

## Trump dropping push for Guard in cities

President: 'Only question of time' before new effort in Chicago, LA and Portland

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he's dropping — for now — his push to deploy National Guard troops in Chicago, Los Angeles and Portland, Ore., a move that comes after legal roadblocks held up the effort.

"We will come back, perhaps in a much different and stronger form, when crime begins to soar again — Only a question of time!" he said in a social media post Wednesday.

Governors typically control states' National Guardsmen, and Trump had deployed troops to all three cities against the wishes of state and local Democratic leaders. He said it was necessary as part of a broader crackdown on immigration, crime and protests.

The president has made a crackdown on crime in cities a centerpiece of his second term — and has toyed with the idea of invoking the Insurrection Act to stop his opponents from using

the courts to block his plans. He has said he sees his tough-on-crime approach as a winning political issue ahead of this year's midterm elections.

Troops had already left Los Angeles after the president deployed them last year as part of a broader crackdown on crime and immigration.

In his post, Trump said the troops' presence was responsible for a drop in crime in the three cities, though they were never on the streets in Chicago and Portland as legal challenges played out. When the Chicago deployment was challenged in court, a Justice Department lawyer said the Guard's mission would be to protect federal properties and government agents in the field, not "solving all of crime in Chicago."

Portland Mayor Keith Wilson's office in a statement said the city's reduction in crime was due to the efforts of local police and public safety programs. Chicago officials echoed the

sentiment, saying in a release Tuesday that the city had 416 homicides in 2025 — the fewest since 2014.

Trump's push to deploy the troops in Democrat-led cities has been met with legal challenges at nearly every turn.

The Supreme Court in December refused to allow the Trump administration to deploy National Guard troops in the Chicago area. The order was not a final ruling but was a significant and rare setback by the high court for the president's efforts.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker wrote on X Wednesday that Trump "lost in court when Illinois stood up against his attempt to militarize American cities with the National Guard. Now Trump is forced to stand down."

Hundreds of troops from California and Oregon were deployed to Portland, but a federal judge barred them from going on the streets. A judge perma-

nently blocked the deployment of National Guard troops there in November after a three-day trial.

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek said in a statement Wednesday that her office had not yet received "official notification that the remaining federalized Oregon National Guard troops can return home. They were never lawfully deployed to Portland and there was no need for their presence. If President Trump has finally chosen to follow court orders and demobilize our troops, that's a big win for Oregonians and for the rule of law."

Trump's decision to federalize National Guard troops began in Los Angeles in June, when protesters took to the streets in response to a blitz of immigration arrests in the area.

He deployed about 4,000 troops and 700 Marines to guard federal buildings and, later, to protect federal agents as they carried out immigration arrests.

## Trump exchanges threats with top Iranian officials

*Associated Press*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — President Donald Trump and top Iranian officials exchanged dueling threats Friday as widening protests swept across parts of the Islamic Republic, further escalating tensions between the countries.

At least seven people have been killed so far in violence surrounding the demonstrations, which were sparked in part by the collapse of Iran's rial currency but have increasingly seen crowds chanting

anti-government slogans.

Trump initially wrote on his Truth Social platform, warning Iran that if it "violently kills peaceful protesters," the United States "will come to their rescue."

"We are locked and loaded and ready to go," Trump wrote, without elaborating.

U.S. forces bombed three Iranian nuclear sites in June, causing extensive damage.

Shortly after, Ali Larijani, a former parliament speaker who serves as the secretary of

Iran's Supreme National Security Council, alleged on the social platform X that Israel and the U.S. were stoking the demonstrations.

He offered no evidence to support the allegation, which Iranian officials have repeatedly made during years of protests sweeping the country.

"Trump should know that intervention by the U.S. in the domestic problem corresponds to chaos in the entire region and the destruction of the U.S. interests," Larijani wrote on X,

which the Iranian government blocks. "The people of the U.S. should know that Trump began the adventurism. They should take care of their own soldiers."

Larijani's remarks likely referenced America's wide military footprint in the region.

Iran in June attacked Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar after the U.S. strikes on nuclear sites during Israel's 12-day war on the Islamic Republic. No one was injured though a missile did hit a radome there.

# Russia: Ukrainian drone strike kills 24

## Attack in occupied region unleashed as tensions grow amid peace talks

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — A Ukrainian drone strike killed 24 people and wounded at least 50 more as they celebrated the New Year in a Russian-occupied village in Ukraine's Kherson region, Russian officials said Thursday, as tensions between the two nations continue to spike despite diplomats hailing productive peace talks.

Three drones struck a café and hotel in the resort town of Khorly on the Black Sea coast, the region's Moscow-installed leader Vladimir Saldo said in a statement on Telegram. He said that one of the drones carried an incendiary mixture, sparking a blaze.

Ukrainian officials did not immediately comment on the claim of a strike. The attack could not be independently verified by The Associated Press.

The attack was condemned by a number of Russian officials. Valentina Matviyenko, the chair of Russia's upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, said that the strike "strengthened" Russia's resolve to quickly achieve its goals in its almost four-year invasion of Ukraine.

