

Pentagon to investigate Kelly over video

Senator joined 5 other Democratic vets urging service members to disobey illegal orders

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon announced Monday that it has launched a review of “serious allegations of misconduct” against Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly, of Arizona, a retired Navy captain who told troops they could refuse unlawful orders.

The announcement comes a week after Kelly participated in a video alongside five other Democratic veterans urging service members to remember their oaths to the Constitution and disobey illegal orders.

President Donald Trump was infuriated by the 90-second video and in a series of posts on social media called the lawmakers “traitors” whose “seditious behavior” should be “punishable by DEATH!”

The Pentagon said that it has initiated a “thorough” review of

the allegations against Kelly to determine further actions, which could include a recall to active-duty service for court-martial proceedings or administrative measures.

The statement suggested Kelly could have violated federal laws that prohibit actions “intended to interfere with the loyalty, morale, or good order and discipline of the armed forces.”

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Monday described the video as “despicable, reckless, and false,” and said it encouraged troops to ignore the orders of their commanders.

Kelly appeared in the video alongside Sen. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., and Reps. Jason Crow, D-Colo.; Maggie Goodlander, D-N.H.; Chris Deluzio, D-Pa.; and Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa.

Hegseth said Kelly, a former fighter pilot for the Navy who

later became an astronaut, was the only lawmaker in the group who remained subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice “and he knows that.”

Hegseth alleged that Kelly explicitly used his rank and service affiliation to lend “the appearance of authority to his words” in a “screed” that sowed doubt and confusion and put service members in danger.

“Kelly’s conduct brings discredit upon the armed forces and will be addressed appropriately,” Hegseth said in a post on X.

A Defense Department spokesperson said the department did not have any additional comment.

In the video, Kelly addresses the military and intelligence community, saying “Like us, you swore an oath.” He later states, “Our laws are clear: you can refuse illegal orders.”

Kelly said he learned of the Pentagon probe on Monday through Hegseth’s post on X. He said the investigation, as well as Trump’s threats, will not intimidate him from doing his job and holding the administration accountable.

“I’ve given too much to this country to be silenced by bullies who care more about their own power than protecting the Constitution,” he said in a statement.

Kelly retired from the Navy in 2011 and is now a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which conducts congressional oversight of the Pentagon.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt denied last week that Trump wanted to execute members of Congress but said the Democrats’ video message “perhaps is punishable by law.”

Naval Academy commandant Clark fired after 6 months

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Naval Academy commandant responsible for the military training and professional development of thousands of sailors and Marines was fired this week after less than six months on the job.

Capt. Gilbert Clark, commandant of midshipmen, was relieved by academy superintendent Lt. Gen. Michael Borgschulte on Monday, the Navy said in a statement the same day, citing a loss of confidence in Clark’s ability to lead.

The service typically does not specify the reasons behind the

firing of an officer.

Capt. Austin Jackson, deputy commandant of midshipmen, has assumed duties as the interim commandant, the Navy said.

Clark, a 1998 graduate of the academy, took over the leadership position in June during a change of command ceremony that identified the commandant role as the “heart of leadership” in the Navy and Marine Corps.

That person “is the daily presence, the standard bearer, the mentor and the warfighting compass for the 4,400 young men and women of the brigade,” Vice Adm. Yvette Davids, then-superintendent of the academy,

said during a June 23 change of command ceremony installing Clark into the position.

Clark is also a graduate of the Naval War College and holds a master’s degree in national security and strategic studies, according to his official biography from the Navy.

He has served as a reactor electrical division officer on the aircraft carrier USS George Washington and as both the executive officer and commanding officer of the destroyer USS The Sullivans, among numerous other roles.

Davids, the first woman to lead the academy, was removed

from her position in July by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for unspecified reasons.

She was reassigned as deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans, strategy and warfighting development in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, the Pentagon said.

Hegseth has ousted several top military leaders in recent months, including Navy Adm. Lisa Franchetti, who was the first woman to be chief of naval operations, and Adm. Linda Fagan, who was commandant of the Coast Guard and the first female officer to lead a branch of the armed forces.

DOD reportedly ending support for Scouts

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Word of impending Defense Department plans to end the military's longtime partnership with Scouting America drew immediate pushback Tuesday, with the organization's top leader saying that claims it is no longer a meritocracy are uninformed.

Membership in the Scouting organization, which is more commonly known as the Boy Scouts, was extended to girls beginning in 2019. The current name was adopted this year.

The statement Tuesday by CEO Roger Krone came in response to an NPR report saying the Pentagon will cease support of U.S. Scouting programs on stateside and overseas military bases.

"Scouting will never turn its back on the children of our mili-

tary families," Krone wrote in his statement. "Just as we always have, Scouts will continue to put duty to country above duty to self and will remain focused on serving all American families in the U.S. and abroad."

The NPR story included a draft memo to Congress from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth saying that Scouting America had become a "genderless" organization that was designed to "attack boy-friendly spaces."

Hegseth also said the organization "no longer supports the future of American boys," NPR reported, adding that the memo has not yet been sent to Congress.

