

President unveils Trump-class warships

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Navy plans to bring back its heavily armed class of warship known as battleships, and it will arm them with the most modern weaponry, including nuclear missiles, President Donald Trump announced Monday.

The president promised the new class of ship would be “100 times more powerful” than the Iowa-class battleships that fought during World War II and were last used by the Navy in the 1990s. Trump promised the new ships would be outfitted with an array of technology still under development, including hypersonic weapons, electric rail guns and high-powered lasers. And they will be capable of firing nuclear-armed cruise missiles, he said.

“Battleships are the largest, sturdiest and most heavily armed vessel built specifically for naval combat,” Trump said Monday from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. “Each one of

these will be the largest battleship in the history of our country, the largest battleship in the history of the world ever built.”

Trump said he would be involved in planning and designing the ships.

“The U.S. Navy will lead the design of these ships along with me, because I’m a really aesthetic person,” Trump said.

Trump said he would meet with top weapons builders next week at Mar-a-Lago to encourage them to build new facilities and produce weapons — including ships — more expeditiously.

The Navy intends to initially build two Trump-class battleships — whose logo depicts Trump in the moments after a July 2024 assassination attempt, fist held high. The first would be named the USS Defiant, Navy Secretary John Phelan said.

Naming the ships for Trump comes after the Air Force’s decision earlier this year to label its next-generation fighter jet the F-47, shunning normal naming

conventions to give its forthcoming sixth-generation fighter a nod to the 47th president.

Phelan said he hoped to see the new ships commissioned in about 2½ years.

Ultimately, the Navy plans to build 20 to 25 Trump-class battleships, the president said. It was not clear Monday how much the new class would cost.

Trump has long called for the Navy to bring back the battleship and criticized some modern Navy ship designs. He said the new ships would anchor his “Golden Fleet,” which he has said would include more and larger ships, uncrewed ships and a new class of aircraft carrier bigger than the 100,000-ton USS Gerald Ford, which is the largest military vessel ever built.

The term battleship has historically described a particular design — a large, up-armored vessel with some of the largest cannons available to the Navy, according to the sea service.

The Navy commissioned its

first three battleships in 1895 and ultimately built 59 battleships, the service said. Its last active battleship, the USS Missouri, was decommissioned in 1992.

The Missouri — a 58,000-ton Iowa-class battleship — was one of four Navy battleships active in the 1990s. It was the Navy’s final battleship built before it was commissioned in 1944 and sent to the Western Pacific to support combat operations during World War II and again during the Korean War. It was decommissioned in 1955 and made a tourist attraction in Bremerton, Wash., before it was recommissioned in 1986. The Missouri supported combat operations during Operation Desert Storm in 1991 before its final decommissioning. America’s last battleship was then sent to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where it has served as a memorial since 1998. A newer U.S. Navy vessel — a Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarine — now carries the name USS Missouri.

US escalating its pressure campaign on Venezuela

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump on Monday delivered a new warning to Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro as the U.S. Coast Guard steps up efforts to interdict oil tankers in the Caribbean Sea as part of the Republican administration’s escalating pressure campaign on the government in Caracas.

Trump was surrounded by his top national security aides, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, as he suggested that he remains ready to further escalate his four-month pressure cam-

paign on the Maduro government, which began with the stated purpose of stemming the flow of illegal drugs from the South American nation but has developed into something more amorphous.

“If he wants to do something, if he plays tough, it’ll be the last time he’ll ever be able to play tough,” Trump said of Maduro as he took a break from his Florida holiday vacation to announce plans for the Navy to build a new, large warship.

Trump levied his latest threat as the U.S. Coast Guard on Monday continued for a second day to chase a sanctioned oil tanker that

the Trump administration describes as part of a “dark fleet” Venezuela is using to evade U.S. sanctions. The tanker, according to the White House, is flying under a false flag and is under a U.S. judicial seizure order.

“It’s moving along and we’ll end up getting it,” Trump said.

It is the third tanker pursued by the Coast Guard, which on Saturday seized a Panama-flagged vessel called Centuries that U.S. officials said was part of the Venezuelan shadow fleet.

The Coast Guard, with assistance from the Navy, seized a sanctioned tanker called Skipper on Dec. 10, also part of the sha-

dow fleet of tankers that the U.S. says operates on the fringes of the law to move sanctioned cargo. That ship was registered in Panama.

Trump, after that first seizure, said the U.S. would carry out a “blockade” of Venezuela. Trump has repeatedly said that Maduro’s days in power are numbered.

Note to readers

Stars and Stripes will not publish on Christmas Eve or Christmas. We will resume publication Friday.

Senator seeks more housing views from troops

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

An online review system for military family housing only shows 45 posts in the year since it launched, triggering Sen. Elizabeth Warren to write to the Pentagon for plans to better promote the accountability tool to the 700,000 troops and families living in privatized base housing.

"[The Defense Department] must do more to improve and fully effectuate housing reforms mandated by Congress and promote the [DOD Housing Feedback System] to provide accountability and better quality of life to service members and their families," the Massachusetts Democrat wrote in a letter sent Sunday to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

The Pentagon press office de-

clined to comment on the eight-page letter but said Hegseth would respond in "due course."

