

Ukraine gains ground, claims to be at border

Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian troops reclaimed a wide swath of territory from Russia on Monday, pushing all the way back to the northeastern border in some places as part of a lightning advance that forced Moscow to make a hasty retreat from occupied land.

As blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flags fluttered over newly liberated towns, the Ukrainian military said its troops had freed more than 20 settlements in 24 hours. In recent days, Kyiv's forces have captured territory at least twice the size of greater London, according to the British Defense Ministry.

After months of little discernible movement on the battlefield, the momentum has lifted Ukrainian morale and provoked rare public criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war. While Ukrainian cities began emerging from Russian occupation, a local leader alleged that the Kremlin's troops had committed atrocities against civilians there similar to those in other places seized by Moscow.

"In some areas of the front, our defenders reached the state border with the Russian Federation," said Oleh Syniehubov, governor of the northeastern Kharkiv region. Over the weekend, the Russian Defense Ministry said troops would be pulled from two areas in that region to regroup in the

eastern region of Donetsk.

There were reports of chaos as Russian troops abruptly pulled out.

"The Russians were here in the morning. Then at noon, they suddenly started shouting wildly and began to run away, charging off in tanks and armored vehicles," Dmytro Hrushchenko, a resident of recently liberated Zaliznychne, a small town near the eastern front line, told Sky News of the quick withdrawal.

Video taken by the Ukrainian military showed soldiers raising the Ukrainian flag over battle-damaged buildings. In one scene, a fighter wiped his boots on a Russian flag on the ground. Other videos showed Ukrainians inspecting the wreckage of Russian military vehicles, including tanks.

It was not yet clear if the Ukrainian blitz could signal a turning point in the war, although some analysts cautioned that fighting would likely go on for months. Momentum has switched back and forth before, but rarely with such a big and sudden swing.

The mood was jubilant across the country.

In Kharkiv, authorities hailed that power and water had been restored to about 80% of the region's population following Russian attacks on infrastructure that knocked out electricity in many places across Ukraine.

The buoyant mood was also captured by a

defiant President Volodymyr Zelenskyy late Sunday on social media.

"Do you still think you can intimidate, break us, force us to make concessions?" Zelenskyy asked. "Cold, hunger, darkness and thirst for us are not as scary and deadly as your 'friendship' and 'brotherhood.'"

In the end, he exclaimed: "We will be with gas, lights, water and food ... and WITHOUT you!"

Meanwhile, in Russia, there were some signs of disarray as Russian military bloggers and patriotic commentators chastised the Kremlin for failing to mobilize more forces and take stronger action against Ukraine. Russia has continuously stopped short of calling its invasion a war, and has been relying on a limited contingent of volunteers instead of a mass mobilization that could spur civil discontent and protest.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the Moscow-backed leader of the Russian region of Chechnya, publicly criticized the Russian Defense Ministry for what he called "mistakes" that made the Ukrainian blitz possible. Even more notable, such criticism seeped onto state-controlled Russian TV.

"People who convinced President Putin that the operation will be fast and effective ... these people really set up all of us," Boris Nadezhdin, a former parliament member, said on a talk show on NTV television.

US Navy, NATO allies begin exercise near Turkey

By ALISON BATH

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A multinational naval exercise focused on crisis response started this week in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, bringing warships from 12 NATO countries into an area with a sizable Russian naval presence.

The Dynamic Mariner exercise led by NATO Allied Maritime Command, or MARCOM, began Sunday near Turkey's Aksaz Naval Base on the southeast coast of the Aegean Sea, the

alliance announced in a statement Monday.

The exercise, in conjunction with Turkey's Mavi-Balina exercise, includes 50 surface ships, five submarines and five patrol planes and helicopters from the United States, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

It wasn't clear how many U.S. ships and personnel were involved, but Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, led by flag-

ship destroyer USS Forrest Sherman, is participating. Another standing NATO naval forces command and 1,500 personnel also will participate, the statement said.

The exercise includes more assets than ever before, said French navy Vice Adm. Didier Piaton, MARCOM deputy commander.

"We continue to work closely with Turkey and other allies and partners to deter aggression and defend the alliance," Piaton said in the statement.

Dynamic Mariner comes as NATO forces keep a watchful eye on Russian ship movement, which has been part of the Kremlin's buildup in the eastern Mediterranean for its war on Ukraine.

Dynamic Mariner-Mavi Balina will include training in surface, air, anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, as well as mine countermeasures and amphibious, hybrid and force protection operations, according to the statement.

The exercises end Sept. 22.

USS Reagan back out for its second half of patrol

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan steamed out of Tokyo Bay with its strike group on Monday to continue its annual Indo-Pacific patrol.

The Ronald Reagan's departure came three weeks after the carrier and its strike group returned to Yokosuka for maintenance and resupply, the ship's staff said in a Monday news release.

The strike group includes the guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville and the guided-missile destroyers USS Benfold and USS Barry, all homeported at Yokosuka.

"Ronald Reagan is quickly back at sea thanks to the efforts of the ship's sailors and the outstanding work from maintenance teams ashore," the carrier's skipper, Capt. Fred Goldhammer, said in the news release.

"Our completion of scheduled maintenance ensures we remain ready and agile to respond at a moment's notice."

