

Hurricane Helene lashes the South

Associated Press

CRAWFORDVILLE, Fla. — Emergency crews rushed Friday to rescue people trapped in flooded homes after Helene roared ashore as a powerful Category 4 hurricane in Florida, generating a massive storm surge and knocking out power to millions of customers in several states. At least six people were reported dead.

The storm made landfall late Thursday in a sparsely populated region with maximum sustained winds of 140 mph in the rural Big Bend area, home to fishing villages and vacation hideaways where Florida's Panhandle and peninsula meet. But the damage extended hundreds of miles to the north, with flooding as far away as North Carolina, where a lake used in scenes from the movie "Dirty Dancing" overtopped a dam. Multiple hospitals in southern Georgia were without power.

"Thank God we're both alive to tell about it," Rhonda Bell said after a towering oak tree outside her home in Valdosta, Ga., smashed through the roof.

Video on social media sites showed sheets of rain coming down and siding coming off buildings in Perry, Fla., near where the storm arrived. One local news station showed a home that was overturned, and many communities established curfews.

"It's really heartbreaking," said Stephen Tucker, after the hurricane peeled off the brand-new roof at her church in Perry, Fla. It had to be replaced after last year's Hurricane Idalia, and the congregation was just weeks away from moving back into the newly renovated sanctuary.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said the damage from Helene in the area appears to be greater than the combined damage of

Idalia and Debby last August. "It's demoralizing," he said.

President Joe Biden said he was praying for survivors as the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency headed to the area. The agency has deployed more than 1,500 workers, and they helped with 400 rescues by late morning.

County officials immediately launched boats to reach stranded people, warning that the water could contain live wires, sewage, sharp objects and other debris.

"If you are trapped and need help please call for rescuers — DO NOT TRY TO TREAD FLOODWATERS YOURSELF," the sheriff's office in Citrus County, Fla., warned in a Facebook post, while raising concerns that the tide could bring another surge of up to 10 feet.

Rescuers in Tampa also used boats to reach stranded resi-

dents. "Flooding was what we had warned everyone about," Mayor Jane Castor said.

More than 4 million homes and businesses were without power Friday morning in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility reports.

One person was killed in Florida when a sign fell on their car, and two people were reported killed in a possible tornado in south Georgia as the storm approached. Trees that toppled onto homes were blamed for deaths in Charlotte, N.C., and Anderson County, S.C.

The hurricane came ashore near the mouth of the Aucilla River on Florida's Gulf Coast. That location was only about 20 miles northwest of where Hurricane Idalia hit last year at nearly the same ferocity and caused widespread damage.

At UN, Israel's Netanyahu vows all goals will be met

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — His leadership strained by conflicts on two fronts, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told world leaders at the United Nations on Friday that his nation will "continue degrading Hezbollah" until achieving its goals along the Lebanon border, further dimming hopes for an internationally backed ceasefire to halt the spiral into an all-out regional war. He said his government would no longer tolerate daily rocket fire from the area.

"Israel has every right to remove this threat and return our

citizens to their home safely. And that's exactly what we're doing ... we'll continue degrading Hezbollah until all our objectives are met," Netanyahu said to a gallery that — at least from the crowd noise — appeared replete with his supporters.

"Just imagine if terrorists turned El Paso and San Diego into ghost towns ... How long would the American government tolerate that?" he said, shaking his fist in emphasis. "Yet Israel has been tolerating this intolerable situation for almost a year. Well, I've come here today to say: Enough is

enough."

Netanyahu, armed with visual aids as he has been in the past, defended his nation's response to the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas on Israel that triggered an Israeli military operation that has devastated the Gaza Strip. He said he traveled to the United Nations to refute the untruths he had heard from other leaders on the same rostrum earlier in the week.

"I didn't intend to come here this year. My country is at war fighting for its life," Netanyahu said. "But after I heard the lies and slanders leveled at my country by many of the speak-

ers at this podium, I decided to come here and set the record straight."

He insisted that Israel wanted peace but said of Iran: "If you strike us, we will strike you." He once again blamed Iran for being behind many of the problems in the region.

"For too long, the world has appeased Iran," Netanyahu said. "That appeasement must end."

As he spoke, the seats in the Iran delegation sat empty. Outside, protesters against Netanyahu and Israel's policies demonstrated behind police barricades.

Trump, Zelenskyy meet amid questions about US support

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met face-to-face with Donald Trump on Friday with public tensions rising between the two over Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion and in the midst of the U.S. presidential election.

"We both want to see this end, and we both want to see a fair deal made," Trump told Fox News while standing alongside Zelenskyy after meeting for 40 minutes. "The president wants it to end, and he wants it to end as quickly as possible. He wants a fair transaction to take place."

Zelenskyy said the war shouldn't have started and added that there needs to be pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin and peace for the families of those killed.

"We need to do everything to

pressure him to stop this war. He is in our territory. That's most important to understand. He is in our territory."

