

## Trump mulls sending US troops to Gaza

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump suggested that displaced Palestinians in Gaza be permanently resettled outside the war-torn territory and proposed the United States take “ownership” in redeveloping the area into “the Riviera of the Middle East.”

Trump’s brazen proposal Tuesday appears certain to roil the next stage of talks meant to extend the tenuous ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and secure the release of the remaining hostages held in Gaza.

The provocative comments came as talks are ramping up this week with the promise of surging humanitarian aid and reconstruction supplies to help the people of Gaza recover after more than 15 months of devastating conflict. Now Trump wants to push roughly 1.8 million people to leave the land they have called home and claim it for the U.S., perhaps with American troops.

“The U.S. will take over the

Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it too,” Trump said at an evening news conference with Netanyahu by his side. The president who made his name as a New York real estate developer added: “We’ll make sure that it’s done world-class. It’ll be wonderful for the people — Palestinians, Palestinians mostly, we’re talking about.”

Trump outlined his thinking as he held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, where the two leaders also discussed the fragile ceasefire and hostage deal in the Israeli-Hamas conflict and shared concerns about Iran.

Trump said the U.S. would redevelop the territory after Palestinians are resettled elsewhere and turn the territory into a place where the “world’s people” — including Palestinians — would live. He offered no detail about what authority the U.S. would use to take the land and develop it.

Trump insisted the Palesti-

nians “have no alternative” but to leave the “big pile of rubble” that is Gaza. He spoke out as his top aides stressed that a three-to-five-year timeline for reconstruction of the war-torn territory, as laid out in a temporary truce agreement, is not viable.

Last week, both Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and Jordanian King Abdullah II dismissed Trump’s calls to resettle Palestinians in Gaza.

But Trump said he believes Egypt and Jordan — as well as other countries, which he did not name — will ultimately agree to take in Palestinians.

“You look over the decades, it’s all death in Gaza,” Trump said. “This has been happening for years. It’s all death. If we can get a beautiful area to resettle people, permanently, in nice homes where they can be happy and not be shot and not be killed and not be knifed to death like what’s happening in Gaza.”

Trump also said he isn’t rul-

ing out deploying U.S. troops to support reconstruction of Gaza. He envisions “long-term” U.S. ownership of a redevelopment of the territory.

The president’s proposal was greeted with alarm by Democrats and a measure of skepticism by his Republican allies.

“He’s completely lost it,” said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn. “He wants a U.S. invasion of Gaza, which would cost thousands of American lives and set the Middle East on fire for 20 years? It’s sick.”

“We’ll see what our Arab friends say about that,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican and a Trump ally. “And I think most South Carolinians are probably not excited about sending Americans to take over Gaza. I think that might be problematic, but I’ll keep an open mind.”

The White House’s focus on the future of Gaza comes as the nascent truce between Israel and Hamas hangs in the balance.

## First deportation flights from US to Gitmo underway

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT  
*Stars and Stripes*

Sailors from a Navy ship moored at Guantanamo Bay are helping Marines set up tents there as the first military flights to deport migrants from the United States to the Navy base in Cuba took off Tuesday.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt announced early Tuesday that the flights to the Navy base were underway. Hours later, U.S. 4th Fleet announced the USS St. Louis, a littoral combat ship homeported at Naval Station Mayport, Fla., was moored at the base to assist

in the expansion of the migrant operations center there.

The St. Louis extended its deployment, according to a Jan. 22 message to families that was shared to the ship’s Facebook page.

“Due to operational requirements, we have been extended in theater and delayed in returning to homeport. I understand the back and forth over the past week has been difficult on our families at home, and for that, I sincerely apologize,” said Cmdr. TJ Orth, commanding officer of the St. Louis.

The ship has been deployed to

the 4th Fleet area of operations to counter maritime drug operations since mid-June.

The arrival of the St. Louis sailors and deported migrants come days after 150 Marines arrived at the Navy base in Cuba to begin preparing migrant detention facilities. Guantanamo Bay has been used primarily for the last two decades to detain those associated with the 9/11 attacks. President Donald Trump said the base has the capacity to hold as many as 30,000 migrants.

The 150 Marines left Saturday and Sunday for Guantana-

mo. They are assigned to the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., according to U.S. Southern Command, the combatant command that oversees operations in the region. Additional troops from SOUTHCOM and Army South also deployed.

There had been seven deportation flights prior to this to Ecuador, Guam, Honduras and Peru. In addition, Colombian officials flew to the U.S. and took two flights of migrants back to their country, The Associated Press reported.

# West Point follows orders, disbands 12 groups

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Military Academy has banned organizations centered primarily on ethnic and gender affiliation as part of what it says is compliance with the effort to end diversity, equity and inclusion programs in government.

The move, outlined in a memorandum issued Tuesday by West Point, told 12 campus clubs to immediately shut down all activities, formal and informal.

Soon after being issued, the memo was posted on Reddit and circulated elsewhere on social media.

Academy officials weren't immediately available for comment. The Washington Post on Wednesday said it had verified the memo's authenticity.

The West Point directive canceled all trips, meetings and activities associated with the designated clubs.

"Moreover, these clubs are not authorized to continue informal activities using Government time, resources, or facilities," the directive stated.

