

Drone in Jordan likely went undetected

The Washington Post

U.S. forces probably did not detect the approach of the Iranian-made drone that killed three American soldiers last week at a remote base in Jordan, and there was no air defense system on site capable of shooting it down, the military's initial assessment of the attack has found.

The early findings, which have not been previously reported, indicate that the drone may have been missed "due to its low flight path," a U.S. defense official with direct knowledge of the assessment told *The Washington Post*. Additionally, this person said, the base, known as Tower 22, was not outfitted with weapons that can "kill" aerial threats like drones, and instead relied on electronic warfare systems designed to disable them or disrupt their path to a target.

A common strategy among drone operators and other pilots seeking to minimize or evade radar detection is to fly low to the

ground. Another U.S. official affirmed the military's belief that the drone flew too low to be detected. Both officials, like some others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive and ongoing investigation. Defense officials have stressed that assessments can change as investigators learn more.

Taken together, the preliminary findings appear to undermine previous assertions that U.S. air defenses mistook the attacking aircraft for an American drone returning to the base about the same time, and they raise new questions about the Pentagon's ability to keep pace with the threats facing U.S. personnel deployed across the Middle East since the war in Gaza set off an acceleration of violence.

U.S. Central Command, which oversees military activity throughout the region, has declined to say whether officials believe the militants responsible

had knowledge of the base's limited defenses.

In a statement, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said CENTCOM has continued to review the attack.

"For operations security reasons, we won't discuss specific force protection measures or potential posture changes," she said. "However, as always, we are committed to taking necessary measures to safeguard our forces who serve in harm's way."

Tower 22 is located at the nexus of Jordan's shared border with Syria and Iraq. It functions as a support site for another U.S. outpost, the isolated al-Tanf garrison in Syria, situated along a key highway connecting Tehran to Damascus. From al-Tanf, U.S. forces have sought to disrupt Iran's efforts to supply weapons and materiel to partners and proxies in Syria and beyond.

The Jan. 28 attack in Jordan killed three Army reservists

from Georgia, the first American deaths from hostile fire since Israel's war in Gaza triggered repeated attacks on U.S. positions in Iraq and Syria by groups affiliated with Iran. There have been at least 168 such incidents since mid-October, according to Pentagon data.

At Tower 22, dozens of other personnel were wounded in the blast, which struck a housing unit during the early morning while many of the 350 troops deployed there were in bed asleep. In response to the deadly violence, U.S. warplanes on Friday struck more than 85 targets in Iraq and Syria that military officials said were associated with the Quds Force, a unit of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and local militias it supports.

Although Tower 22 was outfitted with "multiple" electronic warfare systems capable of taking drones offline, it had limited means to protect itself.

Pentagon believes it has identified Osprey problem

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon believes it has identified the mechanical failure that led to a fatal crash of an Osprey aircraft in Japan and the grounding of the fleet for two months, a U.S. defense official told *The Associated Press*. It is now weighing how the aircraft can be returned to service.

The Pentagon's Joint Safety Council is now working with the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps on their plans to get Osprey crews ready to fly again, said Navy Rear Adm. Chris Engdahl, chairman of the council and commander of Naval Safety Command.

The Air Force investigation is continuing into the Nov. 29 Air Force special operations command CV-22 crash, which killed eight service members. The crash led to a rare grounding on Dec. 6 of about 400 Osprey aircraft across the three services. Japan also grounded its fleet of 14 Ospreys following the crash.

The official who said the mechanical failure had been identified declined to say what the failure was. It has opened the door to discussions on return to flight because mitigations can be put in place. The official was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

While each service will determine when it returns its own fleets to the skies, the council is talking with "commanders across the services on what are their plans to come back to flight, what are their risk decisions," Engdahl said. "In aviation, they've done this before, but probably not on this broad scale with a platform like we have in the V-22" Osprey.

That could include getting service-wide input on how many simulator hours are needed to get a crew back to proficiency, with what type of flying, and what maintenance is needed on each Osprey before they go up in the air again, Engdahl said.

Flight safety is dependent on pilots maintaining currency on an aircraft — meaning that they are flying regularly enough to be proficient in all types of flying, such as night missions, close formation flying or refueling. After 60 days of being grounded, that will be one of the key issues the services must prepare for as the Ospreys return to flight.

They must also make sure the aircraft are ready. Both the Air Force and Marine Corps have been running the Osprey's engines, and the Marines have been conducting ground movements to keep the aircraft working.

Storm finally eases in Southern Calif.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A storm that parked itself over Southern California for days, unleashing historic downpours that caused hundreds of landslides, was expected to move out of the region after one final drenching Wednesday, but authorities warned of the continued threat of collapsing hillsides.

One of the wettest storms in Southern California history unleashed at least 475 mudslides in the Los Angeles area after dumping more than a foot of rain in some areas, including the Hollywood Hills.