The meeting came at a critical time in the Russia-Ukraine war as Election Day nears in the U.S. Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris, his Democratic opponent, have taken sharply different approaches to Ukraine. Zelenskyy has been eager to keep good relations with the United States, his country's largest provider of arms and money for the war. But the future of that support would be in doubt if Trump were to win the election.

Trump, who has touted his good relationship with Putin and called the Russian leader "pretty smart" for invading Ukraine, has for months criticized U.S. support for Ukraine and derided Zelenskyy as a "salesman" for persuading Washing-

ton to provide weapons and funding to his military as it tries to fend off Moscow.

On Friday, Trump brought up his first impeachment, which Democrats in Congress pursued after he asked Zelenskyy for a "favor" — that he investigate Joe Biden, now the president, and Biden's son Hunter, who served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company.

At the time Trump asked for the "favor," he was withholding \$400 million in military aid to Ukraine as it fought Russian-backed separatists. He was later acquitted of the impeachment charges by a Republican-led Senate.

"He could have grandstanded and played cute," Trump said. "And he didn't do that. He said, 'President Trump did absolutely nothing wrong.' He said it loud and clear."

Harris rips proposals for Ukraine to cede land

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With American support for Ukraine at a partisan crossroads, Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday slammed suggestions that Kyiv should cede territory for the sake of peace with Moscow as "dangerous and unacceptable."

The Democratic presidential nominee spoke alongside Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as she unleashed the veiled criticism of Republican candidate Donald Trump's push for Ukraine to quickly cut a deal to end the war.

"They are not proposals for peace," Harris said. "Instead they are proposals for surrender."

Her comments were a reminder of the high stakes for the war effort in this year's election. Trump, for his part, has criticized U.S. assistance for Ukraine, praised Russian President Vladimir Putin and faulted Zelenskyy for the ongoing bloodshed.

Harris embraced Ukraine's defense and outlined a broader foreign policy vision rooted in "international order, rules and norms." Harris rejected calls for the U.S. to walk away from its global role and warned that potential aggressors could be emboldened if Putin emerges victorious.

"The United States supports Ukraine not out of charity, but because it's in our strategic interest," Harris said.

Zelenskyy was in Washington to present the White House and Congress with his plans for reaching an endgame in the war by improving Ukraine's chances on the battlefield.

As Ukraine war enters critical period, EU moves ahead without United States

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — As the war in Ukraine enters a critical period, the European Union has decided that it must take responsibility for what it sees as an existential threat to security in its own neighborhood and is preparing to tackle some of the financial burden, perhaps even without the United States.

EU envoys have been working in Brussels this week on a proposal to provide Ukraine with a hefty loan package worth up to \$39 billion.

"Crucially, this loan will flow straight into your national budget," European Commission

President Ursula von der Leyen told President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "It will provide you with significant and much-needed fiscal space. You will decide how best to use the funds, giving you maximum flexibility to meet your needs."

Zelenskyy wants to buy weapons and rebuild Ukraine's shattered energy network as winter draws near.

In international matters, particularly involving major conflicts, the EU rarely moves ahead without the U.S., but it hopes this decision will encourage others to come forward.

Almost 1,000 days since their

full-scale invasion, Russian forces are making advances in the east.

Ukraine's army has a shaky hold on part of the Kursk region in Russia, which has provided a temporary morale boost, but as casualties mount it remains outmanned and outgunned.

On the political front, Zelenskyy hopes to secure support for a "victory plan" that might force Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table.

He's trying to persuade U.S. President Joe Biden and other allies to help strengthen Ukraine's hand in any future talks.

NYC mayor pleads not guilty to bribery

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Eric Adams pleaded not guilty Friday to federal bribery charges and other counts that have roiled the city after months of investigations, searches and subpoenas.

Adams, a Democrat, entered the plea before a packed courtroom gallery in Manhattan a day after prosecutors revealed charges alleging that he accepted overseas travel and illegal campaign donations from people looking to buy his influence in city government.

The mayor is accused of exploiting a yearslong relationship with people tied to Turkey, who funded his travel and fueled his run for mayor with donations that helped him qualify for more than \$10 million in public campaign funds. People who aren't U.S. citizens are banned by law from donating to U.S. political candidates.

After listening to Magistrate Judge Katharine Parker describe the charges against him, Adams said, "I am not guilty, your honor."

He faces five counts in the indictment: wire fraud, bribery, two counts of receiving campaign contributions from a foreign national, and conspiracy. If convicted of the most serious charge, wire fraud, he faces up to 20 years in prison, federal prosecutors said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Celia V. Cohen told the judge that prosecutors and Adams' lawyer, Alex Spiro, came to an agreement that would allow Adams to be released "on his own signature," with the condition that he not contact any witnesses or individuals in the indictment, with accommodations for him to speak with members of his family and staff — but not about anything pertaining to the allegations.

Adams, 64, is due back in court Wednesday for a conference before the case judge, Dale E. Ho.

