for Dec. 16 in front of U.S. District Judge Mark Scarsi.

Trump in court as lawyers fight to overturn verdict

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Veering from the campaign trail to court, Donald Trump watched Friday as one of his lawyers fought to overturn a verdict finding the former president liable for sexual abuse and slander.

The Republican nominee and accuser E. Jean Carroll, a writer, sat at tables about 15 feet apart, in a federal appeals court. He didn't acknowledge or look at her as he passed right in front of her on the way in and out, but he shook his head at points, such

as when Carroll's attorney said he sexually attacked her.

Trump attorney D. John Sauer told 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judges that the civil trial in Carroll's lawsuit was muddled by improper evidence.

"This case is a textbook example of implausible allegations being propped up by highly inflammatory, inadmissible" evidence, Sauer said, noting that the jury was allowed to consider such items as the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape in which

Trump boasted years ago about grabbing women's genitals.

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, said the evidence in question was proper, and that there was plenty of proof in the nearly two-week-long trial of Carroll's claim that Trump attacked her in a luxury department store dressing room decades ago.

"E. Jean Carroll brought this case because Donald Trump sexually assaulted her in 1996, in a dressing room at Bergdorf Goodman, and then defamed her in 2022 by claiming that she

was crazy and made the whole thing up," Kaplan said.

Trump left court in a motorcade without commenting. Carroll declined to comment.

A jury found that Trump sexually abused Carroll. He denies it. That jury awarded Carroll \$5 million.

Trump's lawyers say the jury's verdict should be tossed because evidence was allowed at trial that should have been excluded and other evidence was excluded that should have been permitted.

Russians mock US allegations of election meddling

Associated Press

Russian commentators on Thursday mocked allegations that Moscow was meddling again in the U.S. presidential election, and President Vladimir Putin appeared to bolster the teasing tone by wryly claiming he supported Vice President Kamala Harris.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Justice Department said the Russian state-owned broadcaster RT is carrying out a covert campaign to influence the American public ahead of the election.

Two state media employees were charged, and 10 people and two entities were sanctioned, with Kremlin-run websites seized.

The Justice Department did not identify which candidate the propaganda campaign was meant to boost. But internal strategy notes from participants in the effort released by the Justice Department make clear that former President Donald Trump was the intended beneficiary, even though the candidates' names were blacked out.

The Kremlin has dismissed previous allegations of interference in U.S. elections, from 2016 and onward, as nonsense. A Foreign Ministry spokesperson vowed to retaliate against U.S. media in Russia.

Margarita Simonyan, head of the state-run broadcaster RT who was sanctioned by the U.S. in the latest allegations, shared a social media post Thursday in which the outlet hit back by saying, "They called from 2016 and want all their tired clichés back."

The Treasury Department described Simonyan as a "central figure in Russian government malign influence efforts."

Putin, who was in the Russian Far East port of Vladivostok for an economic forum, did not address the latest allegations, but he did comment on the election.

"We had the current president, Mr. Biden, as our favorite but he was taken out of the race. He recommended all his supporters back Mrs. Harris, so we will too," Putin said with a wry smile and an arched eyebrow.

Chiefs hold off Ravens 27-20 in opener

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Patrick Mahomes thought for a moment that the Chiefs were headed to overtime. So did Ravens counterpart Lamar Jackson, who had found Isaiah Likely in the back of the end zone with no time left for a touchdown that appeared to tie the game.

In the end, the NFL's season opener Thursday night was decided by referee Shawn Hochuli undertaking a video review.

With a capacity crowd that included pop superstar Taylor Swift waiting in anticipation, Hochuli needed just seconds looking at that final play before making his announcement: Likely landed with his toe on the endline, putting the Baltimore tight end out of bounds, and giving the Chiefs a 27-20 victory as they began pursuit of a record third consecutive Super Bowl title.

"Definitely nerve-wracking because it looked good from my angle on the sideline," Mahomes said, "but then the first view you could see his cleat. ... You have to wear white cleats

next time. That's my advice for him."

Mahomes threw for 291 yards and with a touchdown pass to Xavier Worthy, who also scored a rushing TD in his NFL debut, as the Chiefs not only won the rematch of last season's AFC title game but beat the Ravens for the fifth time in six meetings.

