

Harris crisply attacks Trump in debate

The Washington Post

Vice President Kamala Harris made a sharp, fiery case against Republican nominee Donald Trump during a freewheeling debate Tuesday, blasting the former president's character and preoccupation with himself while pressing him to task on issues including abortion, democracy and foreign policy.

Trump used the head-to-head event to attack Harris as a "Marxist" masquerading as a moderate and repeatedly turned the subject back to the U.S. southern border — an issue where polls show voters trust him more than Harris — often straying from the facts to embrace debunked conspiracy theories about immigration and the 2020 election.

Both sides went into their first debate, hosted by ABC in Philadelphia, spoiling for a fight after several weeks of attacking one another on the campaign trail and wasted little time launching into harsh attacks. Harris' barbs landed crisply, while Trump often veered off-message in response to her attempts to bait him on sensitive topics like the

size of his rally crowds, his 2020 election loss and his admiration for strongmen.

"In this debate tonight, you're going to hear from the same old tired playbook, a bunch of lies, grievances and name-calling," Harris said early in the debate, one of several times that she turned to address viewers rather than her opponent. A few minutes later, she said, "Donald Trump actually has no plan for you, because he is more interested in defending himself than he is in looking out for you."

Trump dismissed the remark as "just a sound bite" and went on to accuse Harris of misleading the public about her positions.

"Everything that she believed three years ago and four years ago is out the window — she's going to my philosophy now," Trump said. "In fact, I was going to send her a MAGA hat. She's going to my philosophy. But if she ever got elected, she'd change it and it will be the end of our country."

Harris was able to deliver the Democratic case against Trump — that he is self-involved, unfit

and consumed with his own interests — in a way that President Joe Biden struggled badly to do in the last debate, a little over two months ago. Her performance, and Trump's often-frustrated reaction, underscored how much the dynamics of race have changed since Biden stepped aside.

Harris seemed to regularly get under the former president's skin, sometimes prompting angry or meandering responses. He accused the vice president and the Biden administration of being responsible for inflation, high crime and illegal immigration, but he also went on tangents, such as repeating baseless assertions.

In one of the most aggressive exchanges from the night, Harris and Trump sparred over abortion, with each casting the other as holding extreme positions.

Harris said Trump was responsible for the worst of the fall-out of abortion bans stemming from the Supreme Court ruling that overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, blaming the former presi-

dent for women "bleeding out" in parking lots and children having to carry a pregnancy resulting from incest.

Trump said it "took courage" to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and falsely claimed that "every legal scholar" wanted abortion policy to be left up to the states. He also falsely stated that Democrats support abortion after birth, which led to the first of several fact checks from the moderators.

Trump declared that he would not sign a national abortion ban but dodged when asked whether he would veto such a ban if it passed Congress, saying that would never happen. "I'm not signing a ban, and there's no reason to sign a ban," Trump said. As for vetoing it, he said, "I won't have to."

Harris repeatedly goaded Trump with references to people leaving his rallies, his various bankruptcies, the money that he received from his father and other matters where he has shown sensitivity.

It is not clear if they will debate again.

Navy says more than 100 mines found in Black Sea

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — More than 100 mines have been spotted by U.S. military reconnaissance aircraft and allies in the Black Sea since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than two years ago, the commanding officer of U.S. 6th Fleet said this week.

Russian mines have been used primarily near Ukrainian ports. But they remain a long-term concern for the nations that share the sea's commercial shipping lanes,

as well as for the potential danger to tourists and others closer to shore.

The 6th Fleet confirmed Wednesday that the U.S. flights have been taking place over Bulgarian and Romanian waters for more than a year, following comments by Vice Adm. Thomas Ishee at the multinational Sea Breeze naval exercise in Varna, Bulgaria, on Monday.

Ishee didn't specify the types of aircraft used for the flights or the service involved. He did say

the flights are part of collective efforts, which have found 105 floating mines in the Black Sea since 2022.

Mines have affected at least five ships traveling in the sea over that same period, Ishee said, as quoted by the Bulgarian News Agency on Monday. He didn't specify the vessels or any resulting damage.

The final drills of the 23rd iteration of Sea Breeze started Monday. The exercise is focused on detecting and clearing sea

mines, among other objectives, 6th Fleet said in a statement Tuesday. Sea Breeze ends Sept. 20.

The first part of the exercise took place in June and July near Scotland. The second and third parts are in Bulgaria, with some 12 countries, including Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Romania, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine participating. It also includes NATO Maritime Command, according to the statement.

USMC leader adds to support for Manila

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

America's top Marine pledged this week to help the Philippine military develop capabilities to monitor its sea territory amid ongoing coast guard clashes with China, according to a state-run media report.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Eric Smith, during a trip to the island nation, promised the Philippines' vice chief of staff, air force Lt. Gen. Arthur Cordura, that the Marines will help Manila boost its maritime surveillance capabilities, the state-run Philippine News Agency reported Tuesday.

The Philippines has limited resources, and the Marines are the lightest U.S. service branch, so the commandant is likely talking about drones and electronic warfare, Paul Buchanan, a U.S. security expert based in New Zealand, said by email Tuesday.

