

## US shoots down suspected spy balloon

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military on Saturday shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the Carolina coast after it traversed sensitive military sites across North America. China insisted the flyover was an accident involving a civilian aircraft and threatened repercussions.

President Joe Biden issued the order but had wanted the balloon downed even earlier, on Wednesday. He was advised that the best time for the operation would be when it was over water, U.S. officials said. Military officials determined that bringing it down over land from an altitude of 60,000 feet would pose an undue risk to people on the ground.

China responded that it reserved the right to “take fur-

ther actions” and criticized the United States for “an obvious overreaction and a serious violation of international practice.”

In its statement Sunday, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said “China will resolutely uphold the relevant company’s legitimate rights and interests, and at the same time reserving the right to take further actions in response.” China’s Ministry of Defense echoed the statement later in the day, saying it “reserves the right to take necessary measures to deal with similar situations.”

The presence of the balloon in the skies above the U.S. last week dealt a severe blow to already strained U.S.-Chinese relations that have been in a downward spiral for years. It prompted Secretary of State

Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a high-stakes Beijing trip aimed at easing tensions.

“They successfully took it down and I want to compliment our aviators who did it,” Biden said after getting off Air Force One en route to Camp David.

The giant white orb was spotted Saturday morning over the Carolinas as it approached the Atlantic coast. At about 2:39 p.m. EST, an F-22 fighter jet fired a missile at the balloon, puncturing it while it was about 6 nautical miles off the coast near Myrtle Beach, S.C., senior defense officials said.

The Washington Post said the F-22 flew from Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Hampton, Va.

The spectacle had Americans looking to the skies all week, wondering whether the mysterious balloon had floated

over them.

The debris landed in 47 feet of water, shallower than officials had expected, and it spread out over roughly seven miles and the recovery operation included several ships. The officials estimated the recovery efforts would be completed in a short time, not weeks. A salvage vessel was en route.

U.S. defense and military officials said Saturday that the balloon entered the U.S. air defense zone north of the Aleutian Islands on Jan. 28 and moved largely over land across Alaska and then into Canadian airspace in the Northwest Territories last Monday. It crossed back into U.S. territory over northern Idaho on Tuesday, the day the White House said Biden was first briefed on it.

## Drill tests response to radiation exposure

BY ALEX WILSON

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — American and Japanese first responders rehearsed emergency medical procedures involving radiation exposure Thursday, part of an annual joint drill centered on the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan.

Now in its 15th year, the unnamed drill at the U.S. 7th Fleet draws from a rotating catalog of scenarios intended to keep the base and the Japanese government proficient in responding to radiation-related issues.

Last year, for example, the drill focused on a simulated leak of radioactive coolant from the carrier.

“This joint response drill continues to foster strong relationships between the U.S. Navy, the city of Yokosuka and the government of Japan,” Rear Adm. Carl Lahti, commander of Naval Forces Japan, told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday. “Working together helps further develop more trust

and combined coordination.”

First responders rushed Thursday to treat a Ronald Reagan crewmember with a simulated medical condition and low-level radiation exposure.

Teams from Puget Sound Naval Shipyard’s Yokosuka detachment prepared an isolation area for the faux radiation and later screened for residual contamination.

Meanwhile, first responders from U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka arrived to treat and transport the patient. Later, the scenario described the patient has having a cardiovascular problem, and they were taken to Yokosuka Kyosai Hospital for further treatment.

“This gives us the opportunity to exercise a rare, but credible, problem aboard a nuclear-powered warship,” Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo told Stars and Stripes during the drill.

Future drills might include a high-level radiation exposure or a completely different problem, she said.

“This scenario was requested and agreed upon at multiple different levels, but it’s rotational,” she said. “What we’re trying to do is reassure the ability to respond and work with them.”

The exercise’s observers included Yokosuka Mayor Katsuaki Kamiji, base commander Capt. Les Sobol and representatives from a variety of groups.

Cerezo declined to comment on whether the joint drill is meant to alleviate the Japanese public’s concerns about the Ronald Reagan’s reactor.

Last year, Japanese public opinion toward nuclear power began to improve. A Nikkei poll from March 2022 showed that a slim majority, 53%, favored restarting the country’s nuclear power plants. The response was the highest in favor of nuclear power since the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi meltdowns, Nikkei reported April 20. Meanwhile, 38% of respondents said Japan “must not proceed” with restarting the plants.

# Air Force removes chaplain deputy from post

By DOUG G. WARE  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The second-highest ranking chaplain in the Air Force has been removed from his leadership post at the Pentagon due to a loss of confidence and a “pattern of shortfalls,” the service said Friday.

Brig. Gen. J. Daniel Brantingham, the deputy chief of chaplains, who had been in the post for about a year, was removed at the end of January, officials said.

As deputy chief of chaplains,

it fell to Brantingham to provide “spiritual care” for airmen and their families and opportunities to “exercise their constitutional right to the free exercise of religion,” the Air Force said.

The deputy chief, who ranks second only to the chief of chaplains, supervises about 2,100 chaplains and religious affairs airmen and is one of six people who also serve on the military-wide Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

“Our military leaders are held to the highest standards of

personal and professional conduct, and are accountable for their actions when falling short of those expectations,” Maj. Gen. Randall Kitchens, the chief of chaplains, said Friday.