That lopsided ledger has been especially frustrating for Jackson, who has called Kansas City the Ravens' "kryptonite." He was sublime Thursday night, throwing for 273 yards and a touchdown and adding 122 yards on the ground, but that review of the final play left him to rue another missed opportunity to finally upstage Mahomes and Co.

"I thought it was a touchdown," Jackson said. "Still think it was a touchdown."

The Ravens were trailing 27-17 in the fourth quarter before kicking a field goal, then got the ball back at their own 13 with 1:50 left and no timeouts. Jackson completed a couple of throws to Likely, who had 111 yards receiving and a score, and scrambled for a crucial first

down. Two plays later, Jackson found Rashod Bateman down the sideline for 38 yards to move the Ravens to the Kansas City 10 with 19 seconds remaining.

Jackson's first pass was a throwaway, but his second missed wide-open Zay Flowers in the back of the end zone. Then came the final throw, after Jackson had scrambled for what seemed like an eternity, and Likely looked like he had forced overtime.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh even signaled for his team to try a winning 2-point conversion, though it never got the chance.

"I thought our guys (overcame) setbacks at times, and fought like crazy to overcome. It looked like we had an opportunity there to tie the game up and try to win," Harbaugh said. "Didn't happen at the end, but our guys fought."

The wild ending came after the start was delayed about 20 minutes by a storm that brought heavy rain and lightning.

The Ravens proceeded to open with an 11-play, 70-yard

drive that ended with Derrick Henry, who had tormented the Chiefs in six previous meetings while he was with Tennessee, plunging into the end zone from 5 yards out for the early lead.

But the high-octane Chiefs, trying to avoid back-to-back season-opening losses, needed just two minutes to answer. Mahomes twice connected with Rashee Rice, who has so far avoided any NFL punishment for his role in an alleged street-racing crash in Dallas, before Worthy showed why the Chiefs made him their first-round pick with his 21-yard touchdown run.

After those two drives, though, the first half was mostly marked by Week 1 blunders.

Jackson was strip-sacked by Chris Jones deep in his own territory, leading to a Kansas City field goal. Flowers was stopped short of the first-down marker on fourth-and-3 near midfield on the Ravens' next series, leading to another field goal. And even Justin Tucker, one of the league's most accurate kickers, pulled a 53-yard field-goal attempt wide left.

Team hosting the NFL game in Brazil opposes green

Associated Press

SAO PAULO — Brazilian soccer club Corinthians, the team turning over its stadium for the first NFL game to be played in South America, dislikes anything green so much that its executives tried to paint the field black about a decade ago.

Players can be fined if they are spotted wearing clothes or shoes of that color, and sponsors

need to adapt if they want to be associated with a club that has more than 35 million fans.

It's all done in an effort to steer Corinthians fans away from any reference to local rival Palmeiras, the team they have been feuding with for more than a century.

On Friday, however, Neo-Quimica Arena will be awash in green when the Green Bay

Packers and the Philadelphia Eagles play the second game of the NFL season in Sao Paulo.

The Eagles are the designated host team. In an attempt to sway some Brazilian fans to their side, they will wear black helmets, white jerseys and black pants — Corinthians colors.

A Corinthians official told The Associated Press on Sun-

day that the move came after a request by its president, who claimed green was only allowed for visiting teams. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The Packers will play in their traditional white, yellow and green jersey — similar to the colors of Brazil's national flag.

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Judge raises NCAA settlement issues

Associated Press

A federal judge on Thursday probed the terms of a proposed \$2.78 billion settlement of anti-trust lawsuits against the NCAA and major conferences and revealed a potential snag in the deal, questioning whether payments to college athletes from booster-funded organizations should be restricted.

"I'm quite concerned about those," U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken said during a preliminary approval hearing. The hearing was the first step of a lengthy court process that could lead to college athletes getting a cut of the billions in television revenue that flows to their schools.

Attorneys representing plaintiffs, the NCAA and parties challenging the settlement appeared via video conference in front of Wilken, who was presiding from the court in Oakland, Calif.