Real-time intelligence, analysis, target designation and communication will be a priority, so any assistance would likely involve electronic warfare specialists, intelligence Marines and drone operators, he said.

Smith made the pledge during a visit to Camp Aguinaldo, the Philippine military's headquarters in Quezon City, according to the news agency report.

During the meeting, Smith committed to helping the Philippine military develop its ability to detect intrusions within its territorial waters so it can work more closely with U.S. counterparts, according to the report.

The generals also discussed an upcoming naval drill involving forces from both countries in the islands — Samasama, Tagalog for “together.”

Marine Rotational Force — Southeast Asia, formed in 2022, participated in Samasama in the

Philippines last year.

Smith's remarks are the latest by U.S. military officers pledging support on behalf of the Philippines, which the United States is bound by treaty to defend in the event of an attack.

The head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Adm. Samuel Papparo, told reporters in Manila on Aug. 27 that the U.S. military is open to consultations about escorting Philippine ships in disputed waters of the South China Sea, where Philippine and Chinese coast guards clash routinely.

Most recently, the two sides collided Aug. 31 at Sabina Shoal, where Philippine authorities allege a Chinese vessel rammed a Philippine vessel three times. China lays claim to nearly the entire sea, including features inside the Philippine exclusive economic zone.

The two countries had agreed

to ease mounting tensions at another flashpoint, Second Thomas Shoal, where Filipino marines man an outpost on a grounded, rusting warship.

Beijing has reclaimed land and built military facilities in disputed territory. Its claims are challenged by neighboring countries, including Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam.

A combined U.S. Navy and Marine Corps amphibious ready group and Marine expeditionary unit can surveil a large portion of Philippine maritime territory and extend into the South China Sea, said retired Marine Col. Grant Newsham, a senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies in Tokyo.

“If it's just Marines, they have the capability to ‘cover’ from land a stretch of ocean extending out into the Philippines EEZ for some distance,” he told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

Pentagon confirms sub USS Georgia in Mideast

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The submarine USS Georgia has arrived in the Middle East, joining two aircraft carrier strike groups in the region, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon's top spokesman, confirmed the Georgia's presence in U.S. Central Command's area of operations more than a month after it was ordered to move to the region. Ryder offered no other details, including when the submarine arrived or where it was.

The Georgia — an Ohio-class, ballistic-missile submarine — was ordered Aug. 11 to sail to the CENTCOM region by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin as ten-

sions between Israel and Iranian proxy forces reached a boiling point. The submarine carries up to 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles along with Mk48 torpedoes, according to the Navy.

The Georgia did not immediately travel to the CENTCOM area of control. In the past four weeks, the Pentagon has maintained the submarine was “in transit” to the region, only sharing on Aug. 22 that the Georgia was operating in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Navy said Aug. 9 — prior to Austin's order — that the Georgia was training for weeks in the Mediterranean Sea.

The Georgia joins two carrier strike groups, the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the USS Abraham Lincoln.

Japanese official rejects phased relocation of Okinawa airfield

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Relocating a Marine Corps airfield from a heavily populated city on Okinawa to a rural northern area in phases would unnecessarily lengthen the time to build the new facility, Japan's defense minister said this week.

Defense Minister Minoru Kihara during a press conference Tuesday pushed back on a campaign pledge by Ginowan city's new mayor, Atsushi Sakima, to “realize a phased relocation” of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to a new airfield under construction on Camp Schwab in the Henoko region.

“If we relocate part of the aircraft stationed at Futenma, which I assume is what phased reloca-

tion means ... it will be necessary to build temporary facilities like hangars and fuel tanks on the Henoko side,” Kihara said. “If we build those temporary facilities, it means that eventually they need to be demolished.”

Sakima also pledged to “push (the government) to show a date for the reversion of MCAS Futenma,” according to a Friday post on X. Sakima was elected Sunday to succeed Masanori Matsugawa, who died July 26.

Construction will take just over eight years to complete, and another two years and nine months to finish procedural measures before turning the airfield over to the Marines, Kihara said.

“It is necessary to consider the process to relocate troops after finishing constructions,” he said, declining to give a reversion date.

'Hellish' scene unfolds as fires rage on in California

Associated Press

TRABUCO CANYON, Calif. — Alex Luna, a 20-year-old missionary, saw the sky turn from a cherry red to black in about 90 minutes as an explosive wildfire raced toward the Southern California mountain community of Wrightwood and authorities implored residents to leave their belongings behind and get out of town.

"It was very, I would say, hellish-like," Luna said Tuesday night. "It was very just dark. Not a good place to be at that moment. ... Ash was falling from the sky like if it was snowing."

Luna was among those who heeded the evacuation order that was issued for the community of about 4,500 in the San Gabriel Mountains. The Bridge Fire, which grew tenfold in a day and had burned 75 square miles as of early Wednesday, is now the largest of three major wildfires burning in Southern California, endangering tens of

thousands of homes and other structures.

The fires sprung to life during a triple-digit heat wave that finally broke Wednesday. The cooler temperatures brought the prospect of firefighters finally making headway against the flames.

