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# The Florida Times-Union

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2022 | JACKSONVILLE.COM

USA TODAY NETWORK

# Trump lawyers offer hints

## Experts dubious of presidential power claims

**Eric Tucker**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – A newly unsealed FBI document about the investigation at Mar-a-Lago not only offers new details about the probe but also reveals clues

about the arguments former President Donald Trump’s legal team intends to make.

A May 25 letter from one of his lawyers, attached as an exhibit to the search affidavit, advances a broad view of presidential power, asserting that the

commander-in-chief has absolute authority to declassify whatever he wants – and also that the “primary” law governing the handling of U.S. classified information simply doesn’t apply to the president himself.

The arguments weren’t persuasive enough to the Justice Department to prevent an FBI search of Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate this month, and the affi-

dativ in any event makes clear that investigators are focused on more recent activity – long after Trump left the White House and lost the legal authority that came with it. Even so, the letter suggests that a defense strategy anchored around presidential powers, a strategy employed during special

See **TRUMP**, Page 4A

## Statue fund could be renamed

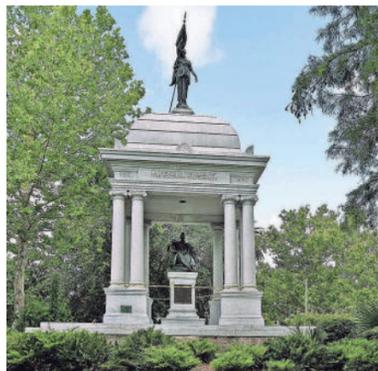
### Removal of Confederate monuments at issue

**Hanna Holthaus**  
Jacksonville Florida Times-Union  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The money previously reserved specifically to remove Jacksonville’s confederate monument could now be renamed to account for the outcome of long-awaited community conversations surrounding the future of the statue.

City Council Finance Committee convened last week to discuss and propose changes to Mayor Lenny Curry’s Capital Improvement Program. Curry, a proponent of taking down the “Monument to the Women of the Confederacy” in Springfield Park, included

See **FUND**, Page 4A



The Monument to the Women of the Southland (Monument to the Women of the Confederacy) has been in Springfield Park, formerly Confederate Park, since 1915, and has spurred controversy in recent years.

BOB SELF/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Pro soccer coming back



Steve Livingstone and Tony Allegretti, pictured Monday at one of the Veterans Park soccer fields in St. Johns County, are two members of the JAXUSL ownership group trying to bring professional soccer back to Jacksonville. The organization received approval this week for the rights to launch a franchise in the United Soccer League for the 2025 season.

BOB SELF/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

## Tebow-backed USL team planning franchise in Jacksonville

**Clayton Freeman** Jacksonville Florida Times-Union | USA TODAY NETWORK

An ownership group including former Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Tim Tebow has acquired the rights to form a new franchise within the United Soccer League, aiming to return professional soccer to Jacksonville in 2025. • Pending successful progress on establishing a home venue, the club intends to begin competition in the USL Championship — equivalent to the second level of the American soccer structure — in the spring of 2025.

See **SOCCER**, Page 5A

I’m thrilled to be part of the new ownership group that seeks to bring some incredible pro teams ... to our area.”

**Tim Tebow**

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**'Life revolves around' football**  
Jaguars rookie Travon Walker is not getting distracted. **Sports, 1C**

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## What is the USL Championship?

The new club would be entering the second-highest level in the American game, one tier below Major League Soccer.

The United Soccer League organizes three primary tiers of men's soccer — the USL Championship, USL Division One and USL Division Two — of which the first two are professional. The organization also includes the USL W-League for women's soccer, and is planning to launch a professional women's league, to be called the Super League, at a future date.

During the 2022 USL Championship season, which remains in progress, the league included 27 teams, two of them in Florida: Miami FC and the Tampa Bay Rowdies, both of which previously competed against the Jacksonville Armada in the North American Soccer League.

Jacksonville is among several cities currently slated to receive USL expansion teams. An ownership group acquired rights in January to launch a new franchise in Des Moines, Iowa, and several other prospective franchises are also in the works.

