

## 3 Russian jets entered Estonian airspace

*Associated Press*

Estonia summoned a Russian diplomat to protest after three Russian fighter aircraft entered its airspace without permission Friday and stayed there for 12 minutes, the nation's foreign ministry said.

Just over a week ago, NATO planes downed Russian drones over Poland and heightened fears that the war in Ukraine could spill over.

Foreign Minister Margus Tsakhna said that Russia violated Estonian airspace four times this year "but today's incursion, involving three fighter aircraft entering our airspace, is unprecedentedly brazen."

Russian officials did not immediately comment.

Russia's violation of Poland's airspace was the most serious cross-border incident into a NATO member country since the war in Ukraine began with Rus-

sia's invasion in 2022. Other alliance countries have reported similar incursions and drone crashes on their territory.

The developments have increasingly rattled European governments as U.S.-led efforts to stop the war in Ukraine have come to nothing.

The European Union's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas called Friday's incursion "an extremely dangerous provocation" that "further escalates tensions in the region."

Estonia, along with other Baltic states Lithuania and Latvia, are seen as being among the most likely targets if Russia one day decides to risk an attack on NATO. Neighboring Poland, though much larger, also feels vulnerable. All four countries are staunch supporters of Ukraine.

The Russian MIG-31 fighters entered Estonian airspace in

the area of Vaindloo Island, which is a small island in the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea, the Estonian military said in a separate statement.

The aircraft did not have flight plans and their transponders were turned off, the statement said, nor were the aircraft in two-way radio communication with Estonian air traffic services.

Italian Air Force F-35 fighter jets, currently deployed as part of the NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission, responded to the incident, according to the statement.

Separately, Maj. Taavi Karotamm, spokesperson for Estonian Defense Forces, said the Russian planes flew parallel to the Estonian border from East to West and did not head toward the country's capital Tallinn.

"Russia's increasingly extensive testing of boundaries and

growing aggressiveness must be met with a swift increase in political and economic pressure," Tsakhna, the foreign minister, said.

The Russian charge d'affaires was summoned and given a protest note, a ministry statement said.

Earlier Friday, the head of Britain's foreign intelligence agency said there is "absolutely no evidence" that Russia's President Vladimir Putin wants to negotiate peace in Ukraine.

Richard Moore, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6 as it is more commonly known, said Putin was "stringing us along."

The war has continued unabated in the three years since Russia invaded its neighbor. Ukraine has accepted proposals for a ceasefire and a summit meeting, but Moscow has demurred.

## Trump: US troops could return to base in Afghanistan

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday suggested that he is working to reestablish a U.S. presence at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, four years after America's chaotic withdrawal from the country left the base in the Taliban's hands.

Trump floated the idea during a press conference with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer as he wrapped up a state visit to the U.K. and tied it to the need for the U.S. to counter its top rival, China.

"We're trying to get it back," Trump said of the base in an aside to a question about ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

While Trump described his call for the U.S. military to reestablish a position in Afghanistan as "breaking news," the Republican president has previously raised the idea.

The White House did not immediately respond to questions about whether it or the Pentagon has done any planning around returning to the sprawling air base, which was central to America's longest war.

During his first presidency, Trump set the terms for the U.S. withdrawal by negotiating a deal with the Taliban. The 20-year conflict came to an end in disquieting fashion under President Joe Biden: The U.S.-backed Afghan government col-

lapsed, a grisly bombing killed 13 U.S. troops and 170 others, and thousands of desperate Afghans descended on Kabul's airport in search of a way out before the final U.S. aircraft departed over the Hindu Kush.

The Afghanistan debacle was a major setback just eight months into Biden's Democratic presidency that he struggled to recover from.

Biden's Republican detractors, including Trump, seized on it as a signal moment in a failed presidency. Those criticisms have persisted into the present day, including as recently as last week, when Trump claimed the move emboldened Russian President

Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine in 2022.

Asked again about the proposal hours later on Air Force One, Trump offered no details but again bashed Biden for "gross incompetence" and said the base should have "never been given back."

It is unclear if the U.S. has any new conversations with the Taliban government about returning to the country.

But Trump hinted that the Taliban, who have struggled with an economic crisis, international legitimacy, internal rifts and rival militant groups since their return to power in 2021, could be game to allow the U.S. military to return.

# Trump nixed \$400M in Taiwan military aid, pushes future sales

*The Washington Post*

President Donald Trump declined to approve more than \$400 million in military aid to Taiwan this summer, as he tries to negotiate a trade deal and potential summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, according to five people familiar with the matter.

The decision, which may still be reversed, marks a U-turn in U.S. policy toward the self-governing island that China claims as its own territory, said the people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Two people familiar with the matter said the package was worth more than \$400 million and would have been “more lethal” than past rounds of aid to Taiwan, including munitions and autonomous drones.

In a statement, a White House official said the decision on the aid package had not yet been fi-

nalized.

