

## GAO: Reassess special ops drills to limit risk

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Special Operations Command should more closely study data on training incidents and spend more time observing high-risk, noncombat operations to better mitigate accidents involving its elite forces, a federal watchdog found in a study published Thursday.

The Government Accountability Office found recent efforts by SOCOM to implement increased safety scrutiny for high-risk training operations have been constrained by fiscal shortfalls and limited by the command's own definitions of high-risk training operations. GAO, in the new report, recommended SOCOM analyze safety data to reassess its most dangerous training operations and reevaluate how it assesses risky training.

Special operations officials have long said the tough, combat-like training conditions were the best way to build the elite troops

needed to carry out the U.S. military's toughest — often secretive — operations around the globe.

The active-duty special operations community includes some 67,500 troops, including Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Air Force pararescue forces and combat controllers, and Marine Raiders, among others, according to the GAO.

Between 2012 and 2022, the GAO found more than 3,600 non-combat accidents involving special operators, with an average of 258 reported training accidents per year with at least minor injuries or more than \$20,000 of military equipment damage. Accident reports ranged from a low of 120 in 2020, when training was constrained by the coronavirus pandemic, to a high of 402 accidents in 2015, the GAO found. Among all those incidents, there were about 86 major accidents among special operators — defined as having caused permanent, partial disabilities, inpatient

care for three or more individuals, or more than \$500,000 of damage. There were 48 training deaths during that decade.

Their training could be safer, the GAO found in its latest report titled "Special Operations Forces: Additional Oversight Could Help Mitigate High-Risk Training Accidents." The watchdog said the Defense Department agreed with the recommendations it made to improve high-risk training for special operators.

During the roughly two-year study, GAO analysts scrutinized accident data for special operations forces from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps during fiscal years 2012 through 2022, according to the report. The analysts also reviewed special operations training, risk management efforts and safety documents and interviewed defense officials associated with the special operations community.

The congressional watchdog found parachute and combat dive

training to be the riskiest operations for special operators outside of a combat zone, with accidents during those two activities accounting for roughly 40% of training incidents during the decade that they analyzed.

SOCOM included parachute and combat dive training among seven categories that it designated "high-risk" for training in a 2022 overhaul of its training safety measures, the GAO said. The other categories were joint terminal attack controller, mountain, sniper, urban combat and vertical lift operations.

But the GAO, in its report, questioned the designation for some of those categories.

"Some training areas designated by SOCOM as high-risk, such as sniper, had very few reported accidents while other training areas that SOCOM has not designated as high-risk, such as tactical vehicles training, had many more reported accidents," the GAO analysts wrote.

## After 9 years, USS George Washington back in Japan

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Hundreds of sailors stood in dress blues as the aircraft carrier USS George Washington pulled into Tokyo Bay on Friday morning for the first time in nearly a decade.

Scores of onlookers were joined by mascots and vendors while the U.S. 7th Fleet Band, high school cheerleaders and traditional Japanese musicians welcomed the ship's return to the place it called home from 2008 to 2015.

While many of the carrier's approximately 3,000 sailors are new to Japan, others, including its

skipper, Capt. Timothy Waits, served aboard the George Washington during its previous deployment to Japan.

Many of the returning sailors specifically requested the assignment, Waits said at a pierside news conference.

"I think that serves as a testament to the people and the culture of Japan, as well as the strong relationship between our two nations," he said.

Among the new arrivals was 10-year-old William Prentiss, of Albuquerque, N.M., who was there to welcome his father, Cmdr. Jacob Prentiss, a supply officer aboard the George Washington.

"I'm really excited to see him. I

haven't seen him in six months," he told Stars and Stripes ahead of the ship's arrival.

Amanda Murillo and her son, Ethan, of Houston, were waiting to welcome Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Murillo.

"We're grateful to have my husband home," she said pierside.

The George Washington left Yokosuka in 2015 for a midlife nuclear refueling and maintenance period at Newport News, Va. The process was significantly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other setbacks.

Its sister ship, the USS Ronald Reagan, took its place as the centerpiece of the 7th Fleet's carrier

strike group until it left Yokosuka on May 16 for its own scheduled maintenance period at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash.

During their 2015 interchange, the two ships swapped nearly two-thirds of their respective 3,000 crew members.

This time around, only about 350 sailors from the Ronald Reagan, or 13% of its crew, moved to the George Washington before it departed for Japan.

The George Washington arrived less than a week after its aviation component, Carrier Air Wing 5, returned to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in southwestern Japan.

# Promotion delayed for general last out of Kabul

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A batch of military promotions approved by the Senate on Thursday left out Lt. Gen. Christopher Donahue, an officer who oversaw the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and is now nominated to lead the Army in Europe and Africa.

It remains unclear why Donahue's nomination to become commanding general of U.S. Army Europe and Africa and receive a promotion to four-star general was not included.

The Washington Post, however, reported that a hold was placed on Donahue's promotion by Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla.

The Post said the report was based on correspondence it had seen, and there was no

comment from Mullin, an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation, or his office.

Three years ago, Mullin, then a member of the House, twice tried to personally rescue people from Afghanistan during the evacuation, only to be rebuffed once by the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan and once by the Pentagon, The Post said.

The Senate Armed Services Committee approved nearly 1,000 promotions, including Donahue's, earlier in the week before advancing them to the full upper chamber.