The weather began relenting Tuesday and evacuation orders were lifted for homes in flood- and slide-prone areas, including a canyon in Los Angeles County that was scarred by a 2022 fire and left with little or no vegetation to hold soil in place.

After a heavy cloudburst forecast for Wednesday afternoon or night that could bring another few inches of rain, Southern California was expected to begin drying out Thursday and heading for a

sunny weekend.

Yet after back-to-back atmospheric rivers walloped California in less than a week, it wouldn't take much for water, mud and boulders to sluice down fragile hillsides, experts warned.

"The ground is fully saturated and simply cannot hold any more water," even if rains are light, National Weather Service meteorologist Tyler Kranz said.

Fortunately, no deaths had been reported from the slides.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said the city was looking toward helping people recover from the weather's pounding. Officials will seek federal emergency money to help move homeless people out of shelters and to aid owners of damaged hillside homes where insurance companies wouldn't cover the losses, she said.

Work crews, meanwhile, struggled to deal with the storm's aftermath. Thousands of customers remained without power late Tuesday, after rain flooded electrical vaults and trees brought down on power lines.

Missing Marine helicopter located outside San Diego

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A Marine Corps helicopter that had been missing with five troops aboard as an historic storm continued drenching California was found Wednesday morning in a mountainous area outside San Diego.

The aircraft was located just after 9 a.m. by civil authorities near the mountain community of Pine Valley, about a 45-mile drive from San Diego but rescue crews said snowy conditions were making access challenging on the ground.

They were "using ground and aviation assets to locate the aircrew in coordination with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and multiple federal state and local agencies," the Marine Corps said in a statement.

The Marines were flying a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter from Creech Air Force Base, northwest of Las Vegas, where they had been doing unit-level training and were returning home to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, defense officials said.

It was not immediately known what time the helicopter left Creech nor what time they

were due to arrive. Waves of heavy downpours hit the area throughout the night and snow was forecast for San Diego County mountains.

The five U.S. Marines were assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing at Miramar, the Marine Corps said in a statement.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department was notified at 1 a.m. that the craft was overdue for arrival at Miramar and was last seen in the area of Pine Valley, a mountainous region near the Cleveland National Forest about 35 miles east of downtown San Diego, Lt. Matthew Carpenter said.

The military was coordinating search and rescue efforts with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the Civil Air Patrol, the Marine Corps said.

Heavy snow falling Wednesday in the sparsely populated mountains covered in pine trees and thick brush was making access to the area challenging, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire, said in a statement on X.

USMC wants air-control experts for data-sharing job

By MATTHEW ADAMS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Marines with air-control experience will be able to apply for a new warrant officer job focused on rapidly exchanging information within the service and the armed forces of other countries, the Marine Corps announced Tuesday.

The new military occupational specialty called the command and control interface control of-

ficer will be responsible for coordinating the use of networks and ensuring insights derived from battlefield data are shared between commanders.

"In support of modernization efforts, the [position] enables the Marine Corps' continued success in the tactical information environment while enhancing our ability to conduct operations aligned with Force Design 2030," according to a Marine administrative message

about the job.

To be eligible for the job, listed as military occupational specialty 7216, enlisted Marines must have expertise in existing and emerging communication practices and technologies. That includes Link 16, a military tactical data link network used by NATO members and other nations.

The service is looking for candidates with a background in managing airspace.

The warrant officer job is open to enlisted Marines who hold the military occupational specialties of low altitude air defense gunner, tactical air defense controller, air support operations operator, air traffic controller or senior air traffic controller.

The Marine Corps is establishing the position as part of an effort to update command and control amid the service's revamp known as Force Design.

House vote to impeach Mayorkas fails

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a dramatic setback, House Republicans failed Tuesday to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, forced to shelve a high-profile priority — for now — after a few GOP lawmakers refused to go along with the party’s plan.

The stunning roll call fell just a single vote short of impeaching Mayorkas, stalling the Republicans’ drive to punish the Biden administration over its handling

of the U.S.-Mexico border. With Democrats united against the charges, the Republicans needed almost every vote from their slim majority to approve the articles of impeachment.

A noisy, rowdy scene erupted on the House floor as the vote was tied for several tense minutes, 215-215. Several Republican lawmakers — led by the impeachment’s chief sponsor, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia — surrounded one of the holdouts, Wisconsin Repu-

blican Mike Gallagher, who refused to change his vote.

With the tally stuck, Democrats shouted for the gavel to close out the vote.

“Frustrated,” said Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, “but we’ll see it back again.”

House Speaker Mike Johnson’s spokesman Raj Shah said they “fully intend” to reconsider the articles of impeachment against Mayorkas “when we

have the votes for passage.”

But next steps are uncertain. In the end, three Republicans opposed the impeachment, and a fourth Republican switched his vote so the measure could be revisited.

The final tally was 214-216.

The outcome was another dismal result for the House Republicans who have repeatedly been unable to use their majority power to accomplish political goals, or even to keep up with the basics of governing.

