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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Navy, Marines hit decade-high mishap deaths

BY GARY WARNER

*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy and Marine Corps recorded 122 major mishaps during Fiscal Year 2025, with 98 service members killed in incidents ranging from a jet crash on Mount Rainier in Washington, to off-duty motorcycle accidents, to physical training incidents, the Department of the Navy reported this week.

The “close-out” totals covered “Class A” mishaps, which include incidents involving fatalities, permanent injuries, aircraft crashes or property damage exceeding \$2.5 million. The statistics do not cover suicides, drug use or illnesses. The 2025 fiscal year ran from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025.

The totals were released without any explanation of causes of rising or falling totals across categories.

Off-duty motorcycle crashes accounted for the largest number of fatalities, with the Navy

recording 30 fatalities and the Marine Corps 15.

The Navy motorcycle fatality total was the highest in the past decade, despite a Department of the Navy rider safety program and increased regulations and limits on motorcycle use on base.

Off-duty automobile and light truck crashes were the second-highest reason for fatalities; the Navy posted 13 fatalities in four-wheel vehicles, and the Marines had 10 deaths.

One Marine and three sailors were killed when struck by motor vehicles while walking.

The 46 Navy deaths from vehicle mishaps were the highest in the past decade and nearly twice the low of 24 fatalities recorded in 2015 and 2020.

The Marines reported two on-duty vehicle mishaps, resulting in three deaths. No Navy personnel were injured in on-duty vehicle incidents.

The Navy reported 14 avia-

tion mishaps: 12 in the air and 2 on the ground — the highest annual count in the past decade. The crash of an EA-18 Growler on Mount Rainier in Washington on Oct. 15, 2024, killed both crew members. All the other crashes resulted in either minor or no injuries.

Though the Navy statistics did not include extensive information on each incident, the Navy total included a Dec. 22, 2024, incident of “friendly fire” in which the crew of an F/A-18F Hornet had to eject. News reports placed the incident in the Middle East.

The Marines reported six helicopter mishaps, three occurring in the air and three on the ground. No fatalities were reported.

The Navy reported eight “shore mishaps,” which included three training fatalities involving equipment, and three deaths during physical training. The Marines reported three fa-

tal “ground mishaps,” all involving deaths during physical training or command-directed hikes.

Seven sailors and five Marines died in off-duty recreational incidents.

The Navy incidents included a sailor who died from what officials believe was “over-consumption of alcohol,” ocean drownings in Maui and Guam and crashes of an ATV and an electric bicycle. Marine recreational incidents included fatal drownings in the Philippines and Texas and a fall on Mount Furano in Japan.

The Navy reported five “afloat mishaps” — including a multicompartiment fire that caused minor injuries to two sailors, a collision with no injuries and two undisclosed equipment mishaps.

All of the at-sea incidents were officially classified as “location withheld,” because of operational security.

## Trump wants NATO to back his push for Greenland

BY JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — President Donald Trump on Wednesday said anything less than full American control of Greenland would be unacceptable, and he urged NATO to back his bid to wrest the huge island territory from fellow ally Denmark.

Greenland “becomes far more formidable and effective” against adversaries such as Russia and China by being in U.S. hands, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, adding that the alliance “should be leading the way for us to get it.”

He also linked control of Greenland to the future development of the American air defense system dubbed the Golden Dome.

Trump’s comments came hours before a high-stakes meeting Wednesday between Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Greenlandic and Danish officials.

The U.S. has long maintained a military presence in Greenland and currently has about 200 troops in the country who are involved with an early-warning ballistic missile defense mission.

Danish officials have said they are open to having more U.S. forces in Greenland but have balked at Trump’s takeover bid.

Trump’s post Wednesday, though, said “anything less than (full control) is unacceptable.”

The escalating crisis over the status of Greenland has dominated security talks on both sides of the Atlantic in recent days.

NATO’s top official this week downplayed the prospect of coming to blows with the United States over Greenland, saying efforts are underway to address Trump’s concerns over security

in the Arctic.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Tuesday was peppered with questions during a European Parliament forum in Brussels, where growing tensions over Trump’s push to take control of another ally’s territory dominated the conversation.

When asked whether any ally would support the United States if it were to take the autonomous Danish territory of Greenland by force, Rutte deflected, saying members of the bloc, including the United States, were working to “make sure that the Arctic is safe.”

# Some advised to evacuate base in Qatar

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some personnel at a key U.S. military base in Qatar were advised to evacuate by Wednesday evening, according to a U.S. official and the Gulf country, as President Donald Trump warns of possible action after a deadly crackdown on protesters in Iran.

The decision came as a senior official in Tehran brought up the country's retaliatory attack in June at Al Udeid Air Base outside Doha, Qatar.

The U.S. official, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive plans, described the move at the base as a precautionary measure and that other steps were being taken across the region. The official, citing the need for operational security, would not go into further detail, including whether the evac-

uation was optional or mandatory, whether it affected troops or civilian personnel or how many were advised to leave.

The anti-government demonstrations in nearby Iran began in late December, and Trump has said he is willing to conduct military operations against Iran if the Tehran government continues to kill and arrest protesters.