The decision comes amid a Pentagon push to strip away activities and events unrelated to fostering what it deems to be warfighting readiness.

On Friday, the Pentagon also

announced that it was ending identity month celebrations, such as Black History Month in February.

"Our unity and purpose are instrumental to meeting the Department's warfighting mission. Efforts to divide the force — to put one group ahead of another — erode camaraderie and threaten mission execution," the Pentagon said in a statement announcing the decision.

The clubs disbanded by the academy are the Asian-Pacific Forum Club; Contemporary Cultural Affairs Seminar Club; Corbin Forum, a group for female cadets founded in 1976; Japanese Forum Club; Korean-

American Relations Seminar; Latin Cultural Club; National Society of Black Engineers; Native American Heritage Forum; Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers; Society of Women Engineers Club; the Vietnamese-American Cadet Association; and Spectrum, which served LGBTQ+ cadets.

The web pages for several of the disbanded clubs displayed error messages Wednesday.

The memo also calls on the Directorate of Cadet Activities to review all other extracurricular and social clubs to make sure they comply with presidential executive orders and Pentagon policy.

## Navy helping build schools and business ties in Serbia

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy is reaching out to businesses about American-led construction projects in Serbia as the U.S. works to build and maintain a presence in a country historically tied to Russia.

Next month, Navy officials will host a half-day conference in Belgrade for businesses to learn about upcoming design and contracting opportunities, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Europe-Africa, which is headquartered in Naples, said in a statement last month. The forum, the first held in Serbia, is a chance for business owners to gain familiarity with NAVFAC and the U.S. government, Don Maconi, director of NAVFAC and Navy Region Europe Africa Central's expeditionary section, said in the Jan. 29 statement.

U.S. relations with Serbia, a landlocked southeastern European country on the Balkan Peninsula, have fluctuated over sev-

eral decades. That's due in part to U.S. interventions in Bosnia and in Kosovo, which America recognizes as independent and Serbia considers its own.

But relations have improved, with the U.S. providing more than \$1 billion in aid to Serbia since 1998, according to the State Department.

It's unclear whether similar aid packages will continue following a freeze on most foreign aid ahead of reviews by the Trump administration. However, military efforts are ongoing, such as an Ohio National Guard-led partnership that includes training with the Serbian armed forces.

The Navy's March 4 informational meeting will include familiarizing Serbian business owners with potential projects and how to bid, said Paul Cage, a NAVFAC spokesman. The program, part of a Defense Security Cooperation Agency initiative, is focused on humanitarian work, such as building schools and other infrastructure, Cage said.

## Ukraine open to offer to trade minerals for support

*The Washington Post*

KYIV, Ukraine — As Ukrainian officials considered how to sway a skeptical President Donald Trump to continue supporting their country, one strategy was to appeal to Trump's businesslike approach and offer him a deal — say, rare earth minerals — to get something in return.

Now Trump says he's interested.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office on Monday, Trump said the United States wants Ukrainian rare earth minerals in exchange for the security assistance that Ukraine depends on for its defense against Russia's invasion.

With continued U.S. support for Ukraine in doubt since Trump's election, officials in Kyiv regarded Trump's interest in Ukraine's rare earth commodities as a positive development that could get him invested in the country's future. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy first suggested providing the United States with

the materials during his meeting with Trump ahead of the November election.

A senior Ukrainian official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter, said earlier Tuesday that Zelenskyy's administration is "ready to sign documents about joint agreements" and that "having a strategic U.S. interest in Ukraine is a key component to our security in the future."

Trump's interest in Ukraine's offer of a barter for military aid could serve as a road map for how countries negotiate with his administration going forward. While repeatedly criticizing past U.S. spending on support for Ukraine, Trump has promised to soon broker a deal to end the three-year war with Russia. But that left some Ukrainian officials uneasy over whether the United States — by far the biggest supplier of weapons to Ukraine — would continue sending critical aid in the event a ceasefire isn't reached this year.

# Trump to ban trans females in sport events

Associated Press

President Donald Trump planned to sign an executive order on Wednesday designed to prevent people who were biologically assigned male at birth from participating in women's or girls' sporting events.

The order marks another aggressive shift by the president's second administration in the way the federal government deals with transgender people and their rights.

The president put out a sweeping order on his first day in office last month that called for the federal government to define sex as only male or female and for that to be reflected on official documents such as passports and in policies such as federal prison assignments.

Trump found during the campaign that his pledge to "keep men out of women's sports" resonated beyond the usual party lines. More than half the voters surveyed by AP VoteCast said

support for transgender rights in government and society has gone too far.

He leaned into the rhetoric before the election, pledging to get rid of the "transgender insanity," though his campaign offered little in the way of details.

Wednesday's order — which coincides with National Girls and Women in Sports Day — will involve how his administration will interpret Title IX, the law best known for its role in pursuing gender equity in athletics and preventing sexual harassment on campuses.

"This executive order restores fairness, upholds Title IX's original intent, and defends the rights of female athletes who have worked their whole lives to compete at the highest levels," said U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace, a Republican from South Carolina.

Every administration has the authority to issue its own interpretations of the landmark leg-

islation.

