

Missiles, drones fired on ships in Red Sea

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Commercial ships came under attack Sunday by drones and missiles in the Red Sea and a U.S. warship there opened fire in self-defense as part of an hourslong assault claimed by Yemen's Houthi rebels, officials said.

The attack marked a potential major escalation in a series of maritime attacks in the Mideast linked to the Israel-Hamas war as multiple vessels found themselves in the crosshairs of a single Houthi assault for the first time in the conflict.

"We're aware of reports regarding attacks on the USS Carney and commercial vessels in the Red Sea, and will provide information as it becomes available," the Defense Department told The Associated Press.

The Carney is an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer that's already shot down multiple rockets the Houthis have fired toward Israel so far in the war.

It wasn't damaged in the attack and no injuries were reported on board, said a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss early details of a military operation.

The Carney responded after hearing from the Bahamas-flagged bulk carrier Unity Explorer that it was under attack by

missile fire, the official said. The Carney shot down two drones during the attack, one in self-defense and another after checking on the Unity Explorer, the official said.

Assessments were still being made on the Unity Explorer.

The British military said earlier that there had been a suspected drone attack and explosions in the Red Sea, without elaborating.

The Defense Department did not identify where it believed the fire came from. Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attacks, however, saying the first vessel was hit by a missile and the second by a drone while in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait that links the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

Saree did not mention any U.S. warship being involved in the attack.

"The Yemeni armed forces continue to prevent Israeli ships from navigating the Red Sea (and Gulf of Aden) until the Israeli aggression against our steadfast brothers in the Gaza Strip stops," Saree said. "The Yemeni armed forces renew their warning to all Israeli ships or those associated with Israelis that they will become a legitimate target if they violate what is stated in this statement."

Saree also identified the first vessel as the Unity Explorer, which is owned by a British

firm that includes Dan David Ungar, who lives in Israel, as one of its officers.

The second was a Panamanian-flagged container ship called Number 9, which is linked to Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement.

Israeli media identified Ungar as being the son of Israeli shipping billionaire Abraham "Rami" Ungar.

The Houthis have been launching a series of attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, as well as launching drones and missiles targeting Israel amid the war.

Another U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said the attack began at about 10 a.m. in Sanaa, Yemen, and had gone on for as much as five hours.

Global shipping had increasingly been targeted as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to become a wider regional conflict — even as a truce briefly halted fighting and Hamas exchanged hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

The collapse of the truce and the resumption of punishing Israeli airstrikes and its ground offensive there, however, had raised the risk of the seaborne attacks resuming.

Elsewhere, Iraqi militants with the Iran-backed umbrella group the Islamic Resistance in Iraq said they struck the Kharab al-Jir U.S. military base in Syria with rockets.

Report: US Navy bases in need of \$49B in upgrades

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The Navy would have to spend more than \$49 billion to fully repair and upgrade roughly 20,000 buildings on its U.S. bases, according to a new federal report that found maintenance for housing and other facilities chronically underfunded.

Eliminating a \$17 billion maintenance backlog and making \$32 billion in improvements to the buildings would cost a little less than half of the money needed to replace them, the

Congressional Budget Office said in a report released Thursday.

The report, based on a 2020 study, noted that the costs were likely already higher and would continue to grow.

But the CBO cast doubt on the Navy's ability to clear that maintenance backlog and further renovate and modernize its buildings to better support uses.

Because of budget pressures, the Defense Department has allowed the services to "cover less than the full amount estimated to maintain and im-

prove" their buildings and other real property, the CBO said.

Funding for facilities in the Navy budget, excluding the Navy Reserve and Marine Corps, ranged from 70% to 85% of estimated needs between 2013 and 2022.

On average, the service spent \$2.3 billion annually between 2020 and 2022 on maintenance for its buildings and non-building structures, the report noted.

"That large and growing share of old buildings may have resulted from policies that prioritized funding for combat

forces over funding for support areas such as infrastructure," the CBO said.

Worldwide, the Navy has more than 90,000 buildings covering about 693 million square feet of space.

The CBO studied 20,000 Navy buildings on 59 installations. It excluded those used by the reserve, the Marine Corps or other government departments.

Nearly half of the buildings studied had surpassed their intended useful life of 49 years, the CBO said.

Austin rejects US isolationism, supports helping global safety

Associated Press

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Saturday denounced those who advocate “an American retreat from responsibility” and said sustained U.S. leadership is needed to help keep the world as safe, free and prosperous as possible. He also urged Congress to end the partisan gridlock that has stalled the federal budget and war spending.

The United States must reject calls to turn away from global interests and become more isolationist, he told an audience of lawmakers, corporate and defense leaders and government officials attending a security conference. Those who “try to pull up the drawbridge,” he said, undermine the security that has led to decades of prosperity.

In his remarks at the Reagan National Defense Forum in California’s Simi Valley, Austin delivered a lengthy defense of U.S. support to Israel in its war against Hamas and to Ukraine in its struggle to battle Russia’s invasion. He said “the world will only become more dangerous if tyrants and terrorists believe that they can get away with wholesale aggression and mass slaughter.”