Qatar said the measures at Al Udeid were being "undertaken in response to the current regional tensions."

"The State of Qatar continues to implement all necessary measures to safeguard the security and safety of its citizens and residents as a top priority, including actions related to the protection of critical infrastructure and military facilities," Qatar's international media office said on the social platform X.

The base, which hosts thou-

sands of American service members, was targeted by Iran in June in retaliation for U.S. strikes on its nuclear facilities.

Ali Shamkhani, an adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, wrote on X that "the #US President, who repeatedly talks about the futile aggression against #Iran's nuclear facilities, would do well to also mention the destruction of the US base in #Al-Udeid by Iranian missiles."

"It would certainly help create a real understanding of Iran's will and ability to respond to any aggression," he added.

The U.S. military maintains a variety of troops in the region, including at Al Udeid, but the Trump administration shifted some resources from the Middle East to the Caribbean Sea as part of a pressure campaign on former Venezuelan President Ni-

colás Maduro.

The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford was ordered in October to sail from the Mediterranean Sea to the Caribbean along with several destroyers. The carrier USS Nimitz, which helped conduct the June strikes on Iran's nuclear program, also departed the region in October.

The Navy had five small ships — two destroyers and three littoral combat ships — in the waters off Iran as of Tuesday.

Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, had a phone call Tuesday with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Qatar's prime minister. In a statement on X, Al Thani said he "reaffirmed the State of Qatar's backing of all de-escalation efforts, as well as peaceful solutions to enhance security and stability in the region."

## Iran signals fast trials and executions for protesters

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's judiciary head signaled Wednesday there would be fast trials and executions ahead for suspects detained in nationwide protests despite a warning from President Donald Trump.

The comments by Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei came as activists had warned hangings of those detained could come soon. The crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,586, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported. The current death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Trump has repeatedly warned that the U.S. may take military action over the killing of

peaceful protesters, just months after it bombed Iranian nuclear sites during a 12-day war launched by Israel against the Islamic Republic in June.

Iran meanwhile has threatened it could make a preemptive strike after alleging without offering evidence that Israel and the United States orchestrated the protests.

A mass funeral also was held Wednesday for some 100 security force members killed in the demonstrations. Tens of thousands of mourners attended, holding Iranian flags and photos of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The caskets, covered in Iranian flags, stood stacked at least three high. Red and white roses and framed photographs of people who were killed covered them.

People elsewhere remained fearful in the streets. Plainclothes security forces still

milled around some neighborhoods, though anti-riot police and members of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force appeared to have been sent back to their barracks.

"We are very frightened because of these sounds (of gunfire) and protests," said a mother of two shopping for fruits and vegetables, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. "We have heard many are killed and many are injured. Now peace has been restored but schools are closed and I'm scared to send my children to school again."

Ahmadreza Tavakoli, 36, told The Associated Press he witnessed one demonstration in Tehran and was shocked by the use of firearms by authorities.

"People were out to express themselves and protest, but

quickly it turned into a war zone," Tavakoli said. "The people do not have guns. Only the security forces have guns."

Mohseni-Ejei's comments about rapid trials and executions were made in a video shared by Iranian state television online.

"If we want to do a job, we should do it now. If we want to do something, we have to do it quickly," he said. "If it becomes late, two months, three months later, it doesn't have the same effect. If we want to do something, we have to do that fast."

The comments stand as a direct challenge to Trump, who warned Iran about executions in an interview with CBS aired Tuesday.

"We will take very strong action," Trump said. "If they do such a thing, we will take very strong action."

# New way to measure troops' body fat coming

By MATTHEW ADAMS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is shifting from height and weight tables and replacing them with a waist-to-height ratio methodology, according to a memo.

The new body-fat standards are between 18% and 26% for men and between 26% and 36% for women, according to a Dec. 18 memo from undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness Anthony J. Tata that the Pentagon released Monday.

Troops in every military branch will get two measure-

ments each year, according to the memo.

"The upper limit for allowable [waist-to-height ratio] for military service body-composition policies shall be less than 0.55," the memo says. The ratio is determined by dividing waist measurement by height.

Under the policy, service members with a waist-to-height ratio of 0.55 or above will be further tested and, if found to exceed body-fat standards, will be placed in their service's remedial programs and referred to medical authorities for an evaluation.

"Failure to meet established

standards may result in the withholding of favorable personnel actions, including promotions," the memo says. "Continued failure or those not demonstrating adequate progress will be subject to administrative measures to include processing for administrative separation."

During a speech to generals Sept. 30, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced 10 initiatives would arrive in their inboxes — including for height and weight requirements.

In a memo, the secretary wrote the military would adopt the methodology "to promote consistency and fairness," and

all service members would be evaluated twice per year.

Since Tata's memo Dec. 18, the Navy has implemented waist-to-height standards as part of its physical readiness program, according to the service's body-composition assessment published last month.

The Air and Space Forces this month updated fitness standards which included the waist-to-height requirements as part of its process.

The Marine Corps and Army are in the process of announcing how they will implement the waist-to-height ratio, service officials said.

