

## Dug-in sides meet as shutdown nears

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Democratic and Republican congressional leaders are heading to the White House for a meeting with President Donald Trump on Monday in a late effort to avoid a government shutdown, but both sides have shown hardly any willingness to budge from their entrenched positions.

If government funding legislation isn't passed by Congress and signed by Trump on Tuesday night, many government offices across the nation will be temporarily shuttered and non-exempt federal employees will be furloughed, adding to the strain on workers and the nation's economy.

White House aides, ahead of a meeting of Trump and congressional leaders, made it clear the Republican administration had no intention to negotiate.

"The president wants to keep the government open, he wants to keep the government funded," press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters at the White House on Monday morning, adding Trump was "giving Democrats one last chance to be reasonable today."

Republicans are daring Democrats to vote against legislation that would keep government funding mostly at current levels, but Democrats have held firm. They're using one of their few points of leverage to de-

mand Congress take up legislation to extend health care benefits.

"The meeting is a first step but only a first step. We need a serious negotiation," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Trump has shown little interest in entertaining Democrats' demands on health care, even as he agreed to hold a sit-down meeting Monday with Schumer, along with Senate Majority Leader John Thune, House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries. The Republican president has said repeatedly he fully expects the government

to enter a shutdown this week.

"If it has to shut down, it'll have to shut down," Trump said Friday. "But they're the ones that are shutting down government."

The Trump administration has tried to pressure Democratic lawmakers into backing away from their demands, warning that federal employees could be permanently laid off in a funding lapse.

"Chuck Schumer said a few months ago that a government shutdown would be chaotic, harmful and painful. He's right, and that's why we shouldn't do it," Thune, a South Dakota Republican, said Sunday on "Meet the Press."

## Decline in maintenance sidelines Marines, Army vehicles

**BY LARA KORTE**

*Stars and Stripes*

Outdated technical information and a lack of parts have led to a decline in the ability of tanks, armored vehicles and trucks used by soldiers and Marines to carry out ground missions, a government watchdog agency said in a new report.

The Government Accountability Office examined 18 combat and support vehicles across the two services and determined mission-capable rates for 16 of them had dropped since 2015.

The Army and the Marine Corps measure mission capability in different ways, but both methods act as tools for evaluating a vehicle's readiness, according to the report, which was issued Thursday.

The Army aims to ensure that its vehicles are prepared to car-

ry out 90% of their potential missions at any given time. But only one combat vehicle, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, has met that metric in the last decade, the report said.

None of the others used in combat — including the Abrams tank, the Stryker armored vehicle and the Paladin self-propelled howitzer — ever met the 90% threshold for mission capability, the GAO found.

On the support side, Army vehicles have met readiness goals about 20% of the time since 2015, according to the GAO. The joint light tactical vehicle, which came online in 2019, had the highest rate of readiness, reaching 90% mission capability in three out of six years.

The Marine Corps judges a vehicle to be mission-capable if it can perform at least one of its

potential missions. Only those vehicles that can't perform any mission are deemed not mission-capable.

Five of the seven Marine Corps vehicles the GAO examined experienced declines similar to those seen in the Army vehicles.

The Amphibious Combat Vehicle — an armored personnel carrier that can hold 16 people and reach top land speeds of 65 mph, according to the manufacturer — had the greatest rate of decline, falling more than 25% over the last decade.

Two vehicles in the Marine Corps' fleet, the assault amphibious vehicle and the light armored vehicle, have otherwise seen positive improvements in their mission capability since 2015, the report said.

Officials interviewed by the GAO gave varying explanations

for the drop-off depending on the type of vehicle.

Those included maintenance delays, worker shortages and unplanned maintenance, according to the report.

But across the board, all 18 vehicles were beset by a lack of available parts and up-to-date technical information.

Some technical data packages, for instance, still included hand-drawn diagrams that are originally from the 1960s, Army officials told the GAO.

Fewer manufacturing sources, long production times and reliance on single suppliers have also made it harder to source the needed materials, the agency found.

As one example given in the report, the Bradley program had over 40 back-ordered fuel tanks due to lead times of seven to nine months for new orders.

# Trump activates 200 Guard troops in Oregon

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two hundred members of the Oregon National Guard are being placed under federal control and deployed to protect immigration enforcement officers and government facilities, according to a Defense Department memo received by state leaders on Sunday.

The deployment is being made over the objections of state leaders and is similar to one last summer in Los Angeles, where protesters demonstrated against deportation operations, but is on a much smaller scale.

There was no immediate comment from the White House. Multiple Pentagon officials were contacted but none

would confirm or deny the authenticity of the memo.

President Donald Trump had announced on Saturday that he would send troops to Portland. The state's governor, Democrat Tina Kotek, said Sunday that she objected to the deployment in a conversation with the president.

Dan Rayfield, the state attorney general, said he was filing a federal lawsuit arguing that Trump was overstepping his authority.

"What we're seeing is not about public safety," he said. "It's about the president flexing political muscle under the guise of law and order, chasing a media hit at the expense of our community."