Austin met privately with top lawmakers on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

His message of rejecting isolationism appeared directed at conservative lawmakers who are increasingly opposed to spending on overseas wars and back former President Donald Trump’s “America First” ideology.

“You’ll hear some people try to brand an American retreat from responsibility as bold new leadership,” Austin said. “Make no mistake: It is not bold. It is not new. And it is not leadership.”

Congress has failed to approve any new money for the wars in Ukraine and Israel and has managed to pass only a short-term budget bill, known as a continuing resolution, that runs out early next year.

The Senate has been deadlocked for months by Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., blocking hundreds of military nominations, including critical senior commanders for key regions around the world.

“Our competitors don’t have to operate under continuing resolutions. And doing so erodes both our security and our ability to compete,” Austin said.

S. Korea launches first spy satellite

Associated Press

VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE, Calif. — South Korea launched its first military spy satellite into space Friday, a little over a week after North Korea claimed to put its own spy satellite into orbit for the first time as tensions rise between the rivals.

Launched from California’s Vandenberg Space Force Base using SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket, it was the first of five spy satellites South Korea plans to send into space by 2025 under a contract with SpaceX. The event had been scheduled for earlier in the week but was pushed back because of weather conditions.

South Korea had no military reconnaissance satellites of its own in space and has partially resorted to the United States’ spy satellites to monitor moves by North Korea.

South Korea’s Defense Ministry described the launch as successful, saying the satellite had a communication with an overseas ground station.

A ministry statement said the launch allowed the South Korean military to acquire an independent space-based surveillance system.

It said the satellite would also help bolster the military’s preemptive missile strike capability, a key part of its so-called three-axis system that includes missile defense and massive retaliatory capabilities.

Pentagon forges new high-tech agreement with Australia, UK

Associated Press

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — From underwater drones to electronic warfare, the United States is expanding its high-tech military cooperation with Australia and the United Kingdom as part of a broader effort to counter China’s rapidly growing influence in the Indo-Pacific.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met with defense chiefs from Australia and the U.K. at the U.S. military’s defense technology hub in Silicon Valley on Friday to forge a new agreement to increase technology cooperation and information

sharing. The goal, according to a joint statement, is to be able to better address global security challenges, ensure each can defend against rapidly evolving threats and to “contribute to stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.”

Austin met with Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles and Grant Shapps, the British secretary of state for defense, at the Defense Innovation Unit headquarters.

Speaking at a news conference, Austin said the effort will, for example, rapidly accelerate the sophistication of the drone systems, and prove that

“we are stronger together.”

The new technology agreement is the next step in a widening military cooperation with Australia that was first announced in 2021. The three nations have laid out plans for the so-called AUKUS partnership to help equip Australia with a fleet of eight nuclear-powered submarines. AUKUS is an acronym for Australia, the U.K. and the U.S.

Under the deal, Australia will buy three Virginia-class submarines from the U.S. and build five of a new AUKUS-class submarine in cooperation with Britain.

Santos, McCarthy ousters mark history

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House is making history this year in ways that Republicans could hardly have envisioned when the party took control.

First, the Republicans voted to oust their speaker, Rep. Kevin McCarthy, in October. On Friday they voted to get rid of one of their own, indicted Rep. George Santos of New York.

Never before had a House majority voted to evict its speaker, and not since the Civil War had the chamber voted to expel a member who was charged but not yet convicted of a crime.

The result has been a dizzying 11 months in a House majority riven by infighting, chiseling away at the powers of Congress and taking its toll on the actual business of governing.

As the year comes to a close,

the arc of power for House Republicans is at an inflection point, a new era of performance politics and chaotic governing that shows no signs of easing.

“Is it messy? Yeah, sure,” said Republican Rep. Mike Lawler, among the New Yorkers who led the ouster of Santos. “But when you’re actually governing in a democratic republic, it can be messy.”

In many ways, Santos is a product and practitioner of a new way of governing, a system that rewards big personalities who rise to prominence with charismatic if often extreme public personas rather than the quieter work that governs the nation.

Instead of shying from the exposure, Santos, who is accused of fabricating much of his life story, embraced his moment in

history, another segment of his celebrity run in Congress.

Before the House vote, Santos held a news conference on the Capitol steps, breezily answering questions about his future (he did not plan to seek reelection) and whether his shoes were purchased illegally with campaign funds (he said they were several years old).

He defended himself against the “bullying” and decried the “smear” against him.

“This is my battle,” Santos said, acknowledging he would have done “a lot” of things differently.

Santos doubled down on his own personal narrative, not as the fraudster he is charged with being, but as the representative of the New Yorkers who sent him to Congress and who, he argued, are the ones who should

decide whether or not to remove him.

“I came in here as a mad-as-hell activist who was just disenfranchised,” he said. “I leave here, no regrets.”

His quick ascent in politics as an outsider modeled partly after Donald Trump is reflective of this postmodern political era, and the power of a single lawmaker to become famous for being famous.