The feedback system went live in August 2024 based on a mandate from the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, an annual bill that outlines defense priorities and spending.

The system allows service members and their spouses who live in on-base family housing with a private landlord to share their experiences in a public forum. It also allows unaccompanied service members living in privatized quarters to submit feedback. Landlords can publicly respond to reviews.

The housing feedback system resembles online review websites for businesses, but users must be verified as residents to post, and all posts must be

screened for personally identifying information or obscene language.

Of the 45 posts made to the website, some include information from the private company that manages the home about resolution or maintenance provided. Three posts were made last month and described issues with mold remediation and pet hair in carpets from a previous tenant. Older posts described issues including moving into homes where landlords knew there were broken appliances, pest infestations and communication gaps during power or water outages.

Warren said in her letter that she does not believe there are so few complaints because housing has improved so dramatically that there are so few disgruntled residents in the five years since

law required the Pentagon implement the site, but rather that potential users are not informed it exists or don't know how to use it.

She cited surveys of tenants taken as recently as this year, including one the Army released in May. It found that satisfaction with housing was 76% and that "many tenants expressed frustration with the maintenance team's inability to resolve issues effectively" and "tenants often have [had] to submit multiple work orders for the same problem."

The housing reforms of 2020 also included a measure to create a dispute resolution process, which Warren also worried wasn't being used to its full potential. The same Army tenant survey found that 70% of respondents were unaware of the resolution process or how to access it.

US strikes another suspected drug-smuggling boat in Pacific

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military said Monday that it had conducted another strike against a boat it said was smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing one person.

In a social media post, U.S. Southern Command said, "Intelligence confirmed the low-profile vessel was transiting along known narco-trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific and was engaged in narco-trafficking operations." Southern Command provided no evidence that the vessel was engaged in drug smuggling.

A video posted by U.S. Southern Command shows splashes of water near one side of the boat. After a second salvo, the rear of the boat catches fire. More splashes engulf the craft and the fire grows. In the final second of the video, the vessel can be seen adrift with a large patch of fire alongside it.

Earlier videos of U.S. boat strikes showed vessels suddenly exploding, suggesting missile strikes. Some strike videos even had visible rocket-like projectiles coming down on the boats.

The Trump administration has said the strikes were meant to stop the flow of drugs into the U.S. and increase pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. At least 105 people have been killed in 29 known strikes since early September. The strikes have faced scrutiny from U.S. lawmakers and human rights activists, who say the administration has offered scant evidence that its targets are drug smugglers and say the fatal strikes amount to extrajudicial killings.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Coast Guard has stepped up efforts to interdict oil tankers in the Caribbean Sea as part of the Trump administration's escalating campaign against Maduro.

Russian missile, drone attack cuts power in parts of Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia fired more than 650 drones and three dozen missiles at Ukraine in a large-scale attack that began during the night and stretched into daylight hours Tuesday, officials said. At least three people were killed, including a 4-year-old child, two days before Christmas.

The barrage struck homes and the power grid in 13 regions of Ukraine, causing widespread outages in bitter temperatures, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, a day after he described recent progress on finding a peace deal as "quite solid."

The attack demonstrated Russian President Vladimir Putin's intention of pursuing the invasion of Ukraine, Zelenskyy said in a post on the Telegram messaging app. Ukrai-

nian and European officials have complained that Putin is not sincerely engaging with U.S.-led peace efforts.

The attack "is an extremely clear signal of Russian priorities," Zelenskyy said.

President Donald Trump has for months been pressing for a peace agreement, but the negotiations have become entangled in the very different demands from Moscow and Kyiv.

Initial reports from Ukrainian emergency services said the child died in Ukraine's northwestern Zhytomyr region, while a drone killed a woman in the Kyiv region, and another civilian death was recorded in the western Khmelnytskyi region, according to Zelenskyy.

Russia launched 635 drones of various types and 38 missiles, Ukraine's air force said. Air defenses stopped 587 drones and 34 missiles, it said.

Second big batch of Epstein files mentions Trump

The Washington Post

Three days after releasing a large batch of Jeffrey Epstein documents that contained few mentions of President Donald Trump, the Justice Department disclosed thousands more files that included wide-ranging references to the president.

The documents show that a subpoena was sent to Mar-a-Lago in 2021 for records that pertained to the government's case against Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's accomplice in sex trafficking. They include notes from an assistant U.S. attorney in New York about the number of times Trump flew on Epstein's plane, including one flight that included just Trump, Epstein and a 20-year-old woman, according to the notes.

The newly released documents also include several tips that were collected by the FBI about Trump's involvement with Epstein and parties at their properties in the early 2000s. The documents do not show whether any follow-up investigations took place or whether any of the tips were corroborated.

In a statement Tuesday morning, the Justice Department said: "Some of these documents contain untrue and sensationalist claims made against President Trump" that it characterized as "unfounded and false."

