

4th downing unprecedented in peacetime

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. fighter jet shot down an “unidentified object” over Lake Huron on Sunday on orders from President Joe Biden. It was the fourth such downing in eight days and the latest military strike in an extraordinary chain of events over U.S. airspace that Pentagon officials believe has no peacetime precedent.

Part of the reason for the repeated shootdowns is a “heightened alert” following a spy balloon from China that emerged over U.S. airspace in late January, Gen. Glen VanHerck, head of NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, said in a briefing with reporters.

Since then, fighter jets last week also shot down objects over Canada and Alaska. Pentagon officials said they posed no security threats, but so little was known about them that Pentagon officials were ruling nothing out — not even UFOs.

“We have been more closely scrutinizing our airspace at these altitudes, including enhancing our radar, which may at least partly explain the in-

crease,” said Melissa Dalton, assistant defense secretary for homeland defense.

U.S. authorities have made clear that they constantly monitor for unknown radar blips, and it is not unusual to shut down airspace as a precaution to evaluate them. But the unusually assertive response was raising questions about whether such use of force was warranted, particularly as administration officials said the objects were not of great national security concern and the downings were just out of caution.

VanHerck said the U.S. adjusted its radar so it could track slower objects. “With some adjustments, we’ve been able to get a better categorization of radar tracks now,” he said, “and that’s why I think you’re seeing these, plus there’s a heightened alert to look for this information.”

He added: “I believe this is the first time within United States or American airspace that NORAD or United States Northern Command has taken kinetic action against an airborne object.”

The Pentagon officials said they were still trying to determine what exactly the objects were and said they had considered using the jets’ guns instead of missiles, but it proved to be too difficult. They drew a strong distinction between the three shot down over this weekend and the balloon from China.

The extraordinary air defense activity began in late January, when a white orb the officials said was from China appeared over the U.S. and hovered above the nation for days before fighter jets downed it off the coast of Myrtle Beach, S.C. That event played out over livestream. Many Americans have been captivated by the drama playing out in the skies as fighter jets scramble to shoot down objects.

The latest brought down was first detected on Saturday evening over Montana, but it was initially thought to be an anomaly. Radar picked it up again Sunday hovering over the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and it was going over Lake Huron, Pentagon officials said Sunday.

U.S. and Canadian authorities

had restricted some airspace over the lake earlier Sunday as planes were scrambled to intercept and identify the object. According to a senior administration official, the object was octagonal, with strings hanging off, but had no discernable payload. It was flying low at about 20,000 feet, said the official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials were still trying to precisely identify two other objects shot down by F-22 fighter jets, and were working to determine whether China was responsible as concerns escalated about what Washington said was Beijing’s large-scale aerial surveillance program.

An object shot down Saturday over Canada’s Yukon was described by U.S. officials as a balloon significantly smaller than the balloon — the size of three school buses — hit by a missile Feb. 4. A flying object brought down over the remote northern coast of Alaska on Friday was more cylindrical and described as a type of airship.

China uses laser on Philippines ship in South China Sea

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines on Monday accused a Chinese coast guard ship of hitting a Philippine coast guard vessel with a military-grade laser and temporarily blinding some of its crew in the disputed South China Sea, calling it a “blatant” violation of Manila’s sovereign rights.

The Chinese ship also maneuvered dangerously close, about 449 feet, to block the Philippine

patrol vessel BRP Malapascua from approaching Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef that has been occupied by Philippine forces, on Feb. 6, the Philippine coast guard said in a statement.

The Philippines has filed nearly 200 diplomatic protests against China’s aggressive actions in the disputed waters in 2022 alone.

China claims the South China Sea virtually in its entirety, put-

ting it on a collision course with other claimants.

Despite friendly overtures to Beijing by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his successor, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who met Chinese leader Xi Jinping in January in Beijing, tensions have persisted, drawing in closer military alliance between the Philippines and the U.S.

Although the Chinese coast guard had tried to block Philip-

pine coast guard ships in the disputed waters before, this was the first time it used lasers and caused physical suffering among Filipino personnel, Philippine coast guard spokesperson Commodore Armand Balilo told The Associated Press.

“The Chinese ship illuminated the green laser light toward the BRP Malapascua, causing temporary blindness to her crew at the bridge,” the Philippine statement said.

Russia pushes advance on east Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Fierce battles raged outside Bakhmut as Russian forces pushed their advance on the eastern city with heavy shelling and infantry attacks, Ukraine's presidential office said Monday, with at least five civilians killed and as many wounded in action across the war-torn country in the last 24 hours.

The presidential office said the situation in Bakhmut's northern suburb of Paraskoviivka is "difficult" as Russian forces continued to pummel the area with "intense shelling and storming actions." The nearby town of Vuhledar is also under heavy bombardment.

Ukrainian soldiers began training on Leopard 2 battle tanks, Germany's Defense Ministry spokeswoman Nadine Krueger said in Berlin. Germany pledged to deliver 14 of the tanks to Ukraine by the end of March.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg again urged Ukraine's Western allies to ramp up their military support. Asked Monday when he expects Russia's so-called spring offensive to begin, Stoltenberg said that "the reality is that we have seen the start already."