Neither Kitchens nor the Air Force elaborated on the details of Brantingham’s removal. They said only it was “due to a loss of confidence in his ability to serve effectively in a leadership position.”

“A pattern of leadership shortfalls contributed to the decision,” an Air Force spokeswo-

man added.

Brantingham became the Air Force’s 27th deputy chief of chaplains when he assumed the post in December 2021. He entered the service in 1990 as a chaplain candidate and 1994 as an active-duty chaplain, according to his Air Force biography. He was promoted to brigadier general not long before he was named deputy chief.

The Air Force has not yet announced who will succeed Brantingham as its deputy chief of chaplains.

## Search for scuba diver off Guam ends after 3 days

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Coast Guard suspended a multiday search for a scuba diver who disappeared Thursday off Guam’s western coast.

The unidentified man, 35, remains missing, a spokeswoman for Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam, Chief Warrant Officer Sara Muir, told Stars and Stripes by email Saturday.

He was diving with a colleague near Rick’s Reef, where they were reportedly doing telecommunications contract work, the sector announced Thursday. The reef is between the villages of Hagatna and Tamuning.

“We extend our condolences to the family and friends of the diver during this trying time,” the sector’s commander, Capt. Nick Simmons, said Saturday in a news release.

The diver was last seen wearing a black wetsuit with orange fins, a rebreather and a spare oxygen tank, according to the sector. Anyone with

information is asked to call Sector Guam’s Joint Rescue Sub-Center at 671-355-4824.

The diver’s colleague contacted the sector at 10:36 a.m. Thursday to report the man missing. The Coast Guard, Navy, along with Guam’s police and fire departments, immediately dispatched teams, vessels and aircraft to begin a search.

First responders included fire department Jet Ski operators, boat crews and divers, Navy MH-60 Knighthawk helicopters, the Coast Guard cutter Frederick Hatch and a 45-foot medium response boat from U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor, according to the report.

The Coast Guard also issued an urgent marine information broadcast to notify mariners about the missing man.

“We are extremely grateful to our local and military partners and good Samaritans for their tremendous efforts over the last few days,” Simmons said in Saturday’s release.

## Army suspends commander at Fort Sill; no reason given

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Maj. Gen. Kenneth Kamper was suspended from his position as the commander of the Army Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill, Okla., while the Army inspector general investigates unnamed allegations against him, service officials announced Friday.

Gen. Gary Brito, commander Army Training and Doctrine Command, decided on the suspension, said Cynthia O. Smith, an Army spokeswoman. Kamper will remain at Fort Sill to “perform duties directed by his chain of command,” she said.

Brig. Gen. Shane Morgan, deputy commander of the Fires Center of Excellence, will serve as interim commander and as the general court-martial convening authority.

Smith declined to confirm the nature of the inspector general’s review, but said it is not related to any allegations of sexual misconduct.

Fort Sill is home to the Army’s field and air defense artillery training facilities and trains

about 20,000 soldiers each year for basic training and advanced individual training.

Last month, roughly 100 Ukrainian troops arrived at the base to learn how to operate and maintain the Patriot missile system to help fend off aerial attacks in the country’s war with Russia.

“Neither the investigation nor the change in leadership will have any impact on the operations or mission at Fort Sill, including the current training of Ukrainian forces on the Patriot missile system, and the suspension was not related to the mission or training of Ukrainian soldiers,” Smith said.

Kamper took command of Fort Sill in March 2020, according to his official service record. He previously served as the chief of staff and later deputy commander of III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, beginning in May 2017.

About 25,000 service members are assigned to Fort Sill, which is located in Lawton, a town about 90 miles southwest of Oklahoma City.

# New Ukraine aid includes long-range rockets

By **DOUG G. WARE**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon on Friday announced a new tranche of military aid for Ukraine worth more than \$2 billion, including long-range precision rockets that could help Ukrainian forces retake territory from Russia.

Ground-launched small diameter bombs are being sent after weeks of repeated Ukrainian requests for more weapons and equipment to upgrade their battlefield capabilities and recapture lost territory in Ukraine's eastern and southeastern regions, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank.

The long-range GPS-guided bombs are basically modified GBU-39 small diameter bombs combined with a rocket motor. Friday was the first time they

were part of a U.S. military aid package, Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the top Pentagon spokesman, said Friday.

Also included in the latest military aid are more Javelin anti-armor systems, anti-armor rockets, two HAWK air defense systems and, also for the first time, equipment to marry Ukraine's air defense systems with those supplied by the West.

"Today's announcement includes critical air defense capabilities to help Ukraine defend its people, as well as armored infantry vehicles and more equipment that Ukraine is using so effectively," Ryder said.

Ukrainian officials said last week that they're expecting a new wave of Russian attacks after observing a buildup of troops along sections of Ukraine's border. Fighting across the country has been muted during the cold

winter months, but Ukraine and Western allies expect Russia is gearing up for a new offensive once winter ends. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his country has a chance to beat them back — if it gets the weapons it wants from the U.S. and other nations.