"Nevertheless, out of our commitment to the law and transparency, the DOJ is releasing these documents with the legally required protections for Epstein's victims," the statement said.

The documents were available for several hours Monday

afternoon and evening on the Justice Department website but appeared to have been taken down around 8 p.m. The Washington Post downloaded the full set of files while they were accessible. The department reposted the files on its website shortly before midnight Monday night.

It was not immediately clear whether officials had done any further redactions of the documents before posting.

The department did not immediately respond to questions about why the documents had been posted and then apparently removed. The White House also did not respond to requests for comment about the newly released documents.

Being mentioned in a mass trove of investigatory documents does not demonstrate criminal wrongdoing. Trump has not been accused of being involved in Epstein's criminal activities. It has long been known that Trump had a years-long friendship with Epstein that ended in the early 2000s.

The president has said he did not know about Epstein's criminal behavior, and his spokesperson has said he kicked Epstein out of his Mar-a-Lago Club for being a "creep."

The files include correspondence among prison officials about Epstein's psychological assessments, with discussions about holding him in a special housing unit about two weeks before he died.

"We have supporting memorandums from the responding officers who indicated they observed inmate Epstein with a makeshift noose around his neck," one of the emails stated.

Lawmaker sues to not add Trump to Kennedy Center

The Washington Post

A Democratic congresswoman sued the Kennedy Center's board of trustees Monday to stop it from adding the president's name to the institution, arguing that only Congress has the power to do so.

In a lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, claimed that a vote by the center's board last week to rename the institution the Trump Kennedy Center exceeded its statutory authority and requested that a judge declare it to be void.

"Because Congress named the center by statute, changing the Kennedy Center's name requires an act of Congress," the lawsuit says.

The Kennedy Center did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Thursday's vote by the Kennedy Center's board to add Trump's name to the institution — which has sparked concern among legal experts — marked the most overt effort to date by

the president and his allies to remold the storied institution in his image.

In February, Trump purged members of the board not appointed by him, installed loyalists and became its new chair. Earlier this month, he even hosted its annual honors event. Ticket sales have plummeted since Trump took over, a Washington Post analysis found.

The lawsuit, which was filed by Democracy Defenders Action and the Washington Litigation Group on behalf of Beatty, requested that a judge order all physical and digital branding changes to be reversed. Trump's name was added to the exterior of the building Friday, the day after the board's vote.

In a series of posts on X, the center's president, Richard Grenell, defended the name change as a reflection of its role as a "bipartisan space." On Friday, he claimed the memorial to Kennedy was not impacted by the board's action and "therefore the Board is allowed to change the name."

US economy expands at strong 4.3% annual rate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy grew at a surprisingly strong 4.3% annual rate in the third quarter, the most rapid expansion in two years, as government and consumer spending, as well as exports, all increased.

U.S. gross domestic product from July through September — the economy's total output of goods and services — rose from its 3.8% growth rate in the April-June quarter, the Commerce Department said Tuesday in a report delayed by the government shutdown.

Analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet forecast growth of 3% in the period.

However, inflation remains higher than the Federal Reserve would like.

The Fed's favored inflation gauge — called the personal consumption expenditures index, or PCE — climbed to a 2.8% annual pace last quarter, up from 2.1% in the second quarter.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core PCE inflation was 2.9%, up from 2.6% in the April-June quarter.

Economists say that persistent and potentially worsening inflation could make a January interest rate cut from the Fed less likely, even as central bank officials remain concerned about a slowing labor market.

Vet groups laud easing stigmas of pot

BY LINDA F. HERSEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Veterans groups, cannabis business owners and other stakeholders praised President Donald Trump's highly publicized executive order to expedite the reclassification of marijuana as helping to shift public views of cannabis — from a stigmatized drug to an accepted medical product for treating chronic pain and other conditions experienced by millions of Americans, including veterans.

Trump's executive order, signed Dec. 18, instructs U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi to speed up the process to make marijuana a Schedule III drug, a legal classification that permits medical uses and research applications.

The president's directive

stated that 30,000 doctors already prescribe "medical marijuana" to more than 6 million patients, including veterans.

The order is significant to the budding cannabis industry for supporting more marijuana research, strengthening product standards and helping end negative stereotypes of consumers, including veterans, said Paul Yau, co-founder and chief executive officer of The Travel Agency, which operates cannabis businesses in New York City.

Forty states have their own regulated medical marijuana programs. An estimated 1 in 10 veterans use cannabis, including to treat chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Many veterans have long

used cannabis to manage pain, sleep disruption, PTSD and other service-connected symptoms," said Yau, whose company markets to veterans, stocks veteran-owned brands and has partnered with a veteran with a service-connected disability to operate a dispensary.

Veterans of Foreign Wars lauded Trump's executive order for endorsing research that could benefit veterans with service-connected injuries that have resisted other treatments.

"The decision acknowledges what veterans and their doctors have been saying for years: We need evidence-based options and the freedom to study them," said Carol Whitmore, VFW national commander.

