

## Biden doubles down on Taiwan promise

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

President Joe Biden on Sunday for the second time this year said U.S. troops would help defend Taiwan in case of a Chinese invasion, further casting doubt on the United States' policy of "strategic ambiguity" regarding the island democracy.

Biden in an interview broadcast on CBS' "60 Minutes" said the U.S. remains committed to the "One China" policy that acknowledges Beijing's claim over Taiwan but considers the island's status unresolved. However, in the case of an "unprecedented attack," U.S. troops would intervene, the president said.

An unnamed White House spokesman later said official U.S. policy toward China and Taiwan has not changed, CNBC reported Monday.

Biden's statement mirrored a

similar one he made during his first presidential visit to Japan in May, when he told a reporter that the U.S. would militarily defend Taiwan. A White House official at the time also said that official policy had not changed.

Beijing considers Taiwan, which split from China in 1949, a breakaway province that must be reunified with the mainland. Chinese officials, in a white paper released in August, said they would not "renounce the use of force" to reclaim Taiwan.

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded Monday to Biden's comments and thanked the U.S. for its "rock-solid security commitment to Taiwan." China had not responded to the Biden interview as of Monday.

His remarks come just over a month after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Aug. 3 became the highest-ranking U.S. official

to visit Taiwan in a quarter century, a visit that prompted Beijing to launch a weeklong series of military drills that effectively encircled the island. Tensions have remained high between China and Taiwan since then, with near-daily incursions by Chinese aircraft and ships into the waters and airspace near Taiwan, according to reports from the island's Ministry of National Defense.

Biden's recent comments may indicate a "steady shift" from the strategic ambiguity policy that's meant to deter China and Taiwan from escalating the conflict by leaving the possibility of U.S. intervention uncertain, according to James Brown, an international affairs expert at Temple University's Japan campus.

"The U.S. leadership has decided that greater clarity is needed to deter an attack by [China] on Taiwan," Brown wrote Monday in an

email to Stars and Stripes.

"Yet, at the same time, Washington wants to minimize criticism that it is itself proving a crisis."

Conversely, Biden's statements in May and on Sunday could be an attempt to reinforce ambiguity, according to Jeff Kingston, a professor of history and Asian studies at Temple.

"America's position on Taiwan has always been 'strategic ambiguity,' and the White House seems to be going this one step further to clarifying but then re-blurring [its position]," he told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday.

Kingston compared Biden's statements with China's practice of entering the territorial waters of disputed island chains in the South China Sea, which he said are attempts to "normalize" that particular action.

## Trial to start for sailor accused of igniting Navy ship

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — According to prosecutors, Ryan Sawyer Mays was a young, arrogant sailor angry about being assigned to deck duty after failing to become a Navy SEAL — and he made the Navy pay in a big way.

But the prosecution has presented no physical evidence proving that Mays, 21, set the USS Bonhomme Richard on fire, a fact defense lawyers plan to highlight at the sailor's court-martial that is scheduled to start Monday at Naval Base San Diego.

The July 2020 blaze burned for nearly five days and sent an acrid smoke over San Diego, damaging the amphibious assault ship so badly that it had to be scuttled. It marked one of the

worst noncombat warship disasters in recent memory.

Mays is charged with aggravated arson and the willful hazarding of a vessel. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Gary Barthel, a civilian lawyer who represented Mays at a preliminary hearing to determine if there was probable cause to send the case to trial, said the Navy judge overseeing that process recommended the case not go to court-martial. But Vice Adm. Steve Koehler, the former commander of the San Diego-based U.S. 3rd Fleet, who had the final say, ordered the court-martial.

Barthel said the Navy's case relies largely on the account of a fellow sailor who has acknowledged changing it repeatedly.

He said investigators brushed aside the fact that lithium batteries were stored next to highly combustible material such as cardboard boxes, in violation of ship protocol.

Barthel said he offered his services pro bono because he thought Mays would not be court-martialed, but he does not have time with his full-time practice to continue to represent the sailor, who is using military counsel. Still, he said he is speaking out because the Navy case is unjust.

"I think there's some real questions as to whether or not the fire was an arson," Barthel said. "And if it were deemed an arson, there are questions about whether Ryan Mays started this fire."

The prosecution's witness, Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenji Velasco, blamed his nervousness for the changes to his story and said during the preliminary hearing that he was now "100 percent" sure that he saw Mays descend to the ship's lower vehicle storage area on the day of the fire.

Neither military defense counsel nor the prosecution could be reached for comment.

While investigators said Mays set the fire, a Navy report last year concluded that the inferno was preventable and unacceptable. Navy leaders disciplined more than 20 senior officers and sailors in connection with what it described as widespread leadership failures that contributed to the disaster.

# NATO: Mobile units best option for Baltics

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Mobile units able to maneuver quickly around NATO's eastern flank could be preferable to permanent bases with large numbers of U.S. troops in the Baltics, top allied commanders said over the weekend after talks in Estonia.

"I don't think we need (a) brigade-size unit permanently here in Estonia," Lt. Gen. Martin Herem, commander of Estonia's defense forces, said Saturday in Tallinn. "I don't think it's efficient."