Other major fires were burning across the West, including in Idaho, Oregon and Nevada, where about 20,000 people had to flee a blaze outside Reno.

In Northern California, a fire that started Sunday burned at least 30 homes and commercial buildings and destroyed 40 to 50 vehicles in Clearlake City, 110 miles north of San Francisco. Roughly 4,000 people were forced to evacuate.

California is only now heading into the teeth of the wildfire season but already has seen nearly three times as much acreage burn than during all of 2023.

Evacuation orders were ex-

panded Tuesday night in Southern California as the fires grew and included parts of the popular ski town of Big Bear. Some 65,600 homes and buildings were under threat by the Line Fire, including those under mandatory evacuations and those under evacuation warnings, nearly double the number from the previous day.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department announced Tuesday that a Norco man suspected of starting the Line Fire in Highland on Sept. 5 had been arrested and charged with arson. He was held in lieu of \$80,000 bail.

Residents along the southern edge of Big Bear Lake were told to leave the area, which is a popular destination for anglers, bikers and hikers.

As of late Tuesday, the blaze had charred more than 54 square miles of grass and brush with 14% containment, according to CalFire.

Inflation now sits at 3-year low

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The post-pandemic spike in U.S. inflation eased further last month as year-over-year price increases reached a three-year low, clearing the way for the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates next week.

Wednesday's report from the Labor Department showed that consumer prices rose 2.5% in August from a year earlier. It was the fifth straight annual drop and the smallest such increase since February 2021. From July to August, prices rose just 0.2%.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices rose 3.2% in August from 12 months earlier, the same as in July. On a month-to-month basis, core prices rose 0.3% last month, a pickup from July's 0.2% increase. Economists closely watch core prices, which typically provide a better read of future inflation trends.

For months, cooling inflation has provided gradual relief to America's consumers, who were stung by the price surges that erupted three years ago, particularly for food, gas, rent and other necessities. Inflation peaked in mid-2022 at 9.1%, the highest rate in four decades.

Fed officials have signaled that they're increasingly confident that inflation is falling back to their 2% target and are now shifting their focus to supporting the job market, which is steadily cooling. As a result, the policymakers are poised to begin cutting their key rate from its 23-year high in hopes of bolstering growth and hiring.

A modest quarter-point cut is widely expected next week. Over time, a series of rate cuts should reduce the cost of borrowing across the economy, including for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards.

Hurricane Francine turns toward La.

Associated Press

MORGAN CITY, La. — Hurricane Francine barreled toward Louisiana on Wednesday as residents made last-minute trips to stock up on supplies and forecasters warned of potentially deadly storm surge, widespread flooding and destructive winds on the northern U.S. Gulf coast.

In Morgan City, La., gas stations have already put plywood on the windows and moved trash cans inside, but a few pumps were still serving the trickle of cars passing through shortly after dawn Wednesday.

Retired boat captain Pat Simon, 75, and his wife, Ruth, had loaded all their possessions in

garbage bags and tied them down in the back of a rented U-Haul pickup truck as they evacuated their home near the banks of the Atchafalaya River near Morgan City.

Hurricane season typically peaks around this time of year, but Pat Simon wasn't overly concerned about Francine.

"I don't think it's going to be that bad, like some of the other ones like Ida and Katrina," he said. "I mean, we've had some bad ones."

Francine drew fuel from exceedingly warm Gulf of Mexico waters to jump from a tropical storm to a Category 1 hurricane on Tuesday night. The National Hurricane Center said Fran-

cine might even reach Category 2 strength with winds of 96 to 110 mph before crashing into a fragile coastal region that still hasn't fully recovered from a series of devastating hurricanes since 2020.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry warned at midday Tuesday — when Francine was still a tropical storm — that residents around south Louisiana and in the heavily populated state capital of Baton Rouge and nearby New Orleans — should "batten down all the hatches" and finish last preparations before a 24-hour window to do so closed.

Once Francine makes landfall, Landry said, residents should stay in place.

Russian commander: Counterattack started

Bloomberg News

Moscow's forces claim to have started an offensive to dislodge Ukrainian troops in the Kursk region of Russia, their first significant effort in more than five weeks since the start of Kyiv's incursion.

A Russian brigade began advancing Tuesday, with fighting continuing Wednesday, Aпти Alaudinov, a military commander, told state-run Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper.

Russian military bloggers also wrote about an offensive in the region, though it remained unclear whether the troops doing the fighting were deployed from the front in eastern Ukraine, or from elsewhere inside Russia.

A few bloggers, alongside Rossiiskaya Gazeta, said some of the soldiers were from the 155th Marine Brigade, which is based in Vladivostok in the Far East, but has in the past fought in the war on Ukraine.

Neither the Russian Defense Ministry nor Ukrainian officials have confirmed that a counteroffensive is under way.

Russia recaptured at least two localities, said the Telegram channel Rybar, which has more than 1 million subscribers.

