

## Tensions high as Houthis attack ship

*Associated Press*

JERUSALEM — Houthi rebels fired a missile, striking a U.S.-owned ship Monday just off the coast of Yemen in the Gulf of Aden, less than a day after they launched an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea, officials said.

The attack on the Gibraltar Eagle, later claimed by the Houthis, further escalates tensions gripping the Red Sea after American-led strikes on the rebels. The Houthis' attacks have roiled global shipping, amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, targeting a crucial corridor linking Asian and Middle East energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which oversees Mideast waters, said Monday's attack happened

some 110 miles southeast of Aden. It said the ship's captain reported that the "port side of vessel hit from above by a missile."

Private security firms Ambrey and Dryad Global told The Associated Press that the vessel was the Eagle Gibraltar, a Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier. The U.S. military's Central Command later acknowledged the strike.

"The ship has reported no injuries or significant damage and is continuing its journey," CENTCOM said.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attack in a recorded television address that aired Monday night.

The vessel is owned by Eagle Bulk Shipping, a Stamford, Conn.-based firm traded on the New York Stock Exchange. In a statement to the AP, the compa-

ny acknowledged the strike and said it caused "limited damage to a cargo hold but (the ship) is stable and is heading out of the area."

"All seafarers onboard the vessel are ... uninjured," the firm said. "The vessel is carrying a cargo of steel products."

Satellite-tracking data analyzed by the AP showed the Eagle Gibraltar had been bound for the Suez Canal, but rapidly turned around at the time of the attack.

CENTCOM said it detected a separate anti-ship ballistic missile launch toward the southern Red Sea on Monday, though it "failed in flight and impacted on land in Yemen."

The U.S. Maritime Administration, under the Transportation Department, also issued a warning Monday saying there continues to be "a high degree of risk to commercial vessels"

traveling near Yemen. Sunday's missile launch toward the American warship also marked the first U.S.-acknowledged fire by the Houthis since America and allied nations began strikes Friday on the rebels following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthi fire in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, CENTCOM said.

The Houthis did not immediately acknowledge that attack either.

It wasn't presently clear whether the U.S. would retaliate for the latest attacks, though President Joe Biden has said he "will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary."

## Austin released from hospital after complications

**BY MATTHEW ADAMS**

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was released from a hospital Monday after a two-week stay for complications from prostate cancer surgery that he kept hidden from White House and Pentagon officials.

"Secretary Austin progressed well throughout his stay and his strength is rebounding. He underwent a series of medical tests and evaluations and received non-surgical care during his stay to address his medical needs, to include resolving some lingering leg pains," his doctors said in a statement re-

leased by the Pentagon. "He was discharged home with planned physical therapy and regular follow-up. The secretary is expected to make a full recovery."

The doctors at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., added he has no further planned treatment for cancer except "regular post-prostatectomy surveillance."

Austin, 70, had been in the hospital since Jan. 1 after experiencing complications from the surgery, which was conducted Dec. 22. The secretary has come under scrutiny after he failed to notify President Joe Biden and

other officials about his illness and hospital stay.

Austin seemed to acknowledge in a statement Jan. 6 that he made a misstep by keeping his hospitalization private.

"I understand the media concerns about transparency, and I recognize I could have done a better job ensuring the public was appropriately informed. I commit to doing better," he said. "But this is important to say: This was my medical procedure, and I take full responsibility for my decisions about disclosure."

During a regular health screening in early December, Austin's cancer was detected.

He was admitted to the hospital about three weeks later for a prostatectomy, which involves surgery to remove part of the prostate gland.

The doctors called it "a minimally invasive surgical procedure." Austin was under general anesthesia during the surgery and left the hospital the following morning.

On Jan. 1, Austin returned to Walter Reed after experiencing pain in his abdomen, hip and leg, the doctors said. He was later found to have a urinary tract infection, and Austin spent days in the intensive care unit before he was moved to a private section of the hospital.

# Military academies focus on Constitution

*Associated Press*

WEST POINT, N.Y. — For 75 minutes, Maj. Joe Amoroso quizzed his students in SS202, American Politics, about civilian leadership of the military, the trust between the armed forces and the public, and how the military must not become a partisan tool.

There was one answer, he said, that would always be acceptable in his class filled with second-year students at the U.S. Military Academy. Hesitantly, one cadet offered a response: “The Constitution.”

“Yes,” Amoroso said emphatically.

His message to the students, known as yearlings, was simple: Their loyalty is “not about particular candidates. It’s not a particular person or personality that occupies these positions. It’s about the Constitution.”

The emphasis for the next generation of military officers that their loyalty must be focused on the nation’s democratic underpinnings rather than on any individual is a reflection of how the armed forces are being forced to deal with America’s deep political polarization at a time when trust in traditional institutions is eroding.

The role of the military in particular has come under scrutiny as former President Donald Trump runs to reclaim the White House and has laid out an aggressive agenda should he win. It includes potentially using the military in ways other presidents

have not. That could mean invoking the Insurrection Act to send units to the border or patrol the streets of predominantly Democratic cities.