Herem said NATO is looking at the types of units needed to reinforce countries on Russia's periphery, moves that come in the wake of the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine that began Feb. 24.

U.S. Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley and other allied defense chiefs were in Estonia for two days of talks, which concluded Saturday.

Milley traveled on to Poland, where he met with U.S. troops Sunday at an undis-

closed military base that is assisting in the transport of weapons to Ukraine.

Milley cautioned that recent Russian setbacks in the war mean that U.S. troops will need to be vigilant, given Moscow's unpredictability.

"The war is not going too well for Russia right now, so it's incumbent upon all of us to maintain high states of readiness, alert," Milley told Reuters on Sunday.

In Estonia, the military chiefs were focused on NATO's efforts to shore up allied defenses. While proponents of permanent bases say large American units, such as armored brigades, would serve as a powerful deterrent to Russian aggression in Poland and the Baltics, there are downsides to the idea, some allied military officials contend.

Dutch Adm. Rob Bauer, chairman of the NATO military committee, told reporters Saturday that the best option is one that gives commanders more flexibility.

"And if you have fixed forces in all the countries, for example, then the enemy,

your opponent, will always look where it is, where there's a weak spot and attack there," Bauer said.

During NATO's June summit in Madrid, members agreed to take steps to expand the number of military units positioned along its eastern flank.

For its part, the U.S. said it would enhance rotational deployments to the Baltic region with a mix of armored, aviation, air defense and special operations forces.

In Madrid, allies also backed a series of moves to increase the size of NATO's quick-reaction force from 40,000 to 300,000.

During talks Saturday, Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas said improvements her country is making will allow for more troop rotations.

"Since January, we have made significant investments to increase our ammunition stocks, improve existing capabilities and develop new ones, upgrade infrastructure to host allies and expand training areas," she said.

## USS Reagan group set to make port call on S. Korea

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group is scheduled to make a routine port visit this week at Busan, South Korea, according to a news release from U.S. Naval Forces Korea.

The strike group and the South Korean navy are expected to train together sometime soon, a South Korean navy public affairs officer told Stars and Stripes by phone Monday. South Korean officials customarily speak to media under the condition of anonymity.

Strike group personnel will also be allowed to meet with their South Korean counterparts through cultural exchanges while in port, according to the Navy statement.

U.S. and South Korean mili-

tary leaders are scheduled to host a news conference on Friday announcing the strike group's arrival. It was expected to arrive a day earlier but is being delayed due to inclement weather, the South Korean navy said in a press release Monday.

The strike group includes the USS Chancellorsville, a Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser, and the USS Benfold, an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer.

The strike group last made a port call at Busan in 2017 after a five-day exercise with South Korean forces. The drills came one month after North Korea conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test and the same year that then-President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traded verbal threats of "fire and fury."

## US Navy veteran held in Afghanistan freed in swap

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

An American Navy veteran captured in Afghanistan two years ago has been freed in exchange for an Afghan man who was imprisoned by the U.S., a senior Biden administration official said Monday.

Mark Frerichs, a former Navy diver abducted in Kabul in 2020, was exchanged on Monday for Bashir Noorzai, an early supporter of the Taliban who was imprisoned stemming from a conviction for smuggling \$50 million worth of heroin.

"In order to bring home a U.S. citizen and reunite him with his family, the President made the difficult decision to grant clemency to Bashir Noorzai after he spent 17 years in U.S. Government custody," said the official, who was not authorized to

speak on the record, in an email to Stars and Stripes.

President Joe Biden made the decision to give clemency to Noorzai in June after deciding his release would not impact the drug trade in Afghanistan or increase any risk to American lives, based in part on his advanced age and many years spent in prison, said another senior Biden administration official who was not authorized to speak on the record.

"Bringing the negotiations that led to Mark's freedom to a successful resolution required difficult decisions, which I did not take lightly," Biden said in a statement Monday, adding he spoke to Frerichs' family about the release.

The U.S. had offered up to \$5 million for information about Frerichs' disappearance.

# Biden says 'Pandemic is over' in interview

*Bloomberg News*

President Joe Biden declared the COVID-19 pandemic "over" and said Americans would gain "control" of inflation, outlining a rosy view for the U.S. economy in an interview less than two months before crucial midterm elections.

Biden said in the interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" for broadcast on Sunday that he hopes the economy can achieve a so-called "soft landing" as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates to cool price increases.

"I'm telling the American people that we're gonna get control of inflation," Biden said when asked whether inflation measured by the consumer price index would continue to decline.

The CPI rose 8.3% in August compared to the same month last year, a larger increase than forecast.

"Their prescription drug prices are gonna be a hell of a lot lower," he added, according to the transcript of the interview. "Their health care costs are gonna be a lot lower. Their basic costs for everybody, their energy prices are gonna be lower. They're gonna be in a situation where they begin to gain control again. I'm more optimistic than I've been in a long time."

He noted that since CPI reached an annual pace of 9.1% in June, the reading "hasn't spiked" and month-to-month price growth has been more moderate.

He also touted his own record on jobs, noting that the unemployment rate was

3.7% in August, "one of the lowest in history."

Interviewer Scott Pelley accompanied Biden to the return of the Detroit Auto Show last week, where he asked the president, "Is the pandemic over?"

