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Democratic candidates dominate at polls

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats are dominating the first major Election Day since President Donald Trump returned to the White House.

And while a debate about the future of the Democratic Party may have only just begun, there are signs that the economy — specifically, Trump's inability to deliver the economic turnaround he promised last fall — may be a real problem for Trump's GOP heading into next year's higher-stakes midterm elections.

Democrats on Tuesday won governor's races in Virginia and New Jersey, the only states electing new chief executives this year. They also swept a trio of state Supreme Court contests in swing-state Pennsylvania and ballot measures from Colorado to Maine.

Trump was largely absent from the campaign trail, but Republican candidates closely aligned themselves with the president, betting that his big win last year could provide a path to victory this time. They were wrong.

Democrats are hoping the off-year romp offers a new winning playbook, but some caution may be warranted. Tuesday's elections were limited to a handful of states, most of which lean blue, and the party that holds the White House typically struggles in off-year elections.

Meanwhile, Republicans in Washington may be more excited than Democrats that a self-described democratic socialist will become New York City's next mayor.

Here's some top takeaways:

■ **A new Democratic playbook emerges:** Former Rep. Abigail Spanberger will become Virginia's next governor — and

Election 2025

Following are major results from Tuesday's elections.

■ **Virginia governor** — Democrat Abigail Spanberger defeated Winsome Earle-Sears.

■ **New Jersey governor** — Democrat Mikie Sherrill defeated Jack Ciattarelli.

■ **New York City major** — Democrat Zohran Mamdani defeated Andrew Cuomo and Curtis Sliwa.

■ **California** — Voters approved new congressional district boundaries, a measure pushed by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom.

■ **Maine** — Voters approved a red flag gun law in the wake of an Army reservist killing 18 people in a mass shooting.

its first female chief executive — while Rep. Mikie Sherrill won the New Jersey governor's office by running campaigns focused largely on the economy, public safety and health care.

Early results showed Democrats outperforming their margins from four years ago in fast-growing suburbs, rural areas and even places with high concentrations of military voters.

The Democrats won by actively distancing themselves from some of the Democratic Party's far-left policies and emphasized what Spanberger described in her victory speech as "pragmatism over partisanship."

A growing collection of Democratic leaders believe the moderate approach holds the key to the party's revival after the GOP won the White House and both congressional chambers last year.

Above all, the Democrats in both states focused on rising costs such as groceries, energy and health care, which Trump

has struggled to control.

In addition to tacking to the middle on economic issues, Spanberger and Sherrill downplayed their support for progressive priorities, including LGBTQ rights and resistance against Trump's attack on American institutions. Spanberger rarely even mentioned Trump's name on the campaign trail.

Both also have resumes that appealed to the middle.

Spanberger is a former CIA case officer who spent years abroad working undercover, while Sherrill spent a decade as an active-duty helicopter pilot for the Navy before entering Congress. Both played up their public safety backgrounds as a direct response to the GOP's attack that Democrats are soft on crime.

■ **It's (still) the economy, stupid:** Trump and his Republican allies have been especially focused on immigration, crime and conservative cultural issues.

But voters who decided Tuesday's top elections were more concerned about the economy, jobs and costs of living. That's according to the AP Voter Poll, an expansive survey of more than 17,000 voters in New Jersey, Virginia, California and New York City suggesting that many voters felt they can't get ahead financially in today's economy.

Ironically, the same economic anxieties helped propel Trump to the White House just one year ago. Now, the economic concerns appear to be undermining his party's political goals in 2025 — and could be more problematic for the GOP in next year's midterm elections, which will decide the balance of power for Trump's final two years in office.

That's even as Trump regularly brags about stock prices booming and boasted about leading a new renaissance of American manufacturing.

About half of Virginia voters said the economy was the most important issue facing their state while most New Jersey voters said either taxes or the economy were the top issue in their state. Just over half of New York City voters said cost of living was their top concern.

It was unclear whether kitchen table concerns weighing so heavily on voters might help break the impasse that has prompted the government shutdown, which has spanned more than a month.

■ **A referendum on Trump:** This was the first major Election Day since Trump returned to the White House. And voters rejected candidates and causes aligned with Trump's Republican Party from Virginia and Pennsylvania to Maine and New Jersey.

They also expressed strong feelings about the direction of the country under his leadership.

About 6 in 10 voters in Virginia and New Jersey said they are "angry" or "dissatisfied" with the way things are going in the country today, according to the AP Voter Poll. Just one-third said they are "enthusiastic" or "satisfied."

In a sign of the extent of the GOP's struggles, Republicans lost the Virginia attorney general's race to Democrat Jay Jones, who was forced to apologize after text messages surfaced weeks before Election Day in which he depicted the murder of political opponents.

Fearing a bad night, Trump tried to distance himself from the election results.

US fatally strikes another alleged drug boat

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced yet another deadly strike on a boat accused of ferrying drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, coming the same day an aircraft carrier began heading to the region in a new expansion of military firepower.

The attack Tuesday killed two people aboard the vessel, Hegseth said, bringing the death toll from the Trump administration's campaign in South American waters up to at least 66 people in at least 16 strikes.