The timing of Donahue's promotion is now uncertain with the Senate not expected to return from recess until December. A senator's hold on his nomination could be bypassed with a time-consuming vote on the Senate floor.

Donahue is best known for being the last

U.S. service member to leave Afghanistan, a moment that was captured in a grainy night vision photo that went viral in 2021. He led the 82nd Airborne Division at the time and was responsible for securing the airfield at then-Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.

The chaotic evacuation of Americans and Afghan refugees from Kabul continues to be a frequent target of criticism by Republicans who blame President Joe Biden's administration after a suicide attack at the airport killed 13 service members.

Donahue has served as the commander of XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Liberty, N.C., since 2022 and, if confirmed, would replace Gen. Darryl Williams at the Army's Europe and Africa headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany.

## GOP IVF critics: Cut troop access from bill

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Two House Republicans are urging congressional leaders to omit expanded access to in vitro fertilization for troops and their families from a defense policy bill set to pass before the end of year.

Reps. Matt Rosendale, R-Mont., and Josh Brecheen, R-Okla., have argued provisions providing extensive military health care coverage of IVF treatments are too costly and would lead to the "destruction of innocent human life."

The lawmakers made their case in a Thursday letter to the leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees, just weeks after two Democratic lawmakers lobbied negotiators of the National Defense Authorization Act to include the IVF provisions.

The House and Senate versions of the must-pass legislation remove long-standing restrictions on Tricare coverage of IVF treat-

ments, no longer requiring that service members and dependents link their infertility to a service-related illness or injury.

Negotiators are expected to unveil a compromise bill next month.

Rosendale, a prominent IVF critic on Capitol Hill, has sought to curb access to the procedure. In June, he unsuccessfully attempted to put forward an amendment defunding IVF treatment for troops.

The procedure, which involves fertilizing eggs outside the womb and then implanting a resulting embryo, became a contentious political issue this year after Alabama's Supreme Court ruled that frozen embryos should be considered children.

Their anti-IVF stance is at odds with the positions of many members of Congress and military service organizations that contend service members deserve access to affordable fertility treatments due to the unique challenges of life in service.

## Military Sealift Command rolls out initiative to fill jobs at sea

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Military Sealift Command is rolling out an initiative to improve mariner recruiting and retention as hundreds of unfilled jobs at sea have forced the command to sideline 17 ships.

The command's efforts to attract and retain workers in the next two years will focus on keeping consistent work and time-off schedules to ensure mariners have a work-life balance. The command is also seeking reforms to pay caps to offer higher wages that will attract more mariners.

"The overarching goal of the workforce initiative is to rebuild mariner trust and improve quality of service. To do this, [Military Sealift Command] is focused on four things: retention, recruiting, quality of service, pay reform, and HR policies and systems," Rear Adm. Phillip Sobeck, commander of the Navy's Military Sealift Command, said Thursday.

In October, the Military Sealift Command announced it was looking to sideline 17 ships with hopes it would address the workforce shortage crippling its logistics fleet. Sobeck confirmed Thursday that the command is moving forward with that plan as part of its new workforce initiative.

The Military Sealift Command operates about 125 civilian-crewed ships responsible for a range of tasks, such as resupplying Navy ships, transporting combat cargo at sea and conducting specialized missions. But the command is having trouble attracting and keeping workers due to high operational tempo, delayed reliefs, extended deployment time and mandated pay caps, Sobeck said.

"We are just not competitive," Sobeck said. "It really is about getting after our retention. So as those mariners start coming back and we start building the bench is when we will bring ships back as they finish up their extended maintenance."

# Storms likely in US before Thanksgiving

*Associated Press*

WINDSOR, Calif. — Forecasters throughout the United States issued warnings that another round of winter weather could complicate travel leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday, while California and Washington state continue to recover from storm damage and power outages.

In California, where a person was found dead in a vehicle submerged in floodwaters Saturday, authorities braced for more precipitation while grappling with flooding and small landslides from a previous storm.

The National Weather Service office in Sacramento, Calif., issued a winter storm warning for the state's Sierra Nevada for Saturday through Tuesday, with heavy snow expected at higher elevations and wind gusts potentially reaching 55 mph. Total snowfall of roughly 4 feet was forecast, with the heaviest accumulations expected Monday and Tuesday.

The Midwest and Great Lakes regions will see rain and snow Monday and the East Coast will be the most impacted on Thanksgiving and Black Friday, forecasters said.

A low pressure system is forecast to bring rain to the Southeast early Thursday before heading to the Northeast. Areas from Boston to New York could see rain and breezy condi-

tions, with snowfall possible in parts of northern New Hampshire, northern Maine and the Adirondacks. If the system tracks further inland, there could be less snow and more rain in the mountains, forecasters said.

"The system doesn't look like a powerhouse right now," Hayden Frank, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Massachusetts, said Sunday.

"Basically, this is going to bring rain to the I-95 corridor so travelers should prepare for wet weather. Unless the system trends a lot colder, it looks like rain."

Frank said he isn't seeing any major storm systems arriving for the weekend anywhere in the country, so travelers heading home next Sunday can expect good driving conditions. Temperatures, however, will get colder in the East while warming up out West.

Last week, two people died when the "bomb cyclone" storm arrived in the Pacific Northwest. Hundreds of thousands lost power, mostly in the Seattle area, before strong winds moved through Northern California. A rapidly intensifying storm that hit the West Coast on Tuesday brought fierce winds that resulted in home and vehicle damage.