Jury finds Mich. school shooter’s mother guilty

Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. — A Michigan jury convicted a school shooter’s mother of involuntary manslaughter Tuesday in the killings of four students in 2021, making her the first parent in the United States to be held responsible for a child carrying out a mass school attack.

Prosecutors said Jennifer Crumbley had a duty under state law to prevent her son, who was 15 at the time, from harming others. She was accused of failing to secure a gun and ammunition at home and failing to get help to support Ethan Crumbley’s mental health.

The four guilty verdicts — one for each student slain at Oxford High School — were returned after roughly 11 hours of deliberations.

Jennifer Crumbley, 45, looked down and shook her head slightly as each juror was polled after the verdicts were read.

On her way out of the courtroom, prosecu-

tor Karen McDonald hugged relatives of victims Justin Shilling and Madisyn Baldwin.

Jennifer and James Crumbley were the first parents in the U.S. to be charged in a mass school shooting committed by their child. James Crumbley faces trial in March.

“The cries have been heard, and I feel this verdict is gonna echo throughout every household in the country,” Justin’s father, Craig Shilling, said outside the courtroom.

“I feel it’s necessary, and I’m happy with the verdict. It’s still a sad situation to be in. It’s gotta stop. It’s an accountability, and this is what we’ve been asking for for a long time now,” Shilling said.

A gag order by the judge prevented McDonald and defense attorney Shannon Smith from speaking to reporters.

On the morning of Nov. 30, 2021, school staff members were concerned about a violent drawing of a gun, bullet and wounded

man, accompanied by desperate phrases, on Ethan Crumbley’s math assignment.

His parents were called to the school for a meeting, but they didn’t take the boy home.

A few hours later, Ethan Crumbley pulled a handgun from his backpack and shot 10 students and a teacher. No one had checked the backpack.

The gun was the Sig Sauer 9 mm his father had purchased with him just four days earlier. Jennifer Crumbley had taken her son to a shooting range that same weekend.

Outside the courthouse, the jury forewoman, who declined to give her name, said jurors were influenced by evidence that Jennifer Crumbley was the last adult to possess the gun. That “really hammered it home,” she told reporters.

In her closing argument Friday, McDonald said she filed the unprecedented charges because of the “unique, egregious” facts leading up to the massacre.

Haley trounced by ‘none of these candidates’ option in Nevada

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Nikki Haley was swamped in Nevada’s symbolic Republican presidential primary as GOP voters resoundingly picked the “none of these candidates” option on the ballot in a repudiation of the former U.N. ambassador who is the last remaining major rival to front-runner Donald Trump.

Trump didn’t compete in Tuesday’s primary, which doesn’t

award any delegates needed to win the GOP nomination. The former president is instead focused on caucuses that will be held Thursday and will help him move closer to becoming the Republican standard-bearer.

That leaves the results Tuesday as technically meaningless in the Republican race. But they still amount to an embarrassment for Haley, who has sought to position herself as a candidate who can

genuinely compete against Trump. Instead, she became the first presidential candidate from either party to lose a race to “none of these candidates” since that option was introduced in Nevada in 1975.

Haley had said beforehand she was going to “focus on the states that are fair” and did not campaign in the western state in the weeks leading up to the caucuses, spending time instead in her

home state, South Carolina, before its Feb. 24 primary. Her campaign wrote off the results with a reference to Nevada’s casino industry.

“Even Donald Trump knows that when you play penny slots, the house wins,” spokeswoman Olivia Perez-Cubas said. “We didn’t bother to play a game rigged for Trump. We’re full steam ahead in South Carolina and beyond.”

Senate eyes new Ukraine aid plan after border bill flop

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Mounting a last-ditch effort, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer tried Wednesday to salvage wartime funding for Ukraine from a collapsed deal that had included border enforcement, pushing ahead on a crucial test vote for tens of billions of dollars for Kyiv, Israel and other U.S. allies.

The New York Democrat planned to force Republicans to take two tough procedural votes. First, for a long-negotiated \$118 billion package with border enforcement measures that collapsed this week after Republicans rejected it; then, for a modified package with the border portion stripped out. If Republicans support either bill, it would still take the Senate days to reach a final vote.

“We still believe Ukraine, Israel, humanitarian aid to the Middle East and helping Indo-China, as well as strengthening our military, is vitally impor-

tant,” Schumer told reporters Wednesday.

The roughly \$60 billion in Ukraine aid has been stalled in Congress for months because of opposition from hardline conservatives who criticize it as wasteful and demand an exit strategy for the war. The impasse means that the U.S. has halted arms shipments to Kyiv at a crucial point in the nearly two-year-old conflict, leaving Ukrainian soldiers without ample ammunition and missiles as Russia mounts relentless attacks.

Ukraine’s cause still enjoys support from many Senate Republicans, including GOP leader Mitch McConnell, but the question vexing lawmakers has always been how to craft a package that could clear the Republican-controlled House.