In response to questions from Stars and Stripes, a Pentagon spokesperson said Tuesday that it will "not comment on leaked documents that we cannot authenticate and that may be pre-deci-

sional."

Under the draft plan, the Pentagon would also cut support for the Scouting organization's quadrennial national jamboree and eliminate increases in pay grade for Eagle Scouts who go on to enlist in branches of the military, according to NPR.

The next national jamboree is scheduled to take place July 22-31, 2026, in West Virginia.

Scouting America is "surprised and deeply saddened by this news," Krone's statement said, adding that the assertion that Scouts are no longer held to high standards is "clearly uninformed."

Krone praised the organization's century-old relationship with the U.S. military and said Scout troops provide stability for the children of military families deployed around the globe.

Scouting has historically been a reliable pipeline for recruiting service members, he said.

For the family of Scott Matthews, a retired Air Force colonel living in the area of Kaiserslautern, Germany, the potential loss of the partnership between Scouting and the Defense Department is heartbreaking, he said.

He and his wife, a civilian working at Ramstein Air Base, are the parents of two Eagle Scouts and a Life Scout working toward her Eagle rank.

"Scouting has been far more than an extracurricular activity; it is a community," Matthews said. "It has given our children, girls and boys alike, a place to form meaningful connections, build lasting friendships and develop the resiliency that military life so often demands, especially overseas."

Retired Navy 4-star to stay in prison during bribery appeal

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

A retired four-star admiral who once was the Navy's No. 2-ranking officer will remain in prison while appealing his conviction for bribery, conspiracy and other charges, an appeals court ordered earlier this month.

Robert Burke did not show that the appeal of his May conviction presented a substantial question of law or fact likely to result in reversal or an order for a new trial, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled on Nov. 13.

Burke was sentenced in September to six years in prison following his conviction in May for his role in a scheme to direct lucrative contracts to a New York-based training company in exchange for a \$500,000-a-year job, stock options and other benefits.

Burke, who was vice chief of

naval operations from June 2019 to June 2020, also hadn't shown that his appeal would result in a sentence with either no prison time or a term less than the total of the time already served plus the expected duration of the appeal process, the court ruled.

In October, a federal judge cited similar reasoning in refusing Burke's request to delay his sentence. Burke's attorneys had argued that his appeal would raise substantial questions of law and fact that were likely to result in reversal or an order for a new trial, according to court documents.

His trial "involved significant legal errors," Burke's attorneys said in an Oct. 17 emergency motion for release pending appeal.

He reported to the Hazelton federal penitentiary in Bruceton Mills, W.Va., on Oct. 21, the Bureau of Prisons said in a statement on Monday.

Navy tries to lift Nimitz jet, helo from South China Sea

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The Navy has deployed a salvage ship to the South China Sea to attempt to raise a sunken fighter and a helicopter that crashed off the USS Nimitz in back-to-back incidents in October.

The USNS Salvor, operated by Military Sealift Command, is on-scene supporting recovering efforts, said Cmdr. Matthew Comer, 7th Fleet spokesman in Japan, in a statement Monday.

The operation was first confirmed by CNN. The Navy did not reveal the location of the recovery mission.

The aircraft — an F/A-18 Super Hornet jet and a MH-60 Seahawk helicopter — were lost Oct. 26 within a half hour of each other as the Nimitz, the Navy's oldest carrier, was transiting the South China Sea. All five crew members

survived.

The Sea Hawk, assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 73, went down at approximately 2:45 p.m. during a routine operation from the Nimitz, according to the Navy.

A half-hour later, a Super Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron 22, based at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., and assigned to the Nimitz, also went down during a routine operation, according to 7th Fleet.

Mark Cancian, a former Marine officer and defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., said Monday that the attempt to salvage the jet and helicopter was "totally normal."

The reason is simple, Cancian said. The Navy will retrieve high-tech equipment before someone else does.

Progress made, Ukraine deal still uncertain

The Washington Post

Momentum is picking up for the new U.S.-led peace deal for Ukraine, with progress made over the weekend in Geneva and new meetings involving the United States, Russian and Ukrainian delegations in the United Arab Emirates.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is even expected to travel to the United States in the coming days to meet with President Donald Trump on the deal.

All these negotiations may be for nothing, however, as the work to make the 28-point U.S. plan more acceptable to Ukraine is precisely what will doom it with Russia, analysts say.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Tuesday that the U.S. had made “tremendous progress” toward a peace deal by bringing Russia and Ukraine to the table.

“There are a few delicate, but not insurmountable, details that must be sorted out and will require further talks between Ukraine, Russia, and the United States,” she said in a post on X. The Ukrainians have said the crucial matter of territory will be resolved directly between Trump and Zelenskyy.

Russian Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov said he expected the Americans to soon present to Russia their interim version of the deal following input from the Ukrainians and Europeans, but warned that if it strayed from what Putin demanded at the Alaska summit in August, there would be a problem.

“Because if the spirit and letter of the Anchorage agreement are erased, based on the key understandings contained therein, then, of course, we’ll be in a fundamentally different situation,” he said.