America’s military has long committed resources to Taiwan’s defense, as China’s People’s Liberation Army rapidly builds up forces and stages more elaborate drills around the island. Xi has instructed the PLA to be capable of seizing Taiwan by 2027, according to U.S. military and intelligence officials, who stress that the date is not a deadline for an invasion.

“This would be exactly the wrong time for the U.S. to take the foot off the gas pedal,” said Dan Blumenthal, a former Pentagon official who now works at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Trump administration has broadly tempered U.S. competition with China in an effort to reach a wide-reaching trade deal with Beijing — easing export controls on high-end semiconductors and declining to en-

force a congressional ban on the social media app TikTok. Some of the concessions have alarmed members of the first Trump administration and Republican lawmakers, who have also voiced concerns about insufficient support for Taiwan’s overstretched defenses.

The fastest way to fortify Taiwan’s military is by directly shipping U.S. arms, a process known as Presidential Drawdown Authority. The Biden administration approved packages totaling more than \$2 billion.

Trump has promised a more transactional U.S. foreign policy and does not support sending weapons without payment, a preference also on display with Ukraine. Rather than continue providing security aid to Kyiv, the president has pushed a program in which European countries would buy American weapons and then donate them to the Ukrainian military.

## Spy chief: No evidence Putin wants peace talks

*Associated Press*

ISTANBUL — There is “absolutely no evidence” that Russia’s President Vladimir Putin wants to negotiate peace in Ukraine, the head of Britain’s foreign intelligence agency said Friday in an outgoing speech.

Richard Moore, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6 as it is more commonly known, said Putin was “stringing us along.”

“He seeks to impose his imperial will by all means at his disposal. But he cannot succeed,” Moore said. “Bluntly, Putin has bitten off more than he can chew. He thought he was going to win an easy victory. But he — and many others — underestimated the Ukrainians.”

The war has continued unabated in the three years since Russia invaded its neighbor, despite renewed U.S.-led efforts in recent months to steer Moscow and Kyiv to a settlement.

Ukraine has accepted proposals for a ceasefire and a summit meeting, but Moscow has demurred.

President Donald Trump said Thursday during a state visit to the United Kingdom that Putin “has really let me down” in peace efforts.

Moore was speaking at the British consulate in Istanbul after five years as head of MI6.

He leaves the post at the end of September.

The agency will then get its first female chief.

During his tenure, Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, a war that has seen tens of thousands killed and still rages, principally in eastern Ukraine.

## 4 soldiers aboard copter that crashed

*Associated Press*

TACOMA, Wash. — Four service members were aboard an Army MH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that crashed near Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the Army said Thursday. The Army did not release their conditions.

The helicopter was on a routine training mission when it crashed at about 9 p.m. Wednesday, an Army official said in a statement. The soldiers were part of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Airborne, officials said. The cause of the crash was under investigation, the Army said.

“This remains an active, ongoing situation,” the release

said.

The crash sparked a small wildfire that had grown to 1 acre by Thursday morning, the Washington Department of Natural Resources said.

This is “currently a search mission” involving the “most professional and skilled addressing the situation,” Army spokesperson Ruth Castro said in an email.

The base is about 10 miles south of Tacoma under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Joint Base Headquarters.

The Thurston County sheriff’s office, based in Olympia, posted online late Wednesday that deputies were dispatched

to reports of a possible helicopter crash in the Summit Lake area, west of Olympia.

“We have been advised that the military lost contact with a helicopter in the area,” the department said. It said it was working with the base and that no further details were available.

Thurston County Sheriff Derek Sanders said on Facebook that deputies located the crash site, “but have been unable to continue rescue efforts as the scene is on fire.”

The King County Guardian 1 helicopter and special operation rescue units responded to the crash site, the sheriff said.

# Senate confirms 48 of Trump's nominees

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate has confirmed 48 of President Donald Trump's nominees at once, voting for the first time under new rules to begin clearing a backlog of executive branch positions that had been delayed by Democrats.

Frustrated by the stalling tactics, Senate Republicans moved last week to make it easier to confirm large groups of lower-level, nonjudicial nominations. Democrats had forced multiple votes on almost every one of Trump's picks, infuriating the president and tying up the Senate floor.

The new rules allow Senate Republicans to move multiple

nominees with a simple majority vote — a process that would have previously been blocked with just one objection. The rules don't apply to judicial nominations or high-level Cabinet posts.

"Republicans have fixed a broken process," Senate Majority Leader John Thune said ahead of the vote.

The Senate voted 51-47 to confirm the four dozen nominees. Thune said that those confirmed on Thursday had all received bipartisan votes in committee, including deputy secretaries for the Departments of Defense, Interior, Energy and others.

Among the confirmed are Jonathan Morrison, the new ad-

ministrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and Kimberly Guilfoyle as U.S. ambassador to Greece. Guilfoyle is a former California prosecutor and television news personality who led the fundraising for Trump's 2020 campaign and was once engaged to Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr.

