

Divers find Osprey wreckage, remains

Associated Press

TOKYO — U.S. and Japanese divers have discovered wreckage and remains of crew members from a U.S. Air Force Osprey aircraft that crashed last week off southwestern Japan, the Air Force announced Monday.

The CV-22 Osprey carrying eight American personnel crashed last Wednesday off Yakushima island during a training mission. The body of one victim was recovered and identified earlier, while seven others remained missing.

The Air Force Special Operations Command said the remains were being recovered and their identities have yet to be determined.

“The main priority is bringing the Airmen home and taking care of their family members. Support to, and the privacy of, the families and loved ones impacted by this incident remains AFSOC’s top priority,” it said in a statement.

The U.S. military identified the one confirmed victim as Air Force Staff Sgt. Jacob “Jake”

Galliher of Pittsfield, Mass., on Saturday. Galliher, 24, was a direct support operator assigned to 43rd Intelligence Squadron, Detachment 1, Operating Location - Alpha, 363rd Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing, according to a statement from Air Force Special Operations Command.

Galliher, who joined the Air Force in 2017, was found near an empty, 20-person life raft and what appeared to be aircraft wreckage, a coast guard spokesman said by phone hours after the crash. It’s customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

His body was returned to the U.S. military on Thursday afternoon, a coast guard news release said.

On Monday, divers from the Japanese navy and U.S. military spotted what appeared to be the front section of the Osprey, along with possibly five of the missing crew members, Japan’s NHK public television and other media reported.

Japanese navy officials de-

clined to confirm the reports, saying they could not release details without consent from the U.S.

The U.S.-made Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter but can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster, like an airplane, during flight.

Ospreys have had a number of crashes, including in Japan, where they are used at U.S. and Japanese military bases, and the latest accident rekindled safety concerns.

Japan has suspended all flights of its own fleet of 14 Ospreys. Japanese officials say they have asked the U.S. military to resume Osprey flights only after ensuring their safety.

The Pentagon said no such formal request has been made and that the U.S. military is continuing to fly 24 MV-22s, the Marine version of Ospreys, deployed on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.

On Sunday, pieces of wreckage that Japan’s coast guard and local fishing boats have collected were handed over to the U.S. mil-

itary for examination, coast guard officials said. Japan’s military said debris it has collected would also be handed over to the U.S.

Coast guard officials said the recovered pieces of wreckage include parts of the aircraft and an inflatable life raft but nothing related to the cause of the crash, such as an engine.

Local witnesses reported seeing fire coming from one of the engines.

Under the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, Japanese authorities are not given the right to seize or investigate U.S. military property unless the U.S. decides otherwise. That means it will be practically impossible for Japan to independently investigate the cause of the accident.

The agreement has often made Japanese investigations difficult in criminal cases involving American service members on Okinawa and elsewhere, and has been criticized as unequal by rights activists and others, including Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki, who has called for a revision.

Fire aboard Navy ship sends 12 sailors to hospital

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — An electrical fire aboard a guided-missile destroyer sent a dozen sailors to the hospital Friday, and damage to the ship is still being assessed, according to the Navy.

The USS Howard was anchored at its Yokosuka homeport when a minor electrical fire in the main engine room was “reported and extinguished Friday morning,” De-

stroyer Squadron 15 spokesman Lt. j.g. Ronan Williams said by phone and email Monday.

The sailors were sent to U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka for evaluation, and seven were discharged that day in good condition, he said. Five remained at the hospital overnight but were discharged in good condition Saturday.

The fire’s cause is still under investigation and damage to the Howard is still being assessed,

Williams said.

The blaze happened nearly four months after the destroyer sustained a “soft grounding” while deployed on Aug. 10.

The ship was en route to Bali, Indonesia, for a scheduled port visit when watch standers alerted that it had grounded.

The ship was ultimately able to resume “normal operations under its own power and propulsion” and there were no injuries, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Luka Bakic said by email at the

time.

Nine days later, the Howard’s skipper, Cmdr. Kenji Igawa, was relieved for a “loss of confidence in his ability to command.”

Bakic, at the time, would not confirm whether the firing was related to the ship’s grounding.

Igawa was temporarily replaced by Capt. Edward Angelinas, who in turn handed the reins to Cmdr. Cameron Dennis, the Howard’s current commander.

Civilian engineer sues Navy for assault

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A civilian engineer serving on a Navy transportation vessel has filed a lawsuit claiming she was sexually assaulted by the ship's captain in her bed — an attack she said the service could have prevented with adequate security and safety policies.

The ship, part of the Navy's Military Sealift Command, lacked oversight of the captain's use of a master key code that gave him complete access to the vessel, according to the 31-page lawsuit filed Wednesday in the U.S. District Court of New Jersey. The ship also lacked working security cameras, kept incomplete logs of crew members coming and going from the vessel, and the command's staff deterred crew members from reporting sexual assaults.

The suit also claims the ship's captain was known among the crew for having an alcohol problem, missed work because of it, and drank alcohol on the ship, which violated policy.