A pairing of border policies and aid for allies — first proposed by Republicans — was intended to help squeeze the package through the House

where archconservatives hold control. But GOP senators — some within minutes of the bill’s release Sunday — rejected the compromise as election-year politics.

“First Republicans said they would only do Ukraine and Israel, humanitarian aid with border. Then they said they would not do it with border,” Schumer said. “Well, we’re going to give them both options.”

Schumer added that the revamped package would include legislation to authorize sanctions and anti-money laundering tools against criminal enterprises that traffic fentanyl into the U.S.

However, it was not clear whether the new plan, even if it passed the Senate, would gain support from House Speaker Mike Johnson.

House Republicans are still insisting on a border plan, even though they rejected the deal negotiated in the Senate as insufficient.

Blinken says work remains on cease-fire

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that “a lot of work” remains to bridge the gap between Israel and Hamas on terms for a new cease-fire and hostage-release deal after the militant group put forward conditions that run counter to Israel’s war goals.

Hamas laid out a detailed three-phase plan to unfold over 4½ months, responding to a proposal drawn up by the United States, Israel, Qatar and Egypt. The plan stipulates that all hostages would be released in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, including senior militants, and an end to the war.

Israel has made destroying Hamas’ governing and military abilities one of its wartime objectives, and the proposal would effectively leave Hamas in power in Gaza and allow it to rebuild its military capabilities. President Joe Biden said Hamas’ demands are “a little over the top” but that negotiations will continue. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Blinken, and the two discussed the latest efforts to free the hostages. Both men were scheduled to hold separate news conferences later Wednesday.

The fighting has killed over 27,000 Palestinians, leveled entire neighborhoods, driven the vast majority of Gaza’s population from their homes and pushed a quarter of the population to starvation.

Iran-backed militant groups across the region have conducted attacks, mostly on U.S. and Israeli targets, in solidarity with the Palestinians, drawing reprisals as the risk of a wider conflict grows.

Russia launches missiles, drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia fired cruise and ballistic missiles and Shahed-type drones at six regions across Ukraine on Wednesday morning, authorities reported, killing at least five civilians and wounding almost 50 others, including a pregnant woman.

The attacks hit at least three major cities, including the capital, Kyiv, where the European Union’s top diplomat, Josep Borrell, was discussing military aid and financial support for Ukraine. He said that he started his day in an air raid shelter,

calling it part of Ukraine’s “daily reality” after almost two years of war.

The West’s help is desperately needed by Ukraine, which is struggling with ammunition and personnel shortages. Some long-term foreign funding is also in doubt as the latest effort to clinch a deal on Ukraine aid in the U.S. Senate collapsed Tuesday.

Though the roughly 900-mile front line has barely budged in recent months, the Kremlin’s forces have the upper hand in stocks of missiles and artillery ammunition used for long-

range strikes. Russia has repeatedly used missiles to blast civilian targets during the conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said last month that air defense and electronic warfare systems that can stop drones are Kyiv’s top priorities.

Borrell visited a drone production facility in Ukraine where, he said, 1,500 small drones are produced daily.

Ukraine’s armed forces said they intercepted 44 Russian drones and missiles out of 64 that were launched in the morning attack.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Sailor arrives a day after Coast Guard seeks help

HI HONOLULU — A 60-year-old man sailing from California to Hawaii arrived in the islands over the weekend, a day after the U.S. Coast Guard asked the public for help finding him.

Noel Rubio arrived safely with his 32-foot sailboat Malulani on Saturday, the Coast Guard said in a statement Monday.

Rubio left Long Beach on Dec. 28 and had planned to arrive in Kaneohe on the island of Oahu three weeks later. He last made contact via cellphone that day south of Catalina Island in California. The Coast Guard said Friday that it was unable to find Rubio despite searching harbors in California, Hawaii and Mexico and sending urgent marine information broadcasts. Rubio's only form of communication on board the Malulani was a VHF-FM marine band radio.

Man with samurai sword arrested in Walmart

WA VANCOUVER — A man wielding a samurai sword and threatening to hurt people was arrested after he entered a Walmart store in southwest Washington state, police said.

Multiple people called 911 around 5:30 p.m. Sunday about a man walking in Vancouver traffic with the sword while screaming and making threats to injure people, Vancouver police said Monday in a news release.

The man walked into the Walmart just before police arrived.

Officers started evacuating the store, quickly found the man and got him to surrender. No one was hurt, police said.

Doctor who prescribed opioids granted new trial

VA RICHMOND — A Virginia doctor who was sentenced to 40 years in prison after prescribing more than half a million doses of highly addictive opioids in two years has been granted a new trial by a federal appeals court that found the instructions given to jurors at his trial misstated the law.

Joel Smithers was convicted in 2019 of more than 800 counts of illegally prescribing drugs.

During his trial, prosecutors said patients from five states drove hundreds of miles to see him to get prescriptions for oxycodone, fentanyl and other powerful painkillers. Authorities said Smithers headed a drug distribution ring that contributed to the opioid abuse crisis in Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

In a ruling issued Friday, a three-judge panel of the Richmond-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated Smithers' convictions and ordered a new trial.

