

US strikes Iran-linked sites in Syria

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military launched airstrikes early Friday on two locations in eastern Syria linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Pentagon said, in retaliation for a slew of drone and missile attacks against U.S. bases and personnel in the region that began early last week.

The U.S. strikes reflect the Biden administration's determination to maintain a delicate balance. The U.S. wants to hit Iranian-backed groups suspected of targeting the U.S. as strongly as possible to deter future aggression, possibly fueled by Israel's war against Hamas,

while also working to avoid inflaming the region and provoking a wider conflict.

Information about the specific targets and other details were not yet provided.

According to the Pentagon, there have been at least 12 attacks on U.S. bases and personnel in Iraq and four in Syria since Oct. 17. Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said 21 U.S. personnel were injured in two of those assaults that used drones to target al-Asad Airbase in Iraq and al-Tanf Garrison in Syria.

In a statement, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the "precision self-defense strikes are a response to a series of on-

going and mostly unsuccessful attacks against U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-backed militia groups that began on October 17."

He said President Joe Biden directed the narrowly tailored strikes "to make clear that the United States will not tolerate such attacks and will defend itself, its personnel, and its interests." And he added that the operation was separate and distinct from Israel's war against Hamas.

The Biden administration has not accused Iran of having a direct role in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel and has said it appears so far that Tehran was not

aware of it beforehand. But the U.S. has noted that Iran has long supported Hamas and has raised concerns that Iran and its proxies could turn the conflict into a wider war.

Austin said the U.S. does not seek a broader conflict, but if Iranian proxy groups continue, the U.S. won't hesitate to take additional action to protect its forces.

According to the Pentagon, all the U.S. personnel hurt in the militant attacks received minor injuries and all returned to duty. In addition, a contractor suffered a cardiac arrest and died while seeking shelter from a possible drone attack.

China, US release dueling videos, accusations

Bloomberg News

The U.S. and China each released video footage that accused the other of provocative or unprofessional actions by military craft in and around the South China Sea, escalating the rhetoric by both countries in the disputed body of water.

The Chinese clip said that on Aug. 19, the USS Ralph Johnson "conducted close-in harassment" against a Chinese navy task group doing routine training in the South China Sea. It accused the American destroyer of "several provocative actions such as making a sharp turn and sudden acceleration or deceleration," and coming within 670 meters, or roughly 730 yards.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian said at a regular press briefing Thursday that the video "shows that the U.S. side is the real provoker, risk-taker and disrupter."

The U.S. warship's actions "endanger China's national security," Wu said, adding that his nation would "take all necessary measures to resolutely safeguard national sovereignty."

The U.S. Pacific Fleet didn't immediately respond to a request for comment outside of working hours. But hours later, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command released video footage that it said showed a Chinese J-11 fighter executing an "unsafe intercept" of a U.S. Air Force B-52 bomber, which was "lawfully conducting routine operations over the South China Sea in international airspace." It said the Oct. 24 intercept was done at night and put both craft in danger of collision.

The 38-second clip shows the Chinese plane approach the B-52 from behind and fly past it from a close distance before veering away.

The U.S. has been increasingly open about posting such footage, though it's rare for the Chinese military to release video of encounters with the U.S. military. The Chinese move comes after the Pentagon said last week that China's warplanes have sharply increased "coercive and risky" behavior in the South China Sea.

The dueling descriptions of the separate events occurred as China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi began a visit to Washington. He was meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday to discuss easing of tensions and preparing for a possible formal meeting between President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco next month. Wang was expected to meet National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Friday

and greet Biden as well.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea as its own, and bristles at military activity conducted by the U.S. and its partners in the region.

Earlier this month, a Canadian general criticized the Chinese air force over an episode off the coast of the Asian nation that apparently saw a fighter cut off a patrol plane and drop flares in its path.

By releasing the video of the warship encounters, China appears to be trying to show that it is behaving responsibly in the region while the troublemaker is the U.S., though Washington insists its military activities are conducted in international airspace and waters.

The video also said the U.S. maneuvers violated agreements between the two nations on the behavior of ship captains at sea.

Israel expects long ground war in Gaza

Associated press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israel expects to launch a long and difficult ground offensive into Gaza soon to destroy Hamas, the country's defense minister said Friday, describing a campaign that will require dismantling a vast network of tunnels used by the territory's militant rulers.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant spoke to a small group of foreign reporters in Tel Aviv after Israeli forces backed by fighter jets and drones carried out a second, limited ground raid into Gaza in as many days, striking the outskirts of Gaza City.

Gallant said the ground invasion that follows weeks of airstrikes "will take a long time," and that it would lead to another lengthy phase of lower-intensity fighting, as Israel destroys "pockets of resistance."

After three weeks of war sparked by a bloody Hamas in-

cursion into southern Israel, the Palestinian death toll has soared past 7,300, according to officials in Gaza. A blockade on Gaza has meant dwindling supplies of food, fuel, water and medicine, and U.N. and Arab leaders have called for a ceasefire to allow entry of humanitarian aid that is only trickling in.