President Donald Trump has

justified the strikes by saying the United States is in "armed conflict" with drug cartels and claiming the boats are operated by foreign terror organizations. The administration has not provided evidence or more details.

"We will find and terminate EVERY vessel with the intention of trafficking drugs to America to poison our citizens," Hegseth posted.

Lawmakers from both parties have pressed the Trump administration for more information on who is being targeted and the legal justification for the strikes given that Congress has not au-

thorized military action. United Nations human rights chief Volker Türk last week called for the U.S. to halt the attacks.

The latest strike comes as the USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier has left the Mediterranean Sea on its way to the Caribbean after Hegseth ordered it to the region more than a week ago. It will join an already robust buildup of American planes, ships and thousands of troops in Latin America.

A defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ship movements, confirmed that the Ford and the de-

stroyer USS Bainbridge crossed through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Atlantic on Tuesday.

The Ford originally deployed with five destroyers, but it's not clear if all of them will go to the Caribbean. Two of the other destroyers in the Ford's strike group, the USS Winston Churchill and the USS Mahan, are in the Mediterranean now, with the Mahan in port at Rota, Spain.

The other two destroyers, the USS Forrest Sherman and the USS Mitchener, are in the Red Sea, the official said.

US military police patrol on Okinawa makes 15 arrests

BY BRIAN McELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

U.S. military police arrested 15 service members during a recent patrol of the nightlife district in Okinawa city — the highest number of arrests on a single night since the patrols began in April, according to U.S. Forces Japan.

The patrol took place between midnight and 2 a.m. Saturday, a city spokesman said Wednesday. Gate 2 Street in Okinawa city, lined with bars and nightclubs, is just outside Kadena Air Base.

Two other service members were arrested the same night during a separate patrol of Naha city, USFJ spokesman Army Maj. D. Hunter Nix said.

The patrols — some of which include Japanese police — are part of an ongoing crackdown on U.S. military crime after a series of sexual assault allegations involving U.S. troops on the island that began in December 2023. A USFJ liberty order issued in October 2024 prohibits service members from drinking in off-

base establishments between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

During their sixth joint patrol with Japanese police in Okinawa city, the U.S. military arrested the 15 service members on accusations of violating the liberty order and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Nix said.

The remaining two were arrested during the U.S. military's first solo patrol of Naha, Okinawa's capital, that same morning, Nix said.

Military police detained two Marines after they threw water bottles at patrol officers, Marine Corps Installations Pacific commander Maj. Gen. Brian Wolford said at the scene.

Wolford accompanied the patrol that night and described the Naha streets as relatively quiet.

Nix declined to release additional details, including suspects' branches of service or the specific charges they may face. Their commanders will "impose appropriate sanctions on those found in violation of the Liberty Order or the Uniform Code of Military Justice," he said.

US, allies wrap exercise in Samoa for mass rescues

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

American sailors and personnel from nine other nations recently wrapped up a two-week exercise in the South Pacific island nation of Samoa as part of an annual U.S. Navy humanitarian mission.

The sailors, along with personnel from Samoa, Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore and the United Kingdom, rehearsed a mass rescue in the islands, according to an Australian Defence Department news release Wednesday.

Samoa is vulnerable to extreme weather, and the drill sought to improve disaster readiness and the ability of South Pacific nations to work together, the release said.

Five to nine named tropical cyclones could occur in the Southwest Pacific between this month and April, New Zealand's National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research reported Oct. 8.

The expeditionary sea base

USS John L. Canley arrived in Samoa on Oct. 21, the Samoan News Hub website reported.

The commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. Steve Koehler, attended Friday's closing ceremony for the exercise aboard the French patrol vessel Auguste Bénébig docked at Apia, the Samoan capital, according to the report.

The Navy's work in Samoa was part of Pacific Partnership, an annual deployment conceived after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami that involves port calls in developing nations in the region.

This year's mission, involving over 1,500 personnel, included stops in Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, Vanuatu, the Philippines, Fiji and Tonga, according to a Navy news release.

The operation, led by the commander of Destroyer Squadron 31, Capt. Mark Stefanik, is focused on engineering, disaster management and medical support, according to the Navy release.

Shutdown becomes longest on record

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The government shutdown entered its 36th day Wednesday, breaking the record as the longest ever and disrupting the lives of millions of Americans with program cuts, flight delays and federal workers nationwide left without paychecks.

President Donald Trump has refused to negotiate with Democrats over their demands to salvage expiring health insurance subsidies until they agree to reopen the government. But skeptical Democrats question whether the president will keep his word, particularly after the administration restricted SNAP food aid despite court orders to ensure funds are available to

prevent hunger.

Trump, whose first term at the White House set the previous government shutdown record, said this one was a “big factor, negative” in the GOP’s election losses Tuesday and he repeated his demands for Republicans to end the Senate filibuster as a way to reopen government — something senators have refused to do.

“We must get the government back open soon,” Trump said during a breakfast meeting Wednesday with GOP senators at the White House.

Trump pushed for ending the Senate rule, which requires a 60-vote threshold for advancing most legislation, as a way to steamroll the Democratic mi-

nority on the shutdown and pass a long list of other GOP priorities. Republicans now hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate, and Democrats have been able to block legislation that would fund the government, having voted more than a dozen times against.