"For me, this just highlights the impor-

ance of timing. It's urgent to provide Ukraine with more weapons," he told reporters in Brussels. Stoltenberg said that NATO sees "no sign whatsoever that [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin is preparing for peace" and that arming Ukraine more quickly could save lives by bringing a quicker end to the conflict.

Russian forces shelled a dozen cities and villages in the Donetsk region in the last 24 hours including in Druzhkivka where a missile hit a hospital and in Pokrovsk where shelling damaged seven houses and a kindergarten.

"The shelling intensifies, and the Russians accumulate more forces for an attack on peaceful cities," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said. "We're seeing a very tough battle in which the Russians aren't sparing neither themselves, nor us."

In the neighboring Luhansk region, Russian troops pulled back after several days of intense fighting near the key city of Kreminna, although they're not "running out of steam," Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai told Ukrainian television.

In the partially occupied southern region of Kherson, artillery fire hit more than 20 cities and villages over the past 24

hours including the regional capital of the same name that was recaptured by Ukrainian forces in November. Two men were killed in one of the villages when their car ran over a land mine.

In the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region, Russian shelling of the city of Nikopol killed one person and wounded two others. The shelling also damaged a residential building, a water treatment facility and a college.

Meanwhile, the U.K. Defense Ministry said Russian forces are bolstering defensive fortifications on the edge of the battlefield in southern Ukraine to protect their flank, despite their focus on the Donbas region.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow issued another warning to U.S. citizens not to travel to Russia for fear of harassment or detention, urged them to leave immediately if they have to travel there.

The warning cited "the potential for harassment and the singling out of U.S. citizens for detention by Russian government security officials, the arbitrary enforcement of local law, limited flights into and out of Russia, the Embassy's limited ability to assist U.S. citizens in Russia, and the possibility of terrorism."

NATO: Allies must stock ammo as Ukraine fires away

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

NATO needs to set more ambitious goals for replenishing ammunition stockpiles as Ukraine burns through reserves faster than allies can refill them, NATO's top official said Monday.

"The current rate of Ukraine's ammunition expenditure is many times higher than our current rate of production," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters ahead of high-level talks in Brussels this week. "This puts our defense industries under strain."

Stoltenberg, who will host a meeting of NATO defense ministers Tuesday and Wednesday

at alliance headquarters, said Ukraine's enormous consumption of munitions prompted the alliance to carry out an "extraordinary survey" of its inventories.

The message from that review is that allies need to increase their targets for stockpiling ammunition, he said.

"For example, the waiting time for large-caliber ammunition has increased from 12 to 28 months," Stoltenberg said. "Orders placed today would only be delivered two-and-a-half years later. So we need to ramp up production and invest in our production capacity."

For the U.S. and other allies, the scale of Russia's war on Ukraine has put a spotlight on

shortcomings in the defense industry when it comes to ramping up large-scale production on short notice.

A key will be getting allies to secure long-term contracts that will enable industry to increase production capacity, Stoltenberg said.

"The good news is that several allies, including the United States and France, have already signed new multiyear contracts with the defense industry," Stoltenberg said.

But he added that more progress is needed.

During talks in Brussels, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also will convene a meeting of the Ukraine Contact Group, a collection of allies and partners

focused on ways to increase military support for Ukraine.

As the war approaches its one-year mark, Russian President Vladimir Putin has given no indication that he is looking for an off-ramp, Stoltenberg said.

"He is launching new offensives, so we must continue to provide Ukraine with what it needs to win and to achieve a just and sustainable peace," Stoltenberg said.

The NATO chief described the war now as a "race of logistics" involving supplies like ammunition, fuel and spare parts that must reach Ukraine before Russia can seize the initiative on the battlefield.

"Speed will save lives," he said.

China says US balloons flew in airspace

Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Monday said more than 10 U.S. high-altitude balloons have flown in its airspace during the past year without its permission, following Washington's accusation that Beijing operates a fleet of surveillance balloons around the world. The United States denied that it operates any surveillance balloons over China.

The Chinese allegation came after the U.S. shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon that had crossed from Alaska to South Carolina, sparking a new crisis in bilateral relations that have spiraled to their lowest level in decades.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin gave no details about the alleged U.S. balloons, how they had been dealt with or whether they had government or military links.

"It is also common for U.S. balloons to illegally enter the airspace of other countries," Wang said at a daily briefing. "Since last year, U.S. high-alti-

tude balloons have illegally flown over China's airspace more than 10 times without the approval of Chinese authorities."

Wang said the U.S. should "first reflect on itself and change course, rather than smear and instigate a confrontation."

China says the balloon shot down by the U.S. was an unmanned airship made for meteorological research that had been blown off course. It has accused the U.S. of overreacting by shooting it down and threatened to take unspecified action in response.

In Washington, National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said Monday that any claim that the U.S. government operates surveillance balloons over China is false.

