

Chargers' Williams looks to continue as big-play receiver

Burrow, Bengals hit road vs Browns on NFL's 100th birthday

CLEVELAND, Sept 17, (AP): Joe Burrow's childhood was pretty much the same as every other boy raised in football-obsessed Ohio, the NFL's birthplace.

He learned his ABCs and multiplication tables in school. Outside, Burrow got lessons on Paul Brown, Jim Brown, Boomer Esiason, Bernie Kosar, The Ickey Shuffle and Dawg Pound.

On Thursday night, Burrow connects to those roots.

This year's No. 1 overall draft pick, reigning Heisman Trophy winner and just maybe the quarterback to change Cincinnati's fortunes, makes his first road start as the Bengals visit the Cleveland Browns to renew a rivalry Burrow learned about as a youngster.

"I know the history behind it," he said. "Excited for my first one".

The 23-year-old's entry into the "Battle of Ohio" also comes on a significant date as it marks the 100th anniversary of the league's start in Canton, where an organizational meeting on Sept 17, 1920 kicked things off.

Burrow's debut last week against the Los Angeles Chargers went about as expected. He made mistakes, showed the same resilience that took him from a third-stringer at Ohio State to national champion at LSU, and had the Bengals poised for a possible win. They missed a last-second field goal to force overtime and lost 16-13.

Burrow scored his first TD on a 23-yard run. He finished 23 of 36 for 193 yards, but was sharp down the stretch, going 8 of 11 for 70 yards on his drive.

"In my eyes I played terrible through 3-1/2 quarters and then played up to my standards in the last drive and almost won the game," Burrow said. "I know I'll be ready for it and I just have to keep that same mindset in the 2-minute drill and bring that along for the rest of the season."

The Browns were searching for any positives after getting blown out 38-6 at Baltimore, a rout that soured any excitement about the team's potential under first-year coach Kevin Stefanski.

Cleveland was undone by turnovers, penalties and missed kicks. Sound familiar?

It was just one game, but it was a really bad one, and it's put early pressure on Stefanski to get things fixed quickly.

There's also more scrutiny on quarterback Baker Mayfield. He set the tone last week with an interception on Cleveland's first possession, and another uneven performance has raised more questions as to whether he's the long-term answer for the Browns.

Mayfield knows he's got to be better.

"There is a sense of urgency," he said. "We hurt ourselves very early on in that game. The focus is on eliminating those mistakes and playing our game."

Meanwhile, Mike Williams is soft-spoken during interviews, but his knack for making flashy plays has made him one of the top deep threats in the NFL.

The Los Angeles Chargers wide

receiver leads the league in receptions over 35 yards since the start of last season. Williams has 11 receptions for going deep, including eight for 40 or more yards.

Williams will try to continue his success against defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City on Sunday as the Chargers play their first game in SoFi Stadium.

Two years ago, Williams caught a late touchdown and two-point conversion to help the Bolts upset the Chiefs at Arrowhead Stadium. Last year, he had a 50-yard reception on fourth down to keep a late drive alive.

"He's big and knows how to go up and get the thing. He's a gifted athlete," Kansas City coach Andy Reid said during a conference call.

Williams, who is in his fourth season, isn't among the fastest receivers, but his 6-foot-4, 218-pound frame makes him a matchup problem for de-

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fensive backs.

Despite missing the last two weeks of training camp with a shoulder injury, Williams played in last Sunday's opener against Cincinnati and had four receptions for 67 yards. One was for 37 yards after he got separation from Bengals cornerback Darius Phillips before taking a hard hit from safety Jesse Bates at the Bengals 18. The long completion would later result in a Michael Badgley field goal.

Quarterback Tyrod Taylor said Williams has the biggest catching radius of any receiver he has thrown to over his 10-year career.

Taylor compared Williams to Cleveland's Jarvis Landry and Kansas City's Sammy Watkins (who was Taylor's teammate in Buffalo) in terms of being able to make catches with their bodies.

"The catches you see him make in practice and games just wows you," he said of Williams. "It gives you trust to give him more opportunities to make plays."

