

Abortion rights win big in elections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats had plenty of good news to celebrate in Tuesday's off-year elections and more evidence that they can win races centered on the national debate over abortion.

Abortion rights supporters won an Ohio ballot measure and the Democratic governor of beet-red Kentucky held onto his office by campaigning on reproductive rights and painting his opponent as extremist. A Democrat won an open seat on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after campaigning on his pledge to uphold abortion rights. And Democrats took full control of the Virginia statehouse, blocking Republicans from being able to pass new abortion restrictions and delivering a defeat to Gov. Glenn Youngkin that may douse any buzz about a late entry into the GOP presidential primary.

The victories won't be enough to make Democrats feel secure heading into next year's presidential election. The off-year elections have major implications in all of those states and provide a snapshot of American politics heading into 2024. But two big names — Joe Biden and Donald Trump — weren't on the ballot this time. How Americans view them will be a huge factor in shaping next year's race.

Here are some key results from Tuesday's voting.

Abortion still helps Dems

Democrats notched two early wins Tuesday night in Kentucky and Ohio, states that voted for Trump in 2020. In both states, abortion was the main campaign issue.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear was reelected in a state that Trump had won by 26 percentage points. Beshear had criticized the abortion views of his Republican challenger, Attorney General Daniel Cameron, in debates and television ads.

One Beshear ad featured a woman who miscarried after being raped by her stepfather at age 12 expressing disbelief at Cameron's opposition to abortion in cases of rape and incest.

In Ohio, a ballot measure preserving abortion rights passed in a state that Trump won by eight percentage points in 2020. Re-

publicans had already tried to derail the measure by calling an unusual August referendum to make it harder to pass ballot measures, an initiative that was roundly rejected by Ohio voters.

Later Tuesday, Dan McCaffery won an open seat on Pennsylvania's Supreme Court after positioning himself as a defender of abortion rights.

And in Virginia, Democrats held the state Senate and flipped control of the Virginia House of Delegates from the GOP.

The outcomes suggest a transformed political landscape since a conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a federal right to an abortion last year. Abortion rights measures have passed in a plethora of states as some other Republican-run states have instituted new bans on the procedure.

Dems still unsure of '24

It was a good night for Democrats following a series of wins in special elections and comes after a stronger performance in last year's midterms, which are usually crushing for the party in power in Washington.

But none of the races were an up-or-down decision on the incumbent president, Biden. And none featured Trump on the ballot or his ability to turbocharge turnout of infrequent voters.

Democrats have performed well in recent special elections and did better than expected in 2022.

It increasingly seems like the party starts from a position of strength. But it's not clear that translates to its 80-year-old president, who faces widespread skepticism about his job performance and whether he is too old to serve a second term.

We'll have to wait until 2024 to see how Biden fares.

Youngkin falls short

Glenn Youngkin burst on the political scene in 2021, winning an upset victory to become the Republican governor of Virginia, a state Biden won handily the previous year.

Putting a moderate, suburban dad spin on modern Republicanism, Youngkin generated buzz that he could even make a late, sur-

prise entry into the GOP presidential primary after this month's elections.

Instead, Youngkin said he would focus on the 2023 legislative elections and winning full Republican control over Virginia government. Things did not go the way he hoped.

Youngkin raised tens of millions of dollars for Republicans to defend their majority in Virginia's House of Delegates and win control of the Senate, which Democrats narrowly held in 2021. Among the things the legislature could do with that majority, he said, was pass a 15-week abortion ban he favored.

Youngkin didn't really have a path forward in the presidential primary — his window to get on the ballot has already closed in some states. Virginia has an unusual single-term limit for governors, making Youngkin's political future even more of a question.

Dems' heartbreak hotel

It was a good night for Democrats, but it could only go so far.

The party invested heavily in an unlikely place: Mississippi, where Brandon Presley, best known as Elvis Presley's second cousin, was challenging Republican Gov. Tate Reeves.

The party hoped that Presley's celebrity and political skills, coupled with the change in a centuries-old provision originally designed to keep Black candidates from winning statewide races, could spell an unlikely victory. But it was not to be.

Reeves won the race.

Historic firsts

Political candidates broke barriers in a handful of wins Tuesday.

Former Biden White House aide Gabe Amo will become the first Black member of Congress from Rhode Island after winning the special election in that state's first congressional district.

The son of West African immigrants, Amo emerged from a 12-candidate September primary to succeed retiring Rep. David Cicilline. On Tuesday, Amo defeated Republican Gerry Leonard, a Marine veteran, in the heavily Democratic district.

Allies urge Israel to allow aid, pause fight

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israel faced pressure from some of its closest allies Wednesday over the plight of civilians in Gaza, where thousands streamed on foot out of the enclave's north because of dwindling food and water and increased fighting in urban areas.