Gaza's Health Ministry on Thursday released a detailed list of names and identification numbers of those killed, including more than 3,000 minors and more than 1,500 women.

More than 1,400 people were slain in Israel during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, according to the Israeli government, and at least 229 hostages were taken into Gaza. Palestinian militants have fired thousands of rockets into Israel, including one that hit a residential building in Tel Aviv on Friday, wounding four people.

The overall number of deaths far exceeds the combined toll of

all four previous wars between Israel and Hamas, estimated at around 4,000. A ground invasion is expected to cause even higher casualties on both sides as Israeli forces and Hamas battle each other in dense residential areas.

Hospitals have been scrounging for fuel to run emergency generators that power incubators and other lifesaving equipment after Israel cut off all fuel deliveries to Gaza at the start of the war, forcing its only power plant to shut down.

Gallant said Israel believes that Hamas would confiscate any fuel that enters. He said Hamas uses generators to pump air into its hundreds of kilometers (miles) of tunnels, which originate in civilian areas. He showed reporters aerial footage of what he said was a tunnel shaft built right next to a hospital.

"For air, they need oil. For oil, they need us," he said.

Little is known about Hamas' secretive tunnels and other infrastructure, and it wasn't possible to independently confirm Gallant's claims.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, which provides basic services to hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza, said it has been forced to ration fuel among lifesaving machines in hospitals, bakeries and desalination plants, and only has enough for a few more days.

Earlier on Friday, the military said ground forces raided inside Gaza, striking dozens of militant targets over the past 24 hours. It said aircraft and artillery bombed targets in Shijaiyah, a neighborhood on Gaza City's outskirts that was the scene of an urban battle in the 2014 war.

The military said the soldiers exited the territory without suffering any casualties. It reported an earlier, hourslong raid into northern Gaza on Thursday.

Maine residents shelter amid search for shooter

Associated Press

LEWISTON, Maine — Police asked thousands of residents to stay in their homes Friday as heavily armed local and federal law enforcement agents searched for a second day for an Army reservist who they say fatally shot 18 people at a bowling alley and a bar.

Nearly two days after the shooting, police have given no indication that they have any leads about the suspect, Robert Card's whereabouts. During a lengthy news conference absent of any major developments, Maine Department of Public Safety Commissioner Michael Sauschuck would only say that authorities are leaving all their options open.

"We're going to be all over the place," Sauschuck said. "That's not saying that we know that the individual is in this house, you know, in that house or they're in that swath of land, this acreage."

Investigators found a note at a home associated with Card on Thursday that was addressed to his son, two law enforcement officials said. The officials described it as a suicide note but said it didn't provide any specific motive for the shooting.

Card's cellphone had also been recovered in the home, the official said, making a search more complicated because authorities routinely use phones to track suspects, the officials said. They were not authorized

to publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity.

Previously, police had said that Card had left his car at a boat ramp in the town of Lisbon shortly after the shootings Wednesday evening. Sauschuck said Friday that authorities were going to conduct extensive searches of the nearby Androscoggin River by air and boat, and that a utility was using its dams to lower the river in the area, but he made it clear that would not be their only area of focus.

The Cards have lived in Bowdoin for generations, neighbors said, and various members of the Card family own hundreds

of acres in the area.

"This is his stomping ground," Richard Goddard, who lives the road where the search took place, said of the suspect. "He knows every ledge to hide behind, every thicket."

Authorities say Card, 40, who has firearms training, opened fire with at least one rifle at a bar and a bowling alley Wednesday in Lewiston, Maine's second-largest city about 15 miles from Bowdoin.

The attack left 18 people dead and 13 wounded, three of whom were hospitalized in critical condition, authorities said. Card will be charged with 18 counts of murder once all the victims are identified, authorities said.

Dems aim to counter promotion blockade

The Washington Post

Democrats and some Republicans have long expressed unease with Sen. Tommy Tuberville's blockade of military nominees over a Pentagon abortion policy.

But with the United States' closest ally now waging a war in the Middle East while critical positions remain on hold, Democrats are getting behind a plan to circumvent Tuberville. It will only work, however, if some Republicans back it — a test of whether Republicans' private frustrations with the Republican Alabama senator's tactics run deep enough to spur public action.

The new plan would require nine or more Republicans to join with Democrats in order to approve a large block of military nominees at once, without infringing on senators' power to stall nominations.

Anger at the affable former college football coach, who has said "there's nobody more military" than him, have reached a

boiling point since Hamas attacked Israel earlier this month.

Tuberville "has not served a day in his life," said Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., a Navy combat veteran who sits on the Armed Services Committee with him.

The generally understated Kelly has taken aim at Tuberville in recent weeks, tussling with him at a committee hearing over his claim to military expertise and characterizing his hold as hurting Israel and helping Hamas at a news conference.

Tuberville's blanket hold applies to all senior military promotions, and more than 350 officers are now caught up in its net. That includes officials whose purview is the Middle East, like the deputy commander of the U.S. Central Command, and the commander of the Fifth Fleet — who are both awaiting stalled nominations to three-star positions.