The statement follows claims from Moscow that Ukraine launched a long-range drone attack against one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's official residences in northwestern Russia overnight from Sunday to Monday. Kyiv has denounced the claims as a "lie."

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Thursday that its specialists had accessed the navigation system in one of the drones it claimed was used in the attack and used its data to confirm that Putin's residence was the drone's final destination. The claim could not be verified as the ministry did not share evidence on the findings, but officials said that it would transfer the data to U.S. officials "through established channels."

On Wednesday, Russia's Defense Ministry also released a video on Wednesday of a downed drone it said was involved in the attack.

The nighttime clip showed a man in camouflage, a helmet and a Kevlar vest standing near a damaged drone lying in snow. The man, his face covered, talks about the drone. Neither the man nor the Defense Ministry

provided any location or date and neither the video nor its claims could be independently verified.

Kyiv has called the allegations of an attack on Putin's residence a ruse to derail ongoing peace negotiations, which have ramped up in recent weeks on both sides of the Atlantic.

In his New Year's address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that a peace deal was "90% ready" but warned that the remaining 10%, believed to include key sticking points such as territory, would "determine the fate of peace, the fate of Ukraine and Europe, how people will live."

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said Wednesday that he, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner had a "productive call" with the national security advisers of Britain, France, Germany and Ukraine "to discuss advancing the next steps in the European peace process."

"We focused on how to move the discussions forward in a practical way on behalf of (Trump's) peace process, including strengthening security

guarantees and developing effective deconfliction mechanisms to help end the war and ensure it does not restart," Witkoff said in a post on X.

Lead Ukrainian negotiator Rustem Umerov also reaffirmed that European and Ukrainian officials plan to meet Saturday, while Zelenskyy is due to hold talks next week with European leaders.

In the diplomatic sphere, Kyiv has also continued to push the International Atomic Energy Agency to take action against Russia for alleged attacks on electricity infrastructure deemed "critical for nuclear safety and security" at Ukraine's nuclear power stations.

The IAEA on Tuesday published a Note Verbale sent by Kyiv to the agency, saying that a Russian drone and missile attack on Dec. 23 had caused certain Ukrainian nuclear power plants to lose a "significant part of their off-site power connections."

Elsewhere in Ukraine, Russia attacked the Odesa region overnight, targeting civilian infrastructure in several waves of drone attacks, according to regional head Oleh Kiper.

# Kim gives daughter's status a boost with tomb visit

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — The teenage daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made her first known visit to a sacred family mausoleum, a step that experts say bolstered her status as her father's potential heir.

The visit, which occurred on New Year's Day on Thursday, even sparked speculation that the girl, reportedly named Kim Ju Ae and aged about 13, could

be named a high-level official at the upcoming ruling Workers' Party congress.

Images carried by North Korea's state media on Friday showed Kim Ju Ae standing in the front row with her parents and deeply bowing at Pyongyang's Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang, where the embalmed bodies of her late grandfather and great-grandfather are on display.

The palace is "a place that symbolizes legitimacy of the North Korean regime" and her visit there ahead of the Workers' Party congress is a politically orchestrated move, said Cheong Seong-Chang, deputy head of the private Sejong Institute in South Korea.

Kim Jong Un, 41, is the third generation of his family to rule North Korea since the country's foundation in 1948.

He often marks key state anniversaries by visiting the Kumsusan palace and paying respect to his father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung.

Cheong predicted that Kim Jong Un could give his daughter the first secretary post at the Workers' Party, the party's No. 2 job, at the congress. Other experts say she is too young for such a high-profile post and might be given lower-level jobs.

# Health subsidies end, launching insurance increases for millions

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Enhanced tax credits that have helped reduce the cost of health insurance for the vast majority of Affordable Care Act enrollees expired overnight, cementing higher health costs for millions of Americans at the start of the new year.

Democrats forced a 43-day government shutdown over the issue. Moderate Republicans called for a solution to save their 2026 political aspirations. President Donald Trump floated a way out, only to back off after conservative backlash.

In the end, no one's efforts were enough to save the subsidies before their expiration date. A House vote expected in January could offer another chance, but success is far from guaranteed.

The change affects a diverse cross-section of Americans who don't get their health insurance from an employer and don't qualify for Medicaid or Medi-

care — a group that includes many self-employed workers, small business owners, farmers and ranchers.

It comes at the start of a high-stakes midterm election year, with affordability — including the cost of health care — topping the list of voters' concerns.

"It really bothers me that the middle class has moved from a squeeze to a full suffocation, and they continue to just pile on and leave it up to us," said 37-year-old single mom Katelin Provost, whose health care costs are set to jump. "I'm incredibly disappointed that there hasn't been more action."

The expired subsidies were first given to Affordable Care Act enrollees in 2021 as a temporary measure to help Americans get through the COVID-19 pandemic. Democrats in power at the time extended them, moving the expiration date to the start of 2026.