The captain is a civilian who is not named in the suit. The engineer, Elsie Dominguez, is seeking a jury trial in her civil case. However, she is also awaiting the outcome of a criminal report that she filed earlier this year with Navy investigators.

"She wants to create systemic change in the industry to make it safer for all mariners," said Christine Dunn, an attorney for Dominguez. "She wants to empower other mariners who have gone through something similar to feel comfortable coming forward. Things cannot change unless you shine a light on them, and so she wants to help do that."

Dominguez, 2014 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, was working as the first assistant engineer aboard

the USNS Carson City, an expeditionary fast transport vessel, in December 2021 when she said the ship's captain used a master key code to access her private room overnight and rape her in her bed.

The Navy failed to care for and protect her when she reported the attack the next morning using the proper reporting procedures, according to the suit.

The Navy's Military Sealift Command operates 130 civilian-crewed ships that replenish Navy ships, conduct special missions, and strategically move and preposition cargo at sea around the world, said Tom Van Leunen, command spokesman. The workforce is comprised of 5,547 civilian mariners working aboard ships, 1,434 civilians in shore jobs, 347 active-duty service members and 956 reservists.

The Carson City is a catamaran with a flight deck for helicopter operations and a loading ramp to enable vehicles to drive on and off the ship quickly.

Van Leunen declined to comment on the ongoing litigation, but said the command takes sexual assault seriously and remains committed to a safe and respectful environment for all personnel.

"We firmly hold our crews accountable for their actions, promote a culture of trust, respect, and zero tolerance towards any form of misconduct or abuse within our ranks," he said.

Before filing the lawsuit, Dunn filed an administrative complaint with the Navy on Dominguez's behalf. The Navy responded this is a worker's compensation issue, Dunn said.

"We think that's a pretty shocking position to take because worker's comp is really intended to cover injury sustained in performance of one's

duties. So, the Navy has to successfully argue when a person goes to work aboard a U.S. Navy vessel, they should expect that being raped in their bed while they lie there unconscious is a part of their work duties," the attorney said.

Dominguez reported her assault to Naval Criminal Investigative Service in June and the case is now with the Department of Justice's Office of Human Rights and Special Prosecutions to determine whether criminal charges will be filed against the captain, said Ryan Meloy, an attorney representing Dominguez for the criminal investigation.

On the night that Dominguez said she was raped, she believes someone drugged her while at a bar in Brindisi, Italy, where the ship was docked. After one beer and one shot, she felt overly intoxicated and required two people to bring her back on the ship to her room, where she was left alone and unconscious, according to court documents. During the night, the captain of the ship entered her room using a master key code and raped her, she claims.

"I am so embarrassed by what I did to you that I do not even have the strength to see you face to face ... I hope that someday you can forgive me. You have a very special place in my heart and I appreciate you very much. Perhaps more than I should. I wish you the best," the captain wrote to Dominguez in a text message the next day, according to court documents.

Dominguez attempted to get a drug test, but she said she needed the captain's permission to do so and felt the captain threatened to derail her career when she asked for permission. She then found sexual-assault reporting instructions online and called the command's sexual as-

sault response coordinator through a helpline. Dominguez said she asked the advocate to make a restricted report that would prevent personally identifying information from being sent to her chain of command. She was told she could not.

Instead, the advocate told Dominguez that her only option was unrestricted reporting, which meant she would be removed from her job immediately and flown from Italy to the United States where she would be interviewed by federal law enforcement agents and forced into a public process.

The advocate also told Dominguez that she would not be allowed to return to work for the command until the criminal investigation closed, which could take more than a year.

"When Ms. Dominguez told the civilian victim advocate that the process she was describing sounded like she was going to lose her job for reporting a rape, the civilian victim advocate told her that was correct," according to the lawsuit.

Military Sealift Command follows guidance from the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office and federal law that only allows for restricted reporting for military personnel and their adult dependents, Van Leunen said.

"Unrestricted reporting allows victims to receive medical treatment, advocacy services, legal support, and eligibility for expedited transfer. In addition, unrestricted reporting allows victims of sexual assault to report retaliation in the [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response] program," he said.

The lawsuit contends these options were not presented to Dominguez, and instead she feared her career would be sidelined.

Israel orders evacuations from south

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israel's military renewed calls Monday for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombarded targets across the Gaza Strip.

The expanded operations, following the expiration of a weeklong cease-fire, are aimed at eliminating Gaza's Hamas rulers, whose Oct. 7 attack into Israel triggered the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades. The war has already killed thousands of Palestinians and displaced over three-fourths of the territory's population of 2.3 million people, who are running out of safe places to go.

Already under mounting pressure from its top ally, the United States, Israel appears to be racing to strike a death blow against Hamas — if that's possible, given the group's deep roots in Palestinian society — before any new cease-fire. But the mounting toll of the fighting, which Palestinian health officials say has killed several hundred civilians since the truce ended on Friday, is likely to further increase international pressure to return to the negotiating table.