Ukraine had lobbied for weeks for U.S.-made Patriot missile systems, Bradley Fighting Vehicles and M1 Abrams tanks. U.S. officials in some cases denied those requests initially, only to change their minds and give Ukraine the weapons. The long-range precision rockets have been on Ukraine's wish list for months, and the ones included in the new package can accurately hit targets up to about 100 miles away, defense officials said.

Ukrainian military officials also have been pleading with the U.S. to send advanced fighter

aircraft, such as the Air Force's F-16 Fighting Falcon, believing they would be a game-changer in air superiority. Biden, however, said last week that the U.S. won't send F-16s. He had said the same when Ukraine requested Abrams tanks before agreeing to do so. Ukrainian pilots are not familiar with the F-16 and they'd have to train with them if the U.S. decided to provide some aircraft to them.

The military aid package announced Friday is the first in February, which will see the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine. Since the Russian invasion Feb. 24, the United States has given close to \$30 billion to help defend Ukraine. It includes \$425 million in equipment through presidential drawdown authority and \$1.75 billion through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.

## SIGAR: US must consider if aid is helping Taliban

By **DOUG G. WARE**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The government's watchdog for Afghanistan reconstruction said Thursday that the Taliban regime is growing ever more oppressive, and lawmakers need to consider whether too many U.S. aid dollars are ending up in its hands.

The report to Congress by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, is an update for lawmakers on rebuilding and aid efforts following the U.S. withdrawal in 2021. The report also measures what impact U.S. money is having and what humanitarian problems are proliferating.

The SIGAR report urges Congress to contemplate one main question: Can the United States keep sending billions to the country without inadvertently funding the Taliban? However, the report also concludes there are millions

of suffering Afghans who are hungry and frightened and still in need of international support — especially as the Taliban continue to roll back rights for women and girls and subject them to restrictive fundamentalist laws.

"As the largest donor to the Afghan people, the United States remains deeply engaged in Afghanistan," the report states, noting the United States has made more than \$8 billion in assistance available to Afghan citizens and refugees since American armed forces withdrew 18 months ago. "It is SIGAR's judgment that the Taliban regime's institutionalized abuse of women raises the important question for policymakers of whether the United States can continue providing aid to Afghanistan without benefiting or propping up the Taliban."

SIGAR is required to report to Congress each quarter on the situation in Afghanistan.

## Rocket strikes damage 2nd-largest Ukraine city

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Five people were injured in Russian rocket attacks Sunday in the center of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, officials said.

Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said four people were injured when a Russian S-300 missile fell near an apartment block and another was hurt when a missile hit a higher-education building. Local media reports said the building hit was the National Academy for Urban Economy, about 700 meters from the city's central square.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting continued in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, one of four regions that Russia illegally annexed last year even though its forces do not fully control the region. Donetsk

governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said five civilians were wounded in rocket attacks during the night in the city of Druzhkivka and that the town of Avdiivka and its outskirts were also fired on.

In the Black Sea port of Odesa, workers labored to connect temporary generators shipped in to try to restore electricity. The city and surrounding area were plunged into darkness over the weekend following a large-scale network failure.

Grid operator Ukrenergo said that the failure involved equipment "repeatedly repaired" after Russia's savage strikes on Ukraine's energy grid, and that residents should brace themselves for lengthy blackouts.

As of Sunday afternoon, about 280,000 customers remained without power, said prime minister Denis Shmyhal.

# Austin residents angered by lack of power outage info

*Associated Press*

Some residents in Austin, Texas, who were still without power Saturday days after a winter storm struck said they are frustrated that no answers are being offered as to when their electricity will return.

“There’s just no communication from (Austin Energy) about when we’re going to get help,” said Christy Kale, who lives in south Austin.

“We got a text (Friday) saying ‘Thank you for your patience,’” after receiving a text on Thursday that said a repair crew had been assigned to the area, Kale said. “But no one has come to the neighborhood that I can tell.”

“There are elderly people” in the neighborhood, said Kale, 66. “Children, people who need medical equipment, it’s just wrong” that no one with the energy company will say when power is expected to be restored.

Officials with Austin Energy did not immediately return phone calls for comment on Saturday.

The energy company’s website said crews were working around the clock “through complicated repairs to restore power to customers.”

The company said power may return intermittently as work continued to repair the system.

Both Kale and fellow south Austin resident Greta Olivas said they have been unable since Friday to speak by phone with a person when trying to contact the power provider for the city of nearly 1 million people, Austin Energy. Both also said they just want to know when to expect power to return.

“If I had an answer, if it was ‘Oh, there’s an area with bigger problems, it’s going to take the weekend (before power is restored)’ ... we would know what to do ... we could go to a hotel,” Olivas said.

“I would drive to San Antonio,” for a hotel, if she knew when to expect the outage to end, Olivas said. “It gets cold at night,” even though she has a fireplace and a generator to run a small space heater and to heat water.

The Saturday morning low in Austin was about 30 degrees Fahrenheit and local disaster declarations have been issued, the first step in possibly qualifying for state and federal disaster aid as a result of the storm. Statewide, the number of outages had fallen to below 125,000 on Saturday, down from a peak of 430,000 customers without power on Thursday.