Twenty percent of veterans experiencing chronic pain reported using fewer opioids as a

result of their medical marijuana use, according to the executive order.

Titled "Increasing Medical Marijuana and Cannabidiol Research," the president's directive does not federally legalize the drug, but tells the leaders of agencies to ease research barriers and support doctors who prescribe marijuana.

The order urges the Justice Department to expedite the completion of the rule-making process to remove marijuana as a Class I narcotic under the Controlled Substances Act, a category that includes heroin.

Marijuana, as a proposed Class III drug, would be in the same category as Tylenol with codeine. Category III drugs have accepted medical uses and a moderate to low risk of addiction.

Waymos blocked roads during SF power outage

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Many of Waymo's self-driving cars blocked streets of San Francisco during a mass power outage Saturday and forced the company to temporarily suspend service, raising questions about the cars' ability to adapt to real-world driving conditions.

Social media users posted videos of Waymos as they encountered traffic lights that were off.

Some cars' hazard lights blinked and they abruptly stopped in place, failing to cross the intersection.

Others came to stops in the middle of the intersection, forcing other cars to swerve around them.

The power outage affected 130,000 homes and businesses in San Francisco, nearly one-third of the customers served by Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

The widespread outage was caused by a fire at a power substation, officials said.

On Monday, the utility company was still working to restore power to thousands of customers.

Waymo operates hundreds of robotaxis in San Francisco, but it wasn't clear how many cars were on the road at the time of the outage.

The company paused service Saturday evening and resumed it Sunday afternoon.

The road-blocking problems that prompted Waymo to suspend its service during the weekend power outages revived concerns that city officials raised about the robotaxis periodically coming to abrupt and inexplicable stops before California regulators ultimately decided to approve them as a commercial service in August 2023.

FDA regulators approve Wegovy pill for weight loss

Associated Press

U.S. regulators Monday gave the green light to a pill version of the blockbuster weight-loss drug Wegovy, the first daily oral medication to treat obesity.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval handed drugmaker Novo Nordisk an edge over rival Eli Lilly in the race to market an obesity pill. Lilly's oral drug, orforglipron, is still under review.

Both pills are GLP-1 drugs that work like widely used injectables to mimic a natural hormone that controls appetite and feelings of fullness.

In recent years, Novo Nordisk's injectable Wegovy and Lilly's Zepbound have revolutionized obesity treatment globally and in the United States, where 100 million people have the chronic disease.

The Wegovy pills are expected to be available within weeks,

company officials said. Availability of oral pills to treat obesity could expand the booming market for obesity treatments by broadening access and reducing costs, experts said.

About 1 in 8 Americans have used injectable GLP-1 drugs, according to a nonprofit health policy research group. But many more have trouble affording the costly shots.

The Novo Nordisk obesity pill contains 25 milligrams of semaglutide. That's the same ingredient in injectables Wegovy and Ozempic and in Rybelsus, a lower-dose pill.

In a clinical trial, participants who took oral Wegovy lost 13.6% of their total body weight on average over about 15 months, compared with a 2.2% loss if they took a placebo, or dummy pill. That's nearly the same as injectable Wegovy, with an average weight loss of about 15%.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man convicted on 67 counts of dogfighting

GA ATLANTA — The 67 dogs were on heavy chains, many without food, water or shelter, on a sprawling 17-acre property in South Georgia, according to federal prosecutors.

Many had wounds and scars from dogfighting, and some were aggressive to the other dogs. There was evidence Dun Bradford had been breeding the pit bull-type dogs for fighting for some time, investigators determined.

Abused dogs weren't the only crimes. Inside the home, investigators said they found evidence that Bradford used his kitchen to make crack cocaine, and he had firearms.

Late last week, the 55-year-old was convicted on 69 counts, including 67 dogfighting charges, plus a drug charge and firearm charge, according to the U.S. Attorney's Middle District of Georgia office.

Bradford's sentencing has not been scheduled but he faces a maximum of life in prison, according to federal prosecutors.

Change at high school lets teens sleep later

NJ SOMERSET COUNTY — One of New Jersey's largest suburban school districts is making a scheduling change aimed at enabling high school students to get more sleep before reporting to classes.

Starting with the 2026-27 academic year, students will report to Bridgewater-Raritan High School in Somerset County by 8

a.m. That's 40 minutes later than the current reporting time, according to the school district.

The scheduling change at the high school is part of an overhaul of start and dismissal times at all grade levels in the Bridge-water-Raritan Regional School District, which enrolls 7,500 students at 11 schools.

Shoplifting arrests soar more than 261%

MA BOSTON — Shoplifting arrests are up more than 261% in Boston compared to the five year average in the city, according to recent police data.

From 2024 to 2025 alone, those types of arrests have more than doubled, according to Boston Police, up about 116% from last year.

Police Commissioner Michael Cox said that shoplifting is "an issue in our city," and asked retailers at a community meeting to be in communication with the department about it.

The Commissioner and the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office attributed the increase in arrests to more reporting and more enforcement, as city and county officials make shoplifting a higher priority and noted that inflation and higher prices for groceries and other goods might be contributing to the problem.