The NCAA and the power conferences (Big Ten, Big 12, Atlantic Coast Conference, Southeastern Conference and Pac-12)

agreed in May to settle House v. NCAA and two similar case cases that challenged compensation rules for college athletes.

The deal calls for the NCAA to foot the bill for nearly \$3 billion in damages paid to former and current college athletes who were denied the right to earn money off their name, image and likeness, dating to 2016.

As part of the settlement, the conferences agreed to a revenue-sharing plan that would allow each school to direct about \$21 million annually to athletes for use of their names, images and likenesses, starting as soon as next season — if the settlement receives final approval.

Wilken did not rule on the request to grant preliminary approval of the deal. She told the NCAA and plaintiffs to "go back to the drawing board" to address issues she raised and report back to her in three weeks with solutions. An exact date for another hearing and for her to make a ruling was not set.

The settlement also takes aim

at reining in so-called NIL collectives that have sprung up around major college sports, paying millions to athletes, since the NCAA lifted its ban on athletes being paid for sponsorship and endorsement deals in 2021.

The settlement allows for enforcement of current NCAA rules banning third-party, pay-for-play to athletes and payments being used as recruiting inducements. Under the terms of the deal, outside arbitrators would determine if rules were violated instead of the NCAA.

"Our position is that pay-for-play is prohibited," NCAA attorney Rakesh Kilaru said.

"But in this House settlement, if it is approved, you will be explicitly paying for play or allowing schools to pay for play. So that no pay-for-play thing is kind of not going to be there anymore, is it?" Wilken said.

Kilaru responded: "There's still going to be a prohibition on pay-for-play, and there's discretion for schools to make payments as they see fit under the

new regime."

"And that won't be pay-for-play?" Wilken said, incredulously.

NCAA rules do define who is a booster and try to distinguish real business deals from NIL payments that are just a stand-in for a salary. Wilken questioned whether it was possible to draw those distinctions while not denying athletes the ability to cash in on their fame.

"Is having your team win a valid business purpose?" she asked.

Plaintiffs' attorney Jeffrey Kessler said they did not expect third-party payments from NIL collectives to decrease because of the settlement.

"If anything, we think they are going to increase," he said.

Kilaru insisted the ability to regulate boosters and collectives was essential to the settlement.

"Based on your comments today, we have to talk about whether we have a deal," he told Wilken.

Rodgers, Jets aim to get past 4th snap against 49ers

Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Robert Saleh chuckled as a reporter finished asking a question that was no laughing matter a year ago.

Did the New York Jets coach think he — and perhaps the rest of the franchise — might exhale a bit when Aaron Rodgers and the offense reach the fifth snap of their season opener against the San Francisco 49ers on Monday night?

"Probably," Saleh said Thursday while looking down and smiling. "Nah, we're fine."

Saleh then went to use a popular expression when he apparently realized he didn't want to jinx anything.

"I'm not even ...," Saleh said with a grin. "If lightning ... lightning ... never mind."

The Jets certainly hope lightning never strikes twice. Or, in this case, that the 40-year-old Rodgers plays a whole lot longer than he did last year in his debut with New

York when he tore his left Achilles tendon on the fourth snap of the season opener.

"Part of the turning the page was last year coming back to practice," Rodgers said. "And then the other part was, you know, OTAs and training camp and all that. So I feel ready."

He'll take the field in San Francisco on Monday night — against the team he grew up rooting for in northern California, and two days removed from the one-year anniversary of one of his darkest moments.

Rodgers acknowledged he might have "a little smirk" after he takes his fourth snap against the 49ers.

"I'm sure they'll catch it," he said of the "Monday Night Football" cameras. "I'm in a good mind space. Really had a year to remember in a lot of ways — some really difficult things with some great things as well."

"There's always a perspective moment during the anthem to collect your thoughts and kind of send gratitude out to the uni-

verse for the opportunity to even be standing on the field in pads. So I'll be really excited about that."

Rodgers has looked good all summer, delivering passes with the zip of his youth and appearing relatively spry — belying his age while showing no signs of the injury.

"He's not a 40-year-old quarterback," Saleh said. "I think he's going to be just fine."

And in many ways, the Jets' promising season largely depends on him being much better than fine.

"I think you always have something to prove," Rodgers said. "Just kind of changes who you're proving that to, I think, the older you get."