Thune's move is the latest salvo after a dozen years of gradual changes by both parties to weaken the filibuster and make the nominations process more partisan. Both parties have obstructed each other's nominees for years, and senators in both parties have advocated for speeding up the process when

they are in the majority.

Republicans first proposed changing the rules in early August, when the Senate left for a recess after a breakdown in bipartisan negotiations over the confirmation process and Trump told Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer to "GO TO HELL!" on social media.

Democrats have blocked more nominees than ever before as they have struggled to find ways to oppose Trump and the GOP-dominated Congress, and as their voters have pushed them to fight Republicans at every turn. It's the first time in recent history that the minority party hasn't allowed at least some quick confirmations.

## Panel recommends new restrictions on vaccines

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s handpicked vaccine advisory committee on Thursday recommended the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adopt new restrictions on a combination shot that protects against chickenpox as well as measles, mumps and rubella.

The panel advised that the vaccine known as MMRV not be given before age 4 and that children in this age group instead get separate vaccines — one against MMR and another for varicella, or chickenpox. The vote was 8-3, with one member abstaining.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices put off an expected vote on hepatitis B shots given to infants on the day they are born.

On Friday, it's expected to decide whether to recommend that some babies can wait a month for those shots, and to also take up COVID-19 vaccinations.

The committee makes recom-

mendations to the CDC director on how already-approved vaccines should be used. CDC directors have almost always accepted those recommendations, which are widely heeded by doctors and guide vaccination programs.

Committee Chairman Martin Kulldorff said committee members aim to reassure the public and remove unnecessary risks and harms.

But many doctors and public health experts say the committee is creating fear and mistrust around vaccines at a time when U.S. vaccination rates are already falling.

Kennedy, a leading antivaccine activist before becoming the nation's top health official, has made or proposed numerous changes to the nation's vaccine system, including firing the entire 17-member panel earlier this year and replacing it with a group that includes several antivaccine voices.

Experts are also concerned the panel's actions could narrow access to the vaccines.

## Trump wraps up British state visit with gratitude

Associated Press

AYLESBURY, England — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he was "tremendously thankful" for the pageantry and splendor lavished on him during his second state visit to the United Kingdom as he wrapped up a trip that largely sidestepped major public disagreements over difficult trade and geopolitical issues.

The mutual warmth, along with Trump's abundance of kind words bestowed on the host country, suggested that an all-out charm offensive by the royal family and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had its desired effect, even though there was a notable lack of progress on some key matters.

Trump and Starmer signed what both sides hailed as a historic agreement on science and technology, and they held a roundtable with global business leaders where they suggested the deal could mean significant job gains.

Among the topics tackled mostly in private talks between

Trump and Starmer were the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and U.S. tariff rates on steel imported from Britain.

"The bond between our countries is like no other anywhere in the world," Trump said at a news conference at Chequers, the rural retreat for British leaders.

The U.S. and U.K., the president said, have "done more good for the planet than any other nation in history."

Joining in the bonhomie, Starmer said that "time and time again, it is British and American men and women, side by side, changing the path of history and turning it towards our values, towards freedom, democracy and the rule of law."

The Trump-Starmer mutual admiration followed King Charles III and Queen Camilla's feting of Trump and first lady Melania Trump at Windsor Castle on Wednesday with all the pomp the monarchy can muster, including the biggest military honor guard ever assembled for a state visit.



# House OKs funding bill, but prospects look dim in Senate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House on Friday passed a short-term spending bill to extend government funding for seven weeks and avoid a partial government shutdown on Oct. 1, but prospects looked dimmer in the Senate, where the two parties show no signs of budging on the matter.

The bill would generally continue existing funding levels through Nov. 21. Democratic leaders are adamantly opposed and are threatening a government shutdown if Republicans don't let them have a say on the measure, as some Democratic support will be needed to get a bill to President Donald Trump's desk for his signature.

The vote was 217-212. Rep. Jared Golden of Maine was the lone Democratic member to support the bill.

House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana had few votes to spare as he sought to persuade fellow Republicans to vote for the funding patch, something many in his conference have routinely opposed in past budget fights.

But this time, GOP members see a chance to portray the Democrats as responsible for a shutdown.

"The ball is in Chuck Schumer's court. I hope he does the right thing. I hope he does not choose to shut the government down and inflict pain on the American people," Johnson said after the vote.

In a sign the vote could be close, Trump weighed in, urging House Republicans to pass the bill and put the burden on Democrats to oppose it. GOP leaders often need Trump's help to win over holdouts on legislation.

"Every House Republican should UNIFY, and VOTE YES!" Trump said on his social media site.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., said that in opposing the continuing resolution, Democrats were working to protect the health care of the American people. He said that with Republicans controlling the White House and both branches of Congress, "Republicans will own a government shutdown. Period. Full stop."

The House vote now sends the bill to the Senate where Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said the Senate will vote on the measure along with a dueling Democratic proposal. But neither is expected to win the 60 votes necessary to advance.

