

## Thousands flee raging wildfires in Calif.

*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — Multiple massive wildfires tore across the Los Angeles area with devastating force early Wednesday, destroying more than 1,000 structures and killing at least two people as desperate residents escaped through flames, ferocious winds and towering clouds of smoke.

At least four separate blazes were burning in the metropolitan area, from the Pacific Coast inland to Pasadena, home of the famed Rose Parade. With thousands of firefighters already attacking the flames, the Los Angeles Fire Department put out a plea for off-duty firefighters to help. The efforts were further hampered by high winds that grounded water-dropping aircraft, but they returned to the skies by midday.

In addition to the two deaths, Los Angeles County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone said many others were hurt in the fires, which threatened at least 28,000 structures.

Images of the devastation that emerged overnight showed luxurious homes that had collapsed in a whirlwind of flaming embers. The tops of palm trees whipped against a glowing red sky.

At least 70,000 residents were ordered to evacuate, officials said. The flames marched toward highly populated and affluent neighborhoods home to California's rich and famous. Hollywood stars, including Mark Hamill, Mandy Moore and James Woods, were among those forced to flee.

The home of Vice President Kamala Harris in Los Angeles was included in one of the evacuation zones, although no one was there, according to a spokesperson.

"We are prioritizing life over everything else," Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said. Several hundred deputies were helping residents evacuate and responding to emergencies, he said.

Flames that broke out Tuesday evening near a nature pre-

serve in the foothills northeast of LA spread so rapidly that staff at a senior living center had to push dozens of residents in wheelchairs and hospital beds down the street to a parking lot. Residents — one as old as 102 — waited in their bedclothes as embers fell around them until ambulances, buses and construction vans arrived to take them to safety.

Another blaze that started hours earlier ripped through the city's Pacific Palisades neighborhood, a hillside area along the coast dotted with celebrity homes and memorialized by the Beach Boys in their 1960s hit "Surfin' USA." In the race to get to safety, roadways became impassable when scores of people abandoned their vehicles and fled on foot, some toting suitcases.

Sheriece Wallace was unaware there was a fire burning around her until her sister called at the moment a helicopter made a water drop over her house.

"I was like, 'It's raining,'"

Wallace said. "She's like, 'No, it's not raining. Your neighborhood is on fire. You need to get out.'"

"As soon as I opened my door, it was like right there," she said. "The first thing I did was looked at the trees to see where the wind was blowing. Because it hit me. It blew me back." She was able to leave.

A traffic jam on Palisades Drive prevented emergency vehicles from getting through, and a bulldozer was brought in to push abandoned cars to create a path. Video along the Pacific Coast Highway showed widespread destruction of homes and businesses along the famed roadway.

A third wildfire started Tuesday evening and quickly prompted evacuations in Sylmar, a San Fernando Valley community that's the northernmost neighborhood in Los Angeles. A fourth fire was reported early Wednesday in Coachella, in Riverside County. The causes were under investigation.

## Ukraine claims it hit a fuel depot deep inside Russia

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian military said Wednesday that it struck a fuel storage depot deep inside Russia, causing a huge blaze at the facility that supplies an important Russian air base.

Russian officials acknowledged a major drone attack in the area, and said that authorities had set up an emergency command center to fight the fire.

Ukraine's General Staff said that the assault hit the storage facility near Engels, in Russia's

Saratov region, about 370 miles east of the Ukrainian border. The depot supplied a nearby airfield used by aircraft that launch missiles across the border into Ukraine, a statement on Facebook said.

Ukraine has been developing its arsenal of domestically produced long-range missiles and drones capable of reaching deep behind the front line as it faces restrictions on the range that its military can fire its Western-supplied missiles into Russia.

The attacks have disrupted Russian logistics and embar-

assed the Kremlin in the almost three-year war, which began on Feb. 24, 2022.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said last year that his country has developed a weapon that could hit a target 400 miles away. Some Ukrainian drone attacks have hit targets more than 600 miles away.

The governor of the Saratov region, Roman Busargin, said that an unspecified industrial plant in Engels sustained damage from the falling drone debris that sparked a fire, but no body was hurt.

Engels, which has a population of more than 220,000, is located on the left bank of the Volga River, and is home to multiple industrial plants. Saratov, a major industrial city of about 900,000, faces Engels across the river.

"The damage to the oil base creates serious logistical problems for the strategic aviation of the Russian occupiers and significantly reduces their ability to strike peaceful Ukrainian cities and civilian objects. To be continued," the statement from Ukraine's General Staff said.

# Trump: NATO nations must increase defense spending

*Bloomberg News*

President-elect Donald Trump said NATO nations should spend the equivalent of 5% of their economic output on defense, escalating his demands on European allies to more than double the current target.

"I think NATO should have 5%," Trump said Tuesday at a news conference at his Mar-a-Lago resort Florida. "I'm the one that got them to pay 2%," he said, referring to pressure he exerted during his previous term to meet the current spending target.

No member of the military alliance is currently spending 5% of gross domestic product on de-

fense, including the U.S. The president-elect didn't say whether he'd increase U.S. spending to that level.

Trump's threats to abandon the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russian President Vladimir Putin's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine have convinced many NATO members that they must enhance their own defenses.