Over 70% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have already left their homes, but the number making their way south has quickened recently as Israeli troops battle Hamas militants inside Gaza City and the humanitarian situation grows increasingly dire.

The Group of Seven wealthy industrial nations announced a unified stance on the Israel-Hamas war after intensive meetings in Tokyo, condemning Hamas and supporting Israel's right to self-defense. But the group also called Wednesday for the "unimpeded" delivery of food, water, medicine and fuel, and for "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has left open the possibility of small pauses to deliver humanitarian aid, but has ruled out a broader cease-fire unless all hostages are freed.

There is no end in sight to the war triggered by Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 assault in-

side Israel.

Israel has said the battle to end Hamas' rule and crush its military capabilities will be long and difficult, and that it will maintain some form of control over the coastal enclave indefinitely — though how it will achieve that remains unclear.

Support for the war remains strong inside Israel, where the focus has been on the fate of the more than 240 hostages taken by Hamas and other militant groups.

The road out of the North

About 15,000 people fled northern Gaza on Tuesday — triple the number that left Monday — according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

On Wednesday, thousands more made their way down Salah al-Din Street, Gaza's main north-south highway, during a daily window set by Israel, now extended to five hours.

Families filled the road, almost all on foot, with men and women carrying young children or pushing the elderly on makeshift carts. Most had only a few belongings in backpacks. A few families rode on donkey carts, holding white flags as they approached Israeli tanks. The United Nations said some reported people arrested as they

crossed Israeli checkpoints.

"We didn't have food or drinking water ... They struck the bakeries. There is no life in Gaza," said Abeer Akila, who left her home in Gaza City with her family and neighbors after heavy bombardment overnight.

Residents reported loud explosions overnight into Wednesday across Gaza City and in the adjacent Shati refugee camp, which houses Palestinian families who fled from or were driven out of what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding its establishment.

The Israeli army's chief spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said late Tuesday that ground forces had reached "the depths of Gaza City." The army said Wednesday that it killed one of Hamas' leading developers of rockets and other weapons, without saying where he was killed.

Hamas has denied that Israeli troops have made any significant gains or entered Gaza City. It was not possible to independently confirm battlefield claims from either side.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have heeded Israeli orders in recent weeks to flee the north. But tens of thousands remain, many sheltering at hospitals or U.N. schools.

Ukraine kills Russia-backed official in Luhansk

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's intelligence agency took credit for a car bombing Wednesday that killed a member of the Russia-backed authority in the illegally annexed Luhansk region.

Mikhail Filipenko was a member of the local legislature and previously served as police chief. He had survived a car bombing on Feb. 21, 2022, three days before Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Local officials announced Filipenko's death.

Filipenko had organized and participated in the torture of prisoners of war and civilians, the Main Intelligence Di-

rectorate of the Ministry of Defense said on Telegram.

It said that the killing was a warning that "traitors to Ukraine and collaborators with terrorist Russia in temporarily occupied territories ... will receive just retribution! The hunt continues!"

The agency said members of the resistance movement helped carry out the killing.

Russia-backed insurgents declared a separatist Luhansk People's Republic in 2014 and fought Ukrainian forces relying on Moscow's military and political support. Russia illegally annexed it in 2022 along with three other eastern Ukrainian regions after invading Ukraine.

Ukraine received good news, meanwhile, on its bid to join the European Union. The EU's executive branch recommended it should be permitted to open membership talks once it's addressed shortfalls that include corruption.

In a setback that had been anticipated, Slovakia's new government of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico rejected a proposal by its predecessor to send Ukraine another package of weapons aid as it fights Russia's invasion.

Fico had vowed to end his country's military aid for Ukraine.

The rejection of a package worth more than \$42.7 million

would have included ammunition and air defense missiles.

Fighting, shelling and airstrikes continued in the southern and eastern regions, where five civilians were killed and five were wounded in the past day, the presidential office reported.

In the Donetsk region, three residents in the village of Bahatur were killed in shelling. In the neighboring Kharkiv region, a man was killed in the city of Kupiansk-Vuzlovyyi, where fighting is taking place. In the southern Kherson region, near Beryslav, a tractor driver was killed by a mine and another resident was wounded in a drone attack.

Panel wants to bypass Tuberville blockade

By **DOUG G. WARE**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Senate committee is planning a hearing next week to consider a move to end Alabama Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville's one-man blockade on military promotions, which has been going since February and is now stalling more than 450 nominations.

"There are now 452 nominations ... at the Senate for consideration that are currently impacted by Sen. Tuberville's holds," Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said Tuesday.

The backlog of nominations has increased in the past couple of weeks as the Pentagon has submitted more top military promotions to the Senate for

confirmation. Singh said the Defense Department has submitted several new nominations this week, for example.

The Senate Rules Committee has set a Nov. 14 hearing for a proposal that would sidestep Tuberville's blockade by allowing the upper chamber to confirm military promotions in batches with minimal debate.

According to the resolution, senators could permit "the en bloc consideration of military nominations" as long as the nominees have been approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"There shall be no limit on the number of motions in order under this resolution," the five-page proposal states.

If the Senate passes the resolution, it will remain active for

the rest of the 118th Congress, which will end in January 2025. All military promotions can be confirmed under the resolution, except nominees for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and leaders of the combatant commands.

"Sen. Tuberville refuses to heed the warnings of our top military officials. He refuses to even cooperate with members of his own party who have pleaded with him to lift this hold," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., chairwoman of the rules committee. "This vote ... will allow us to finally move forward with military confirmations, filling critical positions and protecting our military readiness."

Tuberville, who was a football coach before he was elected to the Senate in 2020, has

been blocking military promotions since February to protest a Pentagon policy that reimburses troops who travel out of state to receive reproductive care, including abortions. Some Republican-controlled states have outlawed or imposed severe restrictions on the practice since the Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* in mid-2022. Among the nominees still being blocked are the commander and deputy commander of the Navy's 5th Fleet, which operates in the Middle East, as well as the U.S. defense attaché to Israel.

"And the list goes on," Singh told reporters at the Pentagon. "These holds have a direct effect on our military readiness, our national security and our military families."

Special education shift to wrap by next year

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

TORII STATION, Okinawa — A move to place students with learning disabilities into general education classrooms is already underway and will be completed by next school year, a Department of Defense Education Activity spokesman said Tuesday.

The changes will apply to approximately 480 of DODEA's 7,485 special education students in grades six through 12, primarily in math and English language arts classes in DODEA schools worldwide, Will Griffin told Stars and Stripes.

He did not have a breakdown of where these students fall on the spectrum of disabilities, which ranges from mild to severe, but said schools would base their decisions on individual needs.

Students will continue to have access to differentiated, direct instruction from a special education teacher who will co-teach and collaborate with general education staff, Griffin said.

The biggest changes will mean a loss of dedicated classrooms, new schedules and a more structured environment.

The decision "was very much a collabora-

tive effort between our education and curriculum folks and our student services team to look at current research and look at what is the best way forward to ensure that all of our students have access to rigorous instruction," Griffin said.

DODEA plans to have "adequate supports" in place to ensure there's "meaningful" instruction that contributes to student achievement goals, he said.

Some schools in Germany have already begun the transition, Griffin said. DODEA operates 160 accredited schools for eligible children on U.S. military bases worldwide.

Soldier's 1-finger salute halts firing range training

By **HANA KUSUMOTO**
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The Japanese army suspended training at a firing range in central Japan after a private first class gestured to reporters there with his middle finger, the nation's defense minister said Tuesday.

The reporters were covering the range's reopening on Monday, five months after author-

ities said an 18-year-old Ground Self-Defense Force recruit shot and killed two other soldiers there and injured a third.

The reopening of the range in Hino, in Gifu prefecture, was marred by a soldier who made the gesture, generally considered profane, Defense Minister Minoru Kihara said at a news conference.

"It is extremely regrettable

... that there was a member who acted inappropriately on such a day," he said.

The soldier, in his 20s, was in a military vehicle entering the range when he gave a two-fingered peace sign to reporters, followed by his lone middle finger. The soldier admitted his actions after shown footage broadcast by the media, Kihara said.

The unnamed soldier is as-

signed to the 35th Infantry Regiment, 10th Division at Camp Moriyama in Nagoya city.

Kihara said the Ground Self-Defense Force is looking into the details, including why the soldier made the gesture.

Training at Hino is suspended while the military imposes preventive measures, including thoroughly disciplining its personnel, Kihara said.

Ivanka testifies she was not involved with financial papers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ivanka Trump testified Wednesday that she had no role in her father's personal financial statements, echoing her adult brothers about documents central to the civil fraud trial that could reshape Donald Trump's family business.

The former president's elder daughter, who has been in his inner circle in both business and politics, rounds out a major stretch in the trial. Her father took the stand on Monday, and her brothers Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr. testified last week.

Unlike her father and brothers, Ivanka Trump is no longer a defendant in New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit. It alleges that Donald Trump's asset values were fraudulently pumped up for years on annual "statements of financial condition" that helped him get loans and insurance.

"I wasn't involved in his statement of financial condition," Ivanka Trump, a former executive vice president at the family's Trump Organization, told the court during even-tempered testimony that provided a counterpoint to her father's caustic turn on the stand. (She periodically flashed broad smiles and at one point thanked a lawyer in James' office for bringing up a 2011 development proposal, saying it "brought back a lot of memories.") Before leaving the company to go with her father to the White House, Ivanka Trump was the point person in establishing a lending relationship with Deutsche Bank's private wealth management arm. It eventually extended the company hun-

dreds of millions of dollars in loans, with terms that required Donald Trump to submit his financial statements each year.

Ivanka Trump testified that her husband, Jared Kushner, introduced her to a banker as the Trumps were seeking financing to buy and overhaul the Doral golf resort near Miami.

The non-jury trial will decide allegations of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records — but Judge Arthur Engoron already has resolved the lawsuit's top claim by ruling that Trump engaged in fraud. That decision came with provisions that could strip the ex-president of oversight of such marquee properties as Trump Tower, though an appeals court is allowing him continued control of his holdings, at least for now.

James, a Democrat, is seeking over \$300 million in penalties and a ban on Trump doing business in New York.

The ex-president and Republican 2024 front-runner denies any wrongdoing, as do the other defendants. He insisted in court Monday that his financial statements greatly underestimated his net worth, that any discrepancies were minor, that a disclaimer absolved him of liability and that "this case is a disgrace."

Ivanka Trump was an executive vice president at the Trump Organization before becoming an unpaid senior adviser in her father's White House.

Her brothers are still Trump Organization EVPs, and they became trustees of a trust set up to run the company when their father went to the White House.

FDA allows new version of diabetes pill for weight loss

Associated Press

A new version of the popular diabetes treatment Mounjaro can be sold as a weight-loss drug, U.S. regulators announced Wednesday.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Eli Lilly's Zepbound, or tirzepatide. The drug helped dieters lose about a quarter of their body weight, or 60 pounds, in a recent study.

Zepbound is the latest diabetes drug approved for weight loss, joining Novo Nordisk's Wegovy, a high-dose version of its diabetes treatment Ozempic.

The FDA approved Lilly's drug for people who are considered obese, with a body mass index of 30 or higher, or those who are overweight with a related health condition, like high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes. The drug should be paired with a healthy diet and regular exercise, the FDA said.

In the U.S., at least 100 mil-

lion adults and about 15 million children are considered obese.

The drug tirzepatide in Zepbound and Mounjaro and semaglutide in Wegovy and Ozempic work by mimicking hormones that kick in after people eat to regulate appetite and the feeling of fullness. Both imitate a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1, known as GLP-1. Tirzepatide targets a second hormone, called glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide, or GIP.

Zepbound appears to spur greater weight loss than Wegovy. Approved for chronic weight management in 2021, Wegovy helped people lose about 15% of their body weight or 34 pounds, according to study results.

"This would be the most highly efficacious drug ever approved for the treatment of obesity," said Dr. Fatima Cody Stanford, an obesity medicine expert at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Funeral home owner, wife, arrested on abuse charges

Associated Press

DENVER — The owner of a Colorado funeral home and his wife were arrested Wednesday after the decaying remains of at least 189 people were recently found at his facility.

Jon and Carrie Hallford were arrested in Wagoner, Okla., on suspicion of four felonies — abuse of a corpse, theft, money laundering and forgery — District Attorney Michael Allen said in a news release after at least some of the aggrieved families were told.

Jon Hallford was being held at the Muskogee County, Okla., jail, but his wife wasn't listed as being there, according to a man who answered a call to the jail but refused to give his name.

Jon Hallford doesn't have an attorney listed in the jail's records, and neither he nor his wife could immediately be reached for comment. Neither has a personal phone number listed, and the funeral home's number no longer works.

Jon Hallford owns Return to Nature Funeral Home in Penrose, a small town about 100 miles south of Denver. The remains were found Oct. 4 by authorities responding to a report of an "abhorrent smell" inside the company's decrepit building. Officials initially estimated there were about 115 bodies inside, but the number later increased to 189 after they finished removing all the remains in mid-October.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

State revisits tax credits for e-vehicles

NM SANTA FE — The administration of New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham used a legislative hearing Monday to outline new priorities for state credits toward the purchase of electric vehicles that would aid low-income residents as well as small businesses.

Taxation and Revenue Department Secretary Stephanie Schardin Clarke told a panel of legislators the administration envisions tax credits that would provide a refund for low-income residents toward the purchase of a electric or plug-in electric vehicle.

She said the credit likely would apply to new and used vehicles, mimicking federal incentives.

That would ensure that people with the lowest incomes and have the lowest tax liability can fully participate, Schardin Clarke said.

Dozens indicted on racketeering charges

GA ATLANTA — Nearly five dozen people indicted on racketeering charges related to protests against a planned police and firefighter training facility near Atlanta appeared in court as their supporters rallied outside the courthouse.

Protests against the proposed training center — dubbed “Cop City” by opponents — have been going on for more than two years. Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr obtained a sweeping indictment in August, using

the state’s anti-racketeering law to target the protesters and characterizing them as “militant anarchists.”

Demonstrators and civil rights organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union, have condemned the indictment and accused Carr, a Republican, of levying heavy-handed charges to try to silence a movement that has galvanized environmentalists and anti-police protesters across the country.

Eviction filings surge in fast-growing county

AZ PHOENIX — Arizona’s most populous county and one of America’s fastest-growing regions saw more eviction filings in October than in any month since the beginning of this century, court officials said.

Landlords filed 7,948 eviction complaints last month with the justice courts in Maricopa County, home to Phoenix, court spokesperson Scott Davis said.

Davis noted that roughly one in three eviction filings do not lead to evictions as landlords and tenants work it out.

Census figures showed that Maricopa County recently saw the largest migration boom in the U.S., leaving real estate developers struggling to meet the housing needs of tens of thousands of new residents. From July 2021 to July 2022, the county grew by almost 57,000 new residents.

ACLU sues state over vanity plate restrictions

MN MINNEAPOLIS — The American Civil Liberties Union of South Da-

kota announced Monday that it is suing South Dakota over a state law that restricts content on vanity plates.

The ACLU said in a press release that it filed the lawsuit on behalf of Lyndon Hart, whose application for a plate that said “REZWEED” was initially denied by the South Dakota Motor Vehicle Division for allegedly being “in poor taste.”

Hart runs a business called Rez Weed Indeed, which he uses to support the legal selling and use of marijuana on Native American reservations. Hart intended for the personalized license plate to refer to his business and its mission of promoting tribal sovereignty, the news release said.

According to the complaint, the state Department of Revenue denied Hart’s application in 2022. Under state law, the department has the authority to “refuse to issue any letter combination which carries connotations offensive to good taste and decency.”

Man arrested in slaying of grandmother

CA SANTA ROSA — Police have arrested a 23-year-old man suspected in the slaying of his grandmother who was found decapitated at a home in Northern California, authorities said.

Officers responding to reports of a possible homicide discovered the headless body of the 64-year-old woman in Santa Rosa, north of San Francisco, according to police.

Investigators identified the suspect as the victim’s grandson, who authorities said was seen leaving the crime scene on

foot. Detectives believe the man “took the victim’s head with him when he left the residence,” a police statement said.

The victim’s head was found Saturday evening on the south bank of the Santa Rosa Creek, police said.

Dentist convicted in slaying of professor

FL TALLAHASSEE — A jury convicted a Florida dentist of murder in the shooting death of his former brother-in-law, a prominent professor outside his Tallahassee home in 2014 following a bitter custody battle with the dentist’s sister.

The verdict signaled jurors believed the prosecutors’ contentions that the defendant, Charles Adelson, paid to have Florida State University law professor Dan Markel killed that year.

Adelson was convicted of first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit first-degree murder and solicitation of first-degree murder, The Tallahassee Democrat reported after jurors returned their verdict.

Prosecutors told jurors at trial that Adelson paid to have the prominent professor killed and that he used his girlfriend, Katherine Magbanua, to hire the father of her two children, Sigfredo Garcia, to commit the murder. They said Garcia enlisted the help of his childhood friend, Luis Rivera. Magbanua and Garcia were convicted of first-degree murder and Rivera is serving a 19-year sentence after pleading guilty to second-degree murder in exchange for testifying against them.

—From Associated Press

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FAU looks to build on Final Four run

Associated Press

It was logical to think when Florida Atlantic's season ended in the Final Four last spring that everything would change.

Dusty May surely would be going to a bigger coaching job and getting a much larger paycheck. The Owls' best players would either be going to the NBA or to higher-profile schools, moves that would have likely come with richer sponsorship opportunities.

Only none of it happened.

May is still in Boca Raton. All his players, except one who graduated and exhausted his eligibility, are still in Boca Raton. A couple of guys briefly dipped a toe into the NBA Draft waters, but nobody entered the transfer portal.

So, when No. 10 FAU — which has its highest ranking and loftiest expectations ever — opened its season Wednesday at Loyola Chicago, the Owls from the Final Four last season were the Owls in the first game this season.

The reasons seem very clear.

"It's their commitment to each other," May said.

"We're family, and we mean it," guard Alijah Martin said.

"It's the culture of this program and this

university," forward Giancarlo Rosado said.

Commitment, family, culture, all good reasons. There's another as well: unfinished business. The Final Four banner from last season now hangs over FAU's home court, and the goal for this season is for the Owls to hang another one — maybe even one showing a bigger prize — next to it.

Nothing is guaranteed and the Owls, the preseason favorites in the American Athletic Conference, know it. They had to hold off Middle Tennessee State in the final seconds of last season's Conference USA semifinals to win 68-65; had that outcome gone the other way, the Owls surely wouldn't have been a No. 9 seed in the NCAA Tournament and maybe been knocked off the bracket entirely.

That said, the Owls bring back their starters, 97% of their blocked shots, 94.5% of their rebounds, 90% of their scoring, 90% of their assists and 89% of their steals from last season.

"We already have our chemistry," guard Bryan Greenlee said, "and we all know our roles."

And the coach is still there, just as he said he would be. He told recruits he was staying, told other coaches, told parents, told his

players. Maybe they believed him, maybe they didn't. But he stayed.

"I think it started in January, when our players started coming in and saying, 'Hey, Coach, my high school coach said you're going to go there, my dad heard you're going to take this job, you're going to do this, you're going to do all that,'" May recalled. "And I just said, 'Fellas, you know me, you know what my values are, you know what's important to me.' Coaches say all the time that they're not leaving and they leave the next day. I'm not going to do that."

That resonated with players, who were also getting calls themselves about potentially transferring — with the lure of more name, image and likeness endorsement money a tough carrot to ignore.

But since May — who did get a new 10-year contract from FAU after the season — stayed, they figured they should as well.

"Look at where we started and the group that we went to the Final Four with," Greenlee said. "We built that group up. So, why would we put in all that work just to leave to go to a better spot? We know the reality: Everyone can reach their dreams from this spot. It's not about where you go. It's about what you do where you're at. Everyone here has bought into that."

Alexander, No. 8 Creighton roll over Florida A&M

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Trey Alexander scored 18 of his 20 points in the first half, and No. 8 Creighton opened with a 105-54 victory over Florida A&M on Tuesday night.

The Bluejays, coming off an NCAA Elite Eight appearance, turned in a mostly polished performance against the overmatched Rattlers of the Southwestern Athletic Conference.

Steven Ashworth, sixth nationally in 3-point shooting at 43.4% last season, was 5-for-7 from distance and finished with 17 points and four assists. Baylor Scheierman had 15 points and eight rebounds.

Keith Lamar had 16 points to lead the Rattlers, who lost four of their top five scorers from last season.

No. 20 Baylor 88, Auburn 82: At Sioux Falls, S.D., Ja'Kobe Walker scored 15 of his 28 points in the second half to help the Bears rally to a win over the Tigers at the Sanford Pentagon.

Baylor used a 22-10 run over the final 8 minutes of the game to overcome an eight-point deficit.

Over the final three minutes, Baylor's RayJ Dennis scored seven of his 15 points, including a 3-pointer to tie the game at 77-77.

Auburn Freshman Aden Holloway scored 14 of his 19 points in the second half to lead the Tigers.

Michigan 99, UNC Asheville 74: Nkamhoua scored 25 points and Dug McDaniel scored a career-high 22 points and the host Wolverines beat the Bulldogs in a season-opening matchup.

Terrance Williams II added 15 points and Alabama graduate transfer Nimari Burnett 13 for the Wolverines. who shot 38-for-67 (56.7%) including 12-for-26 (46.2%) from 3-point range.

Drew Pember scored 19 points for the Bulldogs, Banks 18 and reserve Evan Johnson 12.

Iowa 110, North Dakota 68: Payton Sandfort scored 21 points and five of his teammates reached double figures as the host Hawkeyes beat the Fighting Hawks in a season-opening matchup.

Ben Krikke scored 18, reserve Owen Freeman scored 14 points, Dasonte Bowen had 12 and Patrick McCaffery 11 for Iowa. The Hawkeyes shot 12-for-24 from 3-point range and 53.3% overall (40-for-75). Freeman, a fresh-

man, made 7 of 8.

B.J. Omot scored 24 points for North Dakota.

Iowa moved its record to 8-0 all-time against North Dakota.

Maryland 68, Mount St. Mary's 53: Julian Reese scored 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds to lead the host Terrapins past the Mountaineers in the season opener for both teams.

DeShawn Harris-Smith, a 6-foot-5 freshman guard, scored 10 first-half points and finished with 12 in his Maryland debut. Jahmir Young scored 12 points.

Josh Reaves scored 10 points for Mount St. Mary's.

Maryland's 47-game win streak in home openers is the third-longest active streak nationally dating to the 1977-78 season.

Michigan set to take Big Ten to court

Associated Press

Michigan is preparing to take possible legal action if the Big Ten Conference punishes the Wolverines' football program before a full investigation into allegations of an impermissible scouting and sign-stealing scheme, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The potential for a court fight has increased in recent days as the Big Ten and NCAA weigh details and possible evidence in the case that has dogged Michigan for the past two weeks and shadowed its pursuit of another trip to the College Football Playoff. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because Michigan is not discussing its strategy publicly, and did not provide details of its potential next moves.

Michigan and the Big Ten have both confirmed the school was notified of potential discipline from the conference. The conference gave the school until early this week to respond to allegations and evidence it has been presented.

All this is playing out as the second-ranked Wolverines (9-0) prepare to face their toughest test of the season at

No. 9 Penn State (8-1) on Saturday.

The NCAA is investigating Michigan, too, but its process is slower and is likely to stretch well past the season. Big Ten's rules allow for swifter action and coaches and athletic directors in the league have been pushing Commissioner Tony Petitti to discipline Michigan under the conference's bylaws that cover sportsmanship and competitive integrity.

Michigan and its supporters say the conference is rushing to judgment and Petitti, a former Major League Baseball executive who took the job six months ago, is being pushed to act in a way not supported by league bylaws. Former Michigan star and Heisman Trophy winner Desmond Howard said in an email response to AP such a situation wouldn't happen in the Southeastern Conference.

"I can't imagine (commissioner) Greg Sankey — or Mike Slive before him — allowing themselves to be publicly bullied into circumventing the NCAA investigative process by coaches and ADs who insist on immediate punishment before a full investigation is conducted," said Howard, who has been

an analyst for ESPN's "College GameDay" since 2005. "Especially if a potential national championship is on the line for the conference."

The NCAA doesn't outlaw sign-stealing, but it has rules against in-person scouting of opponents and using electronic equipment to steal signs. The allegations against Michigan suggest a far more robust approach to gathering signs.

Big Ten bylaws allow for the commissioner to hand down a two-game suspension and a fine of up to \$10,000, though more severe penalties can be imposed with approval of the joint group executive committee, comprised of leaders from other Big Ten schools.

Petitti met last week with Big Ten ADs, who discussed possible penalties. Wolverines coach Jim Harbaugh, who served a school-imposed, three-game suspension earlier this season for an unrelated NCAA infractions case, has denied any knowledge of the scheme.

Michigan could seek a court order from a judge that would put any punishment from the Big Ten on hold.

"It's designed to be quick but temporary and it is very diffi-

cult to get temporary or injunctive relief. Courts rarely grant it," Tulane sports law professor Gabe Feldman said.

"Michigan could argue that, yes, they agreed to give the conference power to discipline schools, but the conference has abused their power in this case by disciplining without sufficient evidence and without sufficient process," he added.

A low-level staffer at the center of the investigation, Connor Stalions, resigned last week. Through his attorney, Stalions said that, to his knowledge, none of the Michigan coaches told anyone to break rules or were aware of improper conduct when it came to advance scouting.

Michigan All-American Blake Corum says he has no business relationship with Stalions, and he was unaware of documents filed for a company with his name on them.

Michigan says it is cooperating with the NCAA. The person with knowledge of the situation told the AP the NCAA has not shared any evidence with the Big Ten that shows Harbaugh or his assistant coaches knew or were involved with a sign-stealing scheme.

Top eight hold steady in latest CFP ratings

Associated Press

Ohio State remained No. 1 in the College Football Playoff rankings Tuesday night, with Georgia, Michigan and Florida State following the Buckeyes, as the selection committee stood pat with its top eight teams.

Washington was fifth, followed by Pac-12 rival Oregon, Texas and Alabama at eighth.

Only one of the top 11 teams in last week's first CFP rankings lost last weekend. Oklahoma dropped from ninth to 17th after losing to Oklahoma State. The Cowboys moved up to 15th.

Ohio State was trailing at half-time at Rutgers before pulling away, and that was enough to keep the Buckeyes atop the rankings.

"They continue to play well," said committee chairman Boo Corrigan, who is North Carolina State's athletic director. "Really physical team. (Running back) TreVeyon Henderson being back, going for over 100 yards the last two two games helps them overall, with their top-five defense as well."

The CFP semifinals will be played in the Rose and Sugar

bowls on Jan. 1. The national championship game is scheduled for Jan. 8 in Houston.

There is the potential to shake up the top four this weekend with Georgia and Michigan both facing their highest-ranked opponents so far.

The Bulldogs host Mississippi, the committee's ninth-ranked team. The Wolverines visit Penn State, which is 10th. Washington also faces a ranked team, with No. 18 Utah coming to Seattle on Saturday.

The lowest-ranked team from a Power Five conference with

one loss is Louisville (8-1) out of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

A two-loss team has never made the four-team playoff, which is expanding to 12 teams next year.

Tulane remains the highest-ranked team from outside the Power Five conferences at 23rd. No other team from outside the Power 5 conferences was ranked.

The committee's highest-ranked champion from the so-called Group of Five conferences receives a bid to the New Year's Six bowls.

Sharks top Flyers, end 11-game opening skid

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — After a miserable month, the San Jose Sharks finally have something to celebrate.

Anthony Duclair had a goal and an assist as the Sharks beat the Philadelphia Flyers 2-1 on Tuesday night to snap an 11-game losing streak that matched the longest to start a season in NHL history.

“It’s a lot of relief in here,” goalie Mackenzie Blackwood said. “Everyone’s happy. It’s been a long time coming. Now we can take a breath and try to put some more together.”

Blackwood made 38 saves and William Eklund added a power-play goal for the Sharks (1-10-1), who allowed 10 goals in each of their previous two games.

“I give these guys so much credit,” San Jose coach David Quinn said. “They’ve been such

a great group to coach. They’ve never stopped working. ... At some point you say, enough is enough. I give a ton of credit to our leaders and our older players. I thought they really stepped up tonight.”

Rangers 5, Red Wings 3: Vincent Trocheck scored twice, and Chris Kreider and Artemi Panarin each had a goal and an assist as host New York downed Detroit.

Erik Gustafsson added two assists and Jonathan Quick made 25 saves for the Rangers (9-2-1), who extended their point streak to eight games.

Avalanche 6, Devils 3: Ryan Johansen scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period and host Colorado broke out of an offensive slump with a win over short-handed New Jersey.

Mikko Rantanen had two goals for the Avalanche, including an empty-netter. Nathan

MacKinnon, Miles Wood and Ross Colton also scored.

Lightning 5, Canadiens 3: Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist in visiting Tampa Bay’s victory over Montreal.

Matt Tomkins made 22 saves in his third career start to earn his first NHL win. Kucherov has 11 points in his past three games.

Hurricanes 3, Sabres 2 (OT): Martin Necas scored his second overtime winner of the season, converting 90 seconds into the extra session as host Carolina beat Buffalo.

Carolina defensemen Tony DeAngelo and Brady Skjei, who also had an assist, scored in regulation to help the Hurricanes win for the fifth time in six games. Antti Raanta made 19 saves, including one early in overtime.

Wild 4, Islanders 2: Kirill Kaprizov and Joel Eriksson Ek

scored on consecutive shots in the third period, lifting visiting Minnesota over New York.

Jets 5, Blues 2: Kyle Connor scored twice, and Mark Scheifele added a goal and an assist to help visiting Winnipeg beat St. Louis.

Coyotes 4, Kraken 3 (SO): Nick Bjugstad scored the only goal in a shootout and host Arizona beat Seattle to snap a four-game losing streak to the Kraken.

Flames 4, Predators 2: Blake Coleman scored one of host Calgary’s three goals in the third period for a comeback victory over Nashville.

Penguins 2, Ducks 0: Tristan Jarry and Magnus Hellberg combined on a 32-save shutout after Jarry left with an injury late in the second period, and visiting Pittsburgh snapped Anaheim’s six-game winning streak.

Mavericks coming through behind Doncic-Irving combo

Associated Press

DENVER — Luka Doncic has been at his best — one of the NBA’s best, too, for that matter — in crunch time this season.

Same with the Dallas Mavericks, who are a league-leading 6-0 in clutch situations, which are defined as a scoring margin within five points and five or fewer minutes left in a game.

It’s a small sample size, but the Mavericks look to be taking shape in the first full season of the on-court collaboration between Doncic and Kyrie Irving.

Last season, the Mavericks struggled in clutch time, posting a 6-15 mark after Irving’s arrival in the lineup following the trade with Brooklyn. The team ended up missing the postseason.

They just needed a little more time, Mavericks coach Jason Kidd contended, to fine tune their chemistry.

Now, they appear on the same page.

“When you have 77 (Doncic) and 11 (Irving) it’s an easy thing,” Kidd said of clutch moments. “We talked about last year. As much as we wanted for things to happen right away, you’ve got to go through the process of growing pains and

getting to know one another.

“The other side of that, we’ve spent a lot of time on in-game situations, and everybody’s very comfortable.”

Lost in all the Victor Wembanyama mania and the James Harden trade saga has been the play of Doncic, who looks even more dynamic than ever, which is saying quite a bit about the point guard.

Even better, perhaps, than his video game version on “NBA 2K” (very “near,” rookie teammate Dereck Lively II cracked).

The 24-year-old Slovenian is doing, well, Luka things.

Doncic is nearly averaging a triple-double. And continuing the “it’s never too early to talk about league MVP award” conversation, Doncic’s odds, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, are just slightly less than that of his buddy and two-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic of the Denver Nuggets.

“It’s always nice to play against him,” said Jokic, whose team beat the Mavericks 125-114 last week. “He’s a great player. He’s unique. He’s controlling the game. He’s so versatile.”

Couple that with Irving and it’s led to a hot start for the Mavericks (6-1), who have the second-best mark in the Western Conference. They trail — only slightly — the reigning NBA-champion Nuggets (7-1).

“It’s been fun basketball,” Irving said. “It’s been fun to play.”

Doncic checks in at third on a list of seven players who have 20 or more “clutch points” so far this season. He’s 8-for-11 for 25 points down the stretch of close games, behind just Stephen Curry (28) and LeBron James (26). Also on the list are Damian Lillard (24), Donovan Mitchell (23), Wembanyama (23), the rookie sensation from France who’s taken the league by storm, and Mikal Bridges (20).

“On offense, (Doncic) just always finds the right play,” explained Lively, the 7-foot-1 rookie center out of Duke. “And if you don’t see the right play, he’ll find it himself. No matter if that’s him getting the shot, his teammates getting a shot or him throwing a lob, or just being able to find the open man. He does an excellent job of doing that.”