Senators could then potentially leave town until Sept. 29 — one day before the shutdown deadline. The Senate has a scheduled recess next week because of Rosh Hashana, the Jewish new year.

The Democratic proposal would extend enhanced health insurance subsidies set to expire at the end of the year, plus reverse Medicaid cuts that were included in Republicans' big tax breaks and spending cuts bill enacted earlier this year.

"The American people will look at what Republicans are doing, look at what Democrats are doing, and it will be clear that public sentiment will be on our side," said Senate Democratic Leader Schumer of New York, who has repeatedly threatened a shutdown if health care isn't addressed.

## Trump, Xi to meet in S. Korea next month

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he would meet Chinese President Xi Jinping at a regional summit to take place at the end of October in South Korea and will visit China in the "early part of next year," following a phone call the leaders shared on Friday.

In a Truth Social post, Trump also said the Chinese leader would come to the United States "at an appropriate time," noting the leaders also made progress on "the approval of the TikTok Deal."

"The call was a very good one, we will be speaking again by phone, appreciate the TikTok approval, and both look forward to meeting at APEC!" Trump wrote, referring to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, a grouping of 21 economies on the Pacific Rim.

Neither Trump nor a readout of the call from Chinese state media gave any details on what was discussed about TikTok. TikTok did not immediately respond to a request for more details on the call or the framework deal.

China's official news agency Xinhua said Xi, in the call, stressed the importance of the bilateral ties and urged the U.S. side to avoid any unilateral trade restrictions.

This is the second call with Xi since Trump returned to the White House and launched sky-high tariffs on China, triggering back-and-forth trade restrictions that strained ties between the two largest economies.

But Trump has expressed willingness to negotiate trade deals with Beijing, notably for TikTok, which faces a U.S. ban unless its Chinese parent company sells its controlling stake.

## 2 men sentenced to 2 years for plotting to kill Zambian leader with witchcraft

Associated Press

LUSAKA, Zambia — A judge in Zambia on Monday sentenced two men to two-year terms in prison with hard labor after they were convicted of plotting to kill the president using witchcraft.

The men, a Zambian and a Mozambican national, were convicted under a colonial-era witchcraft law last week.

The court found that they had been in possession of charms, including a live chameleon, an

animal tail and 12 bottles of concoctions and had intended to use them to put a spell on President Hakainde Hichilema with the intention of killing him.

Leonard Phiri, 43, and Jasten Candunde, 42, pleaded for leniency from the magistrate who sentenced them.

Zambia's witchcraft law, passed in 1914, defines practicing witchcraft as pretending to exercise any kind of supernatural power, sorcery, or enchantment intended to cause fear, an-

noyance, or injury. The maximum sentence is three years in prison.

The trial also had a dose of political intrigue, with prosecutors alleging the men were hired by a brother of a former lawmaker to curse Hichilema.

Many traditional beliefs have survived in Zambia alongside its official Christian religion. A 2018 study by the Zambia Law Development Commission found that 79% of Zambians believed in witchcraft.

# Allen, Bernard lift Bills over Dolphins

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Buffalo Bills linebacker Terrel Bernard diagnosed the play as soon as Tua Tagovailoa dropped back in the pocket.

With the game on the line, and the Dolphins threatening to tie the score with three minutes left, Bernard bolted to his left and stepped in front of receiver Jaylen Waddle to intercept Tagovailoa's pass in securing a 31-21 victory and extend the Bills' long run of dominance over their AFC East rivals on Thursday night.

"It's honestly something that we have seen on tape," the middle linebacker said, crediting his position coach Al Holcomb for showing film of similar plays this past week. "That's one of their top quick-game concepts. We're in a three-deep zone and I just saw it and broke on it. So yeah, that's pretty much it."

And credit rookie defensive tackle Deone Walker — filling in for injured veteran Ed Oliver — for getting his arms up and deflecting Tagovailoa's pass.

Josh Allen threw three touchdown passes, including a go-

ahead 15-yarder to Khalil Shakir with 7:17 left. James Cook scored on a 2-yard run and had 108 yards rushing in becoming the first player to top 100 yards against Miami in 36 outings. The Bills (3-0) have now won 14 of 15 meetings over the Dolphins, and seven straight, including playoffs.

"Good win, never easy," Bills coach Sean McDermott said of what was a one-score game before Matt Prater hit a 48-yard field goal with 22 seconds left.

"I thought the grit, the mental toughness of our football team was on display throughout the game, particularly in the fourth quarter there," McDermott added.

Though the Dolphins were competitive, miscues and a lack of discipline left them at 0-3 for the first time since 2019, and leading to further questions regarding coach Mike McDaniel's job security.

"I'm never proud of a loss. We came here to win, and I refuse to take moral victories as the head coach of the Miami Dolphins," McDaniel said. "It wasn't good enough, so that's where I'm at."

After coaching the team to the playoffs in each of his first two seasons, McDaniel's record has dropped to 8-13 since a wildcard loss to Kansas City in 2023.