Rescue crews in Guerneville, Calif., recovered a body inside a vehicle bobbing in flood-

waters around 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Sonoma County Sheriff's Deputy Rob Dillion said, noting the deceased was presumed to be a victim of the storm but an autopsy had not yet been conducted.

Santa Rosa, Calif., saw its wettest three-day period on record with about 12.5 inches of rain by Friday evening, the National Weather Service in the Bay Area reported. Vineyards in nearby Windsor, Calif., were flooded Saturday.

About 36,000 people in the Seattle area were still without electricity after this season's strongest atmospheric river, a long plume of moisture that forms over an ocean and flows over land.

Another storm brought rain to New York and New Jersey, where rare wildfires have raged in recent weeks, and heavy snow to northeastern Pennsylvania. The precipitation was expected to help ease drought conditions after an exceptionally dry fall.

"It's not going to be a drought buster, but it's definitely going to help when all this melts," said Bryan Greenblatt, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Binghamton, N.Y.

Heavy snow fell in northeastern Pennsylvania, including the Pocono Mountains. Higher elevations reported up to 17 inches.

## Trump pushes past sting of Gaetz's exit, picks Bondi, fellow loyalists for key posts

*The Washington Post*

President-elect Donald Trump quickly put behind him the loss of his first choice for attorney general, his top-priority position, while Senate Republicans expressed relief that they had avoided an ugly, drawn-out standoff with the incoming president.

The day after former Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., withdrew his name from consideration to lead the Justice Department, Trump pushed ahead with a burst of fresh announcements for planned appointments and nominations, including some controversial picks. The president-elect also showed no sign of shrinking from his choice of former Fox News host Pete Hegseth for secretary of defense or any of his other picks facing tough confirmation fights.

Senate Republicans welcomed the rapid substitution of former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi as Trump's pick for attorney general after Gaetz announced his withdrawal.

Trump followed that move on Friday by naming hedge fund executive Scott Bessent as his choice for treasury secretary following

days of hand-wringing over the position that is of keen interest to global investors. He also said he'd bring back his first-term budget director, Russell Vought, a key author of the Project 2025 policy blueprint who has advocated for unilaterally rejecting spending that Congress authorized, firing federal workers and taking control of independent regulators.

Trump also announced plans to bring back controversial foreign policy aide Sebastian Gorka, who left Trump's first White House.

Trump's choice for labor secretary, Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, R-Ore., flipped the usual Republican pattern because organized labor lobbied for her while business leaders objected. He named Janette Nesheiwat, a medical contributor on Fox News, as his pick for surgeon general; former Rep. Dave Weldon, R-Fla., to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Johns Hopkins surgeon and public health expert Marty Makary as Food and Drug Administration commissioner; and retired football player and former Texas state Rep. Scott Turner for secretary of housing and urban development.

## NY judge calls off Trump sentencing in hush money case

*The Washington Post*

NEW YORK — The judge overseeing Donald Trump's hush money case has given his lawyers until a few days after Thanksgiving to argue that his conviction should be thrown out because he was elected again as president, and he officially called off Trump's sentencing that was scheduled for this week.

It remained unclear whether New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan would sentence Trump for his 34 felony convictions before the president-elect takes office Jan. 20, but the schedule that was ordered Friday potentially leaves room for it. The judge's one-page order canceled this week's proceeding but did not schedule a new one or reference the possibility of a new date.

Merchan is allowing Trump's lawyers to make a new set of immunity-related arguments related to his conviction in May for falsifying business records to cover up a hush money payment to an adult-film actress ahead of the 2016 election.



# Moscow offers recruits debt forgiveness

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law granting debt forgiveness to new army recruits who enlist to fight in Ukraine.

The measure, whose final version appeared on a government website Saturday, underscores Russia's needs for military personnel in the nearly 3-year-old war, even as it fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile last week.

According to Russian state news agency Interfax, the new legislation allows those signing up for a one-year contract to write off bad debts of up to \$96,000. The law applies to debts for which a court order for collection was issued and enforcement proceedings had commenced before Dec. 1, 2024. It also applies to the

spouses of new recruits.

Russia has ramped up military recruitment by offering increasing financial incentives, in some cases several times the average salary, to those willing to fight.

The strategy has allowed the military to boost its ranks in the conflict zone while avoiding another mobilization order. A "partial mobilization" in September 2022 sparked an exodus of tens of thousands of Russian men, who fled the country to avoid enlistment.

The intense and drawn-out war has strained Russian resources. Putin in September called for the military to increase its troops by 180,000.

The United States, South Korea and Ukraine have said North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in Octo-

ber, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat on the front lines, piling more pressure on Ukraine's also weary and overstretched army.

The push for recruits coincides with a new intermediate-range ballistic missile the Kremlin fired at Ukraine on Thursday. Putin said it was in response to Kyiv's use of American and British missiles capable of striking deeper into Russia.

Ukraine's Security Service showed The Associated Press on Sunday wreckage of the new experimental ballistic missile, which struck a factory in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

The fragments of the missile called Oreshnik — Russian for hazel tree, and which the Pentagon said is based on Russia's

RS-26 Rubezh intercontinental ballistic missile — have not been analyzed yet, according to security officials on site in an undisclosed location in Ukraine. The AP and other media were able to see the fragments before they were taken by investigators.