But Republicans split over ousting Santos just as they did earlier in October over the removal of McCarthy, R-Calif., as speaker, after he engineered passage of legislation with Democrats that averted a government shutdown.

“One was a mistake and one was righteous and necessary,” said Rep. Nick LaLota, R-N.Y., about the two votes.

O’Connor, 1st woman on Supreme Court, dies at 93

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, an unwavering voice of moderate conservatism and the first woman to serve on the nation’s highest court, died Friday.

She was 93.

O’Connor died in Phoenix, of complications related to advanced dementia and a respiratory illness, the Supreme Court said in a news release.

“A daughter of the American Southwest, Sandra Day O’Connor blazed a historic trail as our Nation’s first female Justice,” Chief

Justice John Roberts said in statement issued by the court. “She met that challenge with undaunted determination, indisputable ability, and engaging candor.”

In 2018, she announced that she had been diagnosed with “the beginning stages of dementia, probably Alzheimer’s disease.” Her husband, John O’Connor, died of complications of Alzheimer’s in 2009.

O’Connor’s nomination in 1981 by President Ronald Reagan and subsequent confirmation by the Senate ended 191 years of male exclusivity on the high court.

A native of Arizona who grew up on her

family’s sprawling ranch, O’Connor wasted little time building a reputation as a hard worker who wielded considerable political clout on the nine-member court.

Former President Barack Obama, who awarded O’Connor the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009, praised her for “forging a new path and building a bridge behind her for all young women to follow.”

O’Connor’s survivors include her three sons, Scott, Brian and Jay, six grandchildren and a brother.

Funeral plans were not immediately available.

Judge rejects Trump immunity claim in Jan. 6 case

The Washington Post

A federal judge on Friday rejected Donald Trump’s claim of “absolute immunity” from criminal prosecution for actions taken while he was president, setting a clock ticking on whether the Supreme Court will agree to allow him to face trial in Washington before the 2024 election.

U.S. District Judge Tanya S. Chutkan denied Trump’s request to toss out his four-count August indictment on charges of con-

spiring to defraud the federal government’s election process, to obstruct Congress’s certification of the vote on Jan. 6, 2021, and to disenfranchise American voters.

“Whatever immunities a sitting President may enjoy, the United States has only one Chief Executive at a time, and that position does not confer a lifelong ‘get-out-of-jail-free’ pass,” she wrote in the 48-page opinion. Trump “may be subject to federal investigation, indictment, prosecution, con-

viction and punishment for any criminal acts undertaken while in office.”

Chutkan said no court or any other branch of government has ever accepted Trump’s contention that former presidents enjoy “absolute immunity from criminal prosecution.” Nor, she said, was there any basis for Trump’s argument that he could not be prosecuted for a crime unless he had been impeached and convicted for those actions while in office.

Kyiv investigating possible Russian war crime

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian officials on Sunday launched an investigation into allegations that Russian forces killed surrendering Ukrainian soldiers, a war crime if confirmed, after grainy footage on social media appeared to show two uniformed men being shot at close range after emerging from a dugout.

The video shows the servicemen, one of them with his hands up, walking out at gunpoint and lying down on the ground before a group of Russian troops appears to open fire. It was not immediately possible to verify the video's authenticity or the circumstances in which it was filmed, and it was unclear when the incident took place.

The Ukrainian General Prosecutor's office on Sunday launched a criminal investigation, hours after the Ukrainian military's press office said in an online statement that the foot-

age is genuine.

"The video shows a group in Russian uniforms shooting, at point-blank range, two unarmed servicemen in the uniform of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who were surrendering," the prosecutor's office said in a Telegram update Sunday.

Kyiv, its Western allies and international human rights organizations have repeatedly accused Moscow of breaching international humanitarian law since it launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The Kremlin has denied these allegations.

The video first appeared Saturday on DeepState, a popular Ukrainian Telegram channel covering the war. The post claimed the footage came from the front lines near Avdiivka, a Ukrainian holdout in the country's part-occupied east where there has been fierce fighting in recent weeks.

The General Prosecutor's Office said Sunday that the alleged killing took place in the Pokrovsk district, which includes Avdiivka and surrounding areas.

"It's clear from the video that the Ukrainian servicemen are taking the necessary steps that show they are surrendering," Ukraine's human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, said hours after the footage emerged on Saturday.

In a statement posted to Telegram, Lubinets described the incident as "yet another glaring example of Russia's violations of international humanitarian law."

Oleksandr Shtupun, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian military grouping that is fighting near Avdiivka, was cited by Ukrainian media as saying the video was "glaring confirmation" of Moscow's disrespect for the laws of war.

Also on Sunday, Ukraine's

energy ministry reported that close to 1,000 towns and villages suffered power outages that day, with hundreds of settlements in the west battered by wintry weather and others affected by ongoing fighting.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, late on Saturday assessed that military operations have slowed down all along the frontline in Ukraine due to poor weather, with mud bogging down tracked vehicles and making it hard for lighter equipment and infantry to advance.