"The pandemic is over," Biden said. "We still have a problem with COVID. We're still doing a lot of work on it. It's ... but the pandemic is over," he said, observing that few people at the auto show were wearing masks.

"Everybody seems to be in pretty good shape," he said.

Biden also said that the U.S. would avoid a recession by continuing to "grow the economy," asserting that his policies are "growing entire new industries."

## Rain helps contain huge California wildfire

*Associated Press*

SAN FRANCISCO — A major storm that battered western Alaska over the weekend churned through Northern California on Monday after bringing early-season snow to mountains and dropping rain that helped firefighters increase their containment of a huge wildfire.

Snow and ice in the eastern Sierra Nevada led officials to close State Route 108 high up over the Sonora Pass, the California Department of Transportation said Sunday.

The 119-square-mile Mosqui-

to Fire in the Sierra foothills northeast of Sacramento was 38% contained after downpours on Sunday, allowing sheriff's officials in two counties to lift or downgrade some evacuation orders.

It's the state's largest wildfire of the year so far. More rain was expected, which fire spokesman Scott McLean called a mixed blessing for firefighters.

"It did help a bit to stifle that aggressive fire," McLean said. "But we're going to have new safety issues now with all the mud that's out there. And the

ground moisture could cause some of those damaged trees to fall over."

Lingering showers over the Mosquito Fire will increase the risk of ash and mud flows, the National Weather Service said. To the north, localized flooding and mudslides were reported in parts of the Coast Range scarred from a massive wildfire two years ago.

Scattered rain was expected throughout the day from Sacramento north to Redding, forecasters said.

The weather service cau-

tioned drivers that roads could be slick and commutes could take longer.

Heavy rain fell Sunday across Marin, Napa and Sonoma counties north of San Francisco, with more than an inch recorded over 24 hours in some mountain areas, the National Weather Service said. Flood advisories for the Bay Area expired early Monday.

Bands of rain stretched south into Santa Cruz County and along the Central Coast, but they weren't expected to reach Southern California.

## Fiona cuts power across all of Puerto Rico

*Associated Press*

HAVANA — Hurricane Fiona roared over the Dominican Republic on Monday after knocking out power across all of Puerto Rico, causing damage the governor said was "catastrophic." Many people were left without water service.

No deaths had been reported, but authorities in the U.S. territory said it was too early to know the full scope of damage from an expansive storm that was still forecast to unleash torrential rain across Puerto Rico on Monday.

The island's National Weather Service office said flash flooding was occurring in

south-central parts of Puerto Rico and tweeted, "MOVE TO HIGHER GROUND IMMEDIATELY!"

Up to 22 inches of rain had fallen in some areas of Puerto Rico and forecasters said another 4 to 8 inches could fall — perhaps up to 15 inches in some places — even as the storm moves away.

As much as 15 inches were projected for the eastern Dominican Republic, where authorities told most people to stay home from work, closed ports and banned use of beaches.

"It's important people understand that this is not over," said Ernesto Morales, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in

San Juan.

He said flooding reached "historic levels," with authorities evacuating or rescuing hundreds of people across the island.

"The damages that we are seeing are catastrophic," said Gov. Pedro Pierluisi.

Before dawn on Monday, authorities in a boat traveled through the flooded streets of the north coastal town of Catano and used a megaphone to alert people that the pumps had collapsed and urged them to evacuate as soon as possible.

Brown water rushed through streets, into homes and even consumed a runway airport in southern Puerto Rico.



# Queen Elizabeth II mourned by Britain, world at funeral

Associated Press

LONDON — Britain and the world said a final goodbye to Queen Elizabeth II at a state funeral Monday that drew presidents and kings, princes and prime ministers — and crowds who massed along the streets of London to honor a monarch whose 70-year reign defined an age.

In a country known for pomp and pageantry, the first state funeral since Winston Churchill's was filled with spectacle: Ahead of the service, a bell tolled 96 times — once a minute for each year of Elizabeth's life. Then, 142 Royal Navy sailors used ropes to draw the gun carriage carrying her flag-draped coffin to Westminster Abbey before pallbearers bore it inside the church, where around 2,000 people ranging from world leaders to health care workers gathered to mourn her.

The trappings of state and monarchy abounded: The coffin was draped with the Royal Standard and atop it sat the Imperial State Crown, sparkling with almost 3,000 diamonds, and the sovereign's orb and scepter.

But the personal was also present: The coffin was followed into the church by generations of Elizabeth's descendants, in-

cluding King Charles III, heir to the throne Prince William and 9-year-old George, who is second in line. On a wreath atop the coffin, a handwritten note read, "In loving and devoted memory," and was signed Charles R — for Rex, or king.

Monday was declared a public holiday in honor of Elizabeth, who died Sept. 8 — and hundreds of thousands of people descended on central London to partake in the historic moment. They jammed the sidewalks to watch the coffin wend its way through the streets of the capital after the service. As the procession passed Buckingham Palace, the queen's official residence in the city, staff stood outside, some bowing and curtsying.

Millions more tuned into the funeral live on television, and crowds flocked to parks and public spaces across the U.K. to watch it on screens. Even the Google doodle turned a respectful black for the day.