Spiro told Parker, "We'll be filing a motion to dismiss on Wednesday."

The indictment unsealed Thursday accused Adams of taking a variety of improper gifts from Turkish officials and businesspeople, including free hotel stays and deeply discounted airline tickets to destinations including France, China, Sri Lanka, India, Hungary, Ghana and Turkey.

In return, prosecutors said, Adams did favors for his patrons. That included helping Turkey get fire department approvals to open a new diplomatic tower in Manhattan, despite concerns about its fire safety system, prosecutors said.

Adams says he is innocent. Spiro has said it was neither unusual nor improper for a gov-

ernment official to accept some travel perks. The mayor has denied ever knowingly accepting an illegal campaign contribution and said any help he gave people navigating city bureaucracy was just part of doing his job.

Spiro told reporters the travel perks and seat upgrades Adams accepted were commonly offered to VIPs and members of Congress.

Adams has so far weathered calls to resign from his critics, some Republicans and the field of potential Democratic primary challengers he is expected to face in next June's mayoral primary. The New York Times editorial board, which did not endorse Adams when he was running for mayor in 2021, has also called on him to step down, arguing that he cannot continue to effectively govern the city while he fends off his criminal charges.

Hearing on assassination tries faults Secret Service

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Members of a bipartisan House task force investigating the Trump assassination attempts emphasized during their first hearing Thursday that the Secret Service, not local authorities, was responsible for the failures in planning and communications that led to a gunman being able to open fire on former President Donald Trump in Pennsylvania.

Lawmakers repeatedly questioned why the agency tasked with protecting the country's top leaders didn't do a better job communicating with local authorities during the July 13 rally, particularly when it came to securing the building that was widely agreed to be a security threat but that ultimately was left so unprotected that

gunman Thomas Michael Crooks was able to climb up and open fire on Trump.

"In the days leading up to the rally, it was not a single mistake that allowed Crooks to outmaneuver one of our country's most elite group of security professionals.

There were security failures on multiple fronts," said the Republican co-chair of the committee, Rep. Mike Kelly from Pennsylvania.

"The communication between the Secret Service and local and state partners was disjointed and unclear," said Rep. Jason Crow, the ranking Democrat on the panel, who also praised the local law enforcement.

Trump was wounded and a man attending the rally with his family was killed.

Report: Health officials need larger role in weed policy

Associated Press

With more Americans using ever-stronger marijuana, a federal advisory panel is calling for a public health approach that's a big departure from "Just Say No."

Thursday's report proposes a health-focused strategy with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention taking a larger role in cannabis policy than ever before.

"We'd like the federal government to step up to provide some leadership in this area," said Dr. Steven Teutsch of the University of Southern California, who chaired the committee behind the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report. The CDC and the National Institutes of Health sponsored the report. A CDC spokesperson said Thursday

that the agency would study the recommendations and that more money would be needed to implement them.

Cannabis is getting stronger, with levels of the intoxicating compound THC rising. Twenty-five years ago, cannabis flower contained about 5% THC. Now, many stores sell products with 20%.

Cannabis can ease chronic pain, but evidence on other health benefits has been limited by lack of research. The risks for heavy users include car accidents and repeated bouts of vomiting that can send people to the emergency room.

For teens, cannabis can get in the way of learning and increase the risk of mood and anxiety disorders. Regular use during pregnancy can raise risks for the baby.

Japan's ruling party picks Ishiba to lead

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's governing party on Friday picked former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba as its leader, setting him up to become prime minister next week.

The party leadership is a ticket to the top job because the Liberal Democratic Party's governing coalition controls parliament.

Considered a defense policy expert, Ishiba secured a come-from-behind win against Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi, a staunch conservative who hoped to become the country's first female prime minister.

The LDP, which has enjoyed nearly unbroken rule since World War II, may have seen Ishiba's more centrist views as crucial in pushing back challenges by the liberal-leaning opposition and winning voter support as the party reels from corruption scandals that drove down outgoing Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's popularity.

After his victory was announced, Ishiba stood, waved and bowed repeatedly and pledged to "devote all my body and soul" to regain public trust.

At a news conference, he pledged to continue Kishida's economic policy aimed at pulling Japan out of deflation and

achieving real salary increases, while tackling challenges such as defense and Japan's declining birth rate and population.

"I will achieve a society in which women and young people can have hope, hard-working people feel rewarded and anyone can excel," Ishiba said.

He is expected to call a general election within weeks to capitalize on his win, but it is unclear when. He only said that he would seek the public's mandate at an appropriate time after forming his new administration.

Ishiba has proposed an Asian version of the NATO military alliance, and said Friday that the

idea is to form "an organic connection" of existing U.S.-led defense networks such as the ANZUS alliance with Australia and New Zealand and its alliances with South Korea and the Philippines. "We have to think how we can achieve peace and stability in this region," he said.

He also suggested a more equal Japan-U.S. security alliance, and said having Japanese Self Defense Forces training bases in the United States would "contribute to the strengthening of the Japan-U.S. security alliance," though he did not elaborate.