The league includes multiple players with international experience, and has also served as a launching pad for numerous younger players on their career paths. Those include Canadian winger Alphonso Davies, now at Bayern Munich in Germany's Bundesliga; Brenden Aaronson and Tyler Adams, teammates on the U.S. men's national team with Leeds United in England's Premier League; and Josh Cohen, now a starting goalkeeper for Israeli club Maccabi Haifa in the UEFA Champions League.

The USL Championship also has a broadcast and streaming deal with ESPN, which broadcasts league matches through its various networks as well as online through ESPN+.

As of statistics entering last week's games, the USL reported an average leaguwide attendance slightly below 5,500 fans per game, led by New Mexico United with an average of 10,881.

## Who are the JAXUSL owners?

### Ricky Caplin

Head of Caplin Family Offices, a Jacksonville-based private equity and venture capital company. ... Served as chief executive officer of The HCI Group, a global healthcare information technology consulting firm based on Jacksonville's Southside. ... Following The HCI Group's 2017 acquisition, also executive for healthcare and life sciences for India-based Tech Mahindra. ... Northeast Florida native has also served on Jacksonville's Civic Council.

### Tony Allegretti

Served as executive director of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville from 2014 to 2018. ... Previously helped launch Riverside Arts Market as well as Art Walk in downtown Jacksonville, and was a director of Downtown Investment Authority and director of downtown engagement for JAX Chamber. ... Also has coached soccer at Andrew Jackson High School.

### Steve Livingstone

Native of Scotland served as Jacksonville Armada's first president from 2013 until February 2016. ... Worked with Jaguars as senior manager for marketing in sales support. ... Previously an executive at now-defunct NFL Europe with Scottish Claymores. ... Also has worked as executive at a USL Championship club, Louisville City.

### Tim Tebow

Northeast Florida football giant won Heisman Trophy (2007), two NCAA championships (2006, 2008) at University of Florida. ... First-round NFL Draft selection (Denver Broncos, 2010) played in NFL for Broncos and Jets, part of 2021 preseason with Jaguars. ... Broadcast analyst for SEC Network. ... Also played in Mets organization and won Florida Dairy Farmers Mr. Football award at Nease High School in 2005.

## Jacksonville's pro soccer history

### Jacksonville Tea Men (original NASL/ASL, 1980-84)

Jacksonville's first major soccer club arrived in November 1980 when Lipton moved its NASL team, then called the New England Tea Men, to the First Coast. Playing in bright red and tangerine uniforms, the Tea Men lined up at the Gator Bowl with international stars like Scotland's Archie Gemmill and also competed in the NASL's indoor league inside the old Jacksonville Coliseum. The team reached the NASL quarters in year one, but enthusiasm flagged and the atmosphere waned inside the huge stadium. The club was sold and left the NASL before the 1983 season, playing in the American Soccer League and then an earlier association called the United Soccer League before calling it quits.

### Jacksonville Cyclones (A-League, 1997-99)

After the 1994 World Cup and the 1996 launch of Major League Soccer, Jacksonville got its second team with the Cyclones' 1997 formation in the second-tier A-League, the forerunner of today's USL Championship. The Cyclones had their high-water marks, including an Alltel Stadium exhibition against English Premier League club Leicester City in 1998, but instability plagued the franchise. The club cycled through six coaches and two venues, beginning at Mandarin High School before trying the Jacksonville Suns' Wolfson Park, and struggled on the field more often than not. The end came after the 1999 season: The club declared a one-year hiatus to build a soccer-specific stadium. The stadium never broke ground. The Cyclones never returned.

### Jacksonville Armada (NASL/NPSL, 2015-present)

The Armada entered the second edition of the NASL in the spring of 2015, making an instant splash with a home debut crowd of more than 16,000 and taking on the likes of Argentina's Boca Juniors. But the club turned over coaches rapidly (five within the team's first 18 months of play), incurred heavy expenses in converting the Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville back and forth from soccer to baseball and struggled to find a rhythm on the field. By January 2017, the club came under league ownership and moved to the University of North Florida's Hodges Stadium, but by the time new owner Robert Palmer arrived in July 2017, the NASL itself was near its end. The Armada has remained in operation, albeit on a smaller scale with an under-23 roster in the fourth-tier National Premier Soccer League.