Even so, Shtupun, of Ukraine's Tavria military command that oversees the stretch of frontline near Avdiivka, said in a separate statement Sunday that Russian infantry attacks had intensified in the area over the past day. In a Telegram post, he insisted Ukrainian troops were "holding firm" in Avdiivka and another nearby town.

Philippine leader blames militants for lethal blast

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine president blamed "foreign terrorists" for a bomb blast that killed four people Sunday, wounded dozens of other Catholic worshippers in the south and sparked a security alarm, including in the capital, Manila, where state forces were put on alert.

The suspected bomb, which the police said was made from a mortar round, went off and

hit students and teachers who attended a Mass in a gymnasium at Mindanao State University in southern Marawi city, Taha Mandangan, the security chief of the state-run campus, told The Associated Press by telephone.

Dozens of students and teachers dashed out of the gym and the wounded were taken to hospitals.

Regional military commander Maj. Gen. Gabriel Viray III said four people were killed

by the explosion.

Six of the wounded were fighting for their lives in a hospital, said Gov. Mamintal Adiong Jr. of the Islamic province of Lanao del Sur, which has Marawi as its capital.

"I condemn in the strongest possible terms the senseless and most heinous acts perpetrated by foreign terrorists upon the Mindanao State University," President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in a statement.

Munich airport snowstorm causes central Europe travel chaos

Associated Press

BERLIN — All flights were grounded at Munich's airport Saturday after a winter storm dumped snow across southern Germany and parts of Austria, Switzerland and the Czech Republic, affecting travel across the region.

After initially announcing a halt in air traffic until noon on Saturday, the airport later an-

nounced flights would be canceled until 6 a.m. Sunday. Other airports in the region, including in the Swiss financial capital, Zurich, also announced weather-related delays and cancellations.

Trains to and from Munich's central station were also halted, Germany's national railway said, advising passengers to delay or reroute their jour-

neys. The news agency dpa reported that some passengers in Munich and the nearby city of Ulm spent Friday night on trains due to the halt.

In Munich, no buses or trams were operating as of Saturday afternoon, the local transit authority said. Some subway and regional train lines were also affected by the weather.

Downed trees left "many thousands" of people without power across the state of Bavaria, the utility company Bayernwerk told dpa.

In the Czech Republic, the major highway and some other roads were blocked for hours, trains and public transportation faced delays and cancellations, and over 15,000 households were without power.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

State office posts wrong numbers for Powerball

I A DES MOINES — Powerball losers in Iowa were actually winners for about seven hours last week after the state's lottery mistakenly posted the wrong winning numbers for the game.

Lottery officials blamed an unspecified "human reporting error" for the wrong numbers being posted for Monday night's Powerball drawing. The incorrect numbers were posted on the Iowa Lottery's website at about 12:30 a.m. Tuesday and it took until 7:15 a.m. before anyone noticed the mistake, took down the numbers and halted payoffs.

The initial, incorrect numbers would have resulted in prizes ranging from \$4 to \$200 — officials didn't specify how many people won. Anyone who got up early and cashed in a winning ticket will be able to keep the money.

Monday night's Powerball jackpot was for an estimated \$355 million.

Burning Man narrowly passes inspection

NV RENO — The organizers of the Burning Man festival narrowly passed their environmental inspection after mass torrential rains closed roads, jammed traffic and forced many to walk miles barefoot through muck, leaving trails of debris in the remote Nevada desert, according to a Wednesday report from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Burning Man organizers had just over a month to clean up any remnants of the makeshift

city built across over 4 square miles of the Black Rock Desert in northwestern Nevada as part of their agreement to use federal land for the festival. Each year, nearly 80,000 artists, musicians and activists gather for a week of camping, partying and performances.

An unusual summer storm left tens of thousands stranded in ankle-deep mud before fleeing, calling into question how much of the festival's "Leave No Trace" principle could be followed. Each year, attendees vow to pack up everything they brought to the makeshift city, leaving the sprawling stretch of federal land as it was before they arrived.

A passing grade hinged on inspectors finding less than one square foot of debris per acre.

State ban on TikTok blocked by judge

MT HELENA — Montana's first-in-the-nation law banning the video-sharing app TikTok in the state was blocked Thursday, one month before it was set to take effect, by a federal judge who called the measure unconstitutional.

The ruling delivered a temporary win for the social media company that has argued Montana's Republican-controlled Legislature went "completely overboard" in trying to regulate the app. A final ruling will come at a later date after the legal challenge moves through the courts.

U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy said the ban "oversteps state power and infringes on the Constitutional right of users and businesses" while singling out the state for its fixation on pur-

ported Chinese influence.

The ban, which was scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, was first brought before the Montana Legislature a few weeks after a Chinese spy balloon flew over the state.

Fire hits Christmas charity, gifts on track

MI LANSING — Donations are pouring in at a beloved Christmas charity after smoke damage from a fire stymied plans for the delivery of wrapped gifts for thousands of children in western Michigan.