The queen will be laid to rest later with her husband, Prince Philip, at a private family service.

The mourners at Westminster Abbey included President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, all of the living former British prime ministers and European royalty.

# Ukraine warns of 'nuclear terrorism' after missile strike

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A Russian missile struck close to a nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine without damaging the three reactors but hit other industrial equipment in what Ukrainian authorities denounced Monday as an act of "nuclear terrorism."

The strike followed warnings from Russian President Vladimir Putin of possible stepped-up attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure after his forces suffered humiliating battlefield setbacks. It also renewed fears of a possible radioactive disaster in the nearly 7-month-long war.

The missile struck within 328 yards of reactors at the Pivdennoukrainsk plant, also known as the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Plant, blasting a crater 6½ feet deep and 13 feet across, according to Ukrainian nuclear operator Energoatom.

Black-and-white closed-circuit TV footage released by Ukraine's Ministry of Defense showed two large fireballs erupting one after the other in the dark, followed by incandescent showers of sparks. A time stamp on the video read 19 minutes after midnight.

The ministry and Energoatom both called the strike "nuclear terrorism." The Russian Defense Ministry had no immediate comment. The United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The industrial complex that includes the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear plant sits along the Southern Bug River about 190 miles south of the capital, Kyiv. The attack caused the temporary shutdown of a nearby hydropower plant and shattered more than 100 windows at the complex, Energoatom said.

Ukraine's presidential office said the attack also severed three power transmission lines.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the strikes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said a main transmission line was reconnected Friday, providing electricity that the Zaporizhzhia plant needs to cool its reactors. The IAEA has monitors at the plant.

But the mayor of Enerhodar, the city that hosts the Zaporizhzhia plant, reported more Russian shelling Monday, in the city's industrial zone.

# US bases escape tropical storm Nanmadol with 'minor damage'

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWA-KUNI, Japan — U.S. military bases in the south of Japan weathered an overnight drenching along with high winds as severe tropical storm Nanmadol made its way across the country.

Sasebo Naval Base on Kyushu, southernmost of Japan's four main islands, emerged relatively unscathed Monday after Nanmadol made landfall there late Sunday.

"We have concluded our damage reports and it's the usual downed trees, some bent fence posts, just some minor damage to the base," Sasebo spokesman Aki Nichols told Stars and Stripes by phone. "Nothing that is mission critical."

Farther east at Marine Corps Air Station

Iwakuni, 25 miles south of Hiroshima on Honshu, largest of the four islands, the base kept its occupants indoors until after sounding all clear mid-afternoon Monday and beginning the task of cleaning up, according to a post on the base's official Facebook page.

Nanmadol was centered just offshore of central Honshu in the Sea of Japan at 4 p.m. Monday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. The agency forecasted wind and rain for western and northern Japan through Tuesday.

The U.S. Army Garrison at Camp Zama, 25 miles southwest of central Tokyo, warned of strong winds up to 33 knots, and 1-3 inches of rain for several hours beginning at 3 a.m. Tuesday, according to a post on the garrison's official Facebook page.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Man who dressed up as The Joker sentenced for threats

**MO** CLAYTON — A convicted felon in Missouri accused of livestreaming threats to bomb and kill people while he was dressed up as the Batman villain known as The Joker was sentenced Friday to 60 days in jail, with credit for several months served after his arrest.

Jeremy Garnier, 51, of University City, was sentenced after pleading guilty to a misdemeanor charge of making a terrorist threat. Prosecutors reduced the charge from a felony for the March 2020 incident.

Garnier told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that he never intended to make a threat and pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor to avoid many more months in jail. He told the newspaper he served more than 20 years in prison for robbing a credit union in the 1980s and other felonies, to support his crack habit. He said he is now sober and wants to use his platform to raise awareness about the opioid epidemic.

### Veteran gets 5 years for fraud over faked injuries

**MI** GRAND RAPIDS — A Michigan veteran has been sentenced to five years in prison after investigators who followed him discovered he had faked injuries that allowed him to claim more than \$260,000 in federal benefits.

Joseph Gray, 53, of Lawton, repeatedly claimed he had lost the use of his legs and left hand in order to obtain the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, prosecutors said. But government investigators saw him walking, using his left hand

and even carrying a heavy bag on his shoulder. Acquaintances also told investigators they had not seen Gray in a wheelchair except for his VA appointments.

A federal jury convicted Gray in April of conspiracy to defraud the government, making a false statement to the VA, theft of government funds and making a false, fictitious or fraudulent claim. A judge who sentenced Gray to a five-year prison term also ordered him to pay \$264,631.51 in restitution, the Kalamazoo Gazette reported.

Gray's attorney, Scott Graham, said Gray earned military decorations during the Gulf War and "sustained life-changing injuries" from a fall in Saudi Arabia.

### 39 years later, settlement for flood victims OK'd

**LA** BATON ROUGE — Louisiana families and businesses in Tangipahoa Parish are a step closer to getting paid for flood damages in 1983 caused by the construction of Interstate 12.

A \$95 million payment was approved Friday by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, The Advocate reported. The action allows the money to be moved to an escrow account, and eventually to 1,246 victims, 400 families and 96 businesses.