The Pentagon memo provided by Oregon leaders drew a direct comparison between the June deployment of thousands of Guard troops to Los Angeles and the proposed deployment to the state, adding "This memorandum further implements the President's direction."

While the memorandum does not specifically cite Portland as the target of the proposed deployment, Trump, in a social media post on Saturday, said he directed the Pentagon, at the request of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, "to provide all necessary Troops to protect War ravaged Portland, and any of our ICE Facilities under siege from attack by Antifa, and other domestic terrorists."

"I am also authorizing Full Force, if necessary," he added.

Unlike in Los Angeles, it does not appear that Trump or Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth are currently directing the deployment of active-duty troops to the state. The Trump administration deployed about 700 active-duty Marines to Los Angeles though they were withdrawn just over a month later.

The action also would be far less than Trump's deployment to Washington, D.C., where more than 1,000 National Guard troops, including units from other states, have patrolled the streets for weeks. He also has been suggesting that he will send troops into Chicago but so far has not done so.

## Military police on Okinawa see night patrol progress

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

OKINAWA CITY, Okinawa — U.S. military police detained at least five service members during their most recent joint patrol of a nightlife hot spot on Okinawa, part of a crackdown on off-duty misconduct that began in April.

The patrols on and around Gate 2 Street outside Kadena Air Base alongside Japanese authorities are meant to enforce a ban on off-base drinking by U.S. service members between 1 and 5 a.m. They seem to be having the intended effect, military police leaders with the Air Force and Marine Corps said Saturday on Okinawa city's streets.

Maj. Donald Kidd, acting Marine Corps provost marshal on Okinawa, compared Saturday to an earlier patrol, saying the improvement in behavior was "night and day."

"The service members understand," he said at Kadena's Gate

2. "Even when we catch them in the act, they know. Everybody's informed and the message is out there."

Air Force Lt. Col. Brad Robinson of the 18th Security Forces Squadron led roughly 35 military police personnel from all services on the patrol from midnight to 2 a.m.

They were joined by 26 Japanese police and community members, an Okinawa city spokesman said Monday. Some Japanese government officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

"We're trying to create a safe enough environment where the community starts to trust us ... so we can get rid of the liberty order," Robinson told police personnel before the patrol began. "Our actions tonight will help build that environment."

After Saturday's patrol, Robinson said no violent incidents with service members occurred.

## USS Benfold off to Wash. after 10 years in Japan

BY ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold, with sailors in their summer whites manning the rails, concluded a decade with the U.S. 7th Fleet and sailed out of Tokyo Bay on Monday.

The Benfold, part of Destroyer Squadron 15 since it arrived in October 2015, will relocate to Naval Station Everett, Wash., a ship rotation first announced by the U.S. Pacific Fleet in August 2024.

"Benfold successfully stood the watch in the Western Pacific for 10 years," squadron commander Capt. Dave Huljack said in a news release Thursday. "This ship leaves with an amazing legacy as a workhorse for the fleet and a stalwart friend to our allies and partners."

The Benfold's replacement is the guided-missile destroyer USS Preble, which arrived at Yokosuka in October. It is the only

U.S. warship outfitted with the High-Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance, or HELIOS, system, which can counter small watercraft and drones.

The Benfold in 2015 similarly arrived as one of the Navy's most advanced destroyers, equipped with the newest version of the Aegis Combat System — a suite of technology on Arleigh Burke-class destroyers that integrates combat and defense systems.

Ship swaps are routine for the Navy, and the service over the past decade has often sent its most advanced vessels to the Indo-Pacific.

While at Yokosuka, the Benfold took part in multinational exercises. It also made at least three trips through the Taiwan Strait and one through the South China Sea to maintain a right to pass through international waterways, trips that China condemned as violations of its sovereignty.

# Netanyahu apologizes to Qatar for strike

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used a White House visit on Monday to extend a formal apology to his Qatari counterpart for a recent military strike targeting Hamas officials in the Gulf emirate that infuriated Arab leaders and triggered rare criticism by the U.S. of Israel.

Netanyahu made the call to Qatar Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani as he met with President Donald Trump for critical talks aimed at ending the war in Gaza and developing a U.S. plan on postwar governance in the war-battered Palestinian territory, according to the White House.

“As a first step, Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed his deep regret that Israel’s missile strike against Hamas targets in Qatar unintentionally killed a Qatari serviceman,” the White House said in a statement. “He further expressed regret that, in targeting Hamas leadership during hostage negotiations, Israel violated Qatari sovereignty and affirmed that Israel will not conduct such an attack again in the future.”

The White House talks, and apology from Netanyahu, come at a tenuous moment. Israel is increasingly isolated, losing support from many countries that were long its steadfast allies. At home, Netanyahu’s go-

verning coalition appears more fragile than ever. And the White House is showing signs of impatience.

As he welcomed Netanyahu to the White House, Trump responded affirmatively when asked by reporters whether he was confident a deal would be soon reached to end the fighting between Israel and Hamas.

“I am. I’m very confident,” Trump said.

Israel stuck the headquarters of Hamas’ political leadership in Qatar on Sept. 9 as the group’s top figures gathered to consider a U.S. proposal for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

The strike on the territory of a U.S. ally was a stunning escala-

tion and risked upending talks aimed at winding down the war and freeing hostages. No senior Hamas officials were killed in the strike.