It could also render even larger parts of the isolated terri-

tory uninhabitable.

Airstrikes and the ground offensive have transformed much of the north, including large areas in Gaza City, into a rubble-filled wasteland. Around 2 million people are now crowded into the 90 square miles that make up Gaza's south, where Israel's focus is starting to shift.

As Israel calls for more areas to be evacuated, it's not clear where people can go. Already shelters are overwhelmed, and both Israel and neighboring Egypt have refused to accept any refugees.

Residents said Monday they heard airstrikes and explosions in and around Khan Younis overnight after the military dropped leaflets warning people to relocate farther south toward the border with Egypt. The military has ordered the evacuation of nearly two dozen neighborhoods in and around the town.

Later in the day, the military warned civilians to avoid the main north-south highway between Khan Younis and the central town of Deir al-Balah, saying the road had become a "battlefield" and was "extremely dangerous." That indicated Israeli troops were approaching Khan Younis from the northeast, possibly with plans to cut off central Gaza from the south.

Al-Jazeera television aired footage of medics rescuing people wounded by what appeared

to have been a strike on a car on that stretch of highway. An Israeli tank could be seen just up the road.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman, said the army is pursuing Hamas with "maximum force" in the north and south, and said it was trying to minimize harm to civilians.

He pointed to a map that divides southern Gaza into dozens of blocks in order to give "precise instructions" to residents on where to evacuate.

Many Palestinians, however, have ignored past evacuation orders, saying they do not feel any safer in the areas where they are told to seek refuge — which have also been repeatedly bombed. The military has meanwhile barred those who fled the north from returning, even during the cease-fire.

"The level of human suffering is intolerable," Mirjana Spoljaric, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said during a rare visit to Gaza. She also called for the immediate release of scores of hostages captured by Palestinian militants during the Oct. 7 attack.

Rising toll

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since Oct. 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate

between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70% of the dead were women and children.

A Health Ministry spokesman asserted that hundreds had been killed or wounded since the cease-fire ended early Friday. "The majority of victims are still under the rubble," Ashraf al-Qidra said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah received 32 bodies overnight after Israeli strikes across central Gaza, said Omar al-Darawi, an administrative employee.

The military said aircraft struck some 200 Hamas targets overnight, with ground troops operating "in parallel," without elaborating. It said troops in northern Gaza uncovered a militant hideout in a school after coming under attack. Inside, they found two tunnel shafts, one of which had been booby-trapped, as well as explosives and weapons, the military said.

It is not possible to independently confirm battlefield reports from either side.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives, not civilians, and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighborhoods.

It adds that it takes measures to protect civilians. In addition to leaflets dropped over Gaza, the military has used phone calls and radio and TV broadcasts to urge people to move from specific areas.

China: US Navy ship 'illegally intruded' into waters

Associated Press

BEIJING — The Chinese military said that an American naval ship had "illegally intruded" on Monday into waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of a hot territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

A Chinese naval force was mo-

bilized to track the USS Gabrielle Giffords during the operation, according to a statement from the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater. The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said the ship "was conducting routine operations in international waters ... consistent with international law."

Chinese and Philippine naval

and coast guard ships have confronted each other repeatedly around the shoal in the Spratly Islands in recent months as China tries to prevent the Philippines from resupplying and repairing a rusting warship that it intentionally ran aground in 1999 to serve as a military outpost.

Dwarfed by China's military

might, the Philippines has sought America's help in its multiple territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. agreed to an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the country early this year and launched joint sea and air patrols with the United States late last month.

Congress told Ukraine funding running out

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Monday sent Congress an urgent warning about the need to approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance to Ukraine, saying Kyiv's war effort to defend itself from Russia's invasion may grind to a halt without it.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders and released publicly, Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young warned the U.S. will run out of funding to send weapons and assistance to Ukraine by the end of the year, saying that would "kneecap" Ukraine on the battlefield.

She added that the U.S. already has run out of money that it has used to prop up Ukraine's

economy, and "if Ukraine's economy collapses, they will not be able to keep fighting, full stop."

"We are out of money — and nearly out of time," she wrote.

President Joe Biden has sought a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs, but it has faced a difficult reception on Capitol Hill, where there is growing skepticism about the magnitude of assistance for Ukraine and where even Republicans supportive of the funding are insisting on U.S.-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants as a condition for the assistance.

Meanwhile, the GOP-controlled House has passed a standalone assistance package for Israel, which is fighting a war

with Hamas in Gaza, while the White House has maintained that all of the priorities must be met.

Congress already has allocated \$111 billion to assist Ukraine, including \$67 billion in military procurement funding, \$27 billion for economic and civil assistance and \$10 billion for humanitarian aid. Young wrote that all of it, other than about 3% of the military funding, had been depleted by mid-November.

The Biden administration has said it has slowed the pace of some military assistance to Kyiv in recent weeks to try to stretch supplies until Congress approves more funding.