With the expanded subsidies, some lower-income enrollees

received health care with no premiums, and high earners paid no more than 8.5% of their income. Eligibility for middle-class earners was also expanded.

On average, the more than 20 million subsidized enrollees in the Affordable Care Act program are seeing their premiums rise by 114% in 2026, according to the health care research group KFF.

Those surging prices come alongside an overall increase in health costs in the U.S., which are further driving up out-of-pocket costs in many plans.

Health analysts have predicted the expiration of the subsidies will drive many of the 24 million total Affordable Care Act enrollees — especially younger and healthier Americans — to forgo health insurance coverage altogether.

Over time, that could make the program more expensive for the older, sicker population that remains.

## Complaint filed over ban on gender treatments

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is facing a new legal complaint from a group of government employees who are affected by a new policy going into effect Thursday that eliminates coverage for gender-treatments in federal health insurance programs.

The complaint, filed Thursday on the employees' behalf by the Human Rights Campaign, is in response to an August announcement from the Office of Personnel Management that it would no longer cover "chemical and surgical modification of an individual's sex traits through medical interventions" in health insurance programs for federal employees and U.S. Postal Service workers.

The complaint argues that denying the coverage is sex-based discrimination and asks the personnel office to rescind the policy. The complaint, filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, includes testimonies from four current federal workers at the State Department, Health and Human Services and the Postal Service who would be directly affected by the elimination of coverage.

The Trump administration has taken other steps to restrict care for transgender Americans, particularly minors. In December, the Department of Health and Human Services released proposals that would block gender treatments to minors, including a policy that would bar Medicare and Medicaid dollars to hospitals that provide such care to children.

Senior Trump officials, such as Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., call gender treatments "malpractice" for minors.

## Mamdani promises to govern New York 'expansively and audaciously' as mayor

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Zohran Mamdani became mayor of New York City on Thursday, taking over one of the most unrelenting jobs in American politics with a promise to transform government on behalf of the city's striving, struggling working class.

Mamdani, a Democrat, was sworn in at a decommissioned subway station below City Hall just after midnight, placing his hand on a Quran as he took his oath as the city's first Muslim mayor.

After working part of the night in his new office, Mamda-

ni returned to City Hall Thursday for a grander public inauguration where U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, one of the mayor's political heroes, administered the oath for a second time.

"Beginning today, we will govern expansively and audaciously. We may not always succeed, but never will we be accused of lacking the courage to try," Mamdani told a cheering crowd.

"To those who insist that the era of big government is over, hear me when I say this: No longer will City Hall hesitate to use its power to improve New Yorkers' lives," he said.

Throngs turned out in the frigid cold for an inauguration viewing party just south of City Hall on a stretch of Broadway known as the "Canyon of Heroes," famous for its ticker-tape parades.

Mamdani wasted little time getting to work after the event.

He revoked multiple executive orders issued by the previous administration since Sept. 26, 2024, the date federal authorities announced former Mayor Eric Adams had been indicted on corruption charges, which were later dismissed following intervention by the Trump administration.



# Maduro open to talks on drug trafficking

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuela is open to negotiating an agreement with the United States to combat drug trafficking, the South American country's President Nicolás Maduro said in an interview aired Thursday on state television, but he declined to comment on a CIA-led strike last week at a Venezuelan docking area that the Trump administration believed was used by cartels.

Maduro, in an interview with Spanish journalist Ignacio Ramonet, reiterated that the U.S. wants to force a government change in Venezuela and gain access to its vast oil reserves through the monthslong pres-

sure campaign that began with a massive military deployment to the Caribbean Sea in August.

"What are they seeking? It is clear that they seek to impose themselves through threats, intimidation and force," Maduro said, later adding that it is time for both nations to "start talking seriously, with data in hand."

"The U.S. government knows, because we've told many of their spokespeople, that if they want to seriously discuss an agreement to combat drug trafficking, we're ready," he said. "If they want oil, Venezuela is ready for U.S. investment, like with Chevron, whenever they want it, wherever they want it and however they want it."

Chevron Corp. is the only major oil company exporting Venezuelan crude to the U.S. Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves.

The interview was taped on New Year's Eve, the same day the U.S. military announced strikes against five alleged drug-smuggling boats. The latest attacks bring the total number of known boat strikes to 35 and the number of people killed to at least 115, according to numbers announced by the Trump administration. Venezuelans are among the victims.

President Donald Trump has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States

and asserted that the U.S. is engaged in an "armed conflict" with drug cartels. The strikes began off Venezuela's Caribbean coast and later expanded to the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Meanwhile, the CIA was behind a drone strike last week at a docking area believed to have been used by Venezuelan drug cartels, according to two people familiar with details of the operation who requested anonymity to discuss the classified matter. It was the first known direct operation on Venezuelan soil since the boat strikes began, a significant escalation in the administration's pressure campaign on Maduro, who has been charged with narco-terrorism in the U.S.

## Dozens killed, scores hurt in fire at Swiss bar during New Year's fete

Associated Press

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland — At least 40 people were killed and 119 injured, most of them seriously, after a fire ripped through a bar's New Year celebration in a Swiss Alpine resort after midnight Thursday, police said.