The strike group is expected to continue "working with allies and partners, promote adherence to a rules-based international or-

der, as well as maintain presence and flexibility," according to Task Force 70 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Keiley.

No additional details on upcoming operations were available, he told Stars and Stripes by email Monday.

The Ronald Reagan departed Yokosuka for the first half of its deployment in May, followed immediately by exercises alongside the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and later with the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, visiting the region from its homeport in San Diego.

The Ronald Reagan also made several port visits in its first three months, including Guam and Changi Naval Base in Singapore.

The strike group was scheduled to return to Yokosuka earlier in August, but the visit was delayed after the Defense Department ordered it to remain near the South China and Philippine seas in response to extensive drills by the Chinese navy and air force around Taiwan.

The weeklong drills, which concluded Aug. 11, were Beijing's response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei on Aug. 3.

Playground closed after lead paint found at Osan base

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — A children's playground was shut down and other areas of this air base are being cordoned off after traces of lead-based paint were discovered earlier this month, according to the 51st Fighter Wing.

The playground at the Jirisan Tower residential complex was closed Friday out of an abundance of caution after a small amount of lead-based paint was discovered on the slide last week, 51st Fighter Wing commander Col. Joshua Wood said Monday during a town hall at the Osan officers' club.

"I can tell you our team very much cares," Wood said. "We care about your safety, and we care about providing as high quality of living exceptions and experiences as we possibly can."

Not much of the Jirisan Tower's playground was left after the slides were removed, so it was entirely closed, Wood said.

Lead-based paint was also found on the crossbar of a swing set at the playground near the Hallasan Tower residential complex, a short walk from Jirisan Tower. The swings were removed; however, children are still allowed to visit the playground.

A "thorough" lead-based paint inspection on all the family housing areas in Osan was initiated in March by U.S. Forces Korea, Wood said.

Engineers were unclear how many coats of paint covered some of the affected objects and did not recommend removing it, according to Wood.

Plans are being developed to replace all five of Osan's aging playgrounds, said Lt. Col. Brian Low, the 51st Civil Engineer Squadron commander.

"We will phase it in such a way that we don't take everything down," Low said at the town hall.

Other objects containing lead-based paint near family residences are also being addressed, Wood and Low said. Utility areas inaccessible to residents and the top of a fire hydrant contained the toxic paint and are being cordoned off until engineers can safely deal with the issue.

Guam reports 1st case of monkeypox

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. territory of Guam confirmed its first monkeypox case over the weekend after an incoming traveler tested positive and was placed in isolation, according to Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero's office on Monday.

The governor's statement did not say where the traveler came from or how many people the person had been in contact with.

The infected traveler arrived on Guam on Saturday; a positive test was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the following day, the statement said.

The traveler did not need medical attention and will be monitored for changes in condition, according to the statement.

"The traveler is properly isolated and does

not pose a danger to the local community," Guerrero wrote. "All parties are cooperative, and we ask that the public stay aware and informed on the signs and symptoms of Monkeypox."

Guam's Department of Public Health and Social Services is working to identify and notify anyone who may have had contact with the traveler, the statement said.

News of Guam's first case comes about six weeks after U.S. Forces Japan confirmed a monkeypox infection at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo.

A man in his 20s who was affiliated with Yokota went to urgent care at the base hospital on Aug. 4 with symptoms of headache, chills, malaise and rash, according to Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

US troops deliver aid to flooded Pakistan

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military is delivering tons of humanitarian aid to Pakistan as the country grapples with historic and deadly floods.

A team of American troops deployed to Sukkur Airport in central Pakistan has so far unloaded 600,000 pounds of relief supplies, said Col. Isaac Adams, chief of the Air Mobility Division at the Air Force's 609th Air Operations Center, which is based in Qatar.

"Their efforts are making a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of Pakistanis by providing quality, sustained support to our partner in their time of need," Adams told *Stars and Stripes* on Sunday.

As much as a third of Pakistan is underwater because of nearly

continuous monsoon rains. That has led to flash floods and landslides, which have killed about 1,400 people and affected some 33 million others, the latest United Nations situation report issued Friday said.

Samantha Power, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, visited Pakistan on Thursday and Friday and announced \$20 million in additional humanitarian assistance on top of the \$30 million already pledged.

U.S. Central Command began flying supplies from USAID's Dubai warehouse to Pakistan on Friday, said a statement by the federal aid agency, which is leading the effort.

As of Sunday night, the Air Force had flown eight missions to Pakistan with C-17s and a

C-130, Adams said.

The flights are coming into Pakistan from Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates and Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, multiple Air Force officials said.

About a dozen Air Force and Navy personnel are on the ground in Pakistan unloading the cargo aircraft, Adams said, adding that other service members are helping from Central Command locations in the U.S. and Middle East.

Senior Airman Hunter Evans, one of the troops in Pakistan, arrived Friday from Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait.

The signs of devastation are everywhere, Evans said by phone Sunday.

"If you step off the flight line, you'll sink into the mud," Evans

said.

"You'll see all around us, every dip in the land, there's water."

Sukkur Airport is in Sindh province, an area with over 1.52 million houses damaged or destroyed by floods, which is about 88% of the nationwide total, the U.N. situation report said.

