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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Russia says 6 US-made ATACMS fired from Ukraine

Associated Press

Ukraine fired six U.S.-made ATACMS missiles at Russia's Bryansk region, Russia's Defense Ministry said Tuesday, days after U.S. President Joe Biden eased restrictions on Ukrainian use of American-made weapons in the war that has reached its 1,000-day milestone.

Ukraine claimed it hit a military weapons depot in Bryansk in the middle of the night, though it didn't specify what weapons it used. The Ukrainian General Staff said that multiple explosions and detonation were heard in the targeted area.

In a statement carried by Russian news agencies, the Russian Defense Ministry said the military shot down five Army Tactical Missile Systems, known as ATACMS, and damaged one more.

The fragments fell on the territory of an unspecified military facility, the ministry said. The falling debris sparked a fire, but didn't inflict any damage or casualties, it said.

Neither side's claims could be independently verified.

The announcement came after Biden authorized Ukraine to use U.S.-supplied missiles to strike deeper inside Russia, easing limitations on the longer range weapons after Russia deployed thousands of North Korean troops in the conflict.

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RELATED

1,000 days of war in Ukraine distilled in a 24-hour span

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JEFF DEAN/AP

Former Air Force Osprey pilot Brian Luce poses for a portrait inside the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

The Osprey's odyssey

Aircraft's safety issues spiked over 5 years and caused deaths. Pilots still want to fly it

BY TARA COPP,
KEVIN VINEYS
AND AARON KESSLER
Associated Press

CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — Over a New Mexico training range named the Hornet, two Osprey aircraft speed 100 feet off the ground, banking hard over valleys and hills as they close in on a dusty landing zone.

A flight engineer in the back braces a .50-caliber machine gun over the edge of the Osprey's open ramp as desert shrubbery blurs past. The aircraft's joints shift and rattle, and there is little steady to hold on to until the Osprey touches



YU NAKAJIMA, KYODO NEWS/AP

Wreckage of a U.S. MV-22 Osprey is seen in shallow waters off Nago, Okinawa, southern Japan, Dec. 14, 2016, after it crash landed.

down with a bump, flooding seats with rust-colored dust.

After being grounded for months following a crash last November that killed eight U.S. service members in Japan, the V-22 Osprey is back in the air. But there are still questions as to whether it should be.

The Pentagon bought the V-22 Osprey more than 30 years ago as a lethal hybrid, with the speed of an airplane and the maneuverability of a helicopter. Since then, 64 personnel have been killed and 93 injured in more than 21 major

SEE ODYSSEY ON PAGE 4

BUSINESS/WEATHER

AP says buyouts, layoffs ahead to cut staff by 8%

Associated Press

The Associated Press said Monday that it would begin offering buyouts and lay off selected employees, part of a plan to reduce the news outlet's staff by about 8% and accelerate a transition to a digital-first organization.

The move is part of what is expected to be a dispiriting end-of-year period in the news industry, which is beset by business woes that go back years. The end of a busy presidential-election cycle

was also expected to accelerate reorganization plans.

The AP said those eligible for buyouts were to learn of the offer, which would include severance pay and partial health coverage for 18 months, by the end of Monday.

Those whose positions are due to be eliminated would learn about their fates over the next few weeks.

Once considered the world's largest newsgathering organization, the AP no longer makes that

claim and does not reveal the size of its staff. As a result, it was impossible to say on Monday how many people would be affected. The AP said less than half of the anticipated cuts would involve its news employees, with the bulk happening within the United States.

The News Media Guild said that 121 of its members would be offered buyouts. The AP, without giving an estimate, said there would be fewer job cuts than that among the union members.

EXCHANGE RATES			
Military rates			
Euro costs (Nov. 20)	0.92	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8823
British pound (Nov. 20)	\$1.23	Thailand (Baht)	34.56
Japanese yen (Nov. 20)	151.00	Turkey (NewLira)	34.5632
South Korean won (Nov. 20)	1356.00	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Commercial rates		INTEREST RATES	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769	Prime rate	7.75
Britain (Pound)	1.2638	Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00
Canada (Dollar)	1.4000	Federal funds market rate	4.58
China (Yuan)	7.2403	3-month bill	4.53
Denmark (Krone)	7.0565	30-year bond	4.61
Egypt (Pound)	49.5086		
Euro	0.9459		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7831		
Hungary (Forint)	385.88		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7487		
Japan (Yen)	154.07		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3075		
Norway (Krone)	10.9977		
Philippines (Peso)	58.88		
Poland (Zloty)	4.10		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7539		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3395		
South Korea (Won)	1394.70		

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MILITARY

Finland hosts US, allies in artillery drills

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

ROVANIEMI, Finland — U.S. soldiers are firing away north of the Arctic Circle this week as Finland hosts the largest NATO artillery exercise in Europe for the first time since joining the alliance last year.

The U.S. Army is training with 27 other nations for Dynamic Front, a 20-day exercise that spans the alliance’s eastern flank with Russia, to include sites in Estonia, Germany, Poland and Romania.

The portion of the exercise hosted at the Rovajarvi training area by Finland, which shares an 830-mile border with Russia, comes as tensions are rising in the region. On Monday, undersea communication cables between Germany and Finland were severed, sparking concerns about potential Russian sabotage.

“The fact that such an incident immediately raises suspicions of intentional damage speaks volumes about the volatility of our times ... Our European security is not only under threat from Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, but also from hybrid warfare by malicious actors,” the German and Finnish foreign ministries said in a joint statement.

Such concerns about Russian aggression have been the impetus for expanded NATO training missions on the eastern flank and the driver of a broader U.S. Army buildup in Europe over the past several years.



PHOTOS BY LYDIA GORDON/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers from the 41st Field Artillery Brigade prepare to fire the M270A2 Multiple Launch Rocket System during exercise Dynamic Front at the Rovajarvi training area in Finland on Sunday.



The British army’s Archer mobile howitzer launches an artillery round during exercise Dynamic Front at the Rovajarvi training area.

Among the most significant advances for the Army has been the addition of artillery units to the Europe-based force mix, something that had been lacking after years of troop reductions.

Dynamic Front showcases an array of advanced artillery systems from NATO forces, including the U.S. Army’s M270A2 Multiple Launch Rocket System, which some units based in Grafenwoehr, Germany, acquired months ago as an upgrade.

The U.K.’s Archer mobile howitzer and Finland’s self-propelled K9 howitzer also have been active this week. Finland has the second-largest artillery capability in Europe after Poland and is planning to catch up, Finnish army Col. Janne Makitalo, the exercise coordinator, said in a mission brief Monday.

“Artillery is basically the king

and queen of the battlefield as we have seen from the experience of combat in Ukraine,” Makitalo said.

“It presents lots of firepower because of the intelligence systems and the central development of sensors and reconnaissance drones. ... Everything can be seen at the moment in the battlefield and what can be seen ... can be targeted,” Makitalo added.

Operating in the Arctic has provided NATO members with opportunities to navigate mountainous, icy terrain.

The Army’s 41st Field Artillery Brigade last trained in Finland in May 2023, when it wasn’t as cold and snowy as it is now.

“Even if we’ve been here before, (it’s) new terrain to train with and get used to,” said Sgt. Caleb Jackson, a section chief with 1st Battalion 6th Field Artillery Regiment Sunday.

The change in location wards off complacency, said brigade commander Col. Frank Maxwell.

“This is just a good opportunity for us to ... see ourselves, see our blind spots as we get off of Grafenwoehr and come up to Finland,” Maxwell said.

NATO nations also are testing a unified network that connects the disparate firing units, with the aim of streamlining communication and coordination.

Dynamic Front began Nov. 4 in other locations. It will feature increased live-fire artillery exercises through Thursday, with anti-tank operations continuing into next week.

Navy base in Japan issues lookout alert for macaque

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Sailors and civilians at a naval base near the Japanese capital have been told to keep their distance from a wild monkey spotted prowling nearby.

A “Monkey Warning” posted Monday by Naval Air Facility Atsugi, in Kanagawa prefecture, noted reports from nearby Ayase city of a primate roaming off base.

“The city is asking residents to not approach the monkey and to avoid unnecessary outdoor outings,” said a post on NAF Atsugi’s official Facebook page. “If you see a wild monkey, keep your distance, go indoors and please call NAF Atsugi Security.”

Base spokesman Greg Mitchell did not immediately respond to phone and email queries about the monkey Tuesday.

Monkey alerts have been issued for other U.S. military communities in and near Tokyo in recent years.

Camp Zama, headquarters of U.S. Army Japan, also in Kanagawa prefecture, warned residents on post and at a nearby housing area to be on the lookout for wild

monkeys patrolling their neighborhoods in September 2021.

The following month, a Japanese macaque gained dual status as a celebrity and a fugitive at Yokota Air Base, home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo.

Spotted atop the roof of the base dental clinic, the monkey was soon a star of social media as base residents posted photos and videos of their macaque sightings.

Japanese macaques are common throughout most of Japan and inhabit forested mountain slopes right down to the fringes of Tokyo, the world’s largest urban area.

They are “gentle creatures that display frequent social interactions” and are seldom aggressive, according to the New England Primate Conservancy website.

Nonetheless, staring at them eye to eye can provoke an aggressive response, such as baring their teeth, according to Japan-Visitor.com.

Further unwanted attention could result in a bite. They travel in troops, are active during the day and sleep in trees at night.

Marine sergeant accidentally starts fire in Okinawa hotel

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Police on Okinawa arrested a Marine last week on suspicion of setting a hotel room on fire in an attempt gone wrong to create a romantic evening.

A sergeant assigned to Camp Schwab was taken into custody at the Naha police station at 1:41 p.m. Friday after he “completely burned” the room the previous day, a spokesman for Okinawa Prefectural Police said Tuesday.

The Marine lit about 20 candles in the room, then left to pick up his girlfriend at Naha Airport, according to police. The room caught fire between 10 and 10:30 p.m., the spokesman said.

The Marine told police he “lit the candles to prepare a surprise for his partner” and apologized for “putting the people of the hotel and surrounding area at risk,” the spokesman said.

The Marine Corps is “aware that a U.S. Marine Sergeant assigned to Camp Schwab

is charged with setting a fire in a hotel room,” Maj. Clayton Groover, spokesman for the 3rd Marine Division, said Tuesday. He declined to identify the Marine.

“We are cooperating with the investigation and will refrain from releasing more details about this incident in order to maintain the integrity of the investigation process,” he said.

The fire occurred at the Prostyle Ryokan Naha Kenchomae hotel in Naha’s Kume district, a hotel employee who declined to provide his name confirmed Tuesday.

No injuries were reported, and no further damage occurred to the hotel, the police spokesman said.

The Marine was arrested after providing explanations and completing paperwork at the hotel, the spokesman said.

The case was forwarded to the Naha Public Prosecutors Office on Monday, the spokesman said. Prosecutors, not police, decide charges under Japan’s justice system.

Some Japanese government officials are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

MILITARY

Odyssey: 2010, 2012 crashes exposed issues Osprey still faces today

FROM PAGE 1

accidents. Japan’s military briefly grounded its fleet again late last month after an Osprey tilted violently during takeoff and struck the ground. And four recent fatal crashes brought the program the closest it’s come to being shut down by Congress.

To assess its safety, The Associated Press reviewed thousands of pages of accident reports and flight data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, interviewed more than 50 current and former program officials, crew members and experts, and flew both simulator and real training flights.

The AP found that the top three most serious types of incidents rose 46% between 2019 and 2023, while overall safety issues jumped 18% in the same period before the fleet was grounded.

Yet current and former Osprey pilots — even those who have lost friends in accidents or been in crashes themselves — are some of the aircraft’s greatest defenders.

Ospreys have been deployed worldwide — landing in deserts and on ship decks, rescuing U.S. service members from ballistic missiles in Iraq, evacuating civilians in Niger and even standing by ready to protect the president during a surprise trip to Ukraine last year.

“There’s no other platform out there that can do what the V-22 can do,” said former Osprey pilot Brian Luce, who has survived two crashes. “When everything is going well, it is amazing. But when it’s not, it’s unforgiving.”

Unlike other aircraft, the Osprey’s problems have not leveled off as the years passed, instead they spiked — even as the number of hours flown have dropped. Many of those incidents can be directly tied to the aircraft’s design, experts said.

Parts are wearing out faster than planned, and it’s so complex that a minor mistake by a pilot can turn deadly.

While some aspects of the Osprey are now getting modified to make it more reliable, it’s unlikely the Osprey’s core design will change. With about 400 aircraft that cost between \$75 million and \$90 million apiece, a major upgrade to the fleet could cost billions.

1 pilot survives 2 crashes

In 2010, Luce was the co-pilot in an Osprey crash in Afghanistan that killed his aircraft commander, flight engineer, an Army Ran-

ger and a translator.

There was no enemy fire. In the final seconds of flight, as the Osprey converted to land like a helicopter, it dropped at a rate of more than 1,800 feet per minute. The crash investigation was inconclusive but found possible crew errors and said the engines may have lost power from sucking in too much dust.

Two years later, Luce was the aircraft commander overseeing a co-pilot on a Florida training range. Luce’s aircraft was flying low to the ground and about 750 feet behind the lead Osprey — three times the safe minimum distance required.

Despite being football fields apart, when both Ospreys banked, their change in position put one of Luce’s rotor blades inside the 25-foot vertical separation they needed. It crossed into the wake of the lead aircraft — a turbulent and unpredictable wash of air so strong that crews nicknamed it “Superman’s cape.”

In seconds, Luce’s Osprey nearly inverted and began dropping at more than 2,800 feet per minute before crashing and catching fire.

All five crew members survived. As the most seriously injured were airlifted out, Luce called his wife at the time, his voice shaking.

“It happened again,” he said. She did not have to ask what he meant.

Both the 2010 and 2012 crashes exposed issues with the Osprey that the military still faces today.

After Luce’s 2012 crash, Osprey pilots warned investigators that the program was in trouble, according to investigation interviews obtained by the AP. Pilots couldn’t get enough training hours. Ground maintenance crews couldn’t keep enough aircraft flying due to a shortage of parts.

To meet cost and schedule targets, the Pentagon’s Osprey program office allowed manufacturers Bell Flight and Boeing to turn over the Osprey to the military without fully identifying all the ways the aircraft could run into trouble, a 2001 Government Accountability Office report found.

So even by Luce’s 2012 crash, the military still didn’t know the full size of the Osprey’s wake, crash investigators found.

“The fact that they fell out of the sky just defies logic,” Luce’s commander, Lt. Col. Matt Glover, told crash investigators in documents reviewed by the AP.

“I wish I could say there’s not going to be a next one, but where



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

A Marine carry team moves a transfer case containing the remains of Gunnery Sgt. James W. Speedy of Cambridge, Ohio, during a casualty return in 2022, at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Speedy died March 18, 2022, in an Osprey crash during a NATO exercise in Norway.

we are right now, is it ‘if’ or ‘when,’ ” said a second pilot, who was flying the Osprey in front of Luce’s and whose name is redacted.

The Osprey’s safety record has been challenged in multiple congressional hearings over the years. But each time, it has returned to flight. Some members of Congress have said there is no more margin for error.

“If another Osprey goes down, we’re done. This program’s done,” Rep. Stephen Lynch, a Massachusetts Democrat, told Osprey program officials during a hearing this spring.

The design challenge

In the 1980s, when the \$56 billion V-22 program was in its early stages for Bell Flight and Boeing, the Marine Corps controlled the Osprey’s final design because it committed to buying the most. The Marines wanted an aircraft that could carry at least 24 troops, but only take the same small space on a ship deck as the CH-46 helicopter, which the Osprey was replacing.

Experts say design choices have affected the Osprey’s safety since:

■ The Osprey’s proprotors, which work as propellers while flying like an airplane and as rotor blades when functioning as a helicopter, are too small in diameter for the aircraft’s weight, which can top out at 60,500 pounds.

■ The Osprey’s entire engine, transmission and proprotors rotate to a vertical position when it flies like a helicopter, which compromises the engines.

■ That vertical rotation is at the core of what makes the Osprey complex. Crews must watch numerous factors: speed, the angles of the engine and rotor blades, and the up or down position of the air-

craft’s nose, related to the Osprey’s weight and center of gravity to keep it from crashing.

The Osprey is twice as heavy as the CH-46, so the rotor blades needed to be longer but couldn’t be because they would have hit the body of the aircraft or the tower on the ship deck. Instead, the Osprey’s engines had to be more powerful to help the shorter blades generate enough lift.

That creates fast, violent airflow through the rotor blades, which can quickly destabilize the Osprey if one engine has more power than the other.

More powerful engines also meant they would weigh more. So engineers designed them to rotate and used their exhaust thrust to help lift the Osprey off the ground.

“It’s an aircraft with a huge amount of performance packed into a very compact space. What that means is that it’s a real hot rod to fly,” said Richard Brown, a rotorcraft specialist at Sophrodyne Aerospace. “But it also has these foibles which are baked into the design.”

Crashes go back decades

Problems with the vertical engine caused the aircraft’s first fatal accident in 1992. Oils that had pooled while the Osprey was flying like an airplane spilled down into the engine as it rotated to a vertical helicopter position, catching fire and killing seven crew.

In December 2000, repeated transitions to helicopter mode — where the engine and rotor blades rotate upward like an elbow joint — wore down one of the hydraulic lines in an Osprey to the point that it ruptured in flight, killing four Marines. That led to a grounding and system redesign.

Dusty landings present added danger. When the Osprey hovers in helicopter mode, the air and ex-

haust it creates can kick up a wall of dust and debris that can get sucked back into the engines, clogging and degrading them.

In 2015, a Marine Corps Osprey hovering for 45 seconds in Hawaii disturbed so much sand and dust the crew had to abort and try again to land, because they could no longer see. On their second attempt, the Osprey’s left engine stalled and the aircraft dropped flat, killing two Marines.

“I heard what sounded like the entire aircrew yelling ‘power, power, power,’ ” a surviving Marine told investigators, according to redacted interviews obtained by the AP. “The ceiling opened like a sardine can.”

After the accident, the Marine Corps put out new guidelines reducing the amount of time the aircraft could hover in dusty environments.

But two years later, dust was a factor again. Pilots of a Marine Corps Osprey that had been dropping off troops in landing zones in Australia all day were concerned enough about the aircraft’s weight and potential accumulated dust in the engines that they wanted troops to pour out their water jugs to cut weight.

On their final flight, as the Osprey neared the deck of the transport ship USS Green Bay, it dropped. Airflow generated by the Osprey had reflected off the ship deck and backed up through the rotors.

The pilots applied full throttle but the engines could not produce enough power to compensate for the loss. The Osprey kept falling, clipped the side of the ship and fell into the ocean, killing three.

“It just felt like there was nothing you could do,” the lead pilot told investigators. “I don’t recall

SEE ODYSSEY ON PAGE 5

MILITARY

Odyssey: Rise in safety problems seen in Osprey engine, drive system

FROM PAGE 4

seeing anything with the gauges at this point. I just remember being very frightened.”

The Osprey’s manufacturers, Bell Flight and Boeing, both referred questions about whether design changes could be made to either the rotors or engine orientation to the Pentagon.

In a statement to the AP, Bell said it took the heavier loads into account in its aircraft.

“While the capabilities of the Osprey have evolved over the years, the envelope of the aircraft based on configuration to support the varied missions has actually not adjusted significantly and was anticipated by the original design,” Bell said.

Aircraft is wearing down

The Osprey’s design strains critical components inside, especially in helicopter mode — and those parts are wearing out faster than expected.

When the Osprey is flying like a helicopter, everything has to work harder, because the engines and rotors are supporting the full weight of the aircraft. In airplane mode, the rotors only have to overcome the aircraft’s drag, said Brown, the rotorcraft expert.

Air Force crews fly the heaviest Osprey variant because of all the special instruments needed to allow it to fly secret missions, such as conducting rescues or inserting special operations forces in hostile territory.

In helicopter mode, they have to use an option called “interim power” to land safely, said Glover, the former Osprey squadron commander. The option surges more power, but that also can overtax the gears in the Osprey’s transmission, known as the proprotor gearbox.

“Bell-Boeing and the Marines had said: ‘Hey, you’re not supposed to use that thing very often. We don’t recommend it.’ Well, the Air Force, we’ve got to use it because we are heavy,” Glover said. “If you don’t use it, you won’t have the power to land.”

Japan’s defense ministry blamed human error for its most recent accident, where the Osprey tilted and struck the ground, because the pilots did not engage the interim power option as they hovered like a helicopter during takeoff. The ministry announced last week that its Ospreys had been cleared to return to flight.

The strain from helicopter mode shows in the Osprey’s transmission. A total of 609 have had to be replaced in the past 10 years, according to data obtained by the AP.

Wear and tear also puts a large demand on ground maintenance

crews, who closely track components in the aircraft’s drive system to monitor strain. After each flight, they examine the Osprey’s engines, transmission and hydraulic lines for signs of stress.

On the hydraulic lines, “if one of those comes loose, it’s a problem,” said Master Sgt. Frank Williams, an Osprey maintenance supervisor at Cannon Air Force Base. “You have to pay attention.”