"We are out of money to support Ukraine in this fight," Young wrote. "This isn't a next year problem. The time to help a

democratic Ukraine fight against Russian aggression is right now. It is time for Congress to act."

The letter followed a classified Capitol Hill briefing on Nov. 29 for the top House and Senate leaders on the need for the assistance. Defense and other national security officials briefed the "big four" congressional leaders as Congress is debating Biden's nearly \$106 billion funding package, which includes \$61 billion for Ukraine but has become snared by Republican demands for U.S.-Mexico border security changes.

"They were clear that Ukraine needs the aid soon — and so does our military need the aid soon," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told The Associated Press in an interview.

Biden's Senate allies: Force Israel to limit civilian deaths

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As a cease-fire ticked down last week and Israel prepared to resume its round-the-clock airstrikes, Sen. Bernie Sanders and a robust group of Democratic senators had a message for their president: They were done "asking nicely" for Israel to do more to reduce civilian casualties in Gaza.

Lawmakers warned President Joe Biden's national security team that planned U.S. aid to Israel must be met with assurances of concrete steps from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-right government.

"The truth is that if asking nicely worked, we wouldn't be in the position we are today," Sanders said in a floor speech. It was time for the United States to use its "substantial leverage" with its ally, the Vermont senator said.

"And we all know what that leverage is," he said, adding, "the blank-check approach must end."

With Biden's request for a

nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs hanging in the balance, the senators' tougher line on Israel has gotten the White House's attention, and that of Israel.

Lawmakers of both major political parties for decades have embraced the U.S. role as Israel's top protector, and it's all but inconceivable that they would vote down the wartime aid. The Democratic lawmakers are adamant that's not their intent, as strong supporters of Israel's right of self-defense against Hamas. But just the fact that Democratic lawmakers are making that link signals the fractures in Congress amid the scenes of suffering among besieged Palestinian civilians.

Sanders and the Democratic senators involved say they are firm in their stand that Israel's military must adopt substantive measures to lessen civilian deaths in Gaza as part of receiving the supplemental's \$14.3 billion in U.S. aid.

Ex-ambassador charged with serving as a mole for Cuba

Associated Press

MIAMI — A former American diplomat who served as U.S. ambassador to Bolivia has been charged with serving as a mole for Cuba's intelligence services dating back decades, the Justice Department said Monday.

Newly unsealed court papers allege that Manuel Rocha engaged in "clandestine activity" on Cuba's behalf since at least 1981, including by meeting with Cuban intelligence operatives and providing false information to U.S. government officials about his travels and contacts.

The complaint, filed in federal court in Miami, charges Rocha with crimes including acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government and comes amid stepped up Justice Department criminal enforcement of illicit foreign lobbying on U.S. soil. The 73-year-old had a two-decade career as a U.S. diplomat, including top posts in Bolivia, Argentina and the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

The charging document traces Rocha's illegal ties with Cuba's notoriously sophisticated intelligence services to 1981, when he first joined the State Department, to well after his departure from the federal government more than two decades later.

The FBI learned about the relationship last year and arranged a series of undercover encounters with someone purporting to be a Cuban intelligence operative, including one meeting in Miami last year in which Rocha said that he had been directed by the government's intelligence services to "lead a normal life" and had created the "legend," or artificial persona, "of a right-wing person."

"I always told myself, 'The only thing that can put everything we have done in danger is — is ... someone's betrayal, someone who may have met me, someone who may have known something at some point,'" Rocha said, according to the charging document.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Border officials closing remote port of entry

AZ PHOENIX — So many migrants are crossing from Mexico into the United States around remote Lukeville that U.S. officials said they will close the port of entry there so the operations officials who watch over vehicle and pedestrian traffic going both ways can help Border Patrol agents arrest and process the new arrivals.

Customs and Border Protection announced Friday that the temporary closure of the crossing would start Monday as officials grapple with changing migration routes that have overwhelmed Border Patrol agents stationed there.

Arizona's U.S. senators and governor called the planned closure "unacceptable."

The area around the desert crossing has become a major migration route in recent months, with smugglers dropping off people from countries as diverse as Senegal, India and China.

Most of them are walking into the U.S. west of Lukeville through gaps in the wall, then heading east toward the official border crossing to surrender to the first agents they see in hopes for a chance at asylum.

\$25M state project to remove aging dams

MA BOSTON — Eight aging dams in central and western Massachusetts will be removed as part of a \$25 million initiative announced Friday by state environmental officials.

Removing the dams will re-

store fish and other wildlife habitats, increase biodiversity, improve water quality, promote climate resiliency and make communities safer, officials said.

The floods earlier this year put a few dams at risk and raised concerns the structures may increasingly be at risk as the region is hit by stronger and wetter storms.

US looks to protect lynx as habitat dwindles

MT BILLINGS — U.S. officials proposed a \$31 million recovery plan for Canada lynx on Friday in a bid to help the snow-dependent wildcat species that scientists have said could be wiped out in parts of the contiguous U.S. by the end of the century.