For Rodgers, the four-time NFL MVP with one Super Bowl ring from his days in Green Bay, there's only one person to whom he wants to prove himself.

"Just myself at this point," he said. "I have a lot of pride in my performance. So, when I take the field, I expect greatness."

Reds beat Astros 1-0 for a series sweep

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Ty France homered in the seventh inning as part of a series sweep in which he went 9 for 11, and the Cincinnati Reds beat Houston 1-0 Thursday for its ninth straight win over the Astros.

Rhett Lowder, the seventh overall pick in the 2023 amateur draft, allowed four hits over 6⅓ innings in his second big league start.

“We knew they were an aggressive team. I had to come out with my best stuff and get them out as fast as possible,” said Lowder, who has allowed just one run in his first 10⅓ innings. “I feel really good with where my game’s at right now.”

The 22-year-old right-hander walked four and struck out three.

Tony Santillan (2-2) induced an inning-ending double play in the seventh and worked around a walk in a hitless eighth. Alexis Díaz pitched a perfect ninth for his 25th save in 29 chances, finishing a four-hitter.

Twins 4, Rays 3: Edouard Julien hit a three-run homer, and visiting Minnesota beat Tampa Bay in a game with a 13-minute interruption largely caused by a video review.

With Tampa Bay trailing 4-2 in the seventh inning and Jonny DeLuca on third, Yandy Díaz sliced a drive toward the right-field corner, Matt Wallner gloved the ball on two hops as DeLuca scored, and Wallner’s momentum carried him over the low wall and into a camera well.

Umpires held a crew chief review that took about nine minutes and determined Díaz should be placed on second base. Twins manager Rocco Baldelli then brought in reliever Griffin Jax to replace Pablo López (14-8). Jax retired Brandon Lowe on a groundout.

Minnesota (76-64) moved a half-game ahead of idle Kansas City (76-65) for the AL’s second wild card.

Mariners 6, Athletics 4: Cal Raleigh hit a two-run homer in the first inning and added a sacrifice fly in the fifth, Julio Rodríguez also connected, and Seattle beat Oakland in their final scheduled visit to the Coliseum.

Luke Raley added a two-run shot in the ninth for key insurance as the Mariners closed within 4½ games of the Houston Astros in the American League West standings.

Bryan Woo (7-2) struck out six and didn’t walk a batter over five innings to win in his native Bay Area a 10-minute drive from where he grew up in Alameda, Calif.

The right-hander has victories in his past two decisions, against the A’s and San Francisco. He allowed two runs on eight hits and has five or more strikeouts in six of his past seven outings.

Giants 3, Diamondbacks 3: Reigning NL Cy Young Award winner Blake Snell was removed after a 42-pitch first inning, and host San Francisco rallied to beat Arizona behind a walk-off double in the ninth from Patrick Bailey, who drove in all three Giants’ runs.

Arizona sent eight batters to the plate in the first inning, taking advantage of defensive sloppiness. Shortstop Tyler Fitzgerald threw wide of second for a run-scoring error on Josh Bell’s grounder and Corbin Carroll scored from third on a passed ball as Jake McCarthy reached on the dropped third strike.

Snell allowed two hits and walked two, stranding a pair of runners when Kevin Newman grounded out. He entered with a 1.30 ERA over his past 10 games. Only one of the runs off him were earned.

Pirates 9, Nationals 4: Nick Gonzales highlighted a five-run second inning with a two-run single and finished with three RBIs as host Pittsburgh beat Washington, one night after beating no-hit.

Oneil Cruz had a sharply hit a

two-out double to right in the opening inning for the Pirates’ first hit after managing just three baserunners — two walks and an error — against Chicago a night earlier when the Cubs’ Shota Imanaga, Nate Pearson and Porter Hodge combined on a no-hitter.

Gonzales softly grounded to third, ending that threat with the Pirates trailing 3-0. But Gonzales bounced back and brought in two runs with a single to right in the second inning after Jared Triolo, Isiah Kiner-Falefa and Bryan Reynolds had run-scoring hits.

Yasmani Grandal extended Pittsburgh’s lead to 6-3 in the third with a single to right off Jake Irvin (9-12), who gave up six runs, seven hits and four walks in five innings.