Trump’s rhetoric about top commanders also has raised concerns. While in office, Trump once referred to the military leaders in his administration as “my generals.” Earlier this year, he suggested that a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, retired Army Gen. Mark Milley, be put to death for treason.

President Joe Biden, in his first campaign address of the year, warned about Trump’s rhetoric on the military and its leadership.

With cadets and midshipmen drawn from across the United States, students at West Point and other service academies are aware of the national mood and the potential for political divisions to seep into the military.

They encounter an array of classes on the Constitution and, in some cases, the history of the civilian-military relationship. Each graduate who is commissioned takes multiple oaths at school and during their service. Milley emphasized the significance of the oaths in his retirement address last fall, appearing to take aim at Trump.

“We don’t take an oath to a king or a queen or to a tyrant or a dictator. And we don’t take an oath to a wannabe dictator,” he said.

At the Air Force Academy, the Jan. 6,

2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol was a top subject of discussion in the Civil-Military Relations class when junior and senior-year cadets began the spring semester the next day.

The coincidental timing “brought introspection about their oath as future officers,” said the instructor, Marybeth Ulrich. One result was a cadet-driven initiative, the Oath Project.

“Instigation of potential uprising or any issues on Capitol Hill creates immediate concern for the military and for the larger public as a whole. So we were very aware of the events as they were unfolding,” said 1st Lt. Darrell Miller, now stationed with the Space Force at Buckley Space Force Base near Denver, and one of the 13 students in the class who started the project.

Dozens of former and active duty military members have been charged in the Jan. 6 assault, an attempt to stop Congress from certifying the 2020 presidential election that Democrat Biden won over Republican Trump.

A recent Defense Department inspector general report showed that dozens of military members were suspected of extremist activities that included conspiring to overthrow the government, though the number represents a tiny fraction of the more than 2 million U.S. service members.

## Lost Navy SEALs were searching for weapons shipment

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — U.S. Navy ships and aircraft combed areas of the Gulf of Aden for two missing U.S. Navy SEALs on Monday as details emerged about their mission to board and take over a vessel carrying components for medium-range Iranian ballistic missiles headed for Somalia, a U.S. defense official said Monday.

The official said crew on the dhow, which did not have a country flag, were planning to transfer the missile parts, including warheads and engines, to another boat off the coast of Somalia.

The Navy recognized the boat as one with a history of transporting illegal weapons from Iran to Somalia, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to dis-

cuss details not made public.

The SEALs were on the USS Lewis B. Puller, a Navy expeditionary sea base vessel, and traveled in small special operations combat craft driven by naval special warfare crew to get to the boat.

As they were boarding it in rough seas, around 8 p.m. local time, one SEAL got knocked off by high waves and a teammate went in after him.

Both are missing.

The team boarding the small boat was facing about a dozen crew members.

The crew members, who were taken into custody, had no paperwork, which allowed a search of the vessel. The weapons were confiscated, and the boat was sunk, a routine procedure that usually involves blow-

ing open holes in the hull.

U.S. officials have said that the waters in the Gulf of Aden are warm, and Navy SEALs are trained for such emergencies. On Monday, Navy ships, helicopters and drones were involved in the ongoing search.

The U.S. Navy has conducted regular interdiction missions in the region, also intercepting weapons on ships that were bound for Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen.

Officials have said that the SEAL mission was not related to Operation Prosperity Guardian, the ongoing U.S. and international mission to provide protection to commercial vessels in the Red Sea, or the retaliatory strikes that the United States and the United Kingdom have conducted in Yemen over the past two days.

# Arctic freeze continues to blast parts of US

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A dangerous Arctic blast will continue sweeping across the U.S. on Monday and linger through at least midweek, prolonging a bitter cold that set record-low temperatures in parts of the country and threatens to further disrupt daily life, including an NFL playoff game and the first-in-the-nation presidential nominating contest in Iowa.

The National Weather Service said wind chills are expected to push temperatures 30 degrees below zero from the Northern Rockies to northern Kansas and into Iowa, testing the hardiness of caucus-goers willing to brave the deep chill on Monday.

“You can’t sit home,” former President Donald Trump told supporters Sunday. “If you’re sick as a dog, you say, ‘Darling, I gotta make it.’ Even if you vote and then pass away, it’s worth it.”

Arctic storms left at least four

dead and knocked out electricity to tens of thousands in the Northwest, brought snow to the South and walloped the Northeast with blizzard conditions forcing the postponement of the Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Buffalo Bills NFL playoff game hosted in bone-chilling Buffalo, N.Y.

The game was scheduled to be held Monday after being canceled Sunday.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Buffalo native, posted a video on X, formerly Twitter, showing near-whiteout conditions.

“Conditions right now in Orchard Park, where the game would have started moments ago,” she wrote early Sunday afternoon. “No visibility and dangerously high winds.”