When those payments will be made is unclear. Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne said he is confident a district judge will approve the payment, which will then allow a special master to decide how much individuals and businesses are owed.

Rains on April 6, 1983, flooded about 6,000 homes in the Baton Rouge area. In Tangipahoa Par-

ish, east of Baton Rouge, the newly opened I-12 acted like a large levee, and resulted in water from the Tangipahoa River being diverted into homes and businesses.

### 3 students arrested for replica pistol at school

**OR** CLACKAMAS — Three teenagers were arrested Friday in Clackamas County, Ore., after a school resource officer was alerted to a social media video post showing them holding what appeared to be a gun in a school restroom, authorities said.

Deputies arrived within two minutes at Clackamas High School and arrested two students who were seen in the video.

The school was placed on lockdown while authorities identified and arrested a third student who was involved, according to a statement from the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office. Deputies recovered a realistic-looking replica pistol, the statement said.

### Sheriff: 3 killed when small planes collide in midair

**CO** LONGMONT — Two small airplanes collided in midair near Denver on Saturday, killing three people, authorities said.

It wasn't known what might have caused the crash between the four-seater Cessna 172 and the Sonex Xenos, a light, aluminum, homebuilt aircraft that can seat two.

One of the planes crashed in a field, the other in a stand of trees, near Vance Brand Airport in Longmont, Colo., about 30 miles north of Denver. Two people were found dead in one

wreckage, and one person in the other, the Boulder County Sheriff's Office said.

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating.

### Motorcyclist crashes, then struck, killed by train

**CA** OAKLAND — A motorcyclist was struck and killed by an oncoming train in Northern California after flying from the bike during a crash and falling onto railroad tracks, officials said Friday.

The crash caused delays for the Bay Area Rapid Transit system. The motorcyclist's name has not been released.

The motorcyclist lost control of the vehicle and struck a metal fence, The San Francisco Chronicle reported. The impact created an opening in the barrier and the person fell 25 feet onto the railroad tracks below. A train struck the motorcyclist soon after.

### Owner tracks stolen car, then shoots alleged thief

**WA** FEDERAL WAY — Police say a Washington state man tracked down his stolen car using GPS and then shot the suspected thief after the man pointed a gun at him.

The vehicle was stolen in Tacoma and the owner tracked it to Federal Way, KOMO-TV reported.

The 42-year-old owner told police when he confronted the suspect, the man pointed a handgun at him so he shot him. The 29-year-old suspect was hospitalized. The owner of the stolen car was interviewed by police and released.

— From wire reports

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# Garoppolo drives 49ers past Seahawks

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — After the shock of losing starting quarterback Trey Lance to a season-ending injury wore off, the San Francisco 49ers looked awfully familiar with Jimmy Garoppolo back at quarterback.

Garoppolo threw a touchdown pass on his first full drive after replacing Lance and ran for another score to help the 49ers beat the Seattle Seahawks 27-7 on Sunday.

“Just like riding a bike,” Garoppolo said. “It felt good to be back out there. Feel terrible for Trey. I’ve been on that side of it. This league is tough. That sucks for him.”

Lance broke his right ankle on the second drive of the game, a season-ending injury for the 22-year-old who was given the keys to San Francisco’s offense this season. He was taken off the field on a cart, his injured ankle in an air cast.

San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan said after the game that Lance would need surgery and will miss the rest of the season.

“It’s tough,” Shanahan said. “You feel for someone so bad. It’s a sad moment. But you don’t have time to sit there and think about it. You have to get right back to the game. Guys did a good job of that.”

That set the stage for Garoppolo to come in and reclaim the job he held for most of the past four seasons as the surprising decision to keep Garoppolo on a reduced contract paid nearly immediate dividends for the Niners.

He completed his first five passes in his first game since last season’s NFC title game, including a 38-yard touchdown pass to Ross Dwelley that put San Francisco (1-1) up 13-0.

“I thought Jimmy looked great and it felt like Niners football,” fullback Kyle Juszczyk said. “We’ve been doing this thing for five years. Jimmy’s been around for a long time. I mean, props to him for just being such a professional and being ready to go.”

San Francisco mostly coasted from there as the Seahawks (1-1) looked rather flat six days after their emotional, season-opening victory over former quarterback Russell Wilson and the Broncos.

Geno Smith went 24-for-30 for 198 yards and an interception. Seattle also had a trick play near the goal line backfire for another turnover and rushed for only 35 yards on the day.

“Quite a distance from one week to the next,” coach Pete Carroll. “This league just reminds you how you get humbled. We

didn’t do anything like we wanted to today at the line of scrimmage, on either side of the ball.”

Lance took over the starting job this season from Garoppolo after being drafted third overall in 2021. The 49ers traded three first-round picks to move up nine spots to take Lance, making a major investment in him.

Lance spent his rookie season mostly on the bench watching Garoppolo as San Francisco went all the way to the NFC title game before losing to the Rams.

The 49ers planned to trade Garoppolo this offseason but was unable to after he underwent shoulder surgery in March.

Garoppolo remained on the roster but didn’t practice with the team at all during training camp, throwing on his own on a side field, before agreeing to return as a backup on a reduced contract.