The storm, which swept into the region last Monday, has been blamed for at least 12 deaths from traffic fatalities in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

# Dems approve of new state order for primary races

*Associated Press*

PHILADELPHIA — The Democratic Party on Saturday approved reordering its 2024 presidential primary, replacing Iowa with South Carolina in the leadoff spot as part of a major shake-up meant to empower Black and other minority voters critical to its base of support.

Although more changes are possible later this year, the formal endorsement by the Democratic National Committee during its meeting in Philadelphia is an acknowledgement that the start of the 2024 primary will look very different from the one in 2020. Hundreds of party stalwarts climbed to their feet and cheered after the easy passage by voice vote.

States with early contests play a major role in determining the nominee because White House hopefuls struggling to raise money or gain political traction often drop out before visiting states outside the first five. Media attention and policy debates concentrate in those areas, too.

The new plan was championed by President Joe Biden, who is expected to formally announce his reelection campaign in the coming months. The reconfiguring would have South Carolina hold its primary on Feb. 3, followed three days later by New Hampshire and Nevada, which is swapping the caucus it used to hold in favor of a primary. Georgia would vote fourth on Feb. 13, followed by Michigan on Feb. 27, with much of the rest of the nation set to vote on Super Tuesday in early March.

“The Democratic Party looks like America and so does this proposal,” said DNC chair Jaime Harrison, a South Carolinian. The change “continues to make us stronger and elevates the backbone of our party,” he said.

Biden wrote the DNC rules committee in December, saying, “We must ensure that voters of color have a voice in choosing our nominee much earlier in the process and throughout the entire early window.” That committee approved the new lineup, setting up Saturday’s vote.

The move remakes the current calendar, which saw Iowa start with its caucus, followed by New Hampshire and then Nevada and South Carolina. The Republican Party has voted not to change its 2024 primary order, meaning the campaign has already begun in Iowa.

# Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan martial ruler for 9/11 wars, dies

*Associated Press*

ISLAMABAD — Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup and later led a reluctant Pakistan into aiding the U.S. war in Afghanistan against the Taliban, has died, officials said Sunday. He was 79.

Musharraf, a former special forces commander, became president through the last of a string of military coups that roiled Pakistan since its founding amid the bloody 1947 partition of India. He ruled the nuclear-armed state after his 1999 coup through tensions with India, an atomic proliferation scandal and an Islamic extremist insurgency.

He stepped down in 2008 while facing

possible impeachment.

Later in life, Musharraf lived in self-imposed exile in Dubai to avoid criminal charges, despite attempting a political comeback in 2012.

But it wasn’t to be as his poor health plagued his last years. He maintained a soldier’s fatalism after avoiding a violent death that always seemed to be stalking him as Islamic militants twice targeted him for assassination.

“I have confronted death and defied it several times in the past because destiny and fate have always smiled on me,” Musharraf once wrote. “I only pray that I have more than the proverbial nine lives of a cat.”

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Authorities: Woman sent to funeral home still alive

**I**A DES MOINES — A continuing care home in suburban Des Moines has been fined \$10,000 after a funeral home discovered a woman sent to it in a body bag was still alive.

The Iowa Department of Inspection and Appeals said in a report filed Wednesday that the 66-year-old woman was declared dead at the Glen Oaks Alzheimer's Special Care Center in Urbandale on Jan. 3.

The woman, whose name has not been released, had early onset dementia, anxiety and depression and had been in hospice care since Dec. 28.

She was placed in a zipped body bag and taken to the Ankeny Funeral Home & Crematory, where workers found that she was breathing and called 911, the report said.

She was taken to Mercy West Lakes Hospital, where she was breathing but unresponsive. The woman was ultimately returned to hospice care, where she died on Jan. 5 with her family by her side, according to the report.

### Dad: Son, 6, got \$1K in food from Grubhub

**M**I CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP — A Michigan man said he was left with a \$1,000 bill after his 6-year-old son ordered a virtual smorgasbord of food from several restaurants, leading to a string of unexpected deliveries — and maybe a starring role in an ad campaign.

Keith Stonehouse said the food piled up quickly at his Detroit-area home after he let his son, Mason, use his cellphone to

play a game before bed. He said the youngster instead used his father's Grubhub account to order food from one restaurant after another.

The boy's mother, Kristin Stonehouse, said that Grubhub has reached out to the family and offered them a \$1,000 gift card. The company is also considering using the family in an online promotional campaign, she said. Grubhub officials did not immediately comment.

Keith Stonehouse said he was alone with his son while his wife was at the movies when Mason ordered jumbo shrimp, salads, shawarma and chicken pita sandwiches, chili cheese fries and other foods that one Grubhub driver after another delivered.

### Chinese-owned corn plant opposed by USAF

**N**D GRAND FORKS — The U.S. Air Force has told North Dakota leaders that it believes a Chinese company's plans to build a wet corn milling plant near its Grand Forks base poses a "significant threat to national security," prompting city officials to say they'll move to stop a project once touted as an economic boon.