"In Kursk, our people went on a counteroffensive with fresh forces yesterday," said Ruslan

Pukhov, head of the Moscow-based Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies. "So far it has been very successful, with several villages liberated and prisoners taken. The resistance was weak — the Ukrainians did not have a continuous front line there."

Ukraine's incursion is the first foreign military offensive inside Russia since World War II. The operation caught the Kremlin off guard and prompted tens of thousands to flee their homes in the region. Ukraine said at the end of last month it controlled about 500 square miles of Russian territory, which Russia never confirmed.

Analysts at DeepState, a map service maintained in cooperation with the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, said that the situation had worsened on Ukraine's left flank in Kursk after Russian forces crossed the Semy River with armored vehicles.

Ukrainian forces had previously attacked bridges on the Semy in the Glushkov district of Kursk to stop Russia's army from reinforcing its troops and delivering ammunition supplies.

Despite Ukraine's cross-border incursion, Russia has continued its offensive elsewhere along the front line, advancing in the eastern Donetsk region.

McBride closer to being 1st openly trans lawmaker

Associated Press

DOVER, Del. — Delaware in November could elect the first openly transgender member of Congress and the state's first Black U.S. senator.

On Tuesday, voters in the Blue Hen State were deciding their fall nominees in several political contests, including picking Matt Meyer, the chief executive of Delaware's most populous county, in the Democratic primary for governor.

State Sen. Sarah McBride, meanwhile, won the Democratic primary for Delaware's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and now has the chance to make history as the first openly transgender person elected to Congress.

"My heart is filled with hope and gratitude," McBride told The Associated Press. "I'm grateful, I'm hopeful and I'm motivated."

McBride said Tuesday's results reflect the "goodness" of Delawareans who judge a candidate "based on ability, not identity."

"I'm not running to make history," McBride said. "I'm running to make historic progress for Delawareans."

"The only identity I want to be known for is my identity as a proud Delawarean," she said, adding that she wasn't saying her identity doesn't matter. "It's just one part of who I am."

McBride won Tuesday's primary over businessmen Earl Cooper and Elias Weir, neither of whom reported raising any money for their campaigns. Cooper is a political newcomer, while Weir finished dead last in a 2016 congressional primary with less than 1% of the vote.

McBride, meanwhile, raised almost \$3 million in contributions from around the country. McBride achieved national recognition at the 2016 Democratic National Convention as the first openly transgender person to address a major party convention in the United States.

McBride will face James Whalen III, a retired state police officer and construction company owner from Millsboro, who won the GOP primary race against Donyale Hall, a Dover businesswoman and a Gulf War-era veteran of the U.S. Air Force. Democrats have held the seat since 2010.

The House seat is being vacated by Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, who has no primary opponent as she seeks the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Democratic Sen. Tom Carper, who held the seat since 2001. With a victory in November, Blunt Rochester would be the state's first Black U.S. senator.

Meanwhile, in state legislative contests, Kamela Smith knocked off House Speaker Valerie Longhurst.

Taylor Swift gives Harris post-debate endorsement

Associated Press

Taylor Swift, one of the music industry's biggest stars, endorsed Kamala Harris for president shortly after the presidential debate ended.

"I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos," Swift wrote late Tuesday in an

Instagram post, which included a link to a voter registration website.

Swift has a dedicated following among young women, a key demographic in the November election. In a half hour, the post received more than 2.3 million likes.

She included a picture of herself holding her cat Benjamin Button, and she signed the mes-

sage "Childless Cat Lady." The remark is a reference to three-year-old comments made by JD Vance, Donald Trump's running mate, about women without children not having an equal stake in the country's future.

Swift wrote that her endorsement was partially prompted by Trump's decision to post artificial intelligence-generated pictures suggesting that she had

endorsed him.

One showed Swift dressed as Uncle Sam, and the text said "Taylor wants YOU to VOTE for DONALD TRUMP."

Trump's posts "brought me to the conclusion that I need to be very transparent about my actual plans for this election as a voter," Swift wrote. She added that "I've done my research, and I've made my choice."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Wife of inmate wins strip search settlement

CA TEHACHAPI — The wife of a California inmate will receive \$5.6 million after being sexually violated during a strip search when she tried to visit her husband in prison, her attorneys said Monday.

After traveling four hours to see her husband at a correctional facility in Tehachapi, Calif., on Sept. 6, 2019, Christina Cardenas was subject to a strip search by prison officials, drug and pregnancy tests, X-ray and CT scans at a hospital, and another strip search by a male doctor who sexually violated her, a lawsuit said.

Of the \$5.6 million settlement, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation will pay \$3.6 million and the rest will be paid by the other defendants, which include two correctional officers, a doctor, and the Adventist Health Tehachapi Valley hospital.

Lawsuit: Segregation of children violates ADA

ME AUGUSTA — Maine unnecessarily segregates children with behavioral health disabilities in hospitals, residential facilities and a state-run juvenile detention facility, the U.S. Department of Justice announced Monday in a lawsuit seeking to force the state to make changes.

The actions violate the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Supreme Court's 1999 Olmstead ruling that aimed to ensure that people with disabilities aren't needlessly isolated

while receiving government help, federal investigators contend.