"It is China that has a high-altitude surveillance balloon program for intelligence collection, connected to the People's Liberation Army, that it has used to violate the sovereignty of the

United States and over 40 countries across five continents," Watson said.

"This is the latest example of China scrambling to do damage control. It has repeatedly and wrongly claimed the surveillance balloon it sent over the United States was a weather balloon and to this day has failed to offer any credible explanations for its intrusion into our airspace and the airspace of others."

Following the balloon incident, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a visit to Beijing that many had hoped would put the brakes on the sharp decline in relations over Taiwan, trade, human rights and threatening Chinese actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Also Monday, the Philippines accused a Chinese coast guard ship of targeting a Philippine coast guard vessel with a military-grade laser and temporarily blinding some of its crew in the South China Sea, calling it a

"blatant" violation of Manila's sovereign rights.

Wang said a Philippine coast guard vessel had trespassed into Chinese waters without permission on Feb. 6 and that Chinese coast guard vessels responded "professionally and with restraint." China claims virtually all of the strategic waterway and has been steadily building up its maritime forces and island outposts.

"China and the Philippines are maintaining communication through diplomatic channels in this regard," Wang said. China's Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to a question about the incident.

Adding to tensions, a U.S. fighter jet shot down an "unidentified object" over Lake Huron on Sunday on orders from President Joe Biden.

It was the fourth such downing in eight days in an extraordinary chain of events over U.S. airspace that Pentagon officials believe has no peacetime precedent.

Turkish survivors face despair as rescues diminish

Associated Press

ADIYAMAN, Turkey — Thousands left homeless by a massive earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria a week ago packed into crowded tents or lined up in the streets for hot meals Monday, while the desperate search for anyone still alive likely entered its last hours.

One crew wrested a 4-year-old girl from rubble in hard-hit Adiyaman, 177 hours after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck.

Thousands of local and overseas teams, including Turkish coal miners and experts aided by sniffer dogs and thermal cameras, are scouring pulverized apartment blocks for signs of life.

While stories of near-miraculous rescues have flooded the airwaves in recent days — many broadcast live on Turkish television and beamed around the world — tens of thousands of dead have been found during the same period.

Experts say given temperatures that have fallen to 21 degrees Fahrenheit — and

the total collapse of so many buildings — the window for such rescues is nearly shut.

The quake and its aftershocks, including a major one nine hours after the initial tremor, struck southeastern Turkey and northern Syria on Feb. 6, killing more than 35,000 and reducing swaths of towns and cities inhabited by millions to fragments of concrete and twisted metal.

Damage included heritage sites in places like Antakya, an important ancient port and early center of Christianity historically known as Antioch.

Greek Orthodox churches in the region have started charity drives to assist the relief effort and raise funds to eventually rebuild or repair churches.

About 60 miles from the epicenter, almost no houses were left standing in the village of Polat, where residents salvaged refrigerators, washing machines and other goods from wrecked homes.

Not enough tents have arrived for the homeless, said survivor Zehra Kurukafa,

forcing families to share the tents that are available.

"We sleep in the mud, all together with two, three, even four families," said Kurukafa.

Turkish authorities said Monday that more than 150,000 survivors have been moved to shelters outside the affected provinces.

Volunteers from across Turkey have mobilized to help millions of survivors, including a group of volunteer chefs and restaurant owners who served traditional food such as beans and rice and lentil soup for survivors who lined up in the streets of downtown Adiyaman.

As the scale of the disaster comes into view, sorrow and disbelief have turned to rage over the sense there has been an ineffective response to the historic disaster.

That anger could be a political problem for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who faces a tough reelection battle in May.

Haley faces 'high-wire act' in presidential bid

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Few have navigated the turbulent politics of the Trump era like Nikki Haley.

In early 2016, the then-South Carolina governor said she was “embarrassed” by candidate Donald Trump and decried his reluctance to condemn white supremacists. Nine months later, she agreed to join his Cabinet, serving as a key validator as Trump sought to win over skeptical world leaders and voters at home.

And shortly after Trump left the White House, Haley, whose résumé by then included an ambassadorship to the United Nations, vowed not to step in the way if he ran for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. Yet on Wednesday, she is poised to become the first major Republican candidate to enter the race

against him.

“It’s going to be quite the high-wire act,” said veteran Republican strategist Terry Sullivan. “She says she’s always been an underdog. She will be again.”

The 51-year-old Haley may be the first to take on Trump, but a half-dozen or more high-profile Republicans are expected to join the GOP’s 2024 presidential nomination contest over the coming months. Some would-be competitors may be more popular than Haley even in South Carolina, where she lives and has established a campaign headquarters.

Likely rivals include Sen. Tim Scott, a fellow South Carolinian and perhaps the most celebrated elected official in a state where Trump has already locked up endorsements from the governor and its senior senator, Lindsey Graham.

Indeed, on the eve of this

week’s announcement, there is broad agreement that Haley — the only Republican woman of color expected in the 2024 contest, a politician who loves to remind people that she has never lost an election — is about to be tested as never before.

Trump has stepped up his attacks on Haley in recent weeks. But allies describe the former governor, who is the daughter of Indian immigrants, as a savvy executive uniquely positioned to lead a new generation of Republicans.