Swiss investigators said Friday that they believe sparkling flares atop Champagne bottles ignited the fatal fire at a ski resort when they came too close to a crowded bar's ceiling.

The Crans-Montana resort is best known as an international ski and golf venue, and overnight, its crowded Le Constellation bar morphed from a scene of revelry into the site of one of Switzerland's worst tragedies. The country will hold five days of mourning.

Valais Canton police commander Frédéric Gisler said during a news conference that work is underway to identify the victims and inform their families, adding that the community is "devastated."

Beatrice Pilloud, Valais Canton attorney general, said the number of people who were in the bar is "currently totally unknown," adding that its maximum capacity will be part of the investigation.

Gisler said the priority until further notice would be identifying the victims, and added that "this work will have to take several days."

Thirteen of the injured were Italian citizens, and another six Italians are unaccounted for, Italy's ambassador to Switzerland, Gian Lorenzo Cornado, told state-run RAI television.

Axel Clavier, a 16-year-old from Paris who survived the blaze, described "total chaos" inside the bar. One of his friends died and "two or three" were missing, he said.

He said he hadn't seen the fire start, but did see waitresses arrive with Champagne bottles with sparklers, he said.

Clavier said he felt like he was suffocating and initially hid behind a table, then ran upstairs

and tried to use a table to break a Plexiglas window. It fell out of its casing, allowing him to escape.

He lost his jacket, shoes, phone and bank card while fleeing, but "I am still alive and it's just stuff."

"I'm still in shock," he added.

Two women told French broadcaster BFMTV they were inside when they saw a male bartender lifting a female bartender on his shoulders as she held a lit candle in a bottle. The flames spread, collapsing the wooden ceiling, they told the broadcaster.

One of the women described a crowd surge as people frantically tried to escape from a basement nightclub up a narrow flight of stairs and through a narrow door.

The injured were so numerous that the intensive care unit and operating theater at the regional hospital quickly hit full capacity, said Mathias Reynard, head of the regional government of the Valais Canton.

## President delays hikes on tariffs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed a New Year's Eve proclamation delaying increased tariffs on upholstered furniture, kitchen cabinets and vanities for a year, citing ongoing trade talks.

Trump's order signed Wednesday keeps in place a 25% tariff he imposed in September on those goods, but delays for another year a 30% tariff on upholstered furniture and 50% tariff on kitchen cabinets and vanities.

The increases, which were set to take effect Jan. 1, come as the Republican president instituted a broad swath of taxes on imported goods to address trade imbalances and other issues.

The president has said the tariffs on furniture are needed to "bolster American industry and protect national security."

The delay is the latest in the roller coaster of Trump's tariff wars since he returned to office last year.

# No. 1 Indiana roars into CFP semis

Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — Fernando Mendoza literally jumped for joy when the Heisman Trophy winner learned he was not the offensive MVP of Indiana's dominant victory over Alabama in the Rose Bowl.

The quarterback and his teammates ran across the celebration stage to mob 311-pound center Pat Coogan, who was visibly shocked to be the center of attention at another landmark moment for these incredible, unbeaten Hoosiers.

"It's probably the first, if I had to guess, offensive lineman MVP award," Coogan said with a grin. "These guys are unbelievable. The belief that we have in each other ... it's just been never-ending growth, never-ending improvement."

Coogan's improbable honor was a beautiful bit of symbolism that recognized the manner in which these hard-nosed Hoosiers manhandled the Crimson Tide to reach the College Football Playoff semifinals with their 38-3 victory Thursday.

Two years into one of the most

incredible team turnarounds in recent sports history, Indiana was simply tougher, meaner and more precise on both sides of the ball than blue-blooded Bama — and now the Hoosiers (14-0, No. 1 CFP seed) are headed to the Peach Bowl on Jan. 9 for a CFP semifinal rematch with fifth-seeded Oregon.

Mendoza passed for 192 yards and three touchdowns in his first game since winning his school's first Heisman, but the Hoosiers won the Rose Bowl for the first time in school history by dominating the Crimson Tide (11-4, No. 9 CFP seed) at the line of scrimmage.

Indiana scored the first 24 points before pouring it on with fourth-quarter rushing TDs from Kaelon Black and Roman Hemby, wrapping up a jubilant afternoon in the 112th edition of the Granddaddy of Them All.

"I thought our mindset was really good," Indiana coach Curt Cignetti said. "It was a hard-fought game early. Alabama made some plays. They had us off balance offensively. But we were able to make the plays

when we needed to and take over in the second half. It's a big win against a team that's got a lot of tradition like that."

Charlie Becker, Omar Cooper Jr. and Elijah Sarratt caught TD passes, while Black rushed for 99 yards. Indiana outgained Alabama 407-193, delighting a decidedly pro-Indiana crowd that celebrated its long-struggling team's first Rose Bowl game appearance since 1968 with chants of "Hoosier Daddy?" in the final minutes.