**Soccer fans cheer on the United States men's team as they arrive for a 2014 game against Nigeria.** BOB SELF/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

## Soccer

Continued from Page 1A

Ricky Caplin, principal of the Caplin Family Offices, will serve as the head of the JAXUSL ownership group. Also included in the group are Tebow and two experienced figures in Jacksonville's soccer world, former Jacksonville Armada President Steve Livingstone and former Jax Chamber director of downtown engagement Tony Allegretti.

"We've been working on this for a while," Livingstone said in an interview with the Times-Union. "It's been a labor of love."

The prospective franchise, which has yet to announce its name, has also formed a partnership with youth club Florida Elite Soccer Academy.

The new club would be Jacksonville's first soccer franchise in a fully professional league since the end of 2017, when the North American Soccer League suspended play at season's end after losing its recognition as a Division II league from U.S. Soccer in favor of the USL. The Jacksonville Armada, which competed in the NASL at the time, moved to the largely-amateur National Premier Soccer League thereafter.

JAXUSL also intends to begin a women's professional team within USL's planned Super League, which has yet to begin play.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for the USL and Northeast Florida," USL chief operating officer Justin Papadakis said in a statement. "We know the

incredible sports fans of Jacksonville and the First Coast will really support their pro soccer club and make it their own."

For Tebow, the former University of Florida quarterback who played three seasons in the NFL and also played baseball in the New York Mets' minor league system, JAXUSL represents the latest venture into Jacksonville sports. He acquired minority ownership in the Jacksonville Icemen, the city's ECHL hockey franchise, in December 2020.

In a statement, Tebow said, "This is a fantastic and exciting development in our community here on the First Coast that I believe will make a huge impact on so many people and families. I'm thrilled to be part of the new ownership group that seeks to bring some incredible pro teams and a world-class, accessibility-designed facility to our area."

### Team eyes stadium plans

Still to be determined are a host of details.

The franchise has yet to announce a team name or colors — in contrast, for example, to the Jaguars, who announced their name some two years before the NFL awarded the city its team on Nov. 30, 1993.

Fans can make season ticket deposits for \$25 through the club website, jaxusl.com. Livingstone said the organization intends to hold town halls with fans as well as a naming competition.

"We want the community to tell us

Continued on next page

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Continued from previous page

what the team should be all about," he said.

Formal partnerships with municipalities and business organizations, he said, are still in the developmental stages.

Most importantly, club leadership has yet to finalize a location for a stadium, although Livingstone said the club is "well down the road" on assessing the possibilities, which could include sites in Duval, Clay or St. Johns counties. He said that JAXUSL has been in consultation with Sports Facilities Advisory, a Clearwater-based athletic consulting firm, to assess further steps in the process.

As for previous soccer ventures in Jacksonville, the challenge remains the same: attracting fans from across a widely dispersed metropolitan area that spills over into neighboring counties and includes a significant natural boundary in the St. Johns River.

Livingstone, who worked in the front office of USL club Louisville City for about two years after his departure from the Armada, cited the Kentucky club as a model for Jacksonville's stadium aspirations. Louisville City began construction on the soccer-specific Lynn Family Stadium, with a seating capacity of 11,600 but expandable to 15,304, in 2018.

That stadium, built for \$65 million in Louisville's Butchertown neighborhood as part of a larger \$200 million development project, opened in 2020 and drew its record-high crowd of 14,673 earlier this summer on Aug. 13.

He said the club intends to develop its stadium with private funds. The Louisville project also included a \$30 million bond, approved 23-2 by the city's Metro Council in October 2017.

Livingstone said that a soccer-specific stadium, if developed, could also incorporate additional facilities that could attract youth soccer tournaments to Jacksonville.

Although U.S. Soccer requires a minimum capacity of 5,000 for teams that play at Division II level, Livingstone said that JAXUSL hopes to construct a facility that holds approximately 15,000. That figure, he said, is significant because it has typically marked a threshold for the federation to schedule matches for the men's and women's national teams.

The federation has scheduled men's matches at TIAA Bank Field in 1997, 1999, 2012, 2014 and 2016, and women's

matches in 1996, 2013, 2018 and 2019. However, national officials in recent years have often favored venues in the range of 15,000 to 30,000, including six of the seven home games in the final round of 2022 World Cup qualification.