Williams struggled with injuries as a rookie, but has showed the past two seasons why the Chargers took him with the seventh overall pick in 2017. He led the team with 10 touchdown catches in 2018 and had his first 1,000-yard season last year with 49 receptions for 1,001 yards. His 20.4 yards-per-reception average led NFL receivers.

While Williams said he has worked on all facets of his game, offensive coordinator Shane Steichen noted Williams' route running continues to improve.

"He was good (coming out of college at Clemson), but now he's just so good at getting off the line of scrimmage and creating separation, you know, using his hands and coming in and out of breaks and leaning on guys. His ability to stick his foot on the ground and come out of breaks has been big," he said.

The only thing coaches might like Williams to improve on is not diving so often or doing a better job protecting himself when he does. Williams' shoulder injury happened when he lunged for a deep ball and came down hard on his shoulder. He did that a couple more times against the Bengals, which created some anxious moments.

"I try to land the correct way now but sometimes it don't work out. I just try to make a football play," Williams said.



Los Angeles Chargers' Mike Williams (81) makes a catch against Cincinnati Bengals' Darius Phillips (23) during the first half of an NFL football game on Sept 13 in Cincinnati. (AP)

MLB Results/Standings

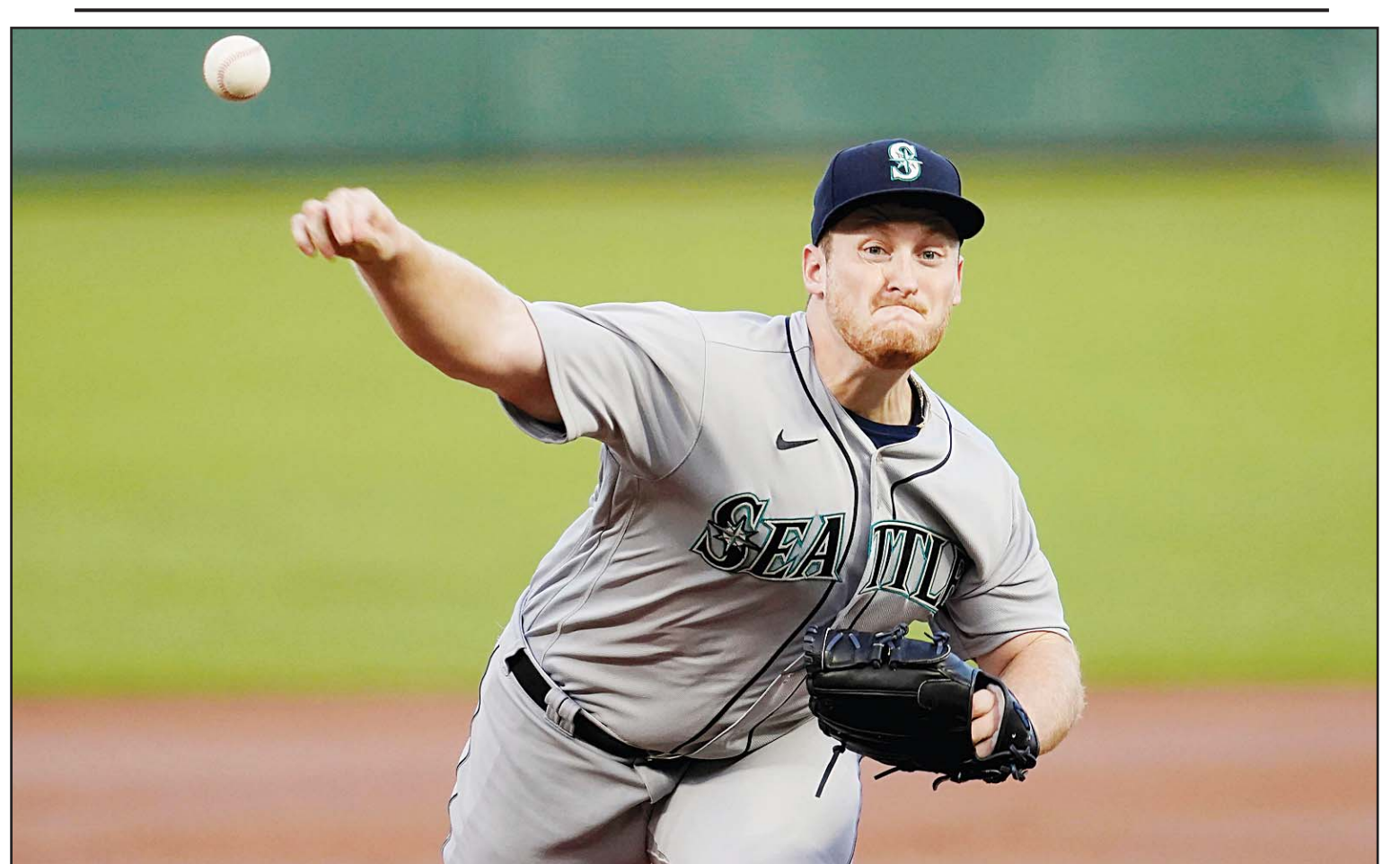
WASHINGTON, Sept 17, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Wednesday.