The Fufeng Group's planned \$700 million facility would be 12 miles from Grand Forks Air Force Base, a location that triggered some local concern about potential espionage. Gov. Doug Burgum and U.S. Sens. John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer — all Republicans — pressed the federal government in July to expedite a review of any security risk.

U.S.-China business ties have become strained amid growing

tensions between the two countries over security and trade issues, which often overlap.

### Daughter charged after body found in freezer

**I**L CHICAGO — A Chicago woman has been accused of keeping her mother's dead body in a freezer for nearly two years while living in a nearby apartment.

Eva Bratcher, 69, appeared in court on charges of concealing her 96-year-old mother's death and possessing a fraudulent identification card.

Regina Michalski's body was discovered this week in a freezer in the garage near the apartment they had shared, police said. Investigators believe she died in March 2021. The cause won't be determined until the body is thawed.

### Democratic-backed bill would ban 'Latinx' term

**C**T HARTFORD — A group of Hispanic lawmakers in Connecticut has proposed that the state follow Arkansas' lead and ban the term "Latinx" from official government documents, calling it offensive to Spanish speakers.

The word is used as a gender-neutral alternative to "Latino" and "Latina" and is helpful in supporting people who do not identify as either male or female, according to the word's backers.

But state Rep. Geraldo Reyes Jr., of Waterbury, the bill's chief sponsor and one of five Hispanic Democrats who put their names on the legislation, said Latinx is not a Spanish word but is rather a "woke" term that is offensive

to Connecticut's large Puerto Rican population.

"I'm of Puerto Rican descent and I find it offensive," he said.

### Survey: College students afraid to express views

**W**I MADISON — Most students who responded to a survey about free speech on University of Wisconsin campuses said they're afraid to express their views on controversial topics in class because they fear other students won't agree or that it could hurt their grades, according to findings released Wednesday.

A third of respondents, meanwhile, said they've felt pressure from an instructor to agree with a certain viewpoint. Almost half said they at least somewhat agree that administrators should bar controversial speakers if some students find the message offensive.

Free speech issues have come to the forefront in academia, as Republicans push schools to crack down on students who disrupt conservative speakers and to allow conservative speakers on campuses. The GOP has also maintained that liberal professors are indoctrinating students or making them feel uncomfortable about expressing conservative views.

UW-Stout's Menard Center for Public Policy and Service sent the survey to undergraduates at all 13 UW System campuses last fall. The Menard family, a major Republican donor that founded the Menards home improvement store chain, donated \$2.6 million to the center in 2019 and contributed \$100,000 toward the survey.

— From wire reports

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# James closes on record; Lakers fall

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — When LeBron James was pulling up his dribble to float an alley-oop pass to Anthony Davis, or diving into the stands in an attempt to regain the ball for the Lakers, he appeared far more concerned with immediate team goals than making NBA history.

Yet after nearly 40 minutes on the court, James couldn't stop Los Angeles from losing ground in the standings, even as he gained on Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's scoring mark.

James moved 36 points away from breaking the NBA career scoring record in the Lakers' 131-126 loss to New Orleans on Saturday night that ended the Pelicans' losing streak at 10 games.

"I just want to win," James said. "You know, you play the game the right way and see what happens."

James had 27 points to go with nine rebounds and six assists as he continued to

close in on Abdul-Jabbar's record total of 38,387 points.

"I'm tired as hell," James said, but added, "I'll be ready to go on Tuesday," when the Lakers play next.

Brandon Ingram had his best game since returning 10 days earlier from a nearly two-month injury absence, scoring 35 points for the Pelicans on an array of drives and jumpers, sometimes in heavy traffic as he was fouled.

CJ McCollum had 23 points, highlighted by a late three to help New Orleans close out the final 3:14 on a 9-5 run that kept the Lakers at bay.

"We just continued to attack across the board," said Pelicans coach Willie Green, whose team won for just the fourth time in 19 games. "Every guy on our team that touched the floor came in and played with force and played with confidence. That is what it is going to take for us to get over the hump."

Davis had 34 points and 14 rebounds for the Lakers. They led by 12 when James' finger roll made it 84-72 in the third quarter.

The Pelicans chipped away and closed the period with five quick points on McCollum's transition floater and Jose Alvarado's three after he caught a deflected inbound pass.

That sequence cut the Lakers' advantage to 106-103, and New Orleans surged in front when Trey Murphy hit back-to-back threes, the second from 27 feet, to make it 114-108.

The game remained tight thereafter, but the Pelicans didn't allow Los Angeles to regain the lead.

Murphy finished with 21 points and Alvarado had 18.

Jonas Valanciunas had 18 points and 14 rebounds for New Orleans but left late in the third quarter with a right knee injury and did not return. Russell Westbrook scored 15 points but did not play during the final 11 minutes.

# Giannis has triple-double; Bucks win seventh straight

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo had a triple-double with 35 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists and the Milwaukee Bucks beat the short-handed Miami Heat 123-115 on Saturday night for their seventh straight victory.

"You kind of know what to expect from the Miami team," Antetokounmpo said. "We've played them so many times. I've played them so many times throughout my years. They're going to help one another. They're going to be aggressive on defense. You've just got to make the right pass, just keep on being aggressive and making as many good decisions as you can throughout the game."