He is a supporter of Taiwan's democracy.

Belgian PM and king blast Pope Francis for church's past sex abuse cover-ups

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Belgium's prime minister blasted Pope Francis for the Catholic Church's horrific legacy of clerical sex abuse and cover-ups here, demanding "concrete steps" to come clean with the past and put victims' interests ahead of those of the institution in a blistering welcome at the start of Francis' visit on Friday.

The speech by Prime Minister Alexander De Croo was one of the most pointed ever directed at the pope during a foreign trip, where the genteel dictates of diplomatic protocol usually keeps outrage out of the public remarks. But even King Philippe had strong words for Francis, demanding the church work "incessantly" to atone for the crimes and help victims heal.

Their tone underscored just how raw the abuse scandal still is in Belgium, where two decades of revelations of abuse and systematic cover-ups have devastated the hierarchy's credibility

and contributed to an overall decline in Catholicism and the influence of the once-powerful Catholic Church.

Francis applauded at the end of De Croo's speech and was expected to meet with victims in private later Friday. "This is our shame and humiliation," he said in an improvised response.

"Today, words alone do not suffice. We also need concrete steps," De Croo told Francis and an audience of royals, church officials, diplomats and politicians at Laeken Castle, the residence of Belgium's royal family.

"Victims need to be heard. They need to be at the center. They have a right to truth. Misdeeds need to be recognized," he said. "When something goes wrong we cannot accept cover-ups," he said. "To be able to look into the future, the church needs to come clean on its past."

Revelations of Belgium's horrific abuse scandal have dribbled out in bits over a quarter century.

Key inflation gauge shows cooling price pressures

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation measure on Friday provided the latest sign that price pressures are easing, a trend that is expected to fuel further interest rate cuts this year and next.

Prices rose just 0.1% from July to August, the Commerce Department said, down from the previous month's 0.2% increase. Compared with a year earlier, inflation fell to 2.2%, down from 2.5% in July and barely above the Fed's 2% inflation target.

The cooling of inflation might be eroding former President Donald Trump's polling advantage on the economy. In a survey last week by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, respondents were nearly equally split on whether Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris would do a better job on the economy. That is a significant shift from when President Joe Biden was still in the race, when about six in 10 Americans disapproved of his handling of the economy. The shift suggests that Harris could

be shedding some of Biden's baggage on the economy as sentiment among consumers begins to brighten.

Grocery costs barely rose last month, according to Friday's report, and energy costs dropped 0.8%, led by cheaper gasoline.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices rose just 0.1% from July to August, also down from the previous month's 0.2% increase. It was the fourth straight time that monthly price increases have fallen below an annual rate of 2%, the Fed's target. Compared with 12 months earlier, core prices rose 2.7% in August, slightly higher than in July.

"Sticky inflation is yesterday's problem," Samuel Tombs, chief U.S. economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said in a research note.

With inflation having tumbled from its 2022 peak to barely above the Fed's 2% target, the central bank last week cut its benchmark interest rate by an unusually large half-point, a dramatic shift after more than two years of high rates.

Athletics bid farewell to Oakland Coliseum

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Mark Kotsay treated this moment, this daunting day, like the World Series he has never had as a player or manager.

Kotsay fought tears, just like so many others Thursday, as the Oakland Athletics bid an emotional farewell to their beloved Coliseum they've called home since 1968, complete with all its quirks like plumbing problems and rally possums — and those stray cats who helped inspire Hall of Famer Tony La Russa's former Animal Rescue Foundation.

The A's beat the Texas Rangers 3-2 and Kotsay took the microphone afterward for a heartfelt thank you to a sellout crowd of 46,889 before leading one last chant of "Let's go Oakland!" Third baseman Max Schuemann grabbed a huge A's flag and ran it around the field, stop-

ping to wave it in front of different sections.

"I've never been to a World Series before," Kotsay said. "But I feel like today is one of those days that you can kind of experience the emotion of that, the magnitude of it. Driving in the gates today and seeing the fullness of a parking lot, feeling the energy and the emotion is something I'll treasure for the rest of my life."

Longtime supporters and kids alike stole away from work or school to be here for the matinee finale under a cloudless September blue sky. Oakland's last team standing, the A's follow the NFL Raiders and Golden State Warriors basketball team out of town.

Spontaneously, Schuemann grabbed the flag held by mascot Stomper moments earlier, and took off running.

"I wanted to enjoy it with

them, for sure," he said of the fans.

Quickly, home plate was dug up and the mound rubber removed. Head groundskeeper Clay Wood's sweet dog Reba made one final run through the outfield to her master's office beyond the fence.

Kotsay made one request for a memento: He's taking three bases, which were changed out every inning so 27 were available as keepsakes — with longtime, outgoing groundskeeper Clay Wood gifted the first-inning bags.