Fishing regulators say no to catching baby eels

ME PORTLAND — Fishermen who harvest one of the most valuable marine species in the U.S. hoped for permission to catch more baby eels next year, but regulators said Monday the tight restrictions that have been in place for several years are

likely to stay the same.

The tiny baby eels, which are often worth more than \$2,000 per pound, are also called elvers. They are a critically important link in the worldwide supply chain for Japanese food. They are harvested from rivers and streams in Maine, sold to aquaculture companies and raised to maturity, then resold as food.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission needs to set a new quota for next year and beyond because the current management plan is expiring. The commission said Monday it's only considering one option for next year's limit and that is a little less than 10,000 pounds, the same the level fishermen have been allowed to catch for several years.

Fishermen are good stewards of the elvers, said Darrell Young, president of the Maine Elver Fishermen's Association. Many fishermen run through their quota in just a few days, he said.

"That tells you how thick the eels are. Overabundant," Young said.

Cyberattack on courts didn't compromise data

PA HARRISBURG — A weekend cyberattack on the website of Pennsylvania's state courts agency disabled some online systems but did not appear to compromise any data and didn't stop the courts from opening Monday, officials said.

Various county court clerks said their offices were operating smoothly.

The federal government's lead cybersecurity agency, the

U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the FBI were investigating the attack on the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, state Supreme Court Chief Justice Debra Todd said in a statement.

Todd called it a "denial of service" cyberattack, using the federal government's description for when attackers "flood the targeted host or network with traffic until the target cannot respond or simply crashes, preventing access for legitimate users."

Georgia could require cash bail for more crimes

GA ATLANTA — Georgia, once a self-proclaimed leader in criminal justice reform, is sliding a little further toward its old lock-'em-up ways.

The GOP-dominated House voted 97-69 for Senate Bill 63 on Monday, backing a measure that requires cash bail for 30 additional crimes and would erode changes that Republican Gov. Nathan Deal championed in 2018 to allow judges to release most people accused of misdemeanors without bail.

The measure would also limit charitable bail funds or even individuals from bailing multiple people out of jail, reserving that ability only to those who meet legal requirements to be bail bond companies.

The move could strand poor defendants in jail when accused of crimes for which they're unlikely to ever go to prison. It could also aggravate overcrowding in Georgia's county lockups.

Gov. Brian Kemp has said he wants more restrictive bail con-

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Chiefs in new, exciting territory as underdogs

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — For most of the past six years, Patrick Mahomes has had to manufacture the chip that he carries on his shoulder, because the Kansas City Chiefs have been so good for so long that they were almost always expected to win.

That is no longer the case.

During a season in which the Chiefs scuffled along on offense, and at one point lost five of eight games, they went from being the favorite on a weekly basis to something entirely different: an underdog. They became the team that received the points when betting lines came out, rather than giving them up, and that chip on Mahomes' shoulder suddenly appeared on its own.

"It kind of lit a fire under some guys," Mahomes admitted, "including myself."

Perish the thought of giving the two-time league and Super Bowl MVP another reason to feel he needs to prove himself.

Yet that is exactly what Mahomes has done in the playoffs, where he's played the best he has all season. He threw for 262 yards and a touchdown in a frigid wild-card win over Miami, doubled down with 215 yards

passing and two scores in a divisional win in Buffalo, and had 241 yards passing and a TD in Baltimore — all without throwing an interception.

In the past two of those games, the Chiefs were underdogs at kickoff, just as they likely will be when they play the 49ers in the Super Bowl on Sunday in the gambling mecca of Las Vegas. San Francisco has been a consistent 1.5-point favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, though that number could change by game time.

Only five teams since 2000 have won the Super Bowl while being underdogs in each of their final three games.

"Listen, we understand the reasoning behind it. I mean, we get it, and understandably so," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "We may not be the prettiest bunch, but we're going to battle, and that's kind of been the personality of this team.

"I don't think it bothers us," Reid added. "We understand, so it is what it is."

In fact, the Chiefs seem to relish the underdog role.

Mahomes certainly does. He is 9-3 as an underdog, giving him the best winning percentage of any quarterback with a

minimum of 10 starts — playoffs included — over the past 15 seasons. The Ravens' Lamar Jackson, whom Mahomes vanquished in the AFC title game a little more than a week ago, is next on the list at 9-5 as an underdog.

In fact, the bigger the underdog, the more successful the Chiefs have been in recent years. In five games that they have been at least a 3.5-point underdog since Mahomes took over as the starting QB, they won four times outright. In the lone loss, in a game against the Patriots in October 2018, they were 4-point underdogs and lost by a field goal, covering the spread.

One player who doesn't subscribe to the notion that the Chiefs are underdogs is 49ers tight end George Kittle.

