

# Chicago Tribune



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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



Sky coach Teresa Weatherspoon celebrates with fans during the Sky's draft watch party at Revolution Brewing in Chicago on Monday. **EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

## Sky ticket sales soar following WNBA draft

Selections of Cardoso, Reese spawn renewed excitement in team

By **Kate Armanini**  
Chicago Tribune

Ticket sales for the Chicago Sky are soaring after the team selected three star players in the WNBA draft Monday, the latest surge of support for women's basketball nationwide.

With the No. 3 and No. 7 picks, the Sky added South Carolina center Kamilla Cardoso and LSU forward Angel Reese to its roster. In the second round, the Sky selected Gonzaga guard Brynna Maxwell with the 13th pick.

"If you're not going to a Sky game this year, I don't know what you're doing," said Karli Bell, the Chicago Sky reporter for Marquee Sports Network. "This is going to be that new generation that's going to bring in those fans."

With an increase of televised games, as well as the addition of the "March Madness" trademark to the women's college bracket in 2022, the historically overlooked sport has seen a renaissance in recent years. This year, ratings for the NCAA women's title game topped the men's championship, with an average of 18.7 million viewers.

Many have dubbed the phenomena the "Caitlin Clark effect." Clark, a former guard for the University of Iowa, was this year's No. 1 pick. Tickets for a June 23 game between the Chicago Sky and the Indiana Fever — the team that drafted Clark — are nearly sold out on Ticketmaster, with prices as high as \$1,700. The cheapest tickets are \$225.

"There has definitely been an increase in ticket sales throughout the year that coincides with the tremendous amount of talent coming out of the NCAA and into the WNBA this upcoming season," Anthony Whaley, Sky vice president of ticket sales, said in a statement. "Fans are wanting to watch more women's basketball and the

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## Aldermen defending ShotSpotter

It's called 'invaluable tool' as council mulls bucking Johnson on technology

By **Jake Sheridan**  
Chicago Tribune

Despite Mayor Brandon Johnson's plan to rid Chicago of ShotSpotter, nearly all aldermen representing the neighborhoods where people are most likely to be shot still want the controversial gunshot detection system to

stay in their wards.

Fourteen aldermen in the 17 wards with the highest gunshot victimization rates told the Tribune they want to see the police response tool remain. Those aldermen — all representing South and West side wards — view the tool as a way to get first responders to gunshot victims

faster, rather than the too-costly impetus for over-policing it has been labeled by opponents.

The group of supporters forms the backbone of a push to take future control of the technology out of Johnson's hands. An order up for a final vote Wednesday is designed to give the City Council power to determine ShotSpotter's fate.

"If it can just do one thing good and save a life, it's worth trying," West Side Ald. Emma Mitts, 37th, told the Tribune.

The effort to undercut Johnson's campaign promise to cancel the ShotSpotter contract pits many regular allies against him. They tout support for the system from neighborhood police district commanders and stark fears about what happens in the absence of the tool that often gives officers their only notice of gunfire.

But despite their concerns, ShotSpotter proponents in

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Yovanny Lopez, husband of 19-year-old Marlen Ochoa-Lopez, who was slain while nine months pregnant, is consoled Tuesday after Clarisa Figueroa entered a guilty plea to first-degree murder. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

## Woman gets 50 years after plea in grisly '19 homicide

Judge tells her to remember destroying the family of pregnant teen she killed

By **Madeline Buckley**  
Chicago Tribune

With the five-year anniversary of the slaying of 19-year-old Marlen Ochoa-Lopez looming, the woman accused of killing the teen and cutting her baby out of the womb in a sensational case that drew international attention was sentenced to 50 years in prison.

Clarisa Figueroa, 51, entered a guilty plea on charges of first-degree murder Tuesday. She had been charged with

murder, kidnapping, dismembering a human body and other felonies in the April 2019 killing of Ochoa-Lopez, who was nine months pregnant.

She appeared in court at the Leighton Criminal Court Building sitting in a wheelchair, while family members of Ochoa-Lopez lined the front row of the gallery carrying a photograph of Marlen's young family.

"They ... live every single day with the actions that you put into motion on April 23, 2019," Judge Peggy Chiampas said after she

accepted the guilty plea. "Every single day, I want you to think of those individuals. Every single day."

Figueroa strangled the teen with a cable, slicing open her abdomen from side to side, removing the baby from the womb and placing him in a bucket, prosecutors said. The baby, Yovanny Jadiel Lopez, died months later.

"The memory of my infant son's last breath in my arms is complete agony," wrote Marlen's



Marlen Ochoa-Lopez

husband Yovanny Lopez in a statement read to the court by an advocate.

Lopez and his family wore shirts that displayed a photograph of a sunflower field, which he said was Marlen's favorite flower.

In his victim impact statement, he said his other son Joshua "has lost his mother forever."

"The death of my wife Marlen

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### INSIDE



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## QR code links to Taylor Swift album teaser

Taylor Swift fans watch workers on a forklift place finishing touches on a painted promotional QR code at 25 W. Grand Ave. in Chicago on Tuesday. The QR code links to a 13-second YouTube short on Swift's account, where the message "Error 321" and a faded "13" pop up in a typewriter font. Swift's 11th studio album is set to be released Friday. **Chicagoland, Page 2**

## First seven jurors selected in Trump hush-money trial

Ex-president rebuked by judge for disruption during questioning

By **Michael R. Sisak, Jennifer Peltz, Jake Offenhartz and Alanna Durkin Richer**  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The first seven jurors for Donald Trump's hush-money trial were chosen Tuesday after lawyers grilled members of the jury pool about their social media posts, political views and personal lives to decide whether they can sit in fair judgment of the former president.

The panelists who were sworn

in are an IT worker, an English teacher, an oncology nurse, a sales professional, a software engineer and two lawyers.

Eleven more people still must be picked before opening statements begin as early as next week in the Manhattan case accusing the Republican of falsifying business records to cover up a sex scandal during his 2016 campaign.

The trial, which began Monday, puts Trump's legal problems at the center of his closely contested race against President Joe Biden. It's the first of Trump's four criminal cases to go to trial, and it may be the only one to reach a verdict

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**TODAY'S WEATHER** High 65 Low 49

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 14

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere  
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