

## Europe virus surge could be alarm for US

*The Washington Post*

Global health leaders are urging caution as the holiday season gets underway, pointing to a 23% spike in coronavirus cases across the Americas in the past week, a surge that follows spikes in Europe — which officials warn could be a “window into the future for the Americas.”

“Time and again, we’ve seen how the infection dynamics in Europe are mirrored here several weeks later,” Carissa Etienne, director of the Pan American Health Organization, said during a Wednesday briefing. “The future is unfolding before us, and it must be a wake-up call for our region because we are even more vulnerable.”

On the same day, the head of the World Health Organization urged against complacency, expressing concern about a “false sense of security that vaccines have ended the pandemic and that people who are vaccinated do not need to take any other precautions.”

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: “While Europe is again the epicenter of the pandemic, no country or region is out of the woods.”

He underlined the trouble in Europe, where the agency reports nearly 60% of worldwide coronavirus deaths were concentrated from Nov. 15 to 21. In that time, the WHO said new cases jumped 11%. Countries in Europe have been implementing new lockdowns and restrictions — an effort to reduce numbers ahead of the end-of-year holidays.

The PAHO pointed to upward trends in new cases in the United States and Canada,

with a “two-to-three-fold increase in new infections over the last week” in Canada’s Yukon and Northwest territories.

In the United States, new daily reported cases have increased 8% in the past week, and deaths have grown 9%, according to tracking by The Washington Post. In that time, hospitalizations have inched up 6%. The situation is particularly dire in pockets of the nation. In Michigan, which leads the nation in COVID-19 hospitalizations, the unvaccinated COVID-19 patients are swarming emergency departments and driving capacity to grueling levels.

In Canada, there was a 5% increase as of Wednesday in new confirmed cases over the past two weeks, compared with the previous two weeks, according to Our World in Data, which cites data gathered by Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Systems Science and Engineering.

During the Thanksgiving eve briefing, health officials urged that mitigation measures — including mask-wearing, social distancing and staying away from crowds — should be kept up regardless of vaccination status.

“During these holiday periods, not just for Thanksgiving in the U.S., of course, but through the end of the year, it’s really important that all of us continue to take measures to keep us and our loved ones safe,” said Maria Van Kerkhove, an epidemiologist leading WHO’s coronavirus response during the briefing. “Those of you who have access to vaccines, who are offered vaccination, please get vaccinated when it’s your turn.”

In the United States, slightly more than

59% of the entire population is fully vaccinated, according to tracking by The Post. More than 19% has been fully vaccinated and has received a booster shot.

As of Nov. 19, about three-quarters of the total population of Canada is fully vaccinated, according to the government dashboard.

In South America, many countries are reporting an increase in cases, including in the Southern Cone, with the highest spikes in Bolivia and Paraguay. Central America is the only area to have experienced a drop in new infections.

Bolivia has reported a 50% increase in the number of new confirmed cases over the past 14 days, compared with the number in the previous 14 days, according to Our World in Data.

In the Bolivian department of Santa Cruz, which includes the city of the same name — the highest populated area in the country — cases have increased by 400% following recent strikes and protests, where hundreds of thousands of people gathered for days to protest anti-money laundering laws passed in August, the PAHO reported.

Paraguay — where only a little more than a third of the population is vaccinated — there has been a 73% spike in cases in the past two weeks, which has prompted health officials to sound the alarm.

Ecuador, which experienced one of Latin America’s most aggressive COVID-19 outbreaks in the region, and where nightmarish images of bodies abandoned on the streets of cities such as Guayaquil shocked the world, is also showing a 32% increase in new cases.

## Ukraine’s Zelensky: Russia plotting coup against him

*The Washington Post*

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday that a group of Russians and Ukrainians are planning to stage a coup d’etat in Ukraine next month, and are trying to enlist the help of the country’s richest man, Rinat Akhmetov.

Zelensky, speaking at a “press marathon” for local and international media, said that audio recordings, obtained by Ukraine’s security services, caught plotters

discussing their plans and mentioning Akhmetov’s name. Akhmetov was not involved in the actual coup plot, however, Zelensky said.

“I believe [Akhmetov] is being dragged into the war against Ukraine,” Zelensky said. “This will be a big mistake, because you cannot fight against your people.”

Zelensky said that the alleged coup was being planned for Dec. 1 or 2. He did not provide further details, however.

Ukrainian media in recent weeks have commented on the growing tensions between Zelensky and Akhmetov. Zelensky has launched a “de-oligarchization” campaign to reduce the political influence of Ukraine’s richest people, who control key sections of the economy.

Akhmetov, a coal and steel tycoon, also owns media holdings, which in recent weeks have increased their criticism of Zelensky and his administration.

# New virus variant emerges in Africa

*Associated Press*

BRUSSELS—The discovery of a new coronavirus variant sent a chill through much of the world Friday as nations raced to halt air travel, markets plunged and scientists held emergency meetings to weigh the exact risks, which were largely unknown.

