

US launches new strike on Houthis

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The U.S. launched a new strike against the Yemen-based Houthis on Tuesday, hitting anti-ship missiles in the third assault on the Iranian-backed group in recent days, a U.S. official said.

The strike came as the Iranian-backed Houthis claimed responsibility for a missile attack against the Malta-flagged bulk carrier *Zografia* in the Red Sea. No one was injured. The vessel had been heading north to the Suez Canal when it was attacked, the Greek Shipping and Island Policy Ministry said.

This latest exchange suggested there has been no let-up in Houthi attacks on shipping in the region, despite the massive U.S. and British assault on the group on Friday, bombing more than 60 targets in 28 locations using warship- and submarine-launched Tomahawk missiles and fighter jets.

The Houthis' military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, said in a pre-recorded statement that it fired after the ship's crew refused to answer warning calls and that the vessel was heading for a port in Israel. According to the shipping tracking website Vessel Finder, *Zografia* was bound for Suez, Egypt.

The *Zografia*, managed by a Greek firm, had no cargo onboard and sustained only material damage, the ministry said. The crew included 20 Ukrainians, three Filipinos and one Georgian. Satellite-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed the *Zografia* still moving after the attack.

The U.S. official said no other details were available yet on the American strike against the missiles, including the precise location. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because the operation had not

been made public.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which monitors incidents in the Mideast's waterways, earlier acknowledged an attack in the vicinity of the *Zografia*.

Amid the latest attacks, U.S. Navy SEALs seized Iranian-made missile parts and other weaponry from a ship bound for Yemen's Houthi rebels in a raid last week that saw two of its commandos go missing, the U.S. military said Tuesday.

The raid marks the latest seizure by the U.S. Navy and its allies of weapon shipments bound for the rebels, who have launched a series of attacks now threatening global trade in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The seized missile components included types likely used in those attacks.

The attacks, U.S.-led retaliation

strikes and the raid all have raised tensions across the Middle East, which also saw Iran conduct ballistic missile strikes in Iraq and Syria.

The SEAL raid happened Thursday, with the commandos launching from the USS *Lewis B. Puller* backed by drones and helicopters, with U.S. Central Command saying it took place in the Arabian Sea.

The SEALs 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 remain missing.

The SEALs found cruise and ballistic missile components, including propulsion and guidance devices, as well as warheads, CENTCOM said. It added that air defense parts also were found.

Trump notches decisive victory in the Iowa caucuses

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Former President Donald Trump scored a record-setting win in the Iowa caucuses on Monday with his rivals languishing far behind, a victory that affirmed his grip on the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

In what was the lowest-turnout caucus in a quarter-century, participants endured life-threatening cold and dangerous driving conditions to meet in hundreds of schools, churches and community centers across the state. But those who ventured out delivered a roughly 30-point win for Trump that smashed the record for a con-

tested Iowa Republican caucus with a margin of victory exceeding Bob Dole's nearly 13-percentage-point victory in 1988.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis finished a distant second, just ahead of former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley.

The results left Trump with a tighter grip on the GOP nomination, though it could take several more months for anyone to formally become the party's standard bearer. The magnitude of Trump's victory, however, posed significant questions for both DeSantis and Haley. Neither candidate appeared poised to exit the race, though they leave Iowa struggling to claim

making much progress in trying to become Trump's strongest challenger.

Having repeatedly vowed vengeance against his political opponents in recent months, Trump offered a message of unity in his victory speech.

"We want to come together, whether it's Republican or Democrat or liberal or conservative," he said. "We're going to come together. It's going to happen soon."

The GOP contest moves swiftly to New Hampshire, which will hold the first-in-the-nation primary on Jan. 23. A shrinking field will compete there after conservative entre-

preneur Vivek Ramaswamy suspended his campaign after a disappointing fourth place finish and endorsed Trump.

DeSantis first heads to South Carolina on Tuesday, a conservative stronghold where the Feb. 24 contest could prove pivotal. He will head later in the day New Hampshire.

"Because of your support, in spite of all of what they threw at us, we got our ticket punched out of Iowa," DeSantis told supporters.

Haley plans to compete vigorously in New Hampshire, where she hopes to be more successful with the state's independent voters.

Iran attacks hit Kurdish areas of Iraq

Associated Press

IRBIL, Iraq—Iraq recalled its ambassador from Tehran for consultations and summoned Iran's chargé d'affaires in Baghdad on Tuesday in protest over Iranian strikes on northern Iraq that killed several civilians overnight, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said.

The Iranian attack was “a blatant violation” of Iraq's sovereignty and “strongly contradicts the principles of good neighborliness and international law, and threatens the security of the region,” it said in a statement.

Iran fired missiles late Monday at what it said were Israeli “spy headquarters” in an upscale neighborhood near the sprawling U.S. Consulate compound in Irbil, the seat of Iraq's northern semi-autonomous Kurdish re-

gion, and at targets linked to the extremist Islamic State group in northern Syria.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said in a statement Tuesday that it launched four missiles at ISIS positions in Syria's Idlib province and 11 missiles at the Kurdish region in northern Iraq, where it said it hit a center of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency.