He was on the losing sideline in the Super Bowl four years ago, when the Chiefs rallied with three fourth-quarter touchdowns to win their first Lombardi Trophy in 50 years. The rest of the time, Kittle has watched from afar as Kansas City went to six straight AFC title games, won four of them, and hoisted another Lombardi Trophy when they beat the Eagles

last year.

"They should have all the attention," Kittle said. "I think they're very used to it. I don't think it's a distraction for them. But while we might be under the radar, I guess, to people on the outside, I think the Chiefs are very aware that we're not."

No, one thing the Chiefs rarely do is overlook an opponent. And it seems downright absurd that they would start at the Super Bowl, particularly against the 49ers, who have been favored in each of the 20 games they have played this season.

The only other NFL team favored that many times? The Chiefs in 2021, when they lost in the AFC title game.

"At the end of the day, it's playoff games. You want to win. This is what you play for," Mahomes said, "and I think that fire — regardless of if we were an underdog or not — would have been lit, because this is the time of year that you work for, and you put in those hard practices for. I think we have that mindset that if we're going to practice the way we do, and we work the way we work, we're not going to let it slide. We're going to maximize our opportunity every time we're out there."

ESPN, Fox, WB Discovery to launch sports streaming platform

Associated Press

ESPN, Fox and Warner Bros. Discovery announced plans on Tuesday to launch a sports streaming platform in the fall that will include offerings from at least 15 networks and all four major professional sports leagues.

A one-stop app to view most sports should be a welcome sight for fans, who have continued to navigate rising costs by subscribing to multiple services.

"This new sports service exemplifies our ability as an industry to drive innovation and provide consumers with more choice, enjoyment and value, and we're thrilled to deliver it to sports fans," Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav said in a statement.

The three companies will each share one-third ownership in the joint venture. A name

for the service and pricing will be announced at a later date.

The platform will include games from the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, WNBA, NASCAR and college sports, including the men's and women's NCAA Tournament, as well as golf, tennis and the FIFA World Cup.

It will include offerings from 15 linear networks — ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU, SEC Network, ACC Network, ESPNEWS, ABC, FOX, FS1, FS2, Big Ten Network, TNT, TBS, truTV — and ESPN+.

Subscribers would also have the ability to bundle the product with Disney+, Hulu and/or Max.

"We believe the service will provide passionate fans outside of the traditional bundle an array of amazing sports content all in one place," Fox CEO and Executive Chair La-

chlan Murdoch said in a statement.

The announcement of the bundle also comes as ESPN and Warner Bros. Discovery are preparing to enter negotiations to renew their NBA rights, which expire at the end of next season.

ESPN has also been searching for strategic partners as it prepares to launch a direct-to-consumer product in the next year or two.

"The launch of this new streaming sports service is a significant moment for Disney and ESPN, a major win for sports fans and an important step forward for the media business," Walt Disney Company CEO Bob Iger said in a statement. "This means the full suite of ESPN channels will be available to consumers alongside the sports programming of other industry leaders as part of a differentiated sports-centric service."

Irving nets 36 in return to Brooklyn

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kyrie Irving was traded away a year ago, but he's never fully left New York.

Not when he grew up in the area as a Nets fan, and not when so many family and friends were in attendance when he came back Tuesday night.

He gave them quite a show.

Irving scored 36 points, leading the Mavericks to a 119-107 victory and then spending time signing autographs and greeting his old fans in the stands.

"Just like any other basketball game, but it felt like I was home tonight," Irving said.

Luka Doncic had 35 points, 18 rebounds and nine assists as the Mavericks' guard tandem took turns hitting some deep 3-pointers in the second half when the Nets were trying to make a run. Doncic quickly shed the mask he began the game with to protect a nasal contusion and just missed his 10th triple-double of the season.

Irving was booed when he

touched the ball in the early going, though he turned those to cheers after finishing one of his fancy drives for a reserve layup or hitting one of his six 3-pointers — and especially when he rose high to slam down a lob pass in the third quarter.

"That was amazing. That was impressive," Doncic said of the play that Irving said he called for himself, telling Josh Green he could get up to catch the pass.

Mikal Bridges scored 28 points and Royce O'Neal had 18 for the short-handed Nets, who trimmed a 23-point deficit to 107-101 with about five minutes remaining before Irving knocked down two straight 3-pointers for a 113-101 lead.

Suns 114, Bucks 106: Devin Booker scored 32 points, Kevin Durant added 28 and host Phoenix beat Milwaukee.

Durant hit five straight shots and had 14 points in the fourth quarter.

The Bucks played without star guard Damian Lillard and

starting center Brook Lopez.

Giannis Antetokounmpo led Milwaukee with 34 points.

Bulls 129, Timberwolves 123 (OT): Coby White and DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points apiece, and host Chicago erased a 23-point deficit to beat Minnesota in overtime.

Anthony Edwards had 38 points and 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who had won three of four. Karl-Anthony Towns scored 33 points, and his 3-pointer tied it at 115-all with 50.5 seconds left in regulation.