Medical experts, including the World Health Organization, warned against any overreaction before the variant that originated in southern Africa was better understood. But a jittery world feared the worst nearly two years after COVID-19 emerged and triggered a pandemic that has killed more than 5 million people around the globe.

British Health Secretary Sajid Javid told lawmakers that the new version may be more transmissible than the delta variant and ren-

der vaccines less effective.

"We must move quickly and at the earliest possible moment," Javid said.

Some nations moved to stop air travel from southern Africa, and stocks plunged in Asia, Europe and the United States.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 800 points at the start of trading. The price of oil plunged 7%.

"The last thing we need is to bring in a new variant that will cause even more problems," German Health Minister Jens Spahn said amid a massive spike in cases in the 27-nation European Union, which recommended a ban on flights from southern African nations.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said flights "should be suspended until we have a clear understanding about the dan-

ger posed by this new variant, and travelers returning from this region should respect strict quarantine rules."

She insisted on extreme caution, warning that "mutations could lead to the emergence and spread of even more concerning variants of the virus that could spread worldwide within a few months.

Belgium became the first European Union country to announce a case of the variant. It involved a person who came from abroad.

"It's a suspicious variant. We don't know if it's a very dangerous variant," Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke said.

Israel, one of the world's most vaccinated countries, announced Friday that it also detected the country's first case of the new variant in a traveler who returned from Malawi.

## Experts to review safety of Merck COVID-19 pill

*Associated Press*

Federal health regulators say an experimental COVID-19 pill from Merck is effective against the virus, but they will seek input from outside experts on risks of birth defects and other potential problems during pregnancy.

The Food and Drug Administration posted its analysis of the pill ahead of a public meeting next week where academic and other experts will weigh in on its safety and effectiveness. The agency isn't required to follow the group's advice.

FDA scientists said their review identified several potential risks, including possible toxicity and birth defects. Given those risks the FDA will ask its advisers whether the drug should never be given during pregnancy or whether it could be made available in certain cases.

Under that scenario, the FDA said the drug would carry warnings about risks during pregnancy, but doctors would still have the option to prescribe it in certain cases where its benefits could outweigh its risks for patients.

Given the safety concerns, the FDA said Merck agreed the drug would not be used in children.

Additionally, the FDA flagged a concern that Merck's drug led to small changes in the coronavirus' signature spike protein, which it uses to penetrate human cells. Theoretically, the FDA cautioned, those changes could lead to dangerous new variants.

Regulators also noted that Merck collected far less safety data overall on its drug than was gathered for other COVID-19 therapies.

## German air force assisting with transfer of ICU patients

*Associated Press*

BERLIN—The German air force will begin assisting with the transfer of intensive care patients Friday as the government warned that the situation in the country is more serious than at any point in the pandemic.

Citing the sharp rise in cases, Health Minister Jens Spahn said contacts between people need to be sharply reduced to curb the spread of the virus.

"The situation is dramatically serious, more serious than it's been at any point in the pandemic," he told reporters in Berlin.

Spahn said Germany was having to organize large-scale transfers of patients within the country for the first time since the outbreak began in early 2020.

German news agency dpa reported that a Luftwaffe A310 medevac plane was expected to fly seriously ill patients from the southern town of Memmingen to North Rhine-Westphalia state Friday afternoon.

Hospitals in the southern and eastern regions of Germany have warned they are running out of intensive care beds because of the large number of seriously ill COVID-19 patients.

The country's disease control agency said 76,414 newly confirmed cases were reported in the past 24 hours. The Robert Koch Institute, a government agency, said Germany also had 357 new deaths from COVID-19, taking the total since the start of the outbreak to 100,476.

Responding to a newly discovered variant that's been spreading in South Africa, Spahn said airlines coming from there would only be able to transport German citizens. Travelers will need to go into quarantine for 14 days whether they are vaccinated or not, he said.

# Black Friday begins amid pandemic woes

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Retailers were expected to usher in the unofficial start to the holiday shopping season Friday with bigger crowds than last year in a closer step toward normalcy. But the fallout from the pandemic continues to weigh on businesses and shoppers' minds.

Buoyed by solid hiring, healthy pay gains and substantial savings, customers are returning to stores and splurging on all types of items. But the spike has also resulted in limited selection across the board as suppliers and retailers have been caught flat-footed.

Shortages of shipping containers and truckers have delayed deliveries while inflation continues to creep. The combination of not finding the right item at the right price — in addition to a labor shortage that makes

it more difficult for businesses to respond to customers — could make for a less festive mood.

At Macy's Herald Square store in Manhattan, shelves were stocked and shoppers were steadily streaming in at 6:30 am, a half hour after the doors opened.

Aniva Pawlowski got to Macy's just ahead of the 6 a.m. opening with plans to buy shoes and coats. Shopping on Thanksgiving Day had been a family tradition, but she stayed home last year and just shopped online. Worries about shortages drove the New Yorker to shop in person and she plans to spend about \$1,000 on holiday shopping, similar to years past, even though she's concerned about rising costs for gas and food.

"Everything is expensive," she said.