Secretary General Mark Rutte has signaled that NATO is likely to raise its spending target to at least 3% of GDP as it seeks to set new requirements for weapons and defense spending for its members.

Another pressing issue for the

alliance now is any future membership for Ukraine, which Kyiv says is crucial to reach a ceasefire with Moscow but which Russia has said would be unacceptable.

According to NATO's latest assessment, 23 out of 32 allies were projected to reach the 2% goal in 2024. That compares with three in 2014.

Marcus Faber, head of the defense committee in Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, told Bloomberg News on Tuesday that the NATO states would have to agree on a new goal, "but it's already clear now that this new goal will be three rather than five percent."

## US strikes hit Houthi hubs for weapons

BY LARA KORTE  
*Stars and Stripes*

American forces in the Middle East struck two underground Houthi weapons hubs in Yemen, U.S. Central Command said Wednesday.

The strikes were aimed at taking out advanced weaponry that had been used in recent attacks against U.S. Navy warships and merchant vessels in the southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, CENTCOM said in a statement on X. No U.S. personnel were injured nor equipment damaged in the attacks, the statement added.

U.S. forces have been working to degrade the capabilities of the Iranian-backed Houthis as the group continues targeting ships in the region. Late last month, CENTCOM confirmed striking several Houthi targets near the capital city of Sanaa, hitting a command hub and weapons production facility as well as a bunker with missiles and drones.

The Houthis, who say they are fighting for an end to the war in Gaza, have made multiple, unsubstantiated claims of successful attacks against U.S. targets.

On Monday, the group claimed to have conducted an operation against the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman, saying they had thwarted a major air attack. The U.S. strike against the Houthis on Wednesday was deliberate and planned, and not a reactive response to any recent events, according to one defense official.

The Houthis also claimed credit for the downing of a U.S. Navy jet over the Red Sea last month that was apparently the result of a "friendly fire" accident involving the cruiser USS Gettysburg, according to CENTCOM.

## Sen. Warren presses Hegseth to answer questions about his past

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Sen. Elizabeth Warren is pressing Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump's pick for defense secretary, to answer additional questions about his past actions and statements before next Tuesday's confirmation hearing.

In a letter to Hegseth sent Monday, the Massachusetts Democrat asked the former Fox News host and Army veteran to respond no later than Friday to questions on allegations of past drinking, sexual assault and mismanagement of veterans organization finances — all of which he denies. She also wants to know about statements he's made concerning minorities, women and LGBTQ people serving in the military.

Hegseth has the support of some veterans groups that believe the military has overemphasized diversity at the cost of troop readiness. A group of former Navy SEALs is planning a rally in support of Hegseth in Washington next week.

"One of the biggest flaws in current leadership in the military and in the Pentagon is when you become more focused on things that don't matter," said Bill Brown, a former SEAL who is organizing Tuesday's rally. "The military is not a social justice project."

Hegseth's supporters have stressed that many of the questions about his past behavior arose from reports based on anonymous sources. But some relate to things he's said in interviews or written in his books.

In "War on Warriors," Hegseth wrote that Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown's promotion to chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff meant that "with the Pentagon now run by, and fully staffed by, so-called 'leaders' like CQ Brown, we can assume that 17 percent of all black officers in the Air Force are simply promoted because of how they look — and not how they lead."

Hegseth also has openly criticized the role of women in combat, although in meetings with senators, he seemed to walk back some of those views.

Warren questioned if Hegseth would be able to lead, saying she was "deeply concerned by the many ways in which your past behavior and rhetoric indicates that you are unfit to lead the Department of Defense."

# DOJ will release Trump election report

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department said Wednesday that it will release special counsel Jack Smith's findings on Donald Trump's efforts to undo the results of the 2020 presidential election, but will keep under wraps for now the rest of the report focused on the president-elect's hoarding of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

The revelation was made in a filing to a federal appeals court that was considering a defense request to block the release of the report while charges remain

pending against two Trump co-defendants in the case accusing Trump of illegally holding classified documents. Aileen Cannon, the Trump-appointed judge presiding over the classified documents case, granted the request Tuesday, issuing a temporary block on the report.

The Justice Department said it would proceed with plans to release the first of two volumes centered on the election interference case, but would make the classified documents section of the report available only to the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate

Judiciary Committees for their private review as long as the case against Trump's co-defendants — Trump valet Walt Nauta and Mar-a-Lago property manager Carlos De Oliveira — is ongoing.

"This limited disclosure will further the public interest in keeping congressional leadership apprised of a significant matter within the Department while safeguarding defendants' interests," the filing said.

It was not immediately clear when the election interference report might be released.

The report is expected to de-

tail findings and charging decisions in Smith's two investigations.

The classified documents inquiry was dismissed in July by Cannon, who concluded that Smith's appointment was illegal. Smith's appeal of the dismissal of charges against Nauta and De Oliveira is still active.

Justice Department regulations call for special counsels appointed by the attorney general to submit a confidential report at the conclusion of their investigations. It's then up to the attorney general to decide what to make public.

## Police: AI used to plan Cybertruck explosion

*Associated Press*

The highly decorated soldier who exploded a Tesla Cybertruck outside the Trump hotel in Las Vegas used generative AI including ChatGPT to help plan the attack, Las Vegas police said Tuesday.