The last two presidential administrations — including Trump's first — offer a glimpse at the push-pull involved.

Betsy DeVos, the education secretary during Trump's first term, issued a Title IX policy in 2020 that narrowed the definition of sexual harassment and required colleges to investigate claims only if they're reported to certain officials.

The Biden administration rolled back that policy last April with one of its own that stipulated the rights of LGBTQ+ students would be protected by federal law and provided new safeguards for victims of campus sexual assault.

The policy stopped short of explicitly addressing transgender athletes. Still, more than a half-dozen Republican-led states immediately challenged the new rule.

"All Trump has to say is, 'We are going to read the regulation

traditionally,'" said Doriane Lambelet Coleman, a professor at Duke Law School.

How this order could affect the transgender athlete population — a number that is incredibly difficult to pin down — is uncertain.

The Associated Press reported in 2021 that in many cases, the states introducing a ban on transgender athletes could not cite instances where their participation was an issue.

When Utah state legislators overrode a veto by Gov. Spencer Cox in 2022, the state had only one transgender girl playing in K-12 sports who would be affected by the ban. It did not regulate participation for transgender boys.

"This is a solution looking for a problem," Cheryl Cooky, a professor at Purdue University who studies the intersection of gender, sports, media and culture, told the AP after Trump was elected.

## Postal Service lifts Hong Kong, China ban day after imposing

Associated Press

HONG KONG — The U.S. Postal Service is reversing course a day after placing a ban on all inbound mail and packages from China and Hong Kong.

The post office had announced Tuesday that it would no longer accept parcels from China and Hong Kong after the U.S. imposed an additional 10% tariff on Chinese goods and ended a customs exception that allowed small value parcels to enter the U.S. without paying tax.

The Postal Service reversed course Wednesday but gave no reason for the reversal, but said it would work with Customs and Border Protection to implement a collection process for the new China tariffs to avoid delivery disruptions.

The post office pointed to the short prepared statement on the reversal when asked for more details Wednesday by The Associated Press.

The ban had the potential to create massive disruptions for online shopping platforms like Shein and Temu, popular with younger shoppers in the U.S. for cheap clothing and other products, usually shipped directly from China.

Cheap, direct postal service helps these companies keep costs low, as did the "de minimis" exemption that previously allowed shipments to go tax-free if their value is under \$800.

The suspension by USPS would have likely have created delays in shipments and potentially higher prices for the companies that rely on rock-bottom pricing for huge sales.

## Trump weighs on sending convicts to other countries

Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY — President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he was exploring whether he can move forward with El Salvador's offer to accept and jail violent American criminals in the "most severe cases" even as he and Secretary of State Marco Rubio both say it raises clear legal issues.

Rubio reached an unusual agreement with Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele a day earlier that the Central American country would accept U.S. deportees of any nationality, including American citizens and legal residents who are imprisoned for violent crimes.

"I'm just saying if we had a legal right to do it, I would do it in a heartbeat," Trump told reporters Tuesday in the Oval Office.

"I don't know if we do or not, we're looking at that right now."

At a news conference earlier in San Jose with Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves, Rubio said there were "obviously legalities involved. We have a Constitution."

But Rubio noted that it was "a very generous offer. No one's ever made an offer like that — and to outsource, at a fraction of the cost, at least some of the most dangerous and violent criminals that we have in the United States."

While in Guatemala, Rubio reached an agreement on accepting deportees with the country's president. President Bernardo Arevalo said that his country will accept migrants from other countries being deported from the United States.



# USAID workers pulled off job worldwide

Associated Press

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday that the original intention was to keep the U.S. Agency for International Development running while reviewing how money was being spent. But he said the government received no cooperation and employees were acting in “contravention” and “insubordination.”

He was speaking about the major upheaval at USAID. Almost all the agency’s workers overseas are being pulled off the job and out of the field under a sudden Trump order.

“It is not the direction I wanted it. It’s not the way we wanted to do it initially, but it is the way we will have to do it now,” Rubio said at a news conference with

the Guatemalan president in the country’s capital.

“What would be a gift to our geopolitical rivals is billions of dollars in foreign aid that is not aligned to the national interests in the foreign policy of the United States,” Rubio said.

The administration notified USAID workers in emails and a notice posted online, the latest in a sudden dismantling of the aid agency by returning political appointees from President Donald Trump’s first term and billionaire Elon Musk’s government-efficiency teams who have called much of the spending on programs overseas wasteful.

The order takes effect just before midnight Friday and gives direct hires of the agency overseas—many of whom have been

frantically packing up households in expectation of the announcement—30 days to return home unless they are deemed essential.

The move had been rumored for several days and was the most extreme of several proposals considered for consolidating the agency into the State Department. Other options had included closures of smaller USAID missions and partial closures of larger ones.

Thousands of USAID employees had already been laid off and programs worldwide shut down after Trump imposed a sweeping freeze on foreign assistance. Despite outcry from Democratic lawmakers, the aid agency has been a special target as the new administration and

Musk’s budget-slashing Department of Government Efficiency look to shrink the federal government.

They have ordered a spending stop that has paralyzed aid and development work around the world, gutted the senior leadership and workforce with furloughs and firings and closed the Washington headquarters to staffers Monday.