Indiana had not won any bowl game since the Copper Bowl in 1991, but history has been no match for Cignetti and his Hoosiers during the coach's two transcendent seasons.

The next challenge is even bigger: Oregon routed Texas Tech 23-0 earlier Thursday in the Orange Bowl. Indiana beat the then-No. 3 Ducks 30-20 in Eugene last October in one of Cignetti's most impressive Big Ten victories.

Indiana is two wins away from the first national championship in school history after becoming the first team to ad-

vance following a first-round bye in the current 12-team playoff format. The first six bye teams — including the first two this season — couldn't come back strong from an extra-long layoff, but the Hoosiers took care of business while improving to 25-2 under Cignetti.

Alabama's second season under Kalen DeBoer ended in the same venue as their final season under Nick Saban two years ago. Alabama was outclassed one week after an impressive road win over Oklahoma, managing just 151 yards before the meaningless final minutes of the Tide's biggest blowout loss since September 1998.

"We can be upset, because losing doesn't sit well for us, and we can be frustrated about it," DeBoer said.

Ty Simpson passed for 67 yards before he cracked a rib late in the first half, and backup Austin Mack replaced him in the third quarter. Mack got the Tide rolling on a 65-yard drive leading to a short field goal, but the Hoosiers responded with two TD drives.

## Source: RHP Imai, Astros agree to \$54M, 3-year deal

Associated Press

Right-hander Tatsuya Imai and the Houston Astros have agreed to a \$54 million, three-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the agreement had not been announced.

Imai gets a \$2 million signing

bonus and salaries of \$16 million this year and \$18 million in each of the final two seasons.

Based on his 2026 performance, his 2027 salary would escalate by \$2 million each for 80, 90 and 100 innings, and his 2028 salary by \$1 million for each level.

If he doesn't pitch 80 innings in 2026 and does in 2027, his 2028 salary would rise by \$1 mil-

lion. If he doesn't pitch 90 innings in 2026 and does in 2027, his 2028 salary would increase by another \$1 million. And if he doesn't pitch 100 innings in 2026 and does in 2027, his 2028 salary also would increase by another \$1 million.

Imai, 27, can opt out after the 2026 and 2027 seasons.

Imai receives the third-highest average annual value for a

Japanese pitcher entering Major League Baseball behind Yoshinobu Yamamoto's \$27.08 million with the Los Angeles Dodgers in a deal that started in 2024 and Masahiro Tanaka's \$22.14 million with the New York Yankees in a contract that ran from 2014-20.

Imai went 10-5 with a 1.92 ERA last season for the Pacific League's Seibu Lions.

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# Defense leads Oregon over Texas Tech

Ducks shut out Red Raiders in Orange Bowl, advance to rematch with Indiana in CFP semifinals

*Associated Press*

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The first thing that Oregon quarterback Dante Moore did after winning the Orange Bowl was salute the thousands of fans who made the cross-country trip to South Florida.

If the Ducks' defense keeps playing like this, those fans might be back in Miami before long.

Matayo Uiagalelei caused a fumble to set up an Oregon touchdown, freshman Brandon Finney Jr. had three takeaways — two interceptions and a fumble recovery — and the fifth-seeded Ducks silenced No. 4 Texas Tech's offense for a 23-0 win in the College Football Playoff quarterfinal at the Orange Bowl on Thursday.

"They've earned this opportunity," Oregon coach Dan Lanning said. "I told them go get their pound of flesh today. They did that today."

Jordon Davison rushed for two scores, Moore threw for 234 yards and Atticus Sappington kicked three field goals for Oregon (13-1), which will play No. 1 Indiana (14-0) in the Peach Bowl — a CFP semifinal — on Jan. 9. It's a rematch of a game

from Oct. 11, when the Hoosiers beat Oregon 30-20.

The Oregon-Indiana winner will be in Miami Gardens for the national title game on Jan. 19.

"I believe we have the best defense in the country," Finney said.

Texas Tech probably wouldn't argue with that.

Texas Tech — which finished at 12-2 — came into the day second nationally in points per game (42.5) and fifth nationally in yards per game (480.3) but got absolutely nothing going. The Red Raiders turned the ball over four times, were stopped on fourth downs three other times and had four three-and-outs.

"Texas Tech fans, I'm sorry that we let you down," coach Joey McGuire said. "I hope you've enjoyed every second of this year. Man, this was such a special team and I'm so proud of them. Hats off to Dan Lanning. Hats off to the Oregon Ducks. Just an incredible football team ... and I told Dan after the game I hope he wins the whole damn thing."

Tech quarterback Behren Morton — who finished 18 of 32 passing for just 137 yards — was

stripped by Uiagalelei early in the third quarter in Red Raider territory. Uiagalelei rumbled deep into the red zone and Davison scored one play later to make it 13-0.

Morton threw a red-zone interception early in the fourth quarter and a fourth-down stop from their own 30 midway through the fourth quarter doomed whatever comeback chances existed for the Red Raiders. Davison plunged in from the 1 with 16 seconds left to cap the scoring.

