

Vikings hold off charging Packers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Sam Darnold threw three touchdown passes and Jordan Addison scored twice as the Minnesota Vikings built an early 28-point lead and hung on down the stretch to beat the Green Bay Packers 31-29 on Sunday.

The Vikings are off to their best start since 2016, when they won their first five games before slumping to an 8-8 finish. They have trailed for less than 3 1/2 minutes all season.

Minnesota spoiled the return of Packers quarterback Jordan Love, who returned after missing two games with an injured left medial collateral ligament. He threw for 389 yards and four touchdowns, both career highs. But he also matched a career high with three interceptions while going 32 of 44.

Jayden Reed had seven receptions for 139 yards and a touchdown for the Packers.

BUCANEERS 33, EAGLES 16: Baker Mayfield threw for 347 yards and two touchdowns, while Mike Evans became the Buccaneers' career scoring leader during Tampa Bay's home victory over Philadelphia.

Mayfield, who completed 30 of 44 passes without an interception, also ran for a TD to help the Bucs dominate the rematch of a lopsided NFC wild-card game they won against the Eagles last January.

Rebounding from a poor performance in a loss to Denver the previous week, Mayfield and the offense scored a touchdown on its opening possession for the first time in 21 games. Evans' 2-yard scoring reception finished a 10-play, 79-yard drive that set the tone for the Bucs,

who outgained the Eagles 254 yards to zero in building a 24-0 lead.

Evans, who finished with eight receptions for 94 yards, moved ahead of Martin Gramatica (592) into first place on Tampa Bay's scoring list with 506. Mayfield also threw a first-quarter TD pass to Trey Palmer and scored on a 1-yard run on fourth-and-goal to make it 21-0 early in the second quarter.

FALCONS 26, SAINTS 24: Younghoe Koo kicked a 58-yard field goal with two seconds remaining as Atlanta rallied past New Orleans without scoring an offensive touchdown.

Koo kicked four field goals in all, also connecting from 53, 44 and 42 yards to give the Falcons a desperately needed home victory.

They had lost their first two games at Mercedes-Benz Stadium and seemed on the verge of falling to 0-3 in Atlanta when Alvin Kamara scored on a 1-yard run with a minute remaining to push the Saints to a 24-23 lead.

A 30-yard pass interference penalty on Paulson Adebo gave the Falcons hope at the New Orleans 40. Kirk Cousins threw three straight incompletions, but it didn't matter.

COLTS 27, STEELERS 24: Joe Flacco threw two touchdown passes in relief of the injured Anthony Richardson, and host Indianapolis came up with a stop in the final minute to beat Pittsburgh.

Indy has won two straight since opening the season with back-to-back losses — and two straight against Pittsburgh.

The Steelers fought back from a 17-0 deficit but fell just short of extending their six-game regular-sea-

son winning streak. Pittsburgh's top-ranked defense allowed a season-high point total.

BENGALS 34, PANTHERS 24: Joe Burrow threw for 232 yards and two touchdowns, Chase Brown ran for 80 yards and two scores, and Cincinnati held on to beat host Carolina for its first win of the season.

Ja'Marr Chase had three catches for 85 yards, including a 63-yard catch-and-run touchdown as the Bengals avoided a potentially disastrous fourth straight loss to open the season. Of the 155 teams to start 0-4 since the merger, only the 1992 Chargers were able to rebound and make the playoffs.

Zack Moss had 78 yards from scrimmage and a touchdown reception for the Bengals.

BRONCOS 10, JETS 9: Bo Nix threw his first NFL touchdown as Denver overcame a miserable first half on offense and held on to beat a banged-up Aaron Rodgers and the sloppy New York Jets in East Rutherford, N.J.

Rodgers came up limping a bit after a sack late in the fourth quarter and seemed to be favoring his left leg — the same on which his Achilles tendon was surgically repaired last year — and was looked at on the sideline by trainers.

It appeared Rodgers might have also fumbled on the play, but the Broncos were out of challenges so Sean Payton couldn't ask officials to review.

TEXANS 24, JAGUARS 20: C.J. Stroud threw for 345 yards and two touchdowns, capped by a 1-yard pass to Dare Ogunbowale with 18 seconds

left, to give Houston a home victory over Jacksonville.

Houston forced a three-and-out to get the ball back with less than three minutes to go.

Stroud then led a nine-play, 69-yard drive to give the Texans their first points of the second half and survive a scare by the winless Jaguars.

BEARS 24, RAMS 18: Caleb Williams led four scoring drives, D'Andre Swift had 165 yards from scrimmage and a touchdown, and host Chicago defeated Los Angeles.

Jaquean Brisker intercepted Matt Stafford with about a minute remaining after the Bears punted on the previous play, helping Chicago end a two-game skid.