President Biden's nominee to lead the Navy, Adm. Lisa Franchetti, and Gen. David Allvin,

who has been tapped to lead the Air Force, are also stalled and performing the jobs in an acting capacity while also still doing the work of their previous posts.

The Defense Department has deployed thousands of additional U.S. military personnel to the Middle East this month amid rising concerns of an expected Israeli ground offensive in the Gaza Strip prompted by the Oct. 7 cross-border attacks by the militant group Hamas.

The deployments include the repositioning of two aircraft carrier strike groups, each with about 7,500 troops, a three-ship amphibious task force of more than 4,000 sailors and Marines and an increase in the number of fighter jets and air defense systems the Pentagon keeps in the region.

The volatility has renewed scrutiny on the former Auburn University football coach, who began his hold in February to protest the military's policy of aiding service members who need to travel in order to legally

obtain an abortion. His Democratic and some Republican colleagues have urged him to drop the holds, but Tuberville hasn't been moved.

"This is more evidence that the need to lock up women for their health care choices is more important to many Republicans than protecting our country or protecting Israel," Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said. "The thing they care about most is criminalizing abortion."

But Tuberville said he wasn't feeling the heat, even as the president made a surprise visit to Israel, top military leaders journeyed to the Hill to debrief senators about the conflict and lawmakers debated sending billions of dollars to help Israel.

"I don't feel any pressure," Tuberville told reporters last week.

"It's not holding up any readiness," he said later of his blanket hold. "I mean, we're not at war, number one. And all these jobs that we're holding, they're all being done."

US, Qatar to revisit Doha's ties to Hamas

The Washington Post

The United States and Qatar have agreed to revisit the Persian Gulf state's association with Hamas after resolution of the high-stakes international hostage crisis involving more than 220 people in Gaza, according to four diplomats familiar with the discussions.

The agreement, which has not been reported previously, was forged during a recent meeting in Doha between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. Still undecided is whether the reevaluation will entail an exodus of Hamas leaders from Qatar, where they have long

maintained a political office in the capital, or steps that come short of that, these officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter.

The agreement is an attempt to balance the Biden administration's short-term goal of rescuing as many hostages as possible with its long-term objective of trying to isolate Hamas following its Oct. 7 rampage in Israel.

Qatar has been instrumental in helping the United States and Israel secure the release of hostages and communicating with Hamas on other pressing issues, including the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Inflation gauge indicates continuing price pressures

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An inflation gauge that is closely monitored by the Federal Reserve showed price increases remained elevated in September amid brisk consumer spending and strong economic growth.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that prices rose 0.4% from August to September, the same as the previous month. And compared with 12 months earlier, inflation was unchanged at 3.4%.

September's month-to-month price increase exceeds a pace consistent with the Fed's 2% annual inflation target, and it compounds already higher costs for such necessities as rent, food

and gas. The Fed is expected to keep its key short-term interest rate unchanged when it meets next week. But its policymakers have flagged the risk that stronger growth could keep inflation persistently high and require further rate hikes to quell it.

Since March 2022, the central bank has raised its key rate from near zero to roughly 5.4% in a concerted drive to tame inflation. Annual inflation has tumbled from the 9.1% peak it reached in June of last year.

On Thursday, the government reported that strong consumer spending drove the economy to a robust 4.9% annual growth rate in the July-September quarter, the best such showing in nearly two years.

Biden meets with new speaker to discuss Israel, Ukraine aid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden met with new House Speaker Mike Johnson and Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries at the White House on Thursday to discuss his request for nearly \$106 billion for Israel, Ukraine and other national security needs.

Johnson, a staunch conservative allied with Donald Trump, has shown little interest in providing additional money from Congress to support Ukraine in its war against Russia. Biden met briefly with Johnson and also with Jeffries before the House leaders joined a classified briefing with other congressional lawmakers on the assistance package, according to a White House official.

“It was a productive meeting,” Johnson told reporters back at the Capitol. “I enjoyed my visit with the president.”

The new Republican leader

who swept into office nearly a month after the ouster of Rep. Kevin McCarthy as speaker had a busy first full day in office, having inherited many of the same political problems that tormented past GOP leaders and challenged their tenure as speaker.

The briefing in the Situation Room for Johnson and other House leaders on the emergency funding request was the first time the new speaker, who opposes the aid to Ukraine, was getting a close airing from White House officials about Biden’s case for the money. The White House has conducted similar briefings in recent weeks.

Biden had called Johnson to congratulate him after his election Wednesday and said it was “time for all of us to act responsibly” to fund the government and provide that foreign aid. “We need to move swiftly,” the

president said in a statement.

Johnson, 51, swept through on the first ballot with support from all Republicans anxious to get on with the business of governing. He was quickly sworn as speaker and is now second in line to the presidency, after the vice president.

While not the Republicans’ top choice, Johnson had few foes and an important backer in Donald Trump.

“He’s a tremendous leader,” Trump said Wednesday at the New York courthouse where the Republican front-runner for the White House in 2024 is on trial over a lawsuit alleging business fraud.