The Justice Department notified Maine of its findings of civil rights violations in a June 2022 letter, pointing to what it described as a lack of sufficient community-based services that would allow the children to stay in their homes.

At the time, the department recommended that Maine use more state resources to maintain a pool of community-based service providers.

It also recommended that Maine implement a policy that requires providers to serve eligible children and prohibit refusal of services.

Five charged with kidnapping migrants

CA LOS ANGELES — Four men were arrested and charged with kidnapping migrants who had been smuggled into the United States and demanding their relatives pay ransom for their release, officials said Monday.

The men have pleaded not guilty after they were arraigned on an indictment, the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles said.

A fifth man has been charged in the case but remains a fugitive, prosecutors said in a statement.

The defendants took the four migrants from an Arizona gas station last year and later held them hostage at a house in California, prosecutors said.

Three of the hostages were later moved to a motel where one escaped through a second-story bathroom window and ran to a nearby store, the statement said.

One of the suspects followed him and punched him, trying to kidnap him again, the statement said.

Women settle lawsuits after saline swapped for painkiller

CT NEW HAVEN — Dozens of women who say they suffered excruciating pain at a Yale University fertility clinic because a nurse stole fentanyl for her own use and replaced it with saline have settled their lawsuits against the Ivy League school.

Patients and their lawyers announced the settlements Monday in New Haven, Conn., where Yale is based.

Details of the agreements were not released, but lawyers said they included significant financial settlements.

The women say they underwent painful and invasive procedures for in vitro fertilization and were supposed to receive fentanyl at the Yale University Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility clinic in Orange, Conn., and its prior location in New Haven.

Unbeknownst to them, they received saline instead of fentanyl, and when they told staff of their extreme pain during and after the procedures, their concerns were dismissed, according to lawsuits filed by the women and their spouses.

They said Yale officials failed to safeguard supplies of the painkiller.

Death on river trip is 15th in Grand Canyon this year

AZ GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK — There has been another fatal-

ity at Grand Canyon National Park, authorities announced Monday.

Park officials said 59-year-old Patrick Horton of Salida, Colo., was on the 10th day of a non-commercial river trip along the Colorado River and was discovered dead by members of his party Saturday morning.

Officials said the National Park Service is conducting an investigation of Horton's death in coordination with the Coconino County Medical Examiner's Office.

Horton is believed to be the seventh person to die at the canyon since July 31 and the 15th this year.

Man charged in attack accused in earlier attack

PA PITTSBURGH — A man accused of having assaulted two Jewish students with a glass bottle on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh is now accused of having thrown a bottle at two people associated with another university the day before.

Jarrett Buba, 52, was charged earlier with felony aggravated assault in the Aug. 30 attack on the students who were walking near Pitt's Cathedral of Learning.

A day earlier, two people associated with Carnegie Mellon University told university police that a man threw a glass bottle at them in the Oakland neighborhood.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that a police complaint did not say why the two individuals were targeted.

The bottle hit a vehicle and neither person was injured, officials said.

— From wire reports

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Rousseau grows into big role with Bills

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Greg Rousseau was apprehensive entering his red-shirt freshman college season in 2019, because he didn't know what to make of hearing then-Miami Hurricanes defensive coordinator Blake Baker start calling him "Groot."

The reference to the Marvel Comics tree-like character with spiky hair and long arms was foreign to the then-19-year-old defensive end, even though the resemblance remains apparent to this day.

The Bills edge rusher has maintained his spiky hairstyle, and carries himself with a substantial wingspan to accompany his 6-foot-6, 266-pound frame.

"I was never self-conscious about my size. I just hadn't watched the movie 'Guardians of The Galaxy,' so I didn't know what that was," Rousseau said Tuesday as Buffalo prepares to play at Miami on Thursday night. "And then I watched it. Pretty good movie and I liked the character. He's pretty cool."

He quickly warmed to the nickname when teammates and fans started chanting "Groooooooooot!" during a season he finished with an ACC-leading 15½ sacks.

Selected 30th in the 2021 draft after opting out the previous year for COVID-19 reasons, Rousseau spent his first three seasons in Buffalo flashing his potential — but he was knocked for lacking consistency — in combining for 17 sacks in 46 games.

Then came Sunday, when Rousseau pro-

duced what might represent a breakout performance with a career-best three sacks, the last one forcing a pivotal fumble, in helping rally Buffalo to a 34-28 season-opening win over Arizona.

"We all kind of fed off his energy and the vibe," defensive tackle DaQuan Jones said. "To see him go out there and to see his confidence keep growing, I honestly would say he sparked our defense."

Rousseau's first sack came when chasing Kyler Murray out of bounds for no gain during an opening half in which Arizona built a 17-3 lead by scoring on each of its first three possessions.

Rousseau took over the game in the third quarter.

Arizona's opening drive ended with a three-and-out when Rousseau sacked Murray for an 8-yard loss.