In response to questions from the AP, the Marine Corps said the Osprey is still one of its safest aircraft. Over the past decade, the rate that it experienced the worst type of accident resulting in either death or loss of aircraft was 2.27 for every 100,000 hours of flight. The Marines said that compares with 5.66 for its other heavy lift helicopter, the CH-53.

Those numbers don’t tell the whole story. The Marines’ three most serious categories of accidents climbed from 2019 to 2023, even as the number of hours they flew dropped significantly — from 50,807 in fiscal 2019 to 37,670 in 2023, according to data obtained by the AP.

The Air Force’s Osprey has a much higher rate of the worst type of accidents per 100,000 flight hours than its other major aircraft, and its incidents also climbed even as flight hours dropped.

The AP also found that the rise in safety problems over the past five years largely involved the Osprey’s engine or drive system.

There were at least 35 instances where crews experienced an engine fire, power loss or stall, 42 issues involving the proprotors and at least 72 instances of the gears inside the transmission or drive system becoming so stressed they flake off metal chips that can quickly endanger a flight.

Pilots have to fly perfectly

The Osprey’s complexity tests its crews.

Pilots control the angle of the engines and proprotors with a small notched wheel they move with their thumbs. It’s sensitive to the touch — too much of a nudge and the engines’ angle changes by several degrees. And they have to watch a computer display to see the angle.

As the engines and rotor blades begin to rotate upward, the flight controls inside the cockpit change, too — from working like the controls inside an airplane to operating like those in a helicopter.

“You have to just mentally switch, while you are on approach, what your hands are doing,” said Osprey pilot Capt. Christian Eells.

The aircraft’s computer is designed to autocorrect for a pilot if their movement of the wheel could result in the Osprey’s inter-

nal components being damaged. But that adds to the danger if a pilot can’t quickly force the nacelles, which house the engines, upward to slow down the aircraft, he said.

“It will not prevent you from stalling, sinking rapidly or entering any other unsafe flight,” Luce said. “But if you are going too fast, it will not only prevent you from raising the nacelles to slow down, the flight control computers will bounce the nacelles forward” to reduce strain on the gears — which speeds the Osprey up, Luce said.

If there are other complications in flight or a pilot is distracted or misses the significance of an aircraft warning light, those mistakes can turn dangerous quickly.

Lt. Col. Seth Buckley, the 20th Special Operations Squadron commander at the Cannon base, acknowledged that he puts a lot of pressure on his crews to be perfect.

“You have to take that mindset because there are so many things you can do in this aircraft to induce worse problems,” Buckley said.

Reminders of why hang inside the squadron’s heritage room at Cannon, where they have put up a wooden memorial plaque with eight upside-down shot glasses for the friends they lost last November in Japan.

Many of them also wear black metallic memorial bands on their wrists, with the Nov. 29, 2023, crash date and the Osprey’s call sign, “Gundam 22,” etched in.

Facing investigations

The most recent accidents have spurred new lawsuits and congressional investigations.

Family members of the five Marines killed in a 2022 crash in California, caused by an unprecedented dual failure of the Osprey’s clutch, are suing Bell and Boeing, and the maker of the engines, Rolls-Royce. Some of the families of the eight Air Force members killed last November in the Japan crash, which was caused in part by weakened metals in a critical transmission gear, also have hired a lawyer.

“Ultimately, the goal is an Osprey that is as airworthy and in as safe a condition as possible,” said attorney Tim Loranger, who is representing the families.

Following the Japan crash, the military grounded the fleet for three months. Congress also was investigating, and there was frustration from some lawmakers that the Osprey returned to flight before those reviews were complete.

In the meantime, it’s been difficult to get a clear picture of how the aircraft’s manufacturers are responding. After investigations



TARA COPP/AP

Osprey pilot Maj. Lucas Duncavage and squadron commander Lt. Col. Seth Buckley talk over their V-22 Osprey training flight just after landing, at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., last month. During the flight they sped 100 feet off the ground on a training range.

into the Japan and Australia crashes were released this year, neither Bell Flight nor Boeing commented, citing pending litigation.

Naval Air Systems Command, or NAVAIR, which runs the joint Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy Osprey program, is working on a variety of upgrades that should make the aircraft easier to maintain and looking at how else the program can be improved.

“This is the appropriate time to be looking at systemic improvements to the platform,” former program manager Marine Corps Col. Brian Taylor said in a statement.

But it’s unlikely to change any of the fundamentals of vertical engines or rotor size. Those problems are getting fixed in a new aircraft called the Valor that Bell Flight is selling to the Army.

The Valor looks a lot like the Osprey, but it’s smaller. The Valor’s engines stay in a horizontal position. Its smaller size means the rotor blades are more proportional with the aircraft’s weight, which reduces strain on all the other components.

The Valor “captured many lessons learned from both tiltrotor and helicopter previous experience,” Bell said in a statement.

What comes next?

Air Force leadership is watching the Osprey closely, investing in improvements to the engine to make it easier to maintain and looking at future alternatives. The Navy has taken steps to keep more of its legacy aircraft carrier transport planes around in case it can’t make the Osprey work.

The Marine Corps is committed to flying its hundreds of Ospreys through 2050. But it’s also doing a study to decide whether to “significantly modernize the MV/22 and/or begin the process to move forward” to a next-generation assault aircraft, Lt. Gen. Bradford Gerding, Marine deputy commandant of aviation, said in a statement.

Until it has a new option, the Air Force is looking at what can be done to ensure pilots get the time and training needed to master the

Osprey, Air Force special operations commander Lt. Gen. Michael Conley said.

“What I don’t want is someone in my seat 10 years from now say, ‘You know back in 2010, 2012, 2024, you knew crews weren’t getting enough flight hours, you knew there were maintenance challenges, and here we are having the same discussion,’” Conley said.

But it’s also about realizing that aspects of how the Osprey flies won’t change, said Buckley, the Cannon Osprey squadron commander.

“What you have to do is reduce your exposure,” Buckley said.

For example, simulators can now model the full “Superman’s cape” phenomenon, and crews can train to it. But there are still unknowns.

“I do think that we’re still — and maybe even to this day — to a degree working through all the ins and outs aerodynamically what is different about this that has never been seen before with any other aircraft,” Buckley said.

But that doesn’t mean ground it, he said.

In Iraq, Buckley flew a mission where the Osprey was the only aircraft that could help save a service member’s life after a vehicle rollover.

“There wasn’t another plane flying in the sky because the weather was so bad,” Buckley said. “We flew up and down the line of the haboob trying to get around it, but the lightning was too bad, so we penetrated.”

“To this day, that guy is with his family,” he said.

Buckley understands the risks in a different way than many of his crews. He was a high school senior when his 25-year-old brother, 1st Lt. Nathaniel D. Buckley, died in an AFSOC MC-130H cargo aircraft crash in 2002.

In his office, Buckley pointed to the American flag that the Air Force presented to his family after his brother’s death.

“I think my job here is to ensure that I’m going to push it to the level that we are making sure we aren’t delivering any more of these,” he said.

PACIFIC

Experts: Trump's term may bring Indo-Pacific shift

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — President-elect Donald Trump will probably prize deals with individual Indo-Pacific countries over multinational partnerships, a strategy likely to allow China to drive a wedge between the U.S. and its allies, two strategy advisers said this week.

Trump may depart significantly from President Joe Biden's agenda for curtailing Beijing's influence, although both see China as the primary U.S. competitor, Christopher Johnstone, a managing principal at The Asia Group, a strategic advisory firm, said Monday at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

The Biden administration pursued cooperation among its allies and partners, for example, by increasing cooperation and ties between the U.S., Japan and South Korea. Trump is more likely to pursue individual agreements and pressure allies into spending more on defense.

"He brings a deep skepticism about allies and has tended to view

them as free riders who have often taken advantage of the United States," Johnstone told reporters.

Japan this year announced a plan to increase defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product, but Johnstone expects Trump to press for at least 3%.

Trump during his first term pushed South Korea to pay more of the cost to keep American forces stationed in the country or face their withdrawal.

"I think we have to assume that's also a conversation that could return," Johnstone said.

Trump has at times been a strong supporter of Taiwan, but also expressed displeasure with its defense spending and "questioned the importance of Taiwan to the United States," he said.

Faced with Trump's plans to use tariffs and other trade deals to distance the U.S. economy from China, Beijing is likely to retaliate,



Denmark



JEREMY STILLWAGNER/Stars and Stripes

Christopher Johnstone, a managing principal for The Asia Group, speaks to reporters at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo, on Tuesday.

Johnstone said.

"[China is] likely to seek to divide Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Australia, possibly by offering separate inducements and separate incentives related to trade and investment; to attempt to divide the progress that's been made," he said.

China may also test Trump's commitment to Taiwan and keeping open the South China Sea through increased military activity in the area, Johnstone said.

China views Taiwan, a functionally democratic island separated from the mainland by the 110-mile-wide Taiwan Strait, as a breakaway province that must be reclaimed, by force if necessary.

Abraham Denmark, a senior adviser for the Asia Group, said Taiwan presents the greatest potential for conflict. Chinese President Xi Jinping has set 2027 as the year Beijing should "ready to take Taiwan by force," Denmark said.

"It doesn't mean that they will

try to do that," he said. "But it does, I think, signify that the potential for conflict in East Asia, if not high, is a very real possibility that we cannot ignore."

Most Indo-Pacific nations seek stable relationships with both countries, Denmark added.

"I expect countries to continue to hedge for the most part and try to maintain as robust a relationship they can with the United States, while trying to muddle through with China," he said.

South Korean police suspect US soldier of punching teenager

BY YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

South Korean police arrested a U.S. soldier over the weekend on suspicion of punching a teenager in Pyeongtaek, the city adjacent to the Army's Camp Humphreys, and fracturing his jaw.

Police did not identify the soldier, who was handed over to U.S. military police shortly after his arrest early Sunday morning, a Pyeongtaek police detective told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

Eighth Army spokesman Kim Dae Hwan acknowledged a request by Stars and Stripes for comment but had not responded by 6 p.m. Tuesday.

The soldier, a noncommissioned officer in his mid-30s assigned to Humphreys, was arguing with a Korean woman outside Pyeongtaek Station around 12:30 a.m. Sunday when he made eye contact with the younger man passing on the street, according to a second detective who spoke

by phone to Stars and Stripes.

"The soldier and the adolescent then got into an altercation, which escalated into an assault," he said.

South Korean government officials typically speak to the media only on condition of anonymity. Police do not identify individuals under arrest, citing privacy laws in South Korea.

Someone in the teen's group called police, who separated the two at the scene, according to the first detective. The soldier had alcohol on his breath but was not intoxicated, he said.

"We don't know why the fight happened, [or] what the two men were doing around the subway station before the quarrel," he said.

The teen's teeth also were broken, and he had trouble answering questions because of his injuries, the first detective said. Police were uncertain of his age.

The two will be further questioned later, police said.

Ex-Navy spouse convicted of infant's poisoning death at Hawaii day care

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A Honolulu jury on Friday found Dixie Denise Villa, 46, guilty of manslaughter in the 2019 death of an infant at the unlicensed day care she operated out of her home in military housing, according to court records.

Abigail Lobisch, 7 months old, died from an overdose of an allergy drug while staying overnight at Villa's home at Aliamanu Military Reservation in Honolulu.

At the time, Villa was married to an active-duty Navy sailor. The couple has since divorced, according to court records.

Villa, who faces up to 20 years in prison, is slated for sentencing on Feb. 26. She was immediately taken into custody after the verdict was read, according to a report by KHON-TV in Honolulu.

Her bail was set at \$500,000, the station reported.

An autopsy report found Abigail's death was caused by a lethal amount of diphenhydramine in her bloodstream.

Diphenhydramine is an over-

the-counter antihistamine used to relieve symptoms of allergies and colds.

The drug, which also goes by the brand name Benadryl, also induces sleep. Children younger than age 6 are advised not to use diphenhydramine unless directed by a doctor.

Toxicology testing found the level of diphenhydramine in the girl's blood stream at 2,400 nanograms per milliliter — almost twice the average level found in children who have died from the drug, court documents said.

The infant's mother, Anna Lobisch, had been using Villa's day care services for about four months.

On Feb. 23, 2019, she dropped Abigail and her 2-year-old brother off at the Aulani Hotel, a Disney resort, where Villa had stayed the previous night with her two children, according to the criminal complaint filed with Hawaii First

Circuit District Court.

The children were badly sunburned after spending most of the day at the resort's pool.

Villa told Honolulu Police Department detectives she only applied lotion on them.

Some of Villa's neighbors complained numerous times to housing and military authorities that she was operating an unlicensed day care at her home in the Army-run housing community.

A probe conducted by U.S. Army Hawaii after the death concluded that the contractor licensed to run the housing area did not have a "consistent, streamlined process" for evicting tenants operating unauthorized home day care.

Aliamanu is one of many military housing communities in Hawaii operated as Island Palm Communities by the Australia-based Lendlease Corp. in conjunction with the U.S. Army.



Villa



Lobisch

MILITARY



NICHOLAS "TRAPPER" ATKINS/U.S. Air Force

A prototype ladder for the F-16 is draped over the side.

Airman's portable F-16 ladder wins Spark Tank

BY BRIAN ERICKSON
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An F-16 Viper pilot's flash of inspiration amid frustration turned into a win in the annual Air Force innovation competition known as Spark Tank, where he beat out 137 other submissions.

The collapsible F-16 ladder invented by Maj. Nick "Trapper" Atkins of the 31st Fighter Wing at Aviano Air Base was selected as the best of the six finalists in the competition, which helps airmen bring promising ideas to market.

The "numerous times" that Atkins had found himself without a ladder during his career prompted him to create a portable one that fits in the airplane's map case, he said.

"Sometimes being mad solves things," Atkins, the chief of agile combat employment for the wing, said Monday about the Oct. 30 Spark Tank finals at the Pentagon.

Agile combat employment is a set of concepts that involves rapid deployment of aircraft from larger overseas installations to groups of smaller, often remote locations with minimal infrastructure.

In contrast with pilots of many other aircraft, those who fly the F-16 rely on a ladder that is pre-positioned. However, the size and availability constraints of those ladders opened the door for Atkins to come up with something better.

"If you look at what our competitive advantage is going to be to get after the threat, it's our allies, it's our industry and it's our people," Gen. Mike Guetlein, vice chief of space operations and one of the five competition judges, said in an

Air Force statement. "Our people are the ones innovating and bringing forward smart ideas."

Spark Tank winners don't receive financial compensation, though their name is listed on the Air Force-owned patent.

Since winning Spark Tank, Atkins has been working toward approval and certification of the prototype.

He said the version of the ladder that won the competition doesn't meet all the requirements of the Air Force's System Program Office, which manages the development and acquisition of military systems and programs.

The new version will work toward that, he added. Areas being looked at for modification include the load-bearing points and ways to minimize wear and tear.

He hopes that winning the competition will help bring the ladder to mass production. For now, the wing is funding the effort to get it from prototype to production and available for commercial purchase.

Atkins and his team at Aviano are in talks with the military contractor Bunker Supply, which specializes in developing and manufacturing optimized equipment on a larger scale, he said.

"With a product like this, we are trying to resource 900-plus for the Air Force inventory, so we need a company whose purpose is to build," Atkins said.

Once the prototype achieves System Program Office certification, Atkins said, the goal is to have a production model of the ladder available for units to purchase online by the end of 2025.

USS Bush returns to fleet on time after maintenance

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

East Coast aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush has rejoined the Navy fleet on time following a 10-month stint in a shipyard for scheduled maintenance.

The Bush left Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Va., on Saturday, sailing upriver to its homeport of Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The Bush entered the shipyard Jan. 11 for a post-deployment maintenance cycle following its 2022-23 deployment.

"On-time completion of our [planned incremental availability], and subsequent sea trials, is a product of both the Avenger's rock-solid teamwork with Norfolk Naval Shipyard and the tireless dedication of our sailors," said Capt. Robert Bibeau, commanding officer of the Bush. "Through full ownership of the work package, complete integrity every step of the way with our successes and challenges, and forward-leaning deck plate leadership on both the ship and at the shipyard, we were able to get the ship back in action and return lethality to the fleet."

The Bush's on-time delivery comes as the sea service strives to overcome a history of maintenance delays, which can have a domino effect on shipyards' tight schedules.

From 2015 to 2019, 38 out of 51 — or 75% — of planned maintenance periods at the Navy's four public shipyards were completed late for carriers, according to a 2020 re-

port released by watchdog Government Accountability Office.

The GAO made three recommendations to the Navy, including updating workforce planning requirements to avoid the consistent use of overtime; completing the development of shipyard performance metrics; and developing and implementing goals, action plans and milestones, and monitoring results. All recommendations were completed, the Navy said. A follow-on review has not been released.

The last two aircraft carriers to enter the Virginia-based Navy shipyard — including the Bush — have rejoined the fleet on time. The USS Harry Truman departed the shipyard on time Dec. 17, 2023, less than one month before the Bush's arrival. But the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower was delivered two months late in 2022, extending a 13-month maintenance period to 15 months.

The Bush had extensive advance work done pier side at Naval Station Norfolk before the ship entered the shipyard. This style of maintenance, dubbed the "window of opportunity" maintenance period, was a modification to the traditional flow of the schedule.

Modeled after "Tiger Teams," where mechanics travel overseas to accomplish work on ships to prevent a pause in fleet operations, was successful at keeping the Bush's maintenance cycle on track, the shipyard said.

"We were successful through

our Tiger Team mentality that was established while working at Naval Station Norfolk," Kenny Minnard, Nuclear Assistant Project Superintendent said. "Everyone worked together knowing that resources were limited in comparison to shipyard proper [located across the Elizabeth River in Portsmouth]."

The Bush's maintenance period at Norfolk Naval Shipyard focused on modernization efforts, structural repair and preservation work. Sensor and system upgrades were installed, and multiple areas were cleaned and painted, to include tanks, voids, weapons elevators, areas of the flight deck and hangar bay, the main mast and exterior of the ship, as well as general repairs to the hull, and mechanical and electrical infrastructure.

Additionally, there were many quality of service improvements made during modernization with the goal of improving life for the sailors. The Bush saw upgrades to crew living spaces, combination ovens in the ship's galley, modular refrigeration equipment, Wi-Fi capability and a computer network upgrade were installed.

"The Avenger and [Norfolk Naval Shipyard] team applied the true spirit of 'Get Real, Get Better' by embracing the red and owning, communicating, and aggressively attacking challenges on a daily basis to ensure that we got back out to sea more capable, more adaptable, and more lethal than ever before," Bibeau said.

Austin: Alliance with Philippines will transcend administrations

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday condemned China's dangerous actions against the Philippines and renewed a warning that the United States would defend its treaty ally if Filipino forces come under an armed attack in the increasingly volatile waters.

During a visit to the Philippine province of Palawan next to the disputed South China Sea, Austin was asked if the strong U.S. military support for the Philippines would continue under incoming President Donald Trump, including \$500 million in new military funding. Austin expressed belief that the strong alliance "will transcend" changes of administration.

"We stand with the Philippines and we condemn dangerous actions by the PRC against lawful

Philippine operations in the South China Sea," he said, using the acronym of China's official name.

He added: "The behavior of PRC has been concerning. They've used dangerous and escalatory measures to enforce their expansive South China Sea maritime claims."

China has also had recent territorial spats with smaller coastal states, including Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia, over the key global trade and security route. Brunei and Taiwan are also involved in long-unresolved disputes.

The outgoing Biden administration has taken steps to strengthen an arc of military alliances across the Indo-Pacific region to better counter China, including in any future confrontation over Taiwan or in the South China Sea, which

Beijing has claimed almost in its entirety.

That has dovetailed with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s thrust to strengthen his country's external defenses, given an alarming escalation of territorial confrontations between Chinese and Filipinos forces in the South China Sea.

There has been intense speculation over how Trump would steer U.S. military engagements in Asia.

Marcos told reporters that he congratulated Trump on his presidential election victory in a call.

"I expressed to him our continuing desire to strengthen that relationship between our two countries, which is a relationship that is as deep as can possibly be because it has been for a very long time," Marcos said.

MILITARY

DOD pick renews debate concerning women in combat

By Lolita C. Baldor
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump’s nominee for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, has reignited a debate that many thought had been long settled: Should women be allowed to serve their country by fighting on the front lines?

The former Fox News commentator has made it clear, in his book and in interviews, that he believes men and women should not serve together in combat units. If Hegseth is confirmed by the Senate, he could try to end the Pentagon’s nearly decade-old practice of making all combat jobs open to women.

“I’m straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles. It hasn’t made us more effective. Hasn’t made us more lethal. Has made fighting more complicated,” he said in a podcast hosted by Shawn Ryan on Nov. 7. Women have a place in the military, he said, just not in special operations, artillery, infantry and armor units.

Hegseth’s remarks generated a barrage of praise and condemnation. And they raised a question:

“Who’s going to replace them? Men? And we’re having trouble recruiting men into the Army right now,” said Lory Manning, a retired Navy captain who works with the Service Women’s Action Network.

The military services have struggled for years to meet recruiting goals, facing stiff competition from companies that pay more and offer similar or better benefits. And a growing population of young people aren’t interested in joining or can’t meet the physical, academic and moral requirements.