Shoppers are expected to pay on average between 5% to 17% more for toys, clothing,

appliances, TVs and other purchases on Black Friday this year compared with last year, according to Aurelien Duthoit, senior sector advisor at Allianz Research, with the biggest price increases on TVs. That's because whatever discounts available will be applied to goods that already cost more.

"I think it is going to be a messy holiday season," said Neil Saunders, managing director at GlobalData Retail. "It will be a bit frustrating for retailers, consumers and the workers. We are going to see long lines. We are going to see messier stores. We are going to see delays as you collect online orders."

Big retailers have been preparing for the holiday season, trying to find workarounds to supply chain holdups. Some of the biggest U.S. retailers are rerouting goods to less congested ports, even chartering their own vessels.

## Center where burned cub escaped given donations

*Associated Press*

RENO, Nev. — Private donors' new pledge to match \$500,000 in contributions for a \$1 million-expansion at a Lake Tahoe wildlife rescue center is bringing smiles back to staff and volunteers, who have been on an emotional rollercoaster since a bear cub being treated for severe wildfire burns made a much-publicized escape this summer.

The Lake Tahoe Wildlife Center has been making repairs directed by California regulators since Tamarack — named after the wildfire that blazed across more than 100 square miles in the Sierra and severely burned the cub's paws — tunneled under an electric fence and fled back to the wild.

It was the first escape in the 45-year-history of the center in South Lake Tahoe, Calif.

Two days later, volunteers spotted and photographed a cub clinging to a tree 40 feet up in a nearby forest. They became convinced it was the 6-month-old escapee, decided to leave him alone and now believe he's doing just fine.

The contribution the Bentley Foundation and MH Buckeye announced this week may just be the happy ending they've been looking for.

"We've turned the corner," center spokesman Greg Erfani told The Associated Press. As of Wednesday, they were only \$180,000 short of the \$1.05 million needed to begin

construction in the spring and finish by the end of 2022. "It's going to build the first animal hospital in the Lake Tahoe area," he said.

The center has continued to rescue smaller animals and recently released seven rehabilitated coyote pups. But it's been prohibited from accepting big game including bears since the California Department of Fish and Wildlife declared in October that it had to make improvements to its enclosures and fencing.

Erfani said supply-chain challenges have delayed immediate repairs but the center should be fully up and running by next month, bears and all.

## Female inmates sue over trans inmates in jails

*The Sacramento Bee*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A woman's rights group is suing the state to overturn a new law that requires prisons to place transgender and gender nonbinary inmates in facilities that correspond to their gender identities, alleging the practice puts incarcerated people in danger.

The Women's Liberation Front filed a lawsuit last week in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California on behalf of several incarcerated women as well as a group, Woman II Woman, that advocates on behalf of incarcerated women.

Two of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, both incarcerated women, allege they were sexually assaulted by inmates who identify as transgender or gender nonbinary.

The lawsuit said that one of the alleged assaults occurred after the law went into effect, while the other alleged assault does not specify when it occurred.

Several of the plaintiffs report being victims of domestic violence in the past. Several of the plaintiffs also cite their religious beliefs, which they argue are impaired by being placed in shared custody with transgender women.

Amie Ichikawa of the group Woman II Woman said she was shocked when she first read the bill that later became law, adding that she wasn't alone.

"We've gotten so many calls, letters, different messages of women feeling forgotten, completely excluded," Ichikawa said.

Ichikawa said that she supports transgender women being safe behind bars, but not in a way that she said allows sexual predators to slip in under the umbrella of transgender identity.

"We're about making sure everybody is being safe here," Ichikawa said.



## Survivor found in Russian coal mine accident

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Rescuers have found a survivor in a Siberian coal mine where dozens of miners are presumed dead after a devastating methane explosion, a top local official announced Friday.

Sergei Tsivilyov, governor of the Kemerovo region where the mine is located, said on the messaging app Telegram that the survivor was found in the Listvyazhnaya mine in southwestern Siberia, and “he is being taken to the hospital.”

Acting Emergency Minister Alexander Chupriyan said the man found in the mine was rescuer Alexander Zakovryashin who had been presumed dead. “I can consider it a miracle,” Chupriyan said.

Zakovryashin was conscious when rescuers found him and has been hospitalized with carbon monoxide poisoning of moderate severity, according to emergency officials.

The authorities had confirmed 14 fatalities on Thursday — 11 miners were found dead and three rescuers died later while searching for others who were trapped at a remote section of the mine. Six more bodies were recovered on Friday morning, and 31 people remain missing.

Gov. Tsivilyov said finding other survivors at this point was highly unlikely.

Hours after a methane gas explosion and fire filled the mine with toxic fumes on Thursday, rescuers were forced to halt the search because of a buildup of methane and carbon monoxide gas from the fire. A total of 239 people were rescued from the mine; 63 of them, as of Friday morning, have sought medical assistance, according to Kemerovo officials.

## Solomon Islands violence recedes, tension lingers

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — Violence receded Friday in the capital of the Solomon Islands, but the government showed no signs of addressing the underlying grievances that sparked two days of riots, including concerns about the country’s increasing links with China.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare sought to deflect attention from domestic issues by blaming outside interference for stirring up the protesters, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the United States.