Charred, mangled wires and an ashy airframe the size of a large snow tire was all that remained of the weapon, which can carry either conventional or nuclear warheads.

"It should be noted that this is the first time the remains of such a missile have been discovered on the territory of Ukraine," said an expert with Ukraine's Security Service, who identified himself only by his first name Oleh because he wasn't authorized to discuss the issue.

## Philippine VP threatens to have president killed

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte said Saturday that she has contracted an assassin to kill the president, his wife and the House of Representatives speaker if she herself is killed, in a brazen public threat that she warned was not a joke.

Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin referred the "active threat" against President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to an elite presidential guards force "for immediate proper action." It was not immediately clear what actions would be taken.

The Presidential Security Command boosted Marcos' security and said it considered the vice president's threat, which was "made so brazenly in public," a national security issue.

The presidential security force said it was "coordinating with law enforcement agencies to detect, deter and defend

against any and all threats to the president and the first family."

Duterte, a lawyer, later tried to walk back her remarks and said they were not an actual threat, but only an expression of concern over an unspecified threat to her own life.

"If I expressed the concern, they will say that's a threat to the life of the president?" Duterte said to journalists. "Why would I kill him if not for revenge from the grave? There is no reason for me to kill him. What's the benefit for me?"

Under the Philippine penal code, such public remarks may constitute a crime of threatening to inflict a wrong on a person or his family, and is punishable by a jail term and fine.

The Philippine Constitution says that if a president dies, sustains a permanent disability, is removed from office or resigns, the vice president takes over.

## Israeli strike kills Lebanese soldier, wounds at least 18

Associated Press

BEIRUT — An Israeli strike on a Lebanese army center Sunday killed one soldier and wounded 18 others, the Lebanese military said. Meanwhile, the Hezbollah militant group fired barrages of rockets into northern and central Israel, wounding at least five people.

Israeli strikes have killed over 40 Lebanese troops since the start of the war between Israel and Hezbollah, even as Lebanon's military has largely kept to the sidelines.

The Israeli military expressed regret over the strike, saying it occurred in an area of ongoing combat operations against Hezbollah. It said in a statement that its operations are directed solely against Hezbollah and not the Lebanese military, and that the strike was under review.

Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, con-

demned it as an assault on U.S.-led cease-fire efforts, calling it a "direct, bloody message rejecting all efforts and ongoing contacts" to end the war.

The strike occurred in southwestern Lebanon on the coastal road between Tyre and Naqoura, where there has been heavy fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

Hezbollah fired barrages of rockets into northern and central Israel on Sunday, some of which were intercepted.

Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said it was treating two people in the central city of Petah Tikva, a 23-year-old man who was lightly wounded by a blast and a 70-year-old woman suffering from smoke inhalation from a car that caught fire. The first responders said they treated three other people in northern Israel, including a 60-year-old man in serious condition.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### State sues Dallas over pot decriminalization

**TX** DALLAS — Attorney General Ken Paxton is suing Dallas for the second time in three months, this time arguing the city is violating state law by enforcing a voter-approved charter amendment banning arrests for low-level marijuana offenses.

The latest legal action follows suits Paxton filed in January against cities like Austin and Denton, where similar voter-supported mandates on weed passed. Dallas officials announced Tuesday the city would enforce Proposition R, barring police from arresting or citing people on suspicion of carrying four ounces or less of marijuana.

Voters approved the proposition on Nov. 5 despite the use and possession of recreational marijuana still being illegal in Texas.

### Dads sue over ban from games in wristband flap

**NH** CONCORD — Two New Hampshire fathers who were barred from school district events for wearing pink wristbands marked “XX” to represent female chromosomes insisted at a federal court hearing Thursday that they didn’t set out to harass or otherwise target a transgender soccer player at the game they attended.

Kyle Fellers and Anthony Foote sued the Bow school district after being banned from school grounds for wearing the wristbands at their daughters’ soccer game in September. The no-trespass orders have since expired, but a judge is deciding

whether the plaintiffs should be allowed to wear the wristbands and carry signs at upcoming school events, including basketball games, swim meets and a music concert, while the case proceeds.

Testifying at Thursday’s hearing, both men said that they did not view the wristbands as a protest against Parker Tirrell, a transgender girl on the opposing team, but rather as a show of support for their daughters and their teammates. U.S. District Court Judge Steven McAuliffe questioned whether there is a meaningful distinction and whether their intentions matter.

### French fry firms accused of forming potato ‘cartel’

**ID** BOISE — Two leading frozen potato manufacturers based in Idaho face a lawsuit over allegations of price fixing.

Boise agribusiness giant J.R. Simplot and Eagle potato producer Lamb Weston were among four companies sued Friday in U.S. District Court in Illinois for conspiring to artificially raise prices of frozen potato products, including french fries, hash browns and tater tots, according to the lawsuit.

McCain Foods and Cavendish Farms, both headquartered in Canada, are also named in the lawsuit. Together, the four companies control over 97% of the frozen potato product market in the U.S. — a \$68-billion-per-year industry, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit, brought by Redner’s Markets, an employee-owned supermarket chain based in Pennsylvania, on behalf of itself and others, accuses the companies of illegally coordinating an effort to imple-

ment lockstep price increases since at least 2021 in violation of the Sherman Act, a federal law that prohibits anticompetitive agreements and conduct that monopolizes or attempts to monopolize a certain market.