It remains to be seen if the show will go on Monday afternoon. The weather service expects heavy lake-effect snow to push into upstate New York from Lake Erie, adding to the 1 to 2 feet

of snow already blanketing the region. Snow fell at a rate of 2 inches per hour.

Sub-zero wind chills will grip much of the country, plunging to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit in Montana and the Dakotas.

“It takes a matter of minutes for frostbite to set in,” the South Dakota Department of Public Safety said in a statement Sunday urging people to stay indoors.

Other parts of the country could see temperatures drop 25 to 40 degrees below normal, from the Rockies to the Ohio Valley.

As temperatures in Texas plunged, the state’s power grid operator appealed to residents to voluntarily conserve electricity Monday morning due to the cold weather causing “record breaking demand” for energy. A deadly freeze in 2021 left millions of Texans without power but state officials this week expressed

confidence about the grid’s reliability as the cold front approached.

Hard-freeze and wind chill warnings were in effect for much of northern Texas, with plunging temperatures that are a threat not just to people but to animals left outdoors.

Freezing rain is expected to pelt parts of the Southern Plains and Southern Appalachians.

In Oregon, more than 97,000 homes and businesses were without electricity, most of them in the Portland metro area, a day after high winds and a mix of snow and ice brought down trees and power lines.

Some 100 trees toppled over the weekend in a community just south of Portland, including one that fell on a house and killed a man. Two other people died of suspected hypothermia and a fourth died in a fire that spread from an open-flame stove after a tree fell onto an RV.

## Principal who saved students dies 10 days after shooting

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — An Iowa principal who put himself in harm’s way to protect students during a school shooting earlier this month died Sunday, a funeral home confirmed.

Caldwell Parrish Funeral Home & Crematory confirmed the death of Perry High School Principal Dan Marburger after the family announced it on a GoFundMe page.

Marburger was critically injured during the Jan. 4 attack, which began in the school’s cafeteria as students were gathering for breakfast before class. An 11-year-old middle school student was killed in the shooting, and six other people were injured. The 17-year-old student who opened fire also died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot.

The day after the shooting, the state Department of Public Safety

said Marburger “acted selflessly and placed himself in harm’s way in an apparent effort to protect his students.”

News of Marburger’s death was first posted on a GoFundMe page for his family. The post, by Marburger’s wife, Elizabeth, said he died at about 8 a.m. Sunday, and said: “Dan lost his battle. He fought hard and gave us 10 days that we will treasure forever.”

Iowa Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds offered her condolences in a statement Sunday.

“Our entire state is devastated by the news of Dan Marburger’s death,” she said. “Dan courageously put himself in harm’s way to protect his students, and ultimately gave his own life to save them. He will forever be remembered for his selfless and heroic actions. May he rest in peace.”

Marburger had been principal since 1995.

## Marsh, an Air Force officer, is crowned Miss America

The Washington Post

A second lieutenant in the Air Force is swapping her helmet for a crown after winning the title of Miss America 2024.

Madison Marsh prevailed Sunday as Colorado’s representative, becoming the first active-duty Air Force officer to win the pageant, according to the Miss Colorado website.

“Congratulations to our very own Airman,” the Air Force tweeted as Marsh won the event in Orlando, Fla.

Her Miss Colorado biography is not typical of a pageant contender: “In her free time, Madison enjoys flying planes, cooking pasta, and reading,” it says.

“When I put on my uniform, I serve, and I represent our country,” Marsh told the Harvard Crimson student newspaper ahead of Sunday’s finale. “When I

put on the crown and sash, I’m serving, representing my community.”

The Air Force Academy championed Marsh throughout the competition, sharing a photo of her standing alongside a plane in her uniform to its Instagram account, with the caption “from the flight line to the spotlight.”

Marsh, who was crowned Miss Colorado in 2023, is an Arkansas native and holds a degree in physics from the Air Force Academy. She is studying public policy at Harvard Kennedy School, according to her competition profile. After the death of her mother in 2018, Marsh helped set up a charitable foundation to fund research into pancreatic cancer and help care for patients. To date, more than a quarter-million dollars has been raised, according to the Miss Colorado website.

# N. Korea claims it tested new missile

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea on Monday said it flight-tested a new solid-fuel intermediate-range missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead as it pursues more powerful, harder-to-detect weapons designed to strike remote U.S. targets in the region.

The report by North Korea's state media came a day after the South Korean and Japanese militaries detected the launch from a site near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, in what was the North's first ballistic test of

2024.

The launch came two months after North Korea said it successfully tested engines for a new solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile, which reflected a push to advance its lineup of weapons targeting U.S. military bases in Guam and Japan.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday's launch was aimed at verifying the reliability of the missile's solid-fuel engines and the maneuverable flight capabilities of the hypersonic warhead,

which the report implied was an upgraded version of previous vehicles designed to perform intermediate-range strikes.