At the Capitol on Thursday, Johnson sat down with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who told reporters afterward that he had a “very good” meeting with the new speaker.

2% of kids, 7% of adults get new COVID shot

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A month after federal officials recommended new versions of COVID-19 vaccines, 7% of U.S. adults and 2% of children have gotten a shot.

One expert called the rates “abysmal.”

The numbers, presented Thursday at a meeting held by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, come from a national survey of thousands of Americans, conducted two weeks ago.

The data also indicated that nearly 40% of adults said they probably or definitely will not get the shot.

A similar percentage of parents said they did not plan to vaccinate their children.

In the late summer, government health officials made the nation’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign more like the annual flu campaign.

Officials approved updated shots that have a single target, an omicron descendant named XBB.1.5.

They replaced vaccines that targeted the original coronavirus strain and a much earlier omicron version. Last month, the CDC recommended the new shots for everyone 6 months and older.

The government also transitioned to a commercialized system that relied on the health care industry — not the government — to handle the distribution of the shots. Many people who immediately went for shots said pharmacies or doctors didn’t have them.

Cases remain low, compared with the pandemic’s early months.

Even so, health officials say about 18,000 hospitalizations and 1,200 deaths are still being reported each week.

Snow piles up in N. Dakota as region’s first major winter storm moves eastward

Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — Nearly a foot of snow buried parts of North Dakota on Thursday as the region’s first wintry weather of the season swept through the Rockies and into the northern Plains, slowing travel and frustrating some farmers who still have crops left to harvest.

The storm dumped as much as 12 inches of snow south of Dickinson, according to the National Weather Service. Eleven inches of snow fell near Stanley, N.D., in the state’s northwest corner, and other areas saw up to 8 inches, said Matt Johnson, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Bismarck.

“Well, it is definitely winter,”

said Karolin Jappe, the emergency manager for McKenzie County.

Jappe ventured out twice Wednesday to the scene of a semi rollover with hazardous materials and said driving was a challenge. Some motorists had rolled their vehicles or slid into ditches, which Jappe said “is normal” given the conditions.

The storm, an upper-level low from western Canada, came across the northern Rockies and is expected to continue east into Canada as cold Arctic air remains behind into next week, Johnson said.

The storm’s second wave was expected to impact central and southwestern North Dakota,

with the heaviest snow expected later Thursday afternoon, he said.

Below-normal cold temperatures are forecast to follow, as low as single digits and possibly even below zero in low-lying areas, Johnson said. The snowpack will enhance the cold temperatures, he said.

Snow continued falling in Montana on Thursday, with the storm leaving 19 inches on the west side of Helena since late Tuesday.

Another 17 inches had fallen by Thursday morning at a backcountry weather station near the borders of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, the National Weather Service reported.

D-backs take string of slights into series

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Before opening the World Series, the Arizona Diamondbacks wanted to recount a series of slights.

Overlooked by oddsmakers and angered by analysts, the Diamondbacks find themselves in a Surprise Series against the also unexpected Texas Rangers. But the mindsets couldn't be more different ahead of Friday night's opener in Major League Baseball's third all-wild card title matchup.

"We just put it on our list and keep those receipts and walk around with a little bit more of a chip on our shoulder," Arizona manager Torey Lovullo said Thursday. "It gives you a little bit more motivation. And when you can get a little bit more, you take it."

Diamondbacks closer Paul Sewald has become keeper of the receipts, reminding teammates of what they consider disrespect.

"Maybe I found screenshots that maybe other people didn't," he said, wearing a T-shirt that proclaimed "Snakes Alive." "We took offense to that and we're excited that we're here and people are still not giving us that much credit here."

The Diamondbacks are tracking closely what the public says, with MLB Network a clubhouse constant. Meanwhile, the Rangers insist they pay no attention.

"We don't listen to the outside noise that much," second baseman Marcus Semien said.

Zac Gallen, a 28-year-old right-hander coming off a career-best 17-win season, starts Game 1 for the Diamondbacks, in the Series for the first time

since beating the New York Yankees for the franchise's only title in 2001. Texas starts Nathan Eovaldi, a 33-year-old right-hander and a two-time All-Star who has overcome two Tommy John surgeries.

Gallen, who grew up in a Philadelphia suburb, followed the pennant-winning Game 7 victory over the Phillies with a tweet highlighting the losing team's spring training and reminded Philadelphia fans to "make sure to get those tix for your next game." When the Phillies led the NLCS 2-0, backup catcher Garrett Stubbs talked about celebrating in the Chase Field pool. Gallen responded to what he said were online direct messages.

"I just figured if they want to talk junk to me, I'll say one back," he said. "And I feel like being from there, I knew how to hit them the hardest."

Both teams worked out Thursday under a closed roof at Globe Life Field, where World Series logos were freshly painted on the turf. Both clubs are two years removed from 100-loss seasons, and the Diamondbacks could become just the second champion with a negative run differential after the 1987 Minnesota Twins.

