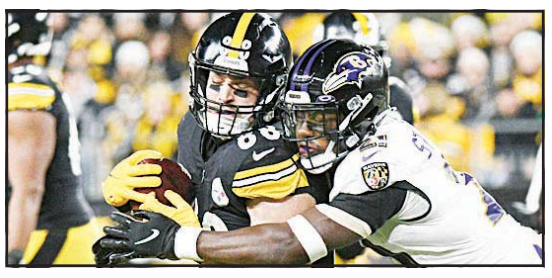

Pittsburgh Steelers tight end Pat Freiermuth (88) makes a catch as Baltimore Ravens free safety Brandon Stephens (21) defends during the second half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh. (AP)

Sports

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CARDINALS IMPROVE TO 7-0 ON ROAD, CHIEFS EARN 5TH STRAIGHT WIN

Lions end winless 'run'; Buccaneers on brink of clinching NFC South title

Steelers pip Ravens

DETROIT, Dec 6, (AP): The Lions finally found a victory when Jared Goff threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Amon-Ra St. Brown as time expired, lifting previously winless Detroit to a 29-27 win over the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday.

Not only was the finish dramatic, it was stunning. Goff led the Lions on a 75-yard decisive possession without a timeout after Kirk Cousins threw a go-ahead 3-yard touchdown pass to Justin Jefferson with 1:50 left. The Vikings failed on a 2-point conversion for the third time; those missed opportunities proved costly.

Goff threw two touchdown passes in the first half to put Detroit ahead by 14 points, its biggest lead this season. Then he turned over the ball twice in the second half to help Minnesota rally.

He came through in the end, leading the long drive and delivering a sharp pass to the rookie receiver, who took advantage of the Vikings secondary playing too deep in the end zone.

Cardinals 33, Bears 22

In Chicago, Kyler Murray threw for two touchdowns and ran for two more in his return from an ankle injury.

The Cardinals (10-2) got back Murray and three-time All-Pro receiver DeAndre Hopkins after both players missed three games because of injuries, then rolled to an easy victory over Chicago (4-8). The NFC West leaders, who have the NFL's best record, intercepted Andy Dalton four times.

The Cardinals, who were coming off a bye, improved to 7-0 on the road, with each win by 10 points or more.

FOOTBALL

Jalen Thompson and Budda Baker picked off passes that deflected off the intended target on Chicago's first two possessions. The Cardinals took advantage.

Buccaneers 30, Falcons 17

In Atlanta ,Tom Brady threw for 368 yards and four touchdowns - two of them to longtime favorite target Rob Gronkowski - and the Buccaneers moved to the brink of clinching the NFC South title.

The Bucs (9-3) won their third straight game and pushed their division lead to four games over Atlanta, Carolina and New Orleans (all 5-7) with five games remaining.

Brady improved to 10-0 in his career against the Falcons, including four straight wins over the last two seasons since moving from New England to Tampa Bay. The 44-year-old Brady completed 38 of 51 throws, including touchdowns of 27 and 11 yards to Gronkowski - their first scoring passes since Week 2 against the Falcons.

Steelers 20, Ravens 19

In Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh thwarted a 2-point conversion attempt after Lamar Jackson's touchdown pass to Sammy Watkins got the Ravens within one with 12 seconds to go.

Rather than turn to star kicker Justin Tucker for an almost automatic 35-yard extra point, the Ravens (8-4) went for the knockout punch. Baltimore tight end Mark Andrews couldn't haul in a flip by Jackson. The Steelers (6-5-1) recovered an onside kick to seal it.

Pittsburgh ended a three-game winless streak behind the 39th fourth-quarter comeback engineered by Ben Roethlisberger. The 39-year-old quarterback threw for 236 yards and two second-half touchdowns to Diontae Johnson, the final one a 5-yard catch-and-run with 1:48 to play that gave the Steelers a 20-13 lead.