Need a sled? This library has some to borrow

MI NEW BALTIMORE — If Sterling Heights residents need a sled this winter to enjoy the winter weather at Delia Park, the parks and recreation department has partnered with the library to offer the

city's first-ever Little Free Sled Library.

It is located near the pavilion and the parking lot in the park's north lot.

The library allows visitors to borrow a sled through February or until the snow has melted for the season.

The Sterling Heights Public Library purchased 30 sleds to launch the program and the park maintenance team built a custom sled container.

Tammy Turgeon, library director, said the sled library is part of the library's mission to make recreation, learning and exploration accessible all year.

Hotel owner found liable for discrimination

SD SIOUX FALLS — The owner of a South Dakota hotel who said Native Americans were banned from the establishment was found liable for discrimination against Native Americans on Friday.

A federal jury decided the owner of the Grand Gateway Hotel in Rapid City will pay tens of thousands of dollars in damages to various plaintiffs who were denied service at the hotel. The jury awarded \$1 to the NDN Collective, the Indigenous advocacy group that filed the lawsuit.

The group brought the class-action civil rights lawsuit against Retsel Corp., the company that owns the hotel, in 2022. The case was delayed when the company filed for bankruptcy in September 2024. The head of the company, Connie Uhre, passed away this September.

"This was never about money. We sued for one dollar," said Wizipan Garriott, president of

NDN Collective and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Uhre posted on social media in March 2022 that she would ban Native Americans from the property after a fatal shooting at the hotel involving two teenagers whom police identified as Native American.

She wrote in a Facebook post that she cannot "allow a Native American to enter our business including Cheers," the hotel's bar and casino.

Officer who killed Tamir Rice fired from rangers

WV SLATYFORK — The former Cleveland officer who fatally shot 12-year-old Tamir Rice in 2014 was fired from his post as a ranger at a West Virginia resort community, the fourth known time in seven years that he left a small department following public backlash.

Timothy Loehmann was fired on Friday from his position at the Snowshoe Resort Community District. The district's board announced Loehmann's firing in a statement following their emergency meeting.

Rice, who was Black, was playing with a pellet gun outside a recreation center in Cleveland on Nov. 22, 2014, when he was shot and killed by Loehmann seconds after the officer and his partner arrived. The white officers told investigators Loehmann had shouted three times at Rice to raise his hands.

Cleveland settled a lawsuit over Rice's death for \$6 million. The city fired Loehmann for having lied on his application to become a police officer.

— From wire reports

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Purdy lifts 49ers with record 5 TD passes

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — San Francisco's offense is revving up just in time for the playoffs.

One day after the 49ers clinched a playoff spot, Brock Purdy threw a career-high five touchdown passes and Dee Winters returned an interception of Philip Rivers' final pass 74 yards for a score in a 48-27 victory over the Indianapolis Colts on Monday night.

"He was awesome, he played really well," coach Kyle Shanahan said, describing Purdy's play. "I got on him for a couple throws he missed, but it was pretty close to a perfect game. He did a hell of a job."

San Francisco (11-4) has won five straight to stay competitive for both the NFC West title and the conference's top seed. It also snapped a five-game losing streak in the series that dated to former Indianapolis coach Jim Mora's infamous "playoffs" rant in November 2001.

The Colts' loss also clinched playoff spots for Buffalo, Jacksonville and the Los Angeles Chargers in the AFC.

The biggest reason: Purdy's sensational play.

He completed 25 of 34 passes for 295 yards as the Niners produced 440 total yards and didn't punt for a second straight week.

Christian McCaffrey rushed 21 times for 117 yards and had six catches for 29 yards and two scores. George Kittle added seven receptions for 115 yards and one TD.

And aside from Purdy's lone interception, the San Francisco offense seemed to do anything it wanted against Indy's defense.

"We've got to be better," Colts coach Shane Steichen said. "Bottom line, we can't give up that many yards. They scored a lot of points, went up and down the field and we've got to get that cleaned up in a hurry. Our defense played great last week and then this week ... we've got to be better."

The 44-year-old Rivers sure didn't make it easy on the 49ers in his second game back after a five-year layoff. He was 23-for-35 for 277 yards, two TDs and the one interception. But he also couldn't pull Indianapolis (8-7) out of a late-season swoon that has nearly ended its playoff hopes.

The Colts have lost five straight and six of seven.

Rivers started strong in a wild first half, throwing the first of two TD passes to Alec Pierce, a 20-yarder on the opening series. Pierce finished with four receptions for 86 yards and two scores.

Purdy countered with a 22-yard scoring pass to Demarcus Robinson and, after an Indy fumble, a 2-yard TD pass to McCaffrey to make it 14-7. Rivers tied the score early in the second quarter by neatly fitting a 16-yard throw to Pierce in a tight window.

Purdy then broke the tie with an 11-yard touchdown pass to Kittle and the teams traded field goals before Eddie Pineiro's 64-yard attempt hit the crossbar as time expired in the first half with San Francisco up 24-17.