## Slotkin being probed for Dems' message to troops

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin has been notified that the Trump administration is investigating her after she organized and appeared in a video with other Democrats urging military service members to resist "illegal orders."

Slotkin, a former CIA analyst, first disclosed to The New York Times that prosecutors were investigating her. A person with knowledge of the situation who was not authorized to speak about it publicly confirmed the matter to The Associated Press.

Slotkin, who organized the 90-second video and first posted it on her X account in November, learned this month of the inquiry from the office of U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro, the Justice Department's chief prosecutor in the nation's capital.

The inquiry marks another escalation in President Donald Trump's reaction to a video that he and his aides have labeled as "seditious" — an offense Trump said on his social media account was "punishable by death." Slotkin and the other Democratic lawmakers who participated

in the video said in November that the FBI has contacted them to begin scheduling interviews. Pirro's involvement represents an elevation of the matter for Slotkin.

It is not clear what laws could have been violated in the video message. In it, the lawmakers, all of whom have military and national security experience, tell troops to follow established military protocols by not following commands that violate the law.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has censured Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, a former Navy pilot and astronaut, for participating. Hegseth is attempting to retroactively demote Kelly from his retired rank of captain. The senator is suing Hegseth to block those proceedings, calling them unconstitutional retribution.

Reps. Jason Crow of Colorado, Chris Deluzio of Pennsylvania, Maggie Goodlander of New Hampshire and Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania also appeared in the video. It was not clear whether any other participants are being targeted beyond the FBI questioning.

## Minnesota tensions still boiling after shooting

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Federal officers dropped tear gas and sprayed eye irritant at activists Tuesday during another day of confrontations in Minneapolis, while students miles away walked out of a suburban school to protest the Trump administration's bold immigration sweeps.

Meanwhile, the fallout from the fatal shooting of a Minneapolis woman by an immigration agent reached the local U.S. Attorney's Office. At least five prosecutors have resigned amid controversy over how the U.S. Justice Department is handling the investigation, according to people familiar with the matter.

Separately, a Justice Department official said Wednesday that there's no basis for a criminal civil rights investigation. An FBI probe of Renee Good's death is ongoing.

Strife between federal agents and the public continues to boil, six days since Good was shot in the head while driving off in her Honda Pilot. At one scene, gas clouds filled a Minneapolis street near where she died. A

man scrubbed his eyes with snow and screamed for help after agents in a Jeep sprayed an orange irritant and drove off.

It's common for people to boo, taunt and blow orange whistles when they spot heavily armed immigration agents passing through in unmarked vehicles or walking the streets, all part of an effort to warn the neighborhood and remind the government that they're watching.

A large crowd gathered outside a hotel in Minneapolis banging drums and blowing whistles as officers wearing helmets and carrying batons stood guard just inside. Meanwhile, confrontations erupted between protesters and officers guarding the federal building being used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

The departures in the U.S. Attorney's Office include First Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson, who had been leading the sprawling prosecution of public fraud schemes in the state, according to people who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

# Smithsonian hands over more exhibit plans

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Smithsonian Institution gave the White House new documents on its planned exhibits Tuesday in response to a demand to share precise details of what its museums and other programs are doing for America's 250th birthday.

For months, President Donald Trump has been pressing the Smithsonian to back off "divisive narratives" and tell an upbeat story on the country's history and culture, with the threat of holding back federal money if it doesn't. The institution is a cornerstone of American culture, operating 21 museums and a zoo that are among the most popular tourist destinations in Washington.

By Tuesday, the Smithsonian was supposed to provide lists of

all displays, objects, wall text and other material dedicated to this year's anniversary and other purposes. Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch III told staff, in an email obtained by The New York Times and The Washington Post, that "we transmitted more information in response to that request."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment, leaving it unclear whether it was satisfied with the material it received. Bunch indicated there was more to come, saying the institution will continue to engage in providing "relevant and appropriate materials."

The Trump administration's intent is to ensure Americans get a positive accounting of the country's history, not one weighted by complexities or shameful episodes of the past.

The ultimatum was laid out in a Dec. 18 letter to Bunch from the White House budget director, Russell Vought, and the domestic policy director, Vince Haley.

"We wish to be assured that none of the leadership of the Smithsonian museums is confused about the fact that the United States has been among the greatest forces for good in the history of the world," the letter said.

Americans "will have no patience for any museum that is diffident about America's founding or otherwise uncomfortable conveying a positive view of American history, one which is justifiably proud of our country's accomplishments and record."

The Smithsonian is not a federal entity but receives a majority of its money from Congress.

The White House initially asked for all relevant materials in September but said documents turned over by the Smithsonian fell far short of what it requested.

In his March executive order, Trump claimed there had been a "concerted and widespread" effort over the past decade to rewrite American history by replacing "objective facts" with a "distorted narrative driven by ideology rather than truth."

As part of that, Trump tasked Vice President JD Vance with overseeing efforts to "remove improper ideology" from all areas of the institution. Like other vice presidents, Vance serves on the Smithsonian's board.

The Smithsonian and the White House did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday afternoon.

## EU to provide most of loan effort for Ukraine military

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union will dedicate most of a massive new loan program to Ukraine's military needs over the next two years while also injecting billions into its war-ravaged economy, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday.