Removing women from contention for jobs, said Manning, could force the services to lower standards to bring in more men who have not graduated high school, have criminal records or score too low on physical and mental tests.

Lawmakers are divided on Hegseth’s views.

“Where do you think I lost my legs, in a bar fight? I’m pretty sure I was in combat when that happened,” snapped Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., in an CNN interview last Wednesday after Trump’s selection was announced.

Duckworth, who flew missions in Iraq and lost both legs when her helicopter was hit, added, “It just

shows how out of touch he is with the nature of modern warfare if he thinks that we can keep women behind that sort of imaginary line.”

Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., praised Hegseth and said the reality is that certain military jobs “just need brute strength.” But he added, “women have served incredibly well, honorably in combat roles, and I don’t think that policy is going to change, but we’ll leave it up to him.”

Steven Cheung, a spokesman for the Trump transition, said Hegseth has dedicated his life to supporting American troops and his country, and cited his service in Iraq and Afghanistan and two Bronze Stars.

“He is an incredibly tough and smart candidate that will fight to put America first. With Pete as our secretary of defense, America’s enemies are on notice and our military will be great again,” Cheung said.

Others, including a number of military women, disagree with Hegseth’s views on female troops in combat.

“Pete Hegseth’s views on women in the military are outdated, prejudiced, and ignore over 20 years of evidence proving women’s effectiveness in combat roles,” said Erin Kirk, a Marine Corps combat veteran. She said women have served honorably and effectively as pilots, logistics personnel, intelligence operatives and infantry grunts.

“Hegseth’s stances aren’t just regressive, they pose a direct threat to the Department of Defense’s readiness, and by extension, to our national security,” Kirk said.

Hegseth has said he is not suggesting women should not be combat pilots, but that they should not be in jobs such as SEALs, Army Rangers, infantry, armor and artillery where “strength is a differentiator.” He insists the military lowered standards to get more women into combat roles. The services have said they did not decrease the standards for any of the combat jobs.

Hegseth’s view on women in combat reflects much of the debate over the past nine years, in the wake of then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter’s order in late 2015 that the military open all military jobs to women. That change followed three years of study and wrangling and was a formal recognition that thousands of women



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

President-elect Donald Trump’s nominee for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, has reignited a debate that many thought had been long settled: Should women be allowed to fight on the front lines?

Women in combat roles

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump’s nominee for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, has been outspoken about his opinion that women should not serve in combat roles. Here’s a look at how many women are in such military roles, as of the 2024 budget year:

Special operations

- Navy Special Warfare combat crew: 2
- Air Force special operations: 3
- Green Berets: Fewer than 10
- Completed the Army Ranger course: More than 150
- Total serving in Army Special Operations Command as special forces, civil affairs, psychological operations and helicopter pilots, including in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment: 260 to 270

Marines

- Officers in job categories previously restricted to men, including infantry, artillery and combat engineers: Nearly 192
 - Enlisted Marines in those jobs: 410
- That number has steadily increased since 2018.

Army

- Serving in Army infantry, armor and artillery jobs: Nearly 4,800
 - Field artillery roles: More than 2,020
 - Infantry: More than 902
 - Armor: 864
- The number of women in those jobs also has increased over the years.

Associated Press

had served — and many were wounded or killed — on battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Carter said then that the military could no longer afford to exclude half the population from high-risk military posts and that any man or woman who meets the standards should be able to serve.

The Marine Corps was fiercely opposed to the idea and sought an exemption, which was denied. Special operations forces, in surveys done in 2015 and more recently, said women did not have the physical or mental strength to serve in elite commando units and doing so could hurt the units’ effectiveness and lower standards.

The numbers are small, but women have passed the grueling qualification courses to join special operations units. Two are serving as Navy Special Warfare combat crewmen, three in Air Force special operations units and fewer than 10 are Green Berets.

More than 150 women have completed the Army Ranger course, and several hundred more are serving in Army Special Operations Command jobs such as civil affairs, psychological operations and helicopter pilots, including in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

And, more broadly, thousands of women have served or current-

ly are in jobs that until 2015 were male-only, including in Army and Marine Corps artillery, infantry and armor units.

Lowering standards has been a key talking point for Hegseth.

By opening combat slots to women, “we’ve changed the standards in putting them there, which means you’ve changed the capability of that unit,” Hegseth said in the podcast interview.

Both male and female troops were outspoken since the start of the debate in their opposition to any reduction in standards for the jobs.

Manning, the Navy captain, said Hegseth is conflating two separate issues on standards.

The services do adjust requirements for the annual physical fitness test according to a service member’s age and gender, but they do not adjust the requirements for specific jobs.

Every job, said Manning, “has a set of occupational standards that have to be met.” Those range from physical strength and capabilities to things such as color blindness or academic testing. “Those, by law, have got to be gender neutral. And they are, and they have been for years,” she said.

Monica Meeks, who lives near Fort Campbell, Ky., was in the Army for 20 years and served in Iraq. She said she served with women in a variety of infantry jobs, including the first female platoon sergeant in the 18th Airborne Corps.

“When people say women shouldn’t serve in a combat zone, like an IED (improvised explosive device) can happen at any time. So there is no front line in these wars in Afghanistan and Iraq,” Meeks said.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Putin lowers threshold for use of nukes

Declaration follows Biden decision to let Ukraine launch US-supplied longer-range missiles into Russia

Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday formally lowered the threshold for Russia's use of its nuclear weapons, a move that follows U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russian territory with American-supplied longer-range missiles.

The new doctrine allows for a potential nuclear response by Moscow even to a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Ukraine fired six U.S.-made ATACMS missiles early Tuesday at a military facility in Russia's Bryansk region that borders Ukraine, adding that air defenses shot down five of them and damaged one more.

While the doctrine envisions a possible nuclear response by Russia to such a conventional strike, it is formulated broadly to avoid a firm commitment to use nuclear weapons and keep Putin's options open.

The approval of the document demonstrates Putin's readiness to tap his nuclear arsenal to force the West to back down as Moscow presses a slow-moving offensive in Ukraine as the war reached its 1,000th day.

Asked Tuesday if a Ukrainian attack with longer-range U.S. mis-

siles could potentially trigger a nuclear response, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov answered affirmatively, pointing to the doctrine's provision that holds the door open for it after a conventional strike that raises critical threats for the "sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Russia and its ally, Belarus.

Commenting on whether the updated doctrine was deliberately issued to follow Biden's decision, Peskov said the document was published "in a timely manner" and that Putin instructed the government to update it earlier this year so that it is "in line with the current situation."

Putin first announced changes in the nuclear doctrine in September, when he chaired a meeting discussing the proposed revisions. He has previously warned the U.S. and other NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons to hit Russian territory would mean that Russia and NATO are at war.

Washington has permitted Ukraine to use the longer-range weapons on targets inside Russia after declaring that thousands of North Korean troops were deployed in the Russian region of Kursk to fight an incursion by Kyiv's forces.

White House officials were not surprised by Putin's decision, and



VYACHESLAV PROKOFYEV, SPUTNIK/AP

Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to the Moscow-appointed head of the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine, Yevgeny Balitsky during their meeting in Moscow, on Monday.

the U.S. has seen no change to Russia's nuclear posture, according to a U.S. National Security Council official who was not authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

As a result, the Biden administration has "not seen any reason to adjust our own nuclear posture or doctrine in response to Russia's statements today," the official added. Still, the official says the White House views it as "irresponsible rhetoric."

But the official underscored that the arrival of thousands of North Korean soldiers to take part in combat operations against Ukraine was a major escalation by Moscow that demanded a re-

sponse.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer denounced the revised nuclear doctrine as the "latest example of irresponsibility" from "the depraved Russian government," according to spokesperson Camilla Marshall.

"Russia's the one that continues to escalate this war, and the use of North Korean troops is just one example of that," Marshall said. "He could remove his troops, roll back his tanks and end the onslaught and needless bloodshed in both Ukraine and Russia. ... We would urge him to do so."

The updated doctrine says an attack against Russia by a nonnuclear power with the "participa-

tion or support of a nuclear power" will be seen as their "joint attack on the Russian Federation."

It says any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response but avoids any firm commitment and mentions the "uncertainty of scale, time and place of possible use of nuclear deterrent" among the key principles of the nuclear deterrence.

The document also notes that aggression against Russia by a member of a military bloc or coalition is viewed as "an aggression by the entire bloc," a clear reference to NATO.

At the same time, it spells out conditions for using nuclear weapons in greater detail compared with previous versions of the doctrine, noting they could be used in case of a massive air attack involving ballistic and cruise missiles, aircraft, drones and other flying vehicles.

The formulation appears to significantly broaden the triggers for possible nuclear weapons use compared with the document's previous version, which stated Russia could tap its atomic arsenal if case of an attack with ballistic missiles.

Since Putin sent troops into Ukraine, he and other Russian voices have frequently threatened the West with Russia's nuclear arsenal to discourage it from ramping up support for Kyiv.

Russian hawks called for toughening the doctrine for months, arguing the previous version failed to deter the West from increasing its aid to Ukraine and created the impression that Moscow would not resort to nuclear weapons.

Fired: Russia continues strikes on residential areas in Ukraine

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier on Tuesday, Ukrainian officials reported a third Russian strike in three days on a civilian residential area in Ukraine killed at least 12 people, including a child.

The strike by a Shahed drone in the northern Sumy region late Monday hit a dormitory of an educational facility in the town of Hlukhiv and wounded 11 others, including two children, authorities said, adding that more people could be trapped under the rubble.

Ukrainian civilians have repeatedly been clobbered by Russian drones and missiles during the war, while on the battlefield it is under severe Russian pressure at places on the roughly 600-mile front line where its army is stretched thin against a bigger ad-

versary.

On Sunday, a Russian ballistic missile with cluster munitions struck a residential area of Sumy in northern Ukraine, killing 11 people and wounding 84 others.

On Monday, a Russian missile barrage sparked apartment fires in the southern port of Odesa, killing at least 10 people and wounding 43.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the series of aerial strikes proved that Russian President Vladimir Putin wasn't interested in ending the war.

"Each new attack by Russia only confirms Putin's true intentions. He wants the war to continue. Talks about peace are not interesting to him. We must force Russia to a just peace by force," Zelenskyy said.

Germany vows it will not be intimidated again by Russia

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Germany's foreign minister vowed Tuesday that her country would not be intimidated by Russia's new nuclear deterrent policy, saying Berlin made that mistake in the past but would not repeat it.

Annalena Baerbock told a news conference in Poland that Berlin will now heed the warnings of partners that border Ukraine. She was attending a meeting of foreign ministers of Poland, Germany, France and Italy.

"[Russian President Vladimir] Putin is playing with our fear," Baerbock said. "He didn't just start doing this 1,000 days ago. He started back in 2014. And Germany in particular made the

mistake back then, especially politically, of allowing itself to be intimidated by this fear and, above all, not listening to its partners, especially our Eastern European partners, who made it clear at the time: We must not rely on promises from the Kremlin. We must invest in our own security and protection."

Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

It follows U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles.

The foreign ministers are dis-

cussing stepping up Europe's military support for Ukraine as well as ties with the United States under Donald Trump.

Trump says he expects Europe to make a greater effort for its own defense in the face of Russia's war with Ukraine.

The meeting's host, Poland's Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, said that "we have agreed that Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security, and that includes a more balanced sharing of the burdens among NATO members."

Also present at the meeting is the European Union's upcoming chief of diplomacy, Kaja Kallas.

For "logistical reasons," the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha could not attend in person, Sikorski said.

WAR IN UKRAINE

‘Everyone knows that we have to endure’
1,000 days of war in Ukraine, distilled in a single 24-hour span of violence and resilience

BY LORI HINNANT,
ILLIA NOVIKOV
AND DMYTRO ZHYHINAS
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — The clock on her wall stopped almost as soon as the day began, its hands frozen by the Russian bomb that hit the dormitory serving as home for Ukrainians displaced by war.

It was 1:45 a.m. in an upstairs room in the eastern city of Zaporizhzhia, Natalia Panasenکو’s home for just shy of a year after the town she thinks of as her real home came under Russian occupation. The explosion blasted a door on top of her, smashed her refrigerator and television and shredded the flowers she’d just received for her 63rd birthday.

“The house was full of people and flowers. People were congratulating me ... and then there was nothing. Everything was mixed in the rubble,” she said. “I come from a place where the war is going on every day. We only just left there, and it seemed to be quieter here. And the war caught up with us again.”

Nov. 11 was a typical day of violence and resilience in Ukraine. The Associated Press fanned out across Ukraine to chronicle 24 hours of life just as the country prepared to mark a grim milestone Tuesday: 1,000 days since Russia’s full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

The day opened with two Russian bombings — one that hit Panasenکو’s apartment and another that killed six in Mykolaiv, including a woman and her three children. Before the day was even half-way done, a Russian ballistic missile shattered yet another apartment building, this time in the city of Kryvyi Rih.

Swimmers braved the Black Sea waters off Odesa, steelworkers kept the economy limping along, a baby was born. Soldiers died and were buried. The lucky ones found a measure of healing for their missing limbs and broken faces.

About a fifth of Ukraine’s internationally recognized territory is now controlled by Russia. Those invisible geographical lines shift constantly, and the closer a person is to them the more dangerous life is.

In the no-man’s-land between Russian and Ukrainian forces, there’s hardly any life at all. It’s called the Gray Zone for good reason. Ashen homes, charred trees and blackened pits left by shells exploding over 1,000 days of war stretch as far as the eye can see.

■ Odesa, 6:50 a.m. — The waters of the Black Sea hover around 55 Fahrenheit in late fall. The coastline is mined. Dmytro’s city is regularly targeted by drones and



An aerial view of Chasiv Yar shows the frontline city in ruins after heavy fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces for over a year in Donetsk Region, Ukraine, on Nov. 11.



Olena Moiseeva with her son and daughter cry near the coffin of her husband Yuri Moiseev, a Ukrainian soldier who was killed during fighting with Russian Forces in Terny on Nov. 28, 2023, during the funeral ceremony in Brovary, Kyiv region, Ukraine, on Nov. 11.

missiles.

But Dmytro — who insisted on being identified only by his first name because he was worried for the safety of his family — was undaunted as he plunged into the waves with a handful of friends for their regular swim.

Before the war, the group numbered a couple of dozen. Many fled the country. Men were mobilized to fight. Some returned with disabilities that keep them out of the water. His 33-year-old stepson is missing in action after a battle in the Donetsk region.

For Dmytro and fellow swimmers, the ritual grounds them and makes the grimness of war more bearable. He said the risks of his hobby are well worth the reward: “If you’re afraid of wolves, don’t go into the forest.”

■ Zaporizhzhia, noon — Managing the Zaporizhstal steel mill during wartime means days filled with calculations for Serhii Saphonov.

The staff of 420 is less than half its pre-war levels. Power cuts from Russian attacks on electricity infrastructure require an “algorithm of actions” to maintain operations. Russian forces are closing in on the coke mine in Pokrovsk that supplies the plant with coal. And the city is under increasing attack by Russia’s unstoppable glide bombs.

Right outside his office, a bulletin board displays the names of 92 former steelworkers who have joined the army. Below are photos of the dead. Staff hold fundraisers for supplies for colleagues on the front, including two bulletproof



Anastasia helps husband Serhiy Ponomarenko, a Ukrainian serviceman who had two limbs amputated after fighting at the frontline, as he does his morning exercises in Lviv, Ukraine.

vests sitting in the corner near his desk.

“The old workers, they carry everything on their shoulders. They are hardened. They know their job,” Saphonov said. “Everyone knows that we have to endure, hold out, hoping that things will get better ahead.”

■ Chernihiv, 1 p.m. — Dr. Vladyslava Friz has performed more reconstructive surgeries in the past 1,000 days than she did in the previous decade of her career. And the injuries are like nothing she had ever seen before.

Her days start early and end late. In the first months of the war, she said, the hospital was admitting 60 people per hour, and eight surgeons worked nonstop. They’re still catching up, because so many of the injured need multiple sur-

geries.

On Nov. 11, she was rebuilding the cheek and jaw of a patient injured in a mine explosion.

“Appearance is a person’s visual identity,” she said. “There is work to be done; we are doing it. We have no other options. There are medicines, equipment and personnel, but there are no metal structures for reconstruction. There is no state funding for implants.”

She said she will not abandon her patients but worries that the world will abandon Ukraine as the war approaches its fourth year.

“The global community continues to lose interest in the events in Ukraine while we lose people every day,” she said. “The world seems to have forgotten about us.”

■ Odesa, 6 p.m. — Yulia Ponomarenko has brought two babies into the world in the past 1,000 days, including Mariana on Nov. 11. Her husband, Denys, is fighting at the front.

Their hometown, Oleshky, was submerged by flooding after the explosion of the Kakhovka Dam. But by then, she’d long since fled the occupying Russian forces, who target the families of Ukrainian soldiers.

Mariana, born healthy at 8 pounds, 6 ounces and 21 inches, will grow up with an older brother and sister and a menagerie of two cats and two dogs.

“This child is very expected, very wanted. We now have another princess,” Ponomarenko said.

■ Kyiv, 9 p.m. — The actors can’t perform in their home theater in Kharkiv — too many bombs, too few people willing to gather in one place. So they’ve moved to the Ukrainian capital, where they played to a nearly full house on Nov. 11 as guests of the Franko Theater.

“Because of the war, the Kharkiv theater cannot play on its stage. We play underground. It is literally underground art. There are only two to three places in Kharkiv where we can play, and that’s it,” said Mykhailo Tereshchenko, one of the principal actors of the Taras Shevchenko Academic Ukrainian Drama Theatre, named for Ukraine’s most famous writer.

Yevhen Nyschchuk, director of the Franko, said the theater paused production for a few months after the war started. Now, it’s packed nearly every night there is a play, and the lengthy applause when curtains close is deafening.

The reason goes beyond the quality of a performance at this point, he believes, and expresses “this inner realization that in spite of everything, we will create, we will live, we will come, we will meet, we will applaud each other.”

NATION

Duffy, who defended Trump on Hill, picked to lead DOT

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President-elect Donald Trump said Monday he is naming former Wisconsin Rep. Sean Duffy as his nominee for transportation secretary, as he continues to roll out picks for his Cabinet.

Duffy is a former reality TV star who was one of Trump’s most visible defenders on cable news — a prime concern for the media-focused president-elect. Duffy served in the House for nearly nine years, was a member of the Financial Services Committee and chairman of the subcommittee on insurance and housing. He left Congress in 2019, and is co-host of “The Bottom Line” on Fox Business.

In his announcement, Trump noted that Duffy is married to a Fox News host, calling him “the husband of a wonderful woman, Rachel Campos-Duffy, a STAR on

Fox News.”

A spokesperson for Fox News Media wished Duffy “the best of luck in his return to Washington” and said he left the company Monday.

Duffy is so far the second Fox-affiliated television host that Trump has named to his Cabinet. Trump last week announced his choice of Fox News host Pete Hegseth to serve as his defense secretary.

Trump said Duffy would use his experience and relationships built over the years in Congress “to maintain and rebuild our Nation’s Infrastructure, and fulfill our Mission of ushering in The Golden Age of Travel, focusing on Safety, Efficiency, and Innovation. Importantly, he will greatly elevate the Travel Experience for all Americans!”

Duffy in 2022 ruled out a run for Wisconsin governor despite pleas

from Trump to make a bid, saying he needed to care for his nine children, including his youngest child who had a heart condition.

He is a former lumberjack athlete and frequent Fox News contributor. He was featured on MTV’s “The Real World: Boston” in 1997. He met his wife on the set of MTV’s “Road Rules: All Stars” in 1998. Duffy, after his time on reality television, worked as a special prosecutor and Ashland County district attorney. He won election to Congress as part of a tea party wave in 2010.

When he first ran for office, Duffy was largely considered an underdog but attracted national attention for his campaign ads, in which he donned a red flannel shirt and chopped trees. He told voters he came from a “long line of lumberjacks” and would bring his ax to Washington.

He resigned in 2019.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Then-Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wis., speaks during a 2018 hearing on Capitol Hill. President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Duffy to be transportation secretary.

The Transportation Department oversees the nation’s complex transportation system, including pipelines, railroads, cars, trucks, the airlines and mass transit systems as well as federal funding for highways.

The department includes the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which regulates automakers, including Elon Musk’s Tesla. The department sets fuel economy standards for cars and trucks and regulates the airline industry through the Fed-

eral Aviation Administration, which is grappling with a shortage of air traffic controllers to ensure the safe and orderly flow of air travel.

Nicholas Calio, president and CEO of Airlines for America, said the association was “thrilled” by the choice of Duffy.

“Congressman Duffy has a proven track record for getting things done, and we are eager to collaborate with him on key issues impacting the U.S. airline industry,” Calio said.

Court cancels arguments on Trump appeal on Willis

The Washington Post

ATLANTA — The Georgia Court of Appeals on Monday abruptly canceled oral arguments on Donald Trump’s appeal of a state court ruling allowing Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis to continue prosecuting the 2020 election interference case against the president-elect and several of his allies.