Phillies 6, Marlins 2: Bryson Stott homered into the right-field upper deck, Kody Clemens drove in two runs and NL East-leading Philadelphia beat host Miami to extend their winning streak to five.

In the first game of a four-game series, the Phillies (84-56) opened an eight-game NL East lead with 22 games left.

Ranger Suárez (12-6) scattered three hits over five scoreless innings, leaving after 82 pitches. The left-hander walked two and struck out four.

Bryce Harper went 0 for 3 with a walk, a day after he was hit on the left elbow by a pitch at Toronto and left in the third inning.

Matt Strahm pitched a perfect ninth for his third save.

Rockies 3, Braves 1: Atlanta dropped into a tie for the final NL wild card berth, losing to visiting Colorado as Michael Toglia and Ezequiel Tovar hit solo home runs for the Rockies.

Atlanta and New York are both 76-64 with 22 games left, eight games back of NL East-leading Philadelphia.

Austin Gomber (5-10) allowed one run and five hits in

eight innings, matching his season high. He struck out six and walked none.

Tyler Kinley pitched a perfect ninth for his ninth save in 10 chances as Colorado avoided a three-game sweep and ended an eight-game losing streak at Truist Park.

Rangers 3, Angels 1: Cody Bradford won for the first time making his fifth consecutive quality start and Adolis García provided all the runs that Bradford needed with a three-run home run in the first inning as host Texas beat Los Angeles.

Bradford (5-2) allowed one run and two hits, singles by Zach Neto, in six innings. He walked two, matching his high this season, and struck out four.

In his previous four outings, the 26-year-old left-hander was 0-2 despite an ERA of 2.77 being provided seven runs of support.

The Rangers (68-73) are 8-2 in their past 10 games, their best 10-game stretch this season. The defending World Series champions are within five games of .500 for the first time since Aug. 5.

Kirby Yates, the last of three Texas relievers, pitched a perfect ninth inning for his 27th save in 28 chances.

Tigers 4, Padres 3: Parker Meadows hit a grand slam on a full count with two outs in the ninth inning to give visiting Detroit a victory over San Diego.

Meadows’ opposite-field homer went into the second row in left field off a 100.7 mph four-seam fastball from Padres closer Robert Suarez (8-3). It was the second-fastest pitch a Tigers player has homered off of in the pitch-tracking era that started in 2008, behind only Jeimer Candelario’s homer off of 102.1 mph pitch on Sept. 7, 2018.

Tigers reliever Ricky Vinasco (1-0) won his first game of the season with a scoreless eighth. Tyler Holton earned his seventh save with a scoreless ninth.

Pegula reaches first Grand Slam final

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jessica Pegula could do no right at the outset of her first Grand Slam semifinal. Her opponent at the U.S. Open on Thursday night, Karolina Muchova, could do no wrong.

"I came out flat, but she was playing unbelievable. She made me look like a beginner," Pegula said. "I was about to burst into tears, because it was embarrassing. She was destroying me."

Pegula managed to shrug off that sluggish start and come back from a set and a break down to defeat Muchova 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 for a berth in the final at Flushing Meadows. The No. 6-seeded Pegula, a 30-year-old from New York, has won 15 of her past 16 matches and will meet No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka for the title on Saturday.

Sabalenka, last year's runner-up to Coco Gauff at the U.S. Open, returned to the championship match by holding off No. 13 Emma Navarro of the United States 6-3, 7-6 (2).

This final will be a rematch of the one last month at the hard-court Cincinnati Open, which Sabalenka won — the only

blemish on Pegula's post-Olympics record.

"Hopefully," Pegula said, "I can get some revenge out here."

Pegula's parents own the NFL's Buffalo Bills and NHL's Buffalo Sabres; her father was in the Arthur Ashe Stadium stands Thursday, as were her sister, brother and husband.

Things did not look promising for Pegula early on. Not at all.

Muchova, the 2023 French Open runner-up but unseeded after missing about 10 months because of wrist surgery, employed every ounce of her versatility and creativity, the traits that make her so hard to deal with on any surface. The slices. The touch at the net. The serve-and-volleying. Ten of the match's first 12 winners came off her racket. The first set lasted 28 minutes, and Muchova won 30 of its 44 points.