Arizona went 84-78 during the season and earned the NL's sixth and last postseason berth, finishing with what would be the second-fewest wins for a Series champion behind the 2006 St. Louis Cardinals' 83. The Rangers were 90-72 and got the fifth AL slot.

Texas hasn't won a title since the franchise started play as the expansion Washington Senators in 1961, and odds of a Diamondbacks-Rangers Series

were 1,750 to 1 when wagering for the 2023 season opened.

"We weren't concerned with what people thought of us," said first-year Rangers manager Bruce Bochy, who led San Francisco to three titles from 2010-14. "We thought we belonged and we thought we could win."

Lovullo, excited about his first Series as a manager, opened his news conference by snapping a photo of assembled media "just to break the ice."

He had a message for MLB Network's Chris "Mad Dog" Russo, who promised before Game 6 against the Phillies to "retire on the spot" if Arizona won the pennant.

"You can't back out of that one, Mad Dog. You've got to do something," Lovullo said. "I do like Howard Stern's thought about walking with a billboard saying that I am whatever, a liar ... in Midtown Manhattan for half a day. That will do it for me, but I ain't going to forgive you until you do something unbe-

lievable, maybe show up here and say you're sorry to the entire team."

Better Nate than never

Eovaldi is 4-0 in this postseason. He was to have started Game 4 of the 2018 Series for Boston but instead relieved in the 12th inning of Game 3 and delivered a memorable performance before giving up Max Muncy's winning home run leading off the 18th for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"I kind of had my moment there," Eovaldi said. "Having Game 1, trying to set a tone for the team, there's a lot of pressure with that, but also a lot of excitement."

Great gloves

Arizona had the fewest errors in the major leagues during the season (56), one less than Texas. The Diamondbacks have allowed three unearned runs during the postseason and the Rangers one.

Ex-president to throw first pitch

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Former President George W. Bush, the former Rangers owner, will throw out the ceremonial first pitch before Texas plays the Arizona Diamondbacks in the World Series opener on Friday night.

This will be Bush's fourth World Series ceremonial first pitch but his first before an opener.

Bush, 77, headed the group that bought the Rangers from Eddie Chiles in 1998 and was general partner through November 1994, when he stepped

down as he prepared to become Texas governor.

Bush was U.S. president from 2001-09 and threw out the ceremonial first pitch before Game 3 of the 2001 World Series at Yankee Stadium between New York and Arizona. With heavy security following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Bush wore a bulletproof vest.

Bush threw out ceremonial first pitches with his father, former President George H.W. Bush, before Game 4 of the 2010 World Series in Texas and before Game 5 of the 2017 World Series in Houston.

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Allen leads Bills to 24-18 win over Bucs

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Low energy wasn't going to be an issue for the slow-starting Buffalo Bills on Thursday night.

After riling up the crowd in the end zone following warm-ups, receiver Stefon Diggs gave what coach Sean McDermott called an impassioned pregame speech.

Josh Allen then responded by throwing two touchdown passes and running for another — while shrugging off aggravating an injury to his throwing shoulder — and the Bills hung on to beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 24-18.

Diggs finished with nine catches for 70 yards, but wasn't always the primary target. Gabriel Davis had a career-best nine catches for 87 yards and a

touchdown, and rookie tight end Dalton Kincaid scored his first career TD on a 22-yard catch in a game the Bills never trailed.

And following a week of questions about his "low-positive" approach, Allen came through for the Bills (5-3), throwing for 324 yards on 31-of-40 passing. He had been listed on the Bills' report with a right shoulder injury and was checked in the blue medical tent in the second quarter, but remained in the game.

Allen was in his comfort zone from the beginning in overseeing a hurry-up offense to find a rhythm that had been lacking in Buffalo's previous three outings. He also was unafraid to take off and run with the ball in finishing with 41 yards rushing.

"Personally, I feel like I did,

but I will let you guys write about that whether you guys thought I did or not," Allen said, on bringing a higher energy level. "This team moves really well when I'm able to get the ball around to our playmakers."

The tempo, urgency and throws over the middle that the Bills offense was criticized for previously lacking became apparent on an opening drive. Buffalo settled for Tyler Bass kicking a 37-yard field goal after its drive stalled at Tampa Bay's 19.

Allen was hurt while being sacked on the play before he scored on a 13-yard touchdown scamper early in the second quarter. He returned in time for the next series after being examined.

"I'll be sore for a couple of days, but we'll be fine," he said.

Buffalo limited the Buccaneers' Baker Mayfield-led attack to less than 200 yards of offense through three quarters and 302 overall.

And Bills punter Sam Martin contributed by landing three punts inside Tampa Bay's 10.

Mayfield tried to rally Tampa Bay (3-4) late. He threw a 24-yard touchdown pass to Mike Evans, followed by a 2-point conversion to Cade Otton, to get the Buccaneers within six with 2:44 remaining. But it took Tampa Bay 17 plays and 7:21 to march 92 yards for that score.

The game ended when Mayfield's Hail Mary attempt from his own 45 fell between several players in the end zone.

The Buccaneers have lost three straight and four of five since opening 2-0.