From Kotsay's days of playing outfield and way back to the earthquake-interrupted 1989 World Series when the A's swept the Giants, to Bash Brothers Jose Canseco and Mark McGwire and that special 20-game winning streak of 2002 and the Big Three of Tim Lincecum, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito

to before "I Believe in Stephen Vogt" later became a battle cry, this building has been home to so many glory moments transcending eras and spanning stars of different generations.

Zito sang the national anthem to huge applause, while Rickey Henderson and Dave Stewart tossed ceremonial first pitches.

Not far from the A's dugout, Kelly Mattson of the grounds crew let fans scoop dirt right out of his shovel.

Hours before first pitch, bullpen catcher Dustin Hughes and his Oakland scout father John played catch in left field before hiking up to Mount Davis and exploring the inside of the scoreboard and other hidden spots below the center-field stands.

Hundreds of fans spent recent days walking the concourse snapping photos or taking videos of pictures and memories spanning the decades.

Shohei Ohtani heads to 1st postseason with Dodgers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Shohei Ohtani is headed to the postseason for the first time in his career after the Los Angeles Dodgers won the NL West on Thursday night by scoring five runs in the seventh inning in a 7-2 victory over the second-place San Diego Padres.

The Japanese superstar spent his first six MLB seasons in Anaheim, where the Los Angeles Angels never had a winning record or played in October. He signed a \$700 million, 10-year deal with the Dodgers last offseason.

He made a rookie mistake,

though. Ohtani wasn't wearing goggles like most of his teammates during the alcohol-soaked clubhouse celebration. He blinked hard several times and his eyes appeared red while talking to media outside the throbbing party.

"It stung a little bit in my eyes," he said, smiling. "It was an awesome feeling and I'm hoping to be able to continue popping more champagne."

Ohtani went 3 for 5, driving in a go-ahead run and scoring another.

"Today I came to the stadium really wanting to clinch and I'm glad that we were able to do

that," Ohtani said through an interpreter.

Ohtani's blue T-shirt was soaked through and his dark hair dampened. Cigar smoke spilled out of the clubhouse.

"Shohei was showered with champagne. He's going to smell like a brewery for the next week," manager Dave Roberts said. "This is what Shohei signed up for, this is what he wanted to be a part of. Shohei's just been remarkable this entire season."

Ohtani recently became the first player in major league history with 50 home runs and 50 stolen bases in a season. He

reached 400 total bases Thursday, becoming the first player to do so since 2001.

The Dodgers had not clinched at home since the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, when cardboard cutouts replaced fans in the stands. The last time fans were on hand for a clincher at home was 2018.

"It's total chaos which is exactly how it should be and it never gets old," general manager Brandon Gomes said.

A sellout crowd of 52,433, including retired Dodgers star Manny Ramirez, packed Dodger Stadium for the finale of the crucial series.

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Yankees clinch AL East title with victory

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Judge hit his major league-leading 58th home run, going deep for the fifth straight game to help the New York Yankees wrap up their second AL East title in three years with a 10-1 victory over the Baltimore Orioles on Thursday night.

Giancarlo Stanton had four RBIs that included his 27th homer, Alex Verdugo also homered and Gerrit Cole out-pitched Corbin Burnes in a possible playoff preview. Judge and Stanton homered in the same game for the 14th time this year, tying Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris in 1961 for the most in Yankees history.

New York assured itself a first-round bye and home-field advantage in a best-of-five AL Division Series starting Oct. 5.

Baltimore, which clinched a postseason berth by winning Tuesday night's opener of the three-game series, will be in a best-of-three Wild Card Series starting Tuesday.

Stanton homered in the second to put the Yankees ahead and hit a three-run double in a six-run sixth.

Judge hit a two-run homer in the seventh against Bryan Baker and has 144 RBIs, the most in the majors since Ryan Howard's 146 in 2008. Judge matched his career best by homering in five straight games.

Brewers 5, Pirates 2: Aaron Civale pitched six scoreless innings in his last start before the postseason and Joey Ortiz was a home run short of the cycle as visiting Milwaukee defeated Pittsburgh.

Civale (8-9) allowed three hits, struck out five and walked one. He is 6-1 with a 2.57 ERA in his last nine starts.

Ortiz, a rookie third baseman, tripled in third inning and came home on Brice Turang's ground out to open the scoring. Ortiz doubled in a run in the sixth to up Milwaukee's lead to 5-0.

The NL Central champion

Brewers will open a best-of-three NL Wild Card Series at home starting next Tuesday. They finish the regular season by hosting the contending New York Mets in a three-game series that begins Friday night.

The Brewers have won five of their last seven games and went 46-35 on the road this season.

Tigers 4, Rays 3: Justyn-Henry Malloy's eighth-inning sacrifice fly helped host Detroit rally from a 3-0 deficit to move closer to the postseason with a win over Tampa Bay.

Detroit, which has won five straight, entered the game tied with Kansas City for the second and third American League wild-card spots, two games ahead of the Minnesota Twins.