In a brief notice filed late Monday afternoon, the appellate court said the arguments, originally scheduled to take place Dec. 5, are “hereby canceled until further order of this Court.” The notice gave no reason for the cancellation and caught many parties involved in the case by surprise.

The abrupt notice comes amid lingering questions about the future of the Georgia case against Trump as he prepares to return to



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Fulton County, Ga., District Attorney Fani Willis speaks last month in Atlanta.

the White House after his election victory this month.

While other prosecutions of the president-elect appear to be winding down — including those led by

special counsel Jack Smith, who also charged Trump with 2020 election interference — Willis has strongly implied in the past that she will continue to pursue her office’s case against Trump unless a court blocks her. A spokesman for Willis declined to comment Monday on the appellate court notice.

Trump and several co-defendants have sought to overturn a March ruling allowing Willis to remain on the case after she was accused of having an inappropriate relationship with an outside attorney she hired to lead the election interference case.

In a March 15 order, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee said Trump and the others had “failed to meet their burden” of proving that Willis’ romantic relationship with special prosecutor Nathan Wade and alle-

gations that she was financially enriched by trips the two took together were enough of a “conflict of interest” to disqualify her from the case. But McAfee did find a “significant appearance of impropriety” and ruled that either Willis and her office or Wade had to leave the case. Wade resigned that day.

In appellate filings, Trump and eight co-defendants have argued Wade’s departure was not enough to resolve the “appearance of impropriety” that has “cast a pall over these entire proceedings.” It called McAfee’s decision to keep Willis on the case an “erroneous failure” and a “structural error that would not just cause substantial error at trial” but could later cause a verdict to be overturned.

Fulton County prosecutors have argued McAfee granted Trump

and his co-defendants “substantial leeway” in presenting evidence that Willis’ relationship with Wade compromised the case and found they did not meet their evidentiary burden. They have argued the court should uphold McAfee’s ruling and deny the appeal. Last month, the appellate court granted a joint request from lawyers for Trump and his co-defendants seeking additional time to argue their case — expanding their arguments from 15 minutes to one hour per side.

Steven Sadow, Trump’s lead attorney in Georgia, previously argued that if Trump regained the presidency, the case against his client would have to be delayed until 2029. But even if Trump is removed from the proceedings, the case is expected to move on for the 14 others who are charged.

Amazon, SpaceX challenge labor agency’s constitutionality in court

Associated Press

Attorneys for Amazon and Elon Musk’s SpaceX argued in a federal appeals court Monday that the National Labor Relations Board’s structure is unconstitutional, advancing a legal fight that may last into the Trump administration where Musk is expected to oversee bureaucratic cost-cutting.

A panel of three judges at the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans heard separate oral arguments in the SpaceX and Amazon lawsuits, which the two companies initiated after the labor

agency filed complaints against them in disputes about workers’ rights and union organizing.

A ruling in favor of the companies could immensely diminish — or paralyze — the nearly century-old agency, which is tasked with enforcing labor laws and settling labor-related complaints workers lodge against their employers. The issue may eventually reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which has a conservative majority and has issued rulings curbing the power of government agencies.

The three appellate judges who

heard Monday’s arguments questioned the legal maneuvering by Amazon and SpaceX to get their cases to the 5th Circuit, where jurists nominated by Republican presidents dominate the appeals court.

SpaceX, Musk’s space technology company, filed its lawsuit against the NLRB in January after the labor agency accused the company of unlawfully firing employees who wrote an open letter critical of Musk and of creating the impression worker activities were being surveilled.

Among other claims, the company argued in its complaint that agency proceedings deprived it of the right to a trial by a jury.

Musk, the world’s richest person, has become more influential after pumping an estimated \$200 million through his political action committee to help elect Donald Trump as president.

After he was elected, Trump tapped Musk and former GOP presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy to lead a new efficiency commission focused on cutting costs across the federal govern-

ment.

Amazon’s lawsuit against the NLRB is tied to the company’s objections to a union election that took place at a warehouse in New York City in April 2022. The retail giant has accused the agency of improperly interfering in that election, partly by bringing a lawsuit against the company to reinstate a fired organizer close to when voting began.

The Amazon Labor Union ultimately won the election to represent workers, but Amazon has refused to come to negotiate.

NATION

Suspect charged with murder after 3 stabbed in NYC

BY JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A man has been charged with three counts of first-degree murder in the fatal stabbings of three people in random attacks across Manhattan, police said Tuesday.

Ramon Rivera, 51, was taken into custody after he was found with blood on his clothes and the two kitchen knives, authorities said. He awaited arraignment Tuesday. A message seeking comment was left with an attorney who represented him in a prior case.

“Three New Yorkers. Unprovoked attacks that left us searching for answers on how something like this could happen,” Mayor Eric Adams said at a news conference Monday afternoon.

Investigators were working to understand what propelled the rampage, which happened within 2 1/2 hours Monday.

“No words exchanged. No property taken. Just attacked, viciously,” said Joseph Kenny, the New York Police Department’s chief of detectives. “He just walked up to

them and began to attack them with the knives.”

The first stabbing, on West 19th Street, killed a 36-year-old construction worker, Angel Lata Landi, who was standing by his work site near the Hudson River a little before 8:30 a.m., police said. About two hours later and across the island of Manhattan, a 68-year-old man was attacked while fishing in the East River near East 30th Street.

Both men died shortly after the stabbings, Kenny said. The fisherman’s name was not immediately released.

The suspect then apparently traveled north near the riverfront. Around 10:55 a.m., a 36-year-old woman identified as Wilma Augustin was stabbed multiple times near the United Nations headquarters on East 42nd Street, Kenny said. She died later Monday at a hospital, police said.

A passing cabdriver saw the third attack and alerted police on nearby First Avenue and East 46th Street, officials said. An officer soon apprehended the sus-



Ramon Rivera, a suspect arrested after multiple people were stabbed early Monday, is escorted out by police officers at the NYPD 10th Precinct in New York, on Monday.

pect.

Adams, a Democrat, called Monday’s violence “a clear, clear example” of failures in the criminal justice system and elsewhere.

The suspect in Monday’s rampage, who apparently is homeless, had been sentenced in a criminal

case a few months ago and was arrested in a grand larceny case last month, officials said.

The rampage came three years after a string of stabbings at various points along a subway line killed two people and wounded two others within a few hours.

NYC issues first drought warning in 22 years

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City on Monday issued its first drought warning in 22 years after months of little rain — and will restart the flow of drinking water from an out-of-service aqueduct as supplies run low.

Dry conditions across the Northeast have been blamed for hundreds of brush fires. They had already prompted New York City and state officials to implement water-conservation protocols when Mayor Eric Adams upgraded the drought warning and temporarily halted a \$2 billion aqueduct repair project that had stopped drinking water from flowing from some reservoirs in the Catskill region.

Last week, a park on the north-



Dropping water levels expose the lake bed at the Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County, N.Y., on Nov. 13.

ern tip of Manhattan caught fire, sending smoke billowing across the city — less than a week after a brush fire in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park.

“New Yorkers should not underestimate the dry weather and what it means,” Adams said at a news conference, noting the recent fires. “The fire risk is high

and the fire risk is real.”

The city may elevate the warning to an emergency if dry conditions persist. A drought emergency involves requiring residents and city agencies to cut down on water usage. Upgrading from a watch to a warning requires a range of conservation protocols, Adams said.

Water-saving measures planned for the coming weeks will include washing buses and subway cars less frequently and limiting water use for fountains and golf courses, the mayor said.

“Our city vehicles may look a bit dirtier, and our subways may look a bit dustier, but it’s what we have to do to delay or stave off a more serious drought emergency,” he said.

Jeffries wins reelection as Democrats’ House leader

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Leader Hakeem Jeffries won reelection Tuesday as the Democratic leader, receiving support from his colleagues despite the party’s inability to win back majority control of the chamber in the November election.

Jeffries of New York was chosen during an internal party vote of the House Democrats underway at the Capitol. Most of the Democratic leadership team is expected to be reelected for the new Congress.

In line to become the House speaker, Jeffries remains the highest ranking Black elected official in Congress, and the first to hold the job of party leader.

He fell short of being in place to win the gavel after Republicans swept to power alongside President-elect Donald Trump, winning control of the White House, the Senate and the House.

While the Democratic leader will be the party’s nominee for House speaker, the gavel is expected to go to Speaker Mike Johnson as Republicans continue to hold the majority in the new year.

Jeffries and the House Democratic leadership works as a team — a trio of younger generation leaders that took over when Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi stepped aside from leadership two years ago. Democratic Whip Katherine Clark of Massachusetts and Democratic Caucus Chairman Pete Aguilar of California also won their reelections on Tuesday.

House Democrats picked up a few seats in hard-fought regions, including Jeffries’ home state of New York and in California. But they also lost seats elsewhere and failed to topple some GOP incumbents, and overall there was little change in the House.

Republicans under Johnson are left holding the majority by a slim margin — their numbers diminishing in the new year as Trump has tapped three GOP lawmakers Elise Stefanik, Mike Waltz and Matt Gaetz to serve in his administration. Some need to be confirmed by the Senate.

‘Bomb cyclone’ threatens Northern California and Pacific Northwest

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Northern California and the Pacific Northwest are bracing for what is expected to be a powerful storm, with heavy rain and winds set to pummel the region and potentially cause power outages and flash floods.

The Weather Prediction Center issued excessive rainfall risks beginning Tuesday and lasting through Friday as the strongest atmospheric river — long plumes of moisture stretching far over the Pacific Ocean — that California and the Pacific Northwest has

seen this season bears down on the region. The storm system has intensified so quickly that it is considered a “bomb cyclone,” explained Richard Bann, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center.

The areas that could see particularly severe rainfall as the large plume of moisture heads toward land will likely stretch from the south of Portland, Oregon, to the north of the San Francisco area, he explained.

“Be aware of the risk of flash

flooding at lower elevations and winter storms at higher elevations. This is going to be an impactful event,” he said.

In northern California, flood and high wind watches go into effect Tuesday, with up to 8 inches of rain predicted.

WORLD

US envoy says a truce in Lebanon is ‘within our grasp’

Associated Press
BEIRUT — A United States envoy said an agreement to end the Israel-Hezbollah war is “within our grasp” after talks in Lebanon on Tuesday. There was no such optimism in the Gaza Strip, where the looting of nearly 100 aid trucks by armed men worsened an already severe food crisis.

Amos Hochstein, the Biden administration’s pointman on Israel and Lebanon, arrived as Hezbollah’s allies in the Lebanese government said it had responded positively to the proposal, which would entail both the militants and Israel

ground forces withdrawing from a U.N. buffer zone in southern Lebanon.

The buffer zone would be policed by thousands of additional U.N. peacekeepers and Lebanese troops. Israel has called for a stronger enforcement mechanism, potentially including the ability to operate against any Hezbollah threats, something Lebanon is likely to oppose.

Hochstein said he held “very constructive talks” with Lebanon’s Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, an ally of Hezbollah who is mediating on the group’s behalf.

“Specifically today, we have continued to significantly narrow the gaps,” he told reporters after the two-hour meeting. “It’s ultimately the decisions of the parties to reach a conclusion to this conflict. ... It is now within our grasp.”

In Gaza, meanwhile, the theft of nearly 100 trucks loaded with food and other humanitarian aid over the weekend sent prices soaring and caused shortages in central Gaza, where most of the population of 2.3 million people have fled and where hundreds of thousands are crammed into squalid tent camps.

Experts say famine may already have set in in the north, where Israel has been waging a weekslong offensive that has killed hundreds of people and driven tens of thousands from their homes.

On Monday, a crowd of people waited outside a shuttered bakery in the central city of Deir al-Balah. A woman who had been displaced from Gaza City, identifying herself as Umm Shadi, said the price of flour had climbed to 400 shekels (over \$100) a bag, if it can even be found.

The United Nations said armed men stole food and other aid from

98 trucks over the weekend, the largest single incident of its kind since the start of the war. It did not say who was behind the theft.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the convoy of 109 trucks was instructed by the Israeli military to take an “alternative, unfamiliar route” after the aid was brought through the Kerem Shalom crossing, and that the trucks were robbed near the crossing itself.

Israel has long accused criminal gangs and Hamas of stealing aid, allegations denied by the militant group.

G20 summit calls for more aid to Gaza, an end to the war in Ukraine

Associated Press
RIO DE JANEIRO — Leaders of the world’s 20 major economies gathered once again on Tuesday with a lighter schedule after they issued a joint declaration the night before.

The document, which includes calls for a global pact to combat hunger, more aid for Gaza and the end of the war in Ukraine, was heavy on

generalities and short on specifics.

At the start of the three-day meeting that formally ends Wednesday, experts doubted Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva could convince the assembled leaders to hammer out any agreement at all in a gathering rife with uncertainty over the incoming administration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, and heightened global tensions over

wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.

Taking place just over a year after Hamas’ attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, the declaration referred to the “catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza and the escalation in Lebanon,” stressing the urgent need to expand humanitarian assistance and better protect civilians. It didn’t mention Israel’s suffering or of the

100 or so hostages still held by Hamas. Israel isn’t a G20 member.

President Joe Biden’s decision to ease restrictions on Ukraine’s use of longer-range U.S. missiles to allow that country to strike more deeply inside Russia also played into the meetings.

“The United States strongly supports Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Everyone around

this table in my view should, as well,” Biden said during the summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin didn’t attend the meeting, and instead sent Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Putin has avoided such summits after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant that obliges member states to arrest him.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

4 monkeys are still on the loose from compound

SC YEMASSEE — Four monkeys were still on the loose after dozens escaped earlier this month from a South Carolina compound that breeds the primates for medical research, according to authorities.

Two more rhesus macaques were trapped Monday outside the Alpha Genesis facility in Yemassee, bringing the total of recovered monkeys to 39 of the 43 that escaped, Alpha Genesis CEO Greg Westergaard said in a statement relayed by Yemassee Police in a social media post.

The monkeys caught Monday were in good health, and the others continue to thrive, Westergaard said.

Forty-three monkeys made a break for it Nov. 6 after an employee did not fully lock their enclosure, police said.

Chicago crowns lookalike winner for ‘The Bear’ star

IL CHICAGO — More than 50 contestants turned out Saturday in a Chicago park to compete in a lookalike contest vying to portray actor Jeremy Allen White, star of the Chicago-based television series “The Bear.”

Beyond the renown of being named White’s unofficial body double, the winner walked away with \$50 and a pack of cigarettes in recognition of the puff-prone character White plays in the series — Carmen “Carmy” Berzatto — a young, award-winning chef from the world of fine dining who returns to the Windy City to run his family’s dive sandwich shop.

As hundreds looked on and cheered, the prize went to 37-year-old mental health therapist Ben Shabad, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

32 US students selected as 2025 Rhodes scholars

VA McLEAN — A group of 32 students from the United States have been selected to attend the University of Oxford as part of the prestigious Rhodes scholar program in the coming year among an international class representing more than 70 nations, scholarship officials announced.

The program provides scholarships covering all expenses at England’s storied university. The U.S. students include a Columbia University graduate who founded a group working to keep Brazilian youth in school; a Brown University student born in Mexico who has interviewed asylum seekers, and a Stanford University student and amateur boxer whose senior honor thesis focused on political violence in sub-Saharan Africa.

Nearly 3,000 U.S. students applied to pursue graduate degrees beginning in October 2025, the Office of the American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust in McLean, Va.,



GREG EANS, THE (OWENSBORO, Ky.) MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

Window dressing

Chris Langdon, left, and his daughter, Olive, 9, use a stencil and glass markers to create a holiday tree decoration on the outside window of Melanie’s Boutique on Saturday in Owensboro, Ky.

said in a statement.

The 32 recipients include students from 19 states and the District of Columbia attending 20 U.S. colleges and universities. During the application process, 865 students were endorsed by 243 colleges and universities.

3 hurt when small plane crashes near racing event

CA POMONA — Three people were hurt aboard a single-engine plane that crashed Sunday near a Southern California dragstrip where fans were gathered for the finals of a racing event, authorities said.

At least two parked vehicles on the ground were struck when the Piper PA-32 crashed near the dragstrip in Pomona, about 30 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, the Federal Aviation Administration said.

Nobody on the ground was hurt. The crash happened while the plane was apparently attempting to land at nearby Brackett Field Airport, according to a statement posted by the National Hot Rod Association, or NHRA.

A wayward sea turtle has been released into ocean

TX GALVESTON — An endangered sea turtle that was found about a year ago some 5,000 miles from its native waters has been released into the

Gulf of Mexico, according to the Houston Zoo.

The Kemp’s ridley sea turtle, named Boeier after the boat that rescued it, was found off the coast of the Netherlands after becoming entangled in the net of the commercial fishing boat.

The zoo said the turtle apparently was carried away by currents until it was found and the U.S. National Fish and Wildlife Service secured the turtle’s return.

The turtle was taken to the Rotterdam Zoo where it was nursed back to health and eventually was flown to Houston, where it arrived last month, the zoo said.

Union workers picket at casino with F1 event near

NV LAS VEGAS — Picketing continued outside a hotel-casino near the Las Vegas Strip that remained open with no talks scheduled between management and union members striking for a new contract.

Workers are seeking a pay raise and benefits comparable to pacts reached last year at other resorts.

The walkout by the Culinary Workers Union laborers at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas comes a week before the second annual Las Vegas Grand Prix is due to draw hundreds of thousands of fans for Formula 1 racing on the Strip and nearby streets. It’s the first open-ended strike since 2002 for the largest labor union in Nevada, which has about 60,000 members.

No new negotiations were scheduled, said union spokesperson Bethany Khan and Terri Maruca, media representative for Virgin Hotels, owner of the 1,500-room property.

Viral, duct-taped banana could fetch \$1 million

NY NEW YORK — Walk into any supermarket and you can generally buy a banana for less than \$1. But a banana duct-taped to a wall? That might sell for more than \$1 million at an upcoming auction at Sotheby’s in New York.

The yellow banana fixed to the white wall with silver duct tape is a work titled “Comedian,” by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. It first debuted in 2019 as an edition of three fruits at the Art Basel Miami Beach fair, where it became a much-discussed sensation.

Was it a prank? A commentary on the state of the art world? Another artist took the banana off the wall and ate it. A backup banana was brought in. Selfie-seeking crowds became so thick, “Comedian” was withdrawn from view, but three editions of it sold for between \$120,000 and \$150,000, according to Perrotin gallery.

Now, the conceptual artwork has an estimated value of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million at Sotheby’s auction on Wednesday. Sotheby’s head of contemporary art, David Galperin, calls it profound and provocative.

Bidders won’t be buying the same fruit that was on display in Miami. Those bananas are long gone.

Sotheby’s says the fruit always was meant to be replaced regularly, along with the tape.

Education program now covers military families

WV CHARLESTON — A program that incentivizes West Virginia families to pull their children out of K-12 public schools by offering them government-funded scholarships to pay for private school or homeschooling is expanding to cover military families that temporarily relocate out of state.

The Hope Scholarship Board voted to approve a policy to allow children of military service members who are required to temporarily relocate to another state remain Hope Scholarship eligible when they return to West Virginia, said State Treasurer Riley Moore, the board’s chairman.

“A temporary relocation pursuant to military orders should not jeopardize a child’s ability to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program,” Moore said in a statement.

FACES

This week: ‘Piano Lesson,’ ‘Blitz’ and ‘Wicked’ album

Associated Press

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

■ Steve McQueen’s “Blitz,” streaming Friday on Apple TV+, is a wartime odyssey about a 9-year-old biracial boy (Elliott Hefner) who, after being sent to the countryside during the Nazi bombing of London, tries to get home to his mother (Saoirse Ronan). “Blitz,” McQueen’s first narrative feature since 2018’s “Widows,” sometimes feels stuck between a conventional war drama and something more adventurous, but it’s vividly drawn.

■ Denzel Washington’s quest to bring the works of August Wilson to the screen have already produced several exceptional films, and performances, in “Fences” and “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.” In “The Piano Lesson” (streaming Friday on Netflix), he hands the reins to his son, Malcolm Washington, who makes his directorial debut in a production starring John David Washington, Danielle Deadwyler, Samuel L. Jackson, Erykah Badu, Ray Fisher and Corey Hawkins. The film, set in 1930s Pittsburgh, is about a family wrestling with the legacy of a family heirloom, and of slavery.

■ Following its first foray into feature film animation, 2022’s “Luck,” Skydance returns with another original animated tale in “Spellbound” (Friday on Netflix). The film, set in the magical world of Lumbria, is about a young girl (voiced by Rachel Zegler) who must save the rulers of Lumbria, her parents (Nicole Kidman, Javier Bardem), after they’re turned into monsters.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Music

■ Kim Deal, the center of bands like the Breeders and the Pixies, will release her debut solo album on Friday, “Nobody Loves You More,” via the influential indie label 4AD Records. The project has been in the works for many years — beginning with tracks like “Are You Mine?” and “Wish I Was,” dating back to 2011 — no matter, it still sounds like some left-of-center future.