Several stars among NFL players who could move

Associated Press

Teams looking to bolster their rosters for the second half have until Tuesday's trade deadline at 4 p.m. EDT.

Several established veterans could end up switching uniforms.

The Philadelphia Eagles couldn't wait to upgrade at safety, acquiring two-time All-Pro Kevin Byard from Tennessee earlier this week. Byard is a significant addition at a position that was depleted by injury and the departure of C.J. Gardner-Johnson in free agency.

Here are five players who could end up in new homes:

■ **DERRICK HENRY:** The Titans (2-4) already traded one star on defense, so dealing their best offensive player wouldn't be a surprise. Henry's production is down on a struggling offense. He's run for 425 yards, a 4.3-yard average and three touchdowns. The 29-year-old Henry can be a free agent after the season, so he should be considered a half-season rental.

The Ravens (5-2) and Buccaneers (3-3) are potential leading suitors for Henry. Baltimore lost running back J.K. Dobbins in Week 1. Lamar Jackson is their leading rusher followed by Gus Edwards.

The Buccaneers have the fourth-worst rushing offense in the league and only one team is averaging fewer yards per carry. Henry makes sense for Tampa Bay even though the team wants to build around younger players. The NFC South is wide open and the two-time reigning division champs are in the mix.

Don't discount the Cowboys (4-2) despite Jerry Jones' declaration that Dallas isn't making calls. For the right price, the Eagles (6-1) could pull off yet another deal with the Titans. Getting wide receiver A.J. Brown from Tennessee in 2022 helped elevate Jalen Hurts into an MVP runner-up.

■ **CHASE YOUNG:** The No. 2 overall pick in 2020 could be on the way out in Washington. The Commanders (3-4) already

declined to pick up Young's fifth-year option. He has five sacks in six games, but Washington has already given a big contract to defensive tackle Daron Payne and has defensive line Montez Sweat also due for a new deal.

The Dolphins (5-2), Lions (5-2) and Jaguars (5-2) are among the top possibilities if the Commanders deal Young.

■ **BRIAN BURNS:** A two-time Pro Bowl edge rusher, Burns is in the final year of his contract and the winless Carolina Panthers (0-6) need to accumulate more draft capital after trading a slew of picks to move up to No. 1 to take Bryce Young this season.

Burns has four sacks this season and would be a significant addition for teams such as Miami, Detroit, Buffalo (4-3), Jacksonville (5-2) and even San Francisco (5-2). The Panthers had an opportunity to move Burns last year before the deadline, but they held on and aren't winning with him.

■ **JUSTIN SIMMONS:** The three-time, second-team All-Pro safety is among several Broncos (2-5) who could be on the move. Denver is headed nowhere, and trading veterans for draft capital makes sense.

Simmons is not only a solid, do-it-all player, but he's a strong leader in the locker room and would fit nicely with contending teams. The Seahawks (4-2), Bengals (3-3) and Steelers (4-2) could have interest.

■ **MARQUISE BROWN:** "Hollywood" Brown already was traded once, from Baltimore to Arizona last year. He hasn't matched the production he had with the Ravens in 2021, but only had 11 games with Kyler Murray last season.

Brown has 32 catches for 383 yards and three TDs this season and would be a big boost for an offense that needs a speedy receiver to complement its group. The Chiefs (6-1) seem to be the best fit, but the Chargers (2-4) and even Panthers could be among many suitors.

Lillard leads Bucks past Philadelphia

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Damian Lillard scored 39 points in his first game with his new team and the Milwaukee Bucks regrouped after blowing a 19-point lead to open their season by beating the Philadelphia 76ers 118-117 on Thursday night.

The former Portland Trail Blazers star set a record for the most points by a player in his Bucks debut. Terry Cummings scored 34 points in his first game for the Bucks in 1984.

Giannis Antetokounmpo added 23 points and 13 rebounds

while shooting 10 of 22 from the floor to become the franchise's career leader in baskets. Antetokounmpo has 5,905 career field goals, while Kareem Abdul-Jabbar made 5,902 baskets with the Bucks from 1969-75.

Tyrese Maxey scored 31, Kelly Oubre Jr. had 27 and Joel Embiid 24 for the 76ers.

Lillard was playing with a different team for the first time after spending his first 11 seasons in Portland. Lillard requested a trade in the offseason and landed in Milwaukee, which gave up two-time All-Star Jrue Holiday, Grayson Allen and plenty of

draft capital to land the seven-time All-NBA guard.

Lakers 100, Suns 95: Anthony Davis had 30 points and 13 rebounds, LeBron James scored 10 of his 21 points while playing the entire fourth quarter, and Los Angeles blew past short-handed Phoenix in the final minutes.

James made the tiebreaking layup with 1:11 to play for the Lakers, who rallied from a 12-point deficit entering the fourth to get their first victory of the new season in the home opener of James' 21st NBA campaign.

Kevin Durant had 39 points

and 11 rebounds for the Suns, who played without injured stars Devin Booker and Bradley Beal. The Suns led 84-72 entering the fourth, but missed 13 of their next 14 shots and committed 10 turnovers in the next 10 minutes.