“It’s time for Republicans to do what they have to do, and that’s terminate the filibuster,” Trump told the senators.

That push is likely to go unmet by Republican senators but could spur them to deal with the Democrats.

Trump has remained largely on the sidelines throughout the shutdown, keeping a robust schedule of global travel and events, including at his private

Mar-a-Lago club in Florida. Instead, talks have intensified among a loose coalition of centrist senators trying to negotiate an end to the stalemate.

Expectations are high that the logjam would break once election results were fully tallied in the off-year races widely watched as a gauge of voter sentiment over Trump’s second term. Democrats swept key contests, emboldening progressive senators who want to keep fighting for health care funds. Moderate Democrats have been more ready to compromise.

The top Democrats in Congress demanded that Trump meet with Capitol Hill leaders to negotiate an end to the shutdown and address health care.

Philippines death toll rises as typhoon nears Vietnam

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Typhoon Kalmaegi has left at least 85 people dead with 75 others missing in the central Philippines, many in widespread flooding that trapped people on their roofs and swept away cars in a hard-hit province still recovering from a deadly earthquake, officials said Wednesday.

Among the dead were six people who were killed when a Philippine air force helicopter crashed in the southern province of Agusan del Sur on Tuesday. The crew was on its way to provide humanitarian help to provinces battered by Kalmaegi, the military said. It did not give the cause of the crash.

Kalmaegi blew away from western Palawan province into the South China Sea before noon Wednesday with sustained winds of up to 81 mph and gusts of up to 112 mph, according to forecasters.

Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV, deputy administrator of the Office of Civil Defense, and pro-

vincial officials said many of the deaths were reported in the central province of Cebu, which was pummeled by Kalmaegi on Tuesday, setting off flash floods and causing a river and other waterways to swell.

The resulting flooding engulfed residential communities, forcing startled residents to climb on their roofs, where they desperately pleaded to be rescued as the floodwaters rose, officials said.

At least 49 drowned in floods and others died as a result of landslides and falling debris in Cebu, where 13 people were reported missing, the Office of Civil Defense said. It added that 62 others were reported missing in surrounding provinces.

Forecasters estimate the storm will reach Vietnam’s coast Friday morning. Meanwhile, Thailand’s weather agency issued an advisory for the northern, eastern and central parts of the country, warning that Kalmaegi could cause flash floods, landslides and river overflows.

2nd escaped monkey killed, 1 still loose after Miss. crash

Associated Press

HEIDELBERG, Miss. — A second monkey has been shot and killed and authorities said Tuesday that they were still searching for a third missing monkey a week after their escape from a truck that overturned on a Mississippi highway.

Someone shot the monkey after seeing it cross the highway on Monday evening about a mile from the scene of the Oct. 28 crash, Jasper County Sheriff Sheriff Randy Johnson said. Johnson said he was contacted by a person with the transport company who recovered the monkey after a civilian shot it.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks confirmed Tuesday in a news release that one monkey was still unaccounted for after two of the escaped monkeys were “recovered deceased.” Officials have warned that people should not approach the Rhesus monkeys, saying they are known to be aggressive.

Over the weekend, a woman

who said she feared for the safety of her children shot and killed another escaped monkey after her teenage son saw a monkey outside their home near Heidelberg.

A truck carrying 21 monkeys overturned on Interstate 59 north of Heidelberg last week and several monkeys escaped. Video from the scene showed monkeys and wooden crates in tall grass beside the interstate. Searchers in protective equipment were seen scouring nearby fields and woods. Five monkeys were killed during the search and three were missing initially, officials said.

The monkeys had been housed at the Tulane University National Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana, which routinely provides primates to scientific research organizations, according to the university. Tulane has said it wasn’t transporting the monkeys and they do not belong to the university. The remaining 13 monkeys arrived at their original destination last week, according to Tulane.

High court justices appear skeptical of Trump tariff power

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Key Supreme Court conservatives seemed skeptical Wednesday that President Donald Trump has the power to unilaterally impose far-reaching tariffs, potentially putting at risk a key part of his agenda in the biggest legal test yet of his unprecedented presidency.

The Republican administration is trying to defend the tariffs that have been central to Trump's economic agenda after lower courts ruled the emergency law he invoked doesn't give him near-limitless power to set and change duties on imports.

The Constitution says Congress has the power to levy tariffs.

The Trump administration has argued, however, that in emergency situations the president can take measures to regulate importation — and that would also include tariffs.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett grilled the government on that point.

"Has there ever been another instance in which a statute has used that language to confer the power?" she asked.

Justice Neil Gorsuch also questioned whether Trump's position would hand too much congressional power to the president.

Questions from Chief Justice John Roberts also suggested that he might not be convinced of the validity of the government's argument.

With the court's three liberal-leaning justices seeming deeply dubious, the tariffs challengers could win by swaying two conservatives.

A decision in the case could take weeks or months.

Trump has called the case one of the most important in the country's history and said a ruling against him would be catastrophic for the economy.