The Tigers trailed 3-2 with one out in the eighth, but Riley Greene singled off Garrett Cleavinger (7-5) and Matt Vierling drew a walk.

Colt Keith tied the game with an RBI single, bringing up Malloy — the last position player on the Tigers bench — to pinch hit for Kerry Carpenter. He lifted a fly ball to medium center and Vierling easily beat Jose Siri's throw.

Beau Brieske (4-4) got the win with two innings of relief. Jason Foley pitched the ninth for his 27th save.

White Sox 7, Angels 0: Chicago averted a record-breaking loss for the third straight day, beating visiting Los Angeles behind Chris Flexen's sharp pitching performance.

Chicago improved to 39-120 with its three-game sweep of Los Angeles. It has been tied with the 1962 New York Mets for the modern major league record for losses since Sunday's 4-2 setback at San Diego.

The White Sox have three games left this weekend at Detroit. They finished their home schedule with a 23-58 record.

Flexen (3-15) struck out seven in 6½ innings in his first win since May 8. The right-hander was winless in his previous 23

starts, a franchise record.

Los Angeles dropped to 63-96 to set a franchise record for losses in a season. It went 1-6 on its final trip to finish with a 31-50 road record — the most road losses for the team since it went 27-53 in 1996.

Royals 7, Nationals 4: Kansas City trimmed its magic number to two with a victory over Washington.

Pinch hitter Adam Frazier's one-out, line drive base hit to left field in the top of the ninth drove in two runs, breaking a 4-4 tie and guiding the visiting Royals to their third straight win following a seven-game losing streak.

Salvador Perez's second single of the game scored Frazier, chasing Nationals closer Kyle Finnegan (3-8).

Hunter Renfroe hit his 14th homer of the season to open the scoring, a 424-foot shot that left the park at 108.4 mph.

Kris Bubic (1-1) earned the win with a scoreless eighth inning. Royals closer Lucas Erceg recorded his third consecutive save in the series — and 14th of the season — with a shut down ninth inning.

Starter Michael Wacha pitched five innings, allowing four runs (three earned) and five hits, striking out two and walking one on 83 pitches, 58 for strikes.

Rockies 10, Cardinals 8: Charlie Blackmon had three RBIs and three runs in one of the final games of his professional career, Michael Toglia had three hits and two RBIs, and host Colorado avoided a sweep with a come-from-behind victory over St. Louis.

A two-run, game-tying double from Ezequiel Tovar was the catalyst of a five-run eighth inning for the Rockies, who had lost five of their previous six games. The double was Tovar's National League-leading 45th of the season. Ryan McMahon's double to right field in the next at-bat brought home Tovar for

what would be the game-winning run.

Tovar, McMahon, Jake Cave and Aaron Schunk each finished with two hits. McMahon entered the game hitting just .192 in 54 games since he was Colorado's lone representative at the All-Star Game.

Blackmon's two-run home run in the second inning was the 227th of his 14-year career, tying Carlos Gonzalez for the fifth-most in franchise history. Blackmon, 38, announced Monday he would be retiring at the end of the season. His three RBIs were his most in a game since May 27.

Angel Chivilli (2-3) picked up the win for the Rockies while Ryan Fernandez (1-6) took the loss for St. Louis after giving up four of Colorado's five eighth inning runs.

Marlins 8, Twins 6 (13): Otto Lopez doubled home the go-ahead run in the 13th inning as visiting Miami beat reeling Minnesota.

Carlos Correa homered for the Twins, who were 2 for 19 with runners in scoring position and stranded 15 on the night.

The Twins (82-77) have lost six of their last eight and now trail the Tigers and Royals by three games in the race for the last two AL wild card spots. They would be eliminated with one more loss or one victory by Detroit or Kansas City.

In the 13th inning, Lopez drove home automatic runner Dane Myers with a one-out drive down the left field line off Cody Blewett (1-1). Griffin Conine put the game out of reach with a two-out, two-run single off Justin Topa.

Anthony Maldonado (1-1) pitched two scoreless innings to earn his first career victory. Darren McCaughan allowed one run in the 13th, picking up his first save.

Trailing 4-0 after five innings, the Twins battled back, tying it on Brooks Lee's two-run double in the eighth.

Cowboys win 7th straight over Giants

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — There was a sense of relief in a somewhat subdued Dallas Cowboys locker room after a hard-fought victory over the New York Giants. There was little celebration.

What was important Thursday night were the numbers on the scoreboard at MetLife Stadium. Dallas Cowboys 20, New York Giants 15.

The two-game losing streak was over and those who have been criticizing Dallas (2-2) and coach Mike McCarthy and predicting a disappointing season had been quieted for one night. The Cowboys were back to being the Cowboys, a good offense and a solid defense.

Dak Prescott threw one of his two touchdown passes to Cee-Dee Lamb and the Cowboys beat the Giants for the seventh straight time and 14th in 15 games.