Nearly a week after 37-year-old Matthew Livelsberger fatally shot himself, officials said according to writings, he didn't intend to kill anyone else.

An investigation of Livelsberger's searches through ChatGPT indicate he was looking for information on explosive targets, the speed at which certain rounds of ammunition would travel and whether fireworks were legal in Arizona.

Kevin McMahill, sheriff of

the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, called the use of generative AI a "game-changer" and said the department was sharing information with other law enforcement agencies.

"This is the first incident that I'm aware of on U.S. soil where ChatGPT is utilized to help an individual build a particular device," he said. "It's a concerning moment."

In an emailed statement, OpenAI said it was committed to seeing its tools used "responsibly" and that they're designed to refuse harmful instructions.

"In this case, ChatGPT responded with information already publicly available on the internet and provided warnings

against harmful or illegal activities. We're working with law enforcement to support their investigation," the emailed statement said.

During a roughly half-hour-long news conference, Las Vegas police and federal law enforcement officials unveiled new details about the New Year's Day explosion.

Among the specifics law enforcement disclosed: Livelsberger stopped during the drive to Las Vegas to pour racing-grade fuel into the Cybertruck, which then dripped the substance. The vehicle was loaded with 60 pounds of pyrotechnic material as well as 70 pounds of birdshot, but officials are still uncertain exactly what detonat-

ed the explosion. They said Tuesday that it could have been the flash from the firearm that Livelsberger used to fatally shoot himself.

Authorities also said they uncovered a six-page document they have not yet released because they're working with Defense Department officials since some of the material could be classified.

Among the items released was a journal Livelsberger kept titled "surveillance" or "surveil" log.

The log showed that he considered carrying out his plans in Arizona at the Grand Canyon's glass skywalk, a tourist attraction on tribal land that towers high above the canyon floor.

## Trump asks high court to block sentencing for NY case

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump is asking the Supreme Court to call off Friday's sentencing in his hush money case in New York.

Trump's lawyers turned to the nation's highest court

Wednesday after New York courts refused to postpone the sentencing by Judge Juan M. Merchan, who presided over Trump's trial and conviction last May on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. Trump has denied wrongdoing.

The justices asked for prose-

cutors to respond by Thursday.

Trump's team sought an immediate stay of the scheduled sentencing "to prevent grave injustice and harm to the institution of the Presidency and the operations of the federal government."

Merchan has indicated he

will not impose jail time, fines or probation.

Trump's convictions arose from what prosecutors said was an attempt to cover up a \$130,000 hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels just before the 2016 presidential election.



# Storm threatens snow for southern US

*Associated Press*

NORFOLK, Va. — A developing winter storm threatens to drop snow, sleet and freezing rain on parts of Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas as frigid air that escaped the Arctic plunges temperatures to subfreezing levels in some of the southernmost points of the United States.

National Weather Service meteorologists predicted wintry precipitation across the southern Plains region starting Wednesday night, with snow likely in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Farther south, snow could transition to sleet and freezing rain, which meteorologists have warned could result in hazardous driving conditions.

An arctic blast descended on much of the U.S. east of the Rockies over the weekend, causing hundreds of car acci-

dents and thousands of flight cancellations and delays. Several communities set up warming shelters this week, including one at a roller rink in Cincinnati and another in the Providence, R.I., City Council chambers.

As the cold front moved south, a cold weather advisory was issued for the Gulf Coast and pushed the low temperature in El Paso, along the Texas border with Mexico, to 31 degrees. The National Weather Service predicted a wind chill factor ranging from 0 to 15 degrees.

The polar vortex of ultra-cold air usually spins around the North Pole, but it sometimes ventures south into the U.S., Europe and Asia.

As points north and east dug out of snow and ice Tuesday, communities in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas were prepar-

ing. In Texas, crews treated the roads in the Dallas area amid forecasts of 1 to 3 inches of snow on Thursday, along with sleet and rain. National Weather Service meteorologist Sam Shamburger said up to 5 inches of snow was expected farther north near the Oklahoma line.

Kevin Oden, Dallas' director of emergency management and crisis response, said Tuesday, "Our city is in a preparedness phase."

The storm could make roads slick Friday as 75,000 fans head to AT&T Stadium in Arlington to see Texas play Ohio State in the Cotton Bowl. Arlington spokesperson Susan Shrock said crews are ready to address any hazardous road conditions around the stadium.

Parts of southeastern Georgia and northern Florida endured unusually frigid tem-

peratures overnight into Tuesday and were under freeze warnings into Wednesday.

In northern Florida, with Valentine's Day just a month away, the main concern for growers fearful of cold weather is the fern crop used for floral arrangements.

Major damage to citrus trees, which typically occurs when temperatures drop to 28 degrees or below for several hours, was less likely. Florida's commercial citrus groves are primarily south of the central part of the peninsula.

An area stretching from the central Plains through the Ohio Valley into the mid-Atlantic region is likely to receive more snow and ice for a few days, which could cause the ground covering to melt and refreeze to form treacherous black ice on roadways, forecasters said.