### Nitrogen used to execute man who killed hitchhiker

**AL** ATMORE — An Alabama man convicted in the 1994 killing of a hitchhiker cursed at the prison warden and made obscene gestures with his hands shortly before he was put to death Thursday evening in the nation’s third execution using nitrogen gas.

Carey Dale Grayson, 50, was executed at the William C. Holman Correctional Facility in southern Alabama. He was one of four teenagers convicted of killing Vickie DeBlieux, 37, as she hitchhiked through the state on the way to her mother’s home in Louisiana. The woman was attacked, beaten and thrown off a cliff.

Alabama began using nitrogen gas earlier this year to carry out some executions. The method involves placing a respirator gas mask over the face to replace breathable air with pure nitrogen gas, causing death by lack of oxygen.

### Casey concedes Senate race to McCormick

**PA** HARRISBURG — Democratic Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania conceded his reelection bid to Republican David McCormick on Thursday, as a statewide recount showed no signs of closing the gap and his campaign suffered blows in court in its effort to get favorable ballots counted.

Casey’s concession comes

more than two weeks after Election Day, as a grindingly slow ballot-counting process became a spectacle of hours-long election board meetings, social media outrage, lawsuits and accusations that some county officials were openly flouting the law.

Republicans had been claiming that Democrats were trying to steal McCormick’s seat by counting “illegal votes.” Casey’s campaign had accused of Republicans of trying to block enough legitimate votes to prevent him from pulling ahead and winning.

### Lawsuit challenges gun ban for young adults

**HI** HONOLULU — The latest lawsuit to take aim at Hawaii’s gun laws challenges the state’s ban on gun ownership for young adults 18 to 20 years old, which Second Amendment advocates say is an unconstitutional restriction on the right of Americans to bear arms.

Elijah Pinales, 19, and Juda Roache, who turns 18 next month, want to own guns for self-defense, according to their lawsuit filed Wednesday night in U.S. District Court in Honolulu.

Their lawyers assert that Hawaii is the only state with a complete ban on acquiring and owning firearms and ammunition by those who are 18 to 20. Some states allow 18-year-olds to purchase a long gun and some allow for private party transfer of handguns, said Alan Beck, one of the lawyers who filed the lawsuit and has lodged numerous other challenges to Hawaii weapons laws.

— From wire reports

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# Love, Notre Dame hand Army 1st loss

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Notre Dame's tribute game to its "Four Horsemen" turned into a pretty good one-man show by Jeremiah Love.

Love scored three touchdowns, tying a school record with his 11th straight game with a rushing TD, and the No. 6 Fighting Irish ended No. 18 Army's 13-game winning streak with a 49-14 victory on Saturday night at Yankee Stadium.

The sophomore had TD runs of 68 and 14 yards, finishing with 130 yards on seven carries, and leaped over a defender at the goal line to finish a 6-yard scoring pass from Riley Leonard.

"It's almost like he's anticipating what the defense is going to do and when he breaks through that second level, I don't see many people that can catch him," Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman said of Love, who had a 76-yard TD run last weekend against Virginia.

Leonard threw for two TDs and Jadarian Price ran for two scores for the Irish (10-1), who won their ninth straight to improve their College Football Playoff chances. Notre Dame was No. 6 in those rankings last week and looks every bit like a national title contender, allowing 14 or fewer points in six straight games.

"Everybody on our offense is a dog," Love said. "Coach Freeman calls us 'savages' and that's really what we are. We're just continuing to grow every single week and get better."

Army quarterback Bryson Daily ran for 139 yards and both touchdowns, giving him 23 on the ground this season. The loss by the Black Knights (9-1) left No. 1 Oregon as the only unbeaten team in FBS. Army came in leading the nation with 334.9 yards rushing per game but managed only 207 against Notre Dame.

"We couldn't stay on the field

and props to them," Daily said. "They're a great team."

Notre Dame beat Army for the 16th straight time in the first matchup where both teams were ranked since 1958, the Black Knights' last victory.

Army coach Jeff Monken said playing the Irish at Yankee Stadium was a great experience for his players, though wished they could have made it more competitive.

"I mean, every phase they outclassed us," Monken said.

**No. 2 Ohio St. 38, No. 5 Indiana 15:** Will Howard passed for two touchdowns and rushed for another, TreVeyon Henderson ran for a score and the host Buckeyes beat the previously undefeated Hoosiers.

All Ohio State (10-1, 7-1 Big Ten, CFP No. 2) has to do now is beat Michigan at home next Saturday and it will earn a return to the Big Ten championship game for the first time since 2020 and get a rematch with No. 1 Oregon. The Ducks beat Ohio State 32-31 in a wild one back on Oct. 12.

The Hoosiers (10-1, 7-1, No. 5 CFP) had their best chance to beat the Buckeyes for the first time since 1988 but were hurt by special teams mistakes and disrupted by an Ohio State defense that sacked quarterback Kurtis Rourke five times.

**Florida 24, No. 9 Mississippi: DJ Lagway** threw two touchdown passes, Montrell Johnson ran for 127 yards and a score, and the host Gators upset the Rebels and knocked them out of College Football Playoff contention.