“I’m comfortable here,” Garoppolo said. “The players, the scheme, all that stuff, the locker room. It’s comfortable. I’m familiar with it. I’m not saying I knew this was going to happen, but I was ready for this in case it did happen.”

Garoppolo went 13-for-21 for 154 yards and the TD. He iced the game with a 1-yard sneak late in the fourth quarter.

# Maher kick lifts Rush, Cowboys over Bengals

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Cooper Rush had no choice but to smile as he embraced offensive coordinator Kellen Moore after the winning kick for the Dallas Cowboys.

Dak Prescott’s backup now has a 2-0 career record filling in, with winning drives on his final possession both times. That was enough to let the emotion flow for the normally stoic Rush, at least for a few moments.

“It’s actually exciting to see him be excited after he won a game,” coach Mike McCarthy after a 20-17 victory over Cincinnati on Sunday. “To get a charge out of it because he is so, so consistent.”

Rush led the drive to Brett Maher’s 50-yard field goal as time expired, and the Cowboys held on after losing a two-touchdown halftime lead.

Joe Burrow got the defending AFC champion Bengals even at 17-17 by leading a 19-play, 83-yard drive in the fourth quarter, throwing a 5-yard touchdown pass to Tee Higgins and finding Tyler Boyd for the 2-point conversion.

Cincinnati (0-2) erased the same 17-3 deficit in the opener against Pittsburgh, only to miss two chances to win on a PAT kick in the final seconds of regulation and a short field goal in overtime of the 23-20 loss.

Now the Bengals are the first defending AFC champion to start 0-2 since 1999, when Denver was coming off consecutive Super Bowl victories and started 0-4 after John Elway retired.

“You just can’t let it affect you,” said defensive end Sam Hubbard, who had the only sack of Rush. “People look to you and your de-

meanor, how you handle yourself and all you can do is go back to work. And I’m excited to get back to work.”

After Dallas stopped Cincinnati with about a minute remaining, Rush got the defending NFC East champs in range for Maher. This after his only previous NFL start last year, when the sixth-year pro threw the go-ahead touchdown pass in the final minute of a 20-16 win at Minnesota.

Rush got the winning drive going with a 12-yard completion to Noah Brown, who had his first NFL touchdown on the opening drive and finished with a career-high 91 yards receiving. A 10-yarder to CeeDee Lamb put the Cowboys (1-1) in range for Maher, who kicked a 54-yarder in the first half.

“I felt like I put a good stroke on

it to see it go in,” said Maher, a former Dallas kicker who rejoined the club late in training camp when both kickers competing for the job flopped. “It was just mayhem, to be honest with you.”

Prescott, who wore a headset with a long-sleeve shirt and frequently implored the crowd to make noise, just missed the one start last season with a strained calf. He will be out multiple games this time with a fracture near his right thumb.

Rush directed 75-yard touchdown drives on his first two possessions after the Cowboys went without a TD in the opener against Tampa Bay. Dallas didn’t find the end zone again, but didn’t need to on the final possession after Trevon Diggs stopped Boyd 2 yards short on third-and-3, forcing a punt with 1:09 remaining.



# Battlin' Brady: Bucs end Saints' run

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — It certainly looked like the Saints were in Tom Brady's head when the Buccaneers quarterback threw a tablet in the bench area and later jawed with New Orleans cornerback Marshon Lattimore after a drive-stalling incomplete pass.

How quickly a game can change when emotions spill over.

Brady helped incite a skirmish that led to the ejections of Lattimore and Bucs receiver Mike Evans, then threw a go-ahead touchdown pass to Breshad Perriman that lifted Tampa Bay to a 20-10 victory over New Orleans on Sunday.

"It's an emotional game," Brady said flatly. "A little bit of execution helps all the way around. I thought the defense played well

again and the offensive line fought hard.

"Tough game all around," Brady added. "That is a really good team, really well coached — a team we really struggle with. So, it feels good to win."

Brady, who'd lost four straight regular-season meetings with the Saints, again struggled for the first three quarters of this latest, testy encounter between NFC South rivals.

Brady's frustration was clear when he was caught on camera forcefully throwing a tablet to the turf with a healthy turn of his torso and full follow-through of his prolific right arm.

And after his third-down incomplete pass early in the fourth quarter, Brady was shouting at Lattimore when running back

Leonard Fournette entered the fray and shoved the Saints' star cornerback. Lattimore responded by shoving Fournette, and Evans rushed in and flattened Lattimore — much like he did in a 2017 game between these teams.

"I was just trying to have my teammate's back," Evans said. "I seen (Lattimore) punch someone. I wasn't going to let that happen. ... We know when you come to New Orleans, it gets spicy."

Evans was ejected, as he was five seasons ago. But this time, so was Lattimore, who did not speak with media after the game.

"It hurts to lose your best corner," Saints defensive end Cameron Jordan said. "Guys gun at him because they know he is one of the best corners in the league."

## Flacco throws for 4 TDs, rallies Jets past Browns

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Joe Flacco's 15-yard touchdown pass to rookie Garrett Wilson with 22 seconds left rallied the New York Jets to a 31-30 defeat of the Cleveland Browns, who blew a two-touchdown lead in the final two minutes.