"We got to change the narrative. That's what this game did, especially over a long week-

end," said Prescott, who completed 22 of 27 for 221 yards. "It puts us at 2-and-2. It allows us a couple of days to get our mind right, to get our body right."

Prescott hit running back Rico Dowdle on a 15-yard screen pass for a touchdown to put Dallas ahead in the first quarter. He then found Lamb for a 55-yard catch-and-run TD on a play that ended with the receiver being called for taunting.

"I lost my first two games to them," said Prescott, who has won his last 13 starts against New York. "It could have been a remarkable rookie year had that not happened. It's a good matchup for us. The offensive line always sets the tone. I love playing here in New York. Cowboy fans travel well."

Lamb slipped past two defenders and trotted into the end zone. He then fired the ball in their direction and flexed his muscles, drawing an unsportsmanlike-conduct penalty.

"I think it was the only 1-on-1 I got all game and we exploited

it," said Lamb, who had seven catches for 98 yards. He still has not had a 100-yard game this season.

Brandon Aubrey kicked field goals of 60 and 40 yards for Dallas, which came into the game with major concerns after being thoroughly beaten at home by New Orleans and Baltimore. A new issue for the Cowboys is an apparent leg injury to star pass rusher Micah Parsons, who was carted off the field in the fourth quarter. Parsons said he is getting X-rays on Friday.

Greg Joseph made field goals of 52, 41, 38, 22 and 42 for the Giants (1-3), who controlled the ball for 35:37 but failed to score a touchdown at home for the second straight game. They had two field goals in a 28-6 loss to Minnesota in their opener.

What hurt New York was its inability to run against the league's worst rush defense. Dallas been giving up an average of 185.7 yards, but it held the Giants to 26 yards on 24 carries, a 1.1-yard average.

"I would say we've got to do a better job in the run game, and that starts with me," coach Brian Daboll said. "But we tried a variety of things, we couldn't really get much going."

Daniel Jones' arm kept this one close. He completed 29 of 40 passes for 281 yards, finding sensational rookie Malik Nabers 12 times for 115 yards and Wan'Dale Robinson 11 times for 71 yards. But the one thing he could not find was the end zone.

"We don't feel good about losing," said Jones, who has had three straight solid performances. "We didn't do enough to win. We're frustrated. We're not discouraged. I think we're still confident in our team and what we can do well, but we don't feel good about this."

Nabers left late in the game with a concussion. Jones threw an interception on the Giants' final series after Aubrey missed a 51-yard field goal try — his first career miss from over 50 yards — to give New York one slim last shot.

7 Mountain West schools agree to stay in conference

Associated Press

Seven Mountain West schools have agreed to remain in the league amid overtures by the Pac-12 to lure away at least one more of its teams, the conference announced Thursday.

The move comes after the Pac-12, which was reduced to just two teams after last summer's realignment, announced two weeks ago that four Mountain West teams would join the league in 2026, including Boise State, Fresno State, San Diego State and Colorado State. Utah State agreed to join earlier this week.

The seven remaining Mountain West schools signed a memorandum of understanding to stay in the league. They include Air Force, Nevada, New

Mexico, San Jose State, UNLV, Wyoming and Hawaii.

Because Hawaii is a partial member, the Mountain West needs to add two more schools to be recognized as a conference under NCAA rules, but the league will have until 2028 to comply.

"Our immediate priority was solidifying the membership of the Mountain West. Now our focus turns to our collective future on behalf of our student-athletes," Mountain West Commissioner Gloria Nevarez said in a statement.

"The agreements announced today mark a historic moment for the Mountain West and provide much-needed stability and clarity as the world of intercollegiate athletics continues to

evolve rapidly."

The remaining Mountain West teams agreed to execute grants of media rights from the member institutions to the conference from 2026 to 2032.

"I feel very good about where we landed in these fluid times related to conference realignment," Wyoming athletic director Tom Burman said in a statement.

"The Mountain West Conference will move forward to be at the NCAA requirement of eight full members. We will work with Mountain West leadership to actively add new members, but at this time we cannot comment on the matter of specific institutions for expansion."

The Mountain West stands to make an estimated \$100 million

in exit fees from the teams that are leaving. The Pac-12 is suing the Mountain West over another \$55 million in "poaching penalties" that were part of a football scheduling agreement Oregon State and Washington State entered into with the conference for this season.

The Mountain West will distribute the exit fees to the remaining member schools: Air Force and UNLV will receive 24.5%, Nevada, New Mexico, San Jose State, and Wyoming, 11.5%, and Hawaii — a football-only member — 5%.

UNLV confirmed that it stands to be paid \$10 million to \$14 million, with \$1.5 million to \$1.8 million annually over a six-year period beginning in July 2026.

WNBA semis offer plenty of storylines

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Star power, a quest for a three-peat and two franchises looking for their first championships highlight the WNBA semifinals that begin Sunday.

The Las Vegas Aces will face the New York Liberty in a WNBA Finals rematch from last season while the Connecticut Sun play the Minnesota Lynx in the other series.