Qassim al-Araji, the adviser for national security affairs to Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani who is heading a committee investigating the attack in Irbil, said Iran's “claims of targeting a Mossad headquarters are baseless.”

Iran's strikes came after ISIS claimed responsibility this month for two suicide bombings targeting a commemoration for an Iranian general slain in a 2020

U.S. drone strike. The attack in Kerman killed at least 84 people at the ceremony honoring Revolutionary Guard Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Last month, Iran accused Israel of killing a high-ranking Iranian general, Seyed Razi Mousavi, in an airstrike on a Damascus neighborhood. It was unclear whether the strikes in Syria had, in fact, hit any targets associated with ISIS.

Mounir al-Mustafa, deputy director of the civil defense in northwest Syria, also known as the White Helmets, said one of the strikes in Idlib targeted a medical clinic that was no longer operating in the village of Talteta. Two civilians had minor injuries, he said.

Sami al-Qassim, who lives near the targeted site, said the clinic

was empty and there were no militant activities in the area.

The strike in Irbil killed at least four people, among them Peshraw Dizayi, a prominent local businessman with a portfolio that included real estate and security services companies, along with members of his family.

The United States condemned what State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller described as “Iran's reckless missile strikes.”

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said in a statement that the strikes in Iraq and Syria were “in line with the resolute defense of the country's sovereignty and security, countering terrorism, and part of the Islamic Republic's punishment against those who threaten the country's security.”

USS Theodore Roosevelt is said to be on way to Western Pacific

By **ALEX WILSON**

Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt steamed out of San Diego last week with little fanfare and headed toward the Western Pacific, according to a media report.

Local ship spotters witnessed the carrier depart its berth at Naval Air Station North Island on Thursday and leave San Diego Bay, according to a USNI News report Friday citing an unnamed defense official.

The deployment was not publicized by the Navy. Spokespeople for U.S. 3rd Fleet, 7th Fleet and Naval Air Forces did not respond to multiple requests for comment Monday or Tuesday.

The Theodore Roosevelt completed an 18-month maintenance and upgrade period in March at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash., including a

refit to its flight deck to handle F-35C Lightning II fighter jets.

In December, the carrier completed another maintenance period and an exercise described by the Department of Defense as a “final workup phase and certification event before a scheduled deployment.”

The deployment comes amid an operational stand-down of the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft for the Air Force, Navy and Marines following the Nov. 29 crash of an Air Force CV-22 Osprey off Japan's southwestern coast that killed all eight crewmembers on board. Ospreys are typically used to transport personnel, supplies and equipment for deployed aircraft carriers. In lieu of Ospreys, two C-2A Greyhounds—a fixed-wing aircraft capable of carrier takeoffs and landings—will deploy along with the Theodore Roosevelt, USNI reported.

Navy relieves commander of USS Georgia missile sub

Stars and Stripes

The Navy has fired a guided-missile submarine's commander after losing confidence in his leadership ability.

Capt. Geoffry Patterson was relieved Friday from the Ohio-class USS Georgia's blue crew, the service announced in a news release that day.

Rear Adm. Thomas “T.R.” Buchanan, commander of Submarine Group 10, made the order.

The release provided no specific information about the reason for Patterson's dismissal.

“Navy commanding officers are held to high standards of personal and professional conduct,” the release said.

“They are expected to uphold the highest standards of responsibility, reliability, and leadership, and the Navy holds them accountable when they fall short of those

standards.”

Patterson took command on May 28, 2022, during a pierside ceremony in Souda Bay, Crete.

The Georgia's gold crew leader, Capt. Christopher Osborn, is in command of the vessel, according to the release.

Its operations are not affected, according to the Navy.

Two crews alternate aboard U.S. submarines; one crew takes the boat on patrol while the other remains at its homeport, which permits longer sub deployments and crew training, among other advantages.

Homeported at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, Ga., the Georgia is one of four ballistic-missile submarines converted to carry conventional land-attack Tomahawk cruise missiles and carry out operations by special forces.

Disruptions linger with cold temps

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Dangerously cold temperatures affected much of the Rockies, Great Plains and Midwest on Tuesday, with wind chills below minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit in many parts of the central U.S.

More than 120,000 U.S. homes and businesses were without power early Tuesday, most of them in Oregon, Texas and Louisiana, after widespread outages that started Saturday. Portland General Electric warned that the threat of freezing rain Tuesday could delay restoration efforts. Transportation officials urged residents to avoid travel as roads were expected to be hazardously slick with ice that could weigh down trees and power lines, causing them to fall.

Classes were canceled Tuesday for students in Portland and other major cities including Chicago — home to the nation's fourth-largest public school district — Denver; Dallas; Fort Worth, Texas; in New York's Hudson Valley; across New England; and in the Washington, D.C., region. Federal offices in and around the nation's capital were also closed Tuesday.

The storms and frigid temperatures affected everything from air travel to NFL playoff games to Iowa's presidential caucuses, and were also the cause of several deaths around the country.

At least four people in the Portland area died, including two people from suspected hypothermia. Another man was killed after a tree fell on his house and a woman died in a fire that spread from an open-flame stove after a tree fell onto an RV.