Perhaps more than anyone this young presidential primary season, Haley personifies the Republican Party’s shifting views on Trump. Her reversal on whether to challenge the former president was based less on concerns about his divisive leadership or policy disagreements than the growing belief within the GOP that Trump

is losing political strength.

Haley, like the majority of her party, largely supported Trump even after he inspired a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol.

It was not until Trump-backed candidates across several key states were defeated in last fall’s midterm elections that a wave of high-profile Republicans began to openly weigh 2024 bids against him.

New York-based Republican donor Eric Levine says he’s convinced that another Trump Republican nomination would lead to his party’s destruction. Haley, he said, is among the three favorite Trump alternatives.

“I think as a woman of color and a daughter of legal immigrants from India, she’d give the Democratic Party no reason to exist. All their woke crap goes out the window,” Levine said. “I think she’s a spectacular candidate.”

Union: Critical facts kept from EMTs on Nichols call

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The head of a union representing most of the Memphis Fire Department said three employees who were fired after the death of Tyre Nichols weren’t given enough information as they responded to the call for medical help.

Thomas Malone, president of the Memphis Fire Fighters Association, also wrote in a letter to city council members that information was withheld from those first responders by people on the scene. Nichols, who was Black, was beaten by Memphis police after he was pulled over Jan. 7 for an alleged traffic violation. However, Police Chief Cerelyn “CJ” Davis has said publicly released footage failed to show why Nichols was stopped at all.

The union leader came to the defense of the fire department as a whole, saying its more-than-1,600 employees “serve this

city and its citizens with purpose and intent each and every day.”

The Daily Memphian reported on and published a copy of the letter, which says “there is no way any member could be truly prepared for a situation that occurred on January 7, 2023.”

“Our members were not given adequate information upon dispatch or upon arrival of the scene,” Malone wrote. “Quite frankly, there was information withheld by those already on the scene which caused our members to handle things differently than they should have.”

Three fire department employees were fired after Nichols died, and 13 police officers have either been disciplined or are under investigation.

Memphis city spokeswoman Arlenia Cole told the Daily Memphian that all three former fire department employees have appealed their firings.

Spirits overtake brews in US amid rise in cocktail favor

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Producers of spirits have new bragging rights in the age-old whiskey vs. beer barroom debate.

New figures show that spirits surpassed beer for U.S. market-share supremacy, based on supplier revenues, a spirit industry group announced Thursday.

The rise to the top for spirit-makers was fueled in part by the resurgent cocktail culture — including the growing popularity of ready-to-drink concoctions — as well as strong growth in the tequila and American whiskey segments, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States said.

In 2022, spirits gained market share for the 13th straight year in the fiercely competitive U.S. beverage alcohol market, as its supplier sales reached 42.1%, the council said. After years of steady growth, it marked the first time that spirit supplier revenues have surpassed beer — but just

barely, the spirit industry group said. Beer holds a 41.9% market share, it said.

“Despite the tough economy, consumers continued to enjoy premium spirits and fine cocktails in 2022,” Distilled Spirits Council President and CEO Chris Swonger said.

Overall spirit supplier sales in the U.S. were up 5.1% in 2022 to a record \$37.6 billion, the group said. Volumes rose 4.8% to 305 million 9-liter cases.

Benj Steinman, president of Beer Marketer’s Insights, a leading beer industry trade publication, said the beer industry saw unprecedented growth in the 1970s, growing at a pace of 4% annually. As recently as 2000, beer’s share in the alcohol market was 58%. Over the past several decades, beer’s growth has essentially been flat. Meanwhile, spirits have flourished.

“I think there’s just a long arc on these things,” Steinman said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

1908 Harley-Davidson is now priciest bike ever

WI MILWAUKEE — A rare Harley-Davidson motorcycle built in 1908 has become the most expensive motorcycle ever sold at auction, according to data compiled by a website that tracks vintage motorcycle sales.

The Strap Tank Harley-Davidson was recorded on vintagent.com as being sold for \$935,000 after auction fees last month at the Mecum Auction in Las Vegas, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported Friday.

The bike was named Strap Tank because its oil and fuel tanks are attached to the frame with nickel straps. The bike is believed to be one of only 12 such models in the world.

The record-breaking bike had many of its original parts, making it even more rare, said Greg Arnold, Motorcycle Division manager at Mecum Auctions.

1st infant surrendered anonymously at 'baby box'

KY BOWLING GREEN — Kentucky has seen its first infant anonymously dropped off at one of its “baby box” safe surrender locations.

At a news conference Friday, Safe Haven Baby Boxes founder and CEO Monica Kelsey said the child was dropped off within the last seven days at a Bowling Green Fire Department location, declining to be more specific to protect anonymity. She said fire department staff was able to tend to the child in less than 90 seconds.

The child is the 24th in the country to be surrendered at

one of more than 130 baby boxes and drawers the organization has established across nine states.