The mass removal of thousands of staffers overseas and in Washington would doom billions of dollars in projects in some 120 countries, including security assistance to partners such as Ukraine as well as development work for clean water, job training and education, including for schoolgirls under Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

## Trump’s birthright citizenship order put on 2nd hold

Associated Press

GREENBELT, Md. — A federal judge Wednesday ordered a second temporary pause on President Donald Trump’s executive order seeking to end birthright citizenship for anyone born in the United States to someone in the country illegally.

U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman said no court has endorsed the Trump administra-

tion’s interpretation of the 14th Amendment.

Trump’s inauguration week order had already been on temporary hold nationally because of a separate suit by four states, in which a federal judge called the order “blatantly unconstitutional.” In total, 22 states, as well as other organizations, have sued to try to stop the executive action.

Boardman, nominated by for-

mer President Joe Biden, agreed to the preliminary injunction after a hearing federal court in Greenbelt, Md.

Bringing the suit before Boardman are immigrant-rights advocacy groups CASA and the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project along with a handful of expectant mothers.

The Trump administration has asserted that children of noncitizens are not “subject to

the jurisdiction” of the U.S. and therefore not entitled to citizenship.

The 14th Amendment was added in the aftermath of the Civil War to ensure citizenship for former slaves and free African Americans. It states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

## Greenland lawmakers OK foreign political donations ban

Associated Press

NUUK, Greenland — Greenland’s parliament passed a bill Tuesday that bans political parties from receiving contributions “from foreign or anonymous contributors” after President Donald Trump expressed his wish that the United States take over the vast and mineral-rich Arctic island that belongs to Denmark.

The bill is aimed at protecting “Greenland’s political integri-

ty” and will take effect immediately, according to a translation of a parliamentary document in Danish outlining the measure.

The bill “must be seen in light of the geopolitical interests in Greenland and the current situation where representatives of an allied great power have expressed interest in taking over and controlling Greenland,” the document said.

Before taking office for his second term Jan. 20, Trump

said he would not rule out the use of military force to seize control of Greenland, calling it vital to U.S. national security. His oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., visited Greenland last month and told citizens: “We’re going to treat you well.”

Denmark is a longtime U.S. ally and a founding member of NATO, and its semiautonomous territory is home to a large U.S. military base.

With a total area of 836,000

square miles, Greenland—population about 57,000—is over one-fifth the size of the U.S., according to the CIA World Factbook.

A senior legal officer at Greenland’s parliament, Kent Fridberg, told The Associated Press he did not know whether any foreign donors had contributed to Greenland’s political parties and the idea for the bill was “basically a preventative measure.”

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### FDA OKs pig organ transplant trials

**MD** SILVER SPRING — The Food and Drug Administration has given two biotechnology companies approval for clinical trials that will transplant organs from genetically modified pigs into patients with kidney failure, an experimental but potentially groundbreaking innovation for thousands of Americans on the waiting list for organ transplants.

United Therapeutics Corp. said Tuesday that its trial will start with six patients with end-stage renal disease around the middle of this year. The trial could expand to 50 people who are unable to receive a donor kidney for medical reasons, or who are on the wait-list but are unlikely to receive one within five years.

Another company, eGenesis, said Tuesday it received FDA approval in December for a kidney transplant study on three patients, with the option to expand.

### Bird flu outbreak hikes Waffle House egg prices

**NY** NEW YORK — The Waffle House restaurant chain is putting a 50 cent per egg surcharge in place temporarily due to the biggest bird flu outbreak in a decade.

The Georgia company said that the resulting egg shortage has led to a dramatic increase in its costs.

Bird flu is forcing farmers to slaughter millions of chickens a month, pushing U.S. egg prices to more than double their cost in the summer of 2023. And it appears there may be no relief in

sight with Easter approaching.

The average price per dozen eggs nationwide hit \$4.15 in December. That's not quite as high as the \$4.82 record set two years ago, but the Agriculture Department predicts egg prices are going to soar another 20% this year.

Waffle House, well known as a place to get a cheap breakfast, said that its egg surcharge became effective this week and that it applies to all of its menus. The restaurant's two-egg breakfast, which comes with toast and a side, was listed at \$7.75 on Tuesday.

### Mayor backs out of \$20M school payments

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell appears to have decided against honoring a \$20 million, City Council-authorized settlement agreement with the Orleans Parish School Board, councilmembers announced on Saturday.

The agreement was intended to help the city's schools pull out of an estimated \$36 million deficit and settle a long-running lawsuit filed by the School Board against the city. Chief Administrative Officer Gilbert Montañio took part in settlement negotiations, and the council voted to approve the agreement in late November without any objection from the Cantrell administration.

In a Saturday statement, councilmembers blasted the administration, saying the city is legally and morally obligated to carry out the agreement.

"The refusal to fund the settlement is illegal," Councilman Joe Giarrusso, who chairs the council's budget committee,

said in a statement. "The Council not only made this deal to help the children of New Orleans, but also expected it to be honored. The Administration's refusal to help children is indefensible."

### Council expels member over bribe allegations

**DC** WASHINGTON — The D.C. Council voted unanimously Tuesday to expel council member Trayon White Sr., a searing and unprecedented rebuke stemming from federal allegations that he took \$35,000 in bribes from a government contractor.