Florida (6-5, 4-4 Southeastern Conference), which topped LSU last week, beat ranked teams in consecutive weeks for the first time since 2008 and became bowl eligible. The late-season spurt provided another vote of confidence for coach Billy Napier, who is expected back for a fourth season.

Ole Miss (8-3, 4-3), which entered the day as a 10-point favor-

ite, lost for the first time in four games and surely will drop out of the 12-team playoff picture. The Rebels ranked ninth in the latest CFP and needed only to avoid stumbling down the stretch against Florida and lowly Mississippi State to clinch a spot in the playoff field.

**Oklahoma 24, No. 7 Alabama 3:** Xavier Robinson ran for career highs of 107 yards and two touchdowns, and the host Sooners became bowl eligible and dealt a severe blow to the Crimson Tide's chances of receiving a College Football Playoff berth.

Jackson Arnold ran for 131 yards on 25 carries and completed 9 of 11 passes for the Sooners (6-5, 2-5 SEC), who got coach Brent Venables off the hot seat on Senior Night. It was Oklahoma's first Southeastern Conference home win after leaving the Big 12 this summer.

**No. 4 Penn St. 26, Minnesota 25:** Drew Allar passed for 244 yards and a touchdown, rushed for a score and completed a late fourth-down conversion to help the visiting Nittany Lions stay on track for a spot in the College Football Playoff.

Tyler Warren had eight receptions for 102 yards for Penn State (10-1, 7-1 Big Ten, No. 4 CFP), which dodged the upset on an afternoon when three teams in the projected 12-team playoff were beaten.

**No. 11 Miami 42, Wake Forest 14:** Cam Ward passed for 280 yards and threw two touchdowns to Jacoby George on another record-breaking day, Mishael Powell ran an interception back 76 yards for a touchdown and the host Hurricanes pulled away late.

Miami (10-1, 6-1 Atlantic Coast Conference, No. 8 College Football Playoff) can clinch a berth in the ACC title game with a win at Syracuse next weekend.

**No. 13 SMU 33, Virginia 7:** Kevin Jennings threw for a career-high 323 yards and two touchdowns and ran for another,

and the visiting Mustangs clinched a spot in the ACC championship game by routing the Cavaliers.

Isaiah Smith and Jared Harrison-Hunte each had two sacks to help SMU (10-1, 7-0, No. 13 CFP) extend its winning streak to eight.

**No. 21 Arizona St. 28, No. 14 BYU 23:** Cam Skattebo ran for 147 yards and three touchdowns, Sam Leavitt threw for 247 yards and a score, and the host Sun Devils held on in the final minutes.

The tight finish was capped by a bizarre final minute, including a premature field storming by Arizona State's fans.

Javan Robinson's interception with 1:04 left looked as if it would close it out for Arizona State, but the Sun Devils stalled on the ensuing offensive drive. Leavitt threw the ball out of bounds on fourth down and Arizona State's student section — believing the game was over — rushed the field.

But officials ruled that there was 1 second left and BYU had a shot at the Hail Mary attempt, which failed.

**Kansas 37, No. 16 Colorado 21:** Devin Neal ran for 207 yards and three touchdowns, caught four passes for 80 yards and another score, and led the host Jayhawks to a victory that dealt a big blow to the Buffaloes' hopes of playing for the Big 12 title.

Jalon Daniels threw for 189 yards and a touchdown, and the Jayhawks (5-6, 4-4) scored on every offensive series but their last, keeping Colorado stars Shedeur Sanders and Heisman Trophy candidate Travis Hunter standing on the sideline.

Now, the Buffaloes (8-3, 6-2 Big 12, No. 16 CFP) need to beat Oklahoma State and get some help to play for a championship in their return to the Big 12, and earn the league's guaranteed spot in the College Football Playoff.



# Verstappen wins 4th straight F1 title

*Associated Press*

LAS VEGAS — Asked how he planned to celebrate his fourth consecutive Formula 1 championship, Max Verstappen did a quick scan of the room searching for a drop of alcohol.

“Well, I ran out of beer, so I don’t know,” he said. “Maybe another one, and then maybe I switch to something else. I don’t need to drive anymore, so we don’t do the drink and drive. I don’t need to do that.”

Actually, Verstappen can do anything he wants after finishing fifth on Saturday night in the Las Vegas Grand Prix to beat Lando Norris of McLaren for the title with two F1 races remaining this season.

The Red Bull driver is now a king of Las Vegas, a year after he arrived in Sin City extremely negative about the extravagant race on the famed Strip. He won and completely changed his tune last November as the Dutchman even sang “Viva Las Vegas” as he crossed the finish line.

Now he used the street circuit to become only the sixth driver in F1 history to win at least four titles. Verstappen needed only to finish ahead of Norris to win the title. He started fifth but was already up to second by the 10th lap and Norris never challenged.

He ended the race up 63 points over Norris with two events remaining this season — a position Verstappen said he never expected to be in even though he’s the son of a former F1 driver. His father, Jos, was even once teammates with Michael Schumacher, one of the best in F1 history.

Despite being surrounded by greatness, Verstappen insisted he never expected his own career to be so successful.

“When you’re growing up racing some legendary drivers, it’s very impressive that I can even be on the podium, whenever it is,” he said.

“Maybe win a championship? It’s already hard enough to win one, and then of course, then

you also need a bit of luck to be in the right team situation to maybe win more. Luckily, we did that.”