The Niners were just as efficient in the second half. Purdy capped the first possession with a 15-yard TD pass to Jauan Jennings to take control with a 31-17 lead.

Jonathan Taylor's 1-yard TD run early in the fourth quarter cut the Colts' deficit to 34-27, but San Francisco sealed it with a 9-yard touchdown pass to McCaffrey with 7:37 to play and Winters' interception return with 3:26 to play.

"It was cool to be out here playing against Philip Rivers and the Colts," Purdy said. "To go out and execute like we did, I'm really proud of these guys, everyone. Our defense, the turnover at the end of the game with Dee Winters, huge win for us."

Injury report

49ers: Kittle injured his ankle while making a cut during the third quarter, and linebacker Tatum Bethune injured his right ankle late in the third quarter.

Colts: Indianapolis opened the game without either of its starting offensive tackles — Braden Smith (concussion) and Bernhard Raimann (elbow) — then lost center Tanor Bortolini with a concussion on the third offensive play of the game. Then the Colts lost starting RG Dalton Tucker with shoulder injury in the second half. They also lost DE JT Tuimoloau with an oblique injury in the first half.

Stat sheet

49ers: Purdy has seven TD passes in the last two games, the most over a two-game stretch by a San Francisco quarterback since 2001. ... The Niners have scored in 23 consecutive quarters, their longest streak since 1995.

Colts: Taylor's TD early in the fourth gave him 17 rushing scores this season, breaking a tie with Hall of Famer Lenny Moore for the second-highest single season total in franchise history. ... Indy lost its first game of the season while topping the 20-point mark.

Washington State beats Utah State, winning Potato Bowl

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Zevi Eckhaus threw for a season-high 334 yards with three touchdowns and Washington State piled up 628 yards of offense, beating Utah State 34-21 to win the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl on Monday at Albertsons Stadium.

Eckhaus completed 26 of 44 passes but also threw three interceptions for the Cougars (7-6), who will return to a rebuilt Pac-12 Conference next season — along with the Aggies (6-7), and host school Boise State.

Maxwell Woods carried nine times for 117 yards, becoming the first Washington State player to top 100 in a game this season.

Defensive coordinator Jesse Bobbit filled in as interim head coach after the Cougars lost their third head man in three seasons when Jimmy Rogers left for Iowa State after one season. They had lost head coach Jake Dickert to Wake Forest prior to Rogers' arrival. WSU hired Missouri offensive coordinator Kirby Moore to take the

reins next season. Moore was in attendance.

Eckhaus fired a 41-yard touchdown pass to freshman Mackenzie Alleyne for a 7-0 lead after one quarter. Alleyne had one catch for 9 yards entering play.

Eckhaus threw interceptions on the Cougars' next two drives, but Utah State failed to score.

Stevens kicked short field goals in the third quarter before Bryson Barnes scored on a 2-yard keeper to cut it to 20-7 heading to the fourth.

Eckhaus had a 39-yard touchdown pass to Landon Wright in the fourth quarter as 12 different receivers finished with at least one catch. Backup quarterback Julian Dugger scored on a 34-yard run with four minutes remaining.

Barnes had 116 yards on 9-for-21 passing for the Aggies before a hard hit sent him to the sidelines in the second half.

It was Washington State's first postseason victory since beating Iowa State 28-26 in the 2018 Alamo Bowl.

White Sox expect Murakami to make fast impact

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Chicago White Sox general manager Chris Getz calls Munetaka Murakami “one of the most prolific power hitters on the planet” and expects the 25-year-old Japanese slugger to make an immediate impact on his rebuilding team next season.

The White Sox and Murakami agreed to a \$34 million, two-year contract Sunday. On Monday, Murakami signed the deal as he was introduced to the media at Rate Field.

Murakami has a .270 career average with 246 homers and 647 RBIs in 892 games over eight seasons with the Yakult Swallows of Japan’s Central League.

The left-handed batting corner infielder launched 56 home runs in 2022 to break Sadaharu Oh’s record for a Japanese-born player in Nippon Professional

Baseball while becoming the youngest player to earn Japan’s Triple Crown. He topped 30 homers in four straight years before an injury-interrupted season in 2023.

Murakami’s production dropped to 24 homers and 47 RBIs in 56 games last season as he was restricted by an oblique injury. Now he says he’s recovered and ready to adjust to major league pitching.

Getz projects similar output from Murakami in the majors to help his team climb. Chicago finished last in the AL Central in 2025 with a 60-102 record — its third straight season with more than 100 losses — but improved after the All-Star break, led by a core of young hitters that includes Colson Montgomery, Kyle Teel and Chase Meidroth.

“This was a place that he can come in here and just be himself and be comfortable, establish

himself at the major league level and we’ll see where the journey takes us,” Getz said. “We’re going to support him and we’re going to get great production from him.”

Murakami, speaking through a translator, said he can adjust to major league pitching and improve his defense at first and third base in a hurry, although he stopped short of projecting statistics.