In Wisconsin, the deaths of three homeless people in the Milwaukee area were under investigation, with hypothermia the likely cause, officials said.

A Kentucky State Police helicopter rescued four campers stranded atop Courthouse Rock in the Red River Gorge area on Monday, according to Powell County Search and Rescue, which said the call was "one of the most dangerous rescues ever attempted in the Gorge."

Temperatures are expected to moderate midweek but a new surge of colder air is forecast to drop south over the Northern Plains and Midwest, reaching the Deep South by the end of the week.

Trump defamation trial starts as judge denies adjournment

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jury selection began in a New York courtroom Tuesday after a judge denied Donald Trump's request that a defamation trial stemming from a columnist's claims that he sexually abused her in the 1990s be suspended on Thursday so he could attend the funeral of his mother-in-law.

The denial came during a combative exchange between lawyers for Trump and Judge Lewis A. Kaplan over evidence in the case, Trump's desire to attend the Thursday funeral and whether the trial should occur at all.

This is the penalty phase of a civil defamation trial stemming from columnist E. Jean Carroll's claims he sexually attacked her in a department store dressing room. A May trial found Trump sexually abused Carroll, awarding her \$5 million. Trump did not attend that trial but he showed up Tuesday morning after his political victory at the Iowa caucus hours earlier.

After several dozen prospective jurors were sworn in, Trump shook his head as Kaplan described the case in general terms and explained that for purposes of the trial, it had already been determined that Trump "did sexually assault

Ms. Carroll."

Trump also looked at a prospective juror who said she had worked in a communications capacity for his daughter's company in 2017 and 2018. Another prospective juror said he's a lawyer who has worked on unrelated issues with the firm representing Carroll. Both said they could be fair and impartial and remained among prospective jurors.

In May, a different jury awarded Carroll \$5 million after concluding that Trump sexually abused her in a department store dressing room in spring 1996, then defamed her in 2022 by claiming she made it up after she revealed it publicly in a 2019 memoir. The jury said Carroll hadn't proven that Trump raped her.

Trump is appealing and hasn't paid any of that award.

One issue that wasn't decided in that first trial was how much Trump owed for comments he made about Carroll while he was still president. Determining that dollar amount will be the new jury's only job.

Even before jurors were brought in to the courtroom Tuesday, Trump attorney Michael Madaio complained that the judge had made "inconsistent and unfair" rulings against Trump prior to the start of the trial.

Zelenskyy lashes out at Putin, urges support for Ukraine

Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy came out swinging Tuesday against Russian President Vladimir Putin at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos and even had a harsh tone for his allies as war fatigue grows, pressing political and corporate leaders to enforce sanctions, help rebuild his country and advance the peace process.

Zelenskyy is trying to keep his country's long and largely stalemated defense against Russia in the minds of political leaders, as Israel's war with Hamas, which passed the 100-day mark this week, has siphoned off much of the world's attention and sparked concerns about a wider conflict in the Middle East.

"Anyone thinks this is only about us, this is only about Ukraine, they are fundamentally mistaken," he said in a speech in

English at the Swiss ski resort. "Possible directions and even timeline of a new Russian aggression beyond Ukraine become more and more obvious."

"Putin embodies war" and will not change, he said. While lashing out at Putin for mass deportations, leveling cities and "the terrifying feeling that the war may never end," he also offered pointed criticism for a world that told him not to escalate tensions ahead of Russia's

full-scale invasion in 2022.

"After Feb. 24th, nothing harmed our coalition more than this concept. Every 'Don't escalate' to us, sounded like 'You will prevail' to Putin," Zelenskyy said.

He thanked allies for each package of sanctions on Moscow but urged them to ensure they work. Russia, for instance, has found workarounds for imports of banned Western products that still appear on shelves.

Biden, DNC raise \$97M to end '23

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden and the Democratic National Committee said they raised more than \$97 million in the final three months of last year, boosted by a star-studded December fundraising blitz that came even as the political world's attention shifted to the start of the 2024 Republican presidential primary.

The Biden campaign said Monday that it took in \$235 million from its launch last April until the end of 2023 and finished the year with \$117 million in cash on hand — which it said was the highest total amassed by any Democratic candidate at this point in the cycle. More than 520,000 donors made 926,000-plus contributions in the quarter, it said.

“This historic haul — proudly powered by strong and growing grassroots enthusiasm — sends a clear message,” Julie Chavez Rodriguez, the manager of Biden's reelection campaign, said in a statement. “Our democracy and hard-fought basic rights and freedoms are on the line in 2024, and these numbers prove that the American people know the stakes.”

The president has made defending democracy a center-

piece of his reelection bid and repeatedly decried Donald Trump and his “Make America Great Again” movement as posing dire threats to the nation's founding principals. The GOP primary began with Iowa's caucus Monday, where Trump scored a record-setting win — and the Biden campaign noted that he and his top primary competitors have already spent \$100 million on advertising in the leadoff primary state alone.

Biden traveled to Pennsylvania on Friday and stopped at three stores to make the case that his policies have helped grow the economy and spur small business. It was a change from the set speeches he usually gives, meant to highlight ways his economic plans have ensured strong employment — even while triggering inflation that has worried voters.