The team celebrated their champion as soon as the race ended.

“Max Verstappen you are a four-time world champion,” team principal Christian Horner said on the radio. “That is a phenomenal, phenomenal achievement. You can be incredibly proud of yourself as we are.”

Verstappen sounded unusually emotional on the radio.

“Oh My God, what a season. Four times. Thank you, thank you guys,” he said. “We gave it all.”

The race was won, meanwhile, by George Russell who was followed by Lewis Hamilton in the first 1-2 sweep for the Mercedes drivers since 2022. Hamilton came from 10th on the grid to capture his podium finish.

The duo crossed the finish line under a checkered flag

waved by actor Sylvester Stallone.

Carlos Sainz Jr. finished third for Ferrari as the constructor championship remains a tight battle between leader McLaren and Ferrari. Charles Leclerc, his teammate, was fourth. Red Bull had won the title that pays roughly \$150 million in prize money the last two seasons but has slipped to third in the standings.

That championship battle appears headed to next month’s season finale in Abu Dhabi. McLaren has a 24-point lead over Ferrari heading into this weekend’s race in Qatar after Norris and Oscar Piastri finished sixth and seventh in Las Vegas.

“Max deserved to win it. He drove a better season than I did, he deserved it more than anyone else,” Norris said. “Max just doesn’t have a weakness. When he’s got the best car, he dominates and when he’s not got the best car, he’s still just there always.”

# Jokic, Nuggets continue success against Lakers

*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — Nikola Jokic scored 34 points and Michael Porter Jr. added 24 as the Denver Nuggets used a strong second half to beat the Los Angeles Lakers 127-102 on Saturday night. The Nuggets are now 13-1 in their last 14 games against the Lakers.

Russell Westbrook had 14 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds for Denver against his former team.

Austin Reaves scored 19 points and LeBron James added 18 for Los Angeles, which lost consecutive home games after starting the season 7-0 at home. Rui Hachimura, back in the starting lineup after missing the previous five games with a left ankle sprain, scored 10 points in

22 minutes.

It was the teams’ first meeting since the Nuggets beat the Lakers in the first round of the playoffs earlier this year. Denver also swept them in the Western Conference final the previous year.

**Jazz 121, Knicks 106:** Lauri Markkanen had 34 points, Colin Sexton had four 3-pointers in the fourth quarter and host Utah ran past New York to snap a four-game skid.

Sexton finished with 25 points and John Collins had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Jazz.

**Magic 111, Pistons 100:** Franz Wagner had 30 points, nine rebounds and eight assists as host Orlando beat Detroit for its eighth win in nine games.

Wagner, who has scored 30 or

more points in five of his last seven games, sat out the fourth quarter while the Magic’s bench stretched Orlando’s lead to 22 with 7:19 remaining.

**Grizzlies 142, Bulls 131:** Scotty Pippen Jr. had a career-best 30 points with 10 assists to lead visiting Memphis past Chicago.

Jaylen Wells added 26 points as the Grizzlies won their second straight.

**Trail Blazers 104, Rockets 98:** Anfernee Simons scored 25 points and Shaedon Sharpe added 24 as visiting Portland bounced back from a tough loss with a win over Houston.

The victory came after the Trail Blazers were blown out 116-88 by the Rockets in an NBA Cup game Friday night.

**Bucks 125, Hornets 119:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 32 points and 11 rebounds and Damian Lillard added 31 points to lead host Milwaukee past Charlotte for its fourth straight win.

LaMelo Ball had a career-high 50 points for the Hornets, and Brandon Miller added 32. Ball hit 17 of 38 shots, including 6 of 17 beyond the arc, and 10 of 13 free throws.

**Spurs 104, Warriors 94:** Victor Wembanyama scored 25 points, Harrison Barnes had 22 and host San Antonio overcame a 17-point third-quarter deficit to beat Golden State.

Wembanyama added nine assists, seven rebounds and three blocks in his return from a three-game absence with a bruised right knee.

# Andersson, Flames beat Wild in shootout

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — Rusmus Andersson scored the shootout winner and the Calgary Flames held off the Minnesota Wild 4-3 after blowing a two-goal lead late in the third period Saturday.

Kevin Rooney, Martin Pospisil and Yegor Sharangovich scored in regulation for Calgary, which has won four games in a row.

Marcus Johansson, Brock Faber and Marco Rossi scored for Minnesota. The NHL's top road team, the Wild have lost only once in regulation in 13 away games.

Frederick Gaudreau scored for Minnesota before Justin Kirkland replied for the Flames to tie the shootout at 1 until Andersson fired a shot past Filip Gustavsson in the fifth round. Calgary goalie Dan Vladar then clinched the win by denying Ryan Hartman.

Down 3-1 late in the third, Faber's power-play goal with four minutes left drew the Wild to within one. Rossi provided the game-tying goal with 34 seconds remaining and the goalie pulled to help the visitors earn a point.

**Flyers 3, Blackhawks 2 (OT):** Matvei Michkov scored a power-play goal in overtime as host Philadelphia overcame a two-goal deficit in the third period to beat Chicago.

Michkov scored on a set play, taking a pass from Travis Konecny on the back door and slamming it home at 1:06 of overtime.

With the Flyers trailing 2-0 in the third period, Sean Couturier and Noah Cates scored goals 2:38 apart to tie the score.