The work to come up with a peace plan that would somehow be acceptable to all sides and end nearly four years of war came as dozens of Russian missiles slammed into Kyiv overnight, hitting apartment buildings and power infrastructure.

Lt. Col. Jeff Tolbert, a spokesman for U.S. Army Secretary Dan Driscoll, said the talks continuing through Tuesday with the Russian delegation in Abu Dhabi “are going well and we remain optimistic.” He added they were synchronized with the White House.

Top Ukrainian official Rustem Umerov said Tuesday that Zelenskyy would be headed to the U.S. to finalize the deal with Trump this month.

The original plan, which was

widely criticized by the Ukrainians and Europeans as being too pro-Russian and a capitulation for Ukraine, was endorsed Friday by Russian President Vladimir Putin as a possible basis for peace. Most analysts think the latest changes will be unacceptable to Moscow, leaving Russia with the choice of trying to revise the draft deal once more or rejecting it outright.

The latest flurry of chaotic, pre-Thanksgiving U.S. diplomacy aimed at ending the war could in the end fizzle, just as previous efforts have.

As U.S. officials scrambled to try to bring the sides closer, Russia launched a punishing missile and drone attack against the Ukrainian capital overnight, striking residential apartment buildings in several neighborhoods and killing at least seven people, the latest in a series of attacks on civilian infrastructure that seem designed to increase the pressure on Ukraine’s civilian population to break the nation’s resistance. Russia also targeted several other regions, including Chernihiv, Dnipro and Kharkiv.

A former senior Kremlin official with knowledge of the talks said that the original 28-point plan was just a “starting point”

for Russia, with some elements acceptable to Moscow and others not.

Red lines for Russia in the negotiations include the move reported earlier by The Washington Post to, for now, put aside Moscow’s contentious demand that Ukraine withdraw from territory in the eastern Donbas region that Russia has failed to conquer, and instead for this to be decided in talks between Trump and Zelenskyy. Russia would also reject the call for Ukraine’s NATO aspirations to be decided based on NATO’s rules that would nix the outright veto on membership from the earlier draft.

In the Sunday talks, Ukrainian negotiators told their U.S. counterparts that Kyiv would be willing to start discussions from its current military positions, not on Russian demands that Ukraine surrender the portion of the Donbas region it does not control, as stipulated in the earlier draft of the deal.

The former senior Kremlin official said Russia may be willing to freeze the front lines in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. “But the most complicated piece is Donetsk. I think compromise on Donetsk would be possible but only at the end of the negotiations.”

DOJ pushing to unseal Epstein grand jury files

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Justice Department on Monday renewed its request to unseal grand jury transcripts from Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell’s sex trafficking cases, arguing they should be made public under a new law requiring the government to open its files on the late financier and his longtime confidante.

U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton cited the Epstein Files Transparency Act — passed by Congress last week and signed into law by

President Donald Trump — in court filings asking Manhattan federal Judges Richard M. Berman and Paul A. Engelmayer to reconsider their decisions to keep the material sealed.

The Justice Department interprets the transparency act “as requiring it to publish the grand jury and discovery materials in this case,” said the eight-page filings, which also bear the names of Attorney General Pam Bondi and her second-in-command, Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche.

The filings are among the first public indications that the Justice Department is working to comply with the act, which requires that it release Epstein-related files by Dec. 19.

The Justice Department asked Berman and Engelmayer for expedited rulings allowing the release of the grand jury materials, which contains testimony from law enforcement witnesses but no victims, arguing that the new law supersedes existing court orders and judicial policies that “would otherwise

prevent public disclosure.”

In its filing Monday, the Justice Department said any materials made public could be partially redacted to prevent the disclosure of things like victims’ identifying information.

In an order late Monday, Engelmayer invited Maxwell and victims of Maxwell and Epstein to respond by Dec. 3 to the government’s request. The government must respond to their filings by Dec. 10. The judge said he will rule “promptly thereafter.”

Memo says US to review Biden-era refugee arrivals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration plans a review of all refugees admitted to the U.S. during the Biden administration, according to a memo obtained Monday by The Associated Press, in the latest blow against a program that has for decades welcomed people fleeing war and persecution into the country.

The review is likely to sow confusion and fear among the nearly 200,000 refugees who came to the United States during that period. It is likely to face legal challenges from advocates, some of whom said the move was part of the administration's "cold-hearted treatment" of people trying to build new lives in the U.S.

The memo, signed by the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Joseph Edlow, and dated Friday, said that during the Biden years "expediency" and "quantity" were

prioritized over "detailed screening and vetting." The memo said that warranted a comprehensive review and "re-interview of all refugees admitted from January 20, 2021, to February 20, 2025."

The memo indicated that there will be a list of people to re-interview within three months.

Advocates of the refugee program say that refugees are generally some of the most vetted of all people coming to the United States and that they often wait years to be able to come.