EU leaders agreed last month to loan Ukraine 90 billion euros (\$105 billion) to help cover its needs in 2026 and 2027. Kyiv would only have to pay the money back once Russia ends its war and pays reparations for the damage it has inflicted over the years.

The International Monetary Fund estimates that Ukraine will need 137 billion euros (\$160 billion) over the two years. The government in Kyiv is on the verge of bankruptcy and desperately needs the money by spring.

The bloc hopes that other countries like Britain, Canada, Japan and Norway will help make up the

difference. The IMF is preparing a new multibillion-dollar Ukraine loan and is expected to endorse it next month.

"We all want peace for Ukraine, and for that Ukraine must be in a position of strength," von der Leyen said as she explained the commission's spending plans. She said 60 billion euros (\$70 billion) would be for military support, and 30 billion euros (\$35 billion) for budget aid.

"With the military assistance, Ukraine can stand strong against Russia, and at the same time it can integrate more closely into Europe's defense industrial base," von der Leyen told reporters.

The commission wants the loan money to start flowing in by April, but EU member countries and the European Parliament must endorse the spending plan before it can enter force. Von der Leyen insisted that Ukraine must undertake pro-democracy reforms to secure the loans.

## Army armor-piercing weapon fast-tracked after positive tests

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

*Stars and Stripes*

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — A smart anti-tank munition that helps soldiers hold their own against tracked vehicles is being hurried to the force after successful testing in Bavaria.

The Army's XM204 interim "top-attack" munition was approved for urgent materiel release, a procurement term that means speeding a weapons system into the field to meet an immediate operational requirement, an Army statement Monday said. The test of the briefcase-sized munition was done in early December by soldiers of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment at the Grafenwoehr Training Area in Bavaria.

Eight trainers from the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels also attended a "train-the-trainer" course so they can teach other soldiers how to effectively use the weapon, the statement said.

After being placed and armed

by hand, the XM204 detects oncoming vehicles and autonomously fires submunitions into the air. It can be used alone, in multiples, or in tandem with other systems, according to an Army fact sheet.

After launch, the submunitions scan the area, verify a target, then fire an armor-piercing slug. The system has a 160-foot attack radius and can fire a total of four munitions, according to the manufacturer, Textron.

The device is called a terrain-shaping munition because it is designed to block, disrupt, fix and turn an enemy force, the service said in a previous statement. It allows a small force to repel or slow enemy armor until reinforcements arrive.

Having it in the arsenal helps slow an adversary's movements and protect U.S. forces, Maj. Gen. John Reim, joint program executive officer for armaments and ammunition at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., said in September.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Settlement reached in fatal train crossing crash

**NY** VALHALLA — A more than \$182 million settlement has been reached with victims of a deadly 2015 collision between a train and an SUV at a suburban New York crossing.

The majority of the settlement with Metro-North Railroad goes to the families of five passengers killed when an SUV got stuck on the tracks in Valhalla, about 20 miles north of New York City, the Journal News reported.

The Journal News reviewed the settlement last week before it was sealed by a judge and no longer made available to the public.

A jury in 2024 found that Metro-North bore 71% of the liability for the five passengers' deaths and the injuries of others, and 63% for the death of the SUV driver whose car was on the tracks. The jury specifically faulted the train engineer and the railroad's oversight of the line's electrified third rail.

The Feb. 3, 2015, crash occurred during the evening rush hour as the SUV drove onto the tracks while navigating in backed-up traffic. The crossing gate arm came down onto the vehicle and the driver ended up driving further onto the tracks.

### Doctor charged in killings waives right to hearing

**OH** COLUMBUS — The ex-husband of an Ohio woman, charged last weekend in the killings of her and her husband, waived his right to an extradition hearing Monday in Illinois.

Michael David McKee, 39, a

doctor from Chicago, has been charged with premeditated aggravated murder in the shooting deaths of 39-year-old Monique Tepe, whom he divorced in 2017, and dentist Dr. Spencer Tepe, 37, in their Columbus home on Dec. 30.

McKee appeared in court in Winnebago County, where he has been jailed since his arrest on Saturday. Judge Donald Shriver scheduled a hearing for Jan. 19 to confirm the status of the transfer.

### Cal enrolls more new international students

**CA** BERKELEY — University of California, Berkeley's ability to draw international students appears little affected by the national political scene.

New international student enrollment grew by 29% at UC Berkeley this school year to 2,363, according to University of California data released last week, despite a federal immigration crackdown that has deterred some foreign students from studying in the U.S. Enrollment of undergraduates from California also increased, as the university welcomed 46,151 students, its largest-ever student body, up from 45,882 last year.

The growth in new international students stands in sharp contrast to a 17% decrease among that group at campuses nationwide, according to a November report from the Institute of International Education. UC-wide, the number of new international students grew by about 5%.

Overall international student enrollment held steady at Cal, at about 6,000, with China sending

by far the most, followed by India, South Korea and Canada. New U.S. students from outside California increased by 29%, with total nonresident domestic enrollment up by about 6%, to 4,732.