External pressures were a “very big ... influence. I don’t want to name names. We’ll leave it there,” Sogavare said.

Honiara’s Chinatown and its downtown precinct were focuses of rioters, looters and protesters who demanded the resignation of Sogavare, who has been prime minister intermittently since 2000.

Sogavare has been widely criticized by leaders of the country’s most populous island of Malaita for a 2019 decision to drop diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of mainland China. His government, meanwhile, has been upset over millions in U.S. aid promised directly to Malaita, rather than through the central government.

Those issues are just the latest in decades of rivalry between Malaita and Guadalcanal, where the capital, Honiara, is located, said Jonathan Pryke, director of the Sydney-based Lowy Institute think tank’s Pacific Islands program.

“Most of the drivers of the tension have been in the country for many decades and generations, and a lot of it is born out of the

abject poverty of the country, the limited economic development opportunities and the inter-ethnic and inter-island rivalry between the two most populous islands,” he said.

“So everyone’s pointing fingers, but some fingers also need to be pointed at the political leaders of the Solomon Islands.”

The Solomon Islands, with a population of about 700,000, are located about 1,000 miles northeast of Australia. Internationally they are probably still best known for the bloody fighting that took place there during World War II between the United States and Japan.

Riots and looting erupted Wednesday out of a peaceful protest in Honiara, primarily of people from Malaita demonstrating over a number of grievances. Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the demonstrators, who set fire to the National Parliament, a police station and many other buildings.

Protesters defied a lockdown declared by Sogavare on Wednesday to take to the streets again on Thursday.

Critics also blamed the unrest on complaints of a lack of government services and accountability, corruption and Chinese businesses giving jobs to foreigners instead of locals.

Sogavare said Friday that he stood by his government’s decision to embrace Beijing, which he described as the “only issue” in the violence, which was “unfortunately influenced and encouraged by other powers.”

“I’m not going to bow down to anyone. We are intact, the government’s intact and we’re going to defend democracy,” he said.

## Thai chain’s cannabis pizza: trendy, won’t get you high

Associated Press

BANGKOK — One of Thailand’s major fast food chains has been promoting its “Crazy Happy Pizza” this month, an under-the-radar product topped with a cannabis leaf. It’s legal but won’t get you high.

Veterans of the backpacker trail, familiar with the legendary pizza parlors of neighboring Cambodia’s capital Phnom Penh that offer powerful marijuana as an optional condiment, might feel downright cheated.

“Of course, they cannot get high,” Panusak Suensatboon, general manager of The Pizza Company, said in an interview this week. “It’s just a marketing campaign. and you can taste the cannabis and then if you have enough, you maybe get a bit sleepy.”

The Crazy Happy Pizza is a mashup of toppings evoking the flavors of Thailand’s famous Tom Yum Gai soup along with a deep-fried cannabis leaf on top. Cannabis is also infused into the cheese crust and

there’s chopped cannabis in the dipping sauce. A 9-inch pie costs about \$15. Customers preferring a do-it-yourself variety can choose their own toppings, with a \$3 surcharge for two or three cannabis leaves.

Recreational marijuana is still illegal in Thailand, and can earn you a fine and time in jail, even though drug laws have been liberalized. Cannabis is regulated for medicinal use, and individuals are allowed to grow a small number for their own consumption.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Fire unveils thousands of illegal pot plants**

**CA** REDLANDS — Authorities said they found more than 11,000 marijuana plants at an illegal growing operation Wednesday after one of the buildings caught fire.

The blaze was reported at about 4:30 a.m. in Redlands, east of Los Angeles. Firefighters needed about an hour to douse the flames and they discovered the marijuana operation, police said.

The blaze apparently started in a living section of an outbuilding that was gutted, police said. A second outbuilding was damaged. Marijuana plants were found in the second building and more were in a third building that wasn't damaged.

**Man arrested for having gun in sheriff's office**

**AZ** ARIZONA CITY — An Arizona City man who is prohibited from carrying guns was arrested for allegedly bringing a firearm into a sheriff's substation.

Authorities allege the 38-year-old man entered the sheriff's substation in Arizona City to respond to a harassment complaint that had been filed against him. Staff noticed he was carrying a handgun in his front pocket near his waste, which he gave to a deputy upon request.

The deputy later discovered the man was not allowed to carry guns, and the man allegedly admitted to having several prior felony convictions that prohibit firearm possession unless he

gets his civil rights restored, the Arizona City Independent reported.

**Prosecutors drop 33 more cases over thefts**

**NE** LINCOLN — The number of criminal cases that have been dismissed because of the theft of \$1.2 million worth of drugs from the Nebraska State Patrol evidence room has grown to nearly 100.

The Lincoln Journal-Star reports that prosecutors in Lincoln have dropped another 33 felony cases, adding to the 66 dismissals that occurred before the end of October. And more could be coming as 13 other counties in the region undertake reviews.