The memo also immediately suspended green card approvals for refugees who came to the U.S. during the stated time period. If the agency determines that a person shouldn't have qualified for entry as a refugee, the person "has no right to appeal," according to the memo, although if they are put in removal proceedings and sent to immigration court, they can then plead their case there. The memo also stated that

even those who have already received their green card would be reviewed. People admitted to the U.S. as refugees are required to apply for a green card one year after they arrive and usually five years after that can apply for citizenship.

The Biden administration admitted 185,640 refugees from October 2021 through September 2024.

Refugee advocates slammed news of the review, saying that it will traumatize people who have already gone through extensive vetting to make it to the U.S. in the first place.

"This plan is shockingly ill-conceived," said Naomi Steinberg, vice president of U.S. policy and advocacy at HIAS, a refugee resettlement agency. "This is a new low in the administration's consistently cold-hearted treatment of people who are already building new lives and enriching the communities where they have made their homes."

Tornado damages 100 homes in Houston

Associated Press

HOUSTON — A tornado that raced through residential areas north of Houston damaged more than 100 homes, tearing off roofs, moving garages off their foundations and smashing windows, authorities in Texas said.

No injuries were reported in the storm Monday that uprooted trees, downed power lines and created paths of debris throughout some neighborhoods.

Heavy fog made it difficult to assess all the damage Tuesday morning. Heavy rain and severe thunderstorms were expected farther south during the day, considered one of the busiest travel days of the Thanksgiving holiday period.

Some people hunkered down in their homes and hid in closets during the Texas storm. More than 20,000 customers were without power at one point Monday.

"I had the door and I was trying to hold it shut so that nothing would end up in the house," Miriam Harris told KTRK-TV. "It was so forceful." She suffered roof and tree damage, and some of her holiday light display was mangled.

In Klein, about 25 miles north of Houston, officials were working to fix multiple reported gas leaks, remove trees that were blocking roads, and clean up debris around homes and businesses, said Ja'Milla Lomas, a spokesperson for the Klein Fire Department. Damage also was reported in Cypress and Spring.

The weather service had issued a tornado watch for southeastern Texas, including Houston, until 1 a.m. Tuesday. It also issued a severe thunderstorm warning for parts of southeastern Texas.

Trump administration new draft extends subsidies for 'Obamacare'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House is circulating a proposal that would extend subsidies to help consumers pay for coverage under the Affordable Care Act for two more years, as millions of Americans face spiking health care costs when the current tax credits are set to expire at the end of the year.

The draft plan suggests that President Donald Trump is open to extending a provision of "Obamacare" as his administration and congressional Republicans search for a broader policy solution to a fight that has

long flummoxed the party. The White House stresses that no plan is final until Trump announces it.

The subsidies were at the heart of the Democrats' demands in the government shutdown fight that ended earlier this month.

Most Democratic lawmakers had insisted on a straight extension of the tax credits, which expire at the end of the year as a condition of keeping the government open.

Eligibility for the Obamacare subsidies, which were put in place during the COVID-19 pan-

demic to help people afford health care coverage, would be capped at 700% of the federal poverty level, according to two people with knowledge of the proposal. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss a White House proposal that is in draft form.

The White House would also require those on Obamacare, regardless of the type of coverage, to pay some sort of premium for their Obamacare plans. That would effectively end zero-premium plans for those with lower incomes.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Snowy owl pair draws crowds on beach

IL CHICAGO — A pair of snowy owls spotted along a Lake Michigan beach has drawn curious crowds and sparked happy speculation about how long the Arctic birds of prey will call Chicago home.

Word of the two owls has circulated on birder forums in the nation's third-largest city for about a week, according to the Chicago Ornithological Society.

While snowy owls aren't rare in Chicago, their frequency varies widely each winter. Generally, a handful are reported around December, but sometimes there aren't any.

On Saturday, well over 100 people came out to a concrete pier that juts out into the lake to catch a glimpse.

Among them was Sean Clark, a birder and photography enthusiast.

"They were coming and going all day long. It's amazing that the birds are accepting of that many people," he said.

Prosecutors add charge in deadly shooting

PA WILKES-BARRE — Months after Jose Sandoval Perez allegedly fired shots inside a Hazleton, Pa., tavern in May resulting in the death of a Nanticoke man, Luzerne County prosecutors added a manslaughter charge to his case.

Sandoval Perez, 27, of Hazleton, was initially charged by Hazleton City police detectives with firearms not to be carried without a license, reckless endangerment and theft for the alleged shooting, according to

court records.

Jeuris Sanchez Alvarez, 30, who was inside the tavern, died from multiple gunshot wounds.

Prosecutors recently added charges of voluntary manslaughter and aggravated assault against Sandoval Perez.

Melania Trump welcomes tree to White House

DC WASHINGTON — First lady Melania Trump welcomed this year's Christmas tree to the White House on Monday.

The tree, which came from Korson's Tree Farms in Michigan, was delivered in a green horse-drawn carriage driven by three men wearing top hats.

"It's a beautiful tree," the first lady said as she circled the carriage and posed for pictures.

Wearing a cream-colored overcoat and dark red gloves, she shook hands with one of the drivers and a woman who was standing with the two Clydesdale horses.