## DOJ sues landlord firms for alleged rent scheme

*AP/Report for America*

DENVER — The U.S. Justice Department is suing several large landlords for allegedly coordinating to keep Americans' rents high by using both an algorithm to help set rents and privately sharing sensitive information with their competitors to boost profits.

The lawsuit arrives as U.S. renters continue to struggle under a difficult housing market, with incomes failing to keep up with rent increases. The latest figures show that half of American renters spent more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities in 2022, an all-time high.

That means decisions between medications, groceries, school supplies and rent. It means eviction notices and protracted court cases in which children face the highest eviction rates, with 1.5 million evicted each year, according to Princeton University's Eviction Lab.

While the housing crisis has been assigned several causes, including a slump in homes built over the last decade, the Justice Department's lawsuit claims major landlords are playing a part.

The department, along with 10 states including North Carolina, Tennessee, Colorado and California, is accusing six landlords that collectively operate more than 1.3 million units in 43 states and the District of Columbia of scheming to avoid lowering rents.

The landlord Greystar Real Estate Partners LLC, a defendant in the case, declined a request for comment from The Associated Press, but published an unsigned statement on its website.

"Greystar has and will conduct its business with the utmost integrity. At no time did Greystar engage in any anti-competitive practices," the statement read. "We will vigorously defend ourselves in this lawsuit."

## Body of at least one Israeli hostage found

*Associated Press*

JERUSALEM — Israeli forces have recovered the body of a hostage held in Gaza, the military said Wednesday, adding that it was identifying additional remains that could belong to another captive held in the war-torn enclave.

The military said it recovered the body of Yosef AlZayadni, 53, from an underground tunnel during an operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

It said it found evidence that raised "serious concerns" for the life of AlZayadni's son Hamzah, who was also taken captive on Oct. 7, 2023, suggesting he may have died in captivity.

The body's recovery comes as Israel and Hamas are considering a ceasefire deal that would free the hostages and halt the fighting in Gaza. Israel believes at least a third of the remaining

100 hostages are dead.

Yosef and Hamzah AlZayadni were believed to still be alive before Wednesday's announcement, however, and news about their fate could ramp up pressure on Israel to move ahead on a deal.

Yosef AlZayadni's name was on a list of 34 hostages shared by a Hamas official with The Associated Press earlier this week that the militant group said were slated for release.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz had said earlier Wednesday that troops recovered the bodies of both Yosef and Hamzah AlZayadni.

AlZayadni and his son, along with two of his other children, were taken captive during Hamas' attack on southern Israel in October 2023, among 250 hostages snatched by the militant group.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Judge largely blocks porn site age check law

**TN** NASHVILLE — A Tennessee law requiring pornographic websites to verify their visitors' age was largely blocked in court before it was to take effect Jan. 1, even as similar laws kicked in for Florida and South Carolina and remained in effect for more than a dozen other states.

On Dec. 30, U.S. District Judge Sheryl Lipman ruled that Tennessee's law would likely suppress the First Amendment free speech rights of adults without actually preventing children from accessing the harmful material in question. The state attorney general's office is appealing the decision.

The Free Speech Coalition, an adult entertainment trade group, is suing over Tennessee's law and those in a half-dozen other states. The coalition lists some 19 states that have passed similar laws. One prominent adult website has cut off access in several states due to their laws.

### McDonald's rolls back its goals for diversity

**IL** CHICAGO — Four years after launching a push for more diversity in its ranks, McDonald's is ending some of its diversity practices, citing a U.S. Supreme Court decision that outlawed affirmative action in college admissions.

McDonald's is the latest big company to shift its tactics in the wake of the 2023 ruling and a conservative backlash against diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Walmart, John Deere, Harley-Davidson and others rolled back their DEI ini-

tiatives last year.

McDonald's said Monday it will retire specific goals for achieving diversity at senior leadership levels. It also intends to end a program that encourages its suppliers to develop diversity training and to increase the number of minority group members represented within their own leadership ranks.

McDonald's rolled out a series of diversity initiatives in 2021 after a spate of sexual harassment lawsuits filed by employees and a lawsuit alleging discrimination brought by a group of Black former McDonald's franchise owners.

### Mockingbird targeted over state bird title

**FL** TALLAHASSEE — For nearly a century, the mockingbird has reigned supreme as the state bird of Florida, surviving multiple coup attempts by the Florida Legislature.

Once again, a lawmaker this year wants to dethrone the bird known for its lilting sounds. Islamorada Republican Rep. Jim Mooney's bill would actually designate two birds in its place: the American Flamingo as the state bird and the Florida scrub-jay as the state songbird.

Being named the state bird won't confer any added protection to the scrub-jay, which is already protected as a threatened species, but it is still important as an entry point to talking about conservation.

### Teens break record by giving away shoes

**CA** SAN DIEGO — A little more than 200 San Diego teens have broken the

Guinness World Record for donating the most shoes in 24 hours.

The volunteers worked day and night Dec. 7 to unload thousands of boxes of shoes and give them out to folks in need for the holidays in a parking lot at the Sharp Spectrum Center in San Diego. By 6:30 a.m. the parking lot was filled with families awaiting the 8 a.m. start time.