Gov. Andy Beshear signed a law in 2021 that allows the use of baby boxes for children less than 30 days old. The law requires the boxes to be located at police stations, fire stations or hospitals that are staffed 24 hours a day. It also requires equipping them with a notification system to alert the first responders on site that a child has been placed inside the box.

Oldest school for Black children going to museum

VA WILLIAMSBURG — A building believed to be the oldest surviving schoolhouse for Black children in the United States was hoisted onto a flatbed truck and moved a half-mile Friday into Colonial Williamsburg, a Virginia museum that continues to expand its emphasis on African American history.

Built 25 years before the American Revolution, the original structure stood near the college campus of William & Mary. The two-story pinewood building held as many as 30 students at a time, some of them free Black children studying alongside the enslaved.

Hundreds of people lined the streets to celebrate its slow-speed trip into the heart of the living history museum, which tells the story of Virginia's colonial capital through interpreters and restored buildings.

For historians and descendants alike, the Bray School contradicts the belief that all enslaved Americans were uneducated. But the school's faith-based curriculum — created by

an English charity — also justified slavery and encouraged students to accept their fate as God's plan.

Emu escapes, causes ruckus before capture

MA EAST BRIDGEWATER — A large pet bird that is normally native to Australia caused a ruckus south of Boston after escaping from her home.

The bird is an emu, which is the second-tallest bird on Earth after its close relative the ostrich. The flightless bird got loose on Thursday night in East Bridgewater and led police on a chase through Brockton, WCVB-TV reported.

The bird's owner, Lee Flaherty, told the television station that a wild animal likely caused the emu to jump over a 6-foot high fence and take off. The bird, named Mallory, was eventually subdued in a parking lot by Flaherty, police and a bystander.

Mallory was back in her pen after the journey, in which she traveled past Massasoit Community College and Brockton Hospital.

13-year-old boy arrested for threats at school

AZ COTTONWOOD — A 13-year-old Cottonwood boy is facing serious charges after he allegedly threatened classmates, saying they were on a “kill list.”

Cottonwood police said the incident was reported Thursday afternoon at Mountain View Preparatory School. Several students informed teachers that the boy repeatedly made threats. Officers spoke with the students and teachers involved.

Authorities said the boy then said he had no real intention to injure anyone. They also found no evidence of an actual list.

The teen, whose name is not being released, was being held Friday at Yavapai County Juvenile Detention Center on charges of making a terroristic threat, threatening or intimidating and interference or disruption of an educational institution.

Factory workers subdue armed person at plant

MN NEW YORK MILLS — A man who fired a shot at a co-worker during a dispute at a Minnesota boat factory Thursday was subdued by other workers as he tried to flee, preventing any serious injuries, authorities said.

Officers responding to a call about an active shooter found David Jeremiah Gadsen, 21, being held by his co-workers at the Lund Boat Co. in New York Mills, Minn., Otter Tail County Sheriff Barry Fitzgibbons said.

Fitzgibbons said in a news release that the two men were arguing inside the plant when Gadsen pulled a handgun and fired one shot, which did not strike the 31-year-old intended victim.

One other shot was “possibly” fired as the shooter chased the other man out of the factory, Fitzgibbons said. The victim escaped unharmed.

Gadsen tried to get back inside the factory but a worker held the door shut and prevented him from entering, according to the sheriff. When Gadsen tried to run away, other workers caught him and held him for officers, Fitzgibbons said.

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Mahomes leads KC to Super Bowl title

Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Patrick Mahomes was magical when the Kansas City Chiefs desperately needed him to pull off another Super Bowl comeback.

Playing on an injured ankle, Mahomes threw two touchdown passes in the fourth quarter and scrambled 26 yards on the go-ahead drive before Harrison Butker kicked a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds left to give the Chiefs a 38-35 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night.

The Chiefs won their second NFL title in four years and two-time NFL MVP Mahomes earned his second Super Bowl MVP award.

“I thought guys just embraced the moment,” Mahomes said about rallying from a 10-point halftime deficit. “In that first half, we were playing and doing some good stuff, but I felt like the guys were getting consumed by everything around us.”

Mahomes and Jalen Hurts excelled in the first Super Bowl matchup featuring two Black starting QBs. But Mahomes turned it up in the second half after re-aggravating a sprained right ankle.

“It took everybody to win the game,” Mahomes shouted as red and yellow con-

fetti littered the field.

Coach Andy Reid, who couldn’t win the big game in Philadelphia, beat his former team to earn his second ring with Mahomes and the Chiefs.

“We wanted to get this so bad for him,” Travis Kelce said. “His legacy in Philly lives on forever. ... There’s a lot of pride in knowing that he’s had success in two different organizations, but this was the better one.”

With the score tied at 35, the Eagles tried to let the Chiefs score a touchdown with under two minutes left so they could get the ball back after a defensive holding call on cornerback James Bradberry on third-and-8 gave Kansas City a first down. But Jerick McKinnon slid at the 2, forcing the Eagles to use their last timeout.

“It was holding. I tugged his jersey. I was hoping they would let it slide,” Bradberry said.

After Mahomes took a knee twice, Butker nailed his kick, sending thousands of red-clad Chiefs fans into a frenzy.