The report described the test as a success but didn't provide details. It didn't mention whether North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended the test, which it said was part of the country's regular weapons development activities and did not affect the security of neighbors.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile flew about 620 miles before landing in the waters between the Korean Pen-

insula and Japan. The North's existing intermediate-range ballistic missiles or IRBMs, including the Hwasong-12 that may be able to reach the U.S. military hub of Guam in the Pacific, are powered by liquid-fuel engines, which are fueled up before launch and cannot stay fueled for long.

Missiles with built-in solid propellants can be made ready to launch faster and are easier to move and conceal, theoretically making it harder for adversaries to detect and preempt the launch.

# Ukraine says it shot down two key Russian aircraft

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian air force shot down a Russian early warning and control plane that can spot targets up to 400 miles away and a key command center aircraft that relays information to troops on the ground in a significant blow for the Kremlin's forces, Ukraine's military chief said Monday.

The planes are fundamental tools in helping orchestrate Russian battlefield movements in Ukraine. Shooting them down, if confirmed, would be a landmark

feat for Ukraine in the almost two-year war, as fighting along the front line is largely bogged down in trench and artillery warfare.

Russia has largely ensured its air dominance during the war, as Ukraine fights with its fleet of Soviet-era warplanes against Moscow's more modern aircraft.

Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the commander in chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, didn't say how the two aircraft — a Beriev A-50 and an Il-22 — were brought

down, but Ukraine has received sophisticated air defense systems from its Western allies.

Zaluzhnyi also did not say where the interceptions occurred, though he attached a video to his social media post with an airplane tracker showing two targets disappearing above the Azov Sea, which lies between Ukraine and Russia, north of the Crimean Peninsula and the Black Sea.

There was no immediate official comment from Moscow. Russian war bloggers said both

planes had come under friendly fire, though they presented no evidence of that. They claimed the Il-22 was damaged but made a successful landing.

The A-50, which is topped with a large radar, typically carries a crew of 15. The Russian air force reportedly has been operating a fleet of nine such aircraft.

The Il-22 is an airborne command post. It oversees military operations and sends radio signals to troops on the front line. The Russian air force reportedly has a dozen such planes.

# Israel vows it still seeks 'total surrender of Hamas'

*Bloomberg News*

Israel insists its campaign against Hamas won't end before the Palestinian militant organization capitulates and returns all the people it took captive over three months ago, a senior official said, despite mounting international pressure to wind down the offensive.

"We have to have the total surrender of Hamas, we have to have our hostages back," Nir Barkat, Israel's economy and industry minister, said in an interview with Bloomberg Television

on Monday. "Hamas has to raise a white flag."

Israel has suggested it has little appetite to ease off the offensive in Gaza that began after Hamas attacked from the territory on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people in southern Israel and taking around 230 hostage. The military pulled some forces out of Gaza earlier this month and said it accomplished much of what it set out to do in the northern part of the Hamas-controlled territory.

Even so, fighting continues to

rage in the enclave and Israeli officials have said it could continue for months, if not longer. Much of the Gaza Strip has been reduced to rubble and more than 24,000 people have died, according to health officials there.

Israel's focusing most of its ground and air offensive on the center and south of the strip at the moment.

Barkat, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, sees "no other alternative" to the complete defeat of the group, designated as a

terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union. Some Arab states have said signaled that, given Hamas' deep roots within Gaza and the fact it's run the territory since 2007, it will have to have some postwar role.

"We have to look at somebody out there that is going to recognize Israel, that doesn't want to slaughter and kill and wipe Israel off the map," Barkat said.

Hamas is committed to Israel's destruction and does not recognize the Jewish state.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Man sentenced for false claims against executives**

**NY** NEW YORK — A California man was sentenced to four years in prison for seeking to win a \$100 million lawsuit by making false sexual assault claims against Hollywood executives.

Rovier Carrington, 34, of Los Angeles, was sentenced in Manhattan federal court after he pleaded guilty to making a false declaration in the 2018 civil case.

The sentence issued by Judge Valerie E. Caproni was more than twice what prosecutors requested. In a pre-sentence submission, they wrote that Carrington's fraud could fuel "the false perception that many such claims are fraudulent, chilling others from bringing meritorious sexual-assault claims."

Carrington was arrested in California in September 2021 on a perjury charge for fabricating emails to make it seem that he had been sexually assaulted by two Hollywood executives who he claimed had prevented the production of his reality television program.

**Quakes over magnitude 4 recorded near suburb**

**OK** EDMOND — At least six earthquakes that include two greater than magnitude 4 have been recorded near an Oklahoma City suburb, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The preliminary magnitudes of the earthquakes near Edmond include a 4.1 shortly after 5:30 a.m. Saturday and a 4.3 at about 9:45 p.m. Friday.

No injuries or significant damage has been reported, ac-

ording to city of Edmond spokesperson Bill Begley, who said investigators will fully inspect infrastructure.

**Governor, music leaders push to protect against AI**

**TN** NASHVILLE — Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee unveiled new legislation designed to protect songwriters, performers and other music industry professionals against the potential dangers of artificial intelligence.