Man earns Army's highest civilian honor

NV LAS VEGAS — A Henderson man was honored with the U.S. Army's highest civilian award for his decades of work supporting veterans.

Peter Palivos was presented with the Distinguished Civilian Service Medal by U.S. Army Gen. Andrew Poppas at a Saturday ceremony at Palivos' home.

The event was attended by Nevada dignitaries including Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley, Rep. Susie Lee, Lt. Gov. Starvos Anthony, and 100-year-old Henry Jackson, a decorated

Marine who was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in Las Vegas in 2022.

"It's all very surreal," said Palivos. "It's a great honor, but I'd like to also take this opportunity to encourage others to get involved with philanthropy and to give back."

After starting out shining shoes at his father's store in Chicago decades ago as a 7-year-old, Palivos became an attorney and performed charitable work as chairman of the Las Vegas-based nonprofit Voice of the Veteran in support of U.S. veterans and their families.

Tesla defects led to fiery crash, death, lawsuit says

WA TACOMA — A new lawsuit alleges design defects in a Tesla Model 3 killed a Tacoma woman and severely injured her husband in 2023 by trapping them in a crashed, burning car.

Jeffery Dennis and a lawyer representing the estate of his late wife, Wendy Dennis, filed the lawsuit Friday in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington.

Jeffery Dennis was driving the Tesla on Jan. 7, 2023, for a Saturday afternoon of errands with Wendy in the passenger seat, according to court documents. The car "suddenly and rapidly accelerated out of control" for at least 5 seconds before crashing into a utility pole, the complaint reads.

The complaint alleges the car's Automatic Emergency Braking system, designed to brake when sensors detect a frontal collision is "unavoidable," did not engage.

The Tesla burst into flames

immediately after hitting the utility pole.

Witnesses tried to open the car door to rescue the couple, but the design of the car does not let people open the doors from outside when the battery isn't working, according to the lawsuit.

Some witnesses tried to break the car's windows with a baseball bat, but "the increasingly intense fire forced them to distance themselves," the complaint reads.

First responders were able to pull the couple from the car, but Wendy died at the scene.

Senior living facility part of \$7M settlement

WA BELLINGHAM — Bonaventure Senior Living has agreed to pay \$7 million to improve its services and \$250 to 800 residents following a consumer protection investigation.

Bonaventure operates 15 facilities in Washington. Ten of them were part of the settlement.

An investigation by the Office of the Attorney General found that between 2019 and 2024, Bonaventure failed to provide vital services to residents, including medication assistance, housekeeping, maintenance, dining and infection control.

The office said this likely violated the Washington Consumer Protection Act.

The company did not admit liability, the Office of the Attorney General said, but agreed to provide all the services promised in its contracts and advertising to residents going forward.

— From wire reports

STARS  STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

McCaffrey, 49ers hold off Panthers

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Christian McCaffrey maintained that playing Carolina for the first time since the Panthers traded him to San Francisco three years ago wouldn't raise his level of urgency one bit.

McCaffrey responded to the reunion game like he does almost every week, with a productive performance that led the 49ers to another win.

McCaffrey gained 142 yards from scrimmage and scored a touchdown, and San Francisco overcame a rough performance by quarterback Brock Purdy to beat Carolina 20-9 on Monday night.

"Obviously when you see familiar faces, it's always good to see them before the game and after the game," McCaffrey said. "But that's a completely new team than when I was there. So it's really just business once the ball was snapped."

McCaffrey's big night helped the 49ers (8-4) overcome three interceptions in the first half by Purdy to remain in playoff position heading into the stretch run

of the season.

Bryce Young and the Panthers (6-6) struggled to take advantage of their opportunities a week after he threw for a franchise-record 448 yards in a win at Atlanta. Young threw for 169 yards with one touchdown and one interception as Carolina missed a chance to move into sole possession of first place in the NFC South.

Purdy wasn't much better in his second start back from a toe injury as he became the first player this season to throw three interceptions in the first half of a game. Purdy said neither the toe nor rust was an issue.

"Honestly, the decisions of going to those spots, I was fine with," he said. "It's just the execution of throwing a better ball. I feel like on really all of them, I needed to just drive the ball a little bit more. I kept it up in the air too long on multiple of them."

San Francisco went conservative in the second half after Purdy's rough start to the game, relying mostly on McCaffrey

and short passes. The strategy worked with McCaffrey scoring on a 12-yard run to make it 17-3 and the Niners adding a field goal by Matt Gay.

Young did connect on one big play, a 29-yard TD pass to Teatairoa McMillan, but the Panthers couldn't convert on a 2-point try after a penalty moved the ball to the 1.

Young then threw his second interception of the game to Ji'Ayir Brown with Carolina in scoring position with a 20-9 deficit.

"Just lack of execution," Young said. "Couple of plays I'd like to have back, some stuff we could do better. Not what we wanted. We didn't do good enough and I take ownership of that."

The frustration from the loss contributed to a spat, with Panthers safety Tre'Von Moehrig hitting Niners receiver Jauan Jennings in the groin after a run play late in the game and Jennings responding with a punch to the helmet after the game.