DANIELS 20, BROWNS 16: Las Vegas used a strong defense, as well as a balanced running game, to hold off a late rally and beat Cleveland at home.

Cleveland drove to the Raiders 9-yard line, but Deshaun Watson was sacked by Charles Snowden with 41 seconds left to seal the victory.

RAIDERS 20, BROWNS 16: Las Vegas used a strong defense, as well as a balanced running game, to hold off a late rally and beat Cleveland at home.

CHIEFS 17, CHARGERS 10: Patrick Mahomes passed for 245 yards and a touchdown while rediscovering his connection with Travis Kelce, and Kansas City rallied from an early 10-point deficit to beat Los Angeles in Inglewood, Calif.

Making his 100th regular-season start, Mahomes completed 19 of 29 passes for the two-time defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs, who are 4-0 for the first time since 2020.

Kelce had a season-high seven receptions for 89 yards and set the franchise's career receptions record, surpassing fellow tight end Tony Gonzalez.

RAVENS 35, BILLS 10: Derrick Henry ran for 199 yards, Lamar Jackson accounted for three touchdowns, and Baltimore beat visiting Buffalo. The Bills lost for the first time this season.

Henry had an 87-yard rushing TD that was the longest in franchise history, and caught a pass in the end zone for just the fourth time in his NFL career. Jackson had TD passes to Henry and Justice Hill.

Stewart, Ionescu lead Liberty over the Aces in Game 1 of semifinals

DOUG FEINBERG
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Breanna Stewart scored 34 points and Sabrina Ionescu had 21 to help the New York Liberty beat the Las Vegas Aces 87-77 on Sunday in Game 1 of their semifinals series.

Jonquel Jones added 13 points and 12 rebounds for the Liberty. Game 2 of the best-of-5 matchup is Tuesday night in New York.

Kelsey Plum scored 24 points and A'ja Wilson added 21 for the Aces.

This was a rematch of last season's WNBA Finals that the Aces won in four games, including clinching the championship in New York. The Liberty said they've had a scar from that loss and have used it as motivation all season long. New York had

the best record in the league and earned the top seed in the playoffs.

Last season the Aces were the No. 1 seed, so New York had to go there for the opening two games of the Finals. The Liberty returned home down 0-2 and never could recover.

New York came out strong behind Stewart and led 28-21 after one quarter. Las Vegas closed to 37-34 with 4:11 left in the half before New York ended the second quarter with a 11-4 run to go up 10 at the break.

Stewart, who had 20 points in the opening 20 minutes, had six points that spurt. She hit eight of her 10 shots in the first half.

The Liberty scored the first five points of the third quarter and the lead ballooned to 62-44 on a 3-pointer by Stewart. After a tim-

eout, the Aces scored the next 12 points to get within six. Courtney Vandersloot finally ended the drought for New York with a layup that sparked a run to restore a nine-point advantage at the end of the third.

Las Vegas hung around and only trailed 75-67 until Ionescu hit a 3-pointer with 7:34 left in the game and quickly turned to point to Spike Lee, who was sitting courtside wearing her jersey.

In Game 2 of the opening round series win over Atlanta, the basketball superfan gave the Liberty guard a high-five that she said felt like "New York was injected into my veins."

Ninety seconds later, she hit another 3 that whipped the sell-out crowd into a frenzy.

Las Vegas couldn't get closer

than eight the rest of the way.

This is the first time in the history of the league that the finals participants from the season before met in the semifinals. The league changed its playoff format in 2016 which allowed that to happen with the top eight teams making the postseason regardless of conference affiliation. Minnesota faced Los Angeles in the 2018 first round after the two teams had played in the WNBA Finals the previous two years.

Sun take Game 1 from Lynx

Marina Mabrey scored 20 points and Alyssa Thomas added 17 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists and the Connecticut Sun defeated the Minnesota Lynx 73-70 on Sunday night in Game 1 of their semifinals series.

Dijonai Carrington had 13 points and DeWanna Bonner had 10 points and 11 boards for the Sun.

Napheesa Collier, who averaged 40 points in the first round of the playoffs, led Minnesota with 19 points and nine rebounds. Bridget Carleton scored 17 and Kayla McBride added 12.

Game 2 of the best-of-5 series will be played Tuesday in Minneapolis.

In their first-round sweep of Phoenix, the Lynx shot 50% from the floor and 40% from the arc, topping 100 points in both games.

It was a different story against the Sun, who had the stingiest defense in the league this season. Minnesota shot just 41.5% from the field and made 5 of 20 3-point attempts.

Alabama jumps to No. 1 in AP poll; UNLV ranked for first time

ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

Alabama returned to No. 1 in The Associated Press college football poll for the first time in two years Sunday following its dizzying victory over Georgia, making this 16 of 17 seasons the Crimson Tide has held the top spot at some point.