Since the Biden campaign's launch, nearly 1 million supporters have made more than 2.3 million contributions, and 97% of all its fourth-quarter 2023 donations were under \$200, with the average contribution totaling \$41.88, it announced. Those totals include donations to Biden's political operation and to a network of joint fundraising arrangements with the national and

state Democratic parties.

Biden's campaign said December was his strongest fundraising month to date, exceeding a record it said was previously set in November. That helped last year's final quarter outpace the period from July through September, when Biden and his party reported raising \$71-plus million.

The campaign said the president has held 110 fundraisers since launching, including 39 in last year's fourth quarter alone. That included a string of fundraisers before the Christmas holidays that took him to Boston for a trio of events, one of which featured singer-songwriter James Taylor, and three days in California for gatherings with the likes of Steven Spielberg and Barbra Streisand.

That fundraising push came after Biden, who frequently calls himself the “most pro-union” president in U.S. history, previously staying away from raising money in Los Angeles for months during the writers and actors strikes. It was meant to quiet some donors who had privately grumbled that the president wasn't doing enough to stock his campaign coffers ahead of November's election, which is likely to be hard-fought and close.

Serial killing suspect faces more charges

Associated Press

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. — An architect charged in a string of slayings known as the Gilgo Beach killings was accused Tuesday in the death of a fourth woman, a Connecticut mother of two who vanished in 2007 and whose remains were found more than three years later along a coastal highway in New York.

Rex Heuermann was formally charged in the killing of Maureen Brainard-Barnes, months after having been labeled the prime suspect in her death when he was arrested in July in the deaths of three other women.

In court, Heuermann wore a dark suit and did not say anything during the proceedings. He will continue to be held without bail. The judge set the next court date for Feb. 6.

Brainard-Barnes, 25, who was once employed as a dealer at the Foxwoods Resort Casino, left her hometown of Norwich, Conn., on July 9, 2007, and headed to Manhattan for sex work, with plans to return the following day, according to friends who became concerned when she uncharacteristically stopped using her phone.

She never came back.

Heuermann was arrested July 14 and charged with killing Melissa Barthelemy, Megan Waterman and Amber Lynn Costello, three women who authorities say were also sex workers. Heuermann's lawyer said he has denied committing the crimes. He previously pleaded not guilty to killing Barthelemy, Waterman and Costello.

Brainard-Barnes was the first of the four women to disappear. Their remains were found along the same quarter-mile stretch of parkway in the Gilgo Beach area of Jones Beach Island in 2010.

Supreme Court declines to step into fight over bathrooms for transgender students

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Tuesday passed up a chance to intervene in the debate over bathrooms for transgender students, rejecting an appeal from an Indiana public school district. Federal appeals courts are divided over whether school policies enforcing restrictions on which bathrooms transgender students can use violate federal law or the Constitution.

In the case the court rejected

without comment, the Chicago-based 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld an order granting transgender boys access to the boys' bathroom. The appeal came from the Metropolitan School District of Martinsville, about 30 miles southwest of Indianapolis.

The federal appeals court in Richmond, Va., has also ruled in favor of transgender students, while the appeals court based in Atlanta came out the other way.

At least nine states are restricting transgender students to bathrooms that match the sex they were assigned at birth.

In her opinion for the 7th Circuit, Judge Diane Wood wrote that the high court's involvement seems inevitable.

“Litigation over transgender rights is occurring all over the country, and we assume that at some point the Supreme Court will step in with more guidance than it has furnished so far,” Wood wrote.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Flight school owner, 2 others killed in crash

MA BOSTON — The owner of a flight school and a student pilot were among three people who died in a small-plane crash in a remote, wooded area of Massachusetts over the weekend, state police said Monday.

Fredrika Ballard, 53, of Southwick, Mass., owned the Fly Lugu Flight School while William Hampton, 68, of Indian Orchard, Mass., was a flight instructor. Chad Davidson, 29, of Woodstock, Conn., was a student pilot on the flight that crashed Sunday. They were the only occupants.

The twin-engine Beechcraft Baron 55, which took off from Barnes Airport in Westfield at approximately 11:06 a.m. Sunday crashed near Leyden, Mass. Authorities began searching the crash site in Leyden Wildlife Management Area near Greenfield around 11:30 a.m. after several dog walkers reported seeing a plane crash.

All three passengers were found dead inside the plane by the Greenfield Firefighters and American Medical Response paramedics.

GOP majorities expected to shrink with new maps

WI MADISON — Most of the newly ordered maps redrawing Wisconsin's political boundaries for the state Legislature would keep Republicans in majority control, but their dominance would be reduced, according to an independent analysis of the plans.

Seven sets of new state Senate and Assembly maps were sub-

mitted Friday, the deadline given by the Wisconsin Supreme Court to propose new maps after it ruled three weeks ago that the current ones drawn by Republicans were unconstitutional.

The ruling stands to shake up battleground Wisconsin's political landscape in a presidential election year.

Wisconsin is a purple state, with four of the past six presidential elections decided by less than a percentage point. But Democrats have made gains in recent years, winning the governor's office in 2018 and again in 2022 and taking over majority control of the state Supreme Court, setting the stage for the redistricting ruling.