The Aces, led by unanimous MVP A'ja Wilson, are looking to become the first team since the Houston Comets to win three titles in a row while the Liberty are trying for a measure of revenge against Las Vegas after losing last year.

Minnesota was the dominant team last decade, winning four titles in a seven-year span from 2011-2017. They haven't reached the WNBA Finals since. Connecticut has reached the championship round twice since the Lynx's run, but lost both times.

Connecticut and New York are both looking for the first championship in franchise history.

New York vs. Las Vegas

Season series: The Liberty swept the three games, although the Aces played without Wilson in the last meeting in New York this month.

Marquee matchup: Wilson and Breanna Stewart. They are two of the best women's

basketball players in the world and have shined in the postseason throughout their careers. Wilson raised her game to another level this year, averaging a WNBA-record 26.9 points and 11.9 rebounds during the regular season to earn MVP honors for the third time. Stewart averaged 20.4 points and had more help on the offensive end with the increased play of Sabrina Ionescu.

X-factors: Liberty players have said all season that they are more connected this year after playing as a unit last season for the first time. New York added rookie Leonie Fiebich to the mix and she was stellar throughout the regular season. The 6-foot-4 wing gives New York more size and shooting. Las Vegas added Tiffany Hayes in the middle of the season, convincing her to come out of retirement. She earned The AP's Sixth Woman of the Year honors.

Homecourt advantage: New York captured the No. 1 seed this year and will play the first two games at home in the best-of-five series. Last season in the WNBA Finals, the Liberty had to go to Las Vegas and returned home facing elimination. New York has had a boisterous home crowd all season.

Minnesota vs. Connecticut

Season series: The Sun won two of the three games, although each matchup was competitive. Connecticut won in overtime

in May and then by five in July. Minnesota walked away with a key two-point win during the last week of the regular season to secure the No. 2 seed.

Marquee matchup: Napheesa Collier and Alyssa Thomas. Collier raised her play in the first round of the playoffs, averaging 40 points in the two wins over Phoenix. She tied the WNBA record with a 42-point effort in the clincher on Wednesday night. She anchors the Lynx's defense and was The AP Defensive Player of the Year. Thomas has always lifted her play in the playoffs and this year was no different. She had her fourth postseason triple-double in the opening win over Indiana and then had 19 points and 13 assists in the clincher.

X-factors: The victor of the series may come down to which former Notre Dame guard plays the best, Kayla McBride or Marina Mabrey. The Sun added Mabrey via trade right before the Olympic break. She provides the team with another consistent outside shooter. McBride has been steady for the Lynx since coming to the team in 2021.

Key stat: The Lynx have been the best team in the league when it comes to sharing the basketball. They led the WNBA with 23 assists per game during the regular season. They averaged 29 a contest in their sweep of the Mercury.

Team USA sweeps opening session of Presidents Cup

Associated Press

MONTREAL — The Presidents Cup matches were close. The score after the opening session was not.

The Americans clung to a 1-up lead in all five matches Thursday when they delivered shot after shot, putt after putt, until this already lopsided series took a familiar turn.

United States 5, International 0.

The Americans swept the first day of fourballs matches at Royal Montreal behind a feisty Scottie Scheffler, late heroics from Xander Schauffele and plenty of help from the putting-challenged International team.

It was the third time they shut out the Internationals on

the first day, and the first time since 2000. The Americans went on to an 11-point victory that year.

"We're excited with our start — high fives, celebrate — and we're going to keep the pressure on," U.S. captain Jim Furyk said.

International captain Mike Weir had a plan for the opening two days and he didn't see anything on the course to make any changes for the foursomes matches on Friday. Adam Scott has never been on a winning team since his debut in 2003, and he wasn't about to lose hope.

"The best news is there's tomorrow for us. It's not over," Scott said. "We're going to have to come out, fight really hard,

find that gear, win a session and get going in the right direction. The score line looks rough. But I don't think there was that much difference in it today."

Three matches reached the 18th green. One ended on No. 17. The shortest match was Scheffler and Russell Henley getting the last word in a 3-and-2 win over Tom Kim and Sungjae Im.

Scheffler and Henley never trailed in what was the spiciest match of an otherwise flat day, the Canadian crowd mostly silent after Mackenzie Hughes, who sat out the first session, chugged a beer on the opening tee to get them going.

Scheffler and Kim are good friends who play plenty of money games in Dallas. On the par-3

seventh hole, the 22-year-old Kim holed a putt from just inside 30 feet and did a pirouette on the green, screaming, "Let's Go!"

Scheffler matched the birdie from about the same length, and the world's No. 1 player turned toward Kim and screamed, "What was that?"

It got testy on the next hole when Kim made another long birdie, celebrated wildly and then he and Im walked over to the ninth tee without even watching Scheffler putt.

"It's the same thing I would have done at home if he had made a putt ... and he celebrated like that. So it's all in good fun. We enjoy competing against each other," Scheffler said.