### Whale beloved in Cape Cod found dead on shore

**DE** BETHANY BEACH — A young humpback whale whose high-spirited antics charmed watchers off Massachusetts in the summer has been found dead on a beach in Delaware, whale specialists said.

A whale-watching group in Massachusetts described the death as "most likely a tragic accident" involving a ship and said the whale was recognizable as one that drew admirers off Cape Cod.

The humpback, 32-feet long and estimated to weigh at least 10 tons, washed up last week in a Bethany Beach community, said the Marine Education Research and Rehabilitation Institute, a Delaware nonprofit.

After it was towed to shore with heavy equipment, a necropsy team from the institute examined the whale Friday, determining it suffered a blunt force injury consistent with being hit by a ship.

The whale was buried on the beach, the institute said, adding that large whales cannot be towed safely out to sea.

The humpback was recognized by an organization on Cape Cod that offers whale-watching cruises. Hyannis Whale Watcher described it as "a whale we came to know and love."

"We affectionately nicknamed him 'Oil Change' for a

large, solid white spot on his fluke," the group said.

### 'Dances with Wolves' actor standing trial

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Jury selection began Tuesday in the trial for Nathan Chasing Horse, the former "Dances with Wolves" actor accused of sexually abusing Indigenous women and girls.

Prosecutors allege he used his reputation as a spiritual leader and healer to take advantage of his victims over two decades. Chasing Horse has pleaded not guilty to 21 charges, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a minor, first degree kidnapping of a minor and the use of a minor in producing pornography.

The case sent shock waves across Indian Country when he was arrested and indicted in early 2023. There were setbacks and delays, but the case finally proceeded to trial after prosecutors added allegations that he filmed himself sexually abusing a girl younger than 14.

Best known for portraying the character Smiles A Lot in the 1990 movie "Dances with Wolves," Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation. After starring in the Oscar-winning film, according to prosecutors, Chasing Horse proclaimed himself to be a Lakota medicine man.

Prosecutors claim Chasing Horse led a cult called The Circle. His victims went to him for medical help, according to a court transcript from a grand jury hearing.

— From wire reports

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## Reporting World, National and Military News

# Steelers' Tomlin resigns after 19 seasons

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mike Tomlin was an unknown when the Pittsburgh Steelers plucked him from obscurity in 2007 and handed the young and charismatic Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator one of the most stable jobs in sports.

Over the next 19 seasons, Tomlin wrote his own chapter with one of the NFL's marquee franchises, winning a Super Bowl and going to another while becoming one of the most respected — if idiosyncratic — voices in the game.

Asked repeatedly what separated Tomlin from his peers, his players pointed to his consistency. He was the same coach day after day, season after season.

That consistency, far too often of late, also bled into the results. And after yet another quick playoff exit, Tomlin used his voice one last time to tell team president Art Rooney II that it was time to try something else.

The longest-tenured head coach in major American professional sports stepped down from his job leading Pittsburgh on Tuesday, a seismic shift that will have ripple effects throughout the league.

"I am deeply grateful to Art Rooney II and the late Ambassador (Dan) Rooney for their trust and support," Tomlin said in a statement released by the team. "I am also thankful to the players who gave everything they had every day and to the coaches and staff whose commitment and dedication made this journey so meaningful."

Rooney, who took over for his Hall of Fame father as team president in 2003, lauded Tomlin for his dedication to the franchise and ability to churn out competitive teams year after year in an era when parity is the norm.

"It is hard for me to put into words the level of respect and appreciation I have for Coach Tomlin," Rooney said in a statement. "He guided the franchise to our sixth Super Bowl championship and made the playoffs 13 times during his tenure, including winning the AFC North eight times in his career. His track record of never having a losing season in 19 years will likely never be duplicated."

Tomlin's early success, however, leveled off into a pattern of solid if not always spectacular play, followed by a playoff ca-

meo that ended with the Steelers looking outclassed at every turn.

The 53-year-old Tomlin won 193 regular-season games in Pittsburgh, tied with Hall of Famer Chuck Noll for the most victories in franchise history. But their resumes diverged when it comes to the playoffs. While Noll won four Super Bowls in the 1970s, Tomlin went 8-12 in the postseason, losing each of his last seven playoff games, all by double-digit margins.

The final came Monday night, when the AFC North champions squandered some early momentum before getting drilled 30-6 by the Houston Texans, the most lopsided home playoff loss in team history.

There were chants of "Fire Tomlin!" as the clock kicked toward zero, though they weren't nearly as impassioned as they were in November while the Steelers were getting pushed around by the Buffalo Bills in a loss that dropped their record to 6-6.

Tomlin did his best to tune out the noise and his team responded, the way it seemingly always did during his tenure.

Pittsburgh won four of its final five games, including a sweep of the Baltimore Ravens that gave the club its first AFC North title since 2020.

The optimism, however, dimmed once the Texans asserted themselves. The NFL's top-ranked defense suffocated Aaron Rodgers and the Steelers' offense while the league's highest-paid defense wilted late.

It was a familiar and frustrating pattern for a place where, as Tomlin noted not long after his introduction, "the standard is the standard."