DC resident who threw sandwich at federal agent calls it protest, not crime

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hurling a sandwich at a federal agent was an act of protest for Washington, D.C., resident Sean Charles Dunn. A jury must decide if it was also a federal crime.

"No matter who you are, you can't just go around throwing stuff at people because you're mad," Assistant U.S. Attorney John Parron told jurors Tuesday at the start of Dunn's trial on a misdemeanor assault charge.

Dunn doesn't dispute that he threw his submarine-style sandwich at a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent outside a nightclub on the night of Aug. 10. It was an "exclamation point" for Dunn as he expressed his opposition to President Donald Trump's law-enforcement surge in the nation's capital, defense attorney Julia Gatto said during the trial's opening statements.

"It was a harmless gesture at the end of him exercising his right to speak out," Gatto said.

A bystander's cellphone video of the confrontation went viral on social media, turning

Dunn into a symbol of resistance against Trump's federal takeover. Murals depicting him mid-throw popped up in the city virtually overnight.

"He did it. He threw the sandwich," Gatto told jurors. "And now the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia has turned that moment — a thrown sandwich — into a criminal case."

A grand jury refused to indict Dunn on a felony assault count. After the rare rebuke from the grand jury, U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro's office instead charged Dunn with a misdemeanor.

CBP Agent Gregory Lairmore, the government's first witness, said the sandwich "exploded" when it struck his chest hard enough that he could feel it through his ballistic vest.

Lairmore and other CBP agents were standing in front of a club hosting a "Latin Night" when Dunn approached and shouted profanities at them, calling them "fascists."

Dunn was a Justice Department employee who worked as an international affairs specialist in its criminal division.

FBI fires additional agents over role in Trump investigation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI has continued its personnel purge, forcing out additional agents and supervisors tied to the federal investigation into President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The latest firings came despite efforts by Washington's top federal prosecutor to try to stop at least some of the terminations, people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

The employees were told this week that they were being fired, but those plans were paused af-

ter D.C. U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro raised concerns, according to two people who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss personnel matters.

The agents were then fired again Tuesday, though it's not clear what prompted the about-face.

The total number of fired agents was not immediately clear.

The terminations are part of a broader personnel upheaval under the leadership of FBI Director Kash Patel, who has pushed

out numerous senior officials and agents involved in investigations or actions that have angered the Trump administration.

Three ousted high-ranking FBI officials sued Patel in September, accusing him of caving to political pressure to carry out a "campaign of retribution."

The FBI Agents Association, which has criticized Patel for the firings, said the director has "disregarded the law and launched a campaign of erratic and arbitrary retribution."

The 2020 election investigation that ultimately led to spe-

cial counsel Jack Smith's indictment of Trump has come under intense scrutiny from GOP lawmakers, who have accused the Biden administration's Justice Department of being weaponized against conservatives.

The Justice Department has fired prosecutors and other department employees who worked on Smith's team, and the FBI has similarly forced out agents and senior officials for a variety of reasons as part of an ongoing purge that has added to the tumult and sense of unease currently running inside the bureau.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Courts order ICE not to deport freed man

PA PHILADELPHIA — Two separate courts have ordered immigration officials not to deport a Pennsylvania man who spent four decades in prison before his murder conviction was overturned.

Subramanyam Vedam, 64, is currently detained at a short-term holding center in Alexandria, La., that's equipped with an airstrip for deportations. Vedam, a legal permanent resident known as "Subu," was transferred there from central Pennsylvania last week, relatives said.

An immigration judge stayed his deportation last week until the Bureau of Immigration Appeals decides whether to review his case. That could take several months. Vedam's lawyers also got a stay the same day in U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania.

Vedam came to the U.S. legally from India as an infant. He was serving a life sentence in a friend's 1980 death before his conviction was overturned this year.

He was released from state prison on Oct. 3, only to be taken straight into immigration custody. The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement is seeking to deport Vedam over his no contest plea to charges of LSD delivery, filed when he was about 20.

Man convicted in another 'pillowcase rapist' attack

FL MIAMI — A man suspected of being the "pillowcase rapist" in a string of South Florida rapes back in the 1980s was convicted Monday in another one of the attacks.

Miami-Dade County jurors found Robert Koehler, 66, guilty of sexual battery, kidnapping and burglary after deliberating for less than two hours. His sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 24.

Monday's conviction involves a woman who was 22 years old in 1984 when someone broke into her southwest Miami-Dade County home and raped her. Koehler was sentenced to 17 years in prison nearly three years ago for a similar attack on a 25-year-old woman in 1983.

Authorities say the "pillowcase rapist" terrified his victims by breaking into their homes at night. The assaults attracted extensive media attention and authorities created a task force to investigate. The trail had turned cold until 2020, when authorities say a DNA hit for one of Koehler's relatives led police to him.

US might revoke 20-year oil, gas development ban

NM ALBUQUERQUE — The Trump administration says it will be initiating formal meetings with Native American tribes in the southwest as it considers revoking a 20-year ban on oil and gas development across of hundreds of square miles of federal land surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

The Bureau of Land Management made the announcement in a letter sent to tribal leaders last month, saying the agency will conduct an environmental assessment of the proposal to put the federal parcels back on the board for future leasing. A public comment period will follow.