Nationals	4	TB Rays (10 ins)	2	Chic Cubs	3	Cleveland (10 ins)	2
Oakland	3	Colorado	1	Arizona	9	LA Angels	6
KC Royals	4	Detroit	0	SF Giants	9	Seattle	3
NY Yankees	13	Toronto	2	St Louis	4	Brewers (7 ins)	2
Baltimore	5	Atlanta	1	LA Dodgers	7	SD Padres	5
Miami	8	Boston	4	Cincinnati	1	Pittsburgh	0
Texas	1	Astros	0	Brewers	6	St Louis (7 ins)	0
Twins	5	Chic W. Sox	1	NY Mets	5	Phillies	4

American League				National League					
East Division				East Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Tampa Bay	31	18	.633	—	Atlanta	29	21	.580	—
New York	28	21	.571	3	Miami	25	22	.532	2½
Toronto	26	22	.542	4½	Philadelphia	24	24	.500	4
Baltimore	22	27	.449	9	New York	22	27	.449	6½
Boston	18	32	.360	13½	Washington	18	29	.383	9½

Central Division				West Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Chicago	32	17	.653	—	Chicago	30	20	.600	—
Minnesota	31	20	.608	2	Cincinnati	25	26	.490	5½
Cleveland	26	23	.531	6	St Louis	22	23	.489	5½
Detroit	21	27	.438	10½	Milwaukee	23	26	.469	6½
Kansas City	21	29	.420	11½	Pittsburgh	14	34	.292	15

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Oakland	31	19	.620	—
Houston	24	25	.490	6½
Seattle	22	27	.449	8½
Los Angeles	20	30	.400	11
Texas	18	31	.367	12½



Seattle Mariners' Ljay Newsome pitches against the San Francisco Giants during the first inning of a baseball game in San Francisco on Sept 16. (AP)

Dodgers beat Padres, become 1st to clinch postseason berth

Nationals top Rays as Brewers, Cards split DH

SAN DIEGO, Sept 17, (AP): The Los Angeles Dodgers became the first team to clinch a playoff spot in the pandemic-shortened season, beating the San Diego Padres 7-5 behind Dustin May's gutsy effort out of the bullpen and home runs from A.J. Pollock and Chris Taylor.

Will Smith drove in three runs for the seven-time defending NL West champions Dodgers, who opened a 3½-game lead in the division by winning two of three in the matchup of the NL's two best teams.

Mookie Betts tied his career high with three stolen bases, had two hits and scored a run.

At 35-15, the Dodgers breezed into the expanded 16-team postseason field. Los Angeles are seeking their first World Series title since 1988.

San Diego have lost two straight for the first time since mid-August. Manny Machado hit a solo homer in the eighth, his 14th of the season.

Starter Brusdar Graterol allowed a hit and a run in 1-1/3 innings before Adam Kolarek (3-0) allowed a hit and two walks in two-thirds of an inning. Pedro Baez got the final two outs for his second save.

