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The Columbus Dispatch

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Flavored tobacco fight marches on

Ohio high court to hear legal arguments in 'home rule' case

Jessie Balmert
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

A legal fight over whether Ohio cities can ban flavored tobacco could have sweeping consequences for how local leaders regulate everything from firearms to mobile homes.

On June 9, the Ohio Supreme Court will listen to legal arguments about a lawsuit that strikes at the heart of municipalities' ability to govern themselves, a concept called "home rule."

In recent years, Columbus, Bexley, Grandview Heights, Worthington and other cities banned the sale of flavored tobacco and nicotine products, includ-

ing menthol cigarettes, vape liquids and chewing tobacco. Opponents of these products point to studies that show young people prefer fruit or candy-flavored e-cigarettes, leading to an unhealthy habit.

But Ohio legislators passed a state law to block these local bans and allow the sale of flavored tobacco products.

That change was set to take effect in 2024 against Gov. Mike DeWine's wishes. The governor supports restrictions on flavored tobacco and had lobbied unsuccessfully for a statewide ban.

Twenty-one Ohio cities are suing. They argue that the Ohio Home Rule Amendment, approved by voters in 1912, allows city leaders to set rules for their residents, including a ban on flavored

See TOBACCO, Page 4A



Owners of the to-be-named Columbus National Women's Soccer League team are planning to build a training facility at McCoy Park, seen in this rendering, in the city's Southwest Side. The site will include a two-story, 45,000 square-foot building, set to begin play in 2028. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HASLAM SPORTS GROUP AND COLUMBUS NWSL 2028

A 'best-in-class' goal

Haslam Sports Group unveils plans for NWSL training facility at McCoy Park

Jordan Laird
Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

McCoy Park could soon be the site of state-of-the-art, heated soccer fields and a two-story, 45,000 square-foot training facility for Columbus' newest professional sports team.

The Haslam Sports Group shared its plans for a National Women's Soccer League team training facility with The Dispatch ahead of its request to the Columbus Southwest Area Commission to endorse the group's rezoning application. It's the next step in a process that got off to a rough start in the neighborhood, which is one of the city's most disadvantaged, and had previously been promised a renovated McCoy Park.

See NWSL FACILITY, Page 8A



The training facility planned for McCoy Park includes 2½ high-tech, heated grass fields for the first team and three more fields for academy players and the community to use.

Israel, Iran promise to halt strikes – for now

Pakistan PM says 'final objective' within reach

Christopher Cann, Thao Nguyen, Michael Loria and Bart Jansen
USA TODAY

Israel and Iran said they would halt strikes on each other for now but warned of forceful responses to any future aggression – ending, at least temporarily, an exchange of missile attacks over the weekend that put a fragile ceasefire and diplomatic efforts in peril.

Iran's armed forces issued a statement on June 8 announcing it would cease attacks but said continued Israeli military operations, including in Lebanon, would be met with "far more severe and crushing measures." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel will respond to any attacks from Iran or its proxies "with might," adding that the war "has not yet ended."

The announcements come after President Donald Trump demanded both sides immediately stop "shooting." In a later statement on social media, Trump said both countries wanted a ceasefire and negotiations toward a peace agreement were proceeding, "subject to ignorance or stupidity getting in its way."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said June 8 that his country has "abandoned neither the battlefield nor the negotiating table."

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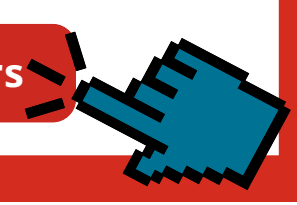
See IRAN WAR, Page 5A

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