The attack on an energy-rich Gulf nation hosting thousands of American troops, which has served as a key mediator between Israel and Hamas throughout the war and even before, was described by Trump as out of step with Israeli and U.S. interests. And Trump sought to move quickly to assuage his Qatari allies.

Qatar, meanwhile, condemned the strike as a “flagrant violation of all international laws and norms” as smoke rose over its capital, Doha.

## Missouri governor signs new map to boost the GOP

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe signed a new U.S. House map into law Sunday as part of President Donald Trump’s plan to try to hold on to a narrow Republican majority in next year’s congressional election.

Kehoe’s signature puts the revised districts into state law with a goal of helping Republicans win one additional seat. But it may not be the final action. Opponents are pursuing a referendum petition that, if successful, would force a statewide vote on the new map. They also have brought several lawsuits

against it.

U.S. House districts were redrawn across the country after the 2020 census to account for population changes. But Missouri is the third state this year to try to redraw its districts for partisan advantage, a process known as gerrymandering.

Republican lawmakers in Texas passed a new U.S. House map last month aimed at helping their party win five additional seats. Democratic lawmakers in California countered with their own redistricting plan aimed at winning five more seats, though it still needs voter approval. Other states also are

considering redistricting.

Each seat could be critical, because Democrats need to gain just three seats to win control of the House, which would allow them to obstruct Trump’s agenda and launch investigations into him. Trump is trying to stave off a historic trend in which the president’s party typically loses seats in midterm elections.

Republicans currently hold six of Missouri’s eight U.S. House seats. The new map targets a seat held by Democratic U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver by shaving off portions of his Kansas City district and stretching

the rest of it into Republican-heavy rural areas. It reduces the number of Black and minority residents in Cleaver’s district, which he has represented for two decades after serving as Kansas City’s first Black mayor.

Cleaver has denounced the redistricting plan for using Kansas City’s Troost Avenue — a street that has long segregated Black and white residents — as one of the dividing lines for the new districts.

Kehoe has defended the new map as a means of boosting Missouri’s “conservative, common-sense values” in the nation’s capital.

## Video game maker EA to be acquired for \$55 billion

Associated Press

Electronic Arts, maker of video games like “Madden NFL” and “The Sims,” is being acquired for \$55 billion, the most expensive leveraged buyout in history.

Under the terms of the deal announced Monday, the private equity firm Silver Lake Part-

ners, Saudi Arabia’s sovereign wealth fund PIF and Affinity Partners will pay EA’s stockholders \$210 per share. Affinity Partners is a private equity firm run by President Donald Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

The deal was anticipated, with leaks of discussions coming out

at the end of last week in a report by The Wall Street Journal. The total value of the deal eclipses the \$32 billion price paid to take Texas utility TXU private in 2007.

If the transaction closes as anticipated, it will end EA’s 36-year history as a publicly traded company that began with its shares

ending its first day of trading at a split-adjusted 52 cents.

The IPO came seven years after EA was founded by former Apple employee William “Trip” Hawkins, who began playing analog versions of baseball and football made by “Strat-O-Matic” as a teenager during the 1960s.



# Shooting, fire at Michigan church leave 4 dead

Associated Press

Investigators were focusing on what motivated a former Marine to ram a pickup truck into the sanctuary of a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Michigan and open fire during a crowded service, killing at least four people while setting the building ablaze.

Crews continued searching for victims in the charred rubble Monday as authorities said “some” people were unaccounted for following the Sunday morning attack that wounded eight others in Grand Blanc Township, about 60 miles north of Detroit.

The FBI considered the attack — the second on an American church in little over a month — an “act of targeted vio-

lence,” said Ruben Coleman, a special agent in charge for the bureau.

Authorities identified the shooter as Thomas Jacob Sanford, 40, of the neighboring town of Burton. Investigators deployed a robot while searching Sanford’s residence Sunday but did not say what they found or provide any additional details about him, including whether he had any connection to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, widely known as the Mormon church.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said investigators were looking into how much planning went into the attack.

“From what I understand, based on my conversations with

the FBI director, all they know right now is this was an individual who hated people of the Mormon faith,” she said Monday during an interview on Fox News Channel’s “Fox and Friends.”

Crews in white coveralls and hard hats searched through what remained of the church on Monday morning. A silver pickup truck with two American flags in the back remained where it had smashed into the front brick wall near a sign that says “visitors welcome.”

Across the street, there was an SUV with apparent bullet holes in the windshield and driver window.

The attacker apparently used gas to start the fire and also had explosive devices but it wasn’t

clear if he used them, said James Dier of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Officers responding to a 911 call were at the church within a minute, said Township Police Chief William Renye. The suspect was killed while exchanging gunfire with two officers, the chief said.

Flames and smoke poured from the church for hours. The fire gutted nearly all of the building, consuming its towering white steeple and sanctuary — only its outer walls and a few side rooms remained standing.

Two bodies were found in the debris, and Renye said on Sunday more victims could be found but he did not have an exact number of those missing.