Flacco, who had four TD passes, found a streaking Wilson over the middle on third-and-10.

Nick Chubb's third rushing TD put the Browns up by 13 with 1:55 left. However, rookie kicker Cade York pushed his extra point to the right, a miss that proved critical.

Flacco hit Corey Davis for a 66-yard TD with 1:22 left to pull the Jets (1-1) within 30-24. New York recovered the onside kick and Flacco, subbing for the injured Zach Wilson, drove to the 15 without any timeouts before hooking up with Wilson.

Greg Zuerlein made the deciding extra point to make it 31-30.

**Jets 42, Ravens 38:** Tua Tagovailoa threw for 469 yards and six touchdowns, four of which came during a spectacular fourth quarter, and visiting Miami rallied from a 21-point deficit to beat Lamar Jackson and Baltimore.

Tagovailoa's 7-yard touchdown pass to Jaylen Waddle with

14 seconds left completed the incredible comeback after Miami (2-0) trailed 35-14 with under 13 minutes remaining.

Tyreek Hill had touchdown catches of 48 and 60 yards during that rally, the latter of which tied the game with 5:19 to play.

**Cardinals 29, Raiders 23 (OT):** Byron Murphy Jr. scooped up Hunter Renfrow's fumble and returned it 59 yards for a touchdown with 3:51 left in overtime, and Arizona rallied from a 20-point deficit in the second half to win at Las Vegas.

Kyler Murray scrambled for a 3-yard touchdown on the final snap of regulation before hitting A.J. Green for the tying 2-point conversion for the Cardinals (1-1), who trailed 23-7 with less than nine minutes left in regulation.

**Packers 27, Bears 10:** Aaron Jones rushed for 132 yards and a touchdown and caught a scoring pass from Aaron Rodgers to lead host Green Bay, which continued its domination of Chicago.

The Packers (1-1) bounced back from a season-opening 23-7 loss at Minnesota and beat the Bears (1-1) for a seventh straight time, matching its second-longest win streak in the 205-game history of the NFL's oldest rivalry.

**Rams 31, Falcons 27:** Matthew Stafford threw for 272 yards and three touchdowns, Jalen Ramsey intercepted a potential go-ahead touchdown pass in the end zone and host Los Angeles held off a second-half rally attempt by Atlanta.

Cooper Kupp had two TD catches for the Super Bowl champion Rams (1-1), who were beaten badly by Buffalo in their season opener.

**Patriots 17, Steelers 14:** Mac Jones threw for 253 yards and a touchdown and New England won at Pittsburgh.

The Patriots (1-1) haven't lost consecutive games to start a season since 2001. They took advantage of a handful of mistakes by the Steelers (1-1), including a muffed punt in the third quarter by Gunner Olszewski that set up a 2-yard touchdown run by Damien Harris. That gave New England an 11-point lead it didn't relinquish.

**Giants 19, Panthers 16:** Graham Gano kicked a 56-yard field goal with 3:34 to play and host New York beat Carolina.

The Giants improved to 2-0 for the first time since 2016.

**Broncos 16, Texans 9:** Russell Wilson overcame a slow start and

a cascade of boos to lead host Denver past Houston in his uneven debut.

The Broncos (1-1) were flagged 13 times for 100 yards, marking the first time in four years they've had back-to-back games with double-digit penalties.

**Jaguars 24, Colts 0:** Trevor Lawrence threw two touchdown passes to Christian Kirk, and host Jacksonville dominated short-handed Indianapolis.

The Jaguars (1-1) sacked Matt Ryan five times, intercepted three of his passes, held NFL rushing champion Jonathan Taylor to 54 yards and notched their eighth shutout in franchise history. The Colts (0-1-1) played without three key starters: All-Pro linebacker Shaquille Leonard and receivers Michael Pittman and rookie Alec Pierce.

**Lions 36, Commanders 27:** Jared Goff threw two of his four touchdown passes to Amon-Ra St. Brown, lifting host Detroit past Washington.

Rookie Aidan Hutchinson had three sacks in the first half to help the Lions (1-1) lead 22-0 at halftime, and Will Harris had an interception in the second half to stunt the Commanders (1-1) as they tried to rally.

# Yankees' Judge hits 58th, 59th homers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Aaron Judge hit his 58th and 59th home runs of the season to move within two of Roger Maris' American League record with 16 games remaining and lead the New York Yankees over the Milwaukee Brewers 12-8 on Sunday.

Judge added a two-run double in the ninth as part of a four-hit day for New York, which hit five homers and avoided a three-game sweep. The Yankees opened a 5½-game lead over second-place Toronto in the AL East and head to the Bronx for a homestand against Pittsburgh and Boston that starts Tuesday.

Judge's 11th multihomer game tied the season record set by Detroit's Hank Greenberg 1938 and matched by the Chicago Cubs' Sammy Sosa in 1998.

**Mets 7, Pirates 3:** Jacob deGrom struck out 13 batters — the most ever for a Mets pitcher who threw five or fewer innings — but didn't factor into the decision. The NL East leaders beat visiting Pittsburgh to complete a four-game sweep.