Planning for the operation began in early September, when military officials began assessing Sukkur Airport's safety, said Maj. Benjamin Leung, a logistics officer with U.S. Air Forces Central.

An advance team of Navy personnel traveled to Sukkur and found an "airfield that's not really lined up to be a cargo airfield" but could be adapted for use by Air Force cargo jets, Leung said.

Army eyes new exoskeleton suit to deal with back pain

The Washington Post

Futuristic military dreams of an Iron Man exoskeleton suit might be giving way for something simpler: a lightweight wearable to help with back pain.

The new suit, which weighs just three pounds, is a soft harness that soldiers strap around their shoulders and legs. Soldiers can press a button on the suit by their left shoulder, which activates the straps running along their back to help ease the burden when lifting heavy objects like artillery rounds, boxes or guns.

Its name is a mouthful, dubbed the Soldier Assistive Bionic Exosuit for Resupply, or SABER. It is developed by the U.S. Army and Vanderbilt University, and slated to be deployed in the field in 2023.

SABER is a departure from the clunky, robotic "warrior suits" the military has designed in the past, and is instead a lightweight, flexible accessory soldiers can wear while moving heavy machinery or artillery around. Cre-

ators say this approach is better, because it solves a specific problem soldiers have while not getting in the way.

"[The Army] initially tried to create Iron Man," Karl Zelik, a lead designer for SABER and associate professor of mechanical engineering at Vanderbilt University, said. "They had these full-body robotic systems that hoped to do everything but ultimately effectively did nothing because they [were] too bulky and heavy and complex and costly. ... This exosuit is about as far away from Iron Man as you can get."

Roughly 460 soldiers are diagnosed with back overuse injuries every day, U.S. Army data shows.

To solve that, the military turned to its Pathfinder project — which aims to innovate Army operations by having soldiers collaborate with universities — and invested \$1.2 million into creating the SABER prototype suit. To date, roughly 100 soldiers have tested the suit.

Danish ship collides with US Navy ship in Baltimore

The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — A Danish training ship hit the moored USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul on Sunday morning in the Inner Harbor, according to a statement from the U.S. Navy.

No U.S. Navy personnel were injured and there was no serious damage to the Navy ship, a U.S. Navy spokesperson said in a statement. The USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul was docked on the port side of the west wall in the Inner Harbor at 11:17 a.m. Sunday when the Danmark crashed into it during Maryland Fleet Week. A representative from Sail Baltimore, which brings visiting vessels to the harbor to showcase different cultures and maritime history, referred questions about damage to the Danmark to the U.S. Navy.

Ships began arriving for Fleet Week on Sept. 7, a weeklong event that brings military vessels from around the world to Baltimore, along with planes and other aircraft.

The USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul, also known as LCS 21, is a littoral combat ship, designed for fighting in regions along a shore. The Freedom class of littoral combat ships were built by Lockheed Martin in Wisconsin.

Other ships in Baltimore's harbor for Fleet Week include the USS Carter Hall, USNS Newport, Canadian Royal Navy HMCS Moncton, and U.S. Coast Guard Cutter James Rankin, according to a U.S. Navy news release. This is the third year Baltimore has hosted Fleet Week.

The Danmark, a three-masted sailing ship, has a long history of visiting Baltimore. The Danmark first arrived in New York for the World's Fair before heading to Baltimore a month later. The Baltimore Sun reported on Oct. 21, 1939. Germany invaded Denmark while the Danmark was in Florida. The ship's captain turned it over to the United States for Coast Guard training during World War II.

Nearly 15K nurses walk off job in Minn.

The Washington Post

About 15,000 nurses in Minnesota walked off the job Monday to protest understaffing and overwork — marking the largest strike of private-sector nurses in U.S. history.

Slated to last three days, the strike spotlights nationwide nursing shortages exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic that often result in patients not receiving adequate care. Minnesota nurses charge that some units go without a lead nurse on duty and that nurses fresh out of school are delegated assignments typically held by more experienced nurses, across some 16 hospitals where strikes are expected. The nurses are demanding a role in staffing plans, changes to shift scheduling practices and higher wages.

“I can’t give my patients the care they deserve,” said Chris Rubesch, the vice president of the Minnesota Nurses Association and a nurse at Essentia Health in Duluth, Minn. “Call lights go unanswered. Patients should only be waiting for a few seconds or minutes if they’ve soiled themselves or their oxygen came unplugged or they need to go to the bathroom, but that can take 10 min-

utes or more. Those are things that can’t wait.”

Paul Omodt, a spokesman for the Twin Cities Hospital Group, which represents four hospital systems where nurses are striking in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, said that the nurse’s union did not do everything it could to avoid a strike.

“Nurses have steadfastly refused to go to mediation,” Omodt said. “Their choice is to strike. This strike is on the nurses.”

Conny Bergerson, a spokeswoman for Alina Health, another hospital system in the Twin Cities where nurses are on strike, said “rushing to a strike before exhausting all options such as engaging a neutral federal mediator does not benefit our employees, patients or the communities we serve.”

The Minnesota Nurses Association, the nurse’s union, said hospital administrators have continued to “refuse solutions” on understaffing or safety in contract negotiations. It said that nurses have increasingly been asked to take on more patients for bedside care to make up for labor shortages, exacerbating burnout and high turnover.