Jimmy Butler scored 32 points and Tyler Herro added 24 for the Heat, who had just nine available players. Notable injured Miami players included Kyle Lowry (sore left knee) and Victor Oladipo (sprained right ankle).

Antetokounmpo had his third

triple-double of the season and 32nd of his career. The 11 assists matched his season high.

"We know that Miami's going to throw a lot of people at him, a lot of bodies," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "He's got to be willing to pass and play with his teammates, and we've got to make shots. I think he did that. It starts with him being aggressive, him drawing extra defenders. His teammates have got to make plays around him. We did enough of that, had enough defense, particularly in the fourth quarter, to grind out a win tonight."

Khris Middleton scored a season-high 24 points and put the Bucks ahead for good with a tiebreaking buzzer beater to end the third quarter. Grayson Allen added 19, Jrue Holiday had 15 and Pat Connaughton had 14.

**Warriors 119 Mavericks 113:** Stephen Curry had 21 points, seven assists and six rebounds before injuring his left

leg defending a drive and host Golden State beat an undermanned Dallas team missing injured star Luka Doncic.

The Warriors said X-rays for Curry were negative, and he will have an MRI exam.

Draymond Green added 17 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for Golden State.

Spencer Dinwiddie scored 25 points for Dallas.

**Nets 125, Wizards 123:** Cam Thomas scored a career-high 44 points off the bench and short-handed Brooklyn overcame a 23-point deficit to beat visiting Washington.

Edmond Sumner also set a personal best with 29 points. Brooklyn guard Kyrie Irving was out with what the team said was right calf soreness a day after he told the Nets he wants to be traded.

Kristaps Porzingis led the Wizards with 38 points.

**Nuggets 128, Hawks 108:** Jamal Murray scored a season-high 41 points, Nikola Jokic had his 18th triple-double of the

season and host Denver beat Atlanta to tie Boston for the best record in the NBA.

Jokic had 14 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists for the 94th regular-season triple-double of his career. Michael Porter Jr. added 23 points to help Denver match Boston at 37-16 with its third straight victory.

Dejounte Murray scored 28 points for Atlanta.

**Clippers 134, Knicks 128 (OT):** Kawhi Leonard scored 35 points, Paul George added 30 and visiting Los Angeles beat New York in overtime.

**Suns 116, Pistons 100:** Deandre Ayton had 31 points and 16 rebounds to help visiting Phoenix beat Detroit.

**Thunder 153, Rockets 121:** Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 42 points and host Oklahoma City set a franchise record for points to rout Houston.

**Bulls 129, Trail Blazers 121:** Zach LaVine scored 36 points, DeMar DeRozan had 27 and host Chicago topped Damian Lillard and Portland.

# Jackson-Davis, Indiana beat No. 1 Purdue

Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Trayce Jackson-Davis returned to Indiana so he could celebrate a banner season.

On Saturday, the fourth-year forward added another big piece to his legacy.

He scored 25 points and then watched Jalen Hood-Schifino break free for the clinching dunk with 2 seconds left to give No. 21 Indiana a 79-74 victory over No. 1 Purdue — and a quick storming of the court.

It's the fourth time the Hoosiers have beaten the nation's top-ranked team at Assembly Hall, and the first since upsetting Michigan 10 years earlier.

"I just think it's a toughness factor," Jackson-Davis said, explaining why this team is different. "I feel like teams in the past that I've been on just weren't that tough, honestly. We've kind of played with a chip on our shoulders since we got punked by Rutgers and we've kind of found our niche and that's what we're doing."

The only guy that's been even close to Jackson-Davis' productivity over the past month has been Purdue's Zach Edey, who had 33 points and 18 rebounds.

But it was Jackson-Davis who walked away with his sixth win in seven games by moving within 16 points of becoming the first Indiana player to ever score 2,000 and grab 1,000 rebounds. He finished with seven rebounds and five blocks.

Fittingly, Jackson-Davis and the Hoosiers (16-7, 7-5 Big Ten) celebrated with their fellow students. It marked the first time in the 216-game series Purdue (22-2, 11-2) was ranked No. 1.

**No. 2 Tennessee 46, No. 25 Auburn 43:** Josiah-Jordan James scored 15 points to lead the host Vols past the Tigers in a game in which every point was difficult and nothing flowed.

Tennessee (19-4, 8-2 Southeastern Conference) shot just 27% from the field and 9.5% from the three-point line. This is after

the Vols shot 28% in a loss to Florida on Wednesday.

Auburn (17-6, 7-3) managed only 24% from the field and 11% from the three-point line.

**No. 4 Alabama 79, LSU 69:** Noah Clowney and Rylan Griffen led a balanced scoring attack with 14 points each to carry the visiting Crimson Tide over the Tigers.

Nimari Burnett and Mark Sears each had 13 points and Brandon Miller had 11 for Alabama (20-3, 10-0 Southeastern Conference).

**No. 5 Arizona 84, Oregon State 52:** Azuolas Tubelis scored 19 points, Courtney Ramey added 11 and the host Wildcats used a massive first-half run to get their sixth win in a row.