“It feels amazing just to see the confetti,” said Butker, who missed a 42-yarder in the first quarter. “I just tried to focus on one kick and focusing on the process.”

The Chiefs won their second Super Bowl following the 2019 season, 50 years after the first one. Mahomes led them back from a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter against San Francisco in that one. It took just three years to get another Lombardi.

Chiefs fans were outnumbered in the stadium, but did their part to silence the boisterous Philly fans with the tomahawk chop chant.

Down 24-14 with a limping Mahomes, the Chiefs (17-3) followed up Rihanna’s electrifying halftime performance with a sensational offensive outburst.

Mahomes, who suffered a high ankle sprain in the divisional round, hurt it again on a 3-yard scramble late in the second quarter. He limped off the field but showed no ill effects on Kansas City’s next possession.

“I knew it was pretty bad when he got up limping but I knew it wasn’t gonna be bad enough to where he was gonna pull himself off the field,” Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy said. “If we would’ve pulled him off, I would’ve had to fight him. He would’ve probably fought me. And so it wasn’t worth entertaining.”

Brilliant effort by Eagles’ Hurts comes up short

Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Whether it was through the air or on the ground, Jalen Hurts dominated the Super Bowl offensively for the Philadelphia Eagles.

It just wasn’t enough to out-duel Patrick Mahomes.

Hurts delivered a record performance on football’s biggest stage, throwing for 304 yards and a touchdown, running for 70 yards and three scores and adding a game-tying two-point conversion.

But Hurts could only watch from the sideline as Mahomes drove the Chiefs to the go-ahead field goal with 8 seconds remaining for a 38-35 victory on Sunday.

“It’s tough,” Hurts said. “We worked really hard to have this opportunity and to come up

short, it’s tough. There’s always a lot to learn from, to have an opportunity to reflect on some of the things we didn’t do and could have done. There is a lot to learn from tonight.”

Despite ending up with the loss, Hurts put together one of the most prolific games in Super Bowl history, but became the first QB ever to lose the big game while leading his team to at least 35 points.

He set the record for most yards rushing ever by a quarterback in a Super Bowl, he tied Terrell Davis’ record for most TD runs by any player, tied James White’s mark with 20 points scored and joined Hall of Famers Steve Young and Joe Montana as the only players ever to account for at least 370 yards and four TDs (rushing and passing) in a Super Bowl.

“Jalen played the best game I’ve seen him play in the two years we’ve been together,” coach Nick Sirianni said. “He was outstanding. I really thought he was in complete control and he did things with his legs in the run game, he did things with his arm in the pass game, made some unbelievable throws, unbelievable reads. I thought he played outstanding.”

But the breakthrough season that ended with Hurts as the runner-up to Mahomes in the MVP voting also led him to be runner-up in the Super Bowl as Hurts became the first player to lose a Super Bowl despite accounting for four touchdowns.

Hurts started the game fast and never slowed down — but couldn’t get a chance to win it at the end thanks to a defensive holding call against James

Bradberry that gave the Chiefs a first down in field-goal range and helped them run out most of the clock.

Hurts had one last chance. His desperation pass fell way short and he walked off the field in dejection.

It was a crushing way to end a brilliant performance.

“Jalen played a hell of a game,” center Jason Kelce said. “On ground, through the air. He made obviously some huge throws. Both offenses came ready to go. It was kind of one of those things where probably whoever had the ball last was going to be in a good situation. We knew if we gave it back with five minutes (remaining), you’re hoping somebody makes a play. But that’s a tough task. Patrick Mahomes is MVP for a reason.”

Questionable flag takes drama from end

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — A questionable late penalty on Philadelphia Eagles cornerback James Bradberry with less than two minutes remaining meant that a scintillating Super Bowl 57 had a bit of an underwhelming finish.

Kansas City won its second Super Bowl in four years by beating the Eagles 38-35 on Sunday in Glendale, Ariz. It was an exciting back-and-forth game that saw the Chiefs claw back from a 10-point halftime deficit.

One of the few gripes for football fans — particularly Eagles fans — was the anti-climatic ending.

The Chiefs were driving and faced third-and-8 at the Eagles 15-yard line with 1:54 remaining when Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes threw incomplete to JuJu

Smith-Schuster. But officials flagged Bradberry for defensive holding, which negated the incompletion and, more importantly, gave the Chiefs a first down.

Replays showed that Bradberry made light contact with Smith-Schuster, though it didn't appear to affect the play much.

Many fans — and some football commentators — disagreed with the call. Former NFL tight end Greg Olsen wasn't happy with the decision on the Fox broadcast and ESPN and Amazon analyst Kirk Herbstreit was also critical on social media.

The only person who didn't seem upset with the call was Bradberry himself.

"It was a holding. I tugged his jersey," Bradberry said. "I was hoping they would let it slide."

Referee Carl Cheffers said it was a "clear

case of a jersey grab."

"The receiver went to the inside and he was attempting to release to the outside," Cheffers told a pool reporter. "The defender grabbed the jersey with his right hand and restricted him from releasing to the outside. So, therefore, we called defensive holding."