Adrian Morejon (2-1) took the loss for San Diego, which used nine pitchers.

Nationals 4, Rays 2, 10 Innings

In St Petersburg, Florida, rookie Luis Garcia hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning and Washington beat the AL East-leading Tampa Bay.

With Carter Kieboom on second base to start extra innings, the 20-year-old Garcia hit a leadoff drive on the first pitch from Nick Anderson (1-1).

Brandon Lowe got the Rays even at 2 when he hit a solo homer off Daniel Hudson (2-2) on a 2-2 pitch with two outs in the ninth.

Kyle McGowan struck out three in the 10th to get his first save.

Asdrubal Cabrera homered and Austin Voth allowed one run and four hits over five innings for the Nationals.

Athletics 3, Rockies 1

In Denver, Mike Fiers threw six sharp innings before turning it over to a lights-out bullpen and Oakland snapped a six-game skid against Colorado.

Fiers (6-2) picked up the win. Liam Hendriks got the final five outs to pick up his 13th save in 14 chances.

Tony Kemp made an acrobatic move to score the game's first run. Caught in a rundown heading for home, he somehow swerved around the tag of first baseman Josh Fuentes — who was covering the plate — and touched home with his left hand as he tumbled to the dirt.

Jake Lamb had two hits, including an RBI single as part of a two-run sixth that gave the Athletics a 3-1 lead.

It was another hard-luck loss for Rockies ace German Marquez (2-6). He struck out six and issued a season-high four walks.

Cardinals 4, Brewers 2, 7 Innings, Game 1
Brewers 6, Cardinals 0, 7 Innings, Game 2

In Milwaukee, Brent Suter and three relievers combined on a two-hitter, Ryan Braun hit his 350th career homer and Milwaukee earned a doubleheader split against St. Louis.

The Cardinals took the opener behind Adam Wainwright's four-hitter. The Brewers scored four runs in the first inning on just one hit, the three-run homer by Braun.

Suter allowed two hits over three scoreless innings, walking two and striking out three. Freddy Peralta (3-1) fol-



Boston Red Sox right fielder Yairo Munoz catches a flyball hit by Miami Marlins' Garrett Cooper during the third inning of a baseball game on Sept 16 in Miami. (AP)

lowed with two perfect innings, striking out three. Devin Williams struck out two in a perfect sixth, and Eric Yardley retired the side in the seventh.

Jacob Nottingham's third homer, a two-run shot in the sixth, put the Brewers up 6-0.

Johan Oviedo (0-3), activated off the injured list earlier in the day after passing a rapid test for COVID-19, allowed six runs in 5-1/3 innings. He hit three batters with pitches.

In the opener, Wainwright (5-1) shook off an early home run, striking out nine in the seven-inning complete game.

Christian Yelich hit a one-out single in the Milwaukee first and Keston Huiru followed with his 13th home run.

Tyler O'Neill hit a solo homer in the second and Brad Miller hit his seventh homer, a solo drive in the sixth.

Brandon Woodruff (2-4), who also went the distance, allowed three earned and seven hits. He struck out five and walked none.

Reds 1, Pirates 0

In Cincinnati, Luis Castillo pitched a masterful seven innings, Shogo Akiyama drove in the game's only run, and Cincinnati extended their winning streak to a season-high five games.

Castillo (3-5) retired nine of the last 10

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batters he faced and gave up only three hits and a walk with 10 strikeouts. Archie Bradley pitched a perfect eighth before Raisel Iglesias pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his eighth save.

Pittsburgh rookie J.T. Brubaker (1-2) tied his career high with 5-1/3 innings, giving up five hits and the lone run with one walk and four strikeouts.

The Pirates set a season low for hits and couldn't get a runner past first base on the way to their season-high eighth straight loss.

Royals 4, Tigers 0

In Detroit, Brady Singer was stellar for a second straight start, allowing two hits in six innings, and Kansas City blanked Detroit.

Singer (3-4) struck out the first five Detroit hitters and retired the first 10. He struck out eight with one walk.

