



Arsenal's Eddie Nketiah, (center left), takes a shot next to Sunderland's Tom Flanagan during the English League Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Arsenal and Sunderland at Emirates Stadium in London. (AP)

# Sports

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Nketiah scores hat trick

## Arsenal advance to semis

LONDON, Dec 22, (AP) — Even after scoring a hat trick for Arsenal, Eddie Nketiah was momentarily upstaged by another academy graduate. It's not often a teenager scores on his debut. Eleven minutes after coming off the bench, Charlie Patino completed a 5-1 victory over Sunderland to send Arsenal into the semifinals of the

side. After Nathan Broadhead pulled one back, Nketiah's back-heeled flick restored Arsenal's two-goal advantage four minutes into the second half. Nketiah completed his treble in the 58th minute after getting on the end of Pépé's cross.

It's another encouraging result for Arsenal, which are fourth in the Premier League as they try to end a five-season exile from the Champions League.

"When you win football matches everything looks much better," manager Mikel Arteta said. "We have to be consistent with the decisions that we make, keep trying to improve all the time the way we play, perform better and better and the results will come. They are coming right now and now it is about consistency. There are a lot of games coming up and we want to maintain that form."

Nketiah should expect to get more playing time, Arsenal's manager said.

"We're going to need him and he's going to play more minutes," Arteta said. "He wants to be the best and works all the time to do that. He's a player that has come through our system and that's why we want to keep him."

Meanwhile, Arsenal's promotion of fan tokens broke advertising regulations and have been banned in Britain for taking advantage of consumers' inexperience in cryptocurrencies.

The London team said fan tokens were used to encourage participation and were different to cryptocurrencies, which are virtual currencies used as a means of payment.

The Facebook and website posts included a video featuring players Ben White, Calum Chambers and Kieran Tierney.

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League Cup. The stoppage-time goal at Emirates Stadium saw the 18-year-old midfielder prod in a shot after Nicolas Pépé rolled the ball into the penalty area.

Pépé was also Arsenal's second scorer in the first half after Nketiah netted the opener from close range in the 17th minute against the third-tier



Sevilla's Ivan Rakitic (left), battles for the ball with Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Sevilla and Barcelona at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium, in Seville, Spain. (AP)

Juve close gap on top 4 as Atalanta draw

## Kounde sent off, Sevilla held by Barca

BARCELONA, Spain, Dec 22, (AP) — Sevilla were held 1-1 at home by Barcelona in a match the hosts finished with 10 men after defender Jules Kounde was sent off with a direct red card for throwing the ball into an opponent's face.

Papu Gómez put Sevilla ahead in the 32nd minute as steady rain fell upon the Sánchez Pizjuán field. Ronald Araújo headed in Ousmane Dembele's corner kick to equalize for Barcelona just before halftime.

The match was deadlocked in the 64th when Kounde, who last summer was rumored to be close to a move to Chelsea, lost his cool. After Barcelona defender Jordi Alba had twice bumped him in the back while disputing a ball going out of bounds, Kounde grabbed the ball and slung it into his face from close range. The referee did not hesitate to show him a red card.

Barcelona increased their control with an extra man and only the woodwork saved Sevilla when Dembele curled a shot off the far post with six minutes to play.

Barcelona remained in seventh place, two points from fourth and the Champions League spots.

As both defenses held the attacks in open play, the goals came from well-executed corner kicks.

Gómez ditched his mark by curling from the far post back to the heart of the area where he used one touch to drive Ivan Rakitic's pass through the crowded area and into the corner of the net.

Gómez, an attacking midfielder, also helped Karim Rekik keep Dembele in check on his repeated attempts to dribble free on the right flank.

Dembele, however, turned passer to help get the equalizer seconds before halftime. Araújo outjumped Fernando to send Dembele's corner kick into the far corner with a slicing header.

After Kounde was sent off, striker Youssef En-Nesyri went on as a substitute for Sevilla after having missed 10 matches with a muscle injury.