Lee made the announcement while standing in the middle of Nashville's famed RCA Studio A, a location where legends such as Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson and Charley Pride have all recorded. Packed inside were top music industry leaders, songwriters and lawmakers, all eager to praise the state's rich musical history while also sounding the alarm about the threats AI poses.

"Tennessee will be the first state in the country to protect artists' voices with this legislation," Lee said. "And we hope it will be a blueprint for the country."

**School board member let go for trying to pull books**

**NE** PLATTSMOUTH — Voters decided to remove a small-town Nebraska school member from office after she tried to have dozens of books pulled from school libraries.

More than 1,600 Plattsburgh voters supported recalling Terri Cunningham-Swanson in a mail-in election. The Omaha World-Herald reported that about 1,000 people voted to keep her on the board she joined a year ago.

Cunningham-Swanson led an effort to have about 50 books removed from school libraries because of concerns about sexual content and adult themes in them.

Some students protested and one librarian resigned after the books were pulled from library shelves while they were being reviewed.

Ultimately, only one book — "Triangles" by Ellen Hopkins, which focuses on three women, including one whose marriage falls apart after she engages in extramarital sex — was pulled from the shelves. Eleven other books were put in a restricted section that students need parent permission to check books out from. More than 30 other books were kept on general library shelves.

**FCC asks automakers on plans to stop car stalking**

**MI** DETROIT — The top U.S. telecommunications regulator is asking automakers how they plan to protect people from being stalked or harassed by partners who have access to vehicle location and other data.

In a letter sent to nine large automakers, Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel asks for details about connected car systems and plans to support people who have been harassed by domestic abusers.

"No survivor of domestic violence and abuse should have to choose between giving up their car and allowing themselves to be stalked and harmed by those who can access its data and connectivity," she said in a statement.

Nearly all new vehicles have

convenience features that use telecommunications to find cars in parking lots, start the engine remotely, and even connect with emergency responders, Rosenworcel's letter said.

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation, a large trade association, said in a statement that misuse of connected vehicle technology to stalk or harass people is not acceptable.

"The industry is considering how to best broaden federal or state policies and other protections to help prevent these incidents," the statement said.

**City makes history with all-female council**

**MN** ST. PAUL — When St. Paul City Council President Mitra Jalali looked out at her fellow council members at their initial meeting, she saw all the members' seats were occupied by women — a first for Minnesota's capital city.

Experts who track women in politics said St. Paul, with a population of about 300,000 people, is the first large U.S. city they know of with an all-female city council. But even as the council members celebrate the milestone, they are expressing more excitement about what the all-female council can accomplish in the coming year.

"We're a multifaith, multicultural group of women. Our professional experiences are what people trusted as much as our personal ones. ... And we have a clear policy vision that we got elected on," Jalali said in an interview.

All seven women are under 40 years old, and six out of the seven are women of color.

— From wire reports

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# Packers top Cowboys in wild-card stunner

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Aaron Jones grew up idolizing Emmitt Smith and the Dallas Cowboys.

The Green Bay running back found a new, and most painful, way to torment the all-time rushing leader's former team.

Jones ran for three touchdowns, Jordan Love threw for three more in his postseason debut, Darnell Savage returned an interception 64 yards for a score and the Packers handed the Cowboys their first home loss since the 2022 opener in a 48-32 wild-card stunner Sunday.

"This was my dad's team," Jones, who shared a moment with Smith before the game and now has 488 yards in four career games against the Cowboys, said of his late father. "You always want to be like your father, so that's how it became my team. Dallas is a special place to me, so it's a full-circle moment. It feels like home."

Even against a team that had won 16 consecutive home games.

Green Bay (10-8) will visit top-seeded San Francisco in the divisional round next

weekend.

Dak Prescott threw two interceptions before three mostly empty touchdown passes in another playoff flop for him and the No. 2 seed Cowboys (12-6).

The first home loss for the Cowboys since now-retired Tom Brady and Tampa Bay beat them 16 months ago was also the most points the franchise has allowed in a postseason game. The previous high was 38.

The Cowboys, who haven't reached an NFC championship game since the most recent of their five Super Bowl titles 28 years ago, didn't trail by more than eight points at AT&T Stadium this season before falling behind 27-0 in the first half.

The loss will raise questions about the future of Dallas coach Mike McCarthy after the Cowboys lost their playoff opener at home for the second time in three seasons under the former Green Bay coach.

Dallas is the first team to win at least 12 games in three consecutive playoff seasons without making a conference title game.

The Cowboys surged to the NFC East title in the final two weeks and had a chance to be

home at least twice this postseason. Instead, they head into a suddenly uncertain offseason.

"Just shocked, honestly," Prescott said. "From the beginning of the game, we got beat. There's no which way around it. There's no way to sugar coat it. Shock."

Romeo Doubs had a career-high 151 yards receiving a week after being hospitalized with a chest injury as the Packers rolled after finishing the regular season 6-2 to grab the NFC's final playoff spot.

"We came in here with a mindset of we're going to dominate," Love said. "A lot of people were counting us out, and we didn't care about that."