**Kings 2, Kraken 1:** Adrian Kempe and Quinton Byfield scored in the second period, and host Los Angeles beat Seattle.

David Rittich made 19 saves for the Kings, who improved to 6-2-1 at home.

Kempe and Byfield scored

1:44 apart in the second period. Byfield buried a sharp-angle slap shot on a power play while dropping to a knee. It was his 98th career point in 200 games.

**Avalanche 7, Panthers 4:** Jonathan Drouin got his first two goals of the season, Mikko Rantanen had a goal and three assists and visiting Colorado beat slumping Florida.

Drouin was playing for only the fifth time this season. He missed 16 games with an upper-body injury.

Valeri Nichushkin had a goal and two assists for the Avalanche, who got a four-goal second period — with scores from Drouin, Rantanen, Logan O'Connor and Samuel Girard.

**Golden Knights 6, Canadiens 2:** Visiting Vegas exploded for five unanswered goals in the second period to roll over Montreal.

Tomas Hertl, Callahan Burke, Ivan Barbashev, Tanner Pearson and Keegan Kolesar each scored.

The Canadiens' Emil Heinemann and Jayden Struble scored in the third before the Golden Knights' Jack Eichel collected his seventh of the season.

**Canucks 4, Senators 3:** Jake DeBrusk had two goals and an assist, and visiting Vancouver beat Ottawa.

Kiefer Sherwood had a goal and an assist for the Canucks in the opener of a six-game trip. Teddy Blueger also scored, and Elias Pettersson had two assists.

The Senators lost their fifth consecutive game. Claude Giroux had a goal and an assist. Brady Tkachuk and Tim Stutzle also scored.

**Bruins 2, Red Wings 1:** Brad Marchand's goal midway through the third period proved to be the winner, and visiting Boston won its second straight game under interim coach Joe Sacco, beating Detroit.

Marchand scored with 8:30 left as the Bruins followed a 1-0 victory over Utah on Thursday

in Sacco's debut after he replaced Jim Montgomery, who was dismissed Tuesday. Marchand's goal was his sixth this season and the 18th of his career against the Red Wings.

Lucas Raymond scored for the Red Wings, who have lost four of their last five games. Cam Talbot stopped 27 shots.

**Stars 4, Lightning 2:** Matt Duchene and Roope Hintz scored in the third period, and visiting Dallas beat Tampa Bay.

Jake Oettinger stopped 27 shots while improving to 11-3 on the season.

Anthony Cirelli scored twice for the Lightning, who had a five-game point streak. Andrei Vasilevskiy made 24 saves.

**Utah 6, Penguins 1:** Sidney Crosby scored his 600th NHL goal for Pittsburgh on Saturday night, but the Penguins lost to visiting Utah.

Dylan Guenther scored twice, while Nick Bjugstad, Jack McBain, Mikhail Sergachev and Alexander Kerfoot also scored for Utah.

Crosby is the 21st player in NHL history to score 600 goals. He reached the milestone with 10 seconds left on a five-on-three power play and now has seven goals in his last 12 games. He finished a one-timer from the right side of the net, set up on a pass from Erik Karlsson at 3:11 of the second period.

**Devils 3, Capitals 2:** Tomas Tatar had a goal and an assist, and visiting New Jersey beat Washington.

Brenden Dillon and Dougie Hamilton also scored for the Devils, who moved to first place in the Metropolitan Division. Jake Allen made 23 saves, including a game-saving glove stop on Connor McMichael late in the third, and has now won three of his last four starts to improve to 5-2-1 on the season.

**Blue Jackets 5, Hurricanes 4 (SO):** Kirill Marchenko tied it late in the third period with his second goal of the game, Sean Monahan had the only score in

a shootout, and host Columbus beat Carolina for its third straight win.

Dmitri Voronkov had a power-play goal and Dante Fabbro also scored for the Blue Jackets. Elvis Merzlikins made 32 saves, including stopping all three shots he faced in the shootout to help Columbus get its third straight win for the first time since March 11-16, 2022.

**Predators 4, Jets 1:** Roman Josi scored twice and Jonathan Marchessault scored a goal and assisted on another to lead host Nashville to a victory over Winnipeg.

Steven Stamkos also scored and Juuse Saros made 22 saves for the Predators, winners of two of three.

**Islanders 3, Blues 1:** Kyle Palmieri scored twice, Brock Nelson had a goal and two assists and host New York beat St. Louis to end a three-game skid.

Ilya Sorokin stopped 24 shots and got his 100th career victory for the Islanders.

**Sabres 4, Sharks 2:** Alex Tuch scored a short-handed goal early in the third period to give visiting Buffalo its first lead and the Sabres beat San Jose.

Tuch intercepted a pass in his defensive zone and beat Mackenzie Blackwood on a breakaway for his third short-handed goal of the season. That gave Buffalo a come-from-behind win and spoiled the night for the sellout crowd that turned out to watch Joe Thornton get his No. 19 jersey retired.

**Oilers 6, Rangers 2:** Connor McDavid had two goals and an assist as host Edmonton beat New York.

Leon Draisaitl and Evan Bouchard each had a goal and an assist, and Vasily Podkolzin and Darnell Nurse also scored to help the Oilers win for the second time in five games (2-2-1) after a three-game win streak. Mattias Janmark and Connor Brown each had two assists and Stuart Skinner had 33 saves.