"I was just responding to some childish behavior," Jen-

nings said.

McCaffrey, who has transformed San Francisco's offense since being acquired in October 2022, finished with 89 yards rushing and 53 receiving for his 10th 100-yard game of the season — two shy of the franchise record he set in 2023.

The 49ers gave the ball to McCaffrey on the first five plays, leading to the first opening-drive TD of the season. Purdy connected on a 12-yard pass to Jennings for the score.

The two offenses did nothing after that. Jaycee Horn had two of Carolina's three picks of Purdy, but the Panthers turned those takeaways into only three points. Young ruined one drive when he was intercepted by Brown on a first-down play from the 1.

"I like the call," coach Dave Canales said. "It was an aggressive call, a play action that we had opportunities on. Unfortunately came out with an interception."

The teams traded field goals and San Francisco led 10-3 at the half.

Vikings place McCarthy under concussion protocol

Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings have placed quarterback J.J. McCarthy in the concussion protocol, putting his availability for their upcoming game at Seattle in question.

McCarthy first reported symptoms during the team's flight home from the 23-6 loss at Green Bay, coach Kevin O'Connell said Monday. The medical staff made the decision to put him in the protocol after returning to Minnesota, O'Connell said, and the Vikings hadn't identified a particular play when McCarthy might've taken a hit to the head.

"It had to be late, based upon how the game went," O'Connell

said.

O'Connell declined to answer specific questions about the severity or nature of McCarthy's symptoms. He did not rule McCarthy out for this Sunday but said rookie backup Max Brosmer would step in with the first-string offense in practice this week until or unless McCarthy is cleared.

"We'll go through the steps and phases of it. I'm not ready to make any sort of designation for the game or anything like that," O'Connell said. "We'll let the process play out, but at the same time I do think it's important for everybody to know that there is total transparency. I'm going to totally, totally defer to

the medical staff and the professionals on that one as well as J.J."

With 10th-year veteran Carson Wentz out for rest of the season following shoulder surgery, the only other quarterback on Minnesota's roster is John Wolford, a 30-year-old journeyman on the practice squad. Wolford does have experience in O'Connell's system, with the Los Angeles Rams in the 2020 and 2021 seasons when O'Connell was the offensive coordinator there under coach Sean McVay.

McCarthy, who missed his rookie season recovering from knee surgery and sat out five more games this season with a

high ankle sprain, has struggled mightily to find any kind of rhythm or display any obvious progress. He went 12 for 19 for 87 yards with two interceptions and five sacks against the Packers, as the Vikings (4-7) lost their third straight game.

McCarthy has been intercepted 10 times in six NFL starts. His completion rate (54.1%) is the worst in the league among all passers with 50 or more attempts this season.

But now his practice time has been interrupted again. He also played through a bruised hand earlier this month.

"It's unfortunate because all you want to do is go back to work," O'Connell said.

Pistons' 13th straight win ties franchise mark

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Cade Cunningham had 24 points and 11 rebounds and the Detroit Pistons won their 13th straight game to tie the franchise record, holding off the Indiana Pacers 122-117 on Monday night.

The Pistons matched winning streaks by their 1989-90 and 2003-04 championship teams, two seasons after losing 28 in a row to break the NBA season record and tie the overall mark. Eastern Conference-leading Detroit is 15-2.

"It's amazing," Cunningham said. "We play for the Detroit Pistons, man. A historic franchise. So to be able to make history for a historic franchise like this — it's special."

It's a stunning turnaround for a franchise that started the 2023-24 season with a 3-36 record and finished with 14 wins.

Down 18 early in the fourth quarter, the Pacers pulled as close as two points. Bennedict Mathurin missed a 3-pointer with a chance to tie it with 11 seconds left.

Pascal Siakam had 24 points for injury-ravaged Indiana. Ja-

race Walker added 21. The Pacers have lost 10 of 11 to fall to 2-15.

Trail Blazers 115, Bucks 103: Jerami Grant scored a season-high 35 points and visiting Portland rolled to a victory while handing Milwaukee its fifth consecutive loss.

Deni Avdija scored 22 points for the Trail Blazers, while Donovan Clingan added 14 points and 12 rebounds.

Kings 117, Timberwolves 112 (OT): DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points and host Sacramento took advantage of Minnesota's second straight stunning collapse, rallying late in regulation and winning in overtime.

After DeRozan tied it at 101 with two free throws with 34 seconds left in regulation, Anthony Edwards missed a jumper for the Timberwolves, and DeRozan and Malik Monk missed shots on the final possession.

Raptors 110, Cavaliers 99: Brandon Ingram scored 15 of his season-high 37 points in the third quarter, Scottie Barnes had 18 points and 11 rebounds and host Toronto beat Cleveland for its eighth straight win.

The Cavaliers' Donovan

Mitchell had 17 points but shot 6 of 20, going 3 of 12 from 3-point range.

Heat 106, Mavericks 102: Tyler Herro scored 24 points in his season debut after recovering from ankle surgery, and Kell'el Ware had 20 points and 18 rebounds for host Miami in a win over Dallas.