■ For those hoping for something a bit more classic, look no further: PBS’ “Great Performances” anthology series, which features musicals, operas, plays, ballets and concerts, will spotlight the great Patsy Cline on Friday, broadcast on PBS and available to stream on the PBS app. “Patsy Cline: Walkin’ After Midnight” celebrates the country music giant on stage at Nashville’s famed Ryman Auditorium with perfor-

mances by Wynonna Judd, Ashley McBryde, Mickey Guyton, Kristin Chenoweth, Rita Wilson and more, with interviews from her husband, Charlie Dick, and famous friends like Loretta Lynn.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

■ We’ve already gotten an Ariana Grande album this year with “eternal sunshine,” but there’s more on the way. On Friday, her voice is all over the soundtrack for the movie “Wicked” as Glinda, opposite Emmy-, Grammy- and Tony Award-winner Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba. The album is part of a two-fer, with the first 11 songs from the first chapter of the two-part film adaptation. That means two of the musical’s best tunes will be available — “Popular” and “Defying Gravity.”

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

Television

■ In “Interior Chinatown,” actor and comedian Jimmy O. Yang plays a Chinese American background actor in a police procedural who dreams of becoming a leading man. It’s adapted from a novel by Charles Yu, who also served as showrunner of the series. Taika Waititi is an executive producer. “Interior Chinatown” premiered Tuesday on Hulu.

■ It’s the beginning of sophomore year for the ladies of Max’s “The Sex Lives of College Girls.” The show, created by Mindy Kaling and Justin Noble, follows roommates at a fictional college in Vermont. Season 3, premiering Thursday, brings back original leads Pauline Chalamet, Amrit Kaur and Alyah Chanell Scott but will wrap up Reneé Rapp’s storyline. She quit the show to focus on her music career.

■ Kaley Cuoco and Chris Messina have more problems when Season 2 of “Based on a True Story” begins streaming Thursday on Peacock. Season 1 saw their characters, Ava and Nathan, launch a true crime podcast with an actual serial killer (played by Tom Bateman). In the new episodes, the couple are new parents attempting to return to a normal life, until a string of murders draws them back into amateur sleuthing.

■ The 1999 film “Cruel Intentions” starring Reese Witherspoon, Ryan Phillippe and Sarah Michelle Gellar remains a cult classic, but Prime Video has updated the story with a TV series. Sarah Catherine Hook and Zac Burgess play wealthy stepsiblings who hatch a plan to seduce and deceive one of their college classmates, who also happens to be the daughter of the vice president of the United States. The show, premiering Thursday, also has plenty of call-backs to the movie.

— Alicia Rancilio



JAE C. HONG/AP

Ringo Starr poses for a portrait in West Hollywood, Calif., on Oct. 17. The former Beatle teamed up with producer T Bone Burnett for his forthcoming country album, “Look Up.”

Ex-Beatle mixes peace and love with twang, heartache on new album

By Andrew Dalton
Associated Press

Country comes naturally to Ringo Starr. It’s been a low-key part of his career since his Beatle beginnings, so it was not a serious swerve for him to make a whole country album, the forthcoming “Look Up,” a collaboration with the modern maestro of classic country and Americana, T Bone Burnett.

“I’ve done 20 albums and there’s always a track that’s country-ish on each one,” the 84-year-old Starr told The Associated Press recently.

His love of the music — Hank Williams and Kitty Wells are favorites — began in childhood, alongside his acquisition of affection for blues, swing and whatever else came to his hometown.

“Liverpool, it’s the capital of country music in England,” Starr said, “because a lot of I think it stems from it being a port, and why we got rock ‘n’ roll music physically, was because the lads on the boats would be going to America, they’d be going to Egypt, would be going all over. But they were bringing music in.”

Starr — even his stage name has cowboy vibes — had a star turn with the Beatles in 1965 when he sang the Buck Owens’ honky-tonk classic, “Act Naturally.” Many of the Beatle originals the drummer sang, including “What Goes On” and “Don’t Pass Me By,” had country undertones.

It would culminate with his second solo album, 1971’s “Beaucoups of Blues,” going full country.

He kept dabbling — he recorded an “Act Naturally” duet with Owens in 1989 — but he didn’t make a full country album again for decades.

Enter Burnett, the culture’s chief curator of classic country for the past 25 years, the man behind the soundtracks to “O Brother Where Art Thou” and “Inside Llewyn Davis,” and the unlikely pairing of Robert Plant and Alison Krauss.

Starr had known Burnett for decades, but had never collaborated on an entire project with him.

“In the ’70s I used to throw a lot of parties and, and he was always there and I never invited him once,” Starr said. “We often laugh about that.”

The two were both at the Sunset Marquis in West Hollywood, Calif., last year for a poetry reading from Olivia Harrison, widow of Starr’s former bandmate George Harrison.

Starr had been doing a series of EPs with different writers and producers, including a recent release with Linda Perry, and suggested Burnett give him a song for the next one.

Burnett quickly came back with a country tune. “It was beautiful. The most beautiful song I’ve heard in a long time,” Starr said. He began to think, “I’m going to do a country piece.”

An inspired Burnett wrote nine songs that along with two more, one of them written by Starr with his friend Bruce Sugar, turned the EP into an LP.

Starr played the drums and sang in Los Angeles, while Burnett recorded parts of the record in Nashville, bringing on young neoclassical country artists Billy Strings and Molly Tuttle for several tracks apiece.

And Krauss sings with Starr on the song he co-wrote, “Thankful,” released last week as the album’s second single, in which he managed to smuggle his catchphrase, “peace and love,” into a genre that’s usually about anything but.

“Yeah, I put it in the song,” he

said with a smile.

“Look Up,” to be released in January, comes at a major country moment across music, with everyone from Beyoncé to Post Malone pulling on cowboy boots and breaking out the twang.

“Mine just came together. I mean, I didn’t think of any of that,” Starr said.

“I just thought, I’m going to do it.”

In January, he’ll get to play one of his favorite places, Nashville’s Ryman auditorium, former longtime home of the Grand Ole Opry, for a pair of concerts and a TV special.

“I’m excited because we’re going to be doing, like, some of the other songs and some of the country songs,” he said.

“We’ll be doing ‘With a Little Help From My Friends’ in a country fashion, country style. So let’s see.”

“Liverpool, it’s the capital of country music in England.”

Ringo Starr



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OPINION

Iran is much weaker than the last time it faced Trump

BY HAL BRANDS

Bloomberg Opinion

The Middle East has long been a source of misery for Washington. It could be a land of opportunity for Donald Trump.

In his first term as president, Trump brokered diplomatic detentes between Israel and several Arab states. In his second, he'll encounter a region in which Israeli military successes have dramatically reset the balance of power. That creates the possibility for a bold play to roll back Iran's influence and curb its nuclear program — if Trump can avoid stumbling into another Middle Eastern mess.

The regional situation has improved markedly from a year ago, when Israel looked shockingly vulnerable and Iran and its proxies seemed ascendant. Today, Israel hasn't eliminated Hamas in Gaza, but it has wrecked most of its military capability. In Lebanon, Hezbollah can still fire rockets and conduct ambushes, but its leadership and long-range capabilities have been ravaged by Israeli assaults.

With U.S. help, Israel blunted Iranian missile and drone attacks in April and October, and delivered a damaging, targeted retaliation after the latter assault. With its proxies battered, its air defenses shredded and its missile arsenal devalued, Iran is more strategically naked than at any time in decades.

President Joe Biden deserves some credit here. Yes, Biden has often urged caution on Israel and his relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is toxic. Still, Biden has given Israel the arms, the diplomatic assistance and the time necessary to take the offensive. The idea that Israel defends itself by itself is a myth: Several times, U.S. forces have even fought directly on its behalf (by shooting down drones and missiles). Since the Hamas invasion on Oct. 7, 2023, U.S.-Israel relations have been both deeply dysfunctional and devastatingly effective. What will Trump make of this inheritance?

BY ARTHUR I. CYR

Special to Stars and Stripes

If there was a single strategic turning point in the 2024 presidential election, it could have been the disastrous decision of the campaign of Vice President Kamala Harris to take a pass on the Al Smith Dinner in New York. Since the now-legendary 1960 race between Sen. John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard M. Nixon, this singular event has generally been considered obligatory.

The only other presidential nominee to duck the dinner was ill-fated Walter Mondale, President Jimmy Carter's vice president and hapless opponent of incumbent President Ronald Reagan in 1984. In both cases, the losing nominee gave the impression, justified or not, that a difficult confrontation with a powerful political personality was being avoided.

There are good reasons for the importance and visibility of the Smith Dinner. Ethnic and religious identities remain important in our politics, arguably especially in more traditional Northeastern states. This most practical consideration is an important factor in this event being generally regarded as obligatory.

The 1960 dinner provided a tremendous boost to Kennedy's candidacy and campaign. He remained poorly defined for a large share of the American electorate, difficult to believe but true from the perspective of 2024. His Ca-

He appears to have forgiven Netanyahu for acknowledging Biden's election victory in 2020; he surely admires Israel's recent shows of strength. That provides an opening — and reports that Iran allegedly tried to assassinate Trump this fall provides extra motive — to further reset the region by squeezing its most malevolent regime.

Trump will likely renew his "maximum pressure" campaign to starve Iran of resources. The U.S. might simultaneously take sharper military action against Yemen's Houthis, still wreaking havoc on Red Sea shipping.

The U.S. could also make clear that, along with Israel, it will hold Iran directly responsible for proxy attacks — a precedent Trump set by killing Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in 2020 — rather than giving Tehran strategic immunity by responding only against the proxies themselves. And the U.S. might give Israel additional arms and intelligence for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities — perhaps even joining that attack — unless Tehran accepts a tougher nuclear deal than the one Trump exited in 2018.

Finally, expect Trump to pick up Biden's push for a regional grand bargain — diplomatic normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia, coupled with enhanced U.S. defense and technological ties to the Saudis — that would consolidate the anti-Iran coalition.

The temptation to make these moves will be strong, because success — reversing the two-decade expansion of Iranian influence and keeping Tehran from acquiring the world's most dangerous weapons — would be so rewarding. Given that Iran, China, Russia and North Korea are cooperating more closely, weakening Tehran would also weaken this larger coalition. But as ever in the Middle East, don't downplay the complications.

First, Trump must determine what he wants. In his first term, he never decided whether the goal was to change Iranian policy or change the Iranian regime. Given Tehran's

weakness, the former objective may now be feasible. The latter, probably, is not.

Second, Trump must bring ambivalent Gulf states onboard. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates loathe Iran but fear conflict in their backyard. Trump will have to prove that the U.S. won't simply abandon them when tensions spiral, as he did when Iran attacked Saudi Arabian oil facilities in 2019.

Third, the U.S. must mind the oil markets. Pressing Iran means removing from global markets most of the 1.7 million barrels per day it exports. Unless Trump relaxes sanctions against Russia and Venezuela, he'll have to expand domestic production while bringing the Saudis and their spare capacity along.

Fourth, Trump can't avoid grappling with Gaza. Saudi Arabia won't normalize ties with Israel until the war there ends (and, perhaps, Israel at least gestures at the creation of a Palestinian state). Trump may hope that stronger U.S. backing will end the war through Israeli victory. If that fails, Trump's support for Israel and his desire to close a Saudi deal could be at odds. And if the Israeli government goes ahead with a far-right plan to formally annex the West Bank, the regional diplomatic climate will change for the worse.

Finally, the risk of escalation is real. Iran is weak but not impotent. It won't sit passively as Washington crushes its economy and Israel bludgeons its allies. Iran could respond by lobbing more missiles at Israel, targeting U.S. allies or military bases in the Persian Gulf, or perhaps even making a break for the nuclear bomb. Any of these moves could trigger the big, ugly war Trump aims to avoid.

The Middle East has changed, but it's still the Middle East — where the most ambitious plans so easily go awry.

Hal Brands is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and the Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

The Republicans' election sweep, beyond the headlines

tholicism was a source of political controversy and had to be overcome to secure the Democratic nomination, and then the election.

Gov. Al Smith of New York was the Democratic Party's nominee to run against Republican Herbert Hoover in 1928. Smith was the first Roman Catholic nominated for the presidency by a major political party in the U.S.

He was buried in a landslide for the enormously popular Hoover, and probably anyone nominated by the Democrats in that year would have suffered the same fate. However, religion was front and center as a major factor, and Smith was the target of relentless ugly, vicious anti-Catholic bigotry.

At the 1960 dinner, Kennedy deployed his subtle sense of humor. He congratulated the Catholic leadership and sponsor of the event for bringing together two politicians who were intense rivals and competitors with an uneasy relationship in that campaign year — Nixon and Gov. Nelson Rockefeller of New York. Those two had been rivals for a time for the 1960 Republican nomination, until Nixon outmaneuvered Rockefeller and sealed impressive victory as the party's choice.

Following Kennedy's election victory, narrow in the popular vote but decisive in the Electoral College, Catholicism ceased to be a major issue in American electoral politics.

In 2024, Harris had no time for Smith's legacy but she did manage to appear on "The

View," "Call Her Daddy" and other venues with overwhelmingly female audiences. She played it safe, and you do not become president of the United States by playing it safe.

Another major factor is organizational. For years, Republicans generally led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky have devoted sustained attention and resources to state governments. In 2024, the party expanded on an already substantial lead in that realm.

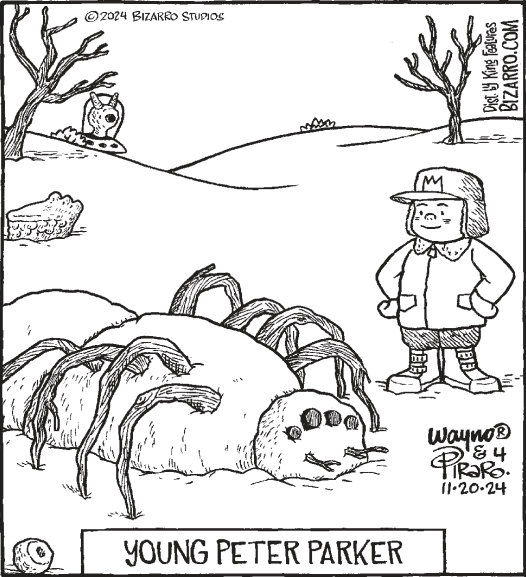
This year, total Republican state legislators increased from 55% to 55.25%, control of state legislative chambers remained steady at 57 while Democrats lost three, from 41 down to 38. Governorships held steady in partisan division, 27 Republicans and 23 Democrats.

Another important factor, ignored by the partisan Democratic mainstream legacy media, is the way Harris became the nominee. Party barons ousted President Joe Biden and inserted her, with no primary votes, no internal competition.

Regarding public policies, we can expect the incoming Trump administration to give priority to defense and national security. This reflects a strong quality of the Republican Party that can be traced back to the Reagan administration. Expect intense debate on Senate confirmation of senior officials.

Arthur I. Cyr is author of "After the Cold War."

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

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5 Tourist,Àö chart
8 Pedestal
12 Jai ,Âî
13 Mouths (Lat.)
14 Author Quindlen
15 What,Àö inside
17 Some HDTVs
18 Chophouse orders
19 Text of a film
21 Mosquito barrier
22 Duel tool
23 Spigot
26 Susan of ,ÀúL.A. Law,Àú
28 Pester
31 401(k) relatives
33 Workout unit
35 Twinkler in the sky
36 Bialik of ,ÀúBlossom,Àú
38 Promptly
40 Church window figures, for short
41 Simple
43 Used to be
45 Tops of waves
47 Wife, in Spanish
51 Pre-Easter period
52 Snakes
54 Utah ski resort
55 Big bird
56 Smoothie berry
57 Forest growth

- 58 Trio after M
59 Burns and Olin

DOWN

- 1 Pouchlike parts
2 Oodles
3 Pool division
4 Tennessee footballer
5 Ogre
6 Louvre collection
7 No longer in
8 Pine plains
9 People of antiquity
10 Break suddenly
11 Sunrise direction
16 Scratched (out)
20 IRS employee
23 Director Burton
24 Altar constellation
25 Remittances
27 Longing
29 Feedbag bit
30 Cen. parts
32 Naps
34 Turn on, as a computer
37 ,ÀúThe A-Team,Àú actor
39 Stinging insect
42 Ruhr Valley city
44 ,ÀúSay something!,Àú
45 Chowder bit
46 Move, in Realtor-speak
48 Formerly
49 Baseball,Àö Musial
50 Unrepaired
53 Punk-rock subgenre

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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Frazz

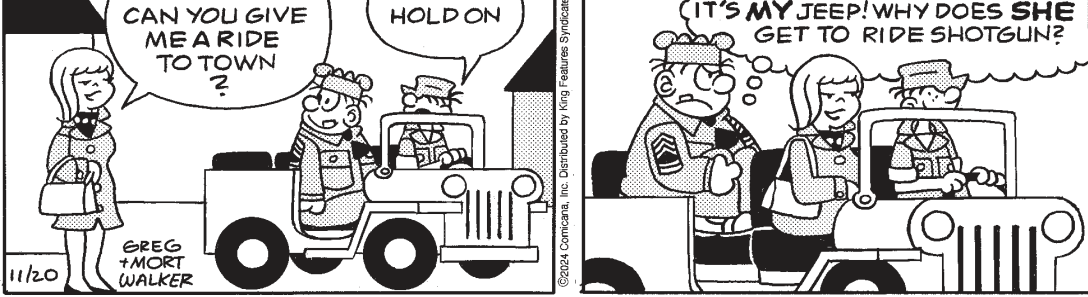
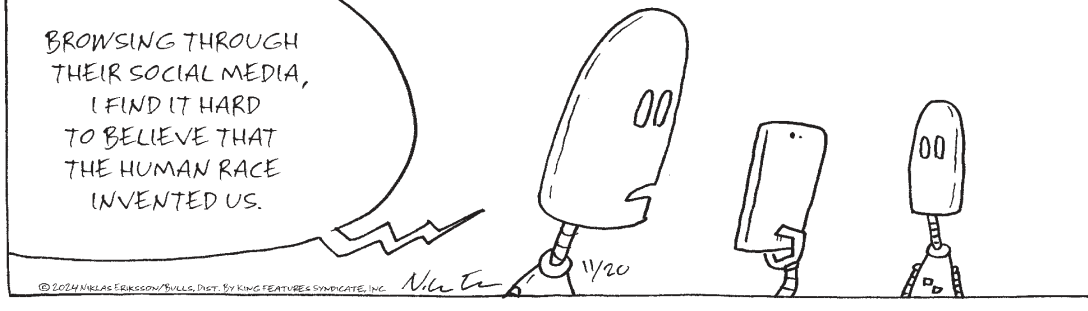
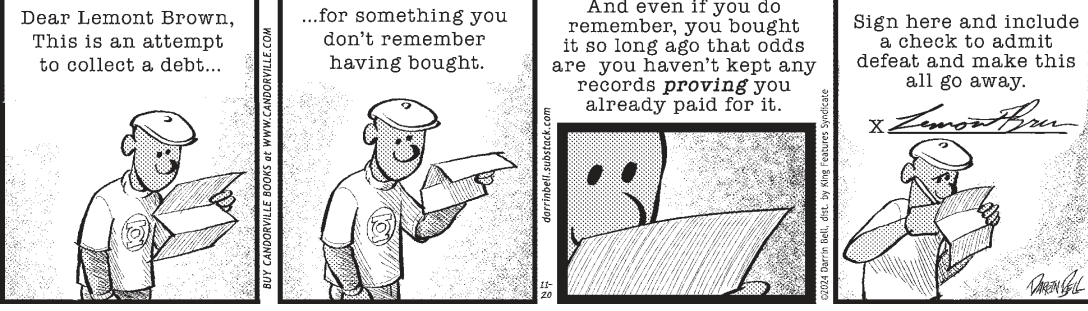
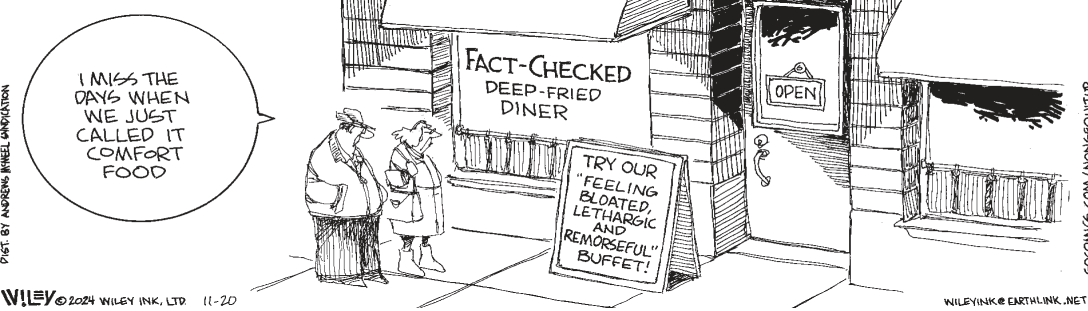
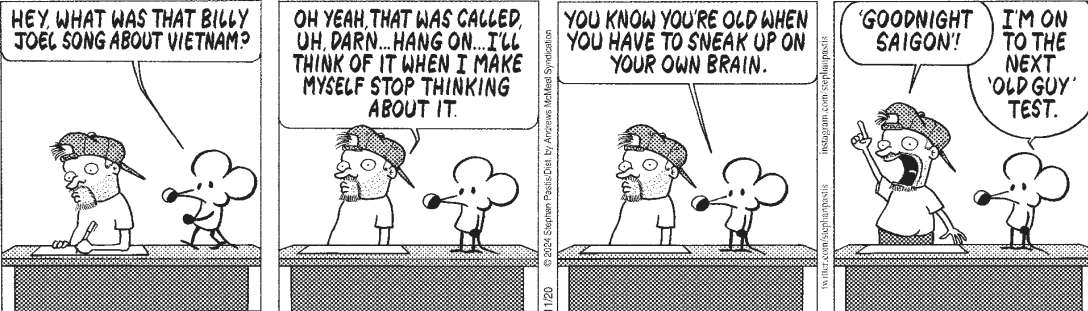
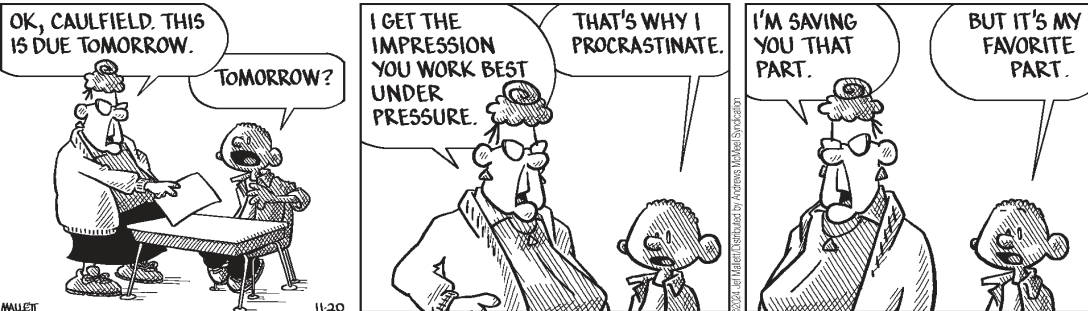
Pearls Before Swine