The Packers have never lost in six trips to AT&T Stadium — including the Super Bowl over Pittsburgh during the 2010 season. They now have two playoff victories over the Cowboys after Aaron Rodgers led a 34-31 divisional win when Dallas was the NFC's top seed in 2016, Prescott's rookie year.

Those Packers let a 21-3 lead slip away. These Packers left little doubt.

# Goff leads Lions to first playoff victory in 32 years

Associated Press

DETROIT — Jared Goff lifted his arms in the air, encouraging Ford Field fans to get even louder, before taking the final snap to end his long-suffering franchise's skid in the playoffs.

The crowd delivered, approaching the decibel level of a siren.

Goff came through, too.

Goff threw for a touchdown and completed a pass for a victory-sealing first down against the team that cast him away, and the Detroit Lions won a playoff game for the first time in 32 years, beating Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams 24-23 on Sunday night.

The Lions (13-5) ended a nine-game postseason losing streak — the longest in NFL history — that dated to a victory over Dallas on Jan. 5, 1992. They lost a home playoff game two years later and hadn't hosted one since.

"It means a whole lot to this

city," Goff said. "We knew what it meant when this season started to get into the playoffs and then to get this win. And, you know, it's just the beginning for us. We've got some run left."

Detroit, the NFC's No. 3 seed, will have two home playoff games for the first time in franchise history, hosting either Tampa Bay or Philadelphia in the divisional round next Sunday. Second-seeded Dallas was routed by Green Bay.

The Rams (10-8) had a chance to take the lead late in the fourth quarter, but Detroit's defense denied them. A holding penalty pushed Los Angeles out of field-goal range, and Stafford — the Lions' longtime quarterback who won a Super Bowl after he was traded to the Rams — threw incomplete on fourth down.

On the first play after the two-minute warning, Goff hit Amon-Ra St. Brown for 11 yards, allowing the Lions to run out the clock — much to the delight of long-

suffering fans who witnessed the franchise's second postseason victory since winning the 1957 NFL title.

"That's the best home atmosphere I've ever played in, and I expect next week will top that," Goff said.

Against the franchise he once led to the Super Bowl, Goff was 22-for-27 for 277 yards and threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to rookie tight end Sam LaPorta that put Detroit ahead 21-10 midway through the second quarter.

The Lions acquired Goff and a pair of first-round picks for Stafford three years ago.

"Jared was really efficient. You could see the command that he has," said Rams coach Sean McVay, whose relationship with Goff soured before the trade. "There's a lot made of it, but I'm really happy for him. We wanted to come away with a win, but he's done a great job."

Stafford, who played most of

the game with a bandaged and bloody hand after he slammed it into a defender's helmet, finished 25-for-36 for 367 yards with two touchdowns.

"I wouldn't want anyone else as our quarterback other than Matthew Stafford," McVay said. "He was outstanding. He was gritty. He was gutsy and made tough throw after tough throw. The rush was barreling down on him, and he stood in there and was dropping dimes all day."

Detroit drafted Stafford No. 1 overall in 2009 and while he put up gaudy statistics, he didn't win a playoff game in his 12 seasons. Stafford hugged dozens of Detroit's players and staff members after the game.

"I'm happy for the players," he said. "I'm happy for those guys."

Record-breaking rookie Puka Nacua had nine receptions for 181 yards and a touchdown for the Rams.

# Lillard's 3 at buzzer in OT rescues Bucks

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Damian Lillard swished a 3-pointer at the buzzer in overtime to give the Milwaukee Bucks a stunning 143-142 win over the Sacramento Kings on Sunday night.

The Kings led by four late in overtime, but Brook Lopez made a 3-pointer from the corner to pull the Bucks to 141-140 with 11.5 seconds remaining. De'Aaron Fox made one of two free throws. Lillard then inbounded the ball to Lopez, who passed it back to Lillard, who then dribbled across half court and sank a shot from about 30 feet that gave the Bucks their 15th consecutive win over the Kings as the Fiserv Forum crowd erupted and teammates mobbed him.

Lillard said the play called for him to inbound the ball to Giannis Antetokounmpo, not Lopez.

"Two guys ran to Giannis and as soon as I looked up, Brook was already running toward me

and I knew that was what the play was going to get to eventually," Lillard said.

After crossing half court, Lillard said he glanced at the clock before making a move to set up his game-winner, which marked the 2,500th 3-pointer of his career.

Lillard led the Bucks with 29 points. Antetokounmpo had a triple-double with 27 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists and Malik Beasley scored 23.

The Bucks improved to 19-3 at home.

**Timberwolves 109, Clippers 105:** Anthony Edwards scored 20 of his 33 points in the third quarter and Rudy Gobert had 15 points and 18 rebounds to help host Minnesota beat Los Angeles.

Norman Powell's corner 3-pointer — his sixth of the game — capped a 20-6 surge by the Clippers over a four-plus-minute stretch that sliced their deficit to 103-100. Gobert, who missed seven free throws in-

cluding earlier back-to-back airballs, made four foul shots in the final minute to nudge the Wolves to the finish line on a night when they had 19 turnovers and allowed 37 points in the fourth quarter.