And while that remains the case for a team whose members walk by six Lombardi Trophies every day on the way to work, the results had plateaued. Pittsburgh finished with 9 or 10 wins in each of Tomlin's final five seasons, often doing just enough to squeak into the playoffs before being exposed by a more talented opponent.

Tomlin had two years left on the contract extension he signed in 2024, with the club holding the option for 2027. Should Tomlin want to return to coaching in the NFL before his contract with the Steelers expired, the club could seek compensation.

## D-backs get All-Star third baseman Arenado from Cardinals

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks acquired eight-time All-Star third baseman Nolan Arenado in a trade Tuesday with the St. Louis Cardinals, adding an accomplished veteran to a team trying to return to the playoffs for the first time since a surprise World Series run in 2023.

St. Louis received minor league pitcher Jack Martinez in the deal. The rebuilding Cardinals will be sending \$31 million to Arizona to offset the \$42 million Arenado is owed over the next two seasons.

A 10-time Gold Glove winner, Arenado has played for St. Louis the past five seasons and was shopped extensively after the 2024 season and this offseason. The 34-year-old isn't the offensive force he used to be but will still provide experience at the position after the Diamondbacks dealt slugger Eu-

genio Suárez at last season's trade deadline.

"We've always liked the way he's played the game and the impact he can have when he's not playing," Arizona general manager Mike Hazen said. "I think he's a good fit. I know how much winning means to him and is important to him — and it's important to us."

Arenado batted .237 with 12 homers and 52 RBIs last season and has two years and \$42 million remaining on a contract paying him \$275 million for nine years. He is owed \$27 million this year and \$15 million in 2027.

St. Louis agreed to send Arizona \$22 million to offset this season's salary.

Arenado waived a no-trade provision to accept the deal.

"One of the best that's ever done what he does in the field and at the plate," Cardinals

president of baseball operations Chaim Bloom said. "He's someone who really appreciates this town as a baseball town at its best. He's a relentless competitor and someone who really wants to win."

Bloom it wasn't fun to trade someone the caliber of Arenado, whom he thinks will be voted to baseball's Hall of Fame.

"That's baseball royalty right there," Bloom said. "We're mindful of that, but at the same time, a lot of what comes with this chair is not letting emotion, sentiment and nostalgia override executing what's best for this team and being fully committed on where we need to go."

Arenado was one of the few veteran pieces that remained with St. Louis, which is building for the future with a young lineup that includes Masyn Winn, Brendan Donovan and Alec Burleson.

# Kansas hands No. 2 Iowa State its 1st loss

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Tre White scored 19 points, Darryn Peterson added 16 and Kansas answered a second-half run by Iowa State with a big charge of its own, sending the second-ranked Cyclones to their first loss of the season, 84-63 on Tuesday night.

Melvin Council Jr. added 15 points and Flory Bidunga had 10 for the Jayhawks (12-5, 2-2 Big 12), who answered their fall out of the AP Top 25 this week by knocking off one of five unbeatens left in Division I men's hoops — and one of two receiving No. 1 votes.

Joshua Jefferson had 12 points to lead Iowa State (16-1, 3-1), but he also had five of its 12 turnovers. Tamin Lipsey added 10 points on 4-of-15 shooting, while Milan Momcilovic had 11 points and Nate Heise had 10.

**No. 3 UConn 69, No. 25 Seton Hall 64:** Tarris Reed Jr. scored 21 points and Silas Demary Jr. made four free throws in the last 29 seconds as the vis-

iting Huskies extended their winning streak to 13 games with a win over the Pirates.

UConn nearly squandered an 18-point lead — 42-24 — with 17:20 left to play. Seton Hall battled back and closed within a point at 65-64 on a 3-pointer by Mike Williams III with 48 seconds left.

**No. 7 Houston 77, West Virginia 48:** Milos Uzan scored 17 points, Emanuel Sharp added 13 points and the host Cougars beat the Mountaineers for their 10th straight win.

Uzan was 5-for-9 on 3-pointers for his first double-figure scoring game since he had 18 points at Cincinnati on Jan. 3.

**No. 8 Nebraska 90, Oregon 55:** Pryce Sandfort scored 28 points, Braden Frager had 23 and each made a career-high seven 3-pointers to lead the host Cornhuskers over the Ducks, extending Nebraska's win streak to 21 games.

The Cornhuskers (17-0, 6-0) posted their most lopsided victory over a Big Ten opponent since they joined the confe-

rence in 2011-12. Nebraska has won its first six conference games for the first time since the 1965-66 team was 7-0 in the old Big Eight.

**No. 12 Michigan State 81, Indiana 60:** Jeremy Fears scored 19 of his career-high 23 points in the first half and Jaxon Kohler finished with 16 points, leading the host Spartans over the Hoosiers.

Michigan State (15-2, 5-1 Big Ten) trailed by seven midway through the first half when Fears was its only scorer and led 39-32 at halftime after some of his teammates contributed offensively.

**No. 16 Virginia 79, No. 20 Louisville 70:** Malik Thomas made six 3-pointers and scored 19 points, Johann Grunloh added 16 points and the visiting Cavaliers shot 55% in the second half to beat the Cardinals.