Chiefs 22, Broncos 9

In Kansas City, the resurgent Kansas City defense shut down Teddy Bridgewater and Denver, Daniel Sorenson returned an interception 75 yards for a touchdown, and the Chiefs won their fifth straight.

Patrick Mahomes had 184 yards passing with a touchdown run and an interception for the Chiefs (8-4), who now lead the Chargers by a game and the Broncos and Raiders by two in their race for a sixth straight AFC West championship.

Things went haywire for the Broncos early in the game, when a 20-play drive ended with a failed fourth-down play rather than an easy field goal. And they didn't get a whole lot better when Bridgewater threw a pair of second-half interceptions, including the one that Sorensen picked off with 9 1/2 minutes left to put the game away.

Bridgewater was held to 257 yards passing for the Broncos (6-6), who have lost 12 in a row to their longtime AFC rival dating to the 2015 season. Javonte Williams started in place of injured running back Melvin Gordon III and had 102 yards rushing along with a touchdown catch late in the fourth quarter.

Seahawks 30, 49ers 23

In Seattle, Russell Wilson played his best game since returning from finger surgery throwing for 231 yards and two touchdowns, and the Seahawks made a late goal line stand. Seattle (4-8) snapped a three-game losing streak but it wasn't easy as a number of mistakes gave the 49ers a chance for a tying touchdown in the final moments.

Gerald Everett fumbled at the San Francisco 2 with 4:03 remaining and Seattle on the cusp of a clinching score. Jimmy Garoppolo led the 49ers 95 yards to the Seattle 3. But his third-down pass for Trent Sherfield was broken up by Sidney Jones, and his fourth- down pass was deflected at the line of scrimmage by Carlos Dunlap. It was the second big play by Dunlap, who sacked Garoppolo for a safety early in the third quarter.

Newly signed running back Adrian Peterson moved into a tie with Jim Brown for 10th all-time with 126 career touchdowns, scoring on a 1-yard run in the second quarter for Seattle.

Washington 17, Raiders 15

In Las Vegas, Taylor Heinicke threw two touchdown passes and set up new kicker Brian Johnson's winning 48-yard field goal with 37 seconds remaining to lead Washington to its fourth straight victory.

Heinicke threw a 7-yard TD pass to Logan Thomas on the opening drive and a 4-yarder to Antonio Gibson early in the fourth quarter after extending the drive with a key third-down scramble.

But Washington (6-6) then allowed the Raiders (6-6) to score on successive drives to take a 15-14 lead on Daniel Carlson's 37-yard field goal set up by Nate Hobbs' interception of Heinicke.

Rams 37, Jaguars 7

In Inglewood, Cooper Kupp, Van Jefferson and Odell Beckham Jr. caught touchdown passes from Matthew Stafford, and the Rams snapped their three-game losing streak.

Herbert

Stafford passed for 295 yards while Sony Michel rushed for 121 yards and a score for the Rams (8-4), who rebounded from a winless November with a solid all-around effort against a struggling opponent. Kupp had his 100th reception of a remarkable season among his eight catches for 129 yards.

Stafford also snapped back into form, playing turnover-free football after giving the ball away six times during the three-game skid that threatened to derail the Rams' playoff plans. Los Angeles still has never lost four straight in coach Sean McVay's half-decade in charge.

Chargers 41, Bengals 22

In Cincinnati, Justin Herbert passed for three touchdowns and Tevaughn Campbell returned a Joe Mixon fumble 61 yards for a score.

Herbert was 26 of 35 for 317 yards as Los Angeles (7-5) bounced back nicely after losing 28-13 at Denver last weekend. Mike Williams had five receptions for 110 yards, and Keenan Allen caught two of Herbert's TD passes.

Cincinnati (7-5) stormed back after falling behind 24-0 in the second quarter. Mixon's 7-yard TD run made it 24-22 with 7:10 left in the third. But Mixon was stuffed on the 2-point conversion try and Campbell's fumble return in the fourth helped close it out for Los Angeles.