Non Sequitur

Candorville

Carpe Diem

Beetle Bailey



11-20

CRYPTOQUIP

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P J H R P I B J O M H O I H D X N G D S S B F
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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A BARISTA IS OVERCHARGING PEOPLE FOR CERTAIN ESPRESSO BEVERAGES, HE HAS A LATTE NERVE!
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals C

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

<div> <div>Schedule</div> <div> <div> <div>Tuesday, November 19</div> <div>MIDWEST</div> <div> <div>Akron (2-8) at Kent St. (0-10)</div> <div>W. Michigan (5-5) at Cent. Michigan (3-7)</div> <div>N. Illinois (6-4) at Miami (Ohio) (6-4)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>Wednesday, November 20</div> <div>MIDWEST</div> <div> <div>Buffalo (6-4) at E. Michigan (5-5)</div> <div>Ohio (7-3) at Toledo (7-3)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>Thursday, November 21</div> <div>SOUTH</div> <div> <div>SE Louisiana (6-5) at Nicholls (4-7)</div> <div>NC State (5-5) at Georgia Tech (6-4)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>Friday, November 22</div> <div>MIDWEST</div> <div> <div>Purdue (1-9) at Michigan St. (4-6)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>SOUTHWEST</div> <div> <div>Temple (3-7) at UTSA (5-5)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>FAR WEST</div> <div> <div>UNLV (8-2) at San Jose St. (6-4)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>Saturday, November 23</div> <div>EAST</div> <div> <div>North Carolina (6-4) at Boston College (5-5)</div> <div>Stonehill (1-9) at Robert Morris (6-5)</div> <div>Cornell (4-5) at Columbia (6-3)</div> <div>Brown (3-6) at Dartmouth (7-2)</div> <div>Uconn (7-3) at Syracuse (7-3)</div> <div>Illinois (7-3) at Rutgers (6-4)</div> <div>Duquesne (8-2) at CCSU (6-5)</div> <div>Iowa (6-4) at Maryland (4-6)</div> <div>Yale (6-3) at Harvard (8-1)</div> <div>LIU Brooklyn (3-8) at Wagner (4-7)</div> <div>Lafayette (6-5) at Lehigh (7-3)</div> <div>Holy Cross (5-6) at Georgetown (5-5)</div> <div>Hampton (5-6) at Albany (NY) (3-8)</div> <div>Delaware (9-1) at Villanova (8-3)</div> <div>Colgate (2-9) at Bucknell (5-6)</div> <div>Monmouth (NJ) (5-6) at Stony Brook (8-3)</div> <div>Penn (4-5) at Princeton (2-7)</div> <div>Howard (4-7) at Morgan St. (5-6)</div> <div>New Hampshire (7-4) at Maine (5-6)</div> <div>NC Central (7-3) at Delaware St. (1-10)</div> <div>Rhode Island (9-2) at Bryant (2-9)</div> <div>Merrimack (4-6) at Fordham (2-9)</div> <div>St. Francis (Pa.) (4-6) at Mercyhurst (3-7)</div> <div>UCF (4-6) at West Virginia (5-5)</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>SOUTH</div> <div> <div>Wake Forest (4-6) at Miami (9-1)</div> <div>Mississippi (8-2) at Florida (5-5)</div> <div>ETSU (6-5) at VMI (1-10)</div> <div>William & Mary (7-4) at Richmond (9-2)</div> <div>SMU (9-1) at Virginia (5-5)</div> <div>Sam Houston St. (8-2) at Jacksonville St. (7-3)</div> <div>Umass (2-8) at Georgia (8-2)</div> <div>UTEP (2-8) at Tennessee (8-2)</div> <div>W. Kentucky (7-3) at Liberty (7-2)</div> <div>Alabama A&M (5-5) at MVSU (1-10)</div> <div>Butler (9-2) at Presbyterian (5-6)</div> <div>Drake (7-2) at Stetson (2-8)</div> <div>E. Illinois (3-8) at Tennessee Tech (6-5)</div> <div>Elon (5-6) at NC A&T (1-10)</div> <div>San Diego (7-3) at Morehead St. (7-4)</div> <div>Norfolk St. (4-7) at SC State (8-2)</div> <div>Charleston Southern (1-10) at Florida St. (1-9)</div> <div>Rice (3-7) at UAB (2-8)</div> <div>Chattanooga (6-5) at Austin Peay (4-7)</div> <div>Towson (6-5) at Campbell (3-8)</div> <div>North Alabama (3-8) at E. Kentucky (7-4)</div> <div>James Madison (8-2) at Appalachian St. (4-5)</div> </div> </div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>DEALS</div> <div> <div>Monday's transactions</div> <div> <div> <div>BASEBALL</div> <div>Major League Baseball American League</div> <div> <div>SEATTLE MARINERS</div> <div>— Agreed to terms with RHP Casey Lawrence on a minor league contract.</div> </div> <div> <div>TAMPA BAY RAYS</div> <div>— Selected the contracts of LHP Joe Rock and LHP Ian Seymour from Durham (IL). Designated INF Austin Shenton for assignment.</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>National League</div> <div> <div> <div>ATLANTA BRAVES</div> <div>— Selected the contract of RHP Roddy Munoz from Mississippi (SL).</div> </div> <div> <div>NEW YORK METS</div> <div>— Agreed to terms with INF Donovan Walton and OF Rafael Ortega on minor league contracts. Agreed to terms with RHP Justin Hagenman on a one-year contract.</div> </div> </div> </div> <div> <div>FOOTBALL</div> <div> <div> <div>National Football League</div> <div> <div>ARIZONA CARDINALS</div> <div>— Signed S Andre Chachere to the practice squad.</div> </div> <div> <div>BALTIMORE RAVENS</div> <div>— Waived LB Deion Jennings from injured reserve.</div> </div> <div> <div>CAROLINA PANTHERS</div> <div>— Signed CB Caleb Farley to the active roster. Placed TE Ian Thomas on injured reserve. Designated LB Amare Barno to return from the physically unable to perform list. Signed DE Sam Roberts to the practice squad.</div> </div> <div> <div>DALLAS COWBOYS</div> <div>— Placed Dak Prescott on injured reserve. Elevated TE Princeton Fant and DB Kemon Hall from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed DB Josh Butler from the practice squad to the active roster.</div> </div> <div> <div>DETROIT LIONS</div> <div>— Placed LB Alex Anzalone on injured reserve. Activated S Ifeatu Melifonwu from injured reserve. Signed LB David Long to the practice squad.</div> </div> <div> <div>GREEN BAY PACKERS</div> <div>— Reinstated RB MarShawn Lloyd off injured reserve.</div> </div> <div> <div>HOUSTON TEXANS</div> <div>— Reinstated DB Jeff Okudah from injured reserve and DT Mario Edwards from the exempt list. Elevated DT Tommy Togiai from the practice squad to the active roster. Waived DB Myles Bryant and RB J.J. Taylor.</div> </div> </div> </div> </div></div></div>
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Schedule

New Mexico St. (2-8) at Middle Tennessee (3-7)

Jackson St. (9-2) at Alcorn St. (6-5)

Prairie View (5-6) at Alabama St. (5-5)

FIU (3-7) at Kennesaw St. (1-9)

South Alabama (5-5) at Southern Miss. (1-9)

W. Carolina (6-5) at Samford (4-6)

Charlotte (3-7) at FAU (2-8)

Lindenwood (Mo.) (5-6) at UT Martin (7-4)

Furman (3-7) at Mercer (9-2)

Tulsa (3-7) at South Florida (5-5)

Georgia Southern (6-4) at Coastal Carolina (5-5)

The Citadel (5-6) at Clemson (8-2)

Bethune-Cookman (2-9) vs. Florida A&M (5-5) at Orlando, Fla.

Pittsburgh (7-3) at Louisville (6-4)

Wofford (5-6) at South Carolina (7-3)

Missouri (7-3) at Mississippi St. (2-8)

SE Missouri (9-2) at Tennessee St. (8-3)

Troy (3-7) at Louisiana-Lafayette (8-2)

Marshall (7-3) at Old Dominion (4-6)

Texas A&M (8-2) at Auburn (4-6)

Vanderbilt (6-4) at LSU (6-4)

Lamar (6-5) at McNeese St. (6-5)

Virginia Tech (5-5) at Duke (7-3)

MIDWEST

Indiana (10-0) at Ohio St. (9-1)

Murray St. (1-10) at S. Illinois (3-8)

North Dakota (5-6) at Illinois St. (8-3)

Davidson (6-4) at Valparaiso (3-7)

Bowling Green (6-4) at Ball St. (3-7)

N. Dakota St. (10-1) at South Dakota (8-2)

Indiana St. (4-7) at N. Iowa (2-9)

Gardner-Webb (4-7) at W. Illinois (3-8)

Dayton (6-4) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (5-6)

S. Dakota St. (9-2) at Missouri St. (8-3)

Penn St. (9-1) at Minnesota (6-4)

Northwestern (4-6) at Michigan (5-5)

Colorado (8-2) at Kansas (4-6)

Wisconsin (5-5) at Nebraska (4-5)

Notre Dame (9-1) vs. Army (9-0) at Bronx, N.Y.

Cincinnati (5-5) at Kansas St. (7-3)

SOUTHWEST

Incarnate Word (9-2) at East Texas A&M (3-8)

Texas Southern (4-6) at Ark.-Pine Bluff (3-8)

Arizona (4-6) at TCU (6-4)

Abilene Christian (8-3) at Stephen F. Austin (6-5)

La.-Monroe (5-5) at Arkansas St. (6-4)

Northwestern St. (0-11) at Houston Christian (4-7)

Cent. Arkansas (6-5) at Tarleton St. (8-3)

East Carolina (6-4) at North Texas (5-5)

Kentucky (4-6) at Texas (9-1)

Texas Tech (6-4) at Oklahoma St. (3-7)

Louisiana Tech (4-6) at Arkansas (5-5)

Georgia St. (2-8) at Texas State (6-4)

Baylor (6-4) at Houston (4-6)

Alabama (8-2) at Oklahoma (5-5)

FAR WEST

Montana (8-3) at Montana St. (11-0)

Utah Tech (1-10) at S. Utah (6-5)

E. Washington (4-7) at N. Arizona (7-4)

Cal Poly (3-7) at Weber St. (3-8)

BYU (9-1) at Arizona St. (8-2)

San Diego St. (3-7) at Utah St. (3-7)

Stanford (3-7) at California (5-5)

N. Colorado (1-10) at Portland St. (2-8)

UC Davis (9-2) at Sacramento St. (3-8)

Idaho (8-3) at Idaho St. (5-6), 6 p.m.

Boise St. (9-1) at Wyoming (2-8)

Washington St. (8-2) at Oregon St. (4-6)

Iowa St. (8-2) at Utah (4-6)

Air Force (3-7) at Nevada (3-8)

Southern Cal (5-5) at UCLA (4-6)

Colorado St. (7-3) at Fresno St. (5-5)

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Signed DT Tresten Hill to the practice squad.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Released WR Jalen Guyton from the practice squad.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Signed DB A.J. Green to the practice squad.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Activated CB Alex Austin. Waived DB Marco Wilson.

NEW YORK JETS — Elevated K Anders Carlson from the practice squad to the active roster. Waived DT Bruce Hector.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANERS — Designated CB Jamal Dean to return from injured reserve. Promoted CB Troy Hill to the active roster.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

BOSTON BRUINS — Promoted LW Jeffrey Viel from Providence (AHL).

BUFFALO SABRES — Sent G Devon Levi to Rochester (AHL). Recalled C Isak Rosen from Rochester.

DETROIT RED WINGS — Recalled D William Lagesson from Grand Rapids (AHL).

VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS — Sent to LW Victor Olofsson to Henderson (AHL).

LOS ANGELES KINGS — Recalled C Samuel Helsenius and D Jacob Moverare from Ontario (AHL).

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Placed C Curtis Lazar on injured reserve, retroactive to Oct. 27. Recalled D Nick DeSimone, LW Nolan Foote, Cs Shane Bowes and Justin Dowling from Utica (AHL). Placed RW Nathan Bastian on injured reserve.

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Recalled D Helge Grans from Lehigh Valley.

ST. LOUIS BLUES — Waived RW Kasperi Kapanen.

SAN JOSE SHARKS — Recalled G Yaroslav Askarov from San Jose (AHL). Placed C Nico Sturm on injured reserve.

WINNIPEG JETS — Reinstated D Ville Heinola from injured reserve and sent to Manitoba (AHL).

COLLEGE

CHARLOTTE — Fired head football coach Biff Poggi.

FAU — Fired head football coach Tom Herman.

UMASS — Fired head football coach Don Brown.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

AP men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking.

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Kansas (49)	4-0	1509	1
2. UConn (7)	3-0	1416	3
3. Gonzaga (2)	3-0	1397	4
4. Auburn (3)	3-0	1370	5
5. Iowa St.	2-0	1184	7
6. Purdue	4-0	1172	13
7. Houston	2-1	1091	8
8. Alabama	3-1	1084	2
9. Kentucky	3-0	1009	19
10. North Carolina	2-1	969	10
11. Tennessee	4-0	942	11
12. Duke	3-1	914	6
13. Baylor	3-1	765	12
14. Creighton	4-0	722	14
15. Marquette	4-0	630	15
16. Indiana	3-0	573	16
17. Arizona	2-1	437	9
18. Cincinnati	3-0	412	17
19. Wisconsin	4-0	370	-
20. Arkansas	2-1	313	18
21. Florida	4-0	302	20
22. St. John's	4-0	270	22
23. Texas A&M	3-1	233	23
24. Rutgers	3-0	143	24
25. Illinois	3-0	116	-

Others receiving votes:

Texas Tech 109,

Mississippi 103,

Xavier 89,

BYU 27,

UCF 21,

Texas 17,

VCU 17,

Michigan St. 16,

Mississippi St. 15,

Ohio St. 13,

Miami 10,

Pittsburgh 9,

Oregon 7,

Memphis 6,

Penn St. 4,

Providence 4,

Utah St. 3,

Kansas St 3,

Clemson 2,

Furman 2,

Arizona St 2,

Michigan 1,

Hofstra 1,

Maryland 1.

USA Today men's Top 25

The USA Today Sports Top 25 men's basketball poll, with team's records through Sunday in parentheses, total points based on 25 for first place through one point for 25th, ranking in last week's poll and first-place votes received.

	Points	Last	1st
1. Kansas (4-0)	765	1	25
2. Connecticut (3-0)	726	3	3
3. Auburn (3-0)	699	4	2
4. Gonzaga (3-0)	687	5	1
5. Iowa St. (2-0)	594	7	0
6. Purdue (4-0)	586	12	0
7. Alabama (3-1)	549	2	0
8. Houston (2-1)	546	10	0
9. Tennessee (4-0)	523	9	0
10. Duke (3-1)	483	6	0
11. Kentucky (3-0)	442	18	0
12. North Carolina (2-1)	435	11	0
13. Creighton (4-0)	392	13	0
14. Baylor (3-1)	370	14	0
15. Marquette (4-0)	364	15	0
16. Cincinnati (3-0)	256	17	0
17. Arizona (2-1)	255	8	0
18. Indiana (3-0)	253	16	0
19. Florida (4-0)	194	19	0
20. St. John's (4-0)	132	25	0
20. Illinois (3-0)	132	20	0
22. Texas A&M (3-1)	114	23	0
23. Arkansas (2-1)	108	21	0
24. Texas Tech (3-0)	97	NR	0
25. Wisconsin (4-0)	91	NR	0

Dropped out:

No. 22 Ohio State (2-1); No. 24 Rutgers (3-0).

Others receiving votes:

Rutgers (3-0) 69;

Xavier (4-0) 48;

Mississippi (4-0) 44;

Brigham Young (4-0) 28;

Pittsburgh (4-0) 18;

Saint Mary's (4-0) 18;

Texas (3-1) 17;

Michigan State (3-1) 9;

Ohio State (2-1) 8;

Mississippi State (4-0) 5;

Nevada (4-0) 4;

Oregon (4-0) 4;

Dayton (4-0) 3;

Central Florida (3-0) 2;

Virginia Commonwealth (4-0) 2;

Wake Forest (4-1) 2;

Providence (4-0) 1.

Men's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games

No. 3 Gonzaga (3-0) vs. Long Beach St. (1-3)

No. 8 Alabama (3-1) vs. No. 25 Illinois (3-0) at Birmingham, Ala.

No. 23 Texas A&M (3-1) vs. Southern (1-3)

No. 24 Rutgers (3-0) vs. Merrimack (1-2)

Thursday's games

No. 11 Tennessee (4-0) vs. Virginia (3-0) at Nassau, Bahamas

No. 13 Baylor (3-1) vs. No. 22 St. John's (4-0) at Nassau, Bahamas

No. 16 Indiana (3-0) vs. UNC-Greensboro (2-1)

Monday's men's scores

EAST

Bryant 85, Delaware 84

Carnegie Mellon 84, Penn State-Erie 62

Chestnut Hill 71, Shippensburg 69

D'Youville 90, Pitt.-Johnstown 86

George Washington 84, NJIT 64

Md.-Eastern Shore 113, Gallaudet 58

Nichols 81, Clark 74

Pittsburgh 93, VMI 48

COLLEGE SOCCER

<div> <div>NCAA Division I</div> <div> <div>Women's soccer tournament</div> <div> <div> <div>First Round</div></div></div></div></div>
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MLB

Pitchers Skenes, Gil named top rookies

By **BERNIE WILSON**
Associated Press

Paul Skenes of the Pittsburgh Pirates was the heralded fireballer who equaled the hype, to the point he started the All-Star Game just two months after making his big league debut.

Luis Gil was an afterthought for the New York Yankees, earning a spot in their rotation only when ace Gerrit Cole got hurt in spring training.

Skenes capped a remarkable season Monday by winning National League Rookie of the Year by a wide margin over San Diego center fielder Jackson Merrill and Milwaukee outfielder Jackson Chourio. Gil edged Baltimore outfielder Colton Cowser to take the AL honor, with Yankees catcher Austin Wells finishing third.

It's the first time the rookie awards went to two pitchers since 2011, when Tampa Bay starter Jeremy Hellickson and Atlanta closer Craig Kimbrel won.