Body found hours after plane crashes in ocean

CA HALF MOON BAY — A woman's body was found in the water near where a single-engine plane crashed into the ocean off the California coast after witnesses reported it flying erratically, authorities said Monday.

The crash was reported shortly after 7 p.m. Sunday by a 911 caller who said the plane was in obvious distress and appeared to go down toward the water near Half Moon Bay, said Sgt. Philip Hallworth with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

The Federal Aviation Administration said two people were aboard the Cozy Mark IV, a four-seat light aircraft that can be built from a kit.

The U.S. Coast Guard sent out a diver and the sheriff's office deployed a drone to search for the downed plane. At around 8:30 p.m. the drone's video feed showed a small plane upside

down near Ross Cove, about 25 miles south of San Francisco, Hallworth said.

Hours later, a woman's body was spotted floating in the water by the crew of a commercial fishing boat, the sheriff's office said in a statement. The tide pushed part of the wreckage onto the shore near the cove, Hallworth said.

Lunar lander will burn up after failed moonshot

FL CAPE CANAVERAL — A U.S. company's lunar lander will soon burn up in Earth's atmosphere after a failed moonshot.

Astrobotic Technology said its lander is headed back toward Earth from the vicinity of the moon. Company officials expect the mission to end Thursday. Astrobotic is working with NASA to track the lander's path and said it should pose no safety risk during its fiery reentry.

The lander, named Peregrine, rocketed from Cape Canaveral on Jan. 8. It quickly developed a fuel leak that forced Astrobotic to abandon its attempt to make the first U.S. lunar landing in more than 50 years. The company suspects a stuck valve caused a tank to rupture.

Astrobotic said it has consulted with NASA and government officials on how best to end the mission.

Swastika painted near Holocaust memorial

PA PHILADELPHIA — Police have opened a vandalism investigation into the spray-painting of a swastika on a wall adjacent to a Holocaust memorial in Philadelphia over

the weekend.

Authorities said the symbol, measuring about two feet by two feet and scrawled with green spray-paint, was reported Sunday on the wall adjacent to the Horowitz-Wasserman Holocaust Memorial Plaza next to the Ben Franklin Parkway a few blocks away from City Hall.

Surveillance video captured images of a man wearing a black mask and a dark jacket with a stripe across the chest and down the arms who appeared to scrawl the symbol on the wall at about 1:30 a.m. Sunday, officials said. The symbol was removed later in the day.

Site for oldest cheese shop in US to be razed

NY NEW YORK — New York City officials have ordered the demolition of a brick building in Little Italy that until recently housed what was billed as the country's oldest cheese shop, Alleva Dairy.

The New York City Department of Buildings determined Friday that the building, located at the corner of Mulberry and Grand streets, must be razed because it is "significantly destabilized" and poses an imminent hazard to the public, WNBC reported.

A chunk of the building's brick facade fell off Wednesday, leaving a gaping hole that exposed its interior and also damaged a plywood barrier surrounding the structure.

Alleva Dairy operated in the building for 130 years and was considered not only the oldest cheese shop in New York City, but perhaps the oldest in America.

— From wire reports

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Bills whip Steelers in snow-delayed game

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — It made no difference to Josh Allen what day or time the Buffalo Bills faced the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The AFC wild-card playoff game could've been played Sunday as scheduled or in the midst of a lake-effect storm that dumped more than 2 feet of snow on the region, and the Bills were going to be ready.

They proved that Monday, when Allen threw three touchdown passes and scored on a franchise playoff-record 52-yard touchdown run as Buffalo beat Pittsburgh 31-17 in a game that was postponed by 27½ hours.

"People keep saying that's what we wanted. We had no call in that," Allen said about the postponement. "We would have played yesterday, would have played Saturday would have played Friday, it wouldn't have mattered. We would have come out here and played when we were told to play."

The game turned into a celebration of the elements. Snow blanketed a majority of the seats inside Highmark Stadium when the gates opened and was put to good use by fans, who tossed handfuls into the air like confetti to celebrate.

"We put on a show in the snow," left tackle Dion Dawkins said. "We're here. We got one more week."

The second-seeded Bills (12-6), who closed the regular season with five straight wins, advance to host Patrick Mahomes and the No. 3 seed Kansas City Chiefs in the divisional round Sunday night. Buffalo and its fans have longed for a home playoff game against the Chiefs after their 2020 and '21 seasons ended with playoff losses at Kansas City.

"We're a step behind already," Allen said, noting the Chiefs will have two more days of rest after beating Miami on Saturday. "It's going to take a team effort. We know the type of team that they

are, obviously the type of quarterback that they have in Pat over there."

Buffalo led 21-0 before Pittsburgh scored on three straight possessions to get within 24-17. Allen then sealed the win, throwing a 17-yard touchdown pass to Khalil Shakir with 6:27 remaining. Shakir caught the pass at the 10 over the middle, slipped Minkah Fitzpatrick's tackle attempt, and outraced the rest of the Steelers defenders into the end zone.