Some hospitals have offered increased

safety protocols for reporting security incidents in negotiations, but have not budged on other safety-and staffing-related demands.

The union has proposed new mechanisms for nurses to have a stronger say in how wards are staffed, including a committee made up of nurses and management at each hospital that would determine appropriate staffing levels. They’ve also proposed protections against retaliation for nurses who report understaffing. Striking nurses at some hospitals said their shifts are often short five to 10 nurses.

Omodt said that while there was a rise in understaffing reports during the height of COVID, conditions have improved and nurses have made contradictory staffing claims since then.

In the lead-up to the strike, Minnesota hospital groups filed unfair labor practices charges against the union for refusing to go to mediation, and asked the National Labor Relations Board to block the strike for failing to provide enough notice. The NLRB has thrown out at least some of those charges.

Scottish service hails queen as ‘constant in all our lives’

Associated Press

EDINBURGH, Scotland — As Queen Elizabeth II’s four children walked silently behind, a hearse carried her flag-draped coffin along a crowd-lined street in the Scottish capital Monday to a cathedral, where a service of thanksgiving hailed the late monarch as a “constant in all of our lives for over 70 years.”

Four days after the 96-year-old queen died at her beloved Balmoral Castle in the Scottish Highlands, a military bagpiper played as her oak coffin, draped in the red-and-yellow Royal Standard of Scotland, was borne from the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh under late-summer sunshine.

King Charles III, dressed in army uniform, and Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward walked behind

as the hearse traveled to St. Giles’ Cathedral, flanked by a bearer party of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and a detachment of the Royal Company of Archers, the king’s ceremonial bodyguard in Scotland.

Inside, the coffin was placed on a wooden stand topped with the golden Crown of Scotland, encrusted with 22 gems and 20 precious stones along with freshwater pearls from Scotland’s rivers.

Because the queen died at her summer home of Balmoral, Scotland has been the focus of the world’s attention for the first part of Britain’s 10 days of national mourning.

In a homily, Church of Scotland Moderator Iain Green-shields said that “most of us cannot recall a time when she was not our monarch.”

New Zealand removes COVID rules as cases wane

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — New Zealand removed most of its remaining COVID-19 restrictions Monday as the government signaled a return to normalcy for the first time since the pandemic began.

People will no longer be required to wear masks in supermarkets, stores, buses or planes.

The last remaining vaccine mandates — on health care workers — will end. And tourists will no longer need to be vaccinated in order to visit the country.

The government announced it was ditching its so-called COVID traffic light framework altogether and leaving in place just two main restrictions — that those who test positive for the virus isolate for seven days, and that people wear masks

when visiting health care facilities like hospitals and aged-care homes.

The changes come as an omicron variant outbreak wanes and the Southern Hemisphere winter ends. Case numbers in New Zealand are at the lowest point since February.

“The changes we’ve made today are significant. They mark a milestone in our response,” said Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. “This is a time when COVID dictates what happens to us, our lives, and our futures — we take control back.”

She said the changes will help drive business activity, which is vital to the nation’s economic recovery.

“This will be the first summer in three years when there won’t be the question of: What if?” Ardern said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Alligator among items seized, but tiger not found

NM ALBUQUERQUE — An alligator, drugs, guns and money were seized during a raid at two homes in Albuquerque last month, but New Mexico wildlife officials said they are still searching for a young tiger they believe is being illegally kept as a pet.

Investigators think the tiger is with someone “in New Mexico or a nearby state,” New Mexico Department of Game and Fish conservation officers said in a statement.

The alligator seized by authorities is about 3 feet long. It was taken to a wildlife facility after state conservation officers and federal, state and local police served search warrants Aug. 12. Albuquerque police reported a 26-year-old man was arrested and investigators seized 2 pounds of heroin, 10.5 pounds of cocaine, 49 pounds of marijuana, 17 rifles and pistols, fentanyl and Xanax pills, and nearly \$42,000.

Complex water OK after incorrect arsenic reading

NY NEW YORK — Water at a public housing complex is OK to drink after earlier tests incorrectly showed the presence of arsenic, city officials said.

A tweeted video showed Mayor Eric Adams and another official drinking glasses of water from a tap at the Jacob Riis Houses. Tests by an outside lab last month had showed higher than allowable levels of arsenic, but later the company said the results were incorrect.

Residents of the 1,700-unit

complex on the lower East Side had been told to avoid drinking or cooking with the water. Adams said additional tests had confirmed the water was safe.

Adams’ office said the city would cease working with the lab, Environmental Monitoring and Technologies, and would “pursue all available legal options” and seek to reimburse residents for costs incurred.

5 sentenced in police corruption scandal

NJ NEWARK — Five former Paterson police officers were sentenced in federal court as part of a long-running corruption investigation.

The five had all pleaded guilty and received sentences ranging from probation to 24 months in prison during proceedings in Newark.

The probe focused on officers who allegedly used excessive force, filed false reports and stole thousands of dollars in cash from people after illegally stopping and searching their vehicles.

Jonathan Bustios, Eudy Ramos and Frank Toledo received sentences of 24 months apiece, Daniel Pent was sentenced to 18 months, and Matthew Torres received three years’ probation.