White's expulsion — the first imposed by the council in its 51-year history — forced the Democrat to immediately surrender his seat representing Ward 8, a swath of largely blue-collar neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River.

As the council voted 12-0 to remove him, White, 40, sat expressionless in the audience alongside his attorney, Frederick D. Cooke, and a couple dozen of his supporters. White, who has pleaded not guilty to the federal bribery charge, is scheduled to go on trial next January.

### Gold treasure hunter to serve additional time

**OH** COLUMBUS — A former deep-sea treasure hunter who has served nearly a decade in jail for refusing to disclose the whereabouts of missing gold coins has had that term ended by a federal judge in Ohio, but he will remain behind bars for now.

U.S. District Judge Algenon Marbley agreed Friday to end Tommy Thompson's sentence

on the civil contempt charge, saying he "no longer is convinced that further incarceration is likely to coerce compliance." However, he also ordered that the research scientist immediately start serving a two-year sentence he received for a related criminal contempt charge, a term that was delayed when the civil contempt term was imposed.

Thompson has been held in contempt of court since Dec. 15, 2015, and also incurred a daily fine of \$1,000. In his ruling, Marbley assessed Thompson's total civil contempt fine at \$3,335,000.

Thompson's case dates to his discovery of the S.S. Central America, known as the Ship of Gold, in 1988. The gold rush-era ship sank in a hurricane off South Carolina in 1857 with thousands of pounds of gold aboard, contributing to an economic panic.

### Estee Lauder to cut up to 7,000 jobs as sales slide

**NY** NEW YORK — Estee Lauder may trim as many as 7,000 jobs by fiscal 2026, more than 11% of its workforce, after the global beauty cosmetics maker lost money in its most recent quarter and reported a 6% sales slump.

The New York company behind such brands as MAC, La Mer and Aveda tempered its profit outlook as the economies of China and South Korea slow, in addition to global geopolitical uncertainty.

Estee Lauder expects to book restructuring and other charges related to the job cuts of between \$1.2 billion and \$1.6 billion, before taxes.

— From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# No. 1 Auburn runs away from Oklahoma

Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — Johni Broome and Chad Baker-Mazara scored 15 points each and No. 1 Auburn remained undefeated in Southeastern Conference play with a 98-70 win over Oklahoma on Tuesday night.

The Tigers (21-1, 9-0) have now won 14 games in a row, the second-longest active winning streak in the country.

Auburn had five players in double figures for the second straight game. Denver Jones and Chaney Johnson both scored 13 points while Tahaad Pettiford added 11.

The Sooners (16-6, 3-6) were led by Dayton Forsythe with 13 points. Jalon Moore added 11, while Jeremiah Fears and Kobe Elvis both had 10.

Dylan Cardwell had a career-high six blocks for the Tigers, who had 11 as a team.

**No. 5 Houston 72, Oklahoma St. 63:** L.J. Cryer scored 18 points, Milos Uzan added 17 points and the host Cougars rebounded from their first Big 12 loss of the season with a win over the Cowboys.

J'Wan Roberts had 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Terrance Arceneaux had 10 points for

Houston (18-4, 10-1 Big 12), which shot 42% and went 8 of 21 on 3-pointers.

**No. 6 Florida 86, Vanderbilt 75:** Will Richard scored 21 points, Alex Condon added 19 and the host Gators beat the Commodores despite playing without leading scorer Walter Clayton Jr.

Clayton watched from the bench after he sprained his left ankle during a lopsided loss at Tennessee on Saturday.

Richard and Condon, meanwhile, carried Florida (19-3, 6-3 Southeastern Conference). Richard hit 5 of 7 shots from 3-point range, and Condon chipped in nine rebounds, four assists and two blocked shots.

**No. 7 Purdue 90, Iowa 81:** Braden Smith had 31 points and Trey Kaufman-Renn scored 25 as the visiting Boilermakers beat the Hawkeyes.

Purdue (18-5, 10-2 Big Ten) won its third consecutive game, pulling away from a 36-all halftime deadlock with a 17-5 run early in the second half.

Iowa (13-9, 4-7) got within 80-77 with 2:42 left in the game but the Boilermakers held the Hawkeyes off.

**UCLA 63, No. 9 Michigan St.**

**61:** Eric Dailey Jr. scored the go-ahead basket over two defenders with 7 seconds left, lifting the host Bruins to a hard-fought victory against the Spartans.

Sky Clark scored 14 points and Tyler Bilodeau added 13 for UCLA (17-6, 8-4 Big Ten), which won its sixth in a row and fifth against a ranked team.

Jaden Akins' potential game-winning 3-pointer bounced off the front of the rim as time expired. He led Michigan State (18-4, 9-2) with 15 points, its only double-figure scorer.

**No. 12 St. John's 70, No. 11 Marquette 64:** Kadary Richmond had 18 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists as the host Red Storm beat the Golden Eagles in their showdown for first place in the Big East.

RJ Luis Jr. added 17 points and 11 rebounds for streaking St. John's (20-3, 11-1), which has won nine straight and 15 of 16.