On Sept. 24, Lincoln Police and the head of the Nebraska State Patrol, Col. John Bolduc, announced the arrest of a former State Patrol evidence technician, Anna Idigima, who they alleged conspired with her boyfriend, George Weaver Jr., to sell drugs stolen from the evidence room.

**Reusable syringes brings call for patient testing**

**WV** BECKLEY — West Virginia Health officials are urging some patients at Mountain State Vascular clinic in Beckley to get blood tests checking for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV after possible exposure.

A letter that went out to patients said the clinic reported that single-use syringes were used on more than one patient during invasive procedures at

the facility, news outlets reported this week. State health officials are investigating.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources said in a statement that no infections have been confirmed, but certain patients who visited the practice between Oct. 27, 2020 and July 7, 2021 should get tested.

**Man arrested after tackling WWE wrestler**

**NY** NEW YORK — Spectators at a WWE event saw an unexpected bout when a man got past a metal barricade at the Barclays Center and tackled wrestler Seth Rollins to the ground as he was walking away from the ring.

Video posted to social media from "Monday Night Raw" showed fans reacting in disbelief as the man rushed Rollins, bringing him to the ground and grappling with him before Rollins pushed him off and referees held him down.

The New York Police Department said the man was taken into custody at the scene and arrested. He faces charges including attempted assault.

The NYPD said Rollins' lip was swelling but he refused medical attention at the scene.

**Frat gets suspension over hazing, alcohol**

**TN** KNOXVILLE — The oldest fraternity chapter at the University of Tennessee has been suspended for five years over repeated hazing and alcohol violations, the university says.

Alpha Tau Omega will be suspended until the fall 2026 semester, university spokesperson Tyra Haag told the Knoxville News Sentinel. Its fraternity house will be closed, and students must move out by Dec. 10.

Frank Cuevas, the university's vice chancellor for student life, said in a statement that the decision was made with the fraternity's national organization.

Before the suspension on Monday, Alpha Tau Omega's national headquarters initially paused the chapter's operations on Oct. 29 for breaking health and safety rules. Infractions were related to hazing, alcohol, fire safety and violations of previous disciplinary sanctions, according to the website for the university's Office of Sorority & Fraternity Life.

**News crew guard shot during robbery attempt**

**CA** OAKLAND — A security guard for a television news crew was shot and wounded during an attempted robbery Wednesday near a store that was hit by a smash-and-grab crew of thieves days earlier, police said.

The guard was with a KRON-TV reporter near downtown shortly before 12:30 p.m. when he was shot in the abdomen, police said. The guard was taken to a hospital in stable condition. No arrests were immediately made.

The reporter wasn't hurt but was "understandably shaken," Jim Rose, KRON-TV general manager, said in a statement.

— From Associated Press

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# Penalties help Raiders top Cowboys in OT

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Derek Carr and the Las Vegas Raiders got the third-down help they needed from Dallas cornerback Anthony Brown.

Daniel Carlson kicked a 29-yard field goal in overtime after Brown's fourth pass-interference penalty kept the drive alive, and the Raiders ended a three-game losing streak by beating the Cowboys 36-33 on Thursday.

Carlson's career-best fifth field goal came after Brown was called for interference on Zay Jones on third-and-18. All four of Brown's interference penalties came on third-down incompletions.

"The penalties obviously helped," said Carr, whose 373 yards passing included a 56-yard touchdown to DeSean Jackson for the first points. "If they weren't holding, we probably would have hit those plays."

The Raiders had just two third-down conversions total the previous two games and were 3 of 13 in this one. But Brown topped that total all by himself.

"Just one of them days," Brown said. "I feel like I was in position for all of them, tried to turn my head. On some of them I did have my head turned. Just try to get better."

Both teams had season highs in penalties and yards. Dallas, the NFL leader in penalty yards coming in, had 14 for a franchise-re-

cord 166 yards and Las Vegas 14 for 110.

A holding call on perennial Pro Bowl left tackle Tyron Smith in his first game back after missing three with an ankle injury negated a Dallas touchdown early in the fourth quarter. The Cowboys settled for a field goal.

"Twenty-eight penalties, I don't know what the hell you want me to say," Dallas coach Mike McCarthy said. "Write what you want. I'm all for it."

The Raiders (6-5) won on Thanksgiving for the first time since 1968. It was their fourth appearance on the holiday since then, with the previous two losses coming at the Cowboys.

"It kind of gave me goose bumps, I'm not going to lie," Carr said. "When that kick went through, I had a lot of memories as a kid."

Dak Prescott had 209 of his 375 yards passing in the fourth quarter. His 32-yard touchdown pass to Dalton Schultz and two-point conversion toss to the tight end pulled the Cowboys (7-4) even at 30 with 2:54 remaining after they trailed almost from the start.

Carlson put Las Vegas ahead 33-30 with a career-long 56-yarder with 1:52 remaining. Greg Zuerlein, who missed an extra point after the first Dallas TD, answered with a 45-yarder with 19 seconds to go.

Tony Pollard had a 100-yard kickoff return for Dallas in the third quarter, but was stopped inside the 15 to start overtime. The Cowboys went three-and-out after a penalty pushed them back to the 7, and the Raiders finished off the third victory for the AFC West against the NFC East-leading Cowboys in the past four games.