Eagles 33, Jets 18

In East Rutherford, Gardner Minshew started in place of an injured Jalen Hurts and led the clock-eating Philadelphia Eagles to scores on their first seven possessions.

Minshew was 20 of 25 for 242 yards and two touchdowns to Dallas Goedert. Kenneth Gainwell ran for a score, Jake Elliott kicked four field goals and the Eagles (6-7) improved to 12-0 all-time against the Jets (3-9).

With Hurts out with an ankle injury, Philadelphia bounced back from a 13-7 loss to the Giants last weekend at MetLife Stadium to slice through the Jets' defense drive after drive. The only possession on which the Eagles didn't score was their last.

But the win might have come at a cost as running back Miles Sanders left in the fourth quarter with an ankle injury after running for 120 yards on 24 carries. Center Jason Kelce also limped off the field at the two-minute warning.

Dolphins 20, Giants 9

In Miami, Tua Tagovailoa threw a pair of short touchdown passes, and the Dolphins extended their winning streak to five games.

Isaiah Ford and Mack Hollins had the scoring grabs for Miami (6-7), which has shaken off a 1-7 start. Jaylen Waddle had nine catches for 90 yards for the Dolphins, and rookie Jaelan Phillips had two more sacks - giving him five in his past two games.

Tagovailoa completed 30 of 41 passes for 244 yards and the two scores.

Mike Glennon started at quarterback for the Giants (4-8) in place of Daniel Jones, who was sidelined with a neck injury. Glennon completed 23 of 44 throws for 187 yards, and Saquon Barkley had 55 rushing yards on 11 carries.

Glennon finished the game, and the team said he was diagnosed postgame with a concussion.

Colts 31,Texans 0

In Houston, Jonathan Taylor ran for 143 yards and two touchdowns and the Colts rolled.

The Texans turned over the ball twice in the first quarter and quarterback Tyrod Taylor was benched in the third quarter as Houston (2-10) lost for the ninth time in 10 games.

Indianapolis' Taylor, who leads the NFL in yards rushing, has 16 rushing touchdowns this season, which ties the franchise record set by Lenny Moore in 1964. It's the 10th straight game when he's ran for a touchdown, the longest streak in the NFL since LaDainian Tomlinson did it in 18 straight in the 2004 and 2005 seasons.

New York City FC celebrates after winning the Eastern Conference Championship following an MLS playoff soccer match against the Philadelphia Union in Chester, Pa. (AP)

NYCFC outlast Union to reach 1st MLS Cup final

Talles Magno scored in the 88th minute to send New York City FC into the MLS Cup final with a 2-1 win over the COVID-19-restriction-ravaged Philadelphia Union on Sunday.

New York won its first Eastern Conference championship and will play at the Portland Timbers on Saturday for the MLS Cup. Gudi Thórarinsson stripped the ball from Union defender Olivier Mbaizo and fed it to Magno for the decisive goal. Magno cupped his ear as he ran off the field after putting the ball past Matt Frese. New York players mobbed each other and danced as Union players sat stunned on the field.

The Union were rocked days before the biggest game in their 11-year history when 11 players were ruled out of the game because of COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Philadelphia was also seeking to reach its first MLS Cup final.

The Union were unable to practice on Thursday because of the league's protocols. They resumed training on Friday. Coach Jim Curtin said during the regular season that all Union players had been vaccinated. The individual players may not have tested positive for the coronavirus, but may have come into contact with someone with a suspected case. (AP)

NFL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, (AP): NFL results and standings on Sunday.