The youths donated 21,604 pairs of shoes, totaling roughly \$1.1 million, as part of the St. Nick's Kicks project organized by the youth-led Chula Vista-based nonprofit Youth Philanthropy Council along with Evolution Design Lab and their Jellypop footwear brand, both based in the Los Angeles area. The last record was set by Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church of Christ) in Manila, Philippines, which donated 17,526 shoes to charity in 24 hours on April 29, 2016.

### Fraternity brothers face felonies after 1 burned

**CA** LOS ANGELES — Four members of a San Diego State fraternity are facing felony charges over an incident in which one of them, a pledge, was set on fire causing third-degree burns that left him in the hospital for weeks, prosecutors say.

Caden Cooper, 22; Lucas Cowling, 20; Christopher Serrano, 20; and Lars Larsen, 19, have each been charged with at least one felony for planning and performing a skit that involved setting Larsen on fire at a party, according to the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. The students then attempted to cover up the incident by lying to police, deleting evidence and ordering other fraternity mem-

bers to stay quiet and delete evidence, prosecutors said.

The charges against them include recklessly causing a fire with great bodily injury, conspiracy to commit an act injurious to the public and violating a local law that makes it illegal to provide an environment where underage drinking can occur. They have pleaded not guilty.

### Couple sentenced over smoke bomb protest

**PA** PITTSBURGH — A man convicted of injuring an officer with a homemade explosive at a 2023 campus protest over transgender rights at the University of Pittsburgh has been sentenced to five years in prison.

Brian DiPippa, 37, agreed to the sentence as part of a plea agreement that also calls for his wife, Krystal Martinez-DiPippa, 42, to serve three years of probation.

The DiPippas were part of a group protesting an April 18, 2023, panel sponsored by the Pitt College Republicans that featured speakers opposed to transgender rights. Federal prosecutors said DiPippa ignited and dropped two homemade smoke bombs near people waiting to attend the event, and later threw one at officers.

A campus police sergeant told the court she had been knocked down when the device exploded as she tried to bat it away. She said she suffered burns to her legs, hearing loss and back injuries that required surgery.

DiPippa pleaded guilty to conspiracy and obstructing law enforcement, while his wife pleaded guilty to the latter charge.

— From Associated Press

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# No. 8 Gators hand No. 1 Vols first loss

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Alijah Martin scored 18 points, Denzel Abernethy added 16 and No. 8 Florida thumped top-ranked Tennessee 73-43 on Tuesday night to knock off the last unbeaten team in Division I basketball.

Alex Condon chipped in 12 points and 12 rebounds for his second double-double this season as the Gators (14-1, 1-1 Southeastern Conference) beat a No. 1 team for the third time in school history — the first in six tries at home — and extended their home-winning streak to 16.

Florida dominated from the opening tip. The Gators scored the first 12 points as the Volunteers (14-1, 1-1) missed their

first nine shots.

Tennessee made four shots in the first 20 minutes and trailed by 36 points late.

Vols coach Rick Barnes delivered a brief message to his downtrodden team: "This is good for us."

At least in the long run.

Tennessee got bullied in the paint, outmuscled on the boards and beaten up and down the court.

Condon and Rueben Chinyelu dominated down low against the Vols' Igor Milicic and Felix Okpara. Chinyelu finished with a career-high 15 boards.

The result was the most lopsided victory against a No. 1 team since UCLA and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, then known as

Lew Alcindor, beat Houston 101-69 in the 1968 Final Four.

The point total was the lowest during Barnes' 10 seasons.

"I have no idea some of the things I was looking out there watching," Barnes said. "I don't think it was our guys not trying to play hard. I just didn't think we played very smart."

Barnes believes his players started pressing amid the sluggish start and "lost our poise."

"I thought we had the wrong guys shooting the ball at the wrong time," he said.

Chaz Lanier, who played four seasons at North Florida before signing with the Vols, scored 10 points on 3-for-16 shooting for Tennessee.

"We didn't want to give him

no breathing room," said Alijah Martin, who led Florida with 18 points. "We know he's an unbelievable talent, unbelievable shooter. And that was the game plan, just don't give him no space. Don't give nothing easy."

After allowing Kentucky to make 14 3-pointers in a 106-100 loss last week, the Gators held the Vols to 4-for-29 from behind the arc.

"I'm incredibly proud," Florida coach Todd Golden said. "But now our biggest thing is this can't be the highlight of our season. It's awesome in the moment, and we're going to enjoy it. But it certainly won't feel as good if we don't go and find a way to win (at Arkansas) on Saturday."

# No. 2 Auburn holds off Texas for Pearl's 214th win

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Johni Broome had 20 points and 12 rebounds as No. 2 Auburn withstood a late Texas rally for an victory to give coach Bruce Pearl the school record for career wins.

The Tigers (14-1, 2-0 SEC) led by 21 in the second half, and bullied the Longhorns with their size and length for long stretches, only to watch Texas fight back behind Arthur Kaluma and Jordan Pope to get within three in the final minute.

Denver Jones and Tahaad Pettiford made four free throws over the final 17 seconds to seal it.

Pearl earned victory No. 214 in his 11th season at Auburn.

Kaluma had 34 points for the Longhorns (11-4, 0-2) on 12-of-16 shooting. Pope scored 17 of his 19 in the second half.