Arizona (21-3, 10-3 Pac-12) slogged through a foul-filled first half before racing past the Beavers with a 19-2 run that gave it a 26-point halftime lead.

**Virginia Tech 74, No. 6 Virginia 68:** Sean Pedulla scored 22 points and the host Hokies snapped the Cavaliers' seven-game winning streak.

Pedulla hit six of 13 from the floor as Virginia Tech (14-10, 4-8 ACC) posted its biggest win of the season.

Jayden Gardner's 20 points led Virginia (17-4, 9-3), which saw its usually stingy defense struggle.

**No. 10 Texas 69, No. 7 Kansas State 66:** Christian Bishop scored all 14 of his points in the second half, including the go-ahead lay-in with 37 seconds to go, and the visiting Longhorns rallied from a 14-point first-half deficit.

Sir'Jabari Rice also had 14 points for Texas, (19-4, 8-2), which took over sole possession of first place in the rough-and-tumble Big 12.

**No. 13 Iowa State 68, No. 8 Kansas 53:** Jaren Holmes led the host Cyclones with 15 points in a win over the Jayhawks.

Osun Osunniyi added 13 for Iowa State (16-6, 7-3 Big 12), which stayed within at least a

game of front-running Texas in the conference standings.

Jalen Wilson led the Jayhawks (18-5, 6-4) with 26 points.

**No. 9 UCLA 76, Washington State 52:** Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 24 points and a career-high 15 rebounds, and the Bruins won their 21st consecutive home game.

UCLA (19-4, 10-2 Pac-12) own the nation's longest active home winning streak, including a 13-0 mark at Pauley Pavilion this season.

**No. 11 Baylor 89, Texas Tech 62:** Jalen Bridges had 18 points with eight rebounds, Keyonte George scored 17 and the host Bears (17-6, 6-4 Big 12) beat the Red Raiders.

**No. 18 Saint Mary's 78, No. 12 Gonzaga 70 (OT):** Aidan Mahaney scored 18 points and took the game over in crunch time, leading the host Gaels to their 12th straight victory.

Mahaney scored or assisted on 19 of 21 points in a stretch that started with Saint Mary's (21-4, 10-0 West Coast Conference) trailing by four points with five minutes to play in regulation.

Drew Timme scored 23 points for Gonzaga (19-5, 8-2).

**No. 14 Marquette 60, Butler 52:** Tyler Kolek had 13 points and eight assists in host Marquette's fifth consecutive victory.

**Oklahoma State 79, No. 15 TCU 73:** Kalib Boone scored 25 points and the host Cowboys blew a 19-point second-half lead before recovering to beat a depleted Horned Frogs squad.

Caleb Asberry added 19 points and John-Michael Wright had 17 for Oklahoma State (14-9, 5-5 Big 12), which has won five of six.

Emanuel Miller led TCU (17-6, 6-4) with 17 points. The Horned Frogs have struggled since their leading scorer, Mike Miles Jr., suffered a hyperextended right knee last Saturday.

**No. 16 Xavier 96, St. John's 71:** Jack Nunge scored 21 points, Colby Jones added 19 and the host Musketeers made a season-

high 15 three-pointers to defeat the Red Storm.

Souley Boum added 17 points, Desmond Claude scored 11 and Jerome Hunter 10 for Xavier (19-5, 11-2 Big East), which has won four of its last five games.

**No. 19 FAU 67, Charlotte 52:** Vladislav Goldin had 15 points and the visiting Owls rebounded with a win just two days after they had their 20-game winning streak snapped.

Alijah Martin added 11 points and Brandon Weatherspoon had 10 for Florida Atlantic (22-2, 12-1 Conference USA).

**No. 23 Miami 78, No. 20 Clemson 74:** Nijel Pack scored 20 points and Isaiah Wong added 15 as the visiting Hurricanes used a second-half burst to hold off the Tigers

Miami (18-5, 9-4 Atlantic Coast Conference) used a 21-9 run to open a 56-44 lead with 11:10 to play.

Clemson (18-6, 10-3) lost its second straight game after opening ACC play 10-1.

**No. 24 UConn 68, Georgetown 62:** Adama Sanogo and Tristen Newton each scored 15 and Alex Karaban knocked down two late three-pointers to give the visiting Huskies a win over the last-place Hoyas.

**Duke 63, North Carolina 57:** Jeremy Roach scored 20 points, Dereck Lively II had career highs of eight blocks and 14 rebounds and the host Blue Devils defeated the Tar Heels.

Kyle Filipowski added 14 points and Tyrese Proctor 11 for Duke (17-6, 8-4 ACC), which won its third straight and beat the North Carolina (15-8, 7-5) for the first time in three meetings.

**Navy 86, Holy Cross 68:** Daniel Deaver scored 35 points and added 16 rebounds for the Midshipmen (13-11, 6-6 Patriot League) to become the program's first player with a 30/15 game since David Robinson had 33 points and 15 rebounds on Feb. 9, 1987.

Sean Yoder added 13 points and he also had seven rebounds and nine assists for Navy.

# MVP Tkachuk, Atlantic get All-Star win

*Associated Press*

SUNRISE, Fla. — Florida's Matthew Tkachuk was right at home at the NHL All-Star Game.