Tagovailoa's interception — the game's only turnover — came with Miami down 28-21 and facing first and 10 at Buffalo's 21. That wasn't the only miscue, however.

The momentum shifted with 10 minutes remaining and the score tied at 21.

With Buffalo punting from midfield on fourth-and-7, Miami defensive tackle Zach Sieler was flagged for roughing punter Cameron Johnston.

The 15-yard penalty put Buffalo at the Miami 36, and Shakir scored five plays later.

"I've got to be better. I can't make stupid errors like that," Sieler said.

Tagovailoa didn't second-guess his read on the interception — his 10th in 10 games against Buffalo — by instead crediting Bernard for making a great play. The quarterback finished 23 of 34 for 146 yards with touchdown passes to Waddle and Tyreek Hill, while Ollie

Gordon scored on a 2-yard run.

As for the Dolphins' level of urgency to win, the quarterback said: "I wouldn't say there was an emphasis to prove anything to anyone. I would say there was an emotion of wanting to get this thing right for each other."

Allen finished 22 of 28 for 213 yards and improved his record to 14-2 over Miami, with 43 TD passes in those games. Buffalo has won 10 straight home meetings with the Dolphins in a run spanning McDermott's nine-year career.

Bernard's interception boosted a defense that had struggled to get Miami off the field; the Dolphins converted 10 of 15 third-down opportunities.

## Milestones

Cook scored a rushing TD in his seventh consecutive regular-season game, matching the team record shared by three players, including Cookie Gilchrist and O.J. Simpson. ... Allen has scored 301 touchdowns from scrimmage, and did so in his 127th game, passing Patrick Mahomes, who reached the 300-TD plateau in 128 games.

## NFL: Eagles should have been penalized on tush push

Associated Press

The NFL said in a training video to officials that the Philadelphia Eagles should have been penalized for at least one false start when they used the tush push against the Kansas City Chiefs in Week 2.

Ramon George, the NFL's vice president of officiating training and development,

highlighted a missed false start by Eagles right guard Tyler Steen on a third-and-1 with 5:34 left in the third quarter and Philadelphia leading 20-10. The Eagles won the Super Bowl rematch 20-17.

"Prior to the snap, looks like we have movement by the right guard. We also have movement coming across from the defen-

sive side. This is a very hard play to officiate. I get it," George said.

"You have a defender who tries to punch the ball but more so we have a false start coming from the right guard. You want to make sure that we officiate these plays tight and make sure that every aspect of the offensive team is legal and any move-

ment, any lineman that's not correct, we want to shut it down as a false start."

George pointed out several plays that were called correctly or incorrectly over the first two weeks of the season during a 19-minute video sent to officials and teams that was obtained by The Associated Press on Thursday night.

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# Boston leads Fever to WNBA semifinals

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Ga. — Aliyah Boston made the go-ahead basket with 7.4 seconds left, Lexie Hull stole the ensuing inbounds pass and the Indiana Fever beat the No. 3-seeded Atlanta Dream 87-85 on Thursday night to advance to the WNBA semifinals.

Despite missing Caitlin Clark among its injured players, Indiana closed on a 7-0 run to win a playoff series for the first time since 2015. The sixth-seeded Fever will play on Sunday against the Las Vegas Aces, who advanced with a victory over the Seattle Storm later Thursday.

Boston was left alone under the basket for an easy layup after Brionna Jones went to the

ground going for a loose ball. It gave Indiana an 86-85 lead, its first since it was 33-30 in the second quarter.

Rhyné Howard twice had trouble inbound the ball in the final seconds, with Hull coming from behind to poke it away from Jones. Indiana got it to Odyssey Sims, who went 1-for-2 at the free-throw line to give Atlanta another shot with 1.2 seconds left. Jones' off-balance 3-pointer at the buzzer was off the mark.

Kelsey Mitchell led Indiana with 24 points and Boston had 14 points, 12 rebounds and six assists. Sims had 16 points and eight assists, and Natasha Howard added 12 points.

Allisha Gray had 19 points and 12 rebounds for her first

playoff double-double to lead Atlanta. Jordin Canada had a double-double with 18 points and 10 assists. Howard scored 16 points and Jones had 12.

**Aces 74, Storm 73:** A'ja Wilson scored 38 points to tie a playoff career high, Jackie Young had a go-ahead follow shot with 12.4 seconds left and Las Vegas beat visiting Seattle to secure a spot in the semifinals.

Wilson, who had 25 points in the second half, had a layup roll off the rim with 25 seconds left and Erica Wheeler raced the other way on a 2-on-1 break with Skylar Diggins.

Wheeler pulled up in the lane to sink a jumper to give Seattle a 73-72 lead with 18 seconds remaining.

Wilson missed another shot, but Young was there for the put-back. After a timeout to get to midcourt, Wheeler had a good look from the free throw line that hit off the back rim and Seattle could not get off another shot before the buzzer.

Las Vegas secured its seventh consecutive semifinal appearance.