Thomas went 6 of 8 from beyond the arc and 6 of 9 overall for Virginia (15-2, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference). The Cavs shot just 40% from the field but led throughout and made 7 of 13

3-pointers after halftime in their first meeting with a ranked foe this season.

**No. 18 Alabama 97, Mississippi State 82:** Labaron Philon Jr. scored a career-high 32 points, Aiden Sherrell also set a career-best with 22 points and the visiting Crimson Tide used a big run spanning halftime to beat the Bulldogs.

**No. 19 Florida 96, Oklahoma 79:** Thomas Haugh scored 21 points, Rueben Chinyelu had 19 points and 12 rebounds for his ninth double-double of the season, and the visiting Gators beat the Sooners.

**No. 22 Clemson 74, Boston College 50:** Nick Davidson scored 21 straight points in the first half and finished with a season-high 25 as the host Tigers beat the Eagles to remain undefeated in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

**No. 24 Tennessee 87, Texas A&M 82 (2OT):** Nate Ament scored 23 points, 10 of which came in the two overtime periods, as the host Volunteers beat the Aggies.

## SGA, Thunder get first win against Spurs this season

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points, and the defending NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder beat San Antonio 119-98 on Tuesday night to earn their first win in four tries against the Spurs this season.

Jalen Williams added 20 points and Chet Holmgren chipped in eight points, 10 rebounds and three blocks for Oklahoma City. The Thunder improved to a league-best 34-7 at the midway point of the season — on pace to match last season's 68-14 regular-season finish.

Stephon Castle scored 20 points and Victor Wembanyama added 17 points and seven rebounds for San Antonio.

**Timberwolves 139, Bucks 106:** Julius Randle scored 29 points and hot-shooting Minnesota never trailed in a blowout of host Milwaukee.

The Timberwolves won their sixth of seven despite missing top scorer Anthony Ed-

wards due to maintenance on his right foot and leading rebounder Rudy Gobert, who served a one-game suspension for flagrant fouls. Gobert picked up his sixth flagrant foul point Sunday in a 104-103 victory over San Antonio.

**Heat 127, Suns 121:** Bam Adebayo scored 29 points, including three long jumpers in the final minutes, and Norman Powell added 27 as host Miami squandered a 20-point lead before recovering to beat Phoenix.

Brooks and Grayson Allen each scored 25 for the Suns, who had won three straight.

**Rockets 119, Bulls 113:** Kevin Durant had 28 points and Alperen Sengun added 23 with 11 assists to lead host Houston over Chicago.

Smith scored 10 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter to help the Rockets snap a three-game skid.

**Nuggets 122, Pelicans 116:** Jamal Murray had 35 points and nine assists, Peyton

Watson made the tiebreaking jumper with 39 seconds left and visiting Denver beat New Orleans.

Trey Murphy III scored 31 points for the Pelicans, who lost for the 11th time in 12 games.

**Lakers 141, Hawks 116:** LeBron James had 31 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds, and host Los Angeles emphatically snapped its three-game skid with a victory over Atlanta.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 26 points and CJ McCollum had 25 for the Hawks, who had won on the first two stops of their West Coast road trip.

**Warriors 119, Trail Blazers 97:** Jimmy Butler scored 16 points, capitalizing on Stephen Curry's sharp passing night that featured 11 assists, and host Golden State ran away from short-handed Portland.

Shaedon Sharpe scored 19 points and Caleb Love 17 and seven assists for the Trail Blazers.

# Lightning top Penguins for 11th straight win

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Nikita Kucherov scored the deciding goal in the shootout and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 2-1 on Tuesday night for their 11th straight win.

J.J. Moser scored in regulation and Andrei Vasilevskiy had 26 saves for Tampa Bay, which has not lost since a 2-1 defeat at home against Los Angeles on Dec. 18. Three of the the Lightning's wins during the streak have come after regulation.

Tampa Bay moved into first place in the Atlantic Division, one point ahead of Detroit, which lost 3-0 at Boston.

Evgeni Malkin scored for Pittsburgh and Arturs Silovs had 30 saves. The Penguins lost their third straight (0-2-1) since a six-game win streak.

Gage Goncalves scored for the Lightning in the second round of the tiebreaker, and Egor Chikarov tied it for Pittsburgh on its attempt in the third round. Kucherov then won it for Tampa Bay.

Moser gave the Lightning a 1-0 lead with 5:47 remaining in the third period. Yanni Gourde brought the puck up the right side and put a shot at Silovs that the goalie caught against his pad. The puck rolled out and lay in front, however, as Moser skated up and knocked it in.

Malkin tied it with 2:16 left as he fired it past Vasilevskiy from the inside edge of the right circle for his 10th of the season.

**Senators 2, Canucks 1:** Artem Zub and Jordan Spence's first-period goals, scored 15 seconds apart, were enough to lead host Ottawa over struggling Vancouver.

Leevi Merilainen had a solid outing making 18 saves for the Senators, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

The Canucks have now lost eight straight (0-6-2) and are in the midst of their longest road trip of the season, a six-game stretch that wraps up Thursday in Columbus. They're currently 0-5.

Elias Pettersson scored goal for Vancouver, while Kevin Lankinen stopped 38 shots.