"Dude hit me and I was able to just stay up and make a play from there," Shakir said. "But that comes down to (Allen) getting the ball, putting it right on the money and giving me an opportunity to make a play."

Allen finished 21-for-30 for 203 yards and ran for 74 yards on eight carries, becoming the first quarterback in NFL playoff history to throw three or more TD passes while rushing for 70 or more yards and a score. He didn't have a turnover for just the fourth time this season.

Mason Rudolph threw two touchdown passes with an interception in his first playoff start for the Steelers (10-8), but Pittsburgh was too inconsistent on either side of the ball to keep up with Allen and the Bills. The Steelers lost their fifth straight playoff game; the franchise's most recent postseason victory was seven years ago.

Missed tackles, two turnovers that led to 14 points for Buffalo and the Bills' ability to bottle up the Steelers' running attack contributed to the loss.

"I'm appreciative of the efforts. But it's not mystical. We didn't do what was required to win tonight," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "Can't come into an environment like this with a playoff-caliber team and turn the ball over like that and expect to be competitive."

Asked about his future in Pittsburgh after completing his 17th season — all of them with a record of .500 or better — Tomlin smirked and walked away.

Mayfield, Buccaneers make quick work of Eagles

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — All Baker Mayfield and the resurgent Tampa Bay Buccaneers wanted was an opportunity to make some noise in the playoffs.

A strong finish to the regular season provided one. Their 32-9 wild-card playoff victory over Jalen Hurts and the defending NFC champion Philadelphia Eagles on Monday night guaranteed they'll have another.

Mayfield threw for 337 yards and three touchdowns, and Tampa Bay's defense never allowed Hurts and Philadelphia's sputtering offense to get into a rhythm before a crowd of 63,397 at Raymond James Stadium.

The Bucs (10-8) won for the sixth time in seven games to advance to an NFC divisional-round matchup on the road next

Sunday against the Detroit Lions (13-5), another team — like the Eagles — that stymied Mayfield during the regular season.

"We worked extremely hard to get a chance to be in the playoffs and we just wanted an opportunity. Our guys came out and played really, really well. ... Once again, the defense played lights out. We're happy, but we've still got more to go," Mayfield said.

"We were underdogs, we're going to be underdogs next week, too," coach Todd Bowles added. "We understand that. We embrace it. We like it."

David Moore scored on a 44-yard reception in the first quarter. Rookie Trey Palmer broke the game open with a 56-yard catch-and-run for a TD that put the Bucs up 25-9 late in the third quarter. Both receivers took ad-

vantage of a porous, poor-tackling Eagles secondary to make their way to the end zone.

Mayfield, the 2018 No. 1 overall draft pick who's playing with his fourth team in less than two years, completed 22 of 36 passes without an interception. He capped his first playoff appearance since the 2020 season with a 23-yard TD pass to Chris Godwin.

"We were a little out of sync. That starts with me," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said. "I wasn't good enough. I didn't put them in good enough positions."

Mayfield said the communication by the Bucs' offense throughout the week made things feel comfortable during the game.

"Everybody was on the same page, knowing what we were going to do offensively, sche-

matically," Mayfield said. "Came out and attacked. Obviously, got to make a few more plays overall on offense, but we made more than enough to win tonight."

It was a disappointing finish for Philadelphia (11-7), which lost to Kansas City in last year's Super Bowl and then spent much of this season resembling a club focused and determined to get back to the title game.

The Eagles played without leading receiver A.J. Brown, who injured a knee in the regular-season finale. Hurts started despite dislocating the middle finger on his throwing hand the previous week, and was 25-for-35 for 250 yards and one TD before being replaced by backup Marcus Mariota in the final minute.

Grizzlies top Warriors as Green returns

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Vince Williams Jr. scored 24, GG Jackson added a career-high 23 points and the Memphis Grizzlies defeated the Golden State Warriors 116-107 on Monday night in the return of Draymond Green from his league suspension.

Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 18 points despite going 4-for-20 from the field.

For Memphis, which is short-handed due to a rash of injuries, some of them long-term, the win came as a bit of a surprise against a Warriors team that was basically at full strength. Memphis had seven players unavailable for Monday's game, but Jaren Jackson Jr. and Santi Aldama, who both missed Saturday's loss to the Clippers, did return.

"I'm happy that guys who got that opportunity, like Vince and GG, took advantage of it and played really well," Memphis center Xavier Tillman said.

Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins noted that the win was a nod to the organization's approach.

"Big win for the Grizzlies, and definitely got to shout out big with for the Hustle as well," Jenkins said referring to the Memphis G-League team, where several players saw action this year. "This is a product of full-on development."

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 26 points and eight assists, and Jonathan Kuminga finished with 20 points and 11 rebounds. Andrew Wiggins scored 16.

Green, suspended by the league indefinitely after he hit Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic in the face Dec. 12, played 23 minutes, scoring seven points.

76ers 124, Rockets 115: Joel Embiid returned from his latest injury to score 41 points and grab 10 rebounds in host Philadelphia's win over Houston.

Embiid had his 16th straight 30-10 game. Tyrese Maxey added 27 points for the Sixers.

Alperen Sengun led the Rockets with 19 points. Dillon Brooks scored 18.