**No. 3 Iowa St. 82, Utah 59:** Curtis Jones had 23 points off the bench to help the No. 3 Cyclones extend their winning streak to 10 games with a victory over the visiting Utes.

Jones, who tied his season

high in points on 10-for-17 shooting, also had five rebounds, six assists and two steals for Iowa State (13-1, 3-0 Big 12).

Tamin Lipsey had 20 points, going 11-for-14 at the free-throw line.

**No. 4 Duke 76, Pittsburgh 47:** Star freshman Cooper Flagg scored 14 of his 19 points after halftime — including a jaw-dropper of a coast-to-coast dunk — to help the No. 4 Blue Devils beat the visiting Panthers.

Fellow rookie Kon Knueppel had 17 points and made four 3-pointers for Duke (13-2, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), which won a matchup of unbeaten league teams behind another strong defensive effort.

**Georgia 82, No. 6 Kentucky 69:** Freshman forward Asa Newell scored 12 of his 17 points after halftime and the host Bulldogs led the entire second half in beating the No. 6 Wildcats for their first win over a top-10 team in five years.

Blue Cain added 15 points and Silas Demary Jr. had 14 for Georgia (13-2, 1-1 Southeastern Conference).

Lamont Butler led Kentucky (12-3, 1-1) with 20.

**No. 7 Marquette 74, Georgetown 66:** Chase Ross scored a career-high 27 points as the No. 7 Golden Eagles rallied from a 14-point first-half deficit to beat the visiting Hoyas.

Stevie Mitchell added 13 points for Marquette (14-2, 5-0 Big East), which won its fifth straight game.

**No. 14 Mississippi St. 76, Vanderbilt 64:** RJ Melendez scored 19 points and the No. 14 Bulldogs beat the host Commodores for their eighth straight victory.

Cameron Matthews added 16 points and Claudell Harris Jr. had 13 for Mississippi State (14-1, 2-0 SEC).

Vanderbilt (13-2, 1-1) had its seven-game winning streak snapped.

**Arizona 75, No. 21 West Virginia 56:** KJ Lewis scored a career-high 21 points and the visiting Wildcats beat the No. 21 Mountaineers for their fifth straight win.

Jaden Bradley added 15 points and Anthony Dell'Orso scored

10 for Arizona (9-5, 3-0 Big 12).

Javon Small led West Virginia (11-3, 2-1) with 17 points.

**No. 24 Michigan 94, No. 22 UCLA 75:** Vladislav Goldin scored 21 of his career-high 36 points in the first half to lead the No. 24 Wolverines to their fourth straight victory.

The 7-foot-1 Russian asserted himself in the game's opening minutes with back-to-back one-handed dunks over Tyler Bilo-deau, who gave up 4 inches and 20 pounds to Goldin.

Tre Donaldson added 20 points for visiting Michigan (12-3, 4-0 Big Ten).

Bilodeau and Sebastian Mack each scored 17 points to lead four players in double figures for the No. 22 Bruins (11-4, 2-2).

**No. 25 Utah St. 85, San Jose St. 78:** Mason Falslev had 17 points and seven rebounds, Tucker Anderson added 15 points and the No. 25 Aggies held on for their fifth consecutive win.

Ian Martinez finished with 14 points and Deyton Albury had 13 for visiting Utah State (15-1, 5-0 Mountain West Conference).



# Young's heave at buzzer sends Hawks over Jazz

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Trae Young hit a buzzer-beating 3-pointer from beyond the half-court line to give the Atlanta Hawks a 124-121 victory over the Utah Jazz on Tuesday night.

Young took an inbound pass, dribbled to just short of half-court and hit the 49-foot winner as time expired while being loosely guarded by Collin Sexton, who had seemingly forced overtime with a tying 3-pointer with four seconds remaining.

"When there's time left, I always feel like we can score," Young said.

Young finished with 24 points and 20 assists. Dyson Daniels added 16 points, seven assists, and six rebounds for the Hawks, who snapped a three-game skid. Clint Capela scored 18 points and De'Andre Hunter 17.

Lauri Markkanen made a season-high eight 3-pointers and scored a season-best 35 points for the Jazz. Sexton added 24 points and Walker Kessler finished with 21 points and 10 rebounds.

Utah scored on five straight possessions and took a 114-113 lead on back-to-back dunks from Kessler. Young hit a step-back 3-pointer to put Atlanta back in front, and fed De'Andre Hunter for another go-ahead 3 with 1:57 left.

**Hornets 115, Suns 104:** La-

Melo Ball had 32 points and 10 rebounds, Miles Bridges added 21 points and host Charlotte snapped a 10-game losing streak with a win over Phoenix.

Nick Richards added 15 points and 12 rebounds off the bench for the Hornets (8-27).

Devin Booker had 39 points and 10 assists and Kevin Durant added 26 points for the Suns (16-19), who have lost five of their last six.

Charlotte took a 13-point lead at the half after outscoring Phoenix 37-17 in the second quarter behind 10 points from Ball, who was scoreless in the first quarter. He scored 29 points in the second half on 8-of-15 shooting, including four 3-pointers.

**Mavericks 118, Lakers 97:** Quinten Grimes had 26 points, nine rebounds and six assists as host Dallas snapped a five-game skid with a win over Los Angeles.

