

US, S. Korea vow to grow security ties

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

The top military leaders for the United States and South Korea reaffirmed their alliance Monday and pledged to expand the scope of their military partnership with allies in the face of North Korea's ballistic missile tests.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Defense Minister Shin Won-sik met Monday in Seoul for the 55th Security Consultative Meeting, an annual conference between senior U.S. and South Korean defense officials to discuss the state and future of their alliance.

Austin arrived Saturday in South Korea as part of a broader trip to the Indo-Pacific to reaffirm the U.S. defense commitment to the region. He leaves for Indonesia on Tuesday.

"I'm proud to say that our alliance is stronger than ever," Austin said at a press conference with Shin at the Ministry

of National Defense headquarters following their meeting.

The U.S. commitment to South Korea's defense remains ironclad and includes "the full range of our nuclear, conventional and missile defense capabilities," Austin added.

Shin said Seoul's "comprehensive strategic alliance" with Washington will bring about "peace, stability and prosperity of not only the Korean Peninsula, but the world."

The two defense leaders agreed to expand the scale of their joint military exercises to include Japanese and U.N. Command troops and update a decade-old bilateral security agreement designed to counter North Korea's nuclear ambitions, Shin said.

On Sunday, Austin and Shin held a video conference with Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara. The three leaders agreed to plan for trilateral military drills next year and af-

firmed that a real-time missile data-sharing system would be operational next month, according to a news release from Seoul's military the same day.

U.S.-South Korean exercises have already expanded beyond the two militaries this year.

On Oct. 22, the U.S., South Korean and Japanese militaries carried out their first-ever aerial drills south of the Korean Peninsula.

Two U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons, two South Korean F-15K Slam Eagles and two Japanese F-2s flew alongside each other while escorting a U.S. B-52H Stratofortress nuclear-capable bomber. The bomber touched down in South Korea five days earlier, marking the first time in at least 30 years that a B-52 landed in the country.

This year's Ssangyong exercise in South Korea, the largest joint maritime drill in the country since 2018, included 30 Brit-

ish marines who conducted reconnaissance operations for the first time.

"We can never accept a nuclear attack by North Korea," Shin said. "And if it does use nuclear weapons, North Korea will face an immediate, overwhelming and decisive response from [South Korea] and U.S., which will lead to the end of the Kim regime."

Austin's meeting with Shin comes nearly 12 weeks after a ballistic missile launched by North Korea failed to put a satellite into orbit. The communist regime last fired two short-range ballistic missiles off its eastern coast Sept. 13, for a total of 21 ballistic missiles in 14 days of testing so far this year.

Two days prior to Austin's arrival, North Korea's state-run news agency issued a report criticizing his upcoming visit and said it would "bring about a new war cloud in the Asia-Pacific region."

Officials say US strikes in Syria kill Iranian proxies

The Washington Post

The Pentagon on Sunday announced a new round of air strikes on Iranian facilities in Syria that officials said were linked to dozens of recent attacks targeting U.S. troops there and in neighboring Iraq, this time causing an undetermined number of fatalities among proxy fighters backed by Tehran.

The operation marked a significant escalation by the Biden administration, which has sought to deter the sharp rise in violence against American forces in the Middle East without provoking a broader re-

gional conflict as tensions flare over the war in Gaza.

In a statement, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said that these latest strikes had been carried out in eastern Syria on facilities used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and groups affiliated with it.

They hit a training facility near the city of Abu Kamal and a "safe house" near Mayadin, he said.

President Joe Biden directed the operation, Austin added, "to make clear that the United States will defend itself, its personnel, and its interests."

A senior U.S. defense offi-

cial, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss preliminary assessments following the strikes, said the training facility in Abu Kamal also was used to store weapons and that secondary explosions were observed.

The safe house had functioned as a headquarters for groups affiliated with the IRGC, the senior defense official said. Militia personnel were present when the strikes occurred there, and the Pentagon believes some were killed, the official added. The fatalities were first reported by Fox News.

American fighter jets conducted the strikes late on Sunday, the official said. In a break with similar operations in recent weeks, the Pentagon has not identified the precise type of aircraft that carried out the mission.

"We continue to message to Iran that we hold them accountable for these [attacks on U.S. personnel], and that their leaders must take action to constrain the activities of the groups Iran directs, trains, and equips," the official said. "We will not hesitate to take further measures to protect our people, if necessary."

Ramstein airman thrust into rescuer role

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Staff Sgt. Stephen Hornik is a passenger services supervisor in the Air Force, but his track record of split-second rescues is making him look like a real-life version of a Marvel character.

Twice in the past 13 months he's jumped into action to save lives, and his heroics cover two continents. Most recently, he was thrust into a life-or-death situation while working the night shift Oct. 4 at Ramstein's passenger terminal.

Around midnight, Hornik, a member of the 721st Aerial Port Squadron, was in the break room when he was summoned to assist an unconscious military retiree who had collapsed and fallen face-first on the rubber mat in the building's entryway.

Fellow passenger services supervisor Staff Sgt. Jeremy Burns and other airmen who were first on the scene called emergency services and hooked the man up to a defibrillator, a 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing statement said.