Young finished with 14 points and Chelsea Gray had 12 points and eight assists for Las Vegas. Wilson scored 30-plus points in a playoff game for the sixth time in her career — tied for the third-most in WNBA history.

Nneka Ogwumike scored 14 of her 16 points in the second half for Seattle.

Wheeler also scored 16 and Diggins added 13.

# Mahomes, Chiefs look to avoid 0-3 start vs. Giants

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Starting a season 0-2 is not normal for Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs.

Mahomes last did it in 2011 as a sophomore at Whitehouse High School in Texas. The Chiefs last did it in 2014, Andy Reid's second year as their coach and the last time they missed the playoffs.

"Definitely new territory as far as being 0-2," Mahomes said. "In my eyes, it looks like what an opportunity. What an opportunity to prove who we are as the Kansas City Chiefs."

The Chiefs get that chance Sunday night, needing to beat the also-winless New York Giants to avoid falling into an 0-3 hole that only one NFL team this century recovered from to qualify for the postseason. The three-time reigning AFC champions with perennial Super Bowl aspirations are favored to win on the road against an opponent with no such realistic hopes right now — they just need to do it to silence doubters.

"Listen, we haven't won a game, so, I understand — I get it," Reid said. "We'll keep pushing and working forward and seeing what we can do going down the road here."

The road here started with a loss to the Los Angeles Chargers in Brazil in the opener, followed by a close home defeat to Philadelphia in a rematch of the most recent Super Bowl. Mahomes, who turned 30 on Wednesday, has lost three in a row for the first time since 2016 at Texas Tech.

Mahomes has been Kansas City's leading rusher in each of its first two games but has completed just 40 of 68 passes for 445 yards, two touchdowns and an interception. Giants coach Brian Daboll isn't paying attention to those numbers.

"He's as good a quarterback as there is in the league when you watch him play," Daboll said. "He's instinctive, he's accurate, he's got leadership. He's one of the best to ever do it. He plays at a high level when he's out there, pretty much on every

snap. He's as good as it gets."

The Chiefs are 6½-point favorites on BetMGM Sportsbook. While Mahomes said he and his teammates need to get their first victory of the season, the Giants might have to find their highest level to pull off the upset, given the Chiefs' urgency to turn things around.

"They're a very good football team: They've been that way for a long time, a model of consistency in this league for the past decade-plus," Daboll said. "We're going to have to do a good job of evaluating and studying them, but also improving on the things we need to improve on and do the things we need to do."

## Giants hope to rebound

Russell Wilson threw for 450 yards and three TDs in Week 2 against the Cowboys. His last pass was an interception in overtime that set up Brandon Aubrey's winning field goal that turned a stalemate into a 40-37 loss for New York.

Before that, 160 yards worth

of penalties piled up, and Daboll stressed it wasn't one play or player that cost his team. Scoring so much actually provided some optimism after failing to get into the end zone at Washington on Sept. 7.

"We believe that we can do it," said receiver Wan'Dale Robinson, who had eight catches for a career-high 142 yards at Dallas. "From top to bottom, I feel like we have the players that can go out there and get the job done. Just continue to go out there and score points each and every Sunday. That gives us a chance to go out there and win."

## Chiefs' Giant road woes

The Giants are the only team the Chiefs have never beaten on the road, but Mahomes still has some of his fondest memories there. His dad, Pat, pitched for the Mets during the 1999 and 2000 seasons, going deep into the playoffs each time.

Mahomes has played one professional game at the Meadowlands, beating the Jets there in 2023.



# Guardians sweep Tigers, tighten AL Central

Associated Press

DETROIT — Jose Ramirez hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the seventh inning after Tarik Skubal was replaced and the surging Cleveland Guardians swept the slumping Detroit Tigers with a 3-1 victory on Thursday.

Cleveland has won seven straight to close the gap behind the AL Central-leading Tigers to 3½ games with a little more than a week left in the regular season. The teams are scheduled for three more games Sept. 23-25.

Detroit has lost six of its past seven games and 15 of 22, turning an 11½-game cushion into a lead that isn't comfortable.

Returning from an injury scare last week, Skubal gave up one run, seven hits and struck out nine in six innings.

The reigning AL Cy Young Award and pitching Triple Crown winner was replaced by right-hander Troy Melton in the seventh in a 1-1 game. Nine pitches later, Ramirez broke the tie with a 368-foot shot to right.

**Rays 4, Blue Jays 0:** Chandler Simpson had his second consecutive three-hit game and Tampa Bay beat visiting Toronto to split their series.

Toronto's magic number to clinch a postseason spot remained at three. The AL East leaders have lost two straight following a six-game winning streak.

Shane Baz (10-12) pitched five scoreless innings with two hits and four strikeouts. Four relievers combined to finish the shut-out, Tampa Bay's ninth of the season.

**Mets 6, Padres 1:** Jonah Tong threw five encouraging innings and earned the win for host New York, which lengthened its lead in the race for the final NL playoff spot.