Salvador Perez homered and drove in three runs for the Royals, who have won seven of eight.

Tarik Skubal (1-3) allowed two earned runs and four hits in six innings in this matchup of rookie starters. He struck out eight with no walks.

Orioles 5, Braves 1

In Baltimore, Cole Hamels finally got on the mound in an Atlanta uniform, allowing three runs to Baltimore before reaching his predetermined pitch count in the fourth inning, and the Braves struggled offensively in a loss to the Orioles.

Rookie Keegan Akin struck out nine over five scoreless innings to earn his first big league victory.

Kuwait SC to meet Kazma SC in federation basketball cup semis

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17, (KUNA): Kuwait SC will meet their rivals Kazma SC next Sunday in federation basketball cup semi-finals after beating Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Shabab respectively on Wednesday.

The titleholders, Kuwait, defeated Al-Sulaibikhat 138-37, making a brilliant game, thanks to their players' skills and experiences.

In the second match, Kazma SC team defeated Al-Shabab 93-68 and dominated almost the game.

The quarter-finals round will resume on Thursday with two matches: Qadsia vs Burgan and Al-Yarmouk against Al-Qurain.

The two winners of the contests will meet each other next Sunday in the semifinals.

The Braves got only six hits — all of them singles — and their lone run scored on a balk. Atlanta haven't won a series in Baltimore since 2004.

Hamel (0-1) gave up a first-inning single and retired the side in order in the second before running into trouble in the third. Austin Hays hit a leadoff double and Hamels got an 0-2 count on No. 9 hitter Andrew Velazquez before issuing a walk. Hanser Alberto followed with an RBI double, José Iglesias hit a run-scoring grounder and Ryan Mountcastle delivered a sacrifice fly for a 3-0 lead.

Akin (1-1) allowed three hits and a walk in his fourth career start. In his previous outing, the lefty didn't make it out of the first inning of a 10-1 loss to the Yankees.

Yankees 13, Blue Jays 2

In New York, Kyle Higashioka hit a career-high three home runs, DJ LeMahieu connected twice and the resurgent Yankees hit a season-best seven homers in beating Toronto.

Luke Voit lofted a three-run drive for his major league-leading 19th homer and Clint Frazier added a solo shot as the Yankees won their seventh straight game.

Gerrit Cole (6-3) had another overpowering start for New York, carrying a no-hitter into the sixth. The right-hander completed seven innings of three-hit ball, striking out eight and walking two.

Marlins 8, Red Sox 4

In Miami, Jorge Alfaro homered twice before he took a foul ball to his helmet and Miami beat Boston.

Garrett Cooper also homered and scored twice for Miami, who moved within 2½ games of first-place Atlanta in the NL East.

Alfaro, the Marlins' catcher, was removed in the seventh inning as a precaution after Christian Vázquez's foul ball beamed him.

Miami chased Boston starter Michael Kickham with a four-run third.

Mets 5, Phillies 4

In Philadelphia, Jacob deGrom exited early from a rare rough outing because of a right hamstring spasm, but the Mets overcame a four-run deficit and rallied past Philadelphia.

Phillies reliever Hector Neris (2-2) dropped the ball on the mound for a balk

Diamondbacks 9, Angels 6

In Anaheim, California, Kole Calhoun hit his third homer in two games against his former Angels teammates, and David Peralta homered and drove in two runs in Arizona's win over Los Angeles.

Nick Ahmed had a two-run single during Arizona's four-run second inning against Dylan Bundy (5-3), who yielded five earned runs on six hits and two walks while getting chased in the third.

Giants 9, Mariners 3

In San Francisco, Brandon Belt, Brandon Crawford and Evan Longoria homered for San Francisco, and the visiting Giants playing at home beat Seattle in a game moved to the Bay Area because of smoky, dangerous air in Western Washington.

Donovan Solano and Mauricio Dubon hit early RBI singles as the Giants snapped a three-game losing streak with a "road" victory at Oracle Park.



Boston Red Sox's Alex Verdugo (left), hits a single during the third inning of a baseball game against the Miami Marlins on Sept 16 in Miami. (AP)