But the man was still unresponsive and turning purple when Hornik arrived, he said.

"It was almost like a pause in time," Hornik said. "Everyone was just standing there staring at him... I think everybody was kind of in shock."

The man wasn't breathing and Hornik couldn't detect a pulse. He immediately started CPR.

He kept at it until base emergency medical technicians and firefighters arrived about five minutes later, he said. They took over and used a machine to squeeze air into the man's lungs between rounds of chest com-

pressions. The man soon began breathing again, Hornik said, adding that in the moment, he was unsure whether his actions had been enough.

"My hands were shaking. I was just freaking out," he said.

The first responders took him aside and calmed him down, telling him that if he hadn't started CPR, the man wouldn't have made it, he said. A few days later, Hornik heard that the man was awake and doing well.

The October events at Ramstein marked the second life-or-death situation Hornik encountered recently.

On Halloween night in 2022, while he was home on leave in Clermont, Fla., he saw a motorcyclist flip over a car and roll across the pavement as his helmet flew off. Hornik and his mother, Sherry, were stopped at an intersection when the collision happened.

Hornik jumped out of the car and administered first aid to the injured man, who was screaming and hyperventilating. His head was bleeding and his arm and leg looked "cracked in half," Hornik said.

He held the victim's hand, reassured him and stayed with him until police and an ambulance arrived. That man also survived.

Airmen in his squadron were inspired by the Oct. 4 events and are brushing up on CPR training, Hornik said. He expressed thanks for his co-workers, who initially stepped in to help the man. He also complimented the medical personnel who handled the situation after him.

As for reprising his superhero role again, he'd rather not see any more sequels.

"I'm getting used to it," he said. "But I wish it would stop happening."

Soldiers killed in Black Hawk crash had deep military ties

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The five special operations soldiers killed Friday during a training flight in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea were a mix of combat-tested aviation troops with deep family ties to the military, defense officials said Monday.

The troops, all of whom were special operations aviation soldiers, were killed during routine aerial refueling training when their MH-60 Black Hawk experienced an emergency, resulting in the crash. Their names are Chief Warrant Officer 3 Stephen R. Dwyer, 38, of Clarksville, Tenn.; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shane M. Barnes, 34, of Sacramento, Calif.; Staff Sgt. Tanner W. Grone, 26, of Gorham, N.H.; Sgt. Andrew P. Southard, 27, of Apache Junction, Ariz.; and Sgt. Cade M. Wolfe, 24, of Mankato, Minn.

The Army's Combat Readiness Center is investigating the crash. There are no indications it was caused by enemy or hostile actions, the Pentagon said.

The soldiers were assigned to 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) out of Fort Campbell, Ky.

"This is devastating news that reverberates across the entire Special Operations community," Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga, commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, said in a statement Monday. "Every loss is tough, but in this case, service to the nation is truly a family business and it's hard to express the amount of sorrow that we all feel right now."

Braga said the soldiers come from "rare patriotic families with deep military service ties that span multiple generations."

Admiral: China's 'provocative' behavior a cause for concern

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

Aggressive actions by China's military and coast guard toward the U.S. and other nations in the Indo-Pacific have steadily increased over time to create "tense, uncomfortable situations," the commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet has said.

Adm. Samuel Paparo, speaking to reporters Wednesday in Sydney, said Beijing has carried out about 180 aggressive or coercive military acts since he took command in fall 2021. The media roundtable was part of the 2023 Indo Pacific International Maritime Exposition.

"They are increasingly provocative and it's deeply concerning," Paparo said, according to a transcript provided to Stars and Stripes by Pacific Fleet. "At times, they've hazarded them-

selves, and they've hazarded the people that are in the vessels and aircraft they've interacted with."

A Chinese J-11 fighter jet executed an "unsafe intercept" of an Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bomber in international airspace over the South China Sea, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command announced Oct. 24. The J-11 flew with "uncontrolled excessive speed" and maneuvered "below, in front of, and within 10 feet of the B-52, putting both aircraft in danger of collision," according to a news release.

Paparo leads a force of more than 200 ships, 1,500 aircraft and 150,000 personnel. He said he believes Beijing is directing troops to "be more aggressive, and they have followed those orders."

The U.S. does not reciprocate aggressive behavior in reversed situations, Paparo said.

Capitol rioter plans run for Congress in Arizona in 2024

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Jacob Chansley, the spear-carrying rioter whose horned fur hat, bare chest and face paint made him one of the more recognizable figures in the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol, apparently aspires to be a member of Congress.

Online paperwork shows the 35-year-old Chansley filed a candidate statement of interest Thursday, indicating he wants to run as a Libertarian in next year's election for Arizona's 8th Congressional District seat.

U.S. Rep. Debbie Lesko, a 64-year-old Republican representing the district since 2018, announced last month that she won't seek re-election. Her term officially ends in January 2025.

Chansley pleaded guilty to a felony charge of obstructing an official proceeding in connection with the Capitol insurrection.

He was sentenced to 41 months in prison in November 2021 and served about 27 months before being transferred to a Phoenix halfway house in

March 2023. Chansley grew up in the greater Phoenix area.