Pete Alonso homered for the fourth straight game, Brandon Nimmo also went deep and Juan Soto collected his 100th RBI for the Mets, who won a series for

the first time since taking two of three from the Detroit Tigers from Sept. 1-3.

The Mets lead the idle Arizona Diamondbacks by two games for the third wild card and moved four games behind the Padres, the second wild card.

Tong (2-2), who allowed six runs while recording only two outs last Friday, gave up an unearned run on four hits Thursday while racking up eight strikeouts. Beginning with Luis Arráez's third-inning sacrifice fly, the 22-year-old Tong retired the final eight batters he faced, five by strikeout.

**Reds 1, Cubs 0:** Hunter Greene pitched a one-hitter and Will Benson drove in the only run with a fourth-inning double as Cincinnati beat visiting Chicago.

Greene (7-4) struck out nine and walked one in his first career complete game. After retiring Michael Busch on a deep drive to the warning track for the first out of the ninth inning, he struck out Nico Hoerner and Ian Happ to end it.

The victory helped Cincinnati stay two games behind the New York Mets for the third NL wild card.

The Cubs, who clinched a postseason berth with an 8-4 win in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, still can secure home-field advantage in the wild-card round.

**Athletics 5, Red Sox 3:** Brent Rooker homered in a three-run first inning and J.T. Ginn limited host Boston to five hits in six innings to lead the Athletics to a victory.

The A's started the game with four straight hits, including Rooker's two-run shot — his 30th of the season.

Ginn (4-6) allowed two runs while walking one and striking out three.

Hogan Harris pitched two innings for his fourth save.

David Hamilton and Trevor Story each hit a solo homer for

Boston, which lost for the fifth time in seven games. The Red Sox entered the day tied with Seattle for the third and final AL wild-card spot; Cleveland, which beat Detroit on Thursday, was 1½ games back.

**Marlins 9, Rockies 7:** Liam Hicks matched a career high with four RBIs, including his sixth homer of the season, and Miami won at Colorado to complete a three-game sweep.

Otto Lopez and Heriberto Hernández also homered for the Marlins, who finished with 34 hits in the series at Coors Field.

Miami has won seven of eight and remained six games behind the New York Mets for the final NL wild-card spot.

Sandy Alcantara (10-12) struck out eight and gave up three runs in 6½ innings. In his past 11 starts, the former Cy Young Award winner is 6-3 with a 3.18 ERA. He went 4-9 with a 7.14 ERA in his first 19 starts this season.

**Mariners 2, Royals 0:** Luis Castillo pitched six innings of three-hit ball, Jorge Polanco and J.P. Crawford drove in runs, and Seattle won at Kansas City to climb back into a first-place tie with the Houston Astros in the AL West.

The Mariners are headed to Houston for a three-game series beginning Friday night.

Eduard Bazarzo and Gabe Speier pitched an inning apiece for Seattle. Andres Muñoz stranded two in the ninth by striking out Adam Frazier on three pitches for his 36th save.

**Yankees 7, Orioles 0:** Max Fried struck out 13 in seven innings while earning his major league-leading 18th victory, and surging New York blanked host Baltimore.

The Yankees moved three games behind first-place Toronto in the AL East. Both teams have nine games left.

New York has gone 17-7 since Aug. 23 to climb out of third place in the division and take

charge of the AL wild card.

Mixing fastballs, change-ups and a tantalizingly slow curve ball, Fried (18-5) dominated the last-place Orioles. His 13 strikeouts tied a career high, set last year against Boston while with the Atlanta Braves.

Fried allowed only three hits — all singles — to win his fifth straight start and reach a career high in victories. The lefty notched 17 wins in 2019 with Atlanta.

**Brewers 5, Angels 2:** Christian Yelich went 2 for 4 and reached 100 RBIs for the season as Milwaukee defeated visiting Los Angeles.

Yelich doubled home Brice Turang as part of the Brewers' three-run outburst in the seventh inning that broke a 2-all tie. This marks Yelich's first 100-RBI season since 2018, when he had 110 and was voted the NL MVP.

The Brewers completed a three-game sweep and reduced their magic number for clinching the NL Central to four. The Angels have lost seven straight.

**Dodgers 2, Giants 1:** Shohei Ohtani hit two doubles off the wall and scored a run, and Yoshinobu Yamamoto combined with five relievers on a one-hitter with 10 walks in Los Angeles' victory over visiting San Francisco.

Freddie Freeman singled home Ohtani in a two-run sixth for the Dodgers, who have won eight of 11 despite another adventurous evening for their beleaguered bullpen.

Yamamoto allowed only Patrick Bailey's second-inning single and struck out seven, but he also walked six while laboring into the sixth inning. Michael Kopech and Blake Treinen then combined to walk four Giants while allowing a run in the seventh.

However, Anthony Banda threw a perfect eighth and Alex Vesia calmly finished for his fifth save.