Kansas City was able to essentially run out the clock from that point forward. Chiefs running back Jerick McKinnon made a smart move on the ensuing down, purposefully sliding 2 yards short of the goal line instead of scoring a touchdown.

Mahomes then was able to kneel twice as the clock ran down after the Eagles used their final timeout.

Harrison Butker kicked a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds remaining that proved to be the winner.

Schwartz, Kraken top Flyers, end three-game skid

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jaden Schwartz scored twice, Jordan Eberle had a goal and an assist and the Seattle Kraken sapped some of Philadelphia's Super Bowl Sunday excitement with a 4-3 victory over the Flyers.

Eeli Tolvanen also scored and Philipp Grubauer made 18 saves for the Kraken, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Seattle entered in fourth place in the Pacific Division and two points out of third.

Eberle said Seattle sorely needed the win.

"Anytime you've lost three in a row, especially coming out of the break, you start doubting yourself a bit," he said. "Ultimately, you come back and you just get a win and you start moving forward."

James van Riemsdyk, Owen Tippett and Patrick Brown scored for the Flyers. Philadelphia completed a homestand with its third loss in four games.

"I just don't think we were on," Flyers coach John Tortorella said.

Serving as the appetizer for Sunday night's Super Bowl featuring the Philadelphia Eagles versus the Kansas City Chiefs,

the pregame had a party atmosphere. Flyers players entered the arena wearing Eagles jerseys, matching many fans' choice of Eagles apparel. Defensemen Travis Sanheim and Tony DeAngelo sported Eagles winter caps during warmups, and Eagles legend Vince Papale pounded the drum before the opening faceoff.

The video board was lit up in green and "Go Birds" scrolled across the screen. Longtime national anthem singer Lauren Hart donned a Jalen Hurts jersey and PA announcer Lou Nolan wore an Eagles baseball hat.

There were eight "E-A-G-L-E-S!" chants in the first period, and the hometown fans were enthused when Tippett snapped an 0-for-13 team skid on the power play with a close-range goal 2:11 into the contest to put the Flyers ahead 1-0.

But Philadelphia didn't take a shot in the final 16:35 of the first period, and the Kraken made them pay with goals by Eberle and Tolvanen.

Sandstrom, Philadelphia's backup to Carter Hart, made 15 saves while falling to 1-8-1.

Canadiens 6, Oilers 2: Jordan Harris had his first career two-goal game and host Montreal

earned wins on back-to-back afternoons.

Alex Belzile, Josh Anderson, Rafael Harvey-Pinard and Christian Dvorak added goals for Montreal. Evgenii Dadonov and Jonathan Drouin each recorded two assists. Jake Allen made 30 saves.

Leon Draisaitl and Evander Kane scored for Edmonton. Connor McDavid was left off the score sheet, ending a 15-game point streak.

Stuart Skinner made 24 saves as the Oilers recorded their first regulation loss in 12 games. They were on a 9-0-2 run heading into Sunday's contest.

Golden Knights 7, Ducks 2: Seven Vegas players had two points and the team scored five times in the third period to break open a one-goal game and extend its winning streak to three games.

Michael Amadio, William Carrier, Jack Eichel, Phil Kessel and Shea Theodore each had a goal and an assist. Paul Cotter and Brett Howden added goals for Vegas. Reilly Smith and William Karlsson each had two assists.

Isac Lundestrom had a goal and an assist, and Frank Vatrano also scored for the Ducks. John

Gibson finished with 32 saves.

After stumbling into the All-Star break at 1-5-2, the Knights have come out firing since then. They have outscored their last three opponents by a combined 17-4 to take a three-point lead in the Pacific Division.

Sharks 4, Capitals 1: Erik Karlsson had a goal and two assists, Aaron Dell stopped all eight shots he faced in relief and visiting San Jose ended its road trip by beating Washington.

Karlsson assisted on a goal by Evgeny Svechnikov at even strength in the first period and Alexander Barabanov on the power play in the second to give him 55 this season, good for second in the NHL. Tomas Hertl added an empty-net goal with 2:11 left.

Karlsson scored his 18th goal of the season in the third period on a shot from along the boards that fluttered by Charlie Lindgren. A third Norris Trophy as the league's top defenseman is in reach for Karlsson, who's on pace to be the first player at that position to reach 100 points since Brian Leetch in 1991-92.

Evgeny Kuznetsov scored Washington's only goal and Lindgren made 29 saves.

Northwestern knocks off No. 1 Purdue

Associated Press

EVANSTON, Ill. — As Northwestern struggled through the past couple of seasons, Boo Buie and Chase Audige learned some tough lessons — on poise, and finishing strong, and competing.

That's how they got to Sunday, and one historic victory for the Wildcats.

Buie scored 26 points and Audige had 15, leading Northwestern to a 64-58 win over Zach Edey and No. 1 Purdue.

"We put in so much work together and we've been through so many ups and downs," Buie said. "It's finally starting to show what the real us is."