The UNESCO World Heritage site has been at the center

of a fight over drilling for years. Within park boundaries are the towering remains of stone structures built centuries ago by the region's first inhabitants, and ancient roads and related sites are scattered farther out across the desert plains and sandstone canyons.

With the urging of some pueblo leaders, former President Joe Biden's administration in 2023 issued an order banning new oil and gas development for two decades within 10 miles of the historic site in northwestern New Mexico.

Court: City's voter ID measure violates law

CA SANTA ANA — A California appeals court ruled Monday that a Huntington Beach measure requiring voter identification at the polls violates state law.

The Fourth District Court of Appeal in Santa Ana determined that the measure passed by voters in the seaside city of 200,000 people should be struck down because it conflicts with state election law, said Lee Fink, a lawyer for Huntington Beach resident Mark Bixby, who challenged the city's measure. California Attorney General Rob Bonta also sued over the Huntington Beach law, contending it would disenfranchise voters.

Corbin Carson, a Huntington Beach spokesperson, said the city is reviewing the appeals court's ruling.

Residents of Huntington Beach voted last year to let local officials require voter identification at the polls starting in 2026. The measure also allows the city to increase in-person voting sites and monitor ballot

drop boxes in local elections.

Bonta filed a lawsuit saying the measure conflicts with state law and could make it harder for poor, non-white, young, elderly and disabled voters to cast ballots. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, then signed into state law a measure barring local governments from establishing and enforcing laws that require residents provide identification to vote in elections.

Banks dies in prison 43 years after murdering 13

PA HARRISBURG — George Banks, one of the most notorious mass murderers in the U.S., has died.

Banks, 83, died Sunday afternoon at Phoenix state prison in Pennsylvania, the state Department of Corrections said. Banks died of complications from renal neoplasm, or kidney cancer, said Montgomery County Coroner Dr. Janine Darby.

Banks had been in prison since 1982 after shooting 14 people, and killing 13, including his own children, during a rampage in Wilkes-Barre. At time, it was considered one of the worst mass murders in American history. He was convicted of 12 counts of first-degree murder and one count of third-degree murder.

Banks had been drinking at a party late at night before using an AR-15 rifle to start the rampage at his home. Five victims were his children, ages 1 to 6. Four more were the mothers of his children.

Eventually, state courts prevented his execution, saying he wasn't mentally competent. That left Banks with a sentence of life imprisonment.

— From wire reports



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CFP rankings open with Ohio State at top

Associated Press

The closest thing resembling drama for the first big reveal of this season's College Football Playoff rankings hinged on which undefeated team would receive top billing.

Answer: The defending champions at Ohio State.

The Buckeyes took the top spot in the first set of 2025 rankings Tuesday night, followed by Indiana and Texas A&M.

In choosing the two Big Ten teams ahead of the Aggies, the 12-person committee appeared to give less weight to A&M's tougher schedule and its 41-40 win over 10th-ranked Notre Dame and more to the way Ohio State and the Hoosiers have mowed down opponents this year, with only two games between the two of them decided by less than 10 points.

"I think statistically when we looked at A&M defensively, they're just lower than both Ohio State and Indiana," committee chair Mack Rhoades said.

"We had to make a hard decision, and you're trying to find

separators, and that was a separator for us."

Another team with no losses, BYU, of the Big 12, was ranked seventh.

Nos. 4, 5 and 6 went to Southeastern Conference teams with one loss each — Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. All of the top six came from either the Big Ten or SEC, a dose of business as usual despite a season that has been anything but predictable.

This marked the first of six weekly rankings the committee will release this season, ending Dec. 7 when the final list will set the bracket for the second 12-team playoff in major college football history.

That tournament begins Dec. 19-20 with four games on the campus of seeds Nos. 5-8. The top four seeds play winners of those games over the New Year holiday and the title game is set for Jan. 19 at Hard Rock Stadium outside Miami.

Texas Tech was ranked eighth and Oregon came in at No. 9. Rounding out the top 12 were Notre Dame — the only team in

the Top 25 not from a power conference — then Texas and Oklahoma.

But if the bracket were set today, the Longhorns and Sooners would miss out, bumped by No. 14 Virginia of the ACC and Memphis of the American. That's thanks to a rule that places the five best-ranked conference champions into the bracket even if they're not in the top 12.

Memphis wasn't among the committee's top 25 but was still the highest ranked leader in a Group of Five conference.

There is, of course, plenty of time for teams to make their cases, with four more weeks of the regular season, then a slate of conference title games set for the first weekend in December.

The final tally in the top 12: The SEC has six teams, the Big Ten three, the Big 12 two and the ACC none, with one independent.

Among those still holding out hope are teams such as 16th-ranked Vanderbilt and 17th-ranked Georgia Tech, each of whom spent time in the AP top 10 this season thanks to upsets that

turned college football upside down in September and October.

The first-round matchups based on CFP rankings:

■ No. 12 Memphis at No. 5 Georgia, winner vs. No. 4 Alabama. You can almost hear SEC commissioner Greg Sankey breaking his TV wondering how an unranked team is in here over one of his.