**Blue Jackets 5, Flames 3:** Boone Jenner scored with 1:34 remaining, Charlie Coyle had two goals and an assist, and Rick Bowness won his debut as Columbus' coach in a victory over visiting Calgary.

Jenner, the Blue Jackets' captain, ripped a snap shot from the left faceoff circle and past the glove of Flames goaltender Dustin Wolf for his eighth goal of the season. Jenner also had an assist and got into a fight in the second period, giving him the Gordie Howe hat trick.

Zach Werenski had a goal and an assist, giving him a point in 16 straight home games, the second-longest streak in franchise history. Dante Fabbro also scored for Columbus and Jet Greaves stopped 29 shots.

Mikael Backlund and Morgan Frost each had a goal and an assist for Calgary. Rasmus Anderson also scored, while Connor Zary and Yegor Sharangovich had two assists apiece. Wolf had 38 saves.

**Blues 3, Hurricanes 0:** Joel Hofer made 33 saves as host St. Louis snapped a three-game losing streak by shutting out Carolina.

Nick Bjugstad, Dalibor Dvorak and Jimmy Snuggerud scored for the Blues. Hofer notched his fourth shutout of the season.

Brandon Bussi made 28 saves for the Hurricanes. It was only the third regulation loss for Bussi in 20 career games (16-3-1).

Carolina was shutout for the first time this season and had its five-game points streak come to an end.

**Predators 4, Oilers 3 (OT):** Roman Josi scored his second goal of the game at 3:43 of overtime, and host Nashville beat Edmonton.

Stamkos gave the Predators a 1-0 lead 2:45 into the game, and Hyman tied it on the man ad-

vantage with 2:54 remaining in the first. McDavid's assist on the play extended his point streak to 20 games. He has 19 goals and 27 assists over that span.

Nashville regained the lead at 3:03 of the second when Haula collected a rebound in front and beat Jarry with a backhand just underneath the crossbar.

The Oilers are 3-0-2 in their last five.

**Jets 5, Islanders 4:** Adam Lowry and Kyle Connor each had a goal and an assist, and host Winnipeg beat New York.

Kyle MacLean, Emil Heine man, Anthony Duclair and Matthew Schaefer scored for the Islanders, who fell to 6-3-1 in their last 10 games. Ilya Sorokin finished with 17 saves.

DeMelo gave the Jets a 4-3 lead with 7:37 remaining in the second period as he scored on a screened shot from the blue line.

Lowry made it a two-goal lead with 20 seconds to go in the middle period, as he deflected Neal Pionk's point shot past Sorokin.

**Mammoth 6, Maple Leafs 1:** Dylan Guenther had two goals and an assist, Jack McBain added a goal and two assists, and host Utah beat Toronto.

Daniil But, JJ Peterka and Michael Carcone each had a goal and an assist, Ian Cole each had two assists and Barrett Hayon added an assist for the Mammoth, who extended their point streak to 4-0-1. Karel Vejmelka had 19 saves while getting his NHL-leading 21st win.

Calle Jarnkrok scored as the Maple Leafs snapped a four-game win streak and a 10-game point streak. Dennis Hildeby finished with 34 saves.

Peterka made it a four-goal lead with 4½ minutes remaining in the second before Jarnkrok spoiled Vejmelka's shutout bid 3:30 into the third.

**Ducks 3, Stars 1:** Chris Kreider and Beckett Sennecke scored goals, Lukas Dostal survived a barrage of shots in the fi-

nal minutes and host Anaheim beat Dallas to snap a nine-game skid.

Jacob Trouba also scored for the Ducks, and Dostal stopped 24 shots — many of them from point-blank range after Dallas pulled the goalie twice in the final minutes. Anaheim was 0-8-1 since a 4-1 win against Columbus on Dec. 20.

Roope Hintz scored for the Stars and Casey DeSmith had 22 saves. Dallas lost for the fourth time in six games (2-2-2).

The Ducks had given up five goals or more in each of their last five games, and they played one of the NHL's best teams without their three top point scorers in Leo Carlsson, Troy Terry and Cutter Gauthier, who sat out because of injury or illness.

**Capitals 3, Canadiens 2 (OT):** Connor McMichael scored with 37.6 seconds remaining in overtime to lift host Washington over Montreal.

The Capitals trailed 2-0 entering the third period before tying it on a pair of goals by Ethen Frank. After they failed to score on an overtime power play, Canadiens goalie Samuel Montembeault left a rebound on Dylan Strome's shot and McMichael was able to stuff it home.

Josh Anderson and Brendan Gallagher scored for Montreal.

**Bruins 3, Red Wings 0:** Jeremy Swayman stopped 24 shots for his first shutout of the season, and host Boston beat Detroit.

Mark Kastelic scored for the Bruins, who have won four straight and six of their last seven games. Kastelic sealed the win with an empty-netter with 3:59 to go.

Cam Talbot finished with a season high-tying 38 saves for the Red Wings, who snapped a four-game win streak and lost in regulation for just the third time in 13 games (9-3-1). Detroit also dropped into second place in the Atlantic Division — one point behind Tampa Bay.