Led by its experienced backcourt and supported by a rowdy student section behind each basket, Northwestern (18-7, 9-5 Big Ten) added a signature win to its bid for the school's second NCAA Tournament appearance. The Wildcats got their first win in 19 games against the No. 1 team in the AP poll.

Northwestern's 18 wins are the most for the school since it went 24-12 during the 2016-17 season, losing to Gonzaga in the second round of the NCAA tourney. It went 32-55 in the previous three years before finding its stride again this season.

"We had a bunch of guys that stayed the course and stayed loyal to the program and fought," Northwestern coach Chris Collins said, "and we had a great offseason."

"When you have a day like this, you know it can be emotional because you know there's a lot of hard work by a lot of people to make this happen."

Purdue (23-3, 12-3) had won 11 in a row against Northwestern, but the Boilermakers stumbled down the stretch.

They shot just 28.6% (6-for-21) and committed 13 of their 16 turnovers in the second half.

Edey had 24 points, eight rebounds and three blocked shots, but the 7-foot-4 center turned it

over six times. Freshman Braden Smith had 10 points on 1-for-7 shooting.

"Just got to show more poise and toughness than we did," Purdue coach Matt Painter said.

Edey's hook shot lifted Purdue to a 55-47 lead with 3:52 to go. But Northwestern closed the game with a 17-3 run.

The decisive stretch began with a huge offensive rebound by Buie, setting up Audige's three-pointer. Audige then had a fast-break dunk, and he just kept going from there.

Audige scored 10 points in Northwestern's dazzling finish. He gave the Wildcats the lead for good when he made a three-pointer after an Edey turnover.

"When my team needed me, I just tried my best to be there," Audige said. "A shot went through, and then the rim started looking a little bigger."

Brooks Barnhizer had a fast-break layup and Buie made two foul shots in the final minute to

help Northwestern hold on. When it was over, the jubilant student sections stormed the court to celebrate with the team.

"Hopefully that'll give our guys confidence to know that you can compete with a team that's as good as anybody in the country," Collins said.

Painter said Buie's offensive rebound was a big moment at the end.

"We've got to secure that right there," Painter said.

Ethan Morton and Mason Gillis each made a 3-pointer to help Purdue open a 26-16 lead with 9:19 left in the first half. But Buie converted a driving layup in the final seconds, trimming the Boilermakers' lead to 37-30 at the break.

Led by Gillis, the Boilermakers went 5 for 9 on 3-pointers in the early going. They missed their last 13 attempts from long range. They shot 36.2% from the field overall after shooting at least 50% in their previous five games.

White, Hauser help short-handed Celtics top Grizzlies

Associated Press

BOSTON — Derrick White scored 23 points to help a short-handed Boston team hold off Ja Morant and the Memphis Grizzlies 119-109 on Sunday.

Sam Hauser added 20 points, tying his career-high with six three-pointers, Al Horford had 16 points and Payton Pritchard added 12 for Boston, which won its fourth straight. Celtics star Jayson Tatum didn't have his sharpest game, finishing with 16 points but making three of 16 shots.

"That's the beauty of this team," said White, who also had 10 assists. "We're just so deep. We've got a lot of guys that can do a little bit of everything."

Morant led the Grizzlies with 25 points, seven assists and six rebounds, while Desmond Bane

scored 18 and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 15 points and seven rebounds.

Boston was without starting point guard Marcus Smart, who missed his 10th straight with a bone bruise in his right ankle, as well as forward Jaylen Brown (facial fracture he suffered from an inadvertent elbow by Tatum) and reserve guard Malcolm Brogdon (sore Achilles).

Boston moved to 1½ games ahead of the idle Bucks for the Eastern Conference's best record ahead of their matchup in Milwaukee on Tuesday.

The Celtics were clinging to a one-point lead early in the final quarter before White scored six points — with a conventional three-point play and three-pointer from the right wing — during a 16-7 spurt that moved

them ahead 104-94 with just over four minutes to play.

"We have some of our top dogs out now and it's just an opportunity for guys to showcase what they can do," Hauser said. "Try to fill that void of the guys that were out. They bring a lot to the table. We try to do our best to do whatever we can to help the team win."

Horford nailed three 3-pointers in the final five minutes.

Trailing by 13 at halftime, the Grizzlies used a 13-point third quarter by Morant that featured one-handed driving baskets, flips in the lane and twisting shots to wipe out the deficit, taking the lead briefly late in the third.

Morant said last month that he wasn't worried about facing any team in the West in the

playoffs. He brought it up again Sunday.

"The confidence I had when I said that is the confidence that got us to the point where we're at now — being one of the top teams in this league," he said.

Raptors 119, Pistons 118: Fred VanVleet scored 35 points, topping 30 for a career-best ninth time this season, and Pascal Siakam added 28 points as host Toronto beat Detroit for its fourth win in five games.

Scottie Barnes scored 20 points and Precious Achiuwa had 11 points and 11 rebounds as Toronto won its second straight over Detroit after losing the previous six meetings.

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 33 points, Alec Burks had 21, and Hamidou Diallo and Jaden Ivey each had 18 for the Pistons.