The proposal marks a sharp turnaround from five years ago, when officials in Donald Trump's presidency said lynx had recovered and no longer needed protection after their numbers had rebounded in some areas.

President Joe Biden's administration in 2021 reached a legal settlement with environmental groups to retain threatened species protections for lynx that were first imposed in 2000.

Populations of the medium-sized wildcats in New Hampshire, Maine and Washington state are most at risk as habitat changes reduce populations of their primary food, snowshoe hares, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service documents indicate.

The recovery plan suggests lynx could be moved into the Yellowstone region of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho — an area they don't currently occupy —

as a potential climate change refuge.

25th case of anthrax confirmed in cattle

ND BISMARCK — A new case of cattle anthrax has been confirmed in southwest North Dakota's Grant County, bringing the number of cases in the state to 25 this year, according to state agriculture officials.

It's the first case reported in the state since August, all in Grant County and neighboring Hettinger and Adams counties, the North Dakota Department of Agriculture said in a news release put out Thursday. Those cases have led to about 170 cattle deaths, North Dakota State Veterinarian Dr. Ethan Andress told The Bismarck Tribune.

While it's unusual to see a case so late in the year, Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring said, the area has seen unusually mild weather recently that has allowed cattle to remain on pastureland where anthrax thrives.

Remington gun factory to close after 200 years

NY ILION — A gun factory in upstate New York with a history stretching back to the 19th century is scheduled to close in March, according to a letter from the company to union officials.

RemArms, the current version of Remington Arms, will close its facility in the Mohawk Valley village of Ilion around March 4, according to the letter sent Thursday. The letter said the company "did not arrive at

this decision lightly," according to the Observer-Dispatch of Utica.

The plant currently employs about 270 workers, according to union officials.

Remington, the country's oldest gun maker, began making flintlock rifles in the region in 1816. The factory site in the village dates to 1828, with many of the current buildings constructed early in the 20th century.

Egg suppliers will pay \$53M for price gouging

IN INDIANAPOLIS — A federal jury in Illinois ordered \$17.7 million in damages — an amount tripled to more than \$53 million under federal law — to several food manufacturing companies who had sued major egg producers over a conspiracy to limit the egg supply in the U.S.

The jury ruled last week that the egg producers used various means to limit the domestic supply of eggs to increase the price of products during the 2000s. The time frame of the conspiracy was an issue throughout the case; jurors ultimately determined damages occurred between 2004 and 2008.

The damages verdict was reached Friday in the Northern District of Illinois. According to federal antitrust law, the damages are automatically tripled, bringing the total to \$53.1 million.

Court documents on the verdict were not readily available Friday evening, but statements from the manufacturers' attorney and one of the egg producers confirmed a total of about \$17.7 million.

— From Associated Press

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Purdy, Samuel power 49ers past Eagles

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Deebo Samuel talked so much smack after last season's NFC championship game, the box score almost needed a doublecheck to confirm that — yes, the 49ers did indeed lose to the Eagles.

Samuel called one Eagles cornerback “trash” and blistered Philly as his “most-hated” team in the NFL. Just for good measure, Samuel and some teammates arrived Sunday dressed in black, perhaps a knowing nod to the bleak day ahead for the Eagles.

Samuel backed up his big mouth with a blockbuster performance that showed the 49ers have plenty of room left to chase the No. 1 seed in the NFC.

Brock Purdy threw for 314 yards and four touchdowns, Samuel scored three TDs and Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts

was checked for a concussion in San Francisco's 42-19 win over Philadelphia.

The fiery NFC championship game rematch also featured 49ers' touchdowns on six straight possessions and a pair of ejections that showed this year's title game might not run again through Philly, after all.

“There wasn't much to last year with this,” 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. “We were just excited to come out here and play a really good team and play well and get a win.”

The 49ers (9-3) left Philly 10 months ago battered in the NFC championship game behind injuries to Purdy and his backup, and they never stood a chance in a 31-7 loss. The 49ers spent an offseason chirping at the Birds — Samuel called James Bradberry “trash” — and then entered the Linc as a rare betting favorite against a 10-win

team at home.

“Talking trash, it's part of the game,” Samuel said. “Hopefully, no one took it to heart. It's all fun and games at the end of the day.”

It wasn't much fun for the Eagles.

The Eagles (10-2) suffered a scare when Hurts jogged off the field in the fourth and went straight to the locker room. He was cleared to play and returned to action.

It was not immediately clear when Hurts was injured. He declined to get into specifics of the injury.

By the time last season's NFL MVP runner-up returned, the Eagles trailed 35-13 and were on their way toward their first home loss of the season. Hurts did hit DeVonta Smith for a 2-yard TD on his return drive. He finished 26-for-45 passing for 298 yards.

Purdy put the finishing touches on the win with a 46-yard TD to Samuel.

Perhaps all that braggadocio paid off for the 49ers. Hard feelings spilled into the game, highlighted by a scrap in the third quarter that got 49ers linebacker Dre Greenlaw and the the Eagles' chief security officer tossed.