Again.

Detroit's Dylan Larkin had a hat trick, Toronto's Mitch Marner had three assists and the Atlantic Division topped the Central Division 7-5 in the All-Star Game final on Saturday.

All-Star Game MVP Matthew Tkachuk — playing alongside his brother Brady Tkachuk of the Ottawa Senators — had seven points on the day, after a five-point outburst in a semifinal win over the Metropolitan Division. Larkin had five goals in the Atlantic's two games.

"We wanted to get a win for the home crowd, the fans," Montreal's Nick Suzuki said. "They did a good job of cheering on the Atlantic Division. We just wanted to put on a good show for them."

And for the MVP, winning in

front of Panthers fans meant more than just winning.

"It's been an honor to play in front of them this whole year and it's great that the other players in the league can see what a great place this is to play," Matthew Tkachuk said. "I'm as happy as can be here."

Arizona's Clayton Keller, Dallas' Jason Robertson, Colorado teammates Cale Makar, Nathan MacKinnon and Mikko Rantanen all had goals for the Central in the final. Makar also had two assists.

It was the first time the Atlantic won the All-Star Game, after six previous tries in the divisional format. The 11 players — nine skaters and two goalies — on the Atlantic roster split \$1 million for the win.

"It was so much fun," said Larkin, who had five goals in the two games. "I'm proud of how we won it. What a great group of guys ... it was just a great weekend."

Matthew Tkachuk has now

been on the winning team in both of his All-Star appearances, and both times he enjoyed the comforts of home. He helped the Pacific win the 2020 All-Star title in St. Louis, his hometown and one of the many spots that his father — Keith Tkachuk, who was in the crowd Saturday — played during his career.

"I've been very fortunate, the two that I've been in that I know the ins and the outs of everything that goes on away from the rink," Matthew Tkachuk said. "It just made it so much more comfortable for me and extra special."

And this one truly had home-ice advantage. Matthew Tkachuk — the former Calgary standout who picked Florida this past offseason, despite much speculation that he would be going to St. Louis — had three goals and two assists in the Atlantic's 10-6 win over the Metropolitan in the second semifinal.

**Semifinal 1:** Central 6, Pacific 4

Keller had two goals and an assist, MacKinnon scored twice and the Central moved into the title matchup. St. Louis' Vladimir Tarasenko had a goal and three assists for the Central. Vancouver's Elias Pettersson had two goals, while San Jose's Erik Karlsson and Edmonton's Connor McDavid also scored for the Pacific.

**Semifinal 2:** Atlantic 10, Metropolitan 6

The teams combined for a record-tying — in the 3-on-3 era, anyway — 16 goals. Matthew Tkachuk had three goals and two assists, tying a single-game record for the format. Larkin scored twice and Brady Tkachuk had a goal and three assists for the Atlantic. Columbus' Johnny Gaudreau had three goals for the Metropolitan. Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby had two goals and Washington's Alex Ovechkin had the other.

## Eagles far more likely to go for it on fourth down

*Associated Press*

If the Super Bowl comes down to a key fourth-down decision, that might bode well for the Philadelphia Eagles.

The analytically inclined Eagles have long been one of the NFL's most aggressive organizations when it comes to the crucial fourth-down calls.

Those decisions helped fuel the team's first Super Bowl title five years ago under coach Doug Pederson and have helped Philadelphia get back to the title game this season under his successor Nick Sirianni thanks to two key fourth-down conversions in the first half of the NFC title game against San Francisco.

The Eagles have converted more fourth downs than any other team in the regular sea-

son and playoffs combined, despite playing from ahead more than any other team this season.

"We have confidence," Sirianni said. "When you go for it on fourth down, you put yourself in those scenarios all week. We have so many meetings about that, of what we're going to do in these scenarios, calls we might call, what we would call if we've already called that and everything like that. You put yourself through those calls, but at the end of the day, you make the decision because you trust the people that are out there doing the job."

Sirianni ranked No. 1 this season in the Football Outsiders' Critical Call Index, while his Kansas City counterpart Andy Reid ranked almost the

opposite at 28th.

The Eagles have converted a league-best 25 fourth-down tries and an impressive clip of 71.4%. While much of that success has come in short-yardage situations where quarterback Jalen Hurts has thrived on sneaks that feature teammates giving him a legal push from behind — converting 27 of 31 runs on third or fourth-and-1 — the Eagles also have had success with more traditional plays.

Hurts converted a fourth-and-3 on a deep pass to DeVonta Smith on the opening drive last week against San Francisco to set up a touchdown — even though the play might have been overturned had the 49ers challenged it.

Later in the first half, Sirian-

ni made a riskier call when he went for it on fourth-and-1 from his own 34 midway through the second quarter in a tie game.

While a stop there could have given San Francisco the ball in scoring position with a chance to take the lead before the half, Hurts converted the sneak. That led to another TD drive and Philadelphia never trailed the rest of the way.

Reid has typically had a more old-school approach on fourth downs but has shown a willingness at times to trust his offense. He attempted a league-low one fourth down from his own territory all season — a successful fourth-and-1 from his 45 late in a tie game against Tennessee in Week 9.