■ No. 11 Virginia at No. 6 Ole Miss, winner vs. No. 3 Texas A&M. Virginia's only Top 25 meeting this season was against Florida State, which does not resemble a Top 25 team now.

■ No. 10 Notre Dame at No. 7 BYU, winner vs. No. 2 Indiana. The Fighting Irish have to hope some of the teams immediately below them — like Texas and Oklahoma — do not put up impressive wins since they close with Navy, Pitt, Syracuse and Stanford.

■ No. 9 Oregon at No. 8 Texas Tech, winner vs. No. 1 Ohio State. A Booster Bowl pitting teams backed by billionaires Phil Knight (Ducks) and Cody Campbell (Red Raiders).

Loyer scores career-high 30, No. 1 Purdue routs Evansville

Associated Press

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Fletcher Loyer opened his final college season by scoring a career-high 30 points and preseason All-American Braden Smith added 11 assists as Purdue protected its first preseason No. 1 ranking with a rousing 82-51 season-opening rout of Evansville on Tuesday night.

Loyer was 8 of 11 from the field and made seven 3-pointers. Smith scored just six points but passed former Illinois star Bruce Douglas for third on the Big Ten's career assists list. Smith increased his total to 769, four more than Douglas. Former Michigan State guard Matten Cleaves is second at 816.

Purdue has won 33 consecutive non-conference home games — this one despite playing without preseason all-conference forward Trey Kaufman-Renn, who missed the game with an injured hip.

Joshua Hughes had 15 points and AJ Casey added 14 for Evansville, which faced the

Boilermakers for the first time in 20 years. Defending Missouri Valley Conference Defensive Player of the Year Connor Turnbull also sat out for an undisclosed reason.

No. 6 Duke 75, Texas 60: Isaiah Evans scored 23 points, Cameron Boozer had a big second half and finished with 15 points and 13 rebounds as the Blue Devils overcame a sluggish start to beat the Longhorns at the Dick Vitale Invitational.

Duke got 10 points from Patrick Ngongba and used a stifling defense to limit Texas to 32% shooting and force 16 turnovers.

No. 8 Kentucky 77, Nicholls 51: Collin Chandler scored a career-high 15 points to lead the host Wildcats over the State Colonels in the opener for both teams.

Otega Oweh, the preseason Southeastern Conference player of the year, scored nine of his 13 points in the second half for Kentucky. Freshman Jasper Johnson added 11 points and Florida transfer Denzel Aberdeen scored 10.

The Wildcats overcame a slow start by outscoring Nicholls 49-36 in the second half to put the game out of reach. They made just three of their first 15 shots but regrouped and shot 61% in the second half. Kentucky made seven 3-pointers in the second half, including back-to-back makes by Chandler, who ended an eight-point stretch with a one-handed dunk.

No. 10 Texas Tech 98, Lindenwood 60: Christian Anderson had career highs with 34 points and 11 assists, leading the host Red Raiders over the Lions as Texas Tech extended its nonconference home winning streak to 39 games.

The Red Raiders, who have the highest preseason ranking in school history coming off the program's third Elite Eight appearance, were without preseason Big 12 player of the year JT Toppin and LeJuan Watts, a Washington State transfer who was also named the preseason newcomer of the year.

Cowboys make trade for Jets DT Williams

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — The Dallas Cowboys traded for star defensive tackle Quinnen Williams of the New York Jets on Tuesday in a major move to try to improve one of the NFL's worst defenses.

The deal for Williams came about two hours before the trading deadline, following a lower-profile addition in linebacker Logan Wilson from the Cincinnati Bengals, who was acquired for a seventh-round pick in the upcoming draft.

The Cowboys are giving the Jets a 2027 first-round pick, a 2026 second-rounder and underperforming defensive tackle Mazi Smith.

New York will get the better of Dallas' 2027 first-rounders. The Cowboys added first-round choices each of the next two years in another blockbuster, the trade that sent star pass rusher Micah Parsons to the Green Bay Packers a week before the season.

Dallas was talking to the Jets

about Williams when it was trying to find a resolution to the contract stalemate with Parsons during training camp. The Cowboys also got defensive tackle Kenny Clark in the Green Bay trade.

Williams was the No. 3 overall pick of New York in 2019 out of Alabama and has steadily developed into one of the NFL's top interior defensive linemen.

Jets general manager Darren Mougey wouldn't say whether Williams requested a trade, but added the deal with Dallas "came together and it was a good value for us today, so we went ahead and did that."

The deal came with New York (1-7) among three teams with an NFL-worst one victory, while the Cowboys (3-5-1) are trying to keep pace in the NFC a year after missing the playoffs. Dallas made three straight postseasons from 2021-23.

"New York will always have a special place in my heart," Williams wrote on X.

"To the fans, thank you for embracing a kid from Alabama and showing love through every high and low. You welcomed me with open arms, and gave me a place to grow. I'm excited for what's next in Dallas and can't wait to get to work."

The trade gives the Cowboys the potential for one of the best interior defensive lines in the league in Williams and Clark, who has been good for them but hasn't been able to reverse the club's struggles in recent years trying to stop the run. Osa Odighizuwa has started alongside Clark.