## Gunman fires on NC seaside bar from boat, killing 3

Associated Press

SOUTHPORT, N.C. — A mass shooting that shattered the evening tranquility of a picturesque, seaside town in North Carolina was a “highly premeditated” attack that left three people dead and five injured, police said Sunday. The suspect who allegedly carried out the attack on a waterfront bar was in custody.

Nigel Edge, 40, of Oak Island is accused of opening fire Saturday night from a boat into a crowd gathered at the Ameri-

can Fish Company in Southport, a historic port town about 30 miles south of Wilmington, Police Chief Todd Coring said.

At a press conference Sunday, Coring said the location was “targeted,” but he did not elaborate.

Authorities said Edge piloted a small boat close to shore, which was lined with bars and restaurants, stopped briefly and fired.

He then sped away.

Roughly half an hour after the shooting, a U.S. Coast Guard

crew spotted a person matching the suspect’s description pulling a boat from the water at a public ramp on Oak Island.

The person was detained and turned over to Southport police for questioning, officials said.

Edge is charged with three counts of first-degree murder, five counts of attempted first-degree murder and five counts of assault with a deadly weapon.

“We understand this suspect identifies as a combat veteran. He self-identifies. Injured in the line of duty is what he’s saying,

he suffers from PTSD,” Coring said.

CNN reported Edge was a veterans of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Edge was scheduled to make his first court appearance on Monday, District Attorney Jon David said. He is being held without bond.

Among the five people hospitalized with injuries, at least one “is now clinging for their life,” David said. Some of the victims were vacationers from out of town.

## Moldova’s pro-EU party wins parliament majority

Associated Press

CHISINAU, Moldova — Moldovans gave the country’s pro-Western governing party a clear parliamentary majority in a weekend election, defeating pro-Russian groups in a vote widely viewed as a stark choice between East and West.

European leaders on Monday hailed Moldovans for re-affirm-

ing their commitment to a Western path and future membership in the European Union in the face of alleged Russian interference. The country is small in size and population but with geopolitical importance.

“You made your choice clear: Europe. Democracy. Freedom,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

said on X. “No attempt to sow fear or division could break your resolve.”

The outcome of Sunday’s high-stakes ballot was noteworthy considering Moldovan authorities’ repeated claims that Russia was conducting a vast “hybrid war” to try to sway the outcome and seize power in Chisinau. Moldova applied to join

the EU in 2022 in the wake of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and was granted candidate status that year.

With nearly all polling station reports counted on Monday, electoral data showed the pro-EU Party of Action and Solidarity securing 50.1% of the vote, while the pro-Russian Patriotic Electoral Bloc won 24.2%.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Thieves steal \$1 million worth in craft whiskey

**WA** BURLINGTON — Thieves who made off with 12,000 bottles of craft whiskey in a rare U.S. liquor heist this summer did more than just snag nearly \$1 million worth of product — they also spirited away nearly half the stock of a single malt distillers had worked for more than a decade to make.

Now the Skagit Valley Sheriff's Office is investigating, and whiskey aficionados are wondering if — and where — the coveted bottles of Westland Distillery's first 10-year Garryana whiskey might turn up.

The bottles disappeared July 31, when someone in a freight truck showed up at Westland Distillery's warehouse in Burlington, Wash., holding the paperwork that purportedly gave them the right to pick up a shipment of Westland single malt, Watchpost blended, and Garryana whiskeys bound for New Jersey.

But the bottles never arrived at their intended destination, and the "sophisticated, fraudulent carrier scheme" was discovered a week later, said Jason Moore, the managing director of the Seattle-based distillery.

### Trader Joe's, Walmart meals may have listeria

**DC** WASHINGTON — Federal health officials are warning consumers not to eat certain heat-and-eat pasta meals sold at Walmart and Trader Joe's because they may be contaminated with listeria bacteria previously linked to a deadly outbreak.

The U.S. Agriculture Depart-

ment updated a public health alert Friday to include Trader Joe's Cajun Style Blackened Chicken Breast Fettuccine Alfredo sold in 16-ounce plastic trays.

Late Thursday the USDA issued a warning for Marketside Linguine with Beef Meatballs & Marinara Sauce sold at Walmart in refrigerated 12-ounce clear plastic trays.

The meals may be contaminated with the same strain of listeria that caused an outbreak tied to chicken fettuccine Alfredo sold at Walmart and Kroger stores.

Four people were killed and at least 20 were sickened in the outbreak updated by federal health officials on Friday evening. The outbreak led to a large recall this summer.

### Gunman who said NFL hid brain injury data had CTE

**NY** NEW YORK — The former high school football player who killed four people inside a Manhattan office tower that houses the headquarters of the NFL, and who blamed the league for hiding the dangers of brain injuries, was suffering from the degenerative brain disease CTE, a city medical examiner said Friday.

Shane Tamura, 27, had "unambiguous diagnostic evidence" of low-stage chronic traumatic encephalopathy, commonly known as CTE, according to a report from the New York City medical examiner.

Tamura, a Las Vegas casino worker, shot himself in the chest after a July 28 mass shooting that killed a police officer, a security guard and two others who worked inside the building.