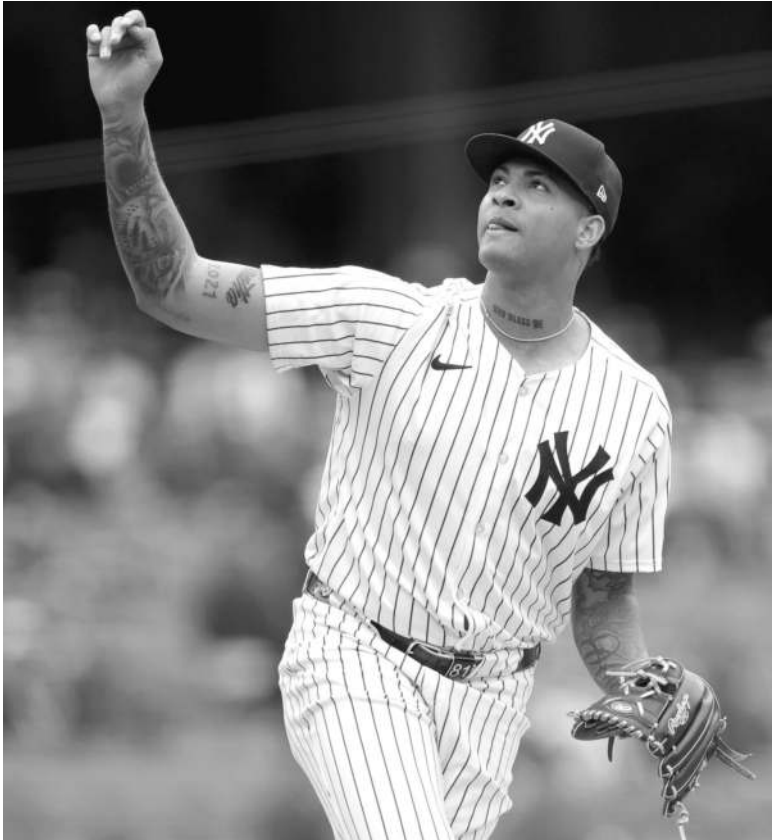
"I was super pleased with what happened this year in terms of going out there and competing, but there's more work to be done for sure," said Skenes, who planned to celebrate with his girlfriend, LSU gymnast and influencer Livvy Dunne.

The Pirates and their fans were excited from the moment the team selected Skenes with the top pick in the 2023 amateur draft. He didn't make his major league debut until May 11 this year but the right-hander was such an immediate sensation that he was selected to start the All-Star Game for the NL on July 16.

The 22-year-old Skenes finished 11-3 with a 1.96 ERA in 23 starts. He struck out 170 and walked 32 in 133 innings.

He said he's looking forward to pitching a full season next year.

"I think it starts now. The post-season is flying by and I can't wait



FRANK FRANKLIN II, LEFT, AND ADAM HUNGER, RIGHT/AP

Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Paul Skenes and New York Yankees pitcher Luis Gil were named NL and AL Rookies of the Year, respectively, on Monday.

for spring training to start already," Skenes said. "I think the biggest thing is going to be proving it over a full season next year also. If nothing else, it's going to be a challenge and an opportunity to prove it again next year."

Skenes received 23 first-place votes and finished with 136 points in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, while Merrill had seven firsts and 104 points. They were listed on all entries. Chourio garnered 26 points.

Skenes is also a finalist for the NL Cy Young Award.

"On top of having a dominant first season, he handled the spotlight that came with it extraordinarily well," Pittsburgh general manager Ben Cherington said. "He is constantly searching for ways to continue to get better,

learns very fast, and wants nothing more than to win. He is a big part of the future of the Pirates, and we're excited for what's to come from him and our team."

Skenes became the second Pittsburgh player to win the award after Jason Bay in 2004.

Because he finished among the top two in voting, Skenes will be credited with a full year of major league service instead of 142 days, under the collective bargaining agreement. If he isn't sent back to the minor leagues, he would become eligible for free agency after the 2029 season.

Gil received 15 first-place votes and 106 points. Cowser got 13 firsts and 101 points, while Wells received 17 points.

The only closer election since 1980 was when Royals shortstop

Angel Berroa beat Yankees outfielder Hideki Matsui 88-84 in 2003.

Gil went 15-7 with a 3.50 ERA in 29 starts for the AL champions. The right-hander had 171 strikeouts in 151⅓ innings.

"It means so much to me. I'm so happy about being able to win this award," Gil said through an interpreter. "Everybody in my corner, they're so happy for me and so proud. I'm also proud of the opportunity that was given to me by the team. It turned out to be a good season for me, a great experience."

New York manager Aaron Boone said Gil "worked so hard to put himself in a strong position heading into spring training after coming back from Tommy John surgery. Without a guarantee of a

major league spot, he absolutely kicked in the door this spring and went on to have a phenomenal rookie season."

Merrill, 21, came on strong during the second half, igniting a debate over whether an everyday player deserved the award more than a starting pitcher.

Merrill was converted from shortstop to center field during spring training, when the Padres had only two outfielders on their roster.

He was picked for the All-Star team and helped San Diego reach the playoffs, where it swept Atlanta in a Wild Card Series and then lost a Division Series to the eventual World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers.

Chourio was a 20-20 player at age 20.

Suzuki, Sabathia among 14 newcomers on HOF ballot

Associated Press

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Outfielder Ichiro Suzuki and pitcher CC Sabathia are among 14 new candidates on the Hall of Fame ballot released Monday, joining 14 holdovers, led by reliever Billy Wagner.

Pitcher Félix Hernández, outfielder Carlos González and infielders Dustin Pedroia and Hanley Ramírez are also among the newcomers joined by reliever Fernando Rodney, second baseman Ian Kinsler, second baseman/outfielder Ben Zobrist, shortstop Troy Tulowitzki, catchers Russell Martin and Brian McCann, and outfielders Curtis Granderson and Adam Jones.



Suzuki



Sabathia

Wagner received 284 votes and 73.8% in the 2024 balloting, five votes shy of the 75% needed when third baseman Adrian Beltré, catcher/first baseman Joe Mauer and first baseman Todd Helton were elected. Wagner will be on the ballot for the 10th and final time.

Other holdovers include steroids-tainted stars Alex Rodriguez

(134 votes, 34.8%) and Manny Ramírez (125, 32.5%) along with Andrew Jones (237, 61.6%), Carlos Beltrán (220, 57.1%), Chase Utley (111, 28.8%), Omar Vizquel (68, 17.7%), Jimmy Rollins (57, 14.8%), Bobby Abreu (57, 14.8%), Andy Pettitte (52, 13.5%), Mark Buehrle (32, 8.3%), Francisco Rodríguez (30, 7.8%), Torii Hunter (28, 7.3%) and David Wright (24, 6.2%).

Gary Sheffield was dropped after receiving 246 votes and 63.9% in his 10th and final year on the ballot. He will be eligible for consideration when the ballot is selected for the committee that considers contemporary era players in December 2025.

BBWAA members with 10 or

more consecutive years of membership are eligible to vote. Ballots must be postmarked by Dec. 31 and results will be announced Jan. 23. Anyone elected will be inducted July 27 along with anyone chosen Dec. 8 by the hall's classic baseball committee considering eight players and managers whose greatest contributions to the sport were before 1980.

Suzuki in 2001 joined Fred Lynn in 1975 as the only players to win AL Rookie of the Year and AL MVP in the same season. Suzuki was a two-time AL batting champion and 10-time Gold Glove winner, hitting .311 with 117 homers, 780 RBIs and 509 stolen bases with Seattle (2001-12, 2018-19), the New

York Yankees (2012-14) and Miami (2015-17). He had a record 262 hits in 2004.

Sabathia was a six-time All-Star, won the 2007 AL Cy Young Award and a World Series title in 2009. He was 251-161 with a 3.74 ERA and 3,093 strikeouts, third among left-handers behind Randy Johnson and Steve Carlton, during 19 seasons with Cleveland (2001-08), Milwaukee (2008) and the Yankees (2009-19).

Dick Allen, Dave Parker and Luis Tiant are being considered by the classic era committee along with Tommy John, Steve Garvey, Ken Boyer and former Negro Leaguers John Donaldson and Vic Harris.

Soccer/NHL



JEFF ROBERSON/AP
The United States' Tim Weah celebrates after scoring against Jamaica in a CONCACAF Nations League quarterfinal series finale Monday night in St. Louis.

US men beat Jamaica for spot in semis

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Mauricio Pochettino had a message for American players after a 5-2 aggregate win over Jamaica gave the three-time defending champions a berth in the CONCACAF Nations League semifinals.

“My advice is look after yourself. We need to be a stronger in March,” Pochettino said. “We need to be desperate to arrive to March and to be all together. That is a sign that we improve a lot and then we start to feel that we are a real group of people, that we are going to fight for something special.”

Christian Pulisic scored twice in the first half, Tim Weah got a goal in his return to the U.S. national team from a red card and the Americans beat Jamaica 4-2 on Monday night in the quarterfinal series finale.

Pochettino has led the team in two windows since replacing Gregg Berhalter following first-round elimination at the Copa America. Just six camps with the top player pool remain before Pochettino picks his 2026 World Cup roster, the next ahead of a March 20 semifinal at Inglewood, Calif.

“Building our way up for the World Cup at home. I think that’s the main goal,” Weah said. “I think we’re on the right track.”

The U.S. dominated with 68% possession and a 16-9 advantage in shots. The Americans also qualified for next year’s CONCACAF Gold Cup, while Jamaica will have to play in qualifying.

Pulisic put the U.S. ahead in the 13th minute when he ran onto a long, looping pass from Weston McKennie and one-timed the ball past onrushing goalkeeper Andre Blake.

Pulisic doubled the lead off a pass from McKennie that Tanner Tessmann dummied in the 33rd minute.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	18	12	5	1	25	66	56
Toronto	19	11	6	2	24	58	50
Tampa Bay	16	9	6	1	19	57	46
Boston	20	8	9	3	19	48	69
Ottawa	17	8	8	1	17	55	53
Buffalo	18	8	9	1	17	61	61
Detroit	18	7	9	2	16	46	60
Montreal	19	7	10	2	16	54	71

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	18	13	4	1	27	78	50
Carolina	17	13	4	0	26	68	41
New Jersey	21	12	7	2	26	72	56
N.Y. Rangers	16	11	4	1	23	57	38
N.Y. Islanders	18	7	7	4	18	49	55
Philadelphia	19	8	9	2	18	56	67
Pittsburgh	20	7	10	3	17	55	80
Columbus	18	7	9	2	16	58	62

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	18	15	3	0	30	74	43
Minnesota	17	11	3	3	25	57	41
Dallas	17	11	6	0	22	57	40
Colorado	19	10	9	0	20	64	70
Utah	18	7	8	3	17	49	62
St. Louis	19	8	10	1	17	47	65
Nashville	19	6	10	3	15	46	61
Chicago	18	6	11	1	13	43	56

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	18	11	5	2	24	72	57
Los Angeles	19	10	6	3	23	61	55
Vancouver	17	9	5	3	21	54	55
Calgary	18	9	6	3	21	49	51
Edmonton	19	9	8	2	20	50	60
Seattle	19	9	9	1	19	55	55
Anaheim	17	7	8	2	16	43	52
San Jose	20	6	10	4	16	50	71

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Sunday's games

Carolina 4, St. Louis 1
Washington 5, Vegas 2
N.Y. Rangers 2, Seattle 0
Nashville 5, Vancouver 3

Monday's games

Columbus 5, Boston 1
Colorado 3, Philadelphia 2
Montreal 3, Edmonton 0
Anaheim 4, Dallas 2
Washington 6, Utah 2
San Jose 5, Detroit 4, OT

Tuesday's games

Edmonton at Ottawa
Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh
Florida at Winnipeg
Minnesota at St. Louis
Anaheim at Chicago
N.Y. Islanders at Calgary
N.Y. Rangers at Vancouver

Wednesday's games

Carolina at Philadelphia
Vegas at Toronto
San Jose at Dallas
Nashville at Seattle
Buffalo at Los Angeles

Thursday's games

Carolina at New Jersey
Colorado at Washington
N.Y. Islanders at Detroit
Tampa Bay at Columbus
Utah at Boston
Vegas at Ottawa
San Jose at St. Louis
Florida at Chicago
Minnesota at Edmonton
N.Y. Rangers at Calgary

Scoring leaders

Through Monday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	19	7	27	34
Kirill Kaprizov, MIN	17	11	20	31
Martin Necas, CAR	17	11	19	30
Jack Eichel, LV	18	5	23	28
Dylan Strome, WSH	18	6	22	28
Sam Reinhart, FLA	18	13	15	28
Cale Makar, COL	19	8	19	27
Mikko Rantanen, COL	19	12	15	27
Nikita Kucherov, TB	16	11	15	26
Alex Ovechkin, WSH	18	15	10	25
Mitch Marner, TOR	19	6	18	24
Jesper Bratt, NJ	21	10	14	24
Artemi Panarin, NYR	16	10	14	24
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	19	13	11	24



DERIK HAMILTON/AP
Mitch Dunning is taken off the ice during the first period Monday in Philadelphia. The referee was injured when he collided with Colorado Avalanche defenseman Josh Manson. The Avs beat the Flyers 5-2.

NHL ROUNDUP

Makar lifts Avs over Flyers; referee stretchered off ice

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Cale Makar scored two goals, Casey Mittelstadt scored one and Justus Annunen had 24 saves to lead the Colorado Avalanche to a 3-2 win over the Philadelphia Flyers on Monday night in a game where a referee was stretchered off the ice.

Makar is off to a sensational scoring start for a defenseman. He beat Aleksei Kolosov for his seventh and eighth goals of the season and now has 27 points in 19 games.

Leading 2-0 in the third, Mittelstadt scored his seventh goal of the season.

Owen Tippett and Tyson Foerster scored for the Flyers in the third to bring it to 3-2.

Mitch Dunning was fully communicative, and could move all his extremities, the league said, following the referee’s violent collision with Colorado defenseman Josh Manson.

The NHL said Dunning was taken to a hospital for precautionary reasons and that all neurological signs were normal.

Manson skated alone on the ice when he slammed into Dunning near the blue line early in the first period. Dunning went down in a heap and lay prone on the ice for several minutes. Dunning appeared to be moving his feet and moved his right hand when Manson went to talk to him.

The game was delayed for several minutes while trainers and medical staff tended to Dunning. Play resumed with one referee and two linespersons.

Dunning is a former professional hockey defenseman who played parts of three seasons in the OHL. He later shifted into officiating and was promoted to full-time NHL status in 2022.

Capitals 6, Utah 2: Alex Ovechkin scored twice before leaving with an apparent leg injury as visiting Washington defeated Utah.

Ovechkin scored on Connor Ingram, making Ingram the 178th goaltender he’s scored on in his 20-year NHL career and tying a league record held by Jaromir Jagr. He left the ice 5:30 into the third with an apparent left leg injury.

Charlie Lindgren had 24 saves for the Capitals. Dylan Strome and Brandon Duhaime each tallied a goal and an assist.

Jack McBain and Nick Bjugstad scored for Utah. Karel Vejmelka replaced Ingram in the net during the second period. They combined for 18 saves.

Blue Jackets 5, Bruins 1: Mathieu Olivier scored short-handed in a three-goal first period for Columbus that ended with Boston fans booing the home team off the ice.

Justin Danforth also scored a short-handed goal, making it 4-1 midway through the third period. Yegor Chinakhov made it 5-1 with about six minutes left, bringing out more boos and sending most of the remaining fans to the exits.

Charlie Coyle scored Boston’s only goal, and Jeremy Swayman made 24 saves as the Bruins lost their third straight game.

Canadiens 3, Oilers 0: Sam Montembeault stopped 30 shots as Montreal blanked Connor McDavid and visiting Edmonton.

Montembeault earned his second shutout of the season after a 48-save showing against Toronto in the season opener.

The Oilers lost their second in a row after falling 4-3 in overtime to Toronto on Saturday.

Ducks 4, Stars 2: Brett Leason had a goal and two assists for a career-high three points, Lukas Dostal stopped 34 shots and Anaheim won at Dallas.

Olen Zellweger, Cutter Gauthier and Jackson LaCombe also scored for the Ducks, who saw a 3-0 lead in the third period shrink to one goal before getting consecutive wins for the first time this season. Dostal won for the first time since Oct. 29, snapping a personal 0-4-1 streak.

Sharks 5, Red Wings 4 (OT): Rookie sensation Macklin Celebrini scored 46 seconds into overtime as host San Jose beat slumping Detroit.

William Ecklund had two goals, and Luke Kunin and Tyler Toffoli also scored for San Jose, which has won two straight and is 3-1-2 in its past six games. Mackenzie Blackwood finished with 16 saves.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Unthinkable: Hoosiers fans savor rare success

FROM PAGE 24

than its combined total over the previous three seasons and finds itself ditching the half-full stadiums that had become the norm in Octobers and Novembers of seasons past.

“We were excited to get a new coach. We knew there was going to be a lot of turnover with the football guys, but we never could have imagined 10-0,” said 47-year-old Jennifer Worman, who lives in an Indianapolis suburb. “It is unreal for IU football.”

There have been no shortage of milestone moments in 2024:

■ The Hoosiers’ 77-3 victory over Western Illinois in Week 2 was the most lopsided in school history, and their 56-7 win over Nebraska six weeks later matched the school record for margin of victory in league play.

■ A 42-13 victory over UCLA was their first ever at the Rose Bowl.

■ Indiana became the first bowl eligible team in the country with a 41-24 win at Northwestern.

■ They’ve scored at least 40 points seven times, won nine times by 14 or more points and have trailed only twice briefly all season.

■ And if the Hoosiers win at No. 2 Ohio State, something they haven’t done since 1987, a win over rival Purdue (1-8, 0-6) could send them to their first Big Ten title game.

It’s a season on the brink only this locker room thought possible.

“We have playmakers all across the board,” sixth-year quarterback Kurtis Rourke said earlier this season. “It makes my job a lot easier. The O-line is playing great so we can run and pass. We’re just clicking right now.”

Naturally, all these wins have put players such as Rourke, the 2022 Mid-American Conference MVP, in the postseason award debate. Some think Rourke even be-

longs in the Heisman Trophy race. He’s hardly alone.

Defensive end Mikail Kamara, a transfer from James Madison, leads the conference in sacks (9½) and earned two national defensive player of the week awards following a 2½-sack, 4½-tackle for loss performance as Indiana reclaimed the Old Brass Spittoon at Michigan State.

Elijah Sarratt also played previously for Cignetti at James Madison and now ranks seventh in the Big Ten in yards (685) and TD receptions (6), as well as second in yards per catch (18.0).

And while some contend a soft schedule has helped Indiana, it didn’t in other years.

The Hoosiers may in fact be the most balanced team in the nation. They’re ranked second in scoring offense (43.9 points), seventh in scoring defense (13.8) and among the top 25 nationally in passing offense (23rd, 276.5 yards), run defense (first, 72.7), pass defense (20th, 183.3), turnover margin (tied for 12th, 1.0 per game) and takeaways (tied for 25th, 17).

It’s enough to convince Indiana fans the Hoosiers should make the expanded 12-team playoff field — win or lose at Ohio State. And it’s rekindled memories of Bob Knight’s three national championship runs and has done what nobody thought possible — temporarily overshadowed basketball at Indiana while the victory flag at Memorial Stadium flies for a 12th consecutive week.

“I’m checking some boxes off, football-wise, that I never thought I’d be able to see,” said 58-year-old Randy Pruitt of Columbus, Ind., who has seen the Hoosiers exceed his wildest expectations. “Make a bowl, that’s probably what we thought. No way would we be mentioned in the top 12 teams and the playoffs. Maybe we still get overlooked, I don’t know. But this wasn’t on the radar.”



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

Indiana football players touch “Hep’s Rock” as they enter Memorial Stadium before playing Washington on Oct. 26 in Bloomington, Ind.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Gonzaga forward Graham Ike looks to shoot as San Diego State forward Magoon Gwath defends during the first half Monday night in San Diego. Ike had 23 points in No. 3 Gonzaga’s 80-67 victory.

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Ike, Nembhard lead Gonzaga to win over San Diego State

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Graham Ike bounced back from early foul trouble to score 20 of his 23 points in the second half, and Ryan Nembhard added 19 points and 10 assists as No. 3 Gonzaga ran past San Diego State 80-67 on Monday night in a showdown of future Pac-12 opponents.

Sixth man Braden Nuff had 10 points for the Bulldogs (4-0), who were playing away from Spokane for the first time this season. The Zags avenged an 84-74 loss to SDSU last year, which snapped its 59-game nonconference winning streak.

Nick Boyd scored 23 points for the Aztecs (2-1), while BJ Davis had 15 and Wayne McKinney 11.

Gonzaga outscored SDSU 8-2 in the opening 1:32 of the second half to push a nine-point halftime lead to 48-33. Ike scored the first five points, on a three-point play and a layup. Michael Ajai added a 3-pointer.

Both teams reached the Sweet 16 last season, the Bulldogs for the ninth straight time.

The Zags will move from the West Coast Conference, where they have dominated for most of the past quarter century, into the reconstituted Pac-12 beginning in 2026. Gonzaga will become the eighth member along with holdovers Washington State and Oregon State, and fellow newcomers

Boise State, San Diego State, Fresno State, Utah State and Colorado State from the Mountain West.

No. 4 Auburn 102, North Alabama 69: Johni Broome had 30 points and 17 rebounds as the Tigers beat the visiting Lions.

Denver Jones added 13 points and a career-high nine assists for Auburn (4-0). Chad Baker-Mazara and Miles Kelly both scored 12.

The Tigers fell behind twice in the first half but were able to take firm control in the final minutes before halftime. Broome scored 16 first-half points in the final 7:35 alone.

Jacari Lane led North Alabama (3-2) with 16 points. Daniel Ortiz and Will Soucie added 15 apiece.

No. 5 Iowa State 87, IU Indianapolis 52: Curtis Jones scored 20 points and Tamin Lipsey added 17 to lead the Cyclones past the visiting Jaguars.