Bam Adebayo had 17 points for the Heat, who were held nearly 20 points below their season average but improved to 8-1 at home.

Knicks 113, Nets 100: Karl-Anthony Towns had 37 points and 12 rebounds and Jalen Brunson scored 27 in visiting New York's victory over Brooklyn.

Towns shot 14 for 20 from the field and made all six free throws to lead the Knicks to their 12th consecutive win over the Nets.

Nuggets 125, Grizzlies 115: Jamal Murray had 29 points and eight assists, Peyton Watson scored 14 of his 27 points in the third quarter, and visiting Denver held off a late push by Memphis.

Nikola Jokic recorded his 10th triple-double of the season with

17 points, 16 assists and 10 rebounds for the Nuggets.

Warriors 134, Jazz 117: Stephen Curry made six 3-pointers and scored 31 points and Jimmy Butler had 18 points, seven assists and six rebounds as host Golden State beat Utah.

Keyonte George finished with 28 points on 10-of-17 shooting to lead the Jazz, who have lost four straight and five of six.

Pelicans 143, Bulls 130: Zion Williamson tied a season high with 29 points and host New Orleans beat Chicago to end a nine-game losing streak for its first win under interim coach James Borrego.

Saddiq Bey had 20 points and 14 rebounds, highlighted by a pair of late 3s to help the Pelicans (3-15) hold a lead that was 18 points with 5:15 left but fell to single digits in the last two minutes.

Rockets 114, Suns 92: Amen Thompson scored 28 points and Aaron Holiday added 22 off the bench for visiting Houston, which was without star forward Kevin Durant for the first time this season, in a win over Phoenix.

Devils beat Red Wings to snap 3-game losing streak

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Nico Hischier, Timo Meier and Connor Brown had a goal and an assist each and the New Jersey Devils beat the Detroit Red Wings 4-3 on Monday night in a matchup of two of the top four teams in the Eastern Conference.

New Jersey scored three goals in the first period on just eight shots for a 3-1 lead after one, snapped a three-game losing streak and got its first regulation win since beating the Los Angeles Kings 4-1 on Nov. 1.

The Devils' Jacob Markstrom made 32 saves, including 13 in the third period.

Alex DeBrincat, James van Riemsdyk and Dylan Larkin

scored for Detroit. Moritz Seider added two assists for the Red Wings, who lost for just the second time in their last seven games.

Capitals 5, Blue Jackets 1: Jakob Chychrun scored twice and host Washington beat Columbus.

Tom Wilson and John Carlson each had a goal and assist, and Martin Fehervary also scored for the Capitals, winners of four of their last five games.

Rangers 3, Blues 2: Alexis Lafreniere scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period and Igor Shesterkin made 19 saves as host New York snapped a four-game skid with a win over St. Louis.

Lafreniere put the puck past Blues netminder Joel Hofer 40 seconds into the final period for his fifth goal this season.

Panthers 8, Predators 3: A.J. Greer scored twice and added an assist, Sam Reinhart and Carter Verhaeghe had a goal and two assists apiece, and visiting Florida beat Nashville.

Gustav Forsling, Evan Rodrigues, Jesper Boqvist and Sam Bennett also scored and Daniil Tarasov made 36 saves for the Panthers, winners of three of their last four games.

Mammoth 5, Golden Knights 1: Logan Cooley scored four straight goals and had an assist as host Utah beat Vegas to avenge a loss four days earlier.

Cooley gave the Mammoth a 3-1 lead on a breakaway at 4:19 of the third period, and completed his second hat trick of the season into an empty net with 4:19 left. He added a short-handed empty-netter with 2:17 to go for his career-high fourth of the night and 13th of the season.

Lightning 3, Flyers 0: Andrei Vasilevskiy made 20 saves for his first shutout of the season, Brandon Hagel had two goals and an assist and Atlantic Division-leading Tampa Bay beat visiting Philadelphia.

Kings 2, Senators 1: Brandt Clarke scored a power-play goal with 6:10 to play to lift host Los Angeles over Ottawa.

Sharp, No. 3 Houston top Syracuse in OT

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Emanuel Sharp and Milos Uzan each scored 26 points, teaming for all 11 of No. 3 Houston's points in overtime, in the Cougars' 78-74 victory over Syracuse on Monday in the opening round of the Players Era.

Uzan, playing in his hometown, scored six points in OT and Sharp had five to keep Houston (6-0) undefeated. Chris Cenac Jr. scored all eight of his points after halftime and had 12 rebounds.

Tyler Betsey led the Orange (4-1) with 16 points. Kiyan Anthony, playing in front of his dad — former Syracuse and NBA star Carmelo — scored 10 points.

The Orange gave the Cougars a fight even though Syracuse is without its leading scorer this week. Donnie Freeman, who averages 17.8 points, is out with a lower-body injury.

No. 2 Arizona 103, Denver 73: Brayden Burries and Ivan Kharchenkov each scored a career-high 20 points and the host Wildcats got 72 points from

freshmen in a win over the Pioneers.