Mavericks 125, Pelicans 120: Kyrie Irving scored 42 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. had 41 and host Dallas split a two-game home set with New Orleans.

The second game in franchise history with two 40-point scorers came with superstar Luka Doncic missing his third consecutive game due to a sprained ankle. Irving and Doncic combined for the other such game in March.

Zion Williamson scored 30 points but was 6-for-11 on free throws, including a miss with 17 seconds left when he had a chance to get the Pelicans even

after Dallas fouled him on purpose.

Celtics 105, Raptors 96: Jayson Tatum had 19 points and 14 rebounds, Jrue Holiday and Derrick White each scored 22 and visiting Boston won its eighth straight meeting with Toronto.

Kristaps Porzingis added 15 points and Al Horford had 10 points and 11 rebounds as the Celtics completed a four-game season sweep of their Atlantic Division rivals.

Lakers 112, Thunder 105: Anthony Davis had 27 points and 15 rebounds, LeBron James scored 25 and host Los Angeles snapped Oklahoma City's four-game winning streak.

D'Angelo Russell had 14 points and seven assists as the Lakers held off the powerhouse Thunder in the fourth quarter for only LA's sixth victory in 18 games, with two of those wins coming against Oklahoma City.

Jazz 132, Pacers 105: Lauri Markkanen had 32 points and 10 rebounds, Collin Sexton scored a season-high 30 and host Utah routed Indiana for its sixth straight victory.

Markkanen made all 10 of his free throws and has scored 30 points or more three times in January.

Magic 98, Knicks 94: Paolo Banchero had 20 points, Cole Anthony scored 10 of his 15 in the

fourth quarter and visiting Orlando beat New York to stop a three-game skid.

Wendell Carter Jr. added 17 points for the Magic, going 7 for 11 off the bench after missing five games with right knee tendinitis.

Cavaliers 109, Bulls 91: Donovan Mitchell scored 34 points, Jarrett Allen had 10 points and 14 rebounds for his ninth straight double-double, and host Cleveland pulled away from Chicago late.

Caris LeVert added 16 points, seven rebounds and seven assists off the bench as the Cavaliers extended their longest winning streak of the season to five, despite blowing a 21-point lead in the second half. Cleveland closed out the game on a 29-10 run.

Heat 96, Nets 95 (OT): Jimmy Butler returned after missing seven games with a sprained toe and scored 31 points, including two free throws with 11.8 seconds left in overtime to help visiting Miami beat Brooklyn.

Pistons 129, Wizards 117: Alec Burks came off the bench to score 34 points and visiting Detroit beat Washington for only its fourth win of the season.

Hawks 109, Spurs 99: Trae Young sank his first six 3-point attempts in host Atlanta's victory over San Antonio.

No. 17 Marquette surges late for win over Villanova

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Dwyane Wade's pre-game message to Marquette was direct.

The Golden Eagles heeded the Hall of Famer's words.

"He said, 'You guys have to win today,'" Marquette coach Shaka Smart recalled after the 17th-ranked Golden Eagles' 87-74 victory over Villanova on Monday. "Obviously that can go both ways, but I thought our guys did play with a level of desperation and commitment to what goes into winning even as Villanova was raining 3s in the first half."

Kam Jones scored 22 points and Tyler Kolek had 19 points and 11 assists as Marquette shot 58.7% and outscored Villanova 30-17 over the last nine minutes. Oso Ighodaro added 18 points, seven rebounds, five assists and three steals.

Wade attended Monday's game to announce he was making a \$3 million gift to his alma mater that will grow the school's summer reading program for Milwaukee children, establish a Wade Scholars program benefiting low-income students and expand the university's athletic and human performance research center, which will include a

new practice facility for the men's basketball program.

The Hall of Famer's appearance came as Marquette was trying to erase a two-game skid. The Golden Eagles were coming off a 69-62 loss to Butler in which they shot 32.9% to snap a 20-game home conference winning streak that had tied a Big East record.

"Anytime you lose a couple of games, and particularly the way we lost our last game and the way that we played on offense and shot the ball, there had to be some doubt overcome," Smart said. "I thought the guys did a great job of overcoming that today."

Alcaraz, Swiatek win after slow starts

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — The bugs bothered Carlos Alcaraz in his first match at the Australian Open in two years, and so did the 37-year-old veteran Richard Gasquet.

For the first set, at least.

After taking an hour and 12 minutes to clinch the opener in a tiebreaker, second-ranked Alcaraz raced through the rest of the match in another hour against the tiring, sweat-soaked Frenchman for a 7-6 (5), 6-1, 6-2 win on Tuesday night.

The first two games took a combined 17 minutes, with the 20-year-old Alcaraz needing a few moments to try to remove a persistent insect that was bothering him behind the baseline just before he held for 1-1.

Both players used their rackets to push the bugs away from the court after the eighth game, and Alcaraz was at it again after the first set.

There were few distractions

after that until Alcaraz was serving for the match and the game went to deuce five times before he closed with an ace.

“Every set, I played better and better,” he said. “In the end, I played at quite a good level.”

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek survived an early test in her bid for a fifth major title when she held off 2020 champion Sofia Kenin 7-6 (2), 6-2 in the opener on Rod Laver Arena.