In a three-page note found in his wallet, Tamura said he believed he had CTE — diagnosable only after death — and implored those who found him: "Study my brain."

### Man eats pet peacocks after neighbor fed them

**FL** HUDSON — A man is accused of killing and eating two of his pet peacocks to "spite" a neighbor in Florida, officials say.

The 61-year-old Hudson man, Craig Vogt, was arrested Sept. 23 after deputies said a neighbor received a disturbing letter from him and called authorities, a complaint filed in Pasco County said.

In the letter, which Vogt put in her mailbox, he wrote that he "killed two of his pet peacocks because she continued feeding them," according to the complaint.

The neighbor said she had previously gotten into a verbal dispute with Vogt over her feeding the birds, documents read.

Speaking with deputies, Vogt said he wrote the letter to "prove a point," according to the Pasco County Sheriff's Office.

Vogt said that, "upon his release, he plans to kill all his pet peacocks to prevent anyone from taking custody of them," according to deputies.

He was arrested on a charge of aggravated animal cruelty and booked into the Land O' Lakes Detention Center, officials said.

### Fire at metal recycling facility burned for hours

**NY** DEWITT — Firefighters have mostly extinguished a large fire at a metal recycling facility in De-

Witt, where a pile of recyclable material burned for at least eight hours on Sunday.

Just after 3 p.m., DeWitt Fire District Chief Jason C. Green said that the fire was mostly out, but crews remained to check for buried, smoldering fires within the pile.

Thick smoke could be seen miles away, but Green said there were no immediate health or safety concerns for nearby neighborhoods. Green said it took so long to put out the fire due to the large amount of material burning.

No injuries were reported.

### Hurt BASE jumper saved from mountain pass

**CO** ASPEN — A BASE jumper crashed Saturday afternoon at the bottom of a climbing wall on Independence Pass in Pitkin County, according to rescuers.

The jumper landed roughly 200 feet from a parking area on the mountain pass, at the base of the Grotto Wall climbing area, according to a news release from Mountain Rescue Aspen.

Pitkin County dispatchers received an emergency text reporting the crash landing at about 12:15 p.m. Saturday and sent Mountain Rescue Aspen crews to the Grotto Wall less than 10 minutes later, the news release stated.

Rescue officials reported that the BASE jumper landed in difficult, rocky terrain and required assistance to reach the ambulance.

The 13-person rescue team built a guided-line system to lower the injured jumper from the rocky area to the ambulance, the news release stated.

— From wire reports

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# Reds earn last playoff spot amid Mets' fade

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — This was the kind of moment that helped lure Terry Francona back into managing.

Cincinnati earned its first playoff berth since 2020 on Sunday, setting off a wild, champagne-soaked celebration. It's the first time in franchise history the Reds have clinched a playoff berth on the final day of the regular season, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

"When you watch those guys, it's just unbridled joy," said Francona, who spent last year away from baseball for health reasons before taking over Cincinnati. "It doesn't matter the language you speak, what country you're from. They're hugging each other, and it's real. And it's worth all the heartache and everything we did, just for those couple of minutes."

The Reds blew an opportunity to clinch a playoff spot on

their own when they squandered a 2-0 lead in a 4-2 loss to the Milwaukee Brewers. But they still got the National League's third and final wild card because the New York Mets were beaten 4-0 by the Miami Marlins.

After Cincinnati's game ended, the Reds went into the locker room and watched the final inning of the Mets-Marlins game.

"We witnessed the last out," reliever Tony Santillan said, "and the clubhouse exploded."

Cincinnati and New York both finished 83-79, but the Reds owned the head-to-head tiebreaker after going 4-2 against the Mets this season.

Cincinnati heads to Los Angeles to begin a best-of-three Wild Card Series against the defending World Series champion Dodgers on Tuesday night. The Reds went 1-5 against the Dodgers during the regular season.

According to Sportradar, the

only other teams in the 162-game era to reach the playoffs with fewer than 84 wins were the 1973 Mets (82-79), 2005 San Diego Padres (82-80) and 2006 St. Louis Cardinals (83-78). The 1973 Mets and 2006 Cardinals both reached the World Series, with St. Louis winning it all.

"As long as you get in, it's a crapshoot," said Cincinnati utilityman Gavin Lux, who won World Series titles with the Dodgers in 2020 and 2024. "Whoever gets hot. Anyone can beat anyone."

The Reds' playoff berth adds one more line to Francona's Hall of Fame-worthy resume.

In his first season as Boston's manager, Francona led the 2004 Red Sox to their first World Series title since 1918. He managed Boston to another World Series championship in 2007 and got Cleveland to Game 7 of the 2016 World Series.

Now he's in the postseason

again. His pep talk in mid-September when Cincinnati was below .500 sparked a surge.

"After we got swept in Sacramento, Tito came in and basically said, 'I know I believe in us. I still believe in all of you. I believe in this group,'" Lux said. "We kind of went on a little run there at the end."