“I’m not really looking at this from a numbers standpoint,” Murakami said. “I really want to compete every day and face challenges. If I’m contributing to the team every night, every game, I feel that’s a success.”

The biggest knock against the 6-foot-2, 213-pound Murakami has been his contact and strikeout rates. Over eight seasons with Yakult, he struck out 977 times in 3,780 plate appearances, just over a quarter

(25.84%) of the time.

But he also had a .557 slugging percentage and 614 walks.

Getz isn’t overly worried.

“And yeah, there has been some conversation about contact and swing and miss,” Getz said. “Oftentimes swing-and-miss comes with a lot of the power.”

“But what makes Munie so attractive to us is this power output. We’re talking about a guy that has some real, real firepower in the engine that makes Munie so special.”

Murakami said he’s adapting his swing so he can stay on top of 100 mph fastballs and the range of breaking and off-speed pitches he’ll face in the majors.

“Rather than explain my swing, I would like for you to see my swing once the season starts,” he said. “I’ve been relentless working to tinker my swing to the U.S.”

Cavaliers snap 3-game losing streak with win vs. Hornets

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and De’Andre Hunter had 15 of his 27 in the second half, powering the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 139-132 victory over the Charlotte Hornets on Monday night.

Darius Garland added 27 points and 10 assists for Cleveland, which pulled away in the second half to snap a three-game losing streak. The Cavaliers had also lost three straight at home and are 2-5 at Rocket Arena since Nov. 30.

LaMelo Ball led Charlotte with 23 points and nine assists, making six 3-pointers. Rookie Kon Knueppel and Brandon Miller each had 20 points, while Moussa Diabate grabbed a season-high 14 rebounds.

Dean Wade chipped in 14 points and seven rebounds for Cleveland, which took its largest advantage at 131-112. Lonzo Ball had six points and seven assists in the middle contest of a three-game homestand.

There were 12 lead changes and 10 ties before intermission, but neither team went up by double digits.

Celtics 103, Pacers 95: Jaylen Brown scored 14 of his game-high 31 points in the final quarter and host Boston rallied from a 20-

point, second-half deficit for a victory over Indiana.

Derrick White finished with 19 points, and Payton Pritchard and Anfernee Simons each had 11 for the Celtics, who won their third straight game.

Pelicans 119, Mavericks 113: Zion Williamson scored 24 points, including 10 straight in a decisive two-minute span of the fourth quarter, to power host New Orleans over Dallas, extending the Pelicans’ season-long winning streak to five games.

New Orleans, which started the season 3-22, has posted its longest winning streak since 2022.

Nuggets 135, Jazz 112: Jamal Murray scored 27 points and host Denver raced out to a 19-0 lead in the opening four minutes and tied a franchise record for 3-pointers with 24, cruising to a victory over Utah.

It was the second time in 17 days the Jazz got down big before hitting a shot or a free throw. New York led Utah 23-0 on its way to a 146-112 win Dec. 5.

Thunder 119, Grizzlies 103: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points, and host Oklahoma City bounced back after two losses in three games to beat Memphis in a matchup of

teams missing several key contributors.

Gilgeous-Alexander made 11 of 20 shots and had eight assists and four steals. It was his 100th consecutive game with at least 20 points, adding to the second-longest streak in NBA history.

Warriors 120, Magic 97: Stephen Curry roared back from a rough first half to score 18 of his 26 points after intermission, Jimmy Butler had 21 points and host Golden State ran away from Orlando in the second half for a win.

Curry played on a tender left ankle and missed his initial six 3-point tries — beginning 3 for 13 from the floor — before finally connecting from deep with 8:20 left in the third quarter to pull the Warriors within 71-69. That was all it took to get Golden State rolling on a 14-4 run.

Pistons 110, Trail Blazers 102: Jalen Duren had 26 points and 10 rebounds as visiting Detroit held off Portland after blowing a 21-point lead.

Ausar Thompson added 18 points and 12 rebounds for the Eastern Conference-leading Pistons. Duncan Robinson scored 15 and Cade Cunningham had 14 before fouling out early in the fourth quarter.

No. 1 Arizona routs Bethune-Cookman

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Brayden Burries scored 20 points, Ivan Kharchenkov added 14 and top-ranked Arizona overcame a sluggish start to rout Bethune-Cookman 107-71 on Monday night.

The Wildcats (12-0) remained No. 1 in this week's AP Top 25 after shutting down San Diego State on Saturday but labored early on offense in the final game before their holiday break.

Careless at times with the ball, Arizona allowed Bethune-Cookman (3-9) to hang around until ratcheting up its defensive pressure midway through the first half.

Arizona used a big run to build a 14-point halftime lead and shot 57% from the floor to match its best start since opening 12-0 in 2014-15. The Wildcats scored 50 points in the paint, grabbed 20 more rebounds and converted 36 points off Bethune-Cookman's 22 turnovers.

Arizona point guard Jaden

Bradley had 11 points, five rebounds, five assists and four steals.

Arizona is one of six remaining undefeated teams in Division I and has seven straight wins by at least 20 points, its longest streak since eight straight 20-point wins in 1929, according to Sportradar.