It remains to be seen how Williams will help edge rushers who struggled badly early in the season without Parsons. The pressure has been better recently for Dallas, but mostly because of increased blitzing.

The Cowboys are on their bye week coming off a 27-17 loss to the Arizona Cardinals and next play at the Las Vegas Raiders in another Monday night game Nov. 17.

An All-Pro in 2022 and a three-time Pro Bowl selection, Williams has 40 sacks and routinely drew double teams from opposing offensive lines that tried to neutralize him — often creating opportunities for other defenders. He signed a four-year, \$96 million contract extension with the Jets, including \$66 million guaranteed, in July 2023.

Williams, 27, will be reunited with defensive line coach Aaron Whitecotton, his position coach the previous four seasons with New York. Brian Schottenheimer, a first-time head coach after a quarter-century as an NFL assistant, hired Whitecotton after getting promoted from offensive coordinator.

Smith has been a disappointment in three seasons since Dallas drafted him 26th overall in the first round. He has alternated between playing and being a healthy scratch most of this season. He was inactive against the Cardinals.

Giddey leads Bulls' rally from 24 down to beat 76ers

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Josh Giddey had a triple-double with 29 points, 15 rebounds and 12 assists, Nikola Vucevic made a 3-pointer with 3.2 seconds remaining and the Chicago Bulls came back from a 24-point deficit to beat the Philadelphia 76ers 113-111 on Tuesday night.

Philadelphia's Quentin Grimes missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer that would have won it.

Giddey is the first Chicago player to have back-to-back triple-doubles since Michael Jordan in 1989. He drove to the basket before hitting Vucevic with a pass for the corner 3 on the game's decisive possession.

The 76ers scored 45 points in the first to take an 18-point lead and stayed in front for the majority of the game. Tyrese Maxey scored 12 points on 4 of 6 shooting from 3-point range during the early offensive outburst.

Thunder 126, Clippers 107: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 30 points and 12 assists and defending champion Oklahoma City ex-

tended its season-opening winning streak to eight games with a victory over host Los Angeles.

Isaiah Joe added 22 points and Cason Wallace and Aaron Wiggins each had 12 to help the Thunder overcome an early surge by the Clippers to set a franchise record for consecutive victories to start a season.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who played for LA in his rookie season before he was traded to OKC, was 9 of 14 from the floor and 4 of 5 from 3-point range.

Raptors 128, Bucks 100: Scottie Barnes and RJ Barrett each scored 23 points, Immanuel Quickley and Sandro Mamukelashvili both had 15 and host Toronto won its third straight game by thumping Milwaukee.

Grady Dick scored 14 points and Brandon Ingram had 13. The Raptors posted their biggest margin of victory of the season, eclipsing a 20-point win at Atlanta on Oct. 22.

Pelicans 116, Hornets 112: Jose Alvarado made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 16 sec-

onds left as host New Orleans won for the first time this season by beating Charlotte.

Trey Murphy III scored 21 points for the Pelicans, who had dropped their first six games. Their victory left Brooklyn (0-7) as the NBA's only winless team.

Hawks 127, Magic 112: Zaccharie Risacher scored 21 points, Nickeil Alexander-Walker had 20 and host Atlanta beat Orlando.

Dyson Daniels added 18 points, Jalen Johnson had 17 and Kristaps Porzingis finished with 15 as the Hawks won for the third time in four games. Onyeka Okongwu added 14 points and seven rebounds off the bench.

Warriors 118, Suns 107: Stephen Curry scored 28 points with five 3-pointers, Moses Moody came off the bench to score 24 and also hit five 3s, and host Golden State jumped to a big early lead before holding on for a victory over Phoenix.

Quinten Post contributed 14 points with four 3s and six rebounds for the Warriors, while Brandin Podziemski had 13 points and Buddy Hield added 12.

Hurricanes snap Rangers' 3-game win streak

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Pyotr Kochetkov made 25 saves in his season debut, Nikolaj Ehlers, Sean Walker and Seth Jarvis scored and the Carolina Hurricanes beat the New York Rangers 3-0 on Tuesday night.

Ehlers, who signed with Carolina last summer after 10 seasons with Winnipeg, scored his first goal with the Hurricanes with 6:30 left in the opening period. Walker made it 2-0 with 3:53 to go in the second on a long shot from the right point that eluded goalie Igor Shesterkin.

Seth Jarvis added an empty-netter for his team-leading eighth goal. Mike Reilly had two assists.

Kochetkov missed the start of the season because of a lower-body injury. He won 27 games for Carolina last season. The 26-year-old Russian made a point-blank stop on New York captain J.T. Miller just over two minutes into the middle period during a power play. The shutout was the 11th of his career.

The Rangers had a three-game winning streak snapped. They are winless at home with just six goals in six games.

Mammoth 2, Sabres 1 (OT): Clayton Keller scored 47 seconds into overtime to lift visiting Utah over Buffalo.

Keller wheeled through the Sabres zone and drove to the net where he slipped a shot past Alex Lyon that helped the Mammoth snap a two-game losing skid.

Nick Schmaltz also scored, and Karel Vejmelka made 17 saves for Utah and added an assist on the winning goal.