The Reds' playoff berth means New York will stay home for the postseason, a humbling finish for a team whose \$322.6 million payroll at the start of the season was the highest in the majors. Although the Mets owned a big league-best 45-24 record through June 12, they went 38-55 after that.

"It's a failure," New York outfielder Juan Soto said. "Anytime you don't make it to the playoffs or win a championship, it's a failure. That's how we're going to look at it, and that's how we're going to go through things in the offseason."

# Blue Jays hold off Yankees to win 7th AL East crown

Associated Press

TORONTO — The Toronto Blue Jays capped a turnaround from worst to first by holding off the New York Yankees to win the AL East on the final day of the season, their first division title in a decade and the seventh in team history.

"The job is not finished," slugger Vladimir Guerrero Jr. said after a 13-4 win over the Tampa Bay Rays that clinched the division crown and secured a bye into the Division Series. "We've got to continue to play hard and play good baseball."

The Blue Jays finished 74-88 a season ago, last in the AL East and 20 games behind the first-place Yankees.

"I think everybody believed that last year was not who we were as a team," outfielder George Springer said. "From day one of spring training you could kind of feel the vibe."

This year, a four-game sweep over New York from June 30 to July 3 was part of a season-best 10-game winning streak that vaulted Toronto into the division lead for good.

"Once we kind of hit our stride, we didn't think anyone could beat us," manager John

Schneider said. "This is, in my opinion, the toughest division in the game. I don't think anyone, besides the people that are here soaking wet like me, expected us to be in this position."

The Blue Jays lost six of seven down the stretch, falling into a first-place tie with the Yankees, but held onto the top spot in the AL by winning their final four games.

"We almost broke at the end but, from that point on, we didn't break in the division," Schneider said. "That was obviously a huge four games for us."

Toronto won eight of 13 meetings with New York this season, giving it the tiebreaker after both teams finished 94-68.

Springer hit one of four Blue Jays home runs in Sunday's rout, his latest drive in a productive season that seemed unlikely in 2024, when the 2017 World Series MVP struggled through one of the worst years of his career, hitting just .220.

"I can't say enough about him," Schneider said of Springer. "Fitting that his last at-bat was a home run. He's the heart and soul of our team. He's infectious when he plays and he's infectious in the clubhouse."

Toronto will face the winner of the best-of-three Wild Card Series between the Red Sox and Yankees in the ALDS, giving the Blue Jays a valuable opportunity to rest and recover while their foes battle in the Bronx this week.

Game 1 will be Saturday in Toronto, and the Blue Jays have home-field advantage throughout the AL playoffs after finishing with the top record in the American League.

Arguably no one needs the break more than shortstop Bo Bichette. The two-time AL hits leader and two-time All-Star hasn't played since Sept. 6, when he injured his left knee in a collision with New York catcher Austin Wells.

"It's kind of exactly what we needed," Schneider said of the five-day break before the Division Series. "I hope that (Bichette) gets a chance to contribute to this. He's been instrumental to what we've been doing here the last six years."

Bichette has been hitting off a tee and throwing, but has yet to resume running.

"Every day I'm feeling better," Bichette said. "I'll be doing everything that I possibly can to get back."



# Packers, Cowboys end game in rare tie

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Brandon Aubrey and Brandon McManus traded short field goals in overtime, and Micah Parsons' highly anticipated return to Dallas ended with the Cowboys and Green Bay Packers in a 40-40 tie Sunday night.

Dak Prescott and Jordan Love had three touchdown passes apiece in regulation, which included seven consecutive lead-changing TDs before McManus' tying 53-yard field goal as time expired.

McManus kicked a 34-yarder as the clock hit 0:00 in overtime, just after Love's pass into the back of the end zone fell incomplete with just a second remaining.

What started as the hyped return of one of the game's elite pass rushers exactly a month after Dallas (1-2-1) traded Parsons to Green Bay (2-1-1) ended up as the second dramatic duel of quarterbacks in as many home games for the Cowboys.

The second-highest scoring tie in NFL history, behind the Raiders' 43-43 draw with the Boston Patriots in the AFL in 1964, was the first for Dallas since 1969. The Packers last tied in 2018.

**Eagles 31, Buccaneers 25:** Visiting Philadelphia used a fake punt, another special teams touchdown and a late defensive stop to beat Tampa Bay, staying undefeated.

Jalen Hurts tossed two touchdown passes, Sydney Brown returned a blocked punt for a score and the Eagles beat Tampa Bay for their 20th victory in 21 games.

Chase McLaughlin's 65-yard field goal for the Buccaneers on the final play of the first half was the longest in NFL history in an outdoor stadium.

**Bills 31, Saints 19:** Josh Allen threw two touchdown passes and ran for a score, and host Buffalo shook off a sloppy first three quarters to stay undefeated while beating winless New Orleans.

The five-time defending AFC

East champion Bills are 4-0 for the 10th time in team history and first since 2020. Buffalo also won its 14th straight regular-season outing at home, one short of matching the franchise record spanning the 1990-91 seasons.

The Saints opened a season 0-4 for the ninth time in team history and first since 2012. They've lost eight straight dating to last year, their worst streak since losing 14 straight in 1980.