Kenin served for the first set at 5-4 but could not close it out. Swiatek rallied to take it in a tiebreaker and then broke serve five games later.

“It wasn’t easy to find my rhythm. I felt a little bit off and Sofia did everything to keep it that way, huge respect to her,” Swiatek said. “I managed to get my level up in the second set.”

Swiatek faces another ex-Australian Open finalist next.

Danielle Collins, runner-up here two years ago, beat 2016 champion Angelique Kerber

6-2, 3-6, 6-1.

“A tough little bracket that we have!” Collins said. “I was like, ‘Wow, I get really great draws now.’ But if you’re trying to win a Grand Slam, you have to beat everyone.”

Last year’s runner-up Elena Rybakina advanced 7-6 (6), 6-4 over former No. 1-ranked Karolina Pliskova to start the night session on Rod Laver Arena.

Victoria Azarenka, who won back-to-back titles here in 2012 and ’13, won a hard-hitting contest with Camila Giorgi of Italy, advancing 6-1, 4-6, 6-3. No. 11-seeded Jelena Ostapenko, the former French Open champion, beat Kimberley Birrell 7-6 (5), 6-1.

The extra-day experiment for the first round finished on time on the two main courts, with Jessica Pegula converting her second match point just before midnight to conclude the program on Tuesday.

In a bid to reduce the number

of late finishes, organizers extended the tournament to 15 days — one more than usual. It didn’t prevent Days 1 or 2 going well past midnight.

But Rybakina and Alcaraz advanced in straight sets in night matches on Rod Laver Arena on Day 3, and Pegula finished off the Margaret Court Arena program to make show-court deadline by 10 minutes.

The fifth-seeded Pegula started her day watching TV coverage of the Buffalo Bills beating the Pittsburgh Steelers 31-17 in an AFC wild-card playoff.

She finished it by beating Canadian qualifier Rebecca Marino 6-2, 6-4, and acknowledged some Buffalo fans in the crowd holding up “Billie” signs.

“I see some Bills fans over there. It was on at 8:30 this morning,” she said in a post-match TV interview. “I’m happy I could finish the day with a win. It was a good day for Buffalo!”

Fleury passes Roy for second place in career wins

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Marc-André Fleury took sole possession of second place with his 552nd win in the NHL, posting his 74th career shutout as the Minnesota Wild beat the New York Islanders 5-0 on Monday.

Joel Eriksson Ek scored twice on special teams, Mats Zuccarello had a goal and an assist, and Connor Dewar and Marcus Foligno also scored for the Wild, who’d gone 1-7-1 in their previous nine games and enjoyed a much-needed celebration of the 39-year-old Fleury passing Patrick Roy on the all-time list.

“Finally, right? It’s been a little rough, lately. I wish we could have done this a little while ago, right?” Fleury said. “But I think everybody knows, everyone in this room, that we try to work our best.”

Martin Brodeur holds the

record with 691 wins.

Fleury stopped 21 shots in his first shutout of the season. He was 1-4-1 in his six previous starts. The crowd chanted Fleury’s name after a difficult power-play save in the second period, when the Wild outshot the sloppy and sluggish Islanders by a whopping 21-3. The siren for the popular French-Canadian nicknamed Flower arose again in the closing minutes, and the entire Wild team mobbed him in the crease for postgame hugs.

Blue Jackets 4, Canucks 3 (SO): Kirill Marchenko scored the only goal in a four-round shootout to lift host Columbus over Vancouver, ending the Canucks’ five-game winning streak.

Columbus rallied three times in regulation with Dmitri Voronkov’s second goal of game

with 9:03 left in the third period, forcing the overtime.

Bruins 3, Devils 0: All-Star Jeremy Swayman stopped 31 shots for his third shutout of the season, getting goals from David Pastrnak, Charlie Coyle and a diving empty-netter from Trent Frederic to give host Boston the win over New Jersey.

Coyle scored 30 seconds into the second period on a backhander, and Pastrnak made it 2-0 on a power play early in the third.

Canadiens 4, Avalanche 3: Joel Armia scored late in the third period and host Montreal edged Colorado to snap a three-game winless streak.

Ducks 5, Panthers 4 (OT): Alex Killorn got his second goal of the game 48 seconds into overtime, and visiting Anaheim fought back from a pair of two-goal deficits to beat Florida.

Kings 5, Hurricanes 2: Tre-

vor Moore scored two goals and visiting Los Angeles snapped an eight-game winless streak by beating Carolina.

Golden Knights 4, Predators 1: Mark Stone had his first regular-season hat trick and Logan Thompson made 34 saves to lead host Vegas over Nashville.

Flyers 4, Blues 2: Owen Tippett scored the tiebreaking goal with 5:33 left, and visiting Philadelphia earned its fourth straight win.

Penguins 3, Kraken 0: Sidney Crosby scored twice, Tristan Jarry stopped 22 shots and host Pittsburgh ended Seattle’s franchise-record nine-game winning streak.

Sabres 3, Sharks 0: Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 28 saves and Casey Mittelstadt had three points to lead host Buffalo over San Jose.