#### Continuing a soccer tradition

A USL Championship soccer club would be the fourth in Jacksonville history to compete in the first or second divisions of American soccer, following the Tea Men in the old NASL of the early 1980s, the Cyclones in the A-League in the late 1990s and the Armada.

The Armada, which drew a crowd of more than 16,000 for its EverBank Field debut on April 4, 2015, continued to field professional players inside the NPSL in 2018, but has subsequently operated a U-23 team consisting chiefly of college and high school players in NPSL competition.

The NASL, embroiled in protracted litigation with U.S. Soccer, has not played a game in nearly five years.

The new club's arrival would join a Jacksonville soccer scene that is already crowded at lower levels. Area clubs during 2022 include the Armada, still active in the NPSL and coming off a divisional title this summer; Florida Elite Soccer Academy, which fields a team in USL League Two, in the Southeast Division; and three teams — Clay County SC, Jacksonville FC and Oceanway FC — that play in the United Premier Soccer League.

Livingstone said that JAXUSL's partnership with Florida Elite, which operates at fields in four Northeast Florida counties and also has a Tallahassee branch, would also establish a fully local pathway from youth soccer to the professional game.

"That pathway has been broken, and a lot of promising kids have had to go somewhere else to play pro soccer," he said. "We're kind of mending that break."

A 2025 launch would come slightly more than a year before the World Cup returns to the United States in 2026, part of a co-hosting arrangement with Canada and Mexico. Venues for the 48-team championship include Atlanta and Miami.

"If we're looking to launch in 2025, we feel like the buildup and the timing going into that big event is perfect," Livingstone said.

## 3 dead after storms rip through Midwest, South

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONROE, Mich. — Severe storms that brought damaging winds, heavy rains and flash flooding to parts of the Midwest and South were blamed for the deaths of three people, including two children in Michigan and Arkansas and a woman in Ohio.

Monday's storms also knocked out electrical service to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in Indiana and Michigan, with dozens of schools canceling classes in Michigan alone on Tuesday because of power outages.

In Monroe, a 14-year-old girl was electrocuted Monday night in the backyard of her home after coming into contact with an electrical line that was knocked down by a thunderstorm, the public safety department said in a Facebook post.

The girl was with a friend and she reached for what she believed was a stick, but it turned out to be the power line, the department said.

And in the Detroit-area community of Warren, two boys were hospitalized — including an 8-year-old who was in critical condition — after one touched a downed power line Tuesday morning, The Detroit News reported, citing a fire department official.

In Arkansas, an 11-year-old boy died after he was swept into a storm drain during heavy rainfall Monday, authorities said.

A 47-year-old woman who tried to help the child was also pulled from the drain and taken to a hospital for treatment, according to police in Bentonville. Slow-moving thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall to the area Monday and caused localized flash flooding, the National Weather Service said.

"Those heavy rains, when they fell, a lot of them fell really quickly and in a short time," said meteorologist Brad McGavock with the weather service in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which covers parts of Arkansas. "Water management through those storm drains can really lead to a big volume of water through those culverts."



A person at Tiscornia Beach in St. Joseph, Mich., takes a photo of a storm front moving in from over Lake Michigan on Monday.

DON CAMPBELL/THE HERALD-PALLADIUM VIA AP

In Ohio, a woman was killed Monday night when a tree fell on her behind her home in Toledo just as a strong storm moved through the area, the city's fire department said.

The storms were widespread in states including Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Tree branches and power lines fell while winds gusted as high as 58 mph at Battle Creek Executive Airport in Michigan and 60 mph in Huntington, Indiana, the weather service reported.

On Monday night, Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said he was declaring a state of emergency after excessive rainfall exacerbated problems in one of Jackson's water-treatment plants and caused low water pressure through much of the capital city. A swollen Pearl River caused flooding in Jackson on Monday, days after storms dumped heavy rain.

The Mississippi flooding was less severe than flooding that caused death and destruction in Kentucky last month. Those floods left at least 39 dead and thousands of families lost all of their possessions. Nearly a month later, residents are wrestling with whether to rebuild at the place they call home or to start over somewhere else.

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