"We had a great game plan," Morton said. "We just didn't execute base plays."

And once again, a CFP bye meant a team went bye-bye.

It was the sixth quarterfinal under this 12-team tournament format that started last year and the sixth time that the team coming off an extended break lost to a team that played a first-round game. That odd streak ended later Thursday, when Indiana — which had a first-round bye — rolled past Alabama 38-3 in another quarterfinal at the Rose Bowl.

In 2024, Boise State (against Penn State), Arizona State (against Texas), Georgia

(against Notre Dame) and Oregon (against Ohio State) all went out in the quarterfinals after first-round byes. Miami added to that list Wednesday night, beating Ohio State in a quarterfinal at the Cotton Bowl. In those six games, including Thursday, the team with the bye has held the lead for less than five minutes — combined — of regulation.

Texas Tech thought it could avoid that fate. It could not, and Oregon finished off its first shutout of an AP-ranked opponent since 2012. Oregon was playing a top-10 team for the 113th time — and for the first time, allowed zero points.

"In this program you don't make excuses," McGuire said, "and you don't let anybody make them for you."

Oregon played James Madison in Round 1 this year, winning 51-34, and generally was unhappy afterward with how it played defensively.

There wasn't anything to not like from that side of the ball on Thursday.

"Last week a lot of people talked about our defense," Lanning said. "They showed up today."

## Manning runs, passes Texas past Michigan in Citrus

*Associated Press*

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arch Manning put on a show for Texas in the shadow of the College Football Playoff.

Manning became the first player in the Citrus Bowl's 80-year history to run and throw for 150 yards each, helping No. 14 Texas (10-3) beat No. 18 Michigan 41-27 on Wednesday.

Manning was 21 for 34 for 224 yards passing and two touchdowns. He added 155 yards on nine carries and another two rushing touchdowns. He fell

one touchdown shy of tying uncle Peyton Manning's five touchdowns for Tennessee in a win over Northwestern in the 1997 Citrus Bowl.

Manning was the first player to rush for 150 yards in the game since Marcus Murphy rushed for 157 yards for Missouri in 2015.

The Wolverines finished 9-4.

### ReliaQuest Bowl

**Iowa 34, No. 13 Vanderbilt 27:** At Tampa, Fla., Mark Gronowski threw two touchdowns

and rushed for another to lead the Hawkeyes (9-4) over the Commodores.

Gronowski was 16 of 22 passing for 212 yards as Iowa got out to a 21-3 lead early in the third quarter.

Heisman Trophy runner-up Diego Pavia finished with 347 passing yards for Vanderbilt (10-3).

### Las Vegas Bowl

**No. 15 Utah 44, Nebraska 22:** At Las Vegas, Devon Dampier threw for 310 yards and two

touchdowns and ran for 148 yards and three scores, and the Utes beat the Cornhuskers.

Utah (11-2) reached 11 wins for just the fourth time in program history and the first time since 2019. It outgained Nebraska (7-6) 535 yards to 343.

### Sun Bowl

**Duke 42, Arizona State 39:** At El Paso, Texas, Darian Mensah threw for 327 yards and four touchdowns to lead the Blue Devils (9-5) over the Sun Devils (8-5).



# Ole Miss tops Georgia in Sugar Bowl

Chambliss, Carneiro lift No. 6 Rebels over No. 3 Bulldogs in CFP quarterfinal; Hurricanes are up next

*Associated Press*

NEW ORLEANS — With Trinidad Chambliss making stunning plays at pivotal moments, Mississippi is doing fine without Lane Kiffin.

Chambliss passed for 362 yards and two touchdowns, and Lucas Carneiro kicked a 47-yard field goal with 6 seconds left to put No. 6 Mississippi in front for good in a 39-34 victory over third-ranked Georgia in a College Football Playoff quarterfinal at the Sugar Bowl on Thursday night.

"A lot of people did doubt us before the season and they still doubted us when our coach left," Chambliss said. "We just want to play ball and have fun, and I think that's showing right now."

The Rebels (13-1, CFP No. 6 seed) have now won two post-season games since Kiffin left for LSU on Nov. 30 and defensive coordinator Pete Golding was promoted to fill the vacancy at the top of the staff. Next up for Ole Miss is a semifinal matchup

with Miami at the Fiesta Bowl.

"We've got a lot of good coaches," Golding said, referring in part to assistants who have agreed to join Kiffin at LSU, but who've been permitted to remain with the Rebels through this postseason.

"A lot of guys have been going through a lot of things but they've been here for the kids the whole time," Golding continued. "And this is a special group of kids."

Following two lopsided CFP quarterfinals at the Orange and Rose bowls, the all-SEC matchup at the Sugar Bowl provided drama throughout.

"It was an incredible college football game," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "It's what the CFP was built for, to have battles like that. And that was basically every conference game we had this year."

While Carneiro's late kick was the decisive score, Ole Miss was awarded a safety on its final kickoff when Georgia's return team tried a cross-field lateral

that hit the pylon with 1 second left.