DeRozan scored the Bulls' first six points of overtime.

Knicks 123, Grizzlies 113: Jalen Brunson had 27 points and eight assists before exiting with an apparent ankle injury, Donte DiVincenzo had 32 points, and host New York beat short-handed Memphis.

Isaiah Hartenstein had 17 points and eight rebounds and Precious Achiuwa scored 17 as the Knicks won for the 10th time in their past 11 games.

Vince Williams Jr. scored 19 points for Memphis.

Heat 121, Magic 95: Jimmy Butler scored 23 points to lead seven six teammates in double figures, and host Miami beat Orlando.

Butler also had eight rebounds, eight assists and three steals for the Heat.

All-Star forward Paolo Banchero scored 23 points for Orlando.

Pacers 132, Rockets 129: Pascal Siakam scored 29 points and teamed up with T.J. McConnell to spur a third-quarter comeback as host Indiana beat Houston.

Jalen Green had 30 points to lead the Rockets.

Jazz 124, Thunder 117: Lauri Markkanen had 33 points and 11 rebounds, and John Collins chipped in 22 points and nine rebounds as host Utah beat Oklahoma City.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led Oklahoma City with 28 points and seven assists.

Hall leads Clemson to win over No. 3 North Carolina

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Brad Brownell kept telling his Clemson players that they were a better team than their results had shown so far with their NCAA Tournament hopes in question.

Taking down No. 3 North Carolina on the road for only the second time in program history certainly helps drive home that message.

PJ Hall had 25 points along with the go-ahead putback with 3:14 left as the Tigers stunned the Tar Heels 80-76 on Tuesday night, earning a marquee win despite blowing a 16-point lead.

"We just held on," Brownell said, adding: "But our guys finished, which was really nice to see."

Armando Bacot had 24 points and 13 rebounds to lead UNC,

while RJ Davis added 22. But the Tar Heels shot just 36.9% and made 9 of 27 3-pointers in a clunker of a follow-up to beating Duke three days earlier.

No. 1 UConn 71, Butler 62: Donovan Clingan had 18 points and 14 rebounds to lead the host Huskies to their 11th straight win.

No. 5 Houston 79, Oklahoma State 63: Jamal Sheard scored 23 points, Emanuel Sharp added 16 and the host Cougars extended their home winning streak to 18 games after playing most of the second half without coach Kelvin Sampson, who was ejected with about 15 minutes remaining.

No. 13 Baylor 79, No. 23 Texas Tech 73: RayJ Dennis scored 21 points, 7-foot freshman Yves Missi had 17 points

with some impressive dunks, and the host Bears dealt the Red Raiders their third straight loss.

No. 14 Iowa State 70, Texas 65: Milan Momcilovic scored 13 points and the visiting Cyclones held off a furious Longhorns rally.

No. 15 South Carolina 68, Mississippi 65: Collin Murray-Boyles scored 16 points and the host Gamecocks reached 20 wins for the first time in seven years.

No. 17 Kentucky 109, Vanderbilt 77: Antonio Reeves scored 24 points and led six players in double figures as the visiting Wildcats snapped a two-game skid.

No. 18 Dayton 94, Saint Joseph's 79: Nate Santos and Kobe Elvis each scored 21 points in the visiting Flyers' win over the Hawks.

Oklahoma 82, No. 21 BYU 66: Javian McCollum scored 15 of his 20 points in the second half in the host Sooners' win over the Cougars.

Nevada 77, No. 22 Utah State 63: Nick Davidson had a career-high 25 points and 10 rebounds as the visiting Wolf Pack ended the Aggies' 13-game home winning streak.

No. 24 San Diego State 77, Air Force 64: Reese Waters scored 15 points, making five of his team's season-high 11 3-pointers, and the visiting Aztecs won consecutive games for the first time since early January.

No. 25 New Mexico 91, Wyoming 73: Donovan Dent had 19 points and seven assists, and Jaelen House added 17 points and eight rebounds to lead the visiting Lobos.

Knights snap Oilers' 16-game win streak

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Chandler Stephenson scored the go-ahead goal, Adin Hill stopped 30 shots and the Vegas Golden Knights ended the Edmonton Oilers' 16-game winning streak with a 3-1 victory on Tuesday night.

Edmonton was looking to tie the 1992-93 Pittsburgh Penguins for the longest NHL winning streak.

Instead, with the game tied 1-1 after two periods, Stephenson took a pass from Jonathan Marchessault and ripped a shot from the center of the left circle to beat Edmonton goalie Stuart Skinner blocker side and put the Golden Knights in front by a goal less than two minutes into the third period.

From there, Hill was spectacular in keeping the Oilers at bay while keeping the crowd energized until the final horn.

"I know that they're hot over there and they had won however many in a row, but I was more focused on just playing our game tonight and trying to get two points," Hill said. "It's a big rivalry and for us to do it with a couple guys that were missing in our lineup is huge."