Two plays into the Cardinals' next possession, Rousseau worked his way around the pocket and used his long reach to strike Murray from behind and tap the ball loose, with the fumble recovered by linebacker Dorian Williams at the Arizona 21. Five plays later, Josh Allen completed an 11-yard touchdown pass to Khalil Shakir to put Buffalo ahead for good.

Rousseau's efforts were even enough for him to be named AFC Defensive Player of the Week on Wednesday.

Though excited to make a crucial play, Rousseau played down his role by crediting teammates and coaches for putting him in a position to succeed, while saying

in the next game he might be the one helping others make a difference.

This is an example of the even-keeled approach Rousseau has sustained even when his lack of production was being questioned.

"He does a good job of self-policing his mental state, and that's hard to do in this league," Jones said. "People are telling him, 'Greg, you got to step up' and all this other stuff. For him to sit there and to have the fortitude of his own belief and to go out there and continue to be himself, it's huge."

The challenge now is building off the season-opening performance while knowing, as coach Sean McDermott joked, how unrealistic it might be to expect a three-sack outing every weekend.

"I'm not a math major, but I think 17 (games) times 3 (sacks) would be like a record maybe, right?" McDermott said, with a wink.

"Look, the game's going to come to him at times like it did the other day, and then sometimes you're going to go up against some really good competition, and they're going to win some," he added. "I think he's mature like that, and he understands that, and he knows he's always trying to grow each and every week and improve."

Rousseau has benefited directly from Von Miller's presence. The NFL's active sacks leader took Rousseau under his wing immediately upon arriving in Buffalo in 2022.

Shanahan: McCaffrey could've played if it was playoffs

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan said All-Pro running back Christian McCaffrey could have played in the 49ers' opener if it had been a playoff game, but the team held him out to make sure his Achilles tendinitis didn't become a more serious issue.

The decision to hold McCaffrey out of Monday night's 32-19 win over the New York Jets came as a surprise to many and upset many fantasy football players who had taken the star running back with one of the top picks in their drafts.

McCaffrey had been listed as

questionable on the injury report but said Friday that he expected to play. Adding more confusion to the issue was a postgame interview on television by fill-in Jordan Mason, who said he was told Friday that he would get the start.

Shanahan said the decision was not made until Monday and that he only told Mason to prepare to possibly have a heavier load with McCaffrey dealing with the injury.

The NFL routinely looks into possible violations of injury reporting and can issue fines if the league determines a team subverted the process.

A league spokesman declined to comment Tuesday on the specifics of McCaffrey's situation.

Shanahan said Tuesday that McCaffrey is still day to day, but that the decision to sit him during the opener was an easy one. McCaffrey got injured early in training camp and missed four weeks of practice before returning to the field last week.

"The Achilles is tendinitis and that stuff comes and goes," Shanahan said. "When it is acting up, it's something you've got to be very careful about. Christian's very diligent about that stuff. If it was a playoff game, he made it very clear to me he be-

lieved he could go. But when you hear that type of stuff and it's not a playoff game and it's Week 1 and especially when you're dealing with the lower extremities like that, it was a tough decision, but hearing all the words in the long run, it made it easy."

Mason replaced McCaffrey and had 147 yards rushing and a touchdown on 28 carries in San Francisco's victory.

McCaffrey led the NFL last season with 2,023 yards from scrimmage and was tied for the league lead with 21 touchdowns, winning AP Offensive Player of the Year.

Newcomers among Big 12's best RBs

Associated Press

Cam Skattebo is now in the primary role Arizona State envisioned for him before the running back had to show his versatility last season by taking snaps at quarterback, lining up as a receiver and even punting for the Sun Devils.

In the Big 12, their new league that had a national-high six returning 1,000-yard rushers and added two more from the transfer portal, Skattebo is the early rushing leader after a breakout performance.

"That looked like a Sunday player," coach Kenny Dillingham said after Skattebo had 33 carries for 262 yards and team highs with three catches and 35 yards receiving in the Sun Devils' win over Mississippi State. He was honored as the AP national player of the week.

The Big 12 is off to another running start, with a Division I-best six players averaging at

least 100 yards through the first two games. That group is topped by Skattebo (155.5 yards per game) and includes Arizona's Quali Conley (101 ypg), who came to 20th-ranked Arizona from San Jose State with new Wildcats coach Brent Brennan, though neither of those league newcomers were coming off 1,000-yard seasons.

"I have a lot of history with that young man," Brennan said. "Seeing the confidence that Quali is playing with is really exciting."

Big 12 returning 1,000-yard rushers RJ Harvey from UCF, DJ Giddens from No. 14 Kansas State and Devin Neal from Kansas have all gone over 100 yards in both games this season. Harvey's six rushing touchdowns lead all Power Four players. Cincinnati's Corey Kiner is right at 100 yards a game after following a 51-yard opener with 149 yards on 20 carries against

Pittsburgh.

Noticeably absent from that list are the Big 12's top two rushers last season: AP All-American, reigning Doak Walker Award winner and 2023 national rushing champion Ollie Gordon II from 13th-ranked Oklahoma State and injured fifth-year Texas Tech back Tahj Brooks.