Grimes matched his career high with six 3-pointers on 6-for-11 shooting. P.J. Washington shot 9 for 14 and finished with 22 points and eight rebounds for the Mavericks, who shot 52% (18 of 38) from the field.

Dallas ended its losing streak without their top scorers. Luka Doncic has been out with a left calf strain since Dec. 25, and Kyrie Irving has been sidelined the past two games with a bulging disk in his back.

Anthony Davis led the Lakers

with 21 points and 12 rebounds. LeBron James added 18 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists.

**Timberwolves 104, Pelicans 97:** Anthony Edwards highlighted a 32-point performance with seven 3-pointers, and visiting Minnesota beat New Orleans to take some luster off of Zion Williamson's return from a 27-game absence.

Williamson, who'd been sidelined by a left hamstring strain, had 22 points, six rebounds, four assists, three steals and a block in 27 minutes in his seventh game this season.

Former Pelican Julius Randle scored 16 points and ex-LSU star Naz Reid had 13 points and 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who led most of the game and by as many as 13 points. Rudy Gobert had 14 rebounds and six blocks.

Edwards hit four early 3s and had 14 points less than seven minutes in.

**Celtics 118, Nuggets 106:** Jayson Tatum scored 29 points, Kristaps Porzingis added 25 and visiting Boston held off depleted Denver as three-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic sat out because of an illness.

Porzingis had 11 rebounds, while Jrue Holiday contributed 19 points. The Celtics attempted 35 3-pointers, which was well below their season average of 50.17. Instead, they outscored

the Nuggets by a 60-46 margin in the paint.

Russell Westbrook had 26 points for Denver. Michael Porter Jr. added 15 points and 10 rebounds as the Nuggets dropped to 10-7 at home. They were 33-8 last season.

**Heat 114, Warriors 98:** Bam Adebayo had 19 points, nine rebounds and five assists with two timely dunks down the stretch, and visiting Miami snapped a three-game losing streak by beating Golden State.

Stephen Curry scored 31 points, Trayce Jackson-Davis added 19, and Draymond Green contributed seven points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. The Warriors were booed by the home crowd, and many frustrated fans headed out of Chase Center early for a second straight game.

**Rockets 135, Wizards 112:** Jalen Green scored 22 of his 29 points in the third quarter and visiting Houston routed short-handed Washington.

Alperen Sengun added 26 points and 10 rebounds, Amen Thompson scored 20 points and grabbed 15 boards, and Fred VanVleet had 19 points as the Rockets improved to 6-1 on the road against Eastern Conference opponents.

Corey Kispert scored 23 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 18 in the Wizards' third straight defeat.

## Source: Verlander signing 1-year, \$15M deal with Giants

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Justin Verlander and the San Francisco Giants have agreed to a \$15 million, one-year contract, according to a person with direct knowledge of the negotiations.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity Tuesday because the deal was pending a physical.

It's the latest big move by new Giants President of Baseball Operations Buster Posey since he was hired in September to replace Farhan Zaidi.

San Francisco also signed free agent shortstop Willy Adames to a \$182 million, seven-year contract in December.

This will be the 20th major league season for Verlander, a three-time AL Cy Young Award winner who turns 42 next month. He would join a Giants rotation led by All-Star righty Logan Webb.

Verlander went 5-6 with a 5.48 ERA in 17 starts for the AL West champion Houston Astros last year. He opened the season on the injured list with shoulder inflammation. He also was on the IL from June 18 to Aug. 21 because of neck discomfort.

The right-hander had a 9.26 ERA in five September starts and was left off Houston's postseason roster when the team was swept by Detroit in an AL Wild Card Series. He became a free agent after he failed to pitch 140 innings, a total that would have triggered his ability to exercise a \$35 million conditional player option.

After the Astros were eliminated from the playoffs, Verlander said he thought he had "a lot more to give" next season and beyond.

"I definitely feel like I want to continue to pitch and compete, and I'm not ready to step away yet," he said in October.

# Oilers blank Bruins to win 4th straight

Associated Press

BOSTON — Adam Henrique scored two goals and Connor McDavid scored on a power play midway through the second period as the Edmonton Oilers won their fourth straight game, 4-0 over the Boston Bruins on Tuesday night.

Stuart Skinner, who left the game late in the first period after a collision with Boston's Nikita Zadorov before returning at the start of the second, stopped 26 shots in 55 minutes as Edmonton won for the 12th time in its last 15 games.

"He got me pretty good," said Skinner. "I think that's like the fifth hit I've got this year. He apologized after, at the start of the second period, which was really nice of him to do. It's an NHL play. It happened."

Viktor Arvidsson added an empty-netter for the Oilers, while center Leon Draisaitl's point streak was halted at 14 games.

It was the Bruins' fifth straight loss, their worst stretch since interim coach Joe Sacco took over for the fired Jim Montgomery on Nov. 19.

Jeremy Swayman made 35 saves but lost his fourth straight start.

Referee Chris Rooney, a Boston native, worked his 1,500th career game.

**Lightning 3, Hurricanes 2:** Brayden Point scored with 52 seconds to play and host Tampa Bay snapped a four-game skid with a victory over Carolina.

Brandon Hagel and Nick Paul also scored for the Lightning while Darren Raddysh finished with two assists. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 30 shots in the victory.