Preacher arrested while watering flowers sues

AL BIRMINGHAM — A Black pastor who was arrested by white police officers while watering the flowers of a neighbor who was out of town filed a federal lawsuit alleging the ordeal violated his constitutional rights and caused lingering problems including emotional distress and anxiety.

Michael Jennings filed the lawsuit against three officers and the central Alabama town of Childersburg requesting a jury trial and seeking an unspecified amount of money.

Jennings, 56, was arrested in May after a white neighbor called 911 and said a “younger Black male” and gold SUV were at a house while the owners — who are friends of Jennings and had asked him to watch their home — were away.

Jennings identified himself as “Pastor Jennings” but refused to provide identification to the officers, who arrested him on a charge of obstructing government operations after a 20-minute confrontation that included raised voices on both sides.

State’s only burn center to close Oct. 14

MS JACKSON — Mississippi’s only burn center will close Oct. 14, hospital officials said.

The JMS Burn and Reconstruction Center, located at Merit Health Central in South Jackson, includes 13 burn intensive care patient rooms, 20 burn step down unit patient rooms and a 12-room outpatient clinic. The center cares for adult and pediatric burn patients on an inpatient and outpatient basis.

After Oct. 14, burn patients will be redirected to Doctors Hospital in Augusta, Ga., Firefighters Burn Center-Regional One Health in Memphis, Tenn., or USA Health in Mobile, Ala., the Clarion Ledger reported.

The hospital said the Burn & Hand Rehabilitative Services Clinic will continue to provide care to current patients until they are transitioned to other physician practices.

Somali American candidate poised to make history

ME LEWISTON — A Democratic candidate is poised to become the first Somali American to serve in the Maine Legislature after her challenger dropped out of the race.

Republican Fred Sanborn-Silvers’ withdrawal last month cleared the path for Democrat Mana Abdi in her bid for Maine House District 95. Another Somali American, South Portland Mayor Deqa Dhalac, is also running for a different House seat.

If either wins, they would make history in the state.

In House District 95, Sanborn-Silvers’ late departure prevented the GOP from coming up with a new candidate to run against Abdi.

Officials: Inmate killed in attack by prisoners

NC RALEIGH — An inmate at a North Carolina prison was killed in an attack by other prisoners, authorities said.

The News & Observer reported that the Central Prison in Raleigh was placed on lockdown while police investigated the death of the inmate, Ronald S. Rhodes, who was being held at the prison as a pretrial detainee.

Rhodes, 35, died about an hour after other inmates assaulted him with a weapon in the prison’s recreation yard, the state Department of Public Safety said in a news release.

Charges filed against Rhodes in Wake County included simple assault and felony solicitation to commit human trafficking.

— From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

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

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Brady, Bucs down Cowboys in opener

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Tom Brady and Mike Evans connected on a punctuating touchdown, Leonard Fournette ran for 127 yards, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers dominated the Cowboys 19-3 Sunday night while Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott departed with a hand injury.

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said after the game Prescott needs surgery for a fracture near the thumb on his throwing hand and will miss multiple weeks, a season-altering blow for the defending NFC East champs.

A rough night for Prescott got worse after his right hand struck a defender when throwing a pass in the fourth quarter. He was checked on the sideline before jogging to the locker room.

Brady was in control throughout the first start for a 45-year-old quarterback in NFL history. The seven-time Super Bowl champ got a big assist from the defense in Todd Bowles' debut as Tampa Bay's coach following three seasons as defensive coordinator.

Vikings 23, Packers 7: Having boldly stated before the season his goal to be the best receiver in the league, Minnesota's Justin Jefferson can already stake a claim to this subjective yet coveted status.

Aaron Rodgers can only wish Jefferson was on his side.

Jefferson smashed visiting Green Bay for 184 receiving yards and two touchdowns in a record-setting first half, giving new Minnesota coach Kevin O'Connell a win in his first game Sunday — and the team its largest margin of victory over the Packers with Rodgers at quarterback.

Steelers 23, Bengals 20 (OT): Chris Boswell kicked a 53-yard field goal as time expired in overtime and Pittsburgh overcame T.J. Watt's injury late in the fourth quarter to beat host Cincinnati in a sloppy season opener for both teams.

Watt had one of four interceptions off Joe Burrow, who rebounded from a lousy start and rallied Cincinnati from a 17-6 halftime deficit. His 6-yard touchdown pass to Ja'Marr Chase tied it at 20 with 2 seconds left in regulation, but the game went to overtime after Minkah Fitzpatrick blocked Evan McPherson's point-after try.

Saints 27, Falcons 26: Wil Lutz kicked a 51-yard field goal with 19 seconds remaining to cap a stunning fourth-quarter comeback by visiting New Orleans, which overcame a 16-point deficit to beat Atlanta in coach Dennis Allen's debut.

After struggling offensively through most

of the season opener, Jameis Winston guided the Saints to three straight scoring drives. The first two ended with touchdown passes to Michael Thomas. The Saints converted one 2-point try, but failed on the other.