Santa Claus Girls of Kent County has been going door-to-door with gifts for more than a century in the Grand Rapids area, delighting families that are struggling during the holidays.

But the all-volunteer group has been scrambling since a fire struck a building in Walker where Santa Claus Girls wraps and stores gifts. Though the fire didn't reach the gifts, smoke filled the space for hours.

The holiday isn't lost. Santa Claus Girls will instead deliver gift cards for 8,500 children to be used at Meijer, a local big-box store. Hudson wouldn't disclose how much each family will receive but said the cost will be covered by insurance.

Casino workers seethe as smoking ban delayed

NJ TRENTON — A bill to end smoking in Atlantic City's casinos that appeared headed for its first vote Thursday was delayed yet again when Democratic lawmakers said they did not have enough votes to advance it.

They also said they would listen to alternatives proposed by the casino industry, including

enclosed smoking rooms in which no employee would be forced to work.

That infuriated over 100 casino workers who packed a hearing room in the state Capitol, convinced that after nearly three years, their state representatives were ready to start the smoking ban on its way to approval.

New Jersey's law banning smoking in public businesses specifically exempts Atlantic City's casinos.

Coal mine sheds jobs ahead of conversion

WY CHEYENNE — A Wyoming coal mine that supplies fuel to a power plant that will be converted to burn gas plans to lay off 19 workers next month, the latest of thousands of jobs lost in the beleaguered U.S. coal industry in recent years.

Workers at the Black Butte Mine were told they would lose their jobs in mid-December, mine manager Steve Gili said Wednesday.

Most are heavy equipment operators, but some are mechanics and other mine staff. No additional layoffs are planned at the mine where the workforce will shrink from 132 to 113, said Gili, who declined to comment further.

While northeastern Wyoming is home to eight of the 10 most productive U.S. coal mines, Black Butte in the southwestern part of the state is a smaller operation. The mine east of Rock Springs in the sparsely populated Red Desert produces 2.5 million tons of coal a year primarily to feed PacifiCorp's nearby Jim Bridger power plant.

— From wire reports

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Tide edge Seminoles to make CFP field

Associated Press

Michigan, Washington, Texas and Alabama were selected to the College Football Playoff on Sunday, making Florida State the first unbeaten Power Five conference champion to be excluded from the four-team field.

Michigan will face Alabama in the Rose Bowl and Washington will play Texas in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1, and the winners will meet for the national championship Jan. 8 in Houston.

The final season of the four-team playoff before it expands to 12 next year presented the CFP selection committee with the toughest decision in the 10-year history of the postseason system.

"Florida State is a different team than they were through the first 11 weeks," said selection committee chairman Boo Corrigan, who is also the athletic director of Florida State's Atlantic Coast Conference rival North Carolina State.

The Seminoles (13-0) lost star quarterback Jordan Travis to a season-ending injury two weeks ago, but continued to win with a backup and then a third-string quarterback. But the committee is instructed to judge the teams for what they are heading into the playoff, and decided FSU without Travis was not among the best four in the country.

"To eliminate them from a chance to compete for a national championship is an unwarranted injustice that shows complete disregard and disrespect for their performance and accomplishments. It is unforgivable," Florida State athletic director Michael Alford said.

Travis is a sixth-year player whose development into one of the best quarterbacks in college football has fueled Florida State's resurgence over the last three years.

"Devastated. heartbroken," Travis posted on the social media platform X. "I

wish my leg broke earlier in the season so y'all could see this team is much more than the quarterback. I thought results matter. 13-0 and this roster matches up across any team in those top 4 rankings. I am so sorry."

Whichever team was left out had a good argument to get in. That created unprecedented controversy and the committee passed over FSU to pick Alabama, which upset Georgia to win the Southeastern Conference championship, and Big 12 champion Texas, which beat the Crimson Tide on the road in September.

The SEC had never missed the playoff. Alabama, which is in for the eighth time, kept that streak alive.

Texas would have been just the second Power Five team with only one loss to be left out. Instead, the Longhorns will be making their first appearance in the CFP in their last season as a member of the Big 12. Texas moves to the SEC next year.

Michigan dominates Iowa for Big Ten championship

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS—Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh celebrated his return to the sideline Saturday by hugging players and evasively running to avoid a Gatorade bath.

Blake Corum and J.J. McCarthy were already reflecting on bigger goals. And when the confetti came streaming down over the Wolverines, they made sure everyone knew they were no longer the nation's second-best team.

Corum scored twice and the defense pitched a rare shutout as No. 2 Michigan routed No. 18 Iowa 26-0 for its third straight Big Ten title game, a third straight playoff berth and, as announced Sunday, the top seed in the College Football Playoff.

And with No. 1 Georgia falling to No. 8 Alabama in the Southeastern Conference title game, Michigan (13-0, No. 2 CFP) finally reached No. 1 in the AP Top 25 on Sunday after spending 13 of 14 weeks at No. 2. Michigan lost of its previous two semifinal appearances and

hasn't won a national title since 1997.