"I'm sick that we lost, and there's things I would love to go back and do differently," Smart said. "But I'm just so proud of the way our guys competed."

After seeing a 21-12 halftime lead turn into a 34-24 deficit with 9:02 to play, Georgia (12-2, CFP No. 3 seed) rallied to tie it, first driving for Gunner Stockton's 18-yard TD pass to Zachariah Branch before Peyton Woodring's short field goal tied it with 55 seconds left.

Chambliss responded by setting up the winning kick with a 40-yard pass to De'Zhaun Stribling on third down from Mississippi's 30-yard line. A few plays later, Carneiro, who'd already broken Sugar Bowl records with field goals of 55 and 56 yards, connected again and sprinted triumphantly toward the Ole Miss sideline as the Rebels swarmed around him.

"They're never scared and they don't panic, and that's what I love about this group," Gold-

ing said of his players. "They don't ever get too high; they don't get too low. They want to get coached. They want to get coached hard, and they want another opportunity."

Harrison Wallace III caught nine passes for 156 yards and one TD, Stribling finished with seven catches for 122 yards, Kewan Lacy rushed for 98 yards and two TDs, and the Rebels outgained the Bulldogs 473 yards to 343.

Stockton passed for 203 yards and one touchdown, and also ran for two scores.

Twice, Chambliss appeared to be running for his life to avoid sacks, retreating well behind the line of scrimmage and changing direction before finding school yard-type completions during a 75-yard scoring drive that ended with Lacy's second touchdown.

"Their quarterback is just incredible," Smart said. "I mean, he does an unbelievable job of not (taking) sacks and making plays with his legs."

## Miami downs defending national champ Ohio State

*Associated Press*

ARLINGTON, Texas — Keionte Scott peeked over at the Miami sideline to see the reaction of his teammates as he sprinted 72 yards untouched for a touchdown returning an interception against defending national champion Ohio State.

They certainly were excited, as were a Pro Football Hall of Fame receiver and a former coach who won national championships with the Hurricanes.

Scott picked off a screen pass by Heisman Trophy finalist Julian Sayin, Carson Beck threw a touchdown pass and 10th-ranked Miami shocked the Buckeyes 24-14 on Wednesday at the Cotton Bowl in a College

Football Playoff quarterfinal.

"I was full of emotions. ... That was a pretty cool moment," said Scott, who has TD returns on both of his interceptions this season. "Just having fun. ... That's what this team relies on, man, just going out there playing free and just having fun."

The Hurricanes (12-2, CFP No. 10 seed) have won two playoff games to get into football's final four after needing an at-large berth to make the 12-team field, after not even playing in the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game. One more win and they will get to play for a national championship in their home stadium.

Next for Miami in coach Ma-

rio Cristobal's fourth season is a CFP semifinal at the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 8 against No. 6 seed Ole Miss, which defeated Georgia in the Sugar Bowl.

There hasn't been a national title for "The U" since 2001, which was their fifth; Cristobal was a standout offensive tackle for the Hurricanes in their 1989 and 1991 championship seasons. The Hurricanes were denied a repeat championship in 2002 with a double-overtime loss in the Fiesta Bowl to Ohio State, the only other time the teams met in a bowl — and the last time Miami played in that game.

Before receiver Michael Irvin and coach Jimmy Johnson

were Super Bowl champions with the Dallas Cowboys, they were part of the Hurricanes' 1987 national championship. Irvin excitedly ran down the sideline while Scott was scoring for a 14-0 lead, and Johnson was nearby when acknowledged by Cristobal during the on-field trophy presentation.

Third-ranked Ohio State (12-2, CFP No. 2 seed) hadn't played since a 13-10 loss to now-No. 1 Indiana in a Big Ten championship game matchup of undefeated teams on Dec. 6. They got a first-round bye, then lost just like all four teams that went directly to the quarterfinal round in the inaugural 12-team playoff last season.

# Rockets beat Nets for 4th straight win

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kevin Durant had 22 points and a season-high 11 assists, Amen Thompson scored 23 points and the Houston Rockets beat the Brooklyn Nets 120-96 on Thursday night for their fourth straight victory.

Alperen Sengun had 20 points, six rebounds and six assists after a two-game absence for the Rockets, who won in Brooklyn for the first time in seven years. Tari Eason finished with 15 points and nine rebounds, and Jabari Smith Jr. and Reed Sheppard each scored 14 points.

Sengun was 8 for 12 from the floor after sitting out two games with a left calf injury.

Cam Thomas scored 21 points for the Nets, who dropped their second straight after winning three in a row for the only time this season. Ziaire Williams added 14.

**Heat 118, Pistons 112:** Norman Powell scored 36 points and Bam Adebayo added 15 points and 14 rebounds as visiting Miami extended their winning streak to four games with a victory over Detroit.

Cade Cunningham had 31 points, 11 as-

sists and eight rebounds for Detroit and Marcus Sasser scored 18.