Chansley is among the more than 700 people who have been sentenced in relation to Capitol riot-related federal crimes. Authorities said Chansley was among the first rioters to enter the Capitol building and he acknowledged using a bullhorn to rouse the mob.

Although he previously called himself the "QAnon Shaman," Chansley has since disavowed the QAnon movement.

He identified himself as Jacob Angeli-Chansley in the candidate statement of interest paperwork filed with the Arizona Secretary of State's office.

The U.S. Constitution doesn't prohibit felons from holding federal office. But Arizona law prohibits felons from voting until they have completed their sentence and had their civil rights restored.

Emails sent to Chansley and his attorney seeking comment on his political intentions weren't immediately returned Sunday.

Trump Jr. on stand as defense witness

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Donald Trump Jr. returned to the stand Monday as defense lawyers started calling witnesses in the New York civil fraud trial that threatens his father's real estate empire.

Donald Trump's eldest son returned two weeks after state lawyers quizzed him during a long stretch of the trial that also featured testimony from the former president and Don Jr.'s siblings Eric and Ivanka Trump.

"You thought you were rid of me, your honor," he quipped as he took the stand.

Trump Jr., a Trump Organization executive vice president, originally testified on Nov. 1 and 2. He said he never worked on the annual financial statements at the heart of New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit. He said he relied on the company's longtime finance chief and outside accountants to verify their accuracy.

James alleges that Donald Trump, his company and executives including his sons exaggerated his wealth by billions of dollars on financial statements given to banks, insurers and others.

The documents were used to secure loans and make deals. James is seeking more than \$300 million in what she says were ill-gotten gains and a ban on the defendants doing business in New York. Before the trial, Judge Arthur Engoron ruled that the defendants committed fraud by inflating his net worth and the value of assets on his financial statements.

He imposed a punishment that could strip Trump of marquee properties like Trump Tower.

Traffic issues rattle Los Angeles after massive fire closes popular interstate

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles motorists should expect traffic snarls during the Monday commute as crews assess how much damage was caused by a raging fire over the weekend that closed a major elevated interstate near downtown, officials said.

Hazardous materials teams were clearing burned material from underneath Interstate 10 to make way for engineers who will ensure the columns and deck of the highway can support the 300,000 vehicles that typically travel that route daily, Gov. Gavin Newsom said at a news conference Sunday.

"Remember, this is an investigation as to the cause of how this occurred, as well as a hazard and structural engineering question," Newsom said. "Can you open a few lanes? Can you

retrofit the columns? Is the bridge deck intact to allow for a few lanes to remain open again?"

Newsom said answering those questions would be a "24-7 operation," but officials couldn't offer a timeline for when the highway might reopen.

Commuters were urged to work from home or take public transportation into downtown Los Angeles. The mile-long I-10 closure between Alameda Street and Santa Fe Avenue will have ripple effects on surface streets and other key freeways including State Route 60 and Interstate 5, the California Highway Patrol said.

The cause of the fire was under investigation Sunday. Flames reported around 12:20 a.m. Saturday ripped through two storage lots in an industrial area beneath the highway,

burning parked cars, stacks of wooden pallets and support poles for high-tension power lines, fire Chief Kristin Crowley said. No injuries were reported.

More than 160 firefighters from more than two dozen companies responded to the blaze, which spread across 8 acres — the equivalent of about six football fields — and burned for three hours. The highway's columns are charred and chipped, and guardrails along the deck are twisted and blackened.

Newsom declared a state of emergency Saturday afternoon and directed the state Department of Transportation to request assistance from the federal government. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said she had also talked with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg about any additional resources that may be needed.

Palestinians are forced to flee hospitals

Associated Press

DEIRAL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Battles around hospitals forced thousands of Palestinians to flee from some of the last shelters in northern Gaza, stranding critically wounded patients, including newborns, and their caregivers with dwindling supplies and no electricity, health officials said Monday.

The Israeli military has urged Palestinians to flee south on foot through what it calls safe corridors. But its purported drive to separate civilians from Hamas militants has come at a heavy cost, with more than two-thirds of the territory's population of 2.3 million having already fled their homes.

Thousands fled Gaza's Shifa Hospital over the weekend as Israeli troops encircled it, but hundreds of patients and displaced people remained, according to officials. Shifa "is not functioning as a hospital anymore," World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. A second Gaza City hospital faces evacuations after running out of fuel.

Both sides have seized on the plight of hospitals, particularly Shifa's, as a symbol of the larger war, now in its sixth week. The fighting was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 surprise attack into Israel, and Israel's response has brought unseen levels of death

and destruction to Gaza.

For Palestinians, Shifa evokes the suffering of civilians. For weeks, staff running low on supplies have performed surgery there on war-wounded patients, including children, without anesthesia. Up until days ago, tens of thousands of people driven from their homes by airstrikes lived in and around the complex, hoping it would be safe.

Israel says Hamas shields itself among civilians, and that the hospital, Gaza's largest, is an example. It says the militants have a command center in and beneath the medical compound. Israel has released maps and diagrams showing what it says are bunkers and other Hamas in-

stallations in and around Shifa, but has not provided evidence.