After grabbing eight of the first nine games, Muchova was a single point from leading 3-0 in the second set. But she couldn't convert a break chance there, flubbing a forehand volley off a slice from Pegula, and everything changed.

Quickly, the 52nd-ranked Muchova went from not being

able to miss a shot to not being able to make one. And Pegula turned it on, heeding her two coaches' advice to mix up her serves and her spins and to go after Muchova's backhand.

"She was everywhere," Muchova said. "She started to play way better."

Most of all, Pegula demonstrated the confident brand of tennis she used to eliminate No. 1 Iga Swiatek, a five-time major champion, in straight sets on Wednesday. Pegula had been 0-6 in major quarterfinals before that breakthrough.

It took Pegula a while to play that well Thursday, but once she got going, whoa, did she ever. She collected nine of 11 games, a span that allowed her to not merely flip the second set but race to a 3-0 edge in the third.

"I was able to find a way, find some adrenaline, find my legs. And then at the end of the second set, into the third set, I started to play like how I wanted to play. It took a while," Pegula said. "I don't know how I turned that around."

Muchova, a 28-year-old from the Czech Republic, hadn't ceded a set in the tournament until then. But she began to fade. Af-

ter going 7 for 7 on points at the net in the first set, she went 15 for 29 the rest of the way. After only seven unforced errors in the first set, she had 33 across the second and third.

And all the while, a crowd that was flat at the beginning — save for the occasional cry of "Come on, Jess!" — was roaring.

When things suddenly got quite tight in the second set of the first semifinal, and spectators suddenly got quite loud while pulling for Navarro, Sabalenka found herself flashing back to 2023, when it felt like everyone was backing Gauff.

"Last year, it was a very tough experience. Very tough lesson. Today in the match, I was, like, 'No, no, no, Aryna. It's not going to happen again. You have to control your emotions. You have to focus on yourself,'" said Sabalenka, a 26-year-old from Belarus who was the champion at the last two Australian Opens.

Using her usual brand of high-risk, high-reward tennis, Sabalenka produced 34 winners and 34 unforced errors — punctuating many groundstrokes with a yell — and, in a fitting bit of symmetry, Navarro had 13 winners and 13 unforced errors.

Spray that caused Sinner to fail test has a warning

Associated Press

ROME — The word "DOPING" is printed in capital letters inside a red circle with a slash through it on the box containing the over-the-counter spray sold in Italy that caused No. 1-ranked tennis player Jannik Sinner to fail two drug tests in March.

Sinner was cleared last month and will play Jack Draper in the U.S. Open semifinals Friday.

Trofodermin, which contains the banned anabolic steroid Clostebol, is available without a prescription in Sinner's home country — and that's where the

23-year-old's physical trainer bought the medication that led to a trace amount of Clostebol showing up in his test results.

A small can of Trofodermin was purchased for \$16 at a Rome pharmacy this week by an Associated Press reporter.

The product is meant for treating cuts and scrapes and contains an underlined warning in Italian on the medication guide that comes inside the box: "For those taking part in sports: use of the drug without therapeutic needs constitutes doping and can result in positive anti-doping tests."

Giovanni Fontana, an Italian lawyer who represents athletes facing doping charges, has worked on about 100 such cases over 30 years. Ten of his cases resulted from positive tests for Clostebol that were traced to Trofodermin; nine of those resulted in bans, Fontana said in an interview Thursday.

"When an athlete tests positive for Clostebol, the first thing I ask them is if they used Trofodermin," Fontana said. "And if they haven't, I tell them to go check if a family member or partner has, because it's transmitted so easily."

Sinner was not suspended for his positive tests after it was determined the Clostebol entered his system unintentionally through a massage from his physiotherapist, Giacomo Naldi. Sinner said his fitness trainer, Umberto Ferrara, purchased Trofodermin in Italy and gave it to Naldi for a cut on his finger. Naldi then treated Sinner while not wearing gloves.

Sinner said before the U.S. Open that he fired Ferrara and Naldi. "In my mind, I know that I haven't done anything wrong," Sinner said.