Hill, who leads the NHL in goals-against average (1.88) and save percentage (.938), made the save of the night when he stymied Leon Draisaitl on a backdoor one-timer late in the third period. Nic Roy and William Karlsson also scored for the Golden Knights.

Skinner, who is now 19-3 in his last 22 starts, made 23 saves.

"Their goalie played well and made some big saves," said Connor McDavid, who scored Edmonton's goal. "It's always a tough game in this building, we were expecting that. Disappointing, but, we move on. It's been a while since we've done that and you forget sometimes how bad you hate losing. It's a good reminder."

The Oilers, who opened the season 3-9-1 before firing coach Jay Woodcroft on Nov. 12, were just 13-15-1 before their winning streak started. Edmonton hadn't lost a game since Dec. 19 and has improved to 29-16-1.

The Oilers have an NHL-best 26-7-0 record since Kris Kno-

lauch's first game as coach on Nov. 13, and have won 24 of their last 27 games to climb into third place in the Pacific Division.

"We're back in the hunt, and we're not content by any means," Oilers defenseman Darnell Nurse said. "I think we worked hard to get ourselves into this position, but we lost tonight to a team in our division that we played a lot over the last couple years. It's gonna leave a bad taste in our mouths."

Edmonton wasn't deterred by committing the first penalty of the game. After Vincent Desharnais' poke check forced a turnover to spring a 2-on-0 rush, McDavid took a pass from Draisaitl and beat Hill.

Lindholm scores twice in debut with Canucks

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Playing for a new team in a familiar building worked out just fine for Vancouver's Elias Lindholm on Tuesday night.

Lindholm scored two power-play goals in similar fashion in his debut with the Canucks and J.T. Miller provided the winning goal in a 3-2 victory against the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday night.

"It's crazy how it all worked out," Lindholm said. "It's pretty special. Obviously, I'm happy to be here and help the team."

Lindholm, a veteran center who began his career with the Hurricanes, had one goal in each of the first two periods as the Canucks returned from the All-Star break and increased their points streak to 12 games.

Quinn Hughes and Brock Boeser each had two assists. Thatcher Demko made 22 saves, including 12 in the third period.

Jordan Martinook and Sebastian Aho scored for Carolina, which had a three-game

winning streak snapped. Pyotr Kochetkov, playing for the Hurricanes for the first time since Jan. 11, stopped 16 shots.

Vancouver acquired Lindholm last week from the Calgary Flames. He played five NHL seasons with the Hurricanes, who drafted him in 2013.

Devils 5, Avalanche 3: John Marino scored the go-ahead goal late in the third period and Vitek Vanecek made 35 saves as host New Jersey snapped a two-game skid.

Jesper Bratt, Dawson Mercer, Chris Tierney and Erik Haula also scored for New Jersey. Nico Hischier had two assists.

Mikko Rantanen also scored and Jonathan Drouin had two assists for the Avalanche.

Flames 4, Bruins 1: Andrei Kuzmenko scored in his debut with his new team, Nazem Kadri had three assists and visiting Calgary beat Boston.

Jacob Markstrom stopped 21 shots for Calgary. Boston native Noah Hanifin added a late goal for the Flames.

Pavel Zacha scored on a power play early in the third period for the Bruins, who opened a seven-game homestand with a flat performance.

Stars 2, Sabres 1: Jake Oettinger stopped 47 shots and Sam Steel scored midway through the second period, helping visiting Dallas beat Buffalo for its fourth straight victory.

Matt Duchene also scored as Dallas celebrated Joe Pavelski's 1,300th NHL game.

Tage Thompson scored for Buffalo, which blew its fourth chance of the season to win three straight.

Flyers 2, Panthers 1: Noah Cates scored the go-ahead goal 2:36 into the third period, and visiting Philadelphia snapped its five-game losing streak.

Travis Konecny also scored for Philadelphia, and Samuel Ersson made 20 saves.

Carter Verhaeghe scored for the Panthers. Anthony Stolarz, who got the start to give All-Star goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky a little more rest, stopped 23 shots.

Penguins 3, Jets 0: Tristan Jarry stopped 24 shots in his NHL-leading sixth shutout this season and host Pittsburgh shut out Winnipeg.

Bryan Rust, Jeff Carter and Kris Letang scored. Jarry improved to 5-0 against Winnipeg, with two of his 19 career shutouts.

Connor Hellebuyck made 24 saves for the Jets, who lost their fourth straight game after winning 10 of 11.

Canadiens 5, Capitals 2: Nick Suzuki and Juraj Slafkovsky each scored twice, and visiting Montreal handed Washington a fifth consecutive loss, despite Alex Ovechkin recording his 10th goal of the season and 832nd of his NHL career.

Michael Pezzetta also scored for Montreal and Samuel Montembeault made 36 saves for his 12th win.

Capitals goalie Charlie Lindgren allowed three goals on nine shots before getting replaced by Darcy Kuemper, who made 15 saves. Rasmus Sandin also scored for Washington.