Dom DiSandro, a constant presence on the Eagles' sideline, pulled Greenlaw off Smith after a reception. Greenlaw popped up and reached over two officials to touch DiSandro's face with a closed fist.

Greenlaw was ejected. DiSandro, a cult hero in Philly for his ever-present backup when Eagles are out in public, also was told to leave and walked to the locker room to a roaring ovation.

“I love how we rallied after,” Shanahan said.

LaPorta, Goff help lead Lions past reeling Saints

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — For a rookie tight end from a college program not known for its offensive prowess, Sam LaPorta has been a quick study in the NFL and is playing a prominent role in what could be a special season for the Detroit Lions.

LaPorta had career highs of nine catches for 140 yards, including an early touchdown and a crucial first-down snag in the final minutes, and Detroit defeated the reeling New Orleans Saints 33-28 on Sunday to post its best record through 12 games since 1962.

“I'm as comfortable with him as anyone I've ever played with,” Lions quarterback Jared Goff said of LaPorta, a second-round draft choice out of Iowa. “For a rookie, it's pretty tremendous. He's such a reliable guy and a guy I count on in those crunch times. I know he's a clutch player.”

The Saints lost quarterback Derek Carr in the fourth quarter to back, shoulder and head injuries after he was hit by defensive lineman Bruce Irvin as he released a pass. Irvin was penalized for driving the weight of his body into Carr as they hit the turf.

Goff passed for 213 yards and two TDs

for the NFC North-leading Lions (9-3), who raced to a three-touchdown lead and then held off New Orleans' comeback bid that featured Chris Olave's five catches for 119 yards. The Saints (5-7) fell one game behind first-place Atlanta in the league's weakest division, the NFC South.

Packers 27, Chiefs 19: Jordan Love connected with Christian Watson on two of his three touchdown passes, and resurgent Green Bay beat visiting Kansas City for its third straight win.

Texans 22, Broncos 17: Nico Collins had a career-high 191 yards receiving and a fourth-quarter touchdown, and Jimmie Ward intercepted Russell Wilson in the end zone with 9 seconds left to preserve host Houston's win over Denver.

Rams 36, Browns 19: Matthew Stafford threw three touchdown passes, Puka Nacua became the first franchise rookie wide receiver to reach 1,000 yards in a season, and host Los Angeles beat Cleveland.

Colts 31, Titans 28 (OT): Gardner Minshew threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to Michael Pittman with 2:31 left in overtime, and visiting Indianapolis beat Tennessee

for its fourth straight victory.

Falcons 13, Jets 8: Desmond Ridder threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to MyCole Pruitt and visiting Atlanta took sole possession of first place in the NFC South with an ugly win over New York.

Dolphins 45, Commanders 15: Tyreek Hill had two touchdowns among his 157 yards receiving, and AFC East-leading Miami routed host Washington, getting to 9-3 for the first time since 2001.

Cardinals 24, Steelers 10: James Conner ran for 105 yards and a pair of touchdowns against his old team as Arizona won at Pittsburgh for the first time since 1969.

Chargers 6, Patriots 0: Justin Herbert threw for 212 yards and set up a pair of Cameron Dicker field goals that were all visiting Los Angeles needed to blank New England and its latest hapless quarterback, Bailey Zappe.

Buccaneers 21, Panthers 18: Mike Evans scored on a 75-yard reception and joined Jerry Rice as the only players in NFL history to string together 10 consecutive seasons with 1,000-plus yards receiving while helping host Tampa Bay beat Carolina.

Leyland 23rd manager elected to Hall

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Jim Leyland left his living room in Thornburg, Pa., and had gone upstairs to lie down, convinced the call to Cooperstown wasn't coming.

"They had told us it would be between 6:30 and 7:15," he said, "but I thought when I didn't get it by a quarter to 7, it wasn't going to happen, so I went up just to rest a minute, kind of get my thoughts together."

Just then, as son Pat arrived upstairs, the phone rang. Hall chairman Jane Forbes Clark was on the line and Leyland had been voted in, two weeks shy of his 79th birthday.

"There was definitely a tear in my eye," Leyland said.

An entertaining and at-times crusty manager who led the Florida Marlins to a World Series title in 1997 and won 1,769 regular-season games over 22 seasons, Leyland received 15 of 16 votes Sunday from the con-

temporary era committee for managers, executives and umpires. He becomes the 23rd manager in the hall.

Honest, profane and constantly puffing on a cigarette, Leyland embodied the image of the prickly baseball veteran with a gruff but wise voice. He is 18th on the career list for manager wins but is second behind Joe McCarthy among those who never played in the major leagues. He also was ejected 73 times, tied with Clark Griffith for 10th in major league history.

Leyland's players included Barry Bonds, Gary Sheffield, Larry Walker, Miguel Cabrera, Justin Verlander and Max Scherzer.