Xavi again placed his trust in Barcelona's youngest players. With both Memphis Depay and Ansu Fati injured, he started the match with Ferran Jutgà as striker and finished

it with 17-year-old Gavi Pérez as a "false nine." Gavi almost snatched a winner with a header that missed by inches.

Gerard Moreno and Boulaye Dia both scored braces to lead Villarreal to a 5-2 win over Alavés.

Moreno's first goal to open the scoring culminated a superb team buildup. Alavés rallied to pull level at 2-2 from goals by Pere Pons and Joselu Mato, but Dia, Yeremy Pino and Moreno turned it into a rout.

Juventus ended the year on a positive note by beating relegation-threatened Cagliari 2-0 to close the gap to the top four in Serie A.

Moise Kean and Federico Bernardeschi scored as Juventus moved to within four points of Atalanta, which were surprisingly held to a 0-0 draw at struggling Genoa.

Atalanta were in fourth place and the final Champions League qualifying berth.

Juventus had struggled at the start of the season but things were starting to click under returning coach Massimiliano

### SOCCER

Allegri and the Bianconeri came into the match having won five of their past six matches, drawing the other.

It almost took an early lead but Kean headed Juan Cuadrado's cross off the far post.

He did better five minutes from halftime when he headed in Bernardeschi's cross following a superb run from the winger.

And Bernardeschi got on the scoresheet himself seven minutes from time when he turned in a pass from Dejan Kulusevski for his first goal since July 2020. He received a standing ovation from the crowd in Turin for ending his 43-match drought.

Atalanta tried everything but could not find a way past a resilient Genoa team and missed the chance to move into second place in Serie A.

It was one-way traffic but when Atalanta did find a way through the defense they were denied by good saves from Genoa goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu.

Genoa remained in the drop zone but inched to within two points of safety.



Kounde



Genoa's Caleb Ekuban, (second right), Atalanta's Davide Zappacosta, (left), fight for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Genoa and Atalanta at the Luigi Ferraris Stadium in Genoa, Italy. (AP)

# Eagles, Rams earn wins in 'rescheduled' games



Los Angeles Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp, top, catches a pass over Seattle Seahawks cornerback Sidney Jones during the second half of an NFL football game in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

Virus-ravaged Washington beaten

PHILADELPHIA, Dec 22, (AP) — Jalen Hurts ran for two touchdowns and threw for another, helping the Philadelphia Eagles come back from an early deficit to beat virus-ravaged Washington 27-17 Tuesday night in a critical showdown with NFC playoff implications.

In his first game back from an ankle injury, Hurts scored on a pair of 1-yard QB sneaks to set the single-season franchise record for rushing touchdowns by a quarterback with 10 and connected with Greg Ward on a 19-yard TD pass. He was 20 of 26 for 296 yards passing with the TD and a bad-luck interception when Dallas Goedert dropped a catchable pass and the ball bounced off his right foot and into the hands of Washington's Landon Collins.

That was a bad bounce for Philadelphia that helped stave off Washington's (6-8) to a 10-point lead after the first quarter. Behind a dominant effort from their offensive line, it was all Eagles (7-7) from there: They outgained Washington 435-136 the rest of the way and shut down an opponent missing a handful of starters because of COVID-19 protocol.

Miles Sanders exploited the holes in Washington's defense left by those absences and additional injuries, carrying the ball 18 times for a career-high 131 yards. He became the first Eagles player with back-to-back 100-yard rushing games since LeSean McCoy in 2014.

Well-rested coming off its bye week, Philadelphia finished with 238 yards rushing, becoming the first team with 175-plus yards on the ground in seven consecutive games since the 1985 Chicago Bears. That's also a first in Eagles franchise history. Goedert made up for



Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts throws during the first half of an NFL football game against the Washington Football Team in Philadelphia. (AP)

his early blunder and a later drop by catching seven passes for 135 yards, including a 45-yard completion.