Durant and James improbably hadn't faced each other on an NBA court since Christmas 2018. Injuries, load management and health and safety protocols prevented them from playing in the previous 13 meetings between James' Lakers and Durant's Warriors, Nets and Suns.

UConn resets for run at another title

Associated Press

STORRS, Conn. — UConn coach Dan Hurley has enjoyed an offseason of celebrating a national championship. He says the best part of his job is building a hoops contender, not admiring the finished product.

That gives him a lot to enjoy this fall as Connecticut rebuilds, looking to fill a void left by the loss of the three biggest stars from last season's 31-8 team that ran through the NCAA Tournament, winning each game by an average of 20 points before a dominant win over San Diego State in the title game.

"Becoming is always better for me than being," Hurley said. "The chase for me is always the exhilarating thing, the exciting thing. The accomplishment fades quickly in your mind. Very quickly it gets to the process that you love."

Part of the process this year was to show his players film of the Florida teams that won back-to-back titles in 2006 and 2007.

The Huskies hope to stay on top by building an offense around returning 7-foot-2 sophomore post Donovan Clingan, who showed a potential to dom-

inate on both ends of the floor last year while backing up Adama Sanogo — the Most Outstanding Player in the NCAA Tournament.

Sanogo is gone to the professional ranks, along with NBA first-round draft pick Jordan Hawkins and Andre Jackson, a second-round selection.

Floor leaders

Leadership roles will go this year to Clingan, fellow sophomore forward Alex Karaban and graduate guard Tristen Newton.

Clingan, who played just 13 minutes a game last season and averaged 6.9 points, suffered a foot injury last month.

The team has been cautious with his rehab, but Hurley is hopeful his star will be healthy in time to lead the Huskies against Northern Arizona in the season opener on Nov. 6.

Some help

The Huskies' returning core is joined by transfer Cam Spencer, who averaged more than 13 points a game at Rutgers last season. They also bring in a consensus top-five recruiting class led by 6-foot-6 point guard Ste-

phon Castle from Georgia, named this week as the Big East's preseason freshman of the year.

The class also includes 6-7 wing Jayden Ross, 6-4 guard Solomon Ball, 6-7 wing Jaylin Stewart and 7-foot post Yousouf Singare.

Chemistry

Back in April, Hurley was facing a major rebuild of his team just 17 days after winning that fifth national championship. Seven players with eligibility remaining announced plans to leave the program or at least test their options. That seems a long time ago now.

The Huskies are ranked No. 6 in the nation, but picked to finish third in the Big East's preseason coaches poll behind Marquette and Creighton. They got a jump on the season with a trip in August to Spain, which Spencer said helped the newcomers learn Hurley's complicated offense that includes more than 130 offensive sets.

Hurley said this year's offensive sets will be different from those the team ran last season, but still expects to have nine or 10 to be in his rotation.

NBA looking into absence by Harden

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Philadelphia 76ers went to Milwaukee without James Harden, and the NBA wants to know why.

The league, which strengthened its rules about resting healthy players this summer, is investigating the reasons behind Harden's absence from the 76ers' nationally televised season opener against the Bucks on Thursday night.

Harden wants to be traded and was away from the Sixers until returning this week. Coach Nick Nurse said Wednesday that the point guard wouldn't travel with the team so he could work on rebuilding his conditioning with team staff members at the 76ers' training facility.

The player participation policy requires teams to demonstrate an approved reason for a star player to miss national TV games.

Teams could be fined \$100,000 for their first violation of the policy.

Penguins end Colorado's record road win streak

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Reilly Smith scored twice, Tristan Jarry stopped 30 shots and the Pittsburgh Penguins ended Colorado's NHL-record road winning streak with a decisive 4-0 victory on Thursday.

The Avalanche had won 15 straight away from Ball Arena dating to March and came in as one of three teams in the league unbeaten on the young season. Both runs came to a halt.

Smith beat Alexandar Georgiev twice in the first period to put Colorado down multiple goals for the first time all season.

Lars Eller added his first goal for Pittsburgh in the second period and Sidney Crosby scored his fourth goal of the season midway through the third.

Jarry picked up his 15th career shutout.

Ducks 4, Bruins 3, OT: Mason McTavish scored on a 2-on-1 break with 2:52 remaining in overtime to give Anaheim the victory and hand Boston its first loss of the season.

David Pastrnak had a goal and an assist, while Charlie McAvoy added three assists, but Boston surrendered a 3-1 lead in the third period.

Charlie Coyle and Matt Grzelcyk also scored for the Bruins, now 6-1.

Anaheim forced overtime on Troy Terry's goal with 14.7 seconds left in regulation.

Boston's Linus Ullmark made 28 saves while John Gibson stopped 30 shots for the Ducks.

Bruins coach Jim Montgomery, a four-year player at the University of Maine, took time before the game to offer his condolences to the victims of the mass shootings in Lewiston.

Islanders 3, Senators 2: Bo Horvat and Noah Dobson each had a goal and an assist, and New York held on for a win over Ottawa, which lost defenseman Erik Brannstrom to an injury.