"I think young people, young players are searching for discipline," Leyland said. "So we all have our insecurities and I think even sometimes players do, even though they're great players. And I think that they're always looking for that leader-

ship. I tried to impress on them what it was to be a professional and how tough this game is to play. And I also told them almost every day how good they were."

Former player and manager Lou Piniella fell one vote short for the second time after also getting 11 in 2018. Former player, broadcaster and NL President Bill White was two shy.

Managers Cito Gaston and Davey Johnson, umpires Joe West and Ed Montague, and GM Hank Peters all received fewer than five votes.

Leyland managed Pittsburgh, Florida, Colorado and Detroit from 1986 to 2013. He will be inducted into the Hall on July 21 along with players voted in by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, whose balloting will be announced on Jan. 23.

Adrián Beltré, Joe Mauer, Chase Utley, David Wright, José Bautista and Matt Holliday

are among the players eligible for the BBWAA ballot for the first time in the current vote. Holdovers include Todd Helton, who fell 11 votes short this year, and Billy Wagner, who was 27 shy.

Leyland's teams finished first six times and went 1,769-1,728. He won American League pennants in 2006, losing to St. Louis in a five-game World Series, and 2012, getting swept by San Francisco. Leyland was voted Manager of the Year in 1990, 1992 and 2006, and he managed the U.S. to the 2017 World Baseball Classic championship, the Americans' only title.

Now he's alongside the elite. "It's the final stop," Leyland said. "To land there in Cooperstown, it doesn't get any better than that. I mean, that's the ultimate. I certainly never thought it was going to happen. Most people probably don't. But it did, and I'm sure I'm going to enjoy it."

Top QBs McCord, Gabriel surprise entries into portal

Associated Press

Ohio State's Kyle McCord and Oklahoma's Dillon Gabriel led a parade of quarterbacks into the transfer portal Monday, the first day of a 30-day window football players can put their names out in search of another opportunity.

Arizona State's Drew Pyne, Baylor's Blake Shapen, Utah's Bryson Barnes and James Madison's Jordan McCloud also entered the portal.

McCord beat out Devin Brown for the starter's job in the preseason and threw for 3,170 yards and 24 touchdowns with six interceptions. Two of the interceptions came in the 30-24 loss to Michigan on Nov. 25.

Ohio State coach Ryan Day was non-committal Sunday when asked if the junior quarterback would play in the Buck-

eyes' game against Missouri in the Cotton Bowl.

Gabriel transferred to Oklahoma from UCF and helped the Sooners regain their footing after coach Lincoln Riley and quarterback Caleb Williams left for USC two years ago.

Gabriel led the Sooners on a last-minute drive this season against Texas and threw the game-winning touchdown with 15 seconds remaining. It was the only loss for a Texas team that reached the College Football Playoff.

Gabriel ranks in the top 10 in Division I history in yards passing and passing touchdowns. In two seasons with the Sooners, he passed for 6,828 yards and 55 touchdowns and ran for 688 yards and 18 scores.

Gabriel's departure comes shortly after offensive coordi-

nator Jeff Leiby left to become head coach at Mississippi State. Leiby was also Gabriel's offensive coordinator for a year at UCF.

Pyne plans to join his third school. He began his career at Notre Dame and threw 22 touchdowns in 10 starts. He was in line for the starter's job at Arizona State this season, but he was injured and didn't play after late September.

Shapen's decision came less than a week after Baylor hired Jake Spavital as offensive coordinator. Shapen became the Bears' starter late in the 2021 season. He battled knee and head injuries this year and averaged 273 yards passing per game with 13 TDs in eight games.

Among other players entering the portal: Arizona State

edge rusher B.J. Green II, Illinois running back Reggie Love, Wisconsin receiver Chimere Dike and Michigan State quarterback Katin Houser.

Green led the Sun Devils with 11 quarterback hits and tied for the team lead with 6.0 sacks.

Williams will not play for USC in the Holiday Bowl, fueling the expectation he will enter the upcoming NFL Draft.

Williams won't be in the lineup when the Trojans (7-5) face Louisville in their bowl game in San Diego on Dec. 27, Riley said Monday.

Williams has been widely expected to enter the draft all year, and he is a strong candidate to be selected No. 1 overall after two impressive seasons at USC.

Riley said he hadn't decided who will be his quarterback.

Scheffler closes out three-shot victory

Associated Press

NASSAU, Bahamas — Scottie Scheffler has made great gains in his putting. Add that to the rest of top-ranked game, and he made it look easy Sunday. He closed with a 4-under 68 for a three-shot victory in the Hero World Challenge.

Scheffler, a runner-up in the Bahamas the last two years, played bogey-free at Albany and didn't let anyone get closer than two shots on the back nine as he ended the year with his fifth victory worldwide.

The Hero World Challenge is an unofficial event, though its 20-man field receives world ranking points and Scheffler only solidified his spot at No. 1.

The week wasn't a total loss for Tiger Woods, the tournament host playing for the first time since surgery to fuse his right ankle a few weeks after the Masters in April.