Burries was 7 of 13 from the field, making 3 of 7 from 3-point range, and added seven rebounds, four assists and two steals, while Kharchenkov was 9 for 12 from the field as the Wildcats (6-0) won their 41st consecutive home game against an unranked opponent.

No. 6 Louisville 87, Eastern Michigan 46: Isaac McKneely scored 17 points for the host Cardinals, which put the defensive clamps on the Eagles, holding Eastern Michigan to 28% shooting in a home victory.

Louisville (6-0) jumped out to a 19-4 lead midway through the first half. The lead grew to 31-9 with 4:29 remaining before halftime. The Cardinals missed their final five shots, however, and shot a season-low 34.4% (11 of 32) in the first half.

No. 7 Michigan 94, San Diego State 54: Yaxel Lendeborg scored 15 points and the visiting Wolverines routed the Aztecs in the opening round of the Players Era tournament.

Elliot Cadeau and Morez

Johnson Jr. each had 13 points. Nimari Burnett and Rodd Gale Jr. scored 11 apiece and Will Tschetter added 10. Michigan (4-0) outrebounded San Diego State (2-1) 45-39 and scored 15 fast-break points.

No. 12 Gonzaga 95, No. 8 Alabama 85: Tyon Grant-Foster and Graham Ike each scored 21 points to lead the Bulldogs to a road victory over the Crimson Tide in the Players Era tournament, Gonzaga's second win over a ranked team.

Ike, who was limping in the second half, also had 11 rebounds. Braden Huff scored 18 points, one of five Bulldogs in double figures.

No. 13 Illinois 87, Texas Rio Grande Valley 73: Andrej Stojakovic scored 24 points for his fourth 20-point performance in five games, leading the host Fighting Illini over the Vaqueros.

Mihailo Petrovic had 12 points, and David Mirkovic and twins Zvonimir and Tomislav Ivisic each added 10 for Illinois (6-1), which is now 6-0 at home.

No. 15 Iowa State 83, No. 14 St. John's 82: Milan Momcilov-

ic scored a game-high 23 points and the host Cyclones defeated the Red Storm in the Players Era tournament.

St. John's had a chance to take the lead after Iowa State's Joshua Jefferson threw the ball away with 30 seconds left, but Oziyah Sellers missed a driving layup at the other end.

No. 17 Tennessee 85, Rutgers 60: Ja'Kobi Gillespie scored 32 point and Nate Ament added 20 to help the host Volunteers beat the Scarlet Knights in the first day of play at the Players Era tournament.

Gillespie made six 3-pointers in the game. Felix Okpara and J.P. Estrella each scored 10 points, while Okpara and Cade Phillips had seven rebounds apiece.

No. 21 Auburn 84, Oregon 73: Tahaad Pettiford scored 24 points before fouling out and the visiting Tigers beat the Ducks in the Players Era Championship.

Seton Hall 85, No. 23 N.C. State 74: A.J. Staton-McCray scored 22 points to lead the Pirates over the Wolfpack in a Maui Invitational quarterfinal.

Briles hired as ENMU coach 9 years after Baylor scandal

Associated Press

PORTALES, N.M. — Art Briles was hired as football coach at Eastern New Mexico on Monday, getting his first college head coaching job since Baylor fired the two-time Big 12 champion more than nine years ago amid a sexual assault scandal at the world's largest Baptist university.

"Very excited, very grateful, very happy," Briles said during his introduction at the NCAA Division II school that plays in the Lone Star Conference. "It's a great moment for me, I hope it's a great moment for this university. I'm extremely excited to start this journey, this new chapter, in our lives."

An external investigation re-

vealed in May 2016 that Baylor had for years mishandled numerous sexual assault allegations by students, including some against football players. Briles has said that he didn't cover up reports of assaults by his players. An NCAA infractions report in 2021 ripped him for failing to look into horrific and potentially criminal allegations, but he wasn't found guilty of any NCAA violations.

When asked how different his perspective is 10 years after his last college season, Briles responded, "I think I'm certainly a lot more knowledgeable about every situation."

"Really, I'm just more concerned about the next chapter and not the last chapter," he

said. "I've kind of learned through the process that a lot of times less said is best said, because a lot of times if you say stuff it can be construed however anybody wants to look at it."

Briles, who turns 70 next month, was hired as offensive coordinator at Grambling State in 2022, but stepped down less than a week later, saying he didn't want to be a distraction at the prominent HBCU. Southern Miss coach Jay Hopson had attempted to hire Briles as the program's OC in 2019, but university administration eventually vetoed the move.

After coaching professional football in Italy, Briles returned to Texas and was the head coach at Mount Vernon High School

for two seasons (2019-20).

The athletic director at Eastern New Mexico is Kevin Fite, who was the associate AD for compliance and eligibility at Houston when Briles was coach there before going to Baylor. Briles had a 34-28 record at Houston from 2003-07, then was 65-37 with the Bears from 2008-15.

Fite said he and Briles are committed to working together to create the best possible experience for players and the entire student and university community.

"That will involve winning," Fite said. "That winning will do a lot for this campus and its students. I understand that this is a unique and surprising hire."