Chase Ross had 16 points for Marquette (18-5, 9-3). In foul trouble early, Kam Jones scored 13 of his 15 points in the second half.

**No. 25 Mississippi 98, No. 14 Kentucky 84:** Matthew Murrell scored 24 points and the host Rebels dominated the first half

to beat the Wildcats.

Murrell made six 3-pointers, four in the first half, as Ole Miss (17-6, 6-4 Southeastern Conference) never trailed and used runs of 10-0 and 15-3 to race to a 54-31 halftime lead.

Amari Williams had a triple-double for Kentucky (15-7, 4-5) with 12 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists.

**No. 20 Arizona 85, BYU 74:** Caleb Love scored 18 points and Jaden Bradley added 17 — all in the second half — to help the visiting Wildcats pull away from the Cougars.

Henri Veesaar also finished with 17 points to help Arizona (16-6, 10-1 Big 12) win its fourth straight game. The Wildcats have won 11 of their last 12 overall to stay in a first-place tie with Houston atop the Big 12 standings.

**No. 21 Wisconsin 76, Indiana 64:** John Tonje had 15 points to lead a balanced scoring attack and the Badgers continued their home domination of the Hoosiers.

Wisconsin (18-5, 8-4 Big Ten) has won its last 21 home games against Indiana, the Hoosiers' longest road losing streak against any opponent.

## Chiefs RB Hunt has made the most of second chance

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Chiefs running back Kareem Hunt has understood the value of second chances since fumbling on the first carry of his NFL debut in 2017.

"I thought my career was done and I was like, 'Man, I'm a bust. It's over with,'" Hunt recalled Tuesday as he fielded questions about playing in his first Super Bowl against the Philadelphia Eagles this Sunday.

As Hunt remembers it, Kansas City coach Andy Reid wasted little time seeking him out

on the sideline at New England after his early turnover.

"He was like, 'Relax, man. Calm down. When we get this ball back, we're giving it right back to you,'" Hunt said. "So that was another second chance right there. And I'm like, 'Wow, I got to make the most of it.'"

Similarly, Hunt has made the most of his latest stint with the team that drafted him.

Following offseason sports hernia surgery, Hunt entered the 2024 season unsigned and working out on his own at his old high school and recovering

from his training sessions in a sauna at the YMCA, unsure whether he'd played his final game in the NFL.

"I didn't know if the opportunity was going to come or not," said Hunt, who'd spent his previous five seasons with the Cleveland Browns.

When Isiah Pacheco fractured his fibula in Week 2, Hunt got the call he'd longed to receive — not only from the team that drafted him, but during what has become the Chiefs' bid to become the first NFL franchise to win three straight Super Bowls.

"When I got that call, I was excited and I told them, 'You won't regret it,'" Hunt said.

They didn't.

Hunt led the Chiefs in rushing this season with 728 yards, and his seven touchdowns were also a team high.

Even after Pacheco returned to the lineup, Hunt remained Kansas City's primary running back and has since added touchdowns in each of the Chiefs' two playoff victories.

"Being able to play football in February is amazing," Hunt said. "I got to make the most of it now."



# Bucks send Middleton to Wizards for Kuzma

Associated Press

The Milwaukee Bucks are trading NBA champion and Olympic gold medalist Khris Middleton to the Washington Wizards and getting Kyle Kuzma back in the deal, a person with knowledge of the agreement told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Also involved in the trade: A.J. Johnson goes from the Bucks to the Wizards and Patrick Baldwin goes from Washington to Milwaukee, along with a future pick swap and some second-round draft capital, said the person, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the trade had yet to receive league approval.

The move, first reported by ESPN, came one day before Thursday's 3 p.m. Eastern trade deadline.

The 33-year-old Middleton, who has struggled with injuries, leaves the Bucks after spending all but one of his 13 NBA seasons in Milwaukee. The three-time

All-Star has been limited to 23 games this season, 16 of those coming off the bench, but was shooting a career-best 51% in those appearances.

Middleton helped the Bucks win the NBA title in 2021, helped the United States win gold at the Tokyo Games later that year and was someone Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo has raved about for years.

"It's definitely a plus having Khris back," Antetokounmpo said earlier this season when Middleton was available again following ankle issues. "Man, he takes us to the next level with his IQ, decision-making, shot ability, defense."

The Bucks will become Kuzma's third team, after four years with the Los Angeles Lakers and parts of four years with the Wizards. The 29-year-old has averaged 17.2 points per game for his career, 15.2 points per game this season.

The move gives Milwaukee some financial flexibility in that

it gets the Bucks below the second apron — meaning, in the short term, some other trade options may be available to them before the deadline.

Being over the second apron had limited the moves Milwaukee could make as it tried to upgrade an aging roster. The Bucks (26-22) are in fifth place in the Eastern Conference after exiting in the first round of the playoffs each of the last two seasons.

They ended up trading a player whose No. 22 jersey could hang from the Fiserv Forum rafters at some point.

Middleton owns the Milwaukee franchise record for career 3-pointers with 1,382. He had 12,586 points with the Bucks to rank as the franchise's third-leading scorer, behind Antetokounmpo and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

He ranks second in team history in games played (735) and minutes played (23,039) — behind Antetokounmpo — and

third in assists (2,990).