It was Jones’ second straight 20-point game off the bench and fourth in his two seasons with Iowa State (3-0).

Saint Mary’s transfer Joshua Jefferson had his first double-double for the Cyclones with 16 points and 10 rebounds. Keshon Gilbert had 11 points and eight assists, and Lipsey led Iowa State with five steals.

Paul Zilinskas led IU Indianapolis (2-3) with 16 points and Jarvis Walker added eight.

No. 19 Wisconsin 87, UT Rio

Grande Valley 84: John Blackwell scored a career-high 30 points and John Tonje added 19 as the Badgers rallied to beat the visiting Vaqueros.

Wisconsin overcame a 52-48 halftime deficit to extend its season-opening winning streak to five games. UTRGV (3-3) entered with a three-game winning streak.

Tonje, coming off a 41-point effort in a win over Arizona, hit four free throws to give the Badgers an 82-77 lead with just over two minutes remaining. DK Thorn hit a deep 3-pointer that pulled the Vaqueros within 85-84 with 1:02 left.

After each team missed a jumper in the lane, Blackwell hit two free throws with 2.1 seconds left to put Wisconsin up 87-84.

Hasan Abdul Hakim scored 19 points and Trey Miller 12 for UTRGV.

No. 20 Arkansas 91, Pacific 72: Adou Thiero scored 23 points, and the Razorbacks pulled away from the visiting Tigers.

Thiero was 8 for 10 from the field as Arkansas (3-1) shot 60% as a team. Boogie Fland scored 20 points, and Zvonimir Ivisic finished with 15. DJ Wagner had 14 points and five assists.

Pacific (3-3) lingered until the final 12 minutes, pulling within two at one juncture. But the Tigers went more than eight minutes without a field goal and the Razorbacks kept building their lead.

ROUNDUP

Bucks’ Lillard hits winner in return

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Damian Lillard has dealt with all kinds of injuries through his 13 seasons in the NBA, but he’d never had to worry about recovering from a concussion before.

His return from concussion protocol put the Milwaukee guard in a much more familiar situation.

Lillard came back after missing three games and made a game-winning layup with 3.9 seconds left in the Bucks’ 101-100 victory over Houston that snapped the Rockets’ five-game winning streak Monday.

“That was actually my first time in my life just getting a concussion,” Lillard said after the game. “I’ve played football. I box all the time. I’ve been in some situations where you would expect I’d have had a concussion before, but first time.

“Usually when something is wrong with me, I feel I can will myself through it and I’m all right. This was probably one of the first times in my life and definitely in my NBA career where I was like, ‘Something is off.’ It was a little frustrating because I didn’t have a choice but to go through the process. I just had to acknowledge the way I was feeling, and I knew I wasn’t all the way right.”

Lillard had an up-and-down performance in his return. He compiled 18 points and 10 assists, but missed all six of his 3-point attempts and couldn’t convert some contested layups he normally hits.

The Bucks trailed 100-99 when Lillard had the ball in his hands in the closing seconds. He drove into the lane, split two defenders and made the driving layup that put Milwaukee ahead for good.

“I think he’s one of the best to ever do it — like finishing the game,” Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo said.

The Rockets rallied from a 14-point, third-quarter deficit to take the lead early in the fourth quarter and stayed ahead until Lillard’s decisive basket. Antetokounmpo blocked a shot by Houston’s Alperen Sengun with 20 seconds left.

Heat 106, 76ers 89: Jimmy Butler scored a season-high 30 points in his return from a sprained ankle, Tyler Herro added 18 and host Miami erased an early 19-point deficit to beat Philadelphia.

Duncan Robinson scored 13 and Dru Smith added 10 for Miami, which played its first home game in two weeks. The Heat — who were outscored 137-71 in third quarters in their first four home games — outscored Philadelphia 35-16 in that period.

Jared McCain scored 20 points, Paul George added 18 and former



Milwaukee’s Damian Lillard drives past Houston’s Alperen Sengun during the first half Monday. Lillard returned after missing three games because of a concussion and scored the game-winner for the Bucks.

Heat forward Caleb Martin finished with 12 for Philadelphia, which has lost 11 of 13 games to open the season.

Joel Embiid played for just the third time this season. The Olympic gold medalist from this past summer scored 11 points in 31 minutes for the 76ers.

Bulls 122, Pistons 112: Zach LaVine scored 16 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter and visiting Chicago pulled away for a win against Detroit.

The game was tied at 95 with 8:46 left, but LaVine had nine points in a 13-2 run that put the Bulls up by 11 with 5:45 to go. He hit six 3-pointers in the quarter after a slow start.

Nikola Vucevic led the Bulls with 29 points and 12 rebounds while Coby White scored 25.

Cade Cunningham had 26 points and 10 assists for the Pistons and Malik Beasley added 21.

Knicks 134, Wizards 106: Jalen Brunson had 26 points and 11 assists, and host New York rolled to a victory that extended Washington’s losing streak to nine games.

Karl-Anthony Towns added 24 points and 12 rebounds in just 25 minutes for the Knicks, who were off and running right from the start even while playing for the second straight night. They rang up 40 points in the first quarter and put up 36 more in the third, building the lead to 109-75 at the end of the period.

New York went 20-for-40 from 3-point range and finished with its highest point total while just missing its largest margin of victory.

Bub Carrington, Jonas Valanciunas and Corey Kispert each scored 18 points for Washington.

Raptors 130, Pacers 119: RJ Barrett scored a season-high 39 points, Jakob Poeltl had 30 points and 15 rebounds for his third straight double-double and host Toronto snapped a seven-game losing streak by beating Indiana.

Toronto came in with the NBA’s worst record at 2-12 and won for the first time since beating Sacramento in overtime on Nov. 2.

Barrett shot 13 for 21, going 4 for 8 from 3-point range and making 9 of 12 at the free throw line. He finished with nine rebounds.

Gradey Dick scored 15 points for Toronto.

Benedict Mathurin scored 17 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter and Pascal Siakam had 25 points and 10 rebounds against his former team as the Pacers lost for the third time in four games.

Indiana’s Obi Toppin had nine of his 19 points in the final period.

Magic 109, Suns 99: Franz Wagner scored 32 points, Anthony Black added 20 and visiting Orlando beat struggling Phoenix.

Tyus Jones had 18 points for Phoenix. Devin Booker — coming off a season-high 44 points — had 17.

The Suns had three starters out due to injury, including Kevin Durant, Bradley Beal and Jusuf Nurkic. It was Durant’s sixth straight game out of the lineup. Phoenix is 1-5 over that stretch, including losing four straight.

Orlando was without leading scorer Paolo Banchero, who has an oblique injury.

The Magic opened the third quarter with a 64-48 lead and then scored the first five points for a 19-point edge. The closest Phoenix got down the stretch was 102-93, with 2:35 left in the game.

Hawks 109, Kings 108: De’Andre Hunter scored 24 points and Dyson Daniels had four blocks, including one in the final seconds, as visiting Atlanta beat short-handed Sacramento.

Daniels’ clutch defensive play on Kings star De’Aaron Fox finished off a late back-and-forth affair. Trae Young had 19 assists for Atlanta. Clint Capela, who had 14 points and 14 rebounds, scored the final three points for the Hawks to put them up 109-106 with under two minutes to play.

Keon Ellis had a career high 33 points, including nine 3-pointers, to lead Sacramento. The Kings were without Domantas Sabonis (back), DeMar DeRozan (back) and Malik Monk (right ankle sprain).

Clippers 102, Warriors 99: Norman Powell scored 23 points and Los Angeles held off Golden State to win its fifth in a row at home.

James Harden added 12 points and 16 assists for the Clippers, who had lost their first four games at their new arena. Ivica Zubac had 17 rebounds.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 26 points and Andrewiggins added 22. Their only lead came on a 3-pointer by Lindy Waters III to start the game, but they closed within three points in the game’s final minutes. Their three-game winning streak ended.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	11	3	.786	—
New York	8	6	.571	3
Brooklyn	5	9	.357	6
Toronto	3	12	.200	8½
Philadelphia	2	11	.154	8½

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	9	6	.600	—
Atlanta	7	8	.467	2
Miami	6	7	.462	2
Charlotte	5	8	.385	3
Washington	2	11	.154	6

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	15	0	1.000	—
Detroit	7	9	.438	8½
Indiana	6	8	.429	8½
Chicago	6	9	.400	9
Milwaukee	5	9	.357	9½

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	10	5	.667	—
Memphis	8	6	.571	1½
Dallas	7	7	.500	2½
San Antonio	6	8	.429	3½
New Orleans	4	10	.286	5½

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	11	3	.786	—
Denver	7	5	.583	3
Minnesota	8	6	.571	3
Portland	6	8	.429	5
Utah	3	10	.231	7½

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	10	3	.769	—
L.A. Lakers	9	4	.692	1
Phoenix	9	6	.600	2
L.A. Clippers	8	7	.533	3
Sacramento	8	7	.533	3

Monday’s games	
Chicago 122, Detroit 112	
New York 134, Washington 106	
Miami 106, Philadelphia 89	
Toronto 130, Indiana 119	
Milwaukee 101, Houston 100	
Orlando 109, Phoenix 99	
Atlanta 109, Sacramento 108	
L.A. Clippers 102, Golden State 99	
Tuesday’s games	
Cleveland at Boston	
Charlotte at Brooklyn	
Denver at Memphis	
New Orleans at Dallas	
Oklahoma City at San Antonio	
Utah at L.A. Lakers	
Wednesday’s games	
Chicago at Milwaukee	
New Orleans at Cleveland	
Indiana at Houston	
Philadelphia at Memphis	
Portland at Oklahoma City	
Atlanta at Golden State	
New York at Phoenix	
Orlando at L.A. Clippers	
Thursday’s games	
Detroit at Charlotte	
Minnesota at Toronto	
Utah at San Antonio	
Orlando at L.A. Lakers	

Leaders	
Through Monday	
Rebounding	
	G OFF DEF TOT AVG
Jokic, DEN	10 45 92 137 13.7
Sabonis, SAC	13 37 126 163 12.5
Zubac, LAC	15 60 126 186 12.4
Towns, NY	13 38 123 161 12.4
Antetokoun., MIL	13 29 132 161 12.4
Poeltl, TOR	15 66 112 178 11.9
Davis, LAL	12 29 105 134 11.2
Sengün, HOU	15 54 112 166 11.1
Allen, CLE	15 30 134 164 10.9
Ayton, POR	11 33 83 116 10.5

Assists	
	G AST AVG
Jokic, DEN	10 117 11.7
Young, ATL	14 163 11.6
James, LAL	13 120 9.2
Harden, LAC	15 135 9.0
Cunningham, DET	16 141 8.8
Haliburton, IND	14 119 8.5
Paul, SA	14 117 8.4

Scoreboard

American Conference							
East							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Buffalo	9	2	0	.818	320	214	
Miami	4	6	0	.400	181	221	
N.Y. Jets	3	8	0	.273	204	242	
New England	3	8	0	.273	182	248	
South							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	7	4	0	.636	258	236	
Indianapolis	5	6	0	.455	236	250	
Tennessee	2	8	0	.200	170	263	
Jacksonville	2	9	0	.182	208	316	
North							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Pittsburgh	8	2	0	.800	233	162	
Baltimore	7	4	0	.636	334	271	
Cincinnati	4	7	0	.364	297	296	
Cleveland	2	8	0	.200	162	248	
West							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Kansas City	9	1	0	.900	240	191	
L.A. Chargers	7	3	0	.700	220	145	
Denver	6	5	0	.545	235	183	
Las Vegas	2	8	0	.200	187	285	

National Conference							
East							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Philadelphia	8	2	0	.800	259	179	
Washington	7	4	0	.636	308	243	
Dallas	3	7	0	.300	187	293	
N.Y. Giants	2	8	0	.200	156	222	
South							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Atlanta	6	5	0	.545	244	274	
Tampa Bay	4	6	0	.400	279	266	
New Orleans	4	7	0	.364	262	260	
Carolina	3	7	0	.300	167	310	
North							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Detroit	9	1	0	.900	336	177	
Minnesota	8	2	0	.800	244	170	
Green Bay	7	3	0	.700	250	213	
Chicago	4	6	0	.400	194	187	
West							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Arizona	6	4	0	.600	238	220	
L.A. Rams	5	5	0	.500	213	239	
San Francisco	5	5	0	.500	250	222	
Seattle	5	5	0	.500	230	238	

Thursday's game	
Philadelphia	26, Washington 18
Sunday's games	
Detroit 52, Jacksonville 6	
Green Bay 20, Chicago 19	
Indianapolis 28, N.Y. Jets 27	
L.A. Rams 28, New England 22	
Miami 34, Las Vegas 19	
Minnesota 23, Tennessee 13	
New Orleans 35, Cleveland 14	
Pittsburgh 18, Baltimore 16	
Denver 38, Atlanta 6	
Seattle 20, San Francisco 17	
Buffalo 30, Kansas City 21	
L.A. Chargers 34, Cincinnati 27	
Open: Arizona, Carolina, N.Y. Giants, Tampa Bay	
Monday's game	
Houston	34, Dallas 10
Thursday, Nov. 21	
Pittsburgh	at Cleveland
Sunday, Nov. 24	
Dallas at Washington	
Detroit at Indianapolis	
Kansas City at Carolina	
Minnesota at Chicago	
New England at Miami	
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Giants	
Tennessee at Houston	
Denver at Las Vegas	
Arizona at Seattle	
San Francisco at Green Bay	
Philadelphia at L.A. Rams	
Open: Buffalo, Cincinnati, Jacksonville, N.Y. Jets, Atlanta, New Orleans	
Monday, Nov. 25	
Baltimore	at L.A. Chargers
Thursday, Nov. 28	
Chicago at Detroit	
N.Y. Giants at Dallas	
Miami at Green Bay	
Friday, Nov. 29	
Las Vegas	at Kansas City



Houston Texans running back Joe Mixon celebrates after running the ball near the Dallas Cowboys' goal line during the first half Monday night in Arlington, Texas. Mixon ran for three TDs in a 34-10 victory.

Texans never trail, hand Cowboys 5th straight loss

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Derek Barnett forced the first fumble and returned the second for a touchdown on the definitive defensive play of the game for the Houston Texans.

Joe Mixon did his thing, and C.J. Stroud didn't have to do much to extend the Dallas Cowboys' misery.

Mixon ran for three touchdowns to extend his TD streak to six games since coming back from an ankle injury, Barnett returned a fumble 28 yards for a score, and the Texans beat the Cowboys 34-10 on Monday night.

The Texans (7-4) stopped just the second two-game losing streak in Stroud's two seasons while maintaining a two-game lead in the AFC South.

Houston pulled away in the second half a week after a 26-23 last-play loss to Detroit at home when the Texans let a 23-7 halftime lead get away and lost despite intercepting Jared Goff five times.

"It's not as bad as it ever seems, and it's never as good as it ever seems," Stroud said. "Those type of games, you have to come out with a win, especially going up like that the half. But what are we going to do about it?"

In a season filled with things gone wrong for the Cowboys (3-7), debris fell from their stadium's retractable roof a few hours before the game. There was no delay and no injuries were reported, just another mishap to foreshadow a fifth consecutive defeat for a team that lost five games total in each of the past three playoff seasons.

Cooper Rush threw a 64-yard touchdown pass to KaVontae Turpin but lost his second start since Dak Prescott's season-ending hamstring injury.

The Dallas losing streak is its longest since a seven-game skid in 2015, and the Cowboys dropped to 0-5 at home. Dallas is the first team in NFL history to trail by at least 20 points in six consecutive home games, including last season's wild-card playoff loss to Green Bay, according to Sportradar.

"Well, they better be frustrated," coach Mike McCarthy said. "I mean, we're all frustrated. I think there'd be something wrong if they weren't frustrated. So just very honest with everything and stay in tune with what's right in front of us. And that's the only way I've ever done it."

The Cowboys were down 10 early in the fourth quarter when Barnett knocked the ball out of Rush's hand as he was throwing. Dallas rookie left tackle Tyler Guyton caught it and was trying to run when Jalen Pitre knocked the ball loose again.

Barnett scooped it and scored, although he almost stepped out of bounds running free toward a pylon.

"The play he made really changed for game for us," Texans coach DeMeco Ryans said. "It flipped the momentum. It got everybody juiced up on the sideline. It was just a huge play."

Earlier, the Cowboys appeared to have pulled within a touchdown on a 64-yard field goal from Brandon Aubrey, but Barnett was penalized for slapping Terence Steele on the rush.

Dallas erased the points by taking the penalty, but Rush's fourth-down pass from the Houston 8-yard line was incomplete on the only good scoring chance of the second half for the Cowboys.

"The defense played with elite energy," Ryans said. "One big play that we gave up. Like to have that one back, but overall I think our guys played really well."

Harbaugh brings out resilience in Chargers

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Coming up big in clutch moments and being resilient are two qualities the Los Angeles Chargers lacked the past four seasons.

That isn't the case in coach Jim Harbaugh's first year.

The Chargers blew a 21-point third-quarter lead but came up with big plays in the closing minutes to beat the Cincinnati Bengals 34-27 Sunday night.

"The worm turned. Like I said, coach Harbaugh coming in and installing the culture, (defensive coordinator Jesse) Minter, and then the guys taking it upon themselves to do their part of the puzzle. And I feel like we doing that," safety Derwin James said.

Being able to respond with a finishing punch after being knocked down is something the Chargers had not shown during the final year of Anthony Lynn's tenure and throughout Brandon Staley's nearly three seasons.

Los Angeles lost eight games from 2020-23 in which it led by at least 10 points. The Chargers' .704 winning percentage the first four seasons of this decade with double-digit advantages was fourth-worst in the league.

"I've just been having this feeling really since the beginning back in April, May and June, that we've got the right guys at the right time and that's all a coach can ask for. Just keep building," Harbaugh said.

Justin Herbert was 2 of 12 during a stretch of five drives before connecting with Ladd McConkey for 28- and 27-yard completions on the go-ahead possession. J.K. Dobbins, held mostly in check to that point, then had a 29-yard TD on a run up the left sideline.

The defense allowed 191 yards on three straight Bengals TD drives, but came up with two third-down stops in the fourth quarter, leading to two missed field goals by Evan McPherson.

Harbaugh called it a "signature win," and it comes at the beginning of a testing stretch for the Chargers, who host Baltimore next Monday night.

After facing the Ravens, the Chargers play at Atlanta and host Tampa Bay.

At 7-3, the Chargers have equaled their best start since 2018 and currently hold the AFC's fifth seed.



Harbaugh

JEROME MIRON / AP

SPORTS



Lone Star showdown
Texans win as Cowboys lose fifth straight » **NFL, Page 23**



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

Huge sellout crowds in Bloomington have become common as of late with Indiana ranked No. 5 in the nation amid a perfect 10-0 season.

Achieving the unthinkable

Indiana's perfect season has turned Hoosiers into toast of college football

By **MICHAEL MAROT**
Associated Press

Ed Miller has attended Indiana football and basketball games since the early 1970s, and he's never seen a fall quite like this. As the leaves change colors and flutter to the ground, and the action ramps up for one of college basketball's true blueblood programs, everyone around Bloomington is focused on what's happening inside the football stadium. Here, the 70-year-old Miller has been part of three straight home sellouts, seen the spinning towels

and decibel levels attain new heights while the favored candy-striped basketball pants have been replaced by the increasingly fashionable candy-striped overalls. Yes, even the start of basketball season cannot tarnish this season's most unthinkable story in college football — the rise of the Hoosiers. "It's hard this time of year usually to keep going to football games, but that has totally flipped," Miller said. "And now, honestly, I'm a little disappointed in basketball. I'm more excited about football than basketball, and I didn't think I'd ever say that."

For decades, Indiana football was mired in mediocrity or worse — irrelevance. Indiana has the most losses (713) and the 10th-lowest winning percentage (.422) in FBS history. The Hoosiers' three bowl wins are the fewest of any Power 4 team, and the 33-year run between post-season victories still is the second-longest active drought among teams with multiple bowl bids. How bad had things gotten? When ESPN broadcaster Joe Buck identified an Indiana alum during a Monday Night Football telecast a couple years back,

Buck's broadcast partner, Troy Aikman, jokingly asked if the Hoosiers still played football. Curt Cignetti took the Indiana job to change that image and while fans liked his passion, they were skeptical of his bold, brash promise of immediate success. "Hey, look I'm super fired up about this opportunity," he shouted at a December basketball game. "I've never taken a backseat to anybody and don't plan on starting now. Purdue sucks. But so does Michigan and Ohio State." Nobody's questioning Cignetti now.

Nick Saban's first recruiting coordinator at Alabama is a front-runner to be this year's national coach of the year, especially after last Saturday's 20-15 victory over the defending national champion Wolverines. The Hoosiers earned just their second series win since 1988 while sealing the first 10-win season in school history, perhaps fittingly, against college football's winningest program. No. 5 Indiana (10-0, 7-0 Big Ten, No. 5 CFP) now has one more win

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Pirates' Skenes, Yanks' Gil win ROY awards » **MLB, Page 19**