Iowa (10-3, No. 16) never had a chance.

Alabama 27, Georgia 24: At Atlanta, The Crimson Tide are again the top dog in the Southeastern Conference after ending the Bulldogs' 29-game winning streak with a victory in the SEC championship game.

Jalen Milroe threw a pair of touchdown passes and No. 8 Alabama's defense dominated much of the way—a compelling playoff statement for a Crimson Tide team that lost at home to Texas early in the season.

No. 4 Florida State 16, No. 15 Louisville 6: The Seminoles made things as difficult as possible on the College Football Playoff selection committee, using a dominant defensive performance to beat the Cardinals for their first Atlantic Coast Conference championship since 2014.

The Seminoles moved to 13-0, but it wasn't enough. On Sunday, they became the first Power Five team to go unbeaten, win

its conference title and fail to make the playoff. Florida State's offensive performance and unsettled quarterback situation created some doubt about whether it's one of the four best teams in the country.

No. 7 Texas 49, No. 19 Oklahoma State 21: Quinn Ewers set a career high by throwing for 452 yards with four touchdowns, one of those to 362-pound defensive tackle T'Vondre Sweat, and Texas bid farewell to the Big 12 by beating Oklahoma State in the conference championship game.

The Southeastern Conference-bound Longhorns (12-1, No. 7 CFP) will leave the Big 12 with four titles. They also won it in the league's inaugural 1996 season, in 2005 when they were last national champs and in 2009.

Keilan Robinson tiptoed the sideline on a 57-yard run for the first of his two touchdowns in the second half as the Longhorns, the only team to beat Alabama this season, stayed in contention for the College Football

Playoff. They were rewarded with the third seed Sunday.

No. 25 SMU 26, No. 17 Tulane 14: Kevin Jennings threw a touchdown pass and accounted for 266 yards from scrimmage in his first career start, Collin Rogers kicked four second-half field goals and SMU beat Tulane in the American Athletic Conference championship game.

The Mustangs (11-2) limited Tulane (11-2, No. 22 CFP) to a touchdown during the final 59 minutes to snap the Green Wave's 10-game winning streak and dethrone the defending league champs.

Troy 49, Appalachian State 23: Kimani Vidal and the Trojans' defense combined to run away with another title in the fourth quarter.

Vidal rushed for 233 yards and five touchdowns, and Troy scored twice in a six-second span of a monster fourth quarter in a 49-23 victory Saturday over Appalachian State for the Trojans' second straight Sun Belt Conference title.

Wisconsin knocks off No. 3 Marquette

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Max Klesmit scored all 21 of his points before halftime, Steven Crowl added 16 and Wisconsin capitalized on its rebounding superiority to beat No. 3 Marquette 75-64 on Saturday.

Wisconsin (6-2) beat Marquette (6-2) for a third straight season in this in-state rivalry between schools separated by just 79 miles. This marks the first three-game winning streak for either team in the 130-game series since the Badgers won four straight from 1998-2001.

Kam Jones scored 19 and Tyler Kolek added 11 for Marquette. AJ Storr had 13 and Tyler Wahl 10 for Wisconsin, which outrebounded the Golden Eagles 38-23 and outscored them 18-2 in second-chance points.

No. 2 Arizona 82, Colgate 55: Caleb Love scored 14 points, Oumar Ballo had 13 points and 10 rebounds, and the host Wildcats made a strong statement to move up to No. 1 by overwhelming the Raiders.

Georgia Tech 72, No. 7 Duke 68: Baye Ndongo scored 21 points and his dunk

with 44 seconds remaining pushed the host Yellow Jackets ahead for good, handing the Blue Devils their second loss this week to an unranked team.

No. 8 Miami 62, Notre Dame 49: Matthew Cleveland scored 14 points, Norchad Omier and Nijel Pack each added 13 and the host Hurricanes beat the Fighting Irish in the Atlantic Coast Conference opener for both teams.

No. 9 Baylor 91, Northwestern State 40: Jalen Bridges made four 3-pointers while scoring 16 points, freshman Yves Missi had a double-double and the host Bears remained undefeated with a victory over the Demons.

No. 11 Gonzaga 89, Southern Cal 76: Ryan Nembhard and Dusty Stromer each scored 15 points and the Bulldogs defeated the Trojans in the Las Vegas Invitational.

UNC-Wilmington 80, No. 12 Kentucky 73: Trazarien White scored 27 points to lead the visiting Seahawks to a victory over the Wildcats.

No. 13 Florida Atlantic 90, Charleston

74: At Boca Raton, Fla., Johnell Davis scored 24, and Vladislav Goldin added 17 points and 12 rebounds to propel the host Owls (7-1) to victory over the Cougars in the finale of the Field of 68 Tipoff.

No. 17 North Carolina 78, Florida State 70: RJ Davis scored 27 points and the host Tar Heels ran off 22 unanswered points in the second half to rally past the Seminoles in both teams' Atlantic Coast Conference opener.