Brown had his back to Jones when Carr threw the pass with Las Vegas at its 43. The penalty put the Raiders at the Dallas 24, and the winning kick came after the Cowboys were penalized twice for rushing past the line of scrimmage before the snap.

Carr was 24 of 39 without an interception, and Hunter Renfrow had career highs in catches (eight) and yards (134). Marcus Mariota scored from the 3 on a shotgun keeper.

The Dallas offense struggled early without top receivers Amari Cooper (COVID-19 protocols) and CeeDee Lamb (concussion) and running back Ezekiel Elliott nursing a right knee injury. The NFL's No. 1 offense bounced back to finish with 437 yards, but the Raiders had a season-high 509.

"We had some explosive plays and we gave up some explosive plays," said interim coach Rich Bisaccia, who left after five seasons with the Cowboys to join the Raiders in 2018.

## Allen leads Bills past short-handed Saints

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Josh Allen and the mercurial Buffalo Bills swung back to a better version of themselves against the reeling New Orleans Saints.

Allen passed for 260 yards and four touchdowns, and the Bills throttled New Orleans' short-handed offense in a 31-6 victory Thursday night that sent the injury-ravaged Saints to their fourth straight loss.

"Coach always talks about playoff caliber and that's the team we want to be," Allen said. "We want to be the best versions of ourselves ... every time we step on the field."

Dawson Knox caught two touchdown passes, giving him a franchise-best seven TDs in a single season by a tight end. His second score gave the Bills (7-4)

a 24-0 lead.

Stefon Diggs had seven receptions for 74 yards and a touchdown, and running back Matt Breida turned a short pass into a 23-yard score in a dominant victory that came just four days after a 26-point home loss to Indianapolis.

"To come up short the way we did (last weekend), sometimes it can be demoralizing," said defensive end Mario Addison, who had one of Buffalo's two sacks of Trevor Siemian. "You've just got to flush that and do it all over again. Everybody had a great mindset going into this game and we were just ready."

The Saints (5-6), playing without dynamic running back Alvin Kamara for a third straight game, were shut out for three quarters. They finally

scored on Siemian's 11-yard pass to tight end Nick Vannett on the first play of the fourth.

Buffalo outgained New Orleans 361-190 and the Bills possessed the ball for 34:38 to the Saints' 25:22.

The game illustrated how limited the Saints' offense has become, in part because of injuries to Kamara and star receiver Michael Thomas, who has not played all season, and also due to significant changes at quarterback.

New Orleans went 5-2 in games started by QB Jameis Winston, who took over this season for the retired Drew Brees. But Winston went out for the season with a knee injury during New Orleans' most recent victory on Oct. 31 and the Saints have lost every game Siemian

has started.

Saints coach Sean Payton's urgency to sustain drives against the high-powered Bills was evident in his decision to call a running play on fourth-and-2 near midfield and to later run a fake punt. Both failed, with the run losing yards and punter Blake Gillikin's pass sailing high and wide of intended receiver Lil'Jordan Humphrey.

"Going in, we felt like we had to be a little bit more aggressive," because of how capable the Bills are offensively, Payton said. "We weren't going to be able to win a game scoring 14 points or 17 points against a team like this."

Siemian finished 17-for-29 passing for 163 yards, one TD and one interception.



# Bears keep Lions winless on Santos FG

Associated Press

DETROIT — Matt Nagy still has a job and perhaps his team has a shot to salvage its season.

Cairo Santos made a 28-yard game-ending field goal to give the slumping Chicago Bears a 16-14 victory over the winless Detroit Lions on Thursday.

The Bears (4-7) ended a five-game losing streak under Nagy, who was answering questions about his job status less than 48 hours before kickoff.

Nagy said team chairman George McCaskey told the team on Wednesday the Patch.com report that the fourth-year coach was told he will no longer coach after the game in Detroit was not accurate.

"We've been through some stuff, some distractions, the last couple days," Nagy acknowledged. "But it just proves who they are, what type of fighters

they are, what type of winners they are."

Meanwhile, the Lions (0-10-1) showed no one in the NFL comes up short quite as they do.

"First, you have to learn how not to lose," said Detroit quarterback Jared Goff, who returned from a one-game absence because of an oblique injury.

Detroit made many mistakes, early and late, to extend its winless skid to 15 games since beating the Bears on the road nearly a year ago. The Lions had 10 penalties, including three in a row when they were at midfield that ended their chance to score on their last possession.

"Having second-and-25 or third-and-32 definitely shrinks your playbook," first year coach Dan Campbell lamented.

Andy Dalton, starting in

place of injured rookie Justin Fields, led the Bears on an 18-play, 69-yard drive that took the final 8:30 off the clock.

Dalton converted a third-and-5 with a 13-yard pass to Damiere Byrd to get the Bears to midfield. Detroit later helped out, giving them 5 yards on a penalty for calling consecutive timeouts without a play in between.