After running for 126 yards and three touchdowns against defending FCS champion South Dakota State in the season opener, Gordon was limited to 49 yards on 17 carries against Arkansas when his only score was the game-winning touchdown before adding the 2-point conversion in double overtime. He has a league-high 45 rushing attempts, but is averaging only 3.9 yards per carry — down from 6.1 last season — and is seventh in the league at 87.5 yards per game.

Gordon got off to an even

slower start last season as a sophomore, with only 109 yards rushing total in the Cowboys' three nonconference games. He averaged 163 yards a game in nine regular-season Big 12 games and finished with 1,732 yards and 21 TDs rushing.

Brooks missed last week's game at Washington State because of an arm injury after running for 153 yards in Tech's opener. Coach Joey McGuire indicated that he could return Saturday against North Texas if there are no setbacks in practice.

Skattebo transferred from Sacramento State to Arizona State, where in his only Pac-12 season last year he ran for 793 yards and nine TDs, had 286 yards and a touchdown receiving and in 50 snaps at quarterback was 6-for-15 passing for 130 yards with a TD and an interception. He also averaged 42.3 yards on eight punts.

Pochettino hired as coach of US men's soccer team

Associated Press

Former Tottenham and Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino was hired Tuesday to succeed Gregg Berhalter as U.S. men's national team coach, 21 months before the Americans host the 2026 World Cup.

A 52-year-old Argentine, Pochettino became the 10th U.S. coach in 14 years and its first foreign-born leader since Jurgen Klinsmann from 2011-16. Pochettino has coached Espanyol in Spain (2009-12), Southampton (2013-14), Tottenham (2014-19) and Chelsea (2023-24) in England and Paris Saint-Germain in France (2021-22), leaving after winning a Ligue 1 title.

"It's about the journey that this team and this country are on," Pochettino said in a statement released by the USSF. "The energy, the passion, and the hunger to achieve something truly historic here — those

are the things that inspired me."

Pochettino had an initial meeting with USSF CEO JT Batson and sporting director Matt Crocker in Barcelona that stretched for five hours and had been in negotiations since mid-August. Crocker was Southampton's academy director when Pochettino started at that club.

While the contract length wasn't specified, the USSF said Pochettino will lead the team at the World Cup.

"Mauricio is a serial winner with a deep passion for player development and a proven ability to build cohesive and competitive teams," Crocker said in a statement. "I am confident that he is the right choice to harness the immense potential within our talented squad."

Pochettino was to arrive in the U.S. on Wednesday, two days before a news conference in New York. He will take over for

friendlies against Panama on Oct. 12 at Austin, Texas, and at Mexico three days later, then lead his first competitive matches in a two-leg CONCACAF Nations League quarterfinal in November.

"The one thing that I found a little funny was the statement that we were going to get a guy that basically wins everything," said former U.S. goalkeeper Kasey Keller, now an ESPN analyst. "It's not like Pochettino has Jose Mourinho's track record, but he's obviously had a good level of success, particularly at places like Southampton, Tottenham, places that didn't have the largest budget to go buy all the greatest players they ever wanted."

"He knows how to work within in a group that might have particular limitations," Keller added. "We have to admit that we're still not France, Brazil,

Germany, Argentina."

Pochettino arrives with high expectations from a USSF management and fan base that believe the player pool is capable of far more than its No. 16 world ranking.

Berhalter was fired on July 10, a week after the Americans were eliminated in the first round of the Copa America.

Pochettino's salary was not announced. The USSF said his hiring was supported by a leadership gift from Kenneth C. Griffin, the CEO of the hedge fund Citadel, and his philanthropic entity Griffin Catalyst.

Pochettino is likely to have his full player pool available for just eight one-week training periods before the team gathers ahead of the World Cup. The Americans are thin at goalkeeper and central defense and have had difficulty maintaining on-field discipline.

Montero throws Tigers' 1st shutout in 3 years

Associated Press

DETROIT — Rookie Keider Montero pitched Detroit's first individual shutout in three seasons and the Tigers beat the Colorado Rockies 11-0 on Tuesday night.

Montero (5-6) was making his 14th major league start and became the first Tigers pitcher with nine shutout innings since Spencer Turnbull's no-hitter in Seattle on May 18, 2021. At 24 years and 66 days, Montero is the third-youngest Tigers pitcher with a shutout in the last 20 seasons, older than only Justin Verlander, who pitched a shutout at 23 years, 91 days in May 2006, and Michael Fulmer, whose shutout came at 23 years and 152 days in August 2016.

"I was just trying to put every pitch in the strike zone and (catcher Jake Rogers) called a great game," Montero said through a translator. "Regardless of the score, I was attacking hitters. I knew I had the guys behind me who would make the plays."

The right-hander, who recorded the 16th complete-game shutout of the season, needed 96 pitches while facing the minimum 27 batters. He allowed three singles, which were all followed by double plays, and struck out five without walking a batter.

"He's just got a really solid four-pitch mix — a lively fastball, two different breaking balls and a good changeup — and he throws a ton of strikes," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "A game like that is rare in this era — a complete game with a low pitch count."

"But it shows what you can do if you change speeds, move the ball on both sides of the plate and keep it down."