Drexel 57, No. 18 Villanova 55: At Philadelphia, Amari Williams scored 12 points and blocked the Wildcats' tying-attempt with 3 seconds left to help the Dragons notch the upset in the inaugural Big 5 Classic at the Wells Fargo Center.

No. 20 Colorado State 86, Washington 81: At Las Vegas, Joel Scott led five players in double figures with 17 points as the Rams defeated the Huskies.

No. 24 Illinois 76, Rutgers 58: Terrence Shannon Jr. had 23 points and 10 rebounds and the visiting Illini beat the Scarlet Knights in the Big Ten opener for both schools.

George's late 3-pointer lifts Clippers over Warriors

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Paul George made a 3-pointer with nine seconds remaining, giving the Clippers their first lead of the game, and Los Angeles hung on to beat the Golden State Warriors 113-112 on Saturday.

George led the Clippers—who avenged a 120-114 loss to Golden State two days earlier in San Francisco—with 25 points, six rebounds and six assists. James Harden added 21 points and Kawhi Leonard had 20.

After a timeout, Draymond Green missed a potential-winning 3-pointer at the buzzer. The Warriors made 17 3-pointers, four each by Green, Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson.

Bucks 132, Hawks 121: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 32 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his first triple-double of the season and 36th overall, helping host Milwaukee beat Atlanta.

Damian Lillard added 25

points and nine assists, and Cameron Payne had 18 points in 20 minutes off the bench.

Nets 129, Magic 101: Mikal Bridges scored 26 of his 42 points in the first quarter as host Brooklyn ended Orlando's winning streak at nine.

Orlando was trying for its first 10-game winning streak in franchise history, but the Magic had little hope after Bridges outscored them by himself as the Nets ran out to a 43-22 lead after 12 minutes.

Kings 123, Nuggets 117: De'Aaron Fox had 26 points and a career-high 16 assists, Malik Monk made a clutch 3-pointer late in the fourth quarter and host Sacramento beat Denver to spoil Nikola Jokic's NBA-leading eighth triple-double.

Jokic finished with 36 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds, the 114th career triple-double for Denver's big man.

Suns 116, Grizzlies 109: De-

vin Booker returned after missing a game because of a sprained right ankle and had 34 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists to lead host Phoenix past Memphis.

Booker hit a 3-pointer to start the fourth quarter and put the Suns up by 15, their biggest lead of the game to that point. He was also 13-for-13 from the free-throw line.

Thunder 126, Mavericks 120: Jalen Williams scored 23 points and visiting Oklahoma City rallied after allowing Dallas' NBA-record 30-0 run in the fourth quarter.

Dallas star Luka Doncic had his 59th career regular-season triple-double with 36 points, 18 assists and 15 assists in a season-high 46 minutes.

Lakers 107, Rockets 97: Anthony Davis had 27 points and 14 rebounds as Los Angeles kept Houston winless on the road.

Pacers 144, Heat 129: Bruce

Brown scored 30 points, Obi Toppin added 22 and visiting Indiana overcame the absence of scoring leader Tyrese Haliburton to beat Miami.

Timberwolves 123, Hornets 117: Karl-Anthony Towns scored 28 points, Rudy Gobert had a season-high 26 and grabbed 12 rebounds and visiting Minnesota beat Charlotte.

Cavaliers 110, Pistons 101: Max Strus and Darius Garland each scored 22 points and visiting Cleveland handed Detroit its 17th straight loss.

Bulls 124, Pelicans 118: Cobey White scored a season-high 31 points, DeMar DeRozan added 24 points and 10 assists and host Chicago beat New Orleans.

Jazz 118, Trail Blazers 113 (OT): Collin Sexton scored a season-high 25 points, Keyonte George had a career-high 20 points to go with six rebounds and six assists and host Utah beat Portland in overtime.

Coyotes' winning streak reaches four

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Michael Carcone scored for the fourth time in three games, and the Arizona Coyotes beat the St. Louis Blues 4-1 on Saturday night for their fourth straight victory.

Alex Kerfoot had a goal and two assists for Arizona, which had a 3-0 lead after one period. Nick Schmaltz and Matias Macceles also scored, and Connor Ingram made 31 saves for his fourth consecutive win.

The Coyotes' season-best winning streak has come against the past four Stanley Cup champions — Colorado (2022), Tampa Bay (2020-21), Vegas (2023) and St. Louis (2019).

Ducks 4, Avalanche 3 (SO): Rookie Leo Carlsson had a goal and an assist and added the shootout winner as host Anaheim snapped an eight-game losing streak.

Alex Killorn and Adam Henrique also scored for Anaheim. John Gibson, who played in his 448th game and surpassed Jean-Sebastien Giguere for most games played by a goaltender in Ducks history, stopped 34 shots and all three in the shootout.

Golden Knights 4, Capitals 1:

Jonathan Marchessault scored twice, and host Vegas beat Washington.

Jack Eichel had a goal and two assists, and Mark Stone also scored for the Golden Knights, who improved to 5-5-3 in their past 13 games. Logan Thompson made 21 saves.