Browns 26, Panthers 24: Rookie Cade York kicked a go-ahead 58-yard field goal with 8 seconds left, Kareem Hunt scored two touchdowns and visiting Cleveland spoiled Baker Mayfield's bid for vengeance by beating Carolina.

Nick Chubb ran for 141 yards and Hunt had 70 total yards from scrimmage as the Browns won their season opener for the first time since 2004.

Chargers 24, Raiders 19: Justin Herbert threw for 279 yards and three touchdowns, Khalil Mack had three sacks in his debut with the team and host Los Angeles defeated Las Vegas to spoil Josh McDaniels' first game as head coach.

Herbert completed 26 of 34 passes and had a 129.4 passer rating despite Keenan Allen leaving with a hamstring injury in the first half and Mike Williams not having a catch until the fourth quarter.

Ravens 24, Jets 9: Lamar Jackson threw three touchdown passes, including two to Devin Duvernay, and visiting Baltimore rolled past New York.

Jackson went 17-for-30 for 213 yards, including a TD to Rashod Bateman, and an interception. The performance came hours after ESPN reported that Jackson turned down a five-year extension offer worth more than \$250 million.

Commanders 28, Jaguars 22: Carson Wentz bounced back from throwing interceptions on consecutive plays early in the fourth quarter, completing his third and fourth touchdowns to give host Washington a comeback victory against Jacksonville.

It was his first four-TD game since the day he tore the ACL in his left knee while with the Philadelphia Eagles in 2017. And it came with former Eagles coach Doug Pederson on the sideline in charge of the Jaguars for the first time.

Chiefs 44, Cardinals 21: Patrick Mahomes threw for 360 yards and five touchdowns, lifting Kansas City to an impressive road win over Arizona.

The game was never in doubt after the opening minutes, with Mahomes picking apart the Cardinals' defense with his usual array of good decisions and deft passing touch. The quarterback was playing his first NFL game against Kliff Kingsbury, who

coached Mahomes in college at Texas Tech and now leads the Cardinals.

Eagles 38, Lions 35: Jalen Hurts accounted for 333 yards and a touchdown and A.J. Brown had a career-high-tying 155 yards receiving in his Philadelphia debut, a win over host Detroit.

The Eagles scored 24 points in the second quarter and had a 17-point lead in the fourth that was cut to three when Jared Goff threw a 22-yard touchdown pass to DJ Chark with 3:51 left.

Dolphins 20, Patriots 7: Tua Tagovailoa passed for 270 yards and a touchdown and host Miami provided an early look at its ability to contend in the AFC East by beating New England.

Second-year receiver Jaylen Waddle scored the Dolphins' first offensive touchdown, taking a fourth-down pass from Tagovailoa into the end zone for a 42-yard score. Waddle caught four passes for 69 yards.

Giants 21, Titans 20: Daniel Jones hit Chris Myarick for a 1-yard touchdown pass, then found Saquon Barkley on a shovel pass for the 2-point conversion with 1:06 left against host Tennessee, making New York's Brian Daboll a winner in his coaching debut.

Daboll didn't hesitate to keep his offense on the field for the 2-point conversion, which snapped the Giants' skid of five straight losses in season openers.

Colts 20, Texans 20 (OT): Matt Ryan rallied Indianapolis in the fourth quarter to force overtime in Houston in his Colts debut, but neither team could score on two overtime possessions each.

The Texans led 20-3 entering the fourth quarter in coach Lovie Smith's debut, but Ryan led three successive scoring drives, culminating with his 15-yard touchdown pass to Michael Pittman with 1:54 remaining.

Bears 19, 49ers 10: Justin Fields threw for two second-half touchdowns, Eddie Jackson set up a TD with an interception and host Chicago gave Matt Eberflus a win in his head coaching debut.

Fields shook off a rough first half, throwing a 51-yard TD to Dante Pettis in the third quarter and connecting with Equanimeous St. Brown for an 18-yarder early in the fourth to put the Bears on top 13-10. Jackson then picked off Trey Lance near midfield for his first interception since 2019 and returned the ball to the 21. That led to a 6-yard touchdown run by Khalil Herbert, making it 19-10.

Alcaraz wins US Open for 1st Slam title

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Walking out for his first Grand Slam final at age 19, Carlos Alcaraz bumped fists with fans leaning over a railing along the path leading to the Arthur Ashe Stadium court. Moments later, after the coin toss, Alcaraz turned to sprint to the baseline for the warmup, until being beckoned back to the net by the chair umpire for the customary pre-match photos.

Alcaraz is imbued with boundless enthusiasm and energy, not to mention skill, speed, stamina and sangfroid. And now he's a U.S. Open champion and the No. 1 player in men's tennis.

Using his uncommon combination of moxie and maturity, Alcaraz beat Casper Ruud 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (1), 6-3 on Sunday to both earn the trophy at Flushing Meadows and become the youngest man to lead the ATP rankings.

"Everything came so fast. For me it's unbelievable. It's something I dreamed since I was a kid, since I started playing

tennis," said Alcaraz, whom folks of a certain age might still consider a kid.

"Of course," he said, "I'm hungry for more."

Alcaraz, who will move up three ranking spots from No. 4 on Monday, already has attracted plenty of attention as someone considered the Next Big Thing in a sport dominated for decades by the Big Three of Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer.