Braves 12, Nationals 0: Michael Harris II hit two of his team's four home runs and visiting Atlanta had 15 hits in a rout of Washington, despite losing starter Reynaldo López to a right shoulder injury after

one inning.

López left with right shoulder tightness after throwing 25 pitches, 16 for strikes. His fastball velocity — usually 96 mph — was down to the 92-94 mph range. He and three relievers kept the Nationals to three hits.

Phillies 9, Rays 4: Kyle Schwarber set an MLB record with his 14th leadoff homer of the season before leaving due to injury, and pinch-hitter Cal Stevenson hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the eighth inning as NL East-leading Philadelphia beat visiting Tampa Bay.

The Phillies scored five runs in the eighth, capped by Trea Turner's second two-run home run of the night. Two batters later, Rays reliever Edwin Uceta hit Nick Castellanos on the hip with a pitch, causing both benches and bullpens to empty and the players to gather on the infield grass. Uceta was ejected from the game.

Royals 5, Yankees 0: Seth Lugo struck out 10 in seven masterful innings and Salvador Perez hit two run-scoring singles to reach 100 RBIs for the second time as visiting Kansas City beat New York.

Tommy Pham homered and Bobby Witt Jr. had an RBI single for the Royals, who ended the night trailing first-place Cleveland by 3½ games in the AL Central. They have a 2½-game edge over Minnesota for the second AL wild card.

Blue Jays 6, Mets 2: Davis Schneider hit a two-run triple, Chris Bassitt (10-13) struck out eight against his former team and host Toronto beat New York.

The Mets lost for the second time in 12 games and fell into a tie with Atlanta for the final National League wild card again.

Twins 10, Angels 5: Kyle Farmer hit a three-run home run in the second inning to provide a well-timed jolt for a sputtering lineup, and Matt Wallner and Carlos Santana also went deep for host Minnesota in a

victory over Los Angeles.

The Twins (77-68), who had lost 15 of their previous 21 games, preserved a three-game edge with 17 games to go in the chase for the last AL wild-card spot that has tightened with their recent slide. Detroit finished the night three games behind, with Boston and Seattle each four games out.

Orioles 5, Red Sox 3: Cedric Mullins hit two homers and drove in three runs, Albert Suárez gave up one run and struck out a career-best eight over six innings and visiting Baltimore held off Boston.

Adley Rutschman added a two-run single for the Orioles, who won for the only the second time in six games as they attempt to catch the AL East-leading New York Yankees, who are a half-game ahead of Baltimore.

Guardians 5, White Sox 0: Lane Thomas hit a three-run homer and Cleveland's bullpen was terrific once again, helping the AL Central leader beat host Chicago after Ben Lively departed with a leg injury.

At 33-113, the White Sox are closing in on the post-1900 record for losses — 120 by the 1962 New York Mets in their inaugural season.

Athletics 4, Astros 3 (12): Zack Gelof homered early, Max Schuemann and Nick Allen drove in runs with 12th-inning bunts and visiting Oakland beat Houston.

With the score 2-2, Daz Cameron's bunt single to start the 12th sent Gelof, the automatic runner, to third. Schuemann then bunted to Héctor Neris (9-5), who spiked his throw home as Gelof scored on the sacrifice. Cameron moved to third on the error as the ball rolled in the field.

Brewers 3, Giants 2: William Contreras had three hits and drove in a run, Garrett Mitchell hit a home run and visiting Milwaukee beat San Francisco.

The NL Central-leading Brewers, who entered the game having lost four of five, are now 4½ games ahead of the Cubs in the division. The Giants fell eight games back of the third NL wild card.

Diamondbacks 6, Rangers 0: Christian Walker hit a pair of homers, Zac Gallen threw five dominant innings and host Arizona beat Texas.

Arizona is a half-game behind San Diego for the top NL wild card, and the Braves and Mets are two games back of the Diamondbacks and tied for the last playoff position.

Padres 7, Mariners 3: Manny Machado hit a two-run homer to become his team's career home runs leader, Fernando Tatis Jr. added a three-run drive and San Diego slugged its way past host Seattle.

Machado's 164th homer in a Padres uniform was a line drive to center field off George Kirby in the sixth inning and gave San Diego a 5-2 lead.

Cubs 6, Dodgers 3: Visiting Chicago rallied for the tying and go-ahead runs in a five-run eighth inning, when Los Angeles committed three errors in a loss that featured a matchup of Japanese star pitchers Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Shota Imanaga.

The NL West-leading Dodgers blew a 3-1 lead and lost to the Cubs for the second straight night. Los Angeles' division lead was cut to 4½ games over second-place San Diego, while Chicago is four games back of Atlanta and the New York Mets, who are tied for the last NL wild card.

Pirates 6, Marlins 4: Andrew McCutchen hit a three-run blast to reach the 20-homer plateau for the 10th time in his career and host Pittsburgh beat Miami.

Reds 3, Cardinals 0: TJ Friedl had a two-run single and scored his team's other run, all in the fifth inning, as visiting Cincinnati beat St. Louis.