Detroit trailed by 22 in the second half and was still down 114-103 with two minutes left, but scored six straight points to make it a five-point game. Powell missed and Javonte Green hit a 3-pointer to get the Pistons within two with 46.4 seconds to play.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. hit a short jumper to make it a two-possession game, though, and Ausar Thompson's turnover forced the Pistons to start fouling. Powell hit a pair of free throws — his first points of the fourth quarter — to clinch it.

**76ers 123, Mavericks 108:** Tyrese Maxey had 34 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds, Joel Embiid scored 22 points and Philadelphia won at Dallas.

Rookie guard VJ Edgecombe, the one-and-done player from Baylor playing 100 miles from his college campus for the first time, scored 23 points two nights after hitting a 3-pointer in the final seconds of a 139-136 overtime victory at Memphis.

Anthony Davis returned for Dallas after missing two games with a sore adductor

muscle. The 10-time All-Star finished with 13 points and eight rebounds as the Mavs matched their season worst with a fourth consecutive loss.

Rookie No. 1 overall pick Cooper Flagg scored 12 points for the Mavericks, who were led by Max Christie's 18.

**Celtics 120, Kings 106:** Jaylen Brown had 29 points and 10 rebounds, and Boston pulled away down the stretch to beat host Sacramento.

The four-time All-Star has been on a scoring tear lately, scoring 20 or more points in 12 of his past 15 games.

DeMar DeRozan led Sacramento with 25 points.

**Clippers 118, Jazz 101:** Kawhi Leonard scored 45 points, James Harden added 20 and Los Angeles recovered from blowing a 21-point lead to beat visiting Utah, extending its winning streak to a season-best six.

Leonard was the only Clippers starter on the floor for much of the fourth quarter. He singlehandedly matched Utah's points in the period (20), with blood on his nose from what appeared to be a scratch.

# Guenther has 1st career hat trick as Mammoth top Isles

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dylan Guenther had his first career hat trick and added an assist as the Utah Mammoth topped the New York Islanders 7-2 on Thursday.

Nick Schmaltz scored twice and added an assist, Clayton Keller and Mikhail Sergachev each had a goal and two assists, and Lawson Crouse and Barrett Hayton each had two assists. Karel Vejmelka returned from a two-game absence and finished with 20 saves as the Mammoth snapped a two-game skid.

Cal Ritchie and Matthew Schaefer scored for New York, and Max Shabanov had two assists. David Rittich made nine saves on 14 shots, but was replaced by Marcus Hogberg 5:41 into the third period.

**Senators 4, Capitals 3:** Fabian Zetterlund scored with less than 2½ minutes remaining to lift Ottawa over visiting Washington.

Zetterlund's 10th goal of the season came less than two minutes after Washington's Aliaksei Protas tied the game at 3-all.

The Capitals, playing the second game of a back-to-back, had jumped out to a 2-0 lead on goals from Tom Wilson and Dylan Strome. Logan Thompson made 28 saves.

**Maple Leafs 6, Jets 5:** Auston Matthews scored his 14th career hat trick and added an assist to lead host Toronto past struggling Winnipeg.

Jets goalie Eric Comrie could not freeze a loose puck at the side of his goal and it slid to a wide-open Matthews in front who completed his hat trick and snapped a 5-all deadlock with 4:22 remaining.

Winnipeg squandered a 4-1 lead for its eighth loss in a row. Mark Scheifele scored two goals and set up another to lead the Jets.

**Penguins 4, Red Wings 3 (OT):** Kris Letang scored 58 seconds into overtime in his 1,200th NHL game as Pittsburgh beat visiting Detroit.

Sidney Crosby had two goals and an assist to extend his point streak to five games, and Blake Lizotte also scored for the Penguins in their third straight victory. Pittsburgh has four wins in its past five games following an eight-game losing streak.

James van Riemsdyk and Alex DeBrincat had power-play goals for the Red Wings, and Andrew Copp also scored. Cam Talbot made 27 saves for the Red Wings, who had won five of six.

**Canadiens 7, Hurricanes 5:** Cole Caufield and Josh Anderson scored 23 seconds

apart in the second period, and Montreal erased a two-goal deficit in a victory at Carolina.

Sammy Blais had a goal and an assist for the Canadiens, who won for the third time in four games.

Sebastian Aho had two goals and three assists to become the first Carolina player with more than three points in a game this season.

**Lightning 5, Kings 3:** Gage Goncalves scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:41 to play, and host Tampa Bay rallied from a late deficit to beat Los Angeles for its sixth consecutive victory.

Jonas Johansson stopped 17 shots for Tampa Bay, which hasn't lost since Dec. 18.

**Blackhawks 4, Stars 3:** Ilya Mikheyev had two goals and Chicago handed visiting Dallas its fourth consecutive loss.

The Blackhawks also beat the Stars 4-3 in a shootout at Dallas on Saturday night.

**Kraken 4, Predators 1:** Matty Beniers scored twice during Seattle's three-goal first period and Philipp Grubauer stopped 24 shots in a win over visiting Nashville.

The Kraken have five victories in their past six games, coming on the heels of a stretch where they lost 10 of 11.