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 17 points for the West-leading Wolves (28-11), who held Clippers stars Paul George (16 points) and James Harden (14 points) to a combined 9-for-33 shooting from the floor. The Wolves, who lead the NBA in scoring defense, are 16-2 at home and 20-6 against their conference.

**Nuggets 117, Pacers 109:** Nikola Jokic had 25 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists, finishing an assist shy of his 13th triple-double of the season in host Denver's victory over Indiana.

Michael Porter Jr. and Jamal Murray matched Jokic with 25 points apiece for the Nuggets, who shot a season-high 64.8% from the field. Aaron Gordon

added 20 points and 10 rebounds to help Denver improve to 17-4 at home.

**Suns 127, Trail Blazers 116:** Devin Booker had 34 points and visiting Phoenix held off Portland for its second straight victory. Bradley Beal added 23 points and Kevin Durant had 21.

Bradley Beal added 23 points, Kevin Durant had 21 and Grayson Allen had 20. The Suns, whose biggest lead was 17 points, let Portland narrow the gap to four points midway through the final quarter.

**Heat 104, Hornets 87:** Bam Adebayo had 24 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, helping host Miami beat Charlotte.

Tyler Herro made four 3-pointers and scored 21 points for Miami. The Heat went 11 for 25 from 3-point range while completing a four-game sweep of the regular-season series against Charlotte. They also won their 22nd straight game at home against Southeast Division opponents.

## Maryland knocks off Illinois; No. 4 UConn makes case for No. 1

Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Jahmir Young scored 28 points and Julian Reese had 20 points and 11 rebounds to lead Maryland to a 76-67 victory Sunday over No. 10 Illinois, the 10th time this week a team ranked in the top 10 of the AP poll has lost.

The Terrapins (11-6, 3-3 Big Ten) outscored the Illini 39-28 in the second half, taking the lead for good on a dunk by Reese with 15:32 to go that made it 47-46. Maryland, which was an 8 1/2-point underdog according to FanDuel Sportsbook, won a road Big Ten game for the first time this season.

Marcus Domask scored 26 points for Illinois (12-4, 3-2) and Luke Goode had 13. Coleman Hawkins, who had scored in double figures in seven straight games for the Illini, fouled out with 2:50 left. He had eight points and seven rebounds.

Maryland came in focused on slowing down the 6-foot-10 Hawkins at both ends of the floor.

"He's a matchup nightmare on offense," Terps coach Kevin Willard said. "So we decided to pound the ball inside to Julian

(Reese) and make Hawkins defend that instead of switching to the perimeter. We knew that would wear him out eventually."

Illinois coach Brad Underwood took the blame for the loss.

"Maryland deserves all the credit. Every ounce of it. It's my fault for not getting these guys in the right frame of mind defensively," he said. "Now we can join the crowd. Every other top-10 team lost this week to an unranked team. Doesn't make it feel any better."

**No. 4 UConn 80, Georgetown 76:** Alex Karaban tied a career high with 26 points and the host Huskies made their case to be considered the nation's top team by beating the Hoyas.

Cam Spencer added 20 points for UConn (15-2, 5-1 Big East), which won its fifth straight game, all without starting center Donovan Clingan, who remained sidelined with a right foot injury. Stephon Castle added 14 points.

With the three teams ranked above the Huskies losing this week (Purdue, Houston and Kansas), the defending national cham-

pions have a chance to become No. 1 when the new AP Top 25 is released Monday afternoon.

**No. 13 Memphis 112, Wichita State 86:** Jaykwon Walton and Jahvon Quinerly scored 23 points apiece to lead the visiting Tigers past the Shockers for their 10th consecutive win.

Walton, who played for Wichita State last season, and Quinerly were two of six players to finish in double-digit scoring for Memphis (15-2, 4-0 American Athletic Conference).

The Tigers recorded their most points this season, set a program record with 19 three-pointers and shot a season-high 65% from the floor. It was the first time since 1986 they have scored more than 100 points in back-to-back games.

**No. 24 Florida Atlantic 86, UAB 73:** Jhonnell Davis scored 30 points and grabbed eight rebounds, Vladislav Goldin added 18 and the host Owls used a big first half to beat the Blazers.

Jalen Gaffney added 10 for Florida Atlantic (13-4, 3-1 American). It was the third 30-point effort of Davis' career, and two of those have come against UAB.

# Osaka's Grand Slam return short-lived

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Moments after her Grand Slam comeback ended in a first-round loss, Naomi Osaka put her gold jacket on and walked back through the players' tunnel where her name has a prominent place among recent Australian Open champions.

Three matches into her return from 15 months off the tour, and six months after the birth of her daughter, Shai, Osaka lost 6-4, 7-6 (2) to 16th-seeded Caroline Garcia in a tight encounter at Rod Laver Arena on Monday night.