"He's one of these few rare talents that comes up every now and then in sports. That's what it seems like," said Ruud, a 23-year-old from Norway. "Let's see how his career develops, but it's going all in the right direction."

The Spaniard was serenaded by choruses of "Olé, Olé, Olé! Carlos!" that reverberated off the arena's closed roof — and Alcaraz often motioned for the spectators to get louder. There were a couple of magical points that drew standing ovations, including one Alcaraz lost with a laser of an on-the-run forehand while

ending up face-down on his belly.

He only briefly showed signs of fatigue from having to get through three consecutive five-setters in the three rounds right before the final; no one had gone through that arduous a route on the way to the title in New York in 30 years.

Alcaraz went five sets against 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic in the fourth round, ending at 2:23 a.m. Tuesday; against Jannik Sinner in the quarterfinals, a 5-hour, 15-minute thriller that ended at 2:50 a.m. Friday after Alcaraz needed to save a match point; and against Frances Tiafoe in the semifinals.

"It's not time to be tired," Alcaraz said.

This was not a stroll to the finish. He faced a pair of set points while down 6-5 in the third. Could have been an outcome-altering moment.

But Alcaraz erased each of those point-from-the-set opportunities for Ruud with the quick-reflex, soft-hand volleys he repeatedly displayed.

Palou wins the IndyCar finale, Power takes title

Associated Press

MONTEREY, Calif. — IndyCar's intense season came to a nail-biting end in which Team Penske's superstars duked it out for the title and the future of the race winner clouded once again.

Will Power beat Team Penske teammate Josef Newgarden by 16 points for the Australian to win his second IndyCar title, and the 16th national championship for Roger Penske. He finished third on Sunday at Laguna Seca Raceway, a spot behind crestfallen Newgarden.

But the win went to outgoing IndyCar champion Alex Palou, who has been entangled in a messy legal battle in negotiations and a courtroom over his 2023 rights. Chip Ganassi Racing says it picked up next year's option on the Spaniard; McLaren Racing says it has Palou under contract.

Palou insisted in July he'd be a McLaren driver next season, but as he celebrated his only win of the season, with owner Chip Ganassi behind him, Palou sounded far less certain. But he did indicate a resolution could be coming, perhaps as soon as Monday.

"Yeah, we talk. We talked in Portland. We talked before that ... I think, Nashville. "Talked this morning," Palou said of recent, rekindled communication with the team owner.

"We'll see when I know. I wish I could tell you guys, 'Hey, I'm doing this,' but I don't have an answer yet. Maybe tomorrow."

It was a blatant about-face that closed a spectacular season in which IndyCar, even without the pizzazz and popularity of a Netflix show, drew the most viewers to its 17-race schedule since 2008.

Wallace holds off boss, title hopefuls in Kansas

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Bubba Wallace was so comfortable cruising around Kansas Speedway on Sunday he told his team over the radio in the closing laps that he didn't want to know who was chasing him or how far back they might be.

He probably would have smiled knowing it was his boss.

Denny Hamlin managed to trim into Wallace's lead down the stretch, but the co-owner with Michael Jordan of the No. 45 car for 23XI Racing ultimately ran out of time. Wallace took the checkered flag for his second NASCAR Cup Series victory, and made it back-to-back weeks that a non-playoff driver won a postseason race.

"I knew Denny was going to be strong," Wallace said after climbing out of his car and throwing a little shade at his many detractors. "It's cool to beat the boss, but man, we were just lights-out. Once we got to the lead, it was a lot

of fun."

Wallace got around playoff contender Alex Bowman for the lead with 67 laps to go, then built a 2-second cushion over a parade of drivers in the title hunt, each trying to earn the win that would ensure their spot in the round of eight.

Hamlin wound up at the front of it, finishing second to climb into third in the playoff standings.

"I was driving as hard as I could," said Hamlin, who had no qualms about passing his own driver for the win. "Nothing will ever come free when you're driving for me."

Wallace, who became the 18th different driver to reach victory lane this season, also won during last year's playoffs at Talladega, when he was likewise out of the title picture. And his victory Sunday came after Erik Jones, who also missed out on the postseason this year, won a chaotic race a week ago at Darlington.

Pujols hits 697th HR, moves into 4th

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Albert Pujols hit his 697th home run, moving past Alex Rodriguez into fourth place on the career list and doing it in dramatic fashion with a ninth-inning drive that rallied the St. Louis Cardinals over the Pittsburgh Pirates 4-3 Sunday.

The NL Central-leading Cardinals trailed 2-1 when Pujols connected for a two-run drive. Pujols had tied Rodriguez with a home run Saturday night.

Pujols trails Barry Bonds (762), Hank Aaron (755) and Babe Ruth (714) on the all-time homer chart.

“There’s impressive and then there’s un-

believable,” St. Louis manager Oliver Mar-mol said. “What we’re witnessing right now is legendary. You have to take a step back from managing the game and take it all in. It’s amazing.”

In his chase for 700 homers, the 42-year-old Pujols has 21 games left in his 22nd and final season in the big leagues. He’s hit 18 home runs this year.

“This opportunity only comes once and it’s something that’s a gift God has given me and I try to take advantage of it every single day,” Pujols said. “I’m not only making memories for me but for the fans, my family and people who love me.”