Jordan Johnson led Bethune-Cookman with 18 points.

No. 10 BYU 109, Eastern Washington 81: AJ Dybantsa had 33 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists to lead BYU to a home victory over Eastern Washington.

Dybantsa became the first player with a triple-double for the Cougars since Kyle Collinsworth against UAB on March 16, 2016.

Kiree Huie led Eastern Washington with 17 points.

No. 12 North Carolina 99, East Carolina 51: Caleb Wilson had 21 points and 12 rebounds, and North Carolina had its highest point total of the season in a home victory over East Carolina.

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Gio Emejuru finished with 21 points and 14 rebounds for ECU (5-8). Jordan Riley, who came in averaging a team-high 21.7 points, scored a season-low 11 on 4-of-24 shooting.

No. 17 Kansas 90, Davidson 61: Tre White and Flory Bidunga each had 18 points and eight rebounds as host Kansas used balanced scoring to beat Davidson.

Roberts Blums was the only player in double figures for the Wildcats (8-4) with 13 points off the bench. Davidson was limited to 36% shooting from the floor and went 2 for 6 at the free-throw line.

No. 20 Illinois 91, Missouri 48: Freshman guard Keaton Wagler made a career-best five 3-pointers and scored 22 points to lead visiting Illinois to a rout of Missouri.

Andrej Stojakovic returned from a first-half injury to score 16 points, and Tomislav Ivisic added 14 points as the Fighting Illini (9-3) rolled to the most lop-

sided victory in the history of the Braggin' Rights rivalry.

The largest previous margin of victory in the series, which has been played 45 times since 1980, was Illinois' 82-50 blowout in 2005, when it was coming off a Final Four run.

No. 21 Virginia 95, American 51: Thijs De Ridder scored a career-high 27 points and grabbed eight rebounds as Virginia rolled to a home victory over American University.

Malik Thomas, Sam Lewis and Elijah Gertrude each added 11 points as the Cavaliers (11-1) headed into their holiday break on a six-game winning streak.

No. 23 Georgia 103, West Georgia 74: Blue Cain had 20 points to lead Georgia to a home win over West Georgia.

Georgia (11-1) entered the matchup as one of the top scoring offenses in Division I, averaging 99.5 points per game. The Bulldogs scored 90 or more points for the ninth time and eclipsed 100 points for the sixth time this season.

Raddysh hits 100 career points as Lightning beat Blues

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Darren Raddysh had a goal and two assists to reach 100 career points, and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the St. Louis Blues 4-1 on Monday night.

Oliver Bjorkstrand had a power-play goal for his 400th point, and Pontus Holmberg and Anthony Cirelli also scored for Tampa Bay. Nikita Kucherov and Jake Guentzel each had two assists, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 23 saves as the Lightning have won back-to-back games for the second time since the start of December.

Justin Faulk scored for St. Louis while Jordan Binnington finished with 13 saves. The Blues were held to two-or-fewer goals for the 21st time in 38 games this season.

Holmberg scored 21 seconds into the game, getting a stick on Raddysh's shot to deflect the puck past Binnington. It tied for the 13th fastest goal to start a game in Lightning franchise history and fastest since Steven Stamkos scored at 20 seconds on March 16, 2024.

Raddysh scored on the power play at 9:12 of the first period when his shot from the center point hit Faulk and caromed into the net.

Faulk cut the Lightning lead in half at 6:43 of the second, but Cirelli answered that 1:18 later getting a stick from the middle slot on Raddysh's shot. Raddysh became the second-fastest defenseman in Lightning history to reach 100 career points in his 206th game.

Flyers 55, Canucks 2: Nikita

Grebenkin had a goal and an assist, Carl Grundstrom also scored, and host Philadelphia beat Vancouver.

Grebenkin and Grundstrom were part of a new look fourth line for Philadelphia, which has struggled to get much production from the unit for most of the season. Rodrigo Abols had two assists, giving the line five points.

Max Sasson and Drew O'Connor scored late goals for Vancouver and Thatcher Demko made 34 saves. The loss snapped a four-game winning streak for the Canucks and it was their first defeat since trading defenseman Quinn Hughes to Minnesota.

Blue Jackets 3, Kings 1: Mason Marchment scored two power-play goals, Kirill Marchenko had one, and visiting Columbus

beat Los Angeles.

Jet Greaves made 23 saves and Damon Severson had two assists as Columbus snapped a four-game road losing streak.

Andrei Kuzmenko scored and Anton Forsberg made 27 saves as the Kings were held under three goals for the sixth straight game.

Kraken 3, Ducks 1: Jordan Eberle scored the tiebreaking goal midway through the third period and added an empty netter in the final minute, and visiting Seattle beat Anaheim.

Frederick Gaudreau also scored and Kaapo Kakko had two assists for the last-place Kraken. Philipp Grubauer stopped 39 shots.

Mikael Granlund scored for the Pacific Division-leading Ducks, and Lukas Dostal had 18 saves.