UNLV, unbeaten through four

games for the first time in its Division I history, cracked the rankings for the first time ever just days after losing its starting quarterback over an NIL dispute. The Rebels are tied for No. 25 with Texas A&M.

Alabama received 40 of 63 first-place votes and leapfrogged three teams to take over No. 1 from Texas, which tussled with

Mississippi State deep into the second half as a five-touchdown favorite and slipped to No. 2. The Longhorns got 19 first-place votes, well off last week's 44.

Ohio State remained No. 3 with four first-place votes. Tennessee, which had an open date, moved up a spot to No. 4. Georgia, whose only three losses since 2021 have come to Alabama, dropped to No. 5.

Oregon, Penn State, Miami, Missouri and Michigan rounded out the top 10.

Mississippi and Utah took the biggest falls. The Rebels, upset by Kentucky at home, dropped from No. 6 to No. 12. The Utes, who lost to Arizona at home, went from No. 10 to No. 18.

Alabama, which is No. 1 for the first time under coach Kalen De-

Boer, has posted back-to-back impressive wins with Heisman Trophy front-runner Jalen Milroe and freshman phenom receiver Ryan Williams leading the way.

The Tide won 42-10 on the road against Wisconsin two weeks ago and prevailed 41-34 against Georgia on Saturday night after squandering a 28-point first-half lead.

Sports

From B1

amount of water and debris down to the Morganton area.

Freedom High School was one of the areas hit hard. The Catawba River

overtook both the football stadium and baseball field on Friday, sending water levels that may have exceeded the amounts witnessed during the September 2004 floods.

Other local school fields and recreational areas along the Catawba and Silver

Creek areas in Morganton include Catawba Meadows, Catawba River Greenway, Catawba River Soccer Complex and Shuey Park.

Much like what we are seeing across McDowell County, the full scope of the tragedy will be known across Burke in upcoming

days and weeks.

Athletics may play a role in the healing process

The result is that sports across a large part of western North Carolina will be taking an extended hiatus

until more pressing matters such as restoring infrastructure can be done. The priority right now is getting through this unprecedented disaster that has impacted everyone in a safe manner.

I do believe once we can get back to a resemblance of normalcy, local sports

will do what it can do best and that's to galvanize the community again. Regardless as to whether you are a Titan, Patriot, Panther, Bear, Dragon, Wildcat or Cavalier, we will all get through this together and hopefully become a better community because of it.

Presidents Cup

From B1

Their only victory since these matches for players from everywhere but Europe came in 1998 at Royal Melbourne, so long ago that Tiger Woods was making his Presidents Cup debut. The U.S. winning streak dates to 2005.

"A lot of these matches were so close," International captain Mike Weir said. "It's disappointing not to get a win. We put our team together to win this thing, and when you don't get a win, it's disappointing, but a lot of great things to take away."

Twenty of the 30 matches went at least 17 holes.

The Americans made a winner out of captain Jim Furyk, who was

at the helm in France five years ago when they lost to Europe in the Ryder Cup.

"These players were amazing," Furyk said. "It was a really good group of 12, an easy bunch. They made the captain's job really easy, and these guys played their hearts out this week. They really played well on the back nine."

Furyk sent out Schaufele in the opening match against Jason Day, and the cool Californian made five birdies in eight holes to seize control early. It ended on the 15th hole.

"All of our 12 guys can compete," Schaufele said. "My goal was just to set the tone, get red up on that board as early as possible, and I was able to do that."

He holed a 45-foot birdie putt on

the opening hole with Day in close birdie range, took his first lead with a 25-foot birdie putt on the par-3 fifth and never let his foot off the gas.

Burns was the only player with a loss to a loss. Tom Kim missed a 6-foot birdie putt for the lead on the 16th hole and stuffed his tee shot on the par-3 17th to within 3 feet. Burns answered with a pitching wedge to 4 feet for matching birdies, and the American got up-and-down on the final hole for a halve point, nudging the Americans closer.

Kim has been the spark for the Internationals with his fist pumps and the way he poked Scheffler with his celebrations in the opening session.

He said the tide would turn at some point, and the 22-year-old South Korean firmly believed it would be

Sunday.

Just not this Sunday.

"When you lose so many times, I feel like there's always a story where people come back. Winning doesn't last forever," Kim said.

"There's going to be times where lip-outs are going to go our way. A few breaks,

a few bounces are going to go our way, and that's going to make a difference.

We play great and we keep falling short sometimes, but I'm not losing hope."

The Internationals picked up a point in the battle of Masters champions when Hideki Matsuyama took down Scottie Scheffler, and Corey Conners delivered an easy win over Tony Finau. But they were trailing 11-7 going into the 12 singles. It was never going to be enough.