**Texans 26, Titans 0:** Rookie Woody Marks had a touchdown reception and ran for another score, and host Houston beat Tennessee for its first win this season.

It's the third time the Texans have shut out a team and the first time since blanking the Titans 29-0 on Nov. 28, 2010. Tennessee was shut out for the first time since a 16-0 loss at Denver on Oct. 13, 2019.

C.J. Stroud threw for 233 yards and two touchdowns as Houston scored three touchdowns in the fourth quarter Sunday to put the game away and match its TD total in the previous three games combined.

**Falcons 34, Commanders 27:** Michael Penix Jr. bounced back from his worst NFL start, Bijan Robinson had a career-high 181 yards from scrimmage and host Atlanta beat short-handed Washington.

The Falcons (2-2) were coming off a 30-0 loss to the Panthers in which Penix and the offense were totally ineffective. Against the Commanders (2-2), Penix completed 20 of 26 passes for a career-high 313 yards with two touchdowns and one interception.

Robinson had 75 rushing yards on 17 carries, including a nifty 14-yard touchdown run where he broke multiple tackles.

**Patriots 42, Panthers 13:** Marcus Jones had an 87-yard punt return for a touchdown, Drake Maye added two touchdown passes and ran for another, and host New England rolled to a win over Carolina.

TreVeyon Henderson and Antonio Gibson added touchdown runs and Jones had a 61-yard punt return that set up another TD to help the Patriots (2-2) avoid their fifth straight 1-3 start.

A week after turning the ball over five times in a loss to Pittsburgh, New England was turnover-free while going 4 for 4 in the red zone.

**Lions 34, Browns 10:** Jared Goff threw two touchdown passes to Amon-Ra St. Brown, Kalif Raymond returned a punt 65 yards for another score and host Detroit beat Cleveland.

The Lions (3-1) intercepted Joe Flacco twice in the first half and scored 20 straight points for a 13-point lead at halftime. Detroit forced Flacco to fumble in the fourth, setting up another touchdown.

The Browns (1-3) opened with an 88-yard, 13-play touchdown drive, then had 44 yards with three punts and two turnovers the rest of the half. They finished with 249 yards of offense, gaining an average of 3.8 yards per play.

**Giants 21, Chargers 18:** Jason Dart threw a touchdown pass and ran for another score in an impressive NFL starting debut, leading host New York to its first victory over previously undefeated Los Angeles.

The excitement by the Giants (1-3) over the win was a bit tempered by the uncertain status of wide receiver Malik Nabers, who was carted off the field in the second quarter with a knee injury.

Dart launched a deep pass down the right sideline toward a streaking Nabers. The wide receiver's right leg appeared to buckle as he went up to try to catch the pass, which fell incomplete.

**Rams 27, Colts 20:** Tutu Atwell caught an 88-yard touchdown pass from Matthew Stafford with 1:33 to play, and host Los Angeles rallied to end Indianapolis' unbeaten start to the season with a victory.

Daniel Jones passed for 262 yards for the Colts (3-1), but Indy couldn't overcome receiver Adonai Mitchell's mind-boggling fumble right before he crossed the goal line with what was about to be a 76-yard touchdown reception in the third quarter.

Stafford passed for 375 yards and three touchdowns for the Rams (3-1), and he hit Puka Nacua for a 9-yard score with 3:20 left. Nacua finished with 13 catches for 170 yards.

**Jaguars 26, 49ers 21:** Parker Washington had Jacksonville's first punt return touchdown in eight seasons and the Jaguars' opportunistic defense delivered four more takeaways in a victory over host San Francisco.

Former 49ers star Arik Armstead's strip-sack of Brock Purdy with less than three minutes to play sealed the win for Jacksonville (3-1).

The Jaguars have generated at least three takeaways in all four games this season, and have four more takeaways than they had in the entire 2024 season.

**Chiefs 37, Ravens 20:** Patrick Mahomes threw for 270 yards and four touchdowns while outdueling Lamar Jackson, who left in the second half with a right hamstring injury, and host Kansas City routed beat-up Baltimore.

The Chiefs (2-2) built a 20-10 halftime lead against the Ravens before cruising to their seventh win in the past eight meetings. The most recent time Baltimore (1-3) beat them was September 2021, and its previous win in Kansas City was Oct. 7, 2021.

**Bears 25, Raiders 24:** Josh Blackwell blocked a 54-yard field-goal attempt by Daniel Carlson in the final minute to preserve a fourth-quarter rally led by Caleb Williams, and visiting Chicago stunned Las Vegas.

Chicago became the second team to win 800 regular-season games, joining the Green Bay Packers, who have 812. Las Vegas has lost three straight.

# Elliott clinches playoffs spot in wild OT

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — The odds were stacked against Chase Elliott as he lined up eighth in overtime at Kansas Speedway in a pivotal NASCAR playoff race.

Elliott had five Toyota drivers ahead of him including Denny Hamlin, who had dominated all of Sunday until a slew of late cautions turned the race upside down.

Even so, not even Elliott's own crew believed NASCAR's most popular driver could steal the win and lock himself into the third round of the playoffs.