Arizona	33	Chicago	22
Detroit	29	Minnesota	27
Indianapolis	31	Houston	0
LA Chargers	41	Cincinnati	22
Miami	20	NY Giants	9
Philadelphia	33	NY Jets	18
Tampa Bay	30	Atlanta	17
LA Rams	37	Jacksonville	7
Washington	17	Las Vegas	15
Pittsburgh	20	Baltimore	19
Seattle	30	San Francisco	23
Kansas City	22	Denver	9

American Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	8	4	0	.667	336	190
Buffalo	7	4	0	.636	326	182
Miami	6	7	0	.462	254	288
NY Jets	3	9	0	.250	217	367

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	8	4	0	.667	304	290
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	371	283
Houston	2	10	0	.167	164	323
Jacksonville	2	10	0	.167	180	320

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	4	0	.667	282	260
Cincinnati	7	5	0	.583	331	267
Pittsburgh	6	5	1	.542	244	286
Cleveland	6	6	0	.500	254	267

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	4	0	.667	303	259
LA Chargers	7	5	0	.583	314	315
Denver	6	6	0	.500	237	218
Las Vegas	6	6	0	.500	274	312

National Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	8	4	0	.667	353	267
Washington	6	6	0	.500	246	297
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	337	291
NY Giants	4	8	0	.333	211	273

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	9	3	0	.750	377	270
Atlanta	5	7	0	.417	216	332
Carolina	5	7	0	.417	236	253
New Orleans	5	7	0	.417	274	276

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	9	3	0	.750	283	242
Minnesota	5	7	0	.417	308	305
Chicago	4	8	0	.333	201	287
Detroit	1	10	1	.125	203	316

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	10	2	0	.833	343	224
LA Rams	8	4	0	.667	336	270
San Francisco	6	6	0	.500	303	278
Seattle	4	8	0	.333	239	249

British vet, Verstappen level on points

Hamilton wins Saudi Arabian GP

JEDDAH, Dec 6, (AP): The increasingly tense Formula One title fight between defending champion Lewis Hamilton and his formidable challenger, Max Verstappen, will head to the last race of the season with the fierce rivals level on points.

Next weekend's Abu Dhabi showdown will see Hamilton crowned for a record eighth time - or Verstappen win his first title.

Hamilton's nail-biting win at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix on Sunday was his third straight to pull him level with Verstappen on 369.5 points. The British veteran is within touching distance of title No. 8 to move one ahead of Michael Schumacher and stand alone among F1 legends.

Verstappen still leads by a hair's breadth, only because he has more wins: 9-8.

"Of course it's exciting," said Verstappen, who won last year in Abu Dhabi. "We're starting again like we started the season." Hamilton's win in the heat and humidity of Jeddah saw him pass Verstappen with six laps remaining of a chaotic race, as the pair tangled again this season following high-octane crashes at the British GP and the Italian GP.

MOTOR RACING

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain celebrates winning the Formula One Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in front of the second placed Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands, in Jeddah. (AP)

Washington Football Team tight end John Bates (87) is tackled after making a gain against the Las Vegas Raiders during the second half of an NFL football game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Hamilton is in no mood to back down with the finish in sight, but Verstappen has drawn out the street fighter in him.

The race on the street circuit under the lights on the 30-kilometer (18.6-mile) coastal resort area in Jeddah will go down as one of the more memorable events of the season - if not the last several years. It saw three standing starts, a pair of restarts, multiple safety cars, and an intense back-and-forth between the title contenders including a minor late collision.

Red Bull was allowed to negotiate a penalty for Verstappen, Mercedes head Toto Wolff slammed his headset in rage, and Hamilton drove into the back of his title rival before ultimately passing Verstappen for the win.

Verstappen was dejected and incredulous after finishing second.

Verstappen is exasperated at some decisions that stewards have made this season Hamilton needed a few moments to recover after one of the most draining of his record-extending 103 career wins in the heat and humidity of the Middle East. He sat on a chair next to his physical trainer, with his face buried into a towel as he waited for the podium ceremony.

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Editor-in-Chief AHMED AL JARALLAH

Editorial Office: Airport Road, Shuwaikh P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267 E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com

Advertising: Tel: 55633481 Fax: 24911307 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

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