Despite the game getting pushed back 54 hours because of Washington's coronavirus outbreak, the delay did not allow starting quarterback Tay-

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lor Heinicke or backup Kyle Allen to clear protocol in time to play. Garrett Gilbert, who signed Friday, completed nine of his first 13 passes and finished 20 of 31 for 194 yards.

Second-year running back Antonio Gibson ran for Washington's first touchdown and had 20 of his 26 rushing yards on that drive, when he got the ball on all seven plays. He was slowed by a toe injury, the same thing that derailed his rookie season, and Jaret Patterson had the team's other rushing TD.

Washington played without five

### NFL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON Dec 22(AP)—Results and standings from NFL games on Tuesday.

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	20	0	0	.100	337	10
Philadelphia	27	0	0	.100	337	17

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	367	227
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	394	243
Miami	7	7	0	.500	285	312
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	250	428

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	9	5	0	.643	337	309
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	398	300
e-Houston	3	11	0	.214	207	372
e-Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	196	370

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	334	315
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	369	303
Pittsburgh	7	6	1	.538	291	335
Cleveland	7	7	0	.500	292	305

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	385	296
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	379	370
Denver	7	7	0	.500	285	243
Las Vegas	7	7	0	.500	299	374

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	10	4	0	.714	401	293
Philadelphia	7	7	0	.500	364	308
Washington	6	8	0	.429	283	351
N.Y. Giants	4	10	0	.286	238	331

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	10	4	0	.714	410	306
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	313	285
Atlanta	6	8	0	.429	258	384
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	271	313

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	11	3	0	.786	359	302
Minnesota	7	7	0	.500	361	342
e-Chicago	4	10	0	.286	240	349
e-Detroit	2	11	0	.179	243	366

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	10	4	0	.714	378	284
L.A. Rams	10	4	0	.714	386	303
San Francisco	8	6	0	.571	360	314
Seattle	5	9	0	.357	282	282

e denotes eliminated from playoffs  
y denotes clinched division

starters who remained in NFL COVID-19 protocol: Heinicke, 2020 All-Pro right guard Brandon Scherff, center Tyler Larsen, cornerback Kendall Fuller and safety Kamren Curl. Reserve defensive tackle Tim Settle and third-string tight end Sammis Reyes were cleared but inactive.

### Rams 20, Seahawks 10

In Inglewood, Cooper Kupp caught two touchdown passes from Matthew Stafford in the second half, and Los Angeles held off Seattle in a rescheduled game between two COVID-19-depleted teams.

Kupp broke Isaac Bruce's single-season Rams receptions record in the third quarter with a 6-yard TD catch that was also the 120th of his spectacular year. The NFL's receiving leader then scored a tiebreaking 29-yard touchdown with 10:48 to play on a picture-perfect throw over the middle from Stafford to cap an 88-yard drive.

Stafford passed for 244 yards and Sony Michel rushed for 92 for the Rams (10-4) in a game postponed from Sunday, while Kupp had nine catches for 136 yards in the third straight victory for Los Angeles following a winless November.

## Organizers say Tokyo Olympics cost \$1.8 bln less than expected

TOKYO, Dec 22, (AP) — The Tokyo Olympics cost \$1.8 billion less than anticipated, local organizers said Wednesday, 4 1/2 months after the Games ended.

Organizers said the estimated official costs were \$13.6 billion. Officials said part of the reduction was because there were no fans - forced

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by the pandemic - and therefore vastly reduced labor costs. They also said other outlays were lower than expected.

Official estimates over the last year said the costs would be \$15.4 billion. However, government audits

over several years suggested the real costs were much higher - perhaps twice the official estimates.

Olympics costs are notoriously difficult to track, and there is always debate about what are and what are not Olympic costs. A study by the University of Oxford concluded that Tokyo was the most expensive Olympics on record.

Organizers indicated final expense figures would not be available until after spring 2022 with venues still being restored and contracts still subject to revision.

The biggest blow to the budget was the loss of \$800 million in ticket sales, a shortfall that has to be made up by Japanese government entities.