“At the end of the day, it’s pretty awesome and we’re playing great baseball and have a great group of teammates,” he said.

The Cardinals went to the ninth inning trailing 2-0 but scored four runs off Chase DeJong (4-2). Tommy Edman and Corey Dickerson led off with back-to-back doubles to produce the first run. Pujols followed with his homer to put the Cardinals on top. One out after Pujols connected, Tyler O’Neil hit a solo shot to cap St. Louis’ big inning.

The Cardinals won on a day when first baseman Paul Goldschmidt and third baseman Nolan Arenado, two NL MVP candidates, got the day off.

Dodgers top Padres, 1st team to clinch playoff spot

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Freddie Freeman drove in four runs on four hits, including a two-run homer, and Trea Turner hit a go-ahead, three-run double for the Los Angeles Dodgers, who beat the San Diego Padres 8-4 on Saturday night to reduce to four their magic number for clinching the NL West.

The Dodgers, an MLB-best 95-43, can clinch a postseason berth for the 10th straight season with a victory Sunday or a Milwaukee loss. They are also closing in on their ninth division title in 10 seasons.

“I think we all know what kind of lead we have,” Freeman said. “But if you start looking at that, and some of the other things, that lead’s going to evaporate and you’ll get a little bit relaxed. I like the way we’ve been playing games the last few days. Even yesterday’s game was just a good baseball game.”

Mariners 8, Braves 7: Host Seattle had two homers in the ninth to rally for a win over Atlanta.

Julio Rodriguez hit his second home run of the game to tie the score in the bottom of the ninth. Eugenio Suarez then hit his second homer of the day as well as for the Mariners.

The Braves trailed 6-2 going into the ninth, but Michael Harris II and Robbie Grossman hit two-out homers during a five-run comeback.

Astros 12, Angels 4: Alex Bregman and Trey Mancini hit two of host Houston’s five home runs, and the AL West-leading Astros beat Los Angeles for their 90th win of the season.

Shohei Ohtani hit his 34th home run of the season in the first, a two-run shot to right. Mike Trout, who has homered in a club record six straight games, had the day off.

Mets 9, Marlins 3: Brandon Nimmo homered, doubled and walked twice and Tomás Nido had three hits and drove in three runs to help visiting New York top Miami and maintain its slim lead atop the NL East.

Taijuan Walker (11-4) won his fourth decision against the Marlins this season, throwing seven innings of one-run ball. The right-hander scattered five hits and struck out 10.

Yankees 10, Rays 4: Gleyber Torres homered twice and Giancarlo Stanton and Oswaldo Cabrera once each during a 10-run barrage in the first two innings and host New York routed Tampa Bay to reopen a 5½-game AL East lead.

Ten of the Yankees’ first 14 batters reached, with Torres hitting a three-run homer in the first and a solo drive in the second. New York built a 10-1 lead with a seven-run second inning and took two of three to finish a 5-2 homestand.

Guardians 4, Twins 1: Andrés Giménez and Steven Kwan hit solo homers, Shane Bieber had another strong start and visiting Cleveland finished off a sweep of Minnesota.

Bieber (10-8) went 6⅓ innings, allowing five hits and one run while striking out seven. He has allowed more than two runs just once in his past nine starts.

Phillies 7, Nationals 5: Alec Bohm hit the go-ahead, two-run homer in the seventh inning to lead host Philadelphia over Washington.

Rhys Hoskins hit a three-run homer for the Phillies.

Brewers 7, Reds 6: Rowdy Tellez homered twice, doubled and drove in four runs as host Milwaukee withstood a ninth-inning comeback by Cincinnati.

Willy Adames and Tellez hit back-to-back

homers off Reds starter Justin Dunn (1-3) in the Brewers’ four-run second inning. Tellez added a solo shot off Luke Farrell in the fourth inning for his 30th homer of the season.

Rangers 4, Blue Jays 1: Martin Perez allowed one run in six innings, Adolis Garcia homered for the second consecutive game and host Texas beat Toronto.

The Blue Jays head home following an 8-2 trip to play five games in four days against another AL wild-card team, Tampa Bay.

Diamondbacks 12, Rockies 6: Zac Gallen retired the first nine batters he faced to extend his scoreless innings streak to 44⅓ innings, seventh longest in MLB history, and visiting Arizona beat Colorado.

Gallen (12-2) struck out 11 in six innings to win for the seventh time in his last eight starts.

Athletics 10, White Sox 3: Ramón Laureano hit a two-run homer and Vimal Machin hit a two-run double in the decisive fifth inning to back Cole Irvin’s second straight win, and host Oakland beat Chicago to snap a five-game losing streak.

Royals 4, Tigers 0: Brady Singer threw seven shutout innings to lead host Kansas City over Detroit and salvage the finale of the three-game series.

Singer (8-4) allowed four hits and one walk, striking out six and retiring 16 of the last 18 batters he faced.

Red Sox 1, Orioles 0: Rich Hill pitched five scoreless innings, and visiting Boston defeated a fading Baltimore team.

Giants 4, Cubs 2: Thairo Estrada homered in the seventh, Wilmer Flores connected in the eighth and visiting San Francisco held on to beat Chicago.