Woods finished 72 holes for only the third time in the last two years. He has played six tournaments following the recovery from his February 2021

car crash in Los Angeles that badly injured his right leg.

"Just like I said to you guys on Tuesday, I'm curious ... what this is going to look like," Woods said. "I haven't done it in a while — I haven't done it with my ankle the way it is now and I was excited each and every day to kind of get through it and kind of start piecing rounds together again. I haven't done this in a long time so it was fun to feel that again."

Woods closed with a 72 and ended up 18th at even par. Scheffler finished at 20-under 268.

Sepp Straka had three late birdies for a 64 to finish second. Justin Thomas had a 67 to finish alone in third. It was his third straight finish in the top 5 dating to September.

Scheffler led the PGA Tour in just about every important statistical category — off the tee, shots to the green — until he got onto the putting surface. He sought help from highly regarded putting coach Phil Kenyon and is starting to see im-

mediate results.

"I played solid and kept my distance," Scheffler said. "I was just trying to hit good shots and get as many looks as I could for birdies."

Scheffler had not played since the Ryder Cup — this was his first 72-hole tournament since the Tour Championship in late August. He said he was optimistic about the work he put in with Kenyon before the Ryder Cup.

"It's nice to see some fast results," Scheffler said. "It's paid off pretty good this week."

Scheffler didn't make his first birdie until he chipped close on the par-5 sixth and then pitched up the slope on the drivable par-4 seventh to 2 feet.

Straka, Thomas and Jordan Spieth at times were poised to make a run. Scheffler answered with birdies at the right time to hold them off. He missed a birdie putt on the 17th from just inside 3 feet. It was his only miss inside 5 feet all week.

Rarely is this holiday event

without some measure of drama, and such was the case on Sunday. Collin Morikawa was given a two-shot penalty before he teed off for using material in a greens-reading book on the fourth hole Saturday.

Turns out his caddie had used a level on the practice green and put some notations in the book. According to new rules, such notes can only come from traditional methods, without outside devices. Morikawa was informed 15 minutes before his round, frustrated because he says he has been told by other officials and caddies that it was OK.

Morikawa (68) finished seventh.

Woods was never in the mix after each round, which was not the primary objective. He knew there would be rust, and he felt he knocked a little off each day. But not all of it. He had a pitch roll back toward his feet on the par-3 second hole for a double bogey, and he hit another poor chip that led to bogey on the par-5 11th.

Panarin scores 3 goals as Rangers hold off Sharks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Artemi Panarin had three goals and an assist, Jonathan Quick won again, and the New York Rangers held on to beat the San Jose Sharks 6-5 on Sunday night.

Mika Zibanejad had a goal and an assist, Will Cuyllle and K'Andre Miller also scored, and Jacob Trouba, Vincent Trocheck and Jonny Brodzinski each had two assists to help the Rangers win for the sixth time in seven games. Quick stopped 23 shots to improve to 7-0-1 this season.

The Metropolitan Division-leading Rangers have won 16 of their last 19 games, have a league-best 18 wins and are tied with Boston for tops with 37 points.

Anthony Duclair had a goal and an assist, and Jacob MacDonald, Fabian Zetterlund, Ryan Carpenter and Alexander Barbanov all scored for San Jose. Mackenzie Blackwood finished with 30 saves.

Bruins 3, Blue Jackets 1: Brad Mar-

chand had a natural hat trick in the third period and host Boston rallied to beat Columbus.

Facing each other for the second time in six days, the Bruins got some payback for a 5-2 loss in Columbus with their third straight victory. Jeremy Swayman, pulled in the loss at Columbus in the second period, made 24 saves.

Boone Jenner scored for the Blue Jackets, who lost for the third time in five games, and Spencer Martin stopped 25 shots.

Predators 2, Sabres 1: Juuse Saros made 34 saves, Filip Forsberg scored his team-leading 13th goal and visiting Nashville beat Buffalo.

Yakov Trenin also scored for the Predators in a first-period burst.

Victor Olofsson scored on a penalty shot for Buffalo, which has lost three in a row to fall to 10-13-2.

Wild 4, Blackhawks 1: Marco Rossi

scored twice and Mats Zuccarello had a goal and two assists to lead host Minnesota.

Matt Boldy also scored as the Wild won their third straight since John Hynes replaced the fired Dean Evason as coach. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 27 shots.

Taylor Raddysh scored in the third period for Chicago, which lost its third straight. Petr Mrazek had 30 saves.

Kings 4, Avalanche 1: Quinton Byfield scored twice, Anze Kopitar became the franchise leader in assists, and host Los Angeles beat Colorado.

Trevor Moore and Drew Doughty also scored, Adrian Kempe had two assists, and the Kings got back on track after their five-game winning streak was snapped by Washington on Wednesday. Cam Talbot made 20 saves.

Josh Manson scored and Alexandar Georgiev finished with 34 saves for the Avalanche. Star defenseman Cale Makar did not play because of a lower body injury.