Hurricanes 6, Sabres 2: Sebastian Aho scored two goals as host Carolina cruised to the victory.

Jack Drury, Stefan Noesen, Teuvo Teravainen and Brady Skjei also scored for the Hurricanes. Martin Necas, Jaccob Slavin, Brent Burns and Andrei Svechnikov all posted two assists as Carolina won for the third time in four games.

Bruins 4, Maple Leafs 3 (OT): Brad Marchand scored 4:52 into overtime, lifting Boston to the road win.

David Pastrnak had a goal and two assists for the Bruins, and Trent Frederic and Kevin Shattenkirk also scored. Linus Ullmark made 37 saves.

Stars 8, Lightning 1: Jason Robertson scored twice and Joe Pavelski had a goal and two assists, powering host Dallas to the runaway victory.

Jamie Benn and Mason Marchment each had a goal and an assist for Dallas (14-5-3),

which raced out to an early 3-0 lead. Tyler Seguin, Thomas Harley and Sam Steel also scored, and Jake Oettinger made 32 saves.

Red Wings 5, Canadiens 4 (OT): Jake Walman scored 54 seconds into overtime, and visiting Detroit earned its fifth win in six games.

Walman, Alex DeBrincat and Daniel Sprong each had a goal and an assist for Detroit, which blew a 3-0 lead in regulation. Joe Veleno and Christian Fischer also scored, and Ville Husso made 26 saves.

Flyers 4, Penguins 3 (SO): Sean Couturier scored the lone goal in the shootout, lifting visiting Philadelphia to the victory.

Flyers goaltender Samuel Ersson stopped Jake Guentzel, Sidney Crosby and Bryan Rust in the shootout, after Guentzel forced overtime with 21 seconds left. Tristan Jarry stopped Tyson Foerster and Travis Konecny.

Senators 2, Kraken 0: Goaltender Anton Forsberg stopped 39 shots for his first shutout of the season for host Ottawa.

Mathieu Joseph and Drake Batherson scored as the Senators snapped a three-game skid. It was Forsberg's fourth career shutout.

Islanders 4, Panthers 3: Ilya Sorokin stopped 42 shots and Julien Gauthier scored early in the third period, sending visiting New York to the victory.

Anders Lee, Pierre Engvall and Simon Holmstrom also scored for New York. Brock Nelson and Bo Horvat each had two assists.

Rangers 4, Predators 3: Vincent Trocheck had a goal and two assists, and New York rallied for a road win.

Jacob Trouba, Chris Kreider and Ryan Lindgren also scored for New York, which has won five of its past six. Adam Fox had three assists and Igor Shesterkin stopped 36 shots.

Jets 3, Blackhawks 1: Morgan Barron broke a tie in the second period, and host Winnipeg stopped a three-game slide.

Mark Scheifele and Cole Perfetti also scored for Winnipeg. Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves.

Canucks 4, Flames 3: Ilya Mikheyev and Sam Lafferty each had a goal and an assist as visiting Vancouver beat Calgary.

Quinn Hughes and Elias Pettersson also scored for the Canucks, and Filip Hronek had three assists. Thatcher Demko stopped 19 shots.

Crew rally, will play Los Angeles FC for MLS title

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Christian Ramirez scored in the 115th minute and the Columbus Crew rallied from two goals down to beat top-seeded FC Cincinnati 3-2 on Saturday night to advance to the MLS Cup Final.

Columbus (17-9-9), which has won two Cups in three previous trips to the final, will host next Saturday's championship match against defending-champion Los Angeles FC, which beat Houston in the Western Conference Final.

It was the second-seeded Crew's ninth conference final, second only to the 13 of the Los Angeles Galaxy.

It was the first time in league history that in-state rivals played for a conference title.

Brandon Vazquez scored in the 14th minute with an assist from Aaron Boupendza to give Cincinnati (20-6-9) the lead. League MVP Luciano Acosta took a pass from Alvaro Barreal and scored in the third minute of stoppage time to give the Supporters' Shield winners a 2-0 lead at halftime.

Cincinnati appeared to take a 3-0 lead in the 69th minute, but a hand-ball foul on Aaron Boupendza erased the goal. Six minutes later the Crew pulled within 2-1 on an own-goal by Cincinnati defender Alvas Powell.

Diego Rossi netted the equalizer for Columbus when he scored unassisted in the

86th minute. Rossi scored 10 minutes into the second half of two 15-minute OT periods. Cucho Hernandez and Kevin Molino picked up assists on Ramirez's winner.

Patrick Schulte finished with five saves for the Crew. Roman Celentano stopped five shots for Cincinnati.

In Los Angeles, Ryan Hollingshead scored late in the first half and LAFC advanced with a 2-0 victory over the Dynamo.

Houston's Franco Escobar scored an own goal in the 80th minute to seal the Western Conference Final for LAFC, which will travel to Columbus next weekend to play for the title. The Crew beat FC Cincinnati 3-2 in a thriller earlier Saturday.