Andrei Svechnikov and Jordan Staal scored for the Hurricanes. Pyotr Kochetkov finished with 31 saves.

Nikita Kucherov found Point cutting to the slot where he received the pass and spun around to his forehand to snap a

shot past Kochetkov on the winning goal.

**Red Wings 3, Senators 2 (OT):** Patrick Kane scored on a power play with 2:39 remaining in overtime and host Detroit extended its winning streak to five games with a win over Ottawa.

Dylan Larkin scored on a power play in the first period and Joe Veleno also scored in regulation for the Red Wings. Larkin extended his goal streak to four games and his point streak to six games.

Alex Lyon started in goal for Detroit, but was removed after the first period due to an upper-body injury. Cam Talbot took over and the duo combined for 31 saves.

Brady Tkachuk and Thomas Chabot scored for the Senators, who have lost five of their last six games. Anton Forsberg made 30 saves.

**Stars 5, Rangers 4 (OT):** Jamie Benn scored on a power play 2:17 into overtime and visiting Dallas rallied from an early three-goal deficit to defeat struggling New York.

Jake Oettinger made 21 saves and Stars defenseman Thomas Harley had a goal and two assists. Harley's snap shot tied it 4-4 at 17:21 of the third period following a terrible turnover by Rangers defenseman K'Andre Miller deep in his own end.

Benn's 11th goal came with Artemi Panarin in the penalty box for hooking and gave Dallas its only lead. The Stars' captain tipped in a centering pass from Jason Robertson. Harley also assisted on the play.

Dallas denied New York goalie Jonathan Quick his 400th career win.

**Blue Jackets 4, Penguins 3 (SO):** Kirill Marchenko and Kent Johnson scored in the shootout, and visiting Columbus rallied to beat Pittsburgh.

Elvis Merzlikins, who made 20 saves, stopped Bryan Rust and Sidney Crosby in the shootout, as the Blue Jackets came

back from a 3-1 deficit in the third period.

Adam Fantilli scored a third-period power-play goal and Dmitri Voronkov scored twice, giving him nine goals in seven games. Columbus has goals with the man advantage in 12 of its last 15 games. Sean Monahan left with an upper-body injury.

Rickard Rakell scored twice and Michael Bunting set a career high with his eighth power-play goal. Crosby had two assists and became the NHL's all-time leader in faceoff wins since the league started tracking the stat in 1997.

**Maple Leafs 3, Flyers 2:** Auston Matthews and John Tavares each had a goal and an assist to lead visiting Toronto to a win over Philadelphia for its fifth straight.

Matthew Knies tallied the go-ahead goal with 6:39 remaining to help the Maple Leafs sweep a home-and-home set with the Flyers. Toronto defeated Philadelphia 3-2 in overtime on home ice on Sunday.

Leafs goalie Joseph Woll made 30 saves.

Travis Konecny scored both Flyers goals.

**Wild 6, Blues 4:** Matt Boldy's tiebreaking goal early in the third period for host Minnesota completed its comeback from a two-score deficit to beat St. Louis for its fourth straight victory.

Boldy snapped in a shot off a pass from Mats Zuccarello on a 2-on-1 rush after Blues defenseman Jake Broberg's stick broke in the neutral zone.

Joel Eriksson Ek scored for the Wild midway through the second period, and Jake Middleton tied the game 1:16 into the third. Marcus Johansson tacked on an empty-netter.

Jordan Kyrou, Jake Neighbours and Robert Thomas scored early in the second period for a 4-2 lead for St. Louis that prompted Minnesota to pull goalie Filip Gustavsson,

who'd allowed a total of three goals over two earlier wins against the Blues this season.

**Jets 5, Predators 2:** Morgan Barron and Josh Morrissey scored 16 seconds apart to help Winnipeg goalie Connor Hellebuyck record his 300th NHL career win over visiting Nashville.

Kyle Connor, Gabriel Vilardi and Nino Niederreiter also scored for the Jets, who halted a three-game losing skid. Mark Scheifele added a pair of assists.

Hellebuyck stopped 26 shots.

Filip Forsberg ended an 18-game scoring drought with his 10th of the season for the Predators. Juuse Saros made 26 saves for Nashville.

**Flames 3, Ducks 2 (OT):** Jonathan Huberdeau scored a power-play goal at 2:05 of overtime in visiting Calgary's victory over Anaheim.

MacKenzie Weegar had a goal and an assist for the Flames, who stopped a two-game skid. Nazem Kadri scored and Dustin Wolf stopped 25 shots.

Mason McTavish tied it with 12:24 left in regulation for the Ducks, who have earned a point in five of their last six games. Alex Killorn also scored, and John Gibson made 30 saves.

Calgary's Connor Zary apparently injured his left knee during the second period in an open-ice collision with Anaheim defenseman Drew Helleeson, who received a game misconduct.

**Golden Knights 4, Sharks 2:** Mark Stone had a goal and an assist as visiting Vegas beat San Jose.

Zach Whitecloud, Victor Olofsson and Tomas Hertl also scored to help the Golden Knights extend their winning streak to three games. Shea Theodore had two assists.

William Eklund had a goal and an assist for the Sharks. Timothy Liljegren also scored.