



Los Angeles Rams running back Cam Akers (23) goes down in front of Tampa Bay Buccaneers defensive end William Gholston (92) during the second half of an NFL divisional round playoff football game in Tampa, Fla. (AP)

# Sports

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U.S. Open champion Medvedev holds off Cressy

## Cornet reaches quarterfinals at her 63rd Grand Slam

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 24, (AP): Alize Cornet dropped to her knees on the hard blue court, clasped her hands and took a few moments to let it sink in.

In her 17th trip to the Australian Open, her 63rd run at a Grand Slam, and two days after celebrating her 32nd birthday, Cornet finally qualified for the quarterfinals at one of the four major events in tennis.

Cornet recovered after a second-set meltdown in the hot Melbourne sun on Monday to advance to the last eight at the Australian Open with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 win over two-time major champion Simona Halep.

No. 115-ranked Kaia Kanepi had the same feeling, waiting until she was 36 to reach the quarterfinals in Australia and finally advancing when, after wasting four match points, she upset second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka 5-7,

6-2, 7-6 (7).

Within seconds, fourth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated No. 20 Taylor Fritz 4-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena to conclude Day 8.

Kanepi's match had to be shifted off the main stadium court because of a late-finishing day program. Kanepi wrapped it up just after midnight on Margaret Court Arena to set up a showdown against 2020 French Open champion Iga Swiatek, who beat Sorana Cirstea 5-7, 6-3, 6-3.

Cornet had her issues, too. She led by a set and 3-1 before losing five consecutive games and 16 straight points as Halep took the match to a decider.

The match was 2-2 in the third set after Cornet held a service game at love, saying "allez" after every shot she hit.

Halep got a break-point chance two games later with a forehand down the

line that just caught the outside of the paint and which Cornet could barely believe. She saved it and held serve, then broke Halep's serve for a 4-3 lead that set her on course for the quarterfinals.

Cornet will next play American Danielle Collins, a 2019 Australian Open semifinalist who beat 19th-seeded Elise Mertens 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 in an almost three-hour match to open play on Rod Laver Arena.

### TENNIS

Cornet made her main draw Grand Slam singles debut as a wild-card entry at the 2005 French Open. She lost five previous fourth-round appearances but had gone close to reaching the quarterfinals before, having match points in the fourth round in Australia in 2009

before losing to eventual runner-up Dinara Safina.

The marquee afternoon men's match was on Margaret Court Arena, where U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev beat 70th-ranked Maxime Cressy 6-2, 7-6 (4), 6-7 (4), 7-5.

The second-ranked Medvedev is trying to become the first man in the Open era to win his second major singles title in the next Grand Slam event. The U.S. Open champion is now potentially three wins from achieving that.

Cressy's serve-and-volley style created some frustrations for Medvedev, who said late in the fourth set that this was the "most unlucky day I've ever had in my life." His luck changed quickly. After saving eight break-point chances in the set, Cressy was broken in that game and Medvedev served out at love.



Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece makes a forehand return to Taylor Fritz of the US during their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Jan. (AP)

He will next play ninth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime, who beat 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic 2-6,

7-6 (7), 6-2, 7-6 (4). Medvedev beat the Canadian in the semifinals at last year's U.S. Open.

# LA Rams end Bucs bid for Super Bowl repeat

Chiefs outlast Bills in OT to reach AFC title game

TAMPA, Fla., Jan 24, (AP): Matthew Stafford threw for 366 yards and two touchdowns and Matt Gay's 30-yard field goal as time expired lifted Los Angeles to a divisional playoff victory over Tom Brady and defending Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay on Sunday night.



Brady

Brady rallied the Bucs from a 27-3 second-half deficit with help from three Los Angeles turnovers, tying the game on Leonard Fournette's 9-yard run on fourth-and-inches with 42 seconds remaining. But the seven-time NFL champion didn't get an opportunity to finish the job.

Stafford led the Rams downfield after the ensuing kickoff, using completions of 20 and 44 yards to league receiving leader Cooper Kupp to set up Gay's winning field goal.

Stafford, who had never won a postseason game before beating Arizona in the previous week's wild-card round, completed 28 of 38 passes without an interception. The 13-year veteran also scored on a 1-yard run as the Rams (14-5) advanced to next Sunday's NFC championship game at home against the San Francisco 49ers.

Brady completed 30 of 54 passes for 329 yards, one touchdown and one interception. He was sacked three times and lost a fumble.

### FOOTBALL

The Bucs (14-5), who lost to the Rams for the third time in two seasons, were trying to become the first team to repeat as Super Bowl champions since the Brady-led New England Patriots during the 2004 season.

### Chiefs 42, Bills 36 OT

In Kansas City, Patrick Mahomes found Travis Kelce in the corner of the end zone early in overtime, and the Kansas City Chiefs rallied to beat the Buffalo Bills 42-36 in a sizzling finish to a wild divisional-round weekend.

The lead changed hands three times in the final two minutes of regulation before Harrison Butker, who earlier missed a field goal and extra point, drilled a 49-yarder for Kansas City as time expired to force overtime.

The Chiefs won the coin toss, marched swiftly downfield against the NFL's top-ranked but exhausted defense, and right into their fourth straight AFC title game.

They'll play the Bengals next Sunday night for a spot in the Super Bowl.



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) scores on an 8-yard touchdown run ahead of Buffalo Bills safety Micah Hyde (23) during the first half of an NFL divisional round playoff football game in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

Burkina Faso advance to quarterfinals

## Tunisia knock Nigeria out of African Cup

GAROUA, Cameroon, Jan 24, (AP): Nigeria's 100% record in the group stage meant nothing as they were knocked out 1-0 by Tunisia in the last 16 of the African Cup of Nations.

Youssef Msakni's low, swerving shot just after halftime was the only goal, leaving Nigerian players

slumped on the field in disappointment at the end.

Nigeria's task was made even harder when Everton's Alex Iwobi was shown a straight red card for raking his studs down the ankle of Msakni in the 66th minute. Iwobi was sent off seven minutes after he arrived as a substitute.

Nigeria had emerged as maybe the top contenders for the title after they were the only team to win all their group games. Tunisia lost twice in the group stage and only went through as one of the best third-place teams but closed Nigeria down in a cagey game in Garoua on the first day of the knock-

out stage.

"We allowed them to get a foothold in the game," said Nigeria's Joe Aribu. "Can't take anything away from them, but we should have been better."

Tunisia got the job done without coach Mondher Kebaier, who was isolating in his hotel room instead of standing on the sidelines after a positive test for the coronavirus.

Tunisia will play Burkina Faso in the quarterfinals.

Burkina Faso beat Gabon in a penalty shootout in Limbe.

Substitute Ismahila Ouedraogo buried the decisive spot kick and Burkina Faso won the shootout 7-6 to finally prevail over a brave Gabonese effort.

### SOCCER

Burkina Faso led 1-0, and Gabon had a man sent off in the 67th. But 10-