Noah Ostlund scored and Lyon made 33 saves for Buffalo. The Sabres have one win in their last five games, which each went to overtime or shootout, and have points in seven straight.

Bruins 4, Islanders 3 (SO): Marat Khusnutdinov tied it late

in the third period and had the lone shootout goal, helping visiting Boston beat New York for its fourth straight victory.

Viktor Arvidsson and Pavel Zacha also scored for the Bruins. Jeremy Swayman made 25 saves.

Bo Horvat scored twice for the Islanders. Anthony Duclair also scored, and 18-year-old defenseman Mathew Schaefer had an assist. Ilya Sorokin stopped 23 shots.

Swayman denied Simon Holmstrom, Horvat and Jonathan Drouin in the shootout as Boston improved to 8-7-0.

Flyers 4, Canadiens 3 (SO): Bobby Brink scored twice, Trevor Zegras had the shootout winner and visiting Philadelphia beat Montreal after blowing a three-goal lead.

Nikita Grebenkin and Cam York also scored for the Flyers. York added an assist, Zegras had two helpers and Dan Vadar stopped 16 shots.

Philadelphia led 3-0 before the game was eight minutes old. Brink deflected a hard pass past Montembeault at 1:56 and the Flyers struck twice more thanks to a 5-on-3 power play.

The Canadiens erupted with four goals in the second. Dach sparked the surge by hammering a shot into the net off the end boards before Demidov set up Suzuki on the power play. Dach then tied it, and Demidov put Montreal up 4-3 with a power-play marker.

Ducks 7, Panthers 3: Cutter Gauthier had his first career hat trick during a four-point performance, and host Anaheim routed Florida for its fourth consecutive victory.

Nikita Nesterenko scored the go-ahead goal late in the second period before Jacob Trouba, Chris Kreider and Jansen Harkins added third-period goals for the upstart Ducks, who surged back into first place in the Pacific Division.

Lukas Dostal made 18 saves as Anaheim improved to 4-1-0

at home and beat the defending champs for the second time in eight days.

Sergei Bobrovsky made 25 saves as the Panthers dropped to 1-5-0 on the road.

Wild 3, Predators 2 (OT): Marcus Johansson scored at 3:38 of overtime with the goal off its moorings and host Minnesota overcame a last-second tying goal to beat Nashville.

Predators goalie Justus Annunen knocked the goal out of place as he backed up on a rush. Johansson's first shot hit the moving net and he got the puck back and slid it across the line. After a review, the goal was ruled good, infuriating the Nashville players and coaches.

Steven Stamkos tied it for the Predators with 0.3 seconds left in regulation and Annunen off for an extra attacker, beating the clock and goalie Filip Gustavsson with a one-timer from the left side. Defenseman Nick Blankenburg kept the puck in at the blue line and got the puck to Stamkos for his second goal of the season and 584th overall.

The Wild closed a six-game homestand with consecutive victories after dropping the first four. Kirill Kaprizov and Zeev Buium scored power-play goals for Minnesota, and Gustavsson made 32 saves.

Stars 4, Oilers 3 (SO): Wyatt Johnston had three assists before making the game-ending shot in a shootout as host Dallas beat Edmonton in their first meeting since the Oilers eliminated the Stars in the Western Conference Final for the second season in a row.

Mikko Rantanen had two goals and an assist for Dallas.

Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid and Vasily Podkolzin scored for Edmonton, which led 2-0 only 7:07 in while playing for the third time in four days. Stuart Skinner, who beat the Stars in the last two West finals, stopped 24 shots.

Casey DeSmith had 23 saves before stopping two of three

shots in the shootout. Jake Oettinger was on the bench, but didn't play for Dallas after the birth of his first child.

Avalanche 3, Lightning 2: Victor Olofsson scored twice, Scott Wedgewood made 22 saves for his NHL-leading eighth victory of the season and host Colorado held off Tampa Bay in a rematch of the 2022 Stanley Cup Finals.

Playing against his former team, Ross Colton also scored to help the Avalanche push their points total to an NHL-best 21. The Lightning had won five in a row.

Nathan MacKinnon had an assist, giving him a team-high 20 points and extending his points streak to seven games.

Nikita Kucherov scored his fifth goal of the season for Tampa Bay, giving the 32-year-old right wing seven points in his past three games against Colorado. The goal gave him 1,005 career points, breaking a tie with Brian Propp for 100th place in NHL history.

Golden Knights 1, Red Wings 0: Akira Schmid made 24 saves for his second regular-season NHL shutout, Ivan Barbashev scored and host Vegas beat Detroit.

Barbashev scored with 6:15 left in the second period, beating goalie John Gibson with a backhander off a rebound.

The Red Wings missed a chance to take the Eastern Conference lead, finishing 3-2-0 on a five-game trip.

Kings 3, Jets 0: Adrian Kempe scored his 200th NHL career goal, Drew Doughty broke the Los Angeles record for goals by a defenseman and the host Kings beat Winnipeg.

Darcy Kuemper made 23 saves and Kevin Fiala added a late power-play goal to help LA get its first home win of the season in six games.

Connor Hellebuyck made 23 saves for the Jets, who dropped their first road game in five tries.