"I knew it was a penalty, but we had half of our guys with one call and half with another," Campbell said. "I either could call the timeout, knowing it would be a penalty, or stand there and watch them score a touchdown."

On the next snap, Dalton converted third-and-4 with a 7-yard pass to Byrd. With only one timeout left, Dalton was able to kneel to run the clock down to 1 second before calling

a timeout to set up Santos' third field goal.

"I don't think I've been a part of a game with two timeouts in a row," the 34-year-old Dalton said.

Dalton finished 24-for-39 for 317 yards with a go-ahead, 17-yard touchdown pass to Jimmy Graham late in the first half and an interception.

Goff was 21-for-25 for 171 yards with two touchdowns and a fumble on a play that was reversed after Nagy challenged. Goff threw a 39-yard touchdown pass to Josh Reynolds on his first drive and a 17-yard pass to T.J. Hockenson late in the third that helped Detroit take a 14-13 lead that it simply failed to keep.

Goff did not get a chance to lead the Lions on a game-winning drive in the end because they couldn't get the ball back.

## Joseph, Clayton help Iona knock off No. 10 Alabama

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Nelly Joseph and Walter Clayton Jr. made key free throws in the final seconds to lift Iona over No. 10 Alabama 72-68 in an opening-round game at the ESPN Events Invitational on Thursday night.

Clayton got an offensive rebound and made one of two free throws to make it 70-68 with 20 seconds left. After Jahvon Quinerly missed a shot for Alabama, Joseph secured the win with two free throws with 9 seconds remaining.

Tyson Jolly had 13 points, Elijah Joiner 12 and Quinn Slazinski 11 for Iona (6-0).

Alabama (4-1) got 19 points from Jaden Shackelford. Quinerly added 15.

**Michigan State 64, No. 22 Connecticut 60:** At Paradise Island, Bahamas, A.J. Hoggard hit the go-ahead free throws with 30.3 seconds left and the Spartans scored the game's fi-

nal nine points to push past the Huskies in the Battle 4 Atlantis semifinals.

Gabe Brown scored 16 points for the Spartans (5-1), who blew a 14-point lead before halftime and shot just 32% after the break. But Michigan State did enough to take back momentum after the Huskies had gone up 60-55 with 1:41 left and finally secure a spot in Friday's championship game.

Adama Sonogo had 18 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Huskies (5-1).

**No. 6 Baylor 69, VCU 61:** At Paradise Island, Bahamas, Matthew Mayer scored 15 points to help the Bears hold off the Rams in the Battle 4 Atlantis semifinals.

Freshman Kendall Brown added 14 points for reigning national champion Baylor (6-0), which had to clean up a mistake-filled first half and keep VCU at arm's distance throughout the second half.

Vince Williams scored 17 points to lead the Rams (3-3), while Levi Stockard had 13 points. VCU shot 48% after half-time to hang around, frequently within two possessions, but it couldn't quite overtake the Bears.

**No. 4 Kansas 71, North Texas 59:** At Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Ochai Agbaji had 18 points and Christian Braun added 16 as the Jayhawks beat the Mean Green in the first round of the ESPN Events Invitational.

Agbaji became the 63rd player to reach 1,000 points in Kansas history when he hit a three-pointer to open the scoring 2½ minutes into the game.

Kansas (4-0) also got 15 points from Remy Martin.

North Texas (2-2) got 23 points from Tylor Perry.

**No. 19 Auburn 62, Loyola Chicago 53:** At Paradise Island, Bahamas, freshman Jabari Smith had 14 points to help the Tigers regroup from a double-

overtime loss and beat the Ramblers in the consolation round of the Battle 4 Atlantis tournament.

Auburn (4-1) held the Loyola Chicago to just two field goals over an 11-minute span in the second half, building a 10-point margin heading into the final minutes.

Marquise Kennedy scored 13 points to lead the Ramblers (4-2), who shot 62% in the first half.

**No. 24 Southern California 70, Saint Joseph's 55:** At Anaheim, Calif. Boogie Ellis scored 17 points, Joshua Morgan added 13 and the Trojans beat the Hawks in the Wooden Legacy.

Chevez Goodwin had 10 points and eight rebounds for USC (4-0).

Ejike Obinna was 9-for-13 from the field and finished with a career-high 18 points and 10 rebounds for Saint Joseph's (2-2). Taylor Funk added 12 points and eight rebounds.

# Conner, No. 8 Ole Miss down Miss. St.

Associated Press

STARKVILLE, Miss. — Snoop Conner ran for two touchdowns and No. 8 Mississippi scored 21 straight points to beat Mississippi State 31-21 on Thursday night in a windy, rainy and cold Egg Bowl.

“What a cool night. What a cool win. We’re happy and relieved,” Mississippi coach Lane Kiffin said. “It wasn’t easy. But our players found a way to win and that’s what matters. We’re at 10 wins and that sounds really cool.”

Matt Corral ran for a touchdown and passed for 229 yards to help Ole Miss (10-2, 6-2 Southeastern Conference) overcome an early 6-3 deficit for a 24-6 lead early in the fourth quarter. Corral was 25-for-33 with an interception.