And yet Elliott pulled it off, coming from seemingly nowhere to chase down Hamlin, Bubba Wallace and the fleet of Toyotas. Elliott door-slammed Hamlin to get to the checkered flag first — his second win of the season — and the Hendrick Motorsports driver joins Ryan Blaney as the two drivers already locked into NASCAR's third round of the playoffs.

Elliott said he believes it is the most exciting victory of his 21 ca-

reer Cup wins.

Hamlin dominated and led 159 laps until a bevy of late issues denied him his chance at career win No. 60 for Joe Gibbs Racing. The race had a slew of late cautions — Hamlin dropped from the lead to seventh on a slow pit stop — that put Wallace in position to win the race. A red-flag stoppage for Zane Smith flipping his car set up the final overtime restart and Wallace was holding tight in a door-to-door battle with Christopher Bell for the victory.

Then Hamlin came from nowhere to catch Wallace, who drives for the team Hamlin co-owns with Michael Jordan, and Wallace scraped the wall as he tried to hold off his boss. That's when Elliott suddenly entered the frame and smashed Hamlin in the door to get past him for his second win of the season.

Elliott and Blaney are locked into the round of eight of the playoffs. The field will be cut from 12 drivers after next week's race in Concord, N.C., and Elliott said once he got in position for the victory, he wasn't giving up.

Hamlin finished second and was clearly dejected by the defeat. The three-time Daytona 500 winner is considered the greatest driver to never win a Cup title and needed the victory to lock up his spot in the next round of the playoffs. He also has a 60th Cup win set as a major career goal and is stuck on 59 victories.

He drove the final 50-plus laps with his power steering on the fritz.

Hamlin was followed by his JGR teammates Bell and Chase Briscoe, who were third and fourth.

Wallace wound up fifth and even though the victory would have moved him deeper into the playoffs than he's ever been in his career, he was satisfied considering how poorly his car was running earlier in the race. He wasn't even upset with Hamlin and shook hands with his boss on pit road.

"To even have a shot at the win with the way we started ... you could have fooled me. We were not good," Wallace said. "Two

years ago I'd probably say something dumb (about Hamlin). He's a dumbass for that move. I don't care if he's my boss or not. But we're going for the win. I hate that we gave it to Chevrolet there."

Elliott, in a Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports, was the only non-Toyota driver in the top five.

## Reddick races

Reddick raced Sunday and finished seventh, hours after his wife disclosed on social media their newborn son has been ailing for several months.

Alexa Reddick posted she was in the cardiovascular intensive care unit at a North Carolina hospital with Rookie, the couple's second son who was born in May, working on improving his "heart function." She wrote she had been seeking medical care for Rookie for some time without getting any concrete answers for what appeared to be "signs of heart failure that were being missed."

"Always trust your mom gut," she added.

# Europe claims Ryder Cup yet again after US charge

Associated Press

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. — Staked to the largest lead in history, Europe fully expected to win the Ryder Cup on Sunday. The surprise was how much emotion poured out of the team on a final day that produced a furious American charge and, ultimately, another Irish hero.

What looked to be only a matter of time before the European celebration was on turned into nervous glances at the scorecard as the unruly crowd at Bethpage Black finally had a U.S. team to cheer for instead of against.

And then Shane Lowry, who endured so much abuse from a hostile and vulgar New York crowd, had the last word. He holed a 6-foot birdie putt against Russell Henley to earn the half-

point Europe needed to make sure it kept that 17-inch gold chalice.

This was Europe's fifth time winning on U.S. soil in the last 10 tries.

Tyrrell Hatton earned a halve against Collin Morikawa that made Europe an outright winner.

The final score — Europe 15, United States 13 — was the only real surprise.

The Americans at least showed a pulse and made their opponents sweat more than anyone imagined, storming back from a seven-point deficit. No team ever won from more than four points behind going into the 12 singles matches. Cameron Young and Justin Thomas won matches on the 18th hole. Bryson DeChambeau charged from 5 down to earn

a halve. Scottie Scheffler avoided getting blanked by winning his heavyweight match against Rory McIlroy.

Another point came from Xander Schauffele in the shortest match of the day, 4 and 3, over Jon Rahm. U.S. Open champion J.J. Spaun won his match. Except for Ludvig Åberg taking down Patrick Cantlay, there was no European blue anywhere to be found. All they needed was a half-point.

That's when Lowry came through. He was 2 down with four holes to play when he birdied three of the last four, none more memorable than the last one.

The Americans tied a Ryder Cup record by winning 8½ points from the 12 singles matches. They needed 10 points.

McIlroy had said winning a

road Ryder Cup was among the biggest accomplishments in golf. It's just not all that unusual. Europe has won five of the last 10 away from home.

Europe put a half-point on the board before a shot was hit. Viktor Hovland, who had a summer neck injury flare up Saturday, was forced to withdraw. Harris English, whose name had been put in the secret envelope, also sat out and the match was declared halved.

That meant the Americans had to win nine of the 11 matches and halve another and they put up an astonishing fight, finally hearing cheers for the U.S. instead of only vitriol toward Europe.

But it couldn't prevent a European celebration, which is becoming all too familiar.