The Mets scored four in the eighth to break the tie. Terrance Gore pinch-ran in place of Tomas Nido, who hit a single off Robert Stephenson (2-2). Gore stole second after three throws to first by Manny Bañuelos, took third when catcher Jason Delay's throw sailed into centerfield and scored on Brandon Nimmo's bloop single.

**Astros 11, Athletics 2:** Framber Valdez set an MLB record with his 25th straight quality start, and Yordan Alvarez and Martin Maldonado had four RBIs each to help host Houston build an early lead in a rout of Oakland.

Alvarez drove in three runs with a double in the Astros' five-run third inning and padded the lead with an RBI double the sixth inning. He extended his hitting streak to a season-high nine games.

Valdez (16-5) allowed four hits and two

runs with seven strikeouts in six innings to pass Jacob deGrom (24 in 2018) for the most consecutive quality starts in a single season in MLB history.

**Marlins 3, Nationals 1:** Sandy Alcantara pitched his major league-leading fifth complete game, a seven-hitter that led visiting Miami over Washington to avoid a series sweep.

Alcantara (13-8) struck out seven and walked one, throwing 104 pitches. His 2.37 ERA is second in the National League to the 2.27 of the Los Angeles Dodgers' Julio Urias.

**Dodgers 4, Giants 3 (10):** Mookie Betts had an RBI double in the 10th inning, Max Muncy drew a bases-loaded walk and visiting Los Angeles held on to beat San Francisco.

The Dodgers beat the Giants for the 15th time in 19 meetings this season, getting that many wins for the first time in the rivalry that goes back to 1884.

**Reds 3, Cardinals 0:** Stuart Fairchild homered, Luis Cessa tossed five shutout innings and visiting Cincinnati shut down Albert Pujols and St. Louis.

The 42-year-old Pujols, who entered the game with 698 home runs, went 0-for-4. The Cardinals have 14 games remaining.

**Twins 3, Guardians 0:** Joe Ryan pitched shutout ball for the second straight outing and became only the second Minnesota starter to reach the eighth inning this season in a win over host Cleveland.

Jake Cave hit a solo homer in the second and AL batting leader Luis Arraez added a two-run single in the ninth as the third-place Twins stopped an eight-game losing streak against the Reds.

**Angels 5, Mariners 1:** Luis Rengifo hit a pair of home runs for the second time in three games, Livan Soto went deep for the first time and host Los Angeles won its third in a row over Seattle.

Seeking their first playoff appearance

since 2001, the longest drought in the major leagues, the Mariners saw their lead for the third and final AL wild-card berth cut to four games over Baltimore.

**Braves 5, Phillies 2:** Rookie Spencer Strider took a no-hit bid into the sixth inning and struck out 10, William Contreras hit a tiebreaking homer and host Atlanta beat Philadelphia for the three-game sweep.

Strider (11-5) didn't allow a hit until Alec Bohm homered to tie the score 1-1.

**Orioles 5, Blue Jays 4:** Adley Rutschman hit a two-run single in the ninth inning and visiting Baltimore turned the 15th triple play in team history as it rallied to beat Toronto.

Jesús Aguilar hit a solo homer, and Rutschman went 2-for-3 with two walks.

**White Sox 11, Tigers 5:** Andrew Vaughn hit his first career grand slam in visiting Chicago's win over Detroit.

Eloy Jiménez and AJ Pollock also connected as the White Sox won for the third time in four games.

**Padres 6, Diamondbacks 1:** Juan Soto homered for the first time in three weeks and Yu Darvish pitched six scoreless innings to give visiting San Diego a victory over Arizona.

Soto finished with three hits and two RBIs. He hit just .089 in his previous 17 games.

**Rays 5, Rangers 3:** Christian Bethancourt and Jose Siri hit back-to-back homers in a three-pitch stretch in the second inning, and host Tampa Bay beat Texas.

Jonathan Aranda, Manuel Margot and Taylor Walls each drove in a run.

**Red Sox 13, Royals 3:** Rafael Devers had four hits and three RBIs in host Boston's win over Kansas City.

**Rockies 4, Cubs 3:** Randal Grichuk had two hits and two RBIs, and Colorado beat Chicago for a rare second straight win on the road.

## Aces win first WNBA title, Chelsea Gray named MVP

Associated Press

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — Las Vegas never had a professional sports champion — until Sunday.

Chelsea Gray scored 20 points to lead the Las Vegas Aces to their first WNBA title, and the city's first pro title, in a 78-71 road win over the Connecticut

Sun in Game 4.

Gray went 9 of 13 from the floor, and was named Finals MVP after averaging 18.3 points in the series.

Vegas finished on an 8-0 run. As the buzzer sounded, league MVP A'ja Wilson, who played every minute of the game, grabbed the ball and stomped

the floor before being mobbed by her teammates.

"We champs! We champs! We champs!" Wilson screamed at teammates as they pulled on their championship hats and T-shirts before the trophy ceremony.

Riquna Williams had 17 points for Vegas, Kelsey Plum added 16

points, Jackie Young had 13 and Wilson added 11 points to go with her 14 rebounds.

Wilson said she hopes this is just the beginning for the franchise.

"You see it. You see it," Wilson said in the on-court celebration. "This is what we're building. This is what we're doing."