# Kershaw to retire after 18 seasons

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — An emotional Clayton Kershaw said Thursday he will retire at the end of the season, having spent his entire 18-year career with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Wiping his eyes, his voice choking at times, Kershaw said he knew going into the season that it would likely be his last, but he didn't want to say anything in case he changed his mind.

"I'm really not sad. I'm really at peace with this. It's just emotional and I tried to hold it together," he said during a news conference. "I told our guys not to make it weird today because I was going to get weird if you make it weird, and here I am making it weird."

The three-time Cy Young Award winner had his wife, Ellen, and four children with him in the room crowded with his teammates, manager Dave Roberts and media.

"I've just never been around a greater competitor," Roberts said. "Very accountable, very consistent. He's made me better and I think we've both grown together so I feel fortunate to have been able to manage him and be around him for 10 years."

The 37-year-old left-hander who got his 3,000th strikeout in July will make his final regular-season start at Dodger Stadium on Friday night against the San Francisco Giants.

"The game in and of itself I'm going to miss a lot, but I'll be OK without that," Kershaw said. "The hard thing will be the feeling after a win. That's pretty special."

The 11-time All-Star and 2014 NL MVP is tied with Zack Wheat and Bill Russell for the most years with the Dodgers in franchise history. Kershaw won World Series championships in 2020 and 2024.

"I love being here. I wouldn't change that for anything," Kershaw said. "My kids have grown

## Kings captain follows Dodgers icon with a Hollywood ending of his own

Associated Press

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Kings captain Anze Kopitar says he will retire after the upcoming season, ending a 20-year NHL career spent entirely in Los Angeles.

Kopitar, 38, made the announcement Thursday during a news conference with his family following the first practice of training camp.

"My mind is made up," he said. "It was a hard decision, and I will put 100% of my energy into this season. I know I'm going to give it all and leave the game with a positive mindset."

Kopitar made his announcement a few hours after the Los Angeles Dodgers announced that left-hander Clayton Kershaw will end his long career this season. Kershaw joined the Dodgers in 2008, two years after Kopitar arrived in LA.

"Must have been something in the universe for us to decide to do it on the same day," a laughing Kopitar said of his friend.

The Slovenian center has spent his entire hockey career and adult life with the Kings since his NHL debut as a teenager in October 2006. He is a five-time NHL All-Star, a two-time winner of the Selke Trophy as the NHL's best defensive forward and a three-time winner of the Lady Byng Trophy for sportsman-like play.

Most prominently, he was a star power forward on both of the Kings' only Stanley Cup-

winning teams in 2012 and 2014. He is the second-leading scorer in franchise history, and he expressed pride at being able to accomplish the rare feat of playing an entire lengthy career with one team.

"For me, I always looked at LA as my team, as my home," Kopitar said. "We always felt extremely comfortable here, so it didn't really cross my mind to even think or explore to go anywhere else. Obviously the fact that we were the first team to bring the Cup to LA, it makes it special, and then to follow it up with another one, those are the core memories that you can't just ignore, even sometimes when times were a little bit rough and we didn't have a very competitive team."

"Those memories, and the guys around you that have won with you before, those are the reasons that I didn't think about going anywhere else."

Kopitar is still playing at an elite level after recording 21 goals and 46 assists last season, but he said he wants to have more time with his wife and soon-to-be-teenage children. He also plans to move his family back to Slovenia.

Kopitar's 1,278 career points are 40th in NHL history, and he is just 29 points behind Marcel Dionne, the leading scorer in Kings history. He is the Kings' franchise leader in games played with 1,454, and he was their leading scorer in 15 of his first 19 seasons.

up here. We've all grown up here."

Kershaw has a career record of 222-96 and 15 shutouts, which lead active players. He threw his only no-hitter in June 2014 against Colorado.

His 2.54 ERA is the lowest of any pitcher in the live-ball era since 1920, and his winning percentage tops all pitchers with at least 200 victories since 1900.

Kershaw's decision was not unexpected. He has struggled with injuries in recent years and began this season on the IL while recovering from offseason surgery. He didn't pitch until May, but proved to be a stalwart when the rotation was

hard-hit by injuries.

In 2024, Kershaw was forced to end his season in August because of a toe injury that limited him to seven starts and just 30 innings with a 2-2 record and a 4.50 ERA, all career lows.

Kershaw is one of three active pitchers with 3,000 strikeouts, along with former teammate Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander. Kershaw could be the last pitcher for a while to reach the milestone — often considered a surefire ticket for Hall of Fame enshrinement. Kershaw would be eligible for Cooperstown in 2031.

He missed the entire postseason, including the Dodgers'

World Series win over the New York Yankees. That spurred him to return this year for what many had speculated would be his final season.

As great as he's been during the regular season, he's endured his share of heartache in October. He has a 4.22 ERA in the postseason.

His teammates often cite his work ethic between starts as inspirational, and he is a commanding, if quiet, presence in the clubhouse.

"It's a sad day, but it's an exciting day for him," third baseman Max Muncy said. "He gets to finally move on to the next chapter."