Middleton had 24 points, 6.3 rebounds and 5.3 assists per game during the 2021 NBA Finals as the Bucks beat Phoenix in six games. He averaged 20.6 points, 6.5 rebounds and 4.8 assists in 80 career playoff games with Milwaukee. He earned All-Star Game selections in 2019, 2020 and 2022.

But injuries limited him over the last few seasons.

He was unavailable for the Bucks' seven-game loss to Boston in the 2022 Eastern Conference semifinals and played in just 33 games in 2022-23 and 55 in 2023-24. Middleton didn't make his 2024-25 debut until Dec. 6 as he recovered from off-season surgery to each of his ankles.

Kuzma has dealt with his own issues this season. He is shooting 42% from the floor, 28.1% on 3-point attempts and 60.2% on free throws — all career lows. He scored 31 points and 22 points in his last two games.

## Celtics hold off Cavaliers in matchup of East's best

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jayson Tatum scored 22 points, Derrick White added 20 and the Boston Celtics showed their championship makeup down the stretch with a 112-105 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers in a matchup of the Eastern Conference's top teams Tuesday night.

The defending NBA titlists executed in the final minutes and held off the Cavs, who lost for just the fourth time in 28 home games.

Kristaps Porzingis added 19 points and Jaylen Brown 16 with nine rebounds as Boston won its fourth straight and improved to 2-1 against Cleveland this season.

Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points and Darius Garland 25 for the Cavs, who cut a 15-point deficit to four in the fourth quar-

ter.

But the Celtics, who have won four straight, didn't buckle and responded in every crucial moment to put away the Cavs.

Jarrett Allen had 17 points and 18 rebounds for Cleveland.

**76ers 118, Mavericks 116:** Joel Embiid had 29 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in his first action in a month to lead Philadelphia to victory over visiting Dallas, which fell to 0-2 since trading star Luka Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers.

Embiid recorded his first triple-double of an injury-plagued season in which he's appeared in just 14 games.

Tyrese Maxey had 33 points and 13 assists for the Sixers.

Kyrie Irving scored 34 points for the Mavs and Naji Marshall added 19.

**Nets 99, Rockets 97:** Keon

Johnson and D'Angelo Russell made 3-pointers in the final 10 seconds, and Brooklyn stunned Houston for its first home victory in two months.

Jalen Green missed a deep 3 at the buzzer for the Rockets as Brooklyn (17-33) ended its 11-game skid at Barclays Center.

**Knicks 121, Raptors 115:** Karl-Anthony Towns had 27 points and 20 rebounds, Jalen Brunson scored 28 points and New York beat host Toronto for its eighth win in 10 games.

Mikal Bridges and Precious Achiuwa each scored 17 points as the Knicks won their eighth straight meeting with the Raptors. Josh Hart added 15 points as all five Knicks starters reached double digits.

Scottie Barnes scored 23 points and Jamal Sheard had a career-high 16 for the short-

handed Raptors.

**Bulls 133, Heat 124:** Rookie Matas Buzelis scored a career-best 24 points and Josh Giddey matched it to help host Chicago top Miami.

Coby White scored 22 points and Ayo Dosunmu added 21 points and nine assists for the Bulls.

Tyler Herro and Bam Adebayo each scored 23 for Miami.

**Lakers 122, Clippers 97:** LeBron James had 26 points, nine assists and eight rebounds, as the visiting Lakers thrashed the Clippers.

Austin Reaves and Rui Hachimura scored 20 points apiece for the Lakers.

**Trail Blazers 112, Pacers 89:** Anfernee Simons had 22 points and Portland won its fifth straight game with a win over visiting Indiana.

# Ducks' Gibson gets win in 500th game

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Trevor Zegras scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period, John Gibson made 26 saves in his 500th career NHL game and the Anaheim Ducks beat Dallas 2-1 on Tuesday night, snapping the Stars' five-game winning streak.

Cutter Gauthier also scored for Anaheim, which has won four straight at home.

Gibson became the first goaltender in franchise history to appear in 500 games. He is the 10th American-born netminder to reach that milestone and the third active. The New York Rangers' Jonathan Quick has appeared in 797 games and the Winnipeg Jets' Connor Hellebuyck has played in 547.

It was also Gibson's 202nd win, leaving him four wins from tying Jean-Sebastien Giguere for the most in franchise history.

Despite the accomplishments, Gibson tried to focus on the present instead of looking back at his career or any milestones still ahead.

"Tonight obviously was a little more special, so it's nice to get the win on top of it," Gibson said. "I was talking to someone earlier, I think it's something that I can be able to look back and reminisce on maybe towards the end of the career in the summer when you're with family and stuff like that."

**Bruins 3, Wild 0:** Charlie McAvoy got his 299th career point with a goal in the second period and Jeremy Swayman stopped 35 shots for his third shutout of the season as host Boston shut out Minnesota.

Trent Frederic scored and Morgan Geekie added an empty-net goal in the final minute for the Bruins.

Marc-Andre Fleury had 32 saves for the Wild, who swept Boston in both meetings last season but could not get anything past Swayman on Tuesday. Minnesota was shut out for the second straight game.

