

The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

Dallas, Texas, Wednesday, June 14, 2006

DallasNews.com

50 cents

NBA Finals, Game 3: Heat 98 Mavericks 96

Mavericks lead series, 2-1. UP NEXT: 8 p.m. Thursday, American Airlines Arena (Channel 8); KESN-FM (103.3), KFLC-AM (1270, Spanish)

So close ...

Miami rally, missed free throw sink Mavs



VERNON BRYANT/Staff Photographer

Dirk Nowitzki, one of the best free throw shooters in the NBA, missed a free throw in the final seconds that would have tied the game. Dallas let a 13-point lead, and a chance to go up 3-0 in the championship series, slip away in the fourth quarter.

By BRAD TOWNSEND
Staff Writer

MIAMI — Uh-oh. It's a series now. With Dallas on the verge of taking a 3-0 lead in the NBA Finals, Dwyane Wade and the Miami Heat rallied from a 13-point deficit in the final six minutes to pull out a 98-96 victory Tuesday night at American Airlines Arena.

Instead of being one victory from their first NBA title, the Mavericks are in a 2-1 dogfight.

Instead of falling into a hole from

which no NBA playoff team has recovered, the Heat has sudden life entering Game 4 on Thursday night in Miami.

"Maybe we started to relax early and celebrate," said Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki, who could have tied the score at 97 by making two free throws with 3.4 seconds left but missed the second attempt.

"The only good thing is we're still up 2-1."

See MIAMI Page 6A

INSIDE

■ More than 11,000 fans paid \$5 a ticket to cheer the Mavericks on from afar and watch the game on TV at American Airlines Center. **6A**

■ The Mavericks appeared well on their way to victory, columnist Tim Cowlishaw writes. And all of a sudden, the magic vanished. **1C**

■ This is why you don't announce parade dates when the team is two victories shy of winning the title, columnist David Moore writes. **8C**

DigitalEXTRA

■ **Mavs playoffs blog:** News, notes and more behind-the-scenes stuff
 ■ **Photos:** Extensive coverage of Game 3
 ■ **Link:** Updated Mavs desktop wallpaper
 DallasNews.com/extra

Wright accord expected

Announcement set for today, but AA, Southwest left wanting; rules would remain for 9 years

By EMILY RAMSHAW
Staff Writer

The mayors of Dallas and Fort Worth scrambled between last-minute meetings and phone conversations in an effort to reach an agreement late Tuesday on the future of long-haul flights from Dallas Love Field.

Barring late-night complications, the mayors' compromise on the Wright amendment will be unveiled by Dallas officials today. But the results of their weeks-long efforts still fall short for representatives from Dallas-based Southwest Airlines and Fort Worth's American Airlines, who said they had no plans to attend an announcement.

Any deal the mayors announce will be only an initial step, with more political wrangling and negotiations likely on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers, who will make the final decision on the Wright amendment, are already raising questions that put into question the future of any compromise that might be revealed today.

See WRIGHT Page 16A

Leak cloud lifts for Rove

Top Bush aide, cleared in naming of CIA operative, turns focus to congressional elections

By G. ROBERT HILLMAN
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — President Bush's top political strategist, Karl Rove, no longer facing the prospect of federal charges in the CIA leak case, is running full speed ahead — toward this fall's mid-term elections.

With the president near historic lows in public opinion polls and the fortunes of his Republican Party on the line in November, party officials and outside analysts agree that Mr. Rove will now be completely unfettered to carry out the president's election-year mandate: Keep Congress in Republican control.

"Although he's very good at keeping a stiff upper lip and creating the impression that nothing bothers him, you can bet this was a heavy load — and he's one happy camper right now," said University of Texas government professor Bruce Buchanan.

See ROVE Page 10A

Sex change on FEMA's dime?

Trip, tickets, divorce lawyer also funded by \$1.4 billion in hurricane claims, report says

By LARRY MARGASAK
Associated Press

The government doled out as much as \$1.4 billion in bogus assistance after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, getting hoodwinked to pay for season football tickets, a tropical vacation and even a divorce lawyer, congressional investigators have found.

Union to invest in New Orleans revitalization. 2A

Prison inmates, a supposed victim who used a New Orleans cemetery for a home address, and a person who spent 70 days at a Hawaiian hotel were able to wrongly get taxpayer help, according to evidence that gives a new black eye to the nation's disaster relief agency.

Federal investigators even informed Congress that one man apparently used FEMA assistance money for a sex-change operation.

See FEMA Page 2A



FLY YOUR FLAG
Today is Flag Day. On June 14, 1777, Congress officially designated the Stars and Stripes as the nation's flag by passing the following resolution: "Resolved: that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

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Mostly sunny



High: 93 Low: 70
Metro, Back Page

INDEX

SECTION A	
Lottery	2
Texas & Southwest	3-4
Nation	7-9, 12, 14
World	14-16
Editorials and Viewpoints	18-19
METRO — SECTION B	
SPORTSDAY — SECTION C	
TV/Radio	2
Baseball	9-11, 13
Football	3
BUSINESS — SECTION D	
Market Day	4-5
One on One	5
TASTE	
Drink	4
Comics	14-19
Horoscope	14
Puzzles	15-17, 19
CLASSIFIED — SECTION F	
SECTION G	
GUIDELINE — SECTION G	
Movies	2
TV	2
At A Glance	6

Bush makes surprise trip to Baghdad to boost Iraq leader

White House whips up drama for issue that defines presidency

From Wire Reports

BAGHDAD, Iraq — President Bush made a surprise visit to Baghdad on Tuesday and held direct talks with Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, offering a dramatic show of support

Editorial, 18A

to the new government while driving home that the country's future lay in Iraqi hands.

In making his visit, Mr. Bush was trying to deliver a carefully calibrated message to Americans: that Iraq and the administration's strategy there appear to be turning a corner but that troops will not be withdrawn anytime soon.

Mr. Bush could have spoken



LARRY DOWNING/Reuters

After meeting with Iraqi officials, President Bush thanked troops and employees at the U.S. Embassy on Tuesday.

with Mr. al-Maliki by secure videoconference from Camp David. Instead, he embraced Iraq's new leader both figuratively and literally — while embracing the political reality that Iraq is so

central to his presidency that he cannot escape developments there and must try instead to make the most of any good news.

See BUSH Page 17A



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