“I was with this team when we were 5-5 and we had losing records. It was in us. We just

needed people to bring it out of us,” Corral said. “We bonded together and we’re stronger. And it shows.”

The Rebels had 388 yards of total offense, with Connor scoring twice on 1-yard runs during the decisive outburst. He rushed for 60 yards on 16 carries.

Dontario Drummond had 13 receptions for 133 yards, and Jerrion Ealy scored on a 15-yard run to make it 31-13 with 5:35 left.

Mississippi State’s Will Rogers was 38-for-58 for 336 yards and an 11-yard touchdown pass to Jaden Walley in the fourth quarter. The Bulldogs (7-5, 4-4) added an 11-yard touchdown run by Jo’quavious Marks with 2:27 remaining, but could not pull within single digits.

“The stat sheet looks pretty good,” Mississippi State coach Mike Leach said. “We played

hard. But they made more key plays and that’s the difference.”

The Bulldogs had 420 yards of total offense, primarily in the final period in the belated rally, but had trouble translating yards into points.

Makai Polk had 10 receptions for 98 yards and added a two-point conversion. Nolan McCord had field goals of 34 and 29 yards.

## Pivotal series

Trailing 10-6 in the second period, Mississippi State missed an opportunity to take the lead before halftime, dropping three potential touchdown passes. Lideatrick Griffin and Jo’Quavious Marks could not hold on to accurate tosses from Rogers inside the red zone, followed by a missed field-goal attempt. The empty scoring drive loomed large as Ole Miss built a 24-6 cushion early in the fourth

quarter.

## The takeaways

**Mississippi:** Winning a high-risk, high-reward match, was capped by the usual bragging rights. The Rebels won a school-record 10 regular-season games and wrapped up second place in the SEC West race. A New Year’s Six appearance appears likely, accompanied by a Top 10 ranking. Corral, already declared for the NFL Draft, remains a dark horse in the Heisman Trophy chase.

**Mississippi State:** The Bulldogs exceeded expectations in Leach’s second season, beating No. 14 Texas A&M, No. 24 North Carolina State and winning four of their last six starts. Rogers passed for 300-plus yards for the 10th time this season as Mississippi State trends upward toward postseason play.

# Third-ranked Alabama flawed but battle-tested

Associated Press

This Alabama team is still winning football games but that aura of seemingly invincibility that normally looms over the Crimson Tide is long gone.

Last year Alabama made it look so easy in its season-long romp to the national championship, being truly challenged only once. That was in the Southeastern Conference championship game against Florida.

The third-ranked Crimson Tide have been beaten once this season — a three-point loss at No. 14 Texas A&M — and three of Alabama’s 10 wins have come by a touchdown or less entering Saturday’s visit to rival Auburn.

Alabama coach Nick Saban has insisted the issues preventing the Tide from putting teams away so easily are fixable, though they’re still surfacing deep into the season.

“You always have to respect the competitive character of the players, whether they have to make stops at the end of the game or we have to move the ball at the end of the game, whether it’s take the air out of it or score,” Saban said Monday. “So these experiences are always beneficial, I think, and certainly, we’ve had our share of them this year.”

The Tide (10-1, 6-1 SEC, No. 2 CFP) dropped a spot in the rankings with a nip-and-tuck win over No. 25 Arkansas, jumped by Ohio State following the Buckeyes’ 56-7 rout of then-No. 7 Michigan State.

Alabama still has clinched a spot in the SEC title game against No. 1 Georgia before its game against Auburn (6-5, 3-4). The Tide’s playoff hopes are still very much intact, but the road to a repeat national title is hardly paved with any level of certainty.

The offensive line hasn’t dominated consistently. The running game isn’t so potent without Najee Harris. The execution not so flawless.

Alabama has squeaked past Florida, which subsequently went into a free fall, and had to hold off a sub-.500 LSU team along with the Razorbacks.

■ Alabama blew most of a 21-3 lead before stopping a botched two-point conversion to hold on for a 31-29 win over then-No. 11 Florida. It looks even less impressive considering what happened to the Gators since, culminating with coach Dan Mullen’s firing on Sunday. Afterward Saban praised the offense for responding but said the team needed to maintain its intensity for 60 minutes, which would become a familiar theme.

■ Alabama rushed for just 6 yards and missed an extra point in a 20-14 win over LSU,

a 29.5-point underdog according to FanDuel Sportsbook. The game wasn’t decided until the Tigers’ Hail Mary fell incomplete, and the Tide had to turn away three fourth-quarter trips across midfield by LSU.

Said Saban afterward: “Sometimes we have an expectation that we’re going to win easy, but sometimes it’s not so easy.”

■ The Tide held on to beat Arkansas 42-35 despite losing a fumble at the goal line and giving up a sack to move out of field-goal range late, among other issues. It took Bryce Young’s Alabama record 559 passing yards and five touchdowns.

■ Then there was the one that got away, a 41-38 loss to unranked Texas A&M after allowing two scores in the final three minutes. It snapped the Tide’s 100-game winning streak over unranked teams.