**Sabres 3, Blue Jackets 2:** Alex Tuch had two goals and an assist, and host Buffalo beat Columbus for its first four-game winning streak in more than two years.

Bowen Byram had a goal and an assist, and James Reimer stopped 28 shots to get his second win of the season and snap a five-game skid (0-4-1). The Sabres had not won four straight since a five-game run spanning Jan. 19-26, 2023.

Kent Johnson got his career-high-tying 16th goal, and Ivan Provorov also scored for the Blue Jackets. Elvis Merzlikins stopped 18 shots.

**Lightning 4, Senators 3:** Brandon Hagel scored less than two minutes into the third period to give host Tampa Bay the lead for good in a win that snapped Ottawa's five-game winning streak.

Luke Glendening, Nikita Kucherov and Ryan McDonagh also scored for the Lightning while Andrei Vasilevskiy finished with 25 saves.

Michael Amadio, Claude Giroux and Drake Batherson scored for the Senators. Linus Ullmark, making his first start in goal since Dec. 22, finished with 34 saves.

**Devils 3, Penguins 2 (SO):** Timo Meier beat Alex Nedeljkovic in the seventh round of a shootout to lift visiting New Jersey past Pittsburgh.

Jack Hughes scored twice for the Devils. Nico Daws stopped 25 shots in overtime and regulation then turned away five of the seven Penguins he faced in the shootout as New Jersey won for the sixth straight time in Pittsburgh.

Jesper Bratt assisted on both of Hughes' goals to boost his season total to 45 as the Devils bounced back from a loss to lowly Buffalo by ending the Penguins' modest two-game winning streak.

**Capitals 6, Panthers 3:** Alex Ovechkin scored his 878th ca-

reer goal into an empty net with 0.1 seconds left on the clock to move closer to Wayne Gretzky's NHL career record, and host Washington defeated defending Stanley Cup champion Florida.

Ovechkin's goal puts him 17 away from breaking Gretzky's mark of 894 that once seemed unapproachable. The Capitals have 29 games left for him to get to 895 or beyond this season, though he does have another year left on his contract.

The Panthers' winning streak ended at three despite goals from Sam Bennett, Aleksander Barkov and Matthew Tkachuk and 21 saves by Sergei Bobrovsky.

**Islanders 2, Golden Knights 1:** Brock Nelson snapped a tie midway through the third period and Ilya Sorokin made 34 saves, helping host New York beat Vegas for its eighth win in nine games.

Nelson tipped a shot by defenseman Alexander Romanov past Ilya Samsonov at 10:43. Tony DeAngelo also assisted on Nelson's 16th goal of the season.

Bo Horvat also scored for the Islanders, who improved to 11-3-0 since Jan. 5.

**Oilers 3, Blues 2 (OT):** Connor Brown scored at 2:33 of overtime and visiting Edmonton beat St. Louis.

Connor McDavid had a goal and two assists and Leon Draisaitl had a goal and an assist for the Oilers, who have won four of their last six games. Stuart Skinner made 20 saves.

**Jets 3, Hurricanes 0:** Eric Comrie made 29 saves and host Winnipeg's potent power play struck for a pair of goals in a victory over Carolina that extended its winning streak to seven games.

Nino Niederreiter and Neal Pionk both scored with the man advantage, giving the Jets an NHL-best 51 power-play goals this season. Rasmus Kupari also scored and Niederreiter added an assist for Winnipeg.

**Maple Leafs 6, Flames 3:** Wil-

liam Nylander had three goals for his second career hat trick, and visiting Toronto beat Calgary.

John Tavares, Bobby McMann and Matthew Knies also scored for the Maple Leafs, who pulled one point behind first-place Florida in the Atlantic Division. Auston Matthews had three assists and Joseph Woll stopped 23 shots.

**Utah Hockey Club 3, Flyers 2 (OT):** Dylan Guenther scored with 1 second left in overtime, and host Utah beat Philadelphia.

Guenther had two goals and an assist in his return to Utah's lineup after missing 12 games with an injury. He tied it at 2 with his 17th goal 8:40 into the third period.

**Canucks 3, Avalanche 0:** Thatcher Demko stopped 25 shots for his ninth career shutout and host Vancouver beat Colorado.

Jake DeBrusk had a goal and an assist, Brock Boeser and Drew O'Connor also scored and Filip had two assists to help the Canucks pull into a tie with Calgary for the second wild card in the Western Conference. Vancouver is 4-1-1 in its last six games.

**Red Wings 5, Kraken 4 (SO):** Patrick Kane scored his NHL-record 53rd career shootout goal and visiting Detroit beat Seattle for its seventh straight win.

Lucas Raymond, Moritz Seider, Jonatan Berggren and Elmer Soderblom scored in regulation for the Red Wings, and Cam Talbot had 23 saves.

**Canadiens 4, Sharks 3:** Joel Armia scored a short-handed tie-breaking goal late in the third period and visiting Montreal beat San Jose to snap a five-game losing streak.

Alex Newhook had a goal and an assist, and Cole Caufield and Brendan Gallagher also scored for the Canadiens, who were 0-4-1 during their skid. Kirby Dach had two assists and Sam Montebault finished with 27 saves.