Brannstrom was stretchered off the ice after a check along

the boards from Cal Clutterbuck at 8:43 of the middle period. The team announced that Brannstrom was alert, had use of his extremities and was taken to a hospital for further evaluation.

Clutterbuck also scored for New York. Ilya Sorokin made 46 saves, including one in the final seconds, as the Islanders snapped a three-game skid.

Claude Giroux and Jacob Chychrun scored for Ottawa, which lost its third straight. Jonas Korpisalo finished with 35 saves.

Lightning 6, Sharks 0: Jonas Johansson made 23 saves for his second consecutive shutout, Steven Stamkos had a goal and an assist, and Tampa Bay hammered winless San Jose.

Tampa Bay also got goals from Brayden Point, Michael Eyssimont, Brandon Hagel, Nicholas Paul and Luke Glendening.

San Jose goalie Mackenzie Blackwood, under constant siege, was pulled at 7:29 of the second after allowing five goals on 21 shots.

The Sharks have opened the season at 0-6-1.

Blues 3, Flames 0: Oskar Sundqvist had a goal and an assist and Joel Hofer made 27 saves in his first career shutout as St. Louis beat Calgary.

Kasperii Kapanen and Nick Leddy scored in the first period as St. Louis evened its record at 1-1-0 on its four-game trip. Sundqvist added an empty-net goal in the final minute.

Calgary lost its fourth straight game to fall to 2-4-1 and has been held without a goal at home for nearly six periods.

The memorable night for Hofer came in his second start of the season. His best stop came with four minutes left in the second when he got his blocker on Walker Duehr's 20-foot wrist shot from the slot on a 3-on-1 rush.

Jacob Markstrom made 32 stops for the Flames.

Rangers 3, Oilers 0: Adam Fox and Braden Schneider each had a goal and an assist, Jonathan Quick made 29 saves and New York beat Edmonton.

Alexis Lafreniere also scored for the Rangers, who have won three games in a row.

Quick earned his 59th career shutout.

The Rangers broke a scoreless deadlock on the power play 3:32 into the second period as Fox took a feed from Vincent Trocheck and sent a slapshot that eluded Stuart Skinner, who finished with 29 saves.

The Oilers, who played without the injured Connor McDavid, have lost four straight.

Hurricanes 3, Kraken 2, OT: Martin Necas scored his second goal of the game with 9.7 seconds left in overtime, and Carolina beat Seattle to snap a three-game skid.

Necas got the puck in the slot and delivered the winning shot after receiving a pass from Tony DeAngelo.

Carolina's Jesperi Kotkanemi scored with 4:24 left in regulation to force the extra session.

Necas had an assist on that goal. Frederik Andersen stopped 23 shots for the Hurricanes.

Oliver Bjorkstrand and Devin Shore scored for the Kraken, and Joey Daccord made 43 saves.

Flyers 6, Wild 2: Bobby Brink scored his first two NHL goals, Sean Couturier, Owen Tippett, Travis Konecny and Travis Sanheim each added one and Philadelphia beat Minnesota.

Carter Hart made 26 saves while Cam Atkinson had three assists for Philadelphia.

Dakota Mermis and Marcus Foligno scored for Minnesota while Filip Gustavsson had 29 saves on the first stop of the Wild's four-day, three-city trip to the East Coast.

Jets 4, Red Wings 1: Nikolaj Ehlers and Kyle Connor scored

in the first period and Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves, leading Winnipeg to a win over Detroit.

Ehlers opened the scoring with his first goal of the season at 16:28 of the first period. Just over a minute later, Connor added his team-leading fifth goal at 17:30. Mason Appleton and Nino Niederreiter scored into an empty net in the third period.

Lucas Raymond scored at 3:18 of the second period for Detroit and James Reimer finished with 28 saves.

Canadiens 4, Blue Jackets 3, OT: Cole Caufield scored with 43 seconds left in overtime and Montreal rallied to beat Columbus in overtime.

Caufield, who also had two assists, beat Columbus goaltender Elvis Merzlikins on the glove side with a wrist shot.

Nick Suzuki had a goal and two assists and Mike Matheson had a goal and an assist for Montreal. Sean Monahan also scored and Samuel Montembeault stopped 31 shots as Montreal overcame an early 2-0 deficit.

Emil Bemstrom scored two power-play goals and Jack Roslovic finished with a goal and two assists for Columbus. Merzlikins made 23 saves.

Maple Leafs 4, Stars 1: Morgan Rielly opened the scoring and had the assist on the first power-play goal scored against Dallas this season as Toronto beat the Stars.

Mitchell Marner, Tyler Bertuzzi and John Tavares also scored for the Leafs, who won their third straight game.

Mason Marchmont scored for the Stars, who lost in regulation for the first time in six games this season and had their three-game winning streak ended.

Joseph Woll won the matchup of backup goaltenders against Scott Wedgewood, stopping 30 shots while making consecutive starts for the first time this season in relief of Ilya Samsonov.