"The competitive in me is really frustrated that I'm not winning these matches, of course," Osaka told a post-match news conference. "So I wouldn't say, like, this comeback is how I thought because I'm delusional enough to think I could have won the tournament."

She smiled at that point, and added: "I think my delusion is what allows me to win the tournaments."

Osaka won the U.S. Open in 2018 and 2020, and the Australian title in 2019 and '21. This was the first time she lost in the first round in Melbourne, where she made her debut in 2016.

She took time out from tennis

for her own well-being after first-round exits at the French Open and U.S. Open in 2022. She's not planning any more breaks for now.

"Yeah, I think I just have to keep living day by day and training hard and playing a lot more matches," she said. "And hopefully my dreams will come true."

The big-serving Garcia didn't give Osaka a look at a break point in the match. Most of the rallies were short — only three longer than nine shots. The bulk were less than four. Most of the service holds were comfortable — except for Osaka's one dropped game in the first set. That was all the difference.

"I have a lot of respect for Naomi as a person and as a player — 15 months she's been away," Garcia said. "I'm very glad to see her back. Six months after giving birth, she's playing quite amazing already. We have to watch out."

It was 1:39 a.m. local time by the time Felix Auger-Aliassime closed out a 4-hour, 59-minute win over 2020 U.S. Open winner Dominic Thiem 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 5-7, 6-3 in the final match of the event.

In the opening match on Rod Laver, U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff needed just 60 minutes

to advance.

Gauff, with increased confidence in her serve thanks to some advice from Andy Roddick, began her bid for back-to-back Grand Slam singles titles with a 6-3, 6-0 victory over Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

The 19-year-old American, who won her first major at the U.S. Open in September, said she was a little nervous to start.

"I think I did well returning, then I found my serve toward the end (of the set)," she said. "When I was nervous at 3-3, I told myself: 'I feel good, I look good, so just have fun'. That was able to relax me a little bit."

Gauff dropped just one point on her serve in the second set and credited Roddick, saying "he's probably one of the best servers in history."

Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova didn't make it past the first round, losing 6-1, 6-2 to Dayana Yastremska and struggling with a hip injury.

A third 16-year-old reached the second round, with Mirra Andreeva beating 29-year-old Bernarda Pera 7-5, 6-2 to set up a second-round match with sixth-seeded Ons Jabeur, a three-time runner-up at Grand Slams.

Alina Korneeva and Brenda Fruhvirtova, both also 16, ad-

vanced after their first Grand Slam main draw wins on Sunday.

"I'm really excited for this," Andreeva said about playing Jabeur. "I said many times before that, she's the player that I was looking up to. I really like the way she plays her game and I'm sure it's going to be a great match."

Australia's newest top-10 player, Alex de Minaur, advanced after a truncated night match on Rod Laver Arena. He was leading 2016 Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic 6-7 (6), 6-3, 2-0 when the big-serving Canadian retired from the match with an injury.

Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev, the 2021 and 2022 finalist at Melbourne Park and at last year's U.S. Open, also advanced when his opponent retired from their match.

Medvedev had dropped the first set but was leading 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, 1-0 when the 22-year-old Terence Atmane quit because of cramps.

"When I was feeling tired in the third set, I looked up the other end and saw he was cramping," Medvedev said. "The conditions were fine but it has not been hot these seven days and then it was hot today, so you get more stressed."

# Rangers hold off Capitals, snap 4-game losing streak

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Artemi Panarin and Alexis Lafreniere scored first-period goals, Igor Shesterkin made 24 saves and the New York Rangers snapped a four-game losing streak with a 2-1 win over the Washington Capitals on Sunday.

The Rangers were coming off a 3-2 loss to the Capitals on Saturday afternoon and a 1-4-1 overall start to 2024. New York survived constant pressure by the Capitals in the third — and failed to score on five power-

play chances of its own — to emerge with the victory.

"Nobody wants to lose hockey games. The urgency grows," Rangers coach Peter Laviolette said. "I thought our guys showed up and played well. We stayed focused and fought through to get us a win."

T.J. Oshie scored for Washington, which completed its season series with New York. Both teams won twice.

Panarin scored his team-best 27th goal of the season 50 seconds into the game with assists

from Vincent Trocheck and Jacob Trouba. Panarin leads the Rangers with 59 points and has points in 35 of New York's 42 games this season. The goal was Panarin's 400th point with the Rangers.

Trocheck has 13 points, including five goals in his past eight games and 17 points in his past 14 games.

Lafreniere scored his 11th goal of the season with 50 seconds remaining in the opening period, snaring his own rebound after Washington net-

minder Charlie Lindgren made an acrobatic save. Defenseman Braden Schneider assisted.

"It was good to get the win, a big two points," Lafreniere said.

**Red Wings 4, Maple Leafs 2:** Andrew Copp scored the tie-breaking goal with 1:40 remaining in the third period and visiting Detroit won for the fifth time in its last six games.

Dylan Larkin had a goal and an assist, and Daniel Sprong and Lucas Raymond added the other goals for Detroit. James Reimer made 28 saves.