Israeli officials recently released photos and footage showing what they described as the opening of a tunnel next to another hospital, as well as gunmen firing from inside the building. They also have shared footage of militants operating in residential neighborhoods and positioning rockets and weapons near schools, hospitals and mosques.

Both Hamas and Shifa hospital staff deny the Israeli allegations.

The Palestinians accuse Israel of firing recklessly toward hospitals, while Israel accuses Hamas of using the hospitals for cover.

Former PM David Cameron returns to UK politics

Associated Press

LONDON — Former British Prime Minister David Cameron made an unexpected return to high office on Monday, becoming foreign secretary in a major shakeup of the Conservative government that also saw the firing of divisive Home Secretary Suella Braverman.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak appointed Cameron, who led the U.K. government between

2010 and 2016 and triggered the country's exit from the European Union, as part of a Cabinet shuffle in which he also sacked Braverman and named James Cleverly, who had been foreign secretary, to replace her.

Braverman, a law-and-order hardliner, drew anger for accusing police of being too lenient with pro-Palestinian protesters. Sunak made additional

changes to the government throughout the day, naming Victoria Atkins as the new health secretary and moving her predecessor, Steve Barclay, to the environment portfolio.

The bold changes are an attempt by Sunak to reset his faltering government. The Conservatives have been in power for 13 years, but opinion polls for months have put them 15 to 20 points behind the opposition

Labour Party amid a stagnating economy, persistently high inflation, an overstretched health care system and a wave of public sector strikes.

Cameron's appointment came as a surprise to seasoned politics-watchers. It's rare for a non-lawmaker to take a senior government post, and it has been decades since a former prime minister held a Cabinet job.

Russia ramps up attacks on eastern Ukraine cities

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian forces have ramped up attacks in eastern Ukraine in an attempt to gain ground near two key front line cities, Ukrainian military officials said Sunday.

Moscow's troops have begun a push to regain territory near Bakhmut, the eastern mining city that was the site of the war's bloodiest battle before falling into Russian hands in May, the head of Ukraine's ground forces wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Ukrainian troops had recap-

tured the heights over Bakhmut and made some advances west, north and south of the city since Kyiv launched its summer counteroffensive.

"Toward Bakhmut, the Russians have become more active and are trying to recapture previously lost positions. ... Enemy attacks are being repelled," Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi wrote in a Telegram update on Sunday afternoon.

A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman said Sunday that Russian forces over the previous day

repelled five Ukrainian attacks near Klischiivka and Kurdyumivka, two small settlements lying south of Bakhmut. Lt. Gen. Igor Konashenkov made the claim at the latest of regular press briefings.

Ukraine's long-awaited counteroffensive has so far resulted in only incremental gains and heavy losses, with Ukrainian troops struggling to punch through Russian lines in the south. Meanwhile, Moscow's forces have attempted to press forward in the northeast, likely with a view to

distract Kyiv and minimize the number of troops Ukraine is able to send to key southern and eastern battles.

Ukraine's General Staff said that Russian troops were also continuing their weeklong push to encircle Avdiivka, a Ukrainian stronghold south of Bakhmut and a key target since the beginning of the war. It's considered the gateway to parts of the eastern Donetsk region under Kyiv's control. The General Staff said Russia's air force was playing a key part in the latest assault.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fight breaks out after screening of attack video

CA LOS ANGELES — Street fights erupted between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian demonstrators outside Los Angeles' Museum of Tolerance after a private screening of a video showing the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas militants.

The Los Angeles Times reported that 150 people attended the private screening of "Bearing Witness to the October 7th Massacre," which included graphic footage captured by Hamas militants' body cameras and cellphones and was compiled by the Israel Defense Forces.

Outside the museum, demonstrators waved flags and got into shouting matches, before dispersing as the event ended, the newspaper reported. But an hour later, a small group of demonstrators returned and fistfights broke out.

"Two reports for battery were taken and will be thoroughly investigated," the Los Angeles Police Department said in a statement. "At this time, we do not have suspects in custody relating to the battery, or for any other reason relating to this event."

1.3 million affected by file-transfer data breach

ME AUGUSTA — The state of Maine has begun notifying people whose personal information was included in a data breach impacting as many as 1.3 million individuals, state officials announced.

The notifications began after the state completed an assessment once they discovered that

hackers exploited a vulnerability in widely used file-transfer software. Other government agencies, major pension funds and private businesses also have been affected by a Russian ransomware gang's so-called supply chain hack of the software MOVEit.

The specific type of data depended on the individual but could include their date of birth, driver's license number, Social Security number, and health and medical information.

The state said it began taking steps to patch the vulnerability, engaged with experts and legal counsel, and carried out evaluations after being alerted on May 31 of the widespread breach.

Firm scraps plans to build offshore turbine blades

VA NORFOLK — A European company has canceled plans to build blades for offshore wind turbines in coastal Virginia, the latest sign of struggle within the U.S.'s nascent industry.

Siemens Gamesa confirmed the cancellation in a statement. The company's proposed \$200 million factory at the Port of Virginia in Portsmouth would have created more than 300 jobs and aided the state in its aspirations to become a hub for offshore wind projects as part of the nation's efforts to tackle climate change.

The change in plans by the Spain-based firm comes at a time when inflation, raised interest rates and supply chain issues have cut into the profitability — and even the viability — of some offshore wind projects in the U.S.

Siemens Gamesa said that it had called off building the Vir-

ginia factory because "development milestones ... could not be met." It did not elaborate.

Jezebel, incisive feminist voice, shutting down

NY NEW YORK — Jezebel, the sharp-edged feminist website that found an impassioned and devoted following at the height of the blogosphere era but ended up struggling with its business model, is shutting down after 16 years, its parent company announced.

It is the latest gender-focused media site to fold as the media industry struggles with plummeting digital advertising that has also cut into the profitability of major tech companies from Google to Facebook.

G/O Media said 23 staffers would be laid off, including Jezebel's team, as part of a restructuring to cope with economic headwinds and a difficult digital advertising environment.

Launched in 2007 by Gawker Media, Jezebel established itself as an influential voice in feminist commentary years before the explosion of the #MeToo movement pushed issues of gender and power to the forefront of mainstream media coverage.

State employees given paid parental leave

LA BATON ROUGE — With just two months left in office, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards announced nearly 70,000 employees will have access to paid parental leave following a birth, adoption or foster child placement.

Currently, state workers use sick days or unpaid time off in order to take parental leave. Ed-

wards' new executive order will allow six weeks of 100% paid parental leave beginning Jan. 1.

"Paid parental leave means better outcomes for every family member, allowing parents to bond with their child without the financial stress of sacrificing their income, savings or paid sick days," Edwards, a Democrat, said.

While paid parental leave will apply to most state employees who have worked for the government for at least a year, there are some exceptions — including unclassified workers in higher education, along with legislative and judicial staffers, The Advocate reported.

State agrees to pay \$4M in suit over jail conditions

WV BECKLEY — The state of West Virginia has agreed to pay \$4 million to settle a class-action lawsuit filed by inmates who described conditions at a jail as inhumane, an attorney for the plaintiffs said.

Attorney Stephen New disclosed the figure to U.S. District Judge Frank Volk, who must approve the settlement. New said the amount is the highest that the state's insurance coverage will pay, news outlets reported.

The lawsuit filed last year on behalf of current and former inmates of the Southern Regional Jail in Beaver referenced a lack of access to water and food at the facility, as well as overcrowding and fights that were allowed to continue until someone was injured.

The money would be split among more than 9,000 inmates at the jail dating to September 2020.

— From wire reports

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Goff, Lions outlast Herbert, Chargers in win

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Dan Campbell wanted to make sure his team had the ball until the last second, even if it meant passing up a chance to take the lead.

With 1:47 remaining and the score tied at 38-all against the Chargers on Sunday, the Detroit Lions coach went for it on fourth-and-2 from the Los Angeles 26-yard line. A field goal would have given Justin Herbert and the Chargers a chance to win or send the game to overtime.

Jared Goff made the move pay off with a 6-yard completion to rookie tight end Sam LaPorta. Goff then knelt down three times, Riley Patterson kicked a 41-yard field goal as time expired, and the Lions prevailed in a 41-38 shootout over the Chargers.

Goff appreciates playing for a coach who's willing to make such gutsy calls.

"I'm sure in his head he didn't want to give Justin the ball back with a minute and a half," said Goff, who threw for 333 yards and two touchdowns. "It's a lot of fun when he puts the ball in our hands to make a play."

In a matchup between two of the league's most aggressive coaches, Campbell and the Lions were 4 of 5 on fourth-down conversions while Brandon Staley and the Chargers converted all three.

"One of those things we haven't done a lot of is win the close shootouts. Every time you win and get it done, you learn something from it," Campbell said. "The offense really showed up today big time."

Browns 33, Ravens 31: Dustin Hopkins kicked a 40-yard field goal as time expired to cap a furious Cleveland rally in the fourth quarter, and the visiting Browns edged Baltimore.

Cleveland (6-3) trailed 31-17 before Deshaun Watson delivered the type of big victory the Browns have long been waiting

to see from their high-priced quarterback.

Baltimore (7-3) had a four-game winning streak snapped, and the victory by Cleveland tightened the race in the AFC North significantly.

Texans 30, Bengals 27: Rookie C.J. Stroud directed a last-minute, game-winning drive for the second straight week, finishing with 356 yards passing and leading visiting Houston past Cincinnati.

With the game tied at 27-all and 1:33 remaining, Stroud moved the Texans 55 yards in six plays to set up a 38-yard field goal by Matt Ammendola as time expired. Ammendola had just been signed on Tuesday because Ka'imi Fairbairn suffered a quadriceps injury a week earlier.

Stroud connected with Dalton Schultz for 25 yards and Noah Brown for 22 yards on the decisive drive. Brown finished with seven catches for a season-high 172 yards, and Devin Singletary rushed for 150 yards and a touchdown on 30 carries for the Texans (5-4).

49ers 34, Jaguars 3: Brock Purdy threw three touchdown passes, including a 66-yarder to George Kittle, and visiting San Francisco drubbed Jacksonville to end a three-game skid.

Deebo Samuel returned from a three-game absence and had a 23-yard scoring run for the 49ers (6-3), who stopped Jacksonville's five-game winning streak and reestablished themselves as a Super Bowl contender following a bye week.

San Francisco dominated both lines of scrimmage and controlled the game from the opening drive. The Niners ran for 147 yards against one of the league's top run defenses and sacked Trevor Lawrence five times. Nick Bosa was a menace all game, and newly acquired defensive end Chase Young got in on one of the sacks.

Cardinals 25, Falcons 23: Kyler Murray threw for 249

yards and ran for a touchdown in his return from a serious knee injury, Matt Prater made a game-winning 23-yard field goal as time expired, and host Arizona beat Atlanta to snap a six-game skid.

Murray made a pair of important plays on the game-winning drive, providing reminders of why he was the No. 1 overall pick in 2019 and also why the Cardinals signed him to a \$230.5 million contract before the 2022 season.

His 13-yard scramble on third-and-10 — and evading multiple sack attempts — helped keep Arizona's drive alive. Then he hit tight end Trey McBride on a 33-yard pass that set up the short field goal.

Seahawks 29, Commanders 26: Jason Myers converted his fifth field goal of the game, a 43-yarder as time expired, and host Seattle held off Washington.

Seahawks quarterback Geno Smith and Commanders QB Sam Howell traded big throws and touchdown passes in the closing minutes, but it was Smith who had the the final chance at the victory and came through.

Howell pulled Washington even at 26-26 on a 35-yard touchdown pass to Dyami Brown with 52 seconds remaining. Smith took over and made a pair of big throws to DK Metcalf: a 17-yard strike on third-and-4 and a 27-yard pass to the Washington 25. Smith spiked the ball with 3 seconds left and Myers concluded his perfect day for Seattle (6-3), which remained tied with San Francisco atop the NFC West.

Raiders 16, Jets 12: Josh Jacobs rushed for 116 yards, Aidan O'Connell connected with fellow rookie Michael Mayer for the game's only touchdown and host Las Vegas beat New York to improve to 2-0 under interim coach Antonio Pierce.

The Raiders (5-5) turned away two late attempts by the Jets to rally. Robert Spillane in-

tercepted Zach Wilson's pass at the Las Vegas 15 with 1:22 left, and after the Raiders punted, Wilson's heave to the end zone fell incomplete on the game's final play.

Vikings 27, Saints 19: Joshua Dobbs kept Minnesota's offense on track in his first start, throwing for a career-high 268 yards as host Minnesota beat New Orleans for its fifth straight victory.

T.J. Hockenson outgained the Saints by himself in the first half with 10 catches for 128 yards and a score for the Vikings (6-4), who took a 24-3 lead into the break but stalled from there.

Cowboys 49, Giants 17: Dak Prescott threw for 404 yards and four touchdowns while running for another score, and host routed New York for the second time this season.

The Cowboys (6-3) won 40-0 in the opener in New Jersey, and the 72-point margin was their largest in a sweep of an NFC East opponent, topping their 66-point edge against Philadelphia in 1969. Dallas extended its home winning streak to 12 games.

Steelers 23, Packers 19: Jaylen Warren and Najee Harris combined for 183 yards rushing and two touchdowns, and host Pittsburgh beat Green Bay.

Chris Boswell kicked three field goals for the Steelers (6-3), who relied on big plays by their defense and special teams to win their ninth straight game decided by eight points or fewer.

Buccaneers 20, Titans 6: Baker Mayfield threw for 278 yards and two touchdowns, and host Tampa Bay beat Tennessee to stop a four-game skid.

Rachaad White turned a first-quarter screen pass into a 43-yard TD. Mike Evans redeemed himself from dropping a pass in the end zone with a 22-yard scoring catch and finished with six receptions for 143 yards for the Buccaneers (4-5).

Maxey scores 50, leading 76ers to win

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Tyrese Maxey scored a career-high 50 points, Joel Embiid had 37 points and the Philadelphia 76ers improved to 8-1 with their eighth straight victory, beating the Indiana Pacers 137-126 on Sunday night.

Maxey was 20-for-32 from the field and had seven rebounds, five assists and three blocks in the first of two straight games in Philadelphia between the teams. His previous high was 44 against Toronto on Oct. 28, 2022.

Maxey's final basket came on a 32-foot step-back 3-pointer with 1:05 to play after Embiid — who has tagged Maxey with the nickname "The Franchise" in past interviews — passed him the ball and set a screen to free him.

"Joel wanted me to get 50 more than even I did," Maxey said. "When he gave me the ball, he said, 'You are going to shoot this basketball.' And that's why I appreciate my teammates, my coaches and the fans. It was a great night and we

got the win, which is what matters most."

Embiid had 13 rebounds in 33 minutes. The 76ers are off to their best nine-game start since opening 10-0 in 2000-01 en route to the NBA Finals.

"We are playing together and trusting each other," Embiid said. "It may not look like we didn't play defense tonight, but (Indiana) plays so fast it's incredible with the pace. So they are going to score a lot, but we just competed. We lowered our guard for a bit, but we had Tyrese to help close it out."

Rockets 107, Nuggets 104: Fred VanVleet scored 26 points, Alperen Sengun added 23 and host Houston beat Denver for its sixth straight victory, its longest winning streak since taking seven straight in January 2021.

Nikola Jokic had his fourth triple-double of the season for Denver, finishing with 36 points, 21 rebounds and 11 assists. The defending champion Nuggets dropped to 8-2.

Timberwolves 117, Warriors 110: Anthony Edwards scored

33 points and visiting Minnesota overpowered Golden State for its sixth straight victory.

Karl-Anthony Towns added 21 points and a season-best 14 rebounds for Minnesota in the first of two straight games between the teams in San Francisco.

Mavericks 136, Pelicans 124: Kyrie Irving made 7 of 10 3-pointers and scored 35 points, Luka Doncic had 15 of his 30 points in a 42-point third quarter and visiting Dallas beat short-handed New Orleans.

In the first of two straight games between the teams in New Orleans, the Mavericks shot 20-for-53 from long range. Dallas iced it in the third quarter, making 8 of 13 3-pointers and outscoring the Pelicans 42-31.

Thunder 111, Suns 99: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 35 points, Jalen Williams had 31 and visiting Oklahoma City used a big fourth quarter to beat Phoenix.

Lakers 116, Trail Blazers 110: Anthony Davis had 30 points and 13 rebounds, Rui Ha-

chimura scored eight of his 19 points in the final 3:43 and host Los Angeles overcame LeBron James' injury absence to beat Portland.

Grizzlies 105, Clippers 101: Desmond Bane scored 27 points and visiting Memphis won for the second time this season, beating reeling Los Angeles.

Nets 102, Wizards 94: Mikal Bridges had 27 points and 13 rebounds and host Brooklyn recovered to beat Washington after blowing a 17-point lead.

Knicks 129, Hornets 107: Julius Randle had 23 points, five rebounds and five assists and host New York scored a season high in its victory over Charlotte.

Heat 118, Spurs 113: Duncan Robinson scored 26 points, Bam Adebayo added 24 points and 11 rebounds and visiting Miami beat San Antonio for its fifth straight victory.

Bulls 119, Pistons 108: DeMar DeRozan scored 29 points, Nikola Vucevic added 21 points and 12 rebounds and host Chicago handed Detroit its eighth straight loss.

Weber State rallies in 2nd half to upset No. 23 Saint Mary's

Associated Press

MORAGA, Calif. — Dillon Jones scored a career-high 29 points and had 10 rebounds, and Weber State rallied from 14 down in the second half to stun No. 23 Saint Mary's 61-57 on Sunday night.

Jones, a unanimous preseason pick to be MVP in the Big Sky, had nine points as part of a 23-4 run midway through the second half that erased a 49-35 deficit and put the Wildcats (2-0) ahead to stay after they trailed the entire first half.

"Call my bluff if you want, but I came in tonight expecting to win," Jones said. "After we did the starting lineups I told the team, 'The reason the higher-level teams beat lower-level teams is because they just give them a certain respect.' I told (my teammates) we're not going to give them respect.

"I was almost in tears telling the team that because I emotionally really thought we could win. It's one thing to say it. It's another thing to actually do it."

Aidan Mahaney and Harry Wessels each scored 11 points to pace the Gaels (2-1).

Neither team shot well from the perimeter. Saint Mary's was 5-for-27 on 3-pointers. Weber State went 6-for-21 beyond the arc.

The Gaels were sloppy over the final five minutes and committed three of their 15 turnovers, a problem that plagued Saint Mary's in its win over New Mexico earlier in the week.

"Concerned. Not very good there," Gaels coach Randy Bennett said. "We keep turning the ball over, not shooting it well. We didn't play well enough at either end of the floor to pull that thing out."

With several NBA scouts in attendance as well as his brother, Jones picked the perfect night to have his career game. He shot 11 of 20 and overcame five turnovers to lead the Wildcats to the win.

The Wildcats' victory wasn't a total surprise. With all five starters back from last season's team that finished 18-15, Weber

State is favored to win the Big Sky.

"The message is just that we are a good team, a good collective group of guys," Jones said. "We're not just going to give people respect because of their name. We will be able to show up and play."

No. 19 North Carolina 90, Lehigh 68: Armando Bacot's 22-point, 20-rebound effort and RJ Davis' 22 points led the host Tar Heels over the Mountain Hawks.

Harrison Ingram added 14 points for North Carolina, which broke away after Lehigh came within three points about seven minutes into the second half. North Carolina (2-0) outscored Lehigh 23-3 on free throws.

No. 20 Baylor 77, Gardner-Webb 62: Ja'Kobe Walter scored 14 points, Jayden Nunn added 12 and the host Bears ran away from the Runnin' Bulldogs in the second half.

Baylor (3-0) won despite not making a 3-point basket (0-for-9) for the first time since a game against Texas Tech in 1990, ending a streak of 1,032 games with at least one.

Fisher fired, move to cost A&M \$75M

Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Landing Jimbo Fisher, a coach with a national title on his resume, seemed like just what Texas A&M needed to finally become a championship contender.

But Fisher failed to replicate his success at Florida State in six years with the Aggies and athletic director Ross Bjork fired the coach Sunday despite owing him more than \$75 million.

“That’s the hard part in all of this,” Bjork said. “How many sitting head coaches won national championships? So everyone had tons of optimism. But it just goes back to the last couple of years. Do we have momentum? Do we have hope? How do we see things trending? And we just didn’t see the trend lines improving.”

Instead of winning a title, Fisher went 45-25 and 27-21 in the Southeastern Conference, never winning more than nine

games in any season. The Aggies are 6-4 with two games left, coming off a 51-10 victory against Mississippi State on Saturday night.

Bjork met with university president Mark Welsh and Texas A&M system chancellor John Sharp earlier this week and told them a coaching change was “absolutely necessary.”

“The assessment I delivered was that we are not reaching our full potential,” Bjork said. “We are not in the championship conversation and something was not quite right about our direction and the plan.”

Assistant Elijah Robinson will serve as interim coach for the last two games. Assistant athletic director for football operations Mark Robinson was also let go.

Bjork delivered the news to Fisher on Sunday morning at Kyle Field in a meeting the AD called “quick and cordial.”

Fisher was lured away from Florida State, where he had won

a national championship in 2013, by a massive 10-year, fully guaranteed contract at the end of the 2017 season.

That contract was extended back to 10 years after he led the Aggies to a 9-1 record during the 2020 pandemic season, by far A&M’s best year under Fisher.

According to his contract, Fisher is owed the entirety of what remains on his deal — regardless of whether he gets another job in coaching — a staggering buyout that is more than triple the largest known given to a fired head coach.

Bjork said 25% of what Fisher is owed — about \$19 million — is due within 60 days and the first of several installments of about \$7 million must be paid within 120 days.

“We will use unrestricted contributions within the 12th Man Foundation for the first one-time payment, and the athletic department will fund the annual payments for the remaining portion by growing our

revenues and adjusting our annual operating budget accordingly,” he said.

He added that the school “has to learn a lesson” from Fisher’s contract and that the finances involving his firing are “monumental.”

“Although this is a major, major financial decision that comes with many consequences, we have a plan and we will not let this impact the performance or the culture of our entire athletics program,” Bjork said.

Bjork said there was no last straw that prompted Fisher’s firing, but rather the totality of how the program was operating.

“You’re either moving forward or you’re stuck. We were stuck ... something was not working to reach our full potential,” Bjork said.

The search for a new coach will begin immediately, with Bjork saying he hopes to hire someone by Dec. 4.

Panthers overcome Bedard’s flashy goals for victory

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Chicago rookie Connor Bedard was great. Sam Reinhart and the Florida Panthers were just a little better.

Reinhart had two goals and two assists, Carter Verhaeghe got the go-ahead goal early in the third period and the Panthers withstood two highlight-reel scores from Bedard to beat the Blackhawks 4-3 on Sunday.

Oliver Ekman-Larsson had a goal and an assist, while Matthew Tkachuk and Evan Rodrigues each had a pair of assists for Florida. The Panthers have won a season-high four straight and are 9-2-1 in their last 12 games.

“Any time you can get home and pile some points together, it’s key,” Reinhart said.

Bedard — who has nine goals in his first 13 games — became the youngest player to score twice in a game against Florida, doing so three days after he became the youngest player to have a two-goal game against Tampa Bay.

“It’s nice to see him rolling and feeling good about it,” Chicago forward Nick Foligno said. “You can see the game’s starting to slow down for him, which is scary.”

Rangers 4, Blue Jackets 3 (SO): Alexis Lafreniere tied the game with 11 seconds left with his second goal of the game and had the only score in the shootout to lift host New York past Columbus. Chris Kreider had a goal and an assist for the Metropolitan Division-leading Rangers, who are 9-0-1 in their last

10 games. Artemi Panarin had two assists to extend his season-opening points streak to 14 games, tying Rod Gilbert for the franchise record set in 1972-73. Jonathan Quick made 26 saves.

Justin Danforth, Adam Fantilli and Sean Kuraly scored for Columbus. The Blue Jackets have lost five straight.

Stars 8, Wild 3: Jason Robertson and Wyatt Johnston each had two goals and an assist to help visiting Dallas beat Minnesota to sweep a three-game trip.

Dallas scored five power-play goals on six chances to tie a franchise record and had two short-handed goals. Minnesota set a record for power-play goals allowed.

Matt Duchene had a goal and an assist and Joe Pavelski, Ra-

dek Faksa and Evgenii Dadonov also scored. Jake Oettinger stopped 24 shots.

Canucks 5, Canadiens 2: Connor Garland, Dakota Joshua and Brock Boeser each had a goal and an assist and visiting Vancouver rebounded from a loss to beat Montreal.

Ilya Mikheyev and Phillip Di Giuseppe also scored and Casey DeSmith made 30 saves to help Vancouver improve to 11-3-1. Montreal traded DeSmith to Vancouver in September.

Mike Matheson and Arber Xhekaj scored for Montreal a night after the Canadiens beat Boston 3-2 in overtime at home.

Ducks 4, Sharks 1: Frank Vatrano scored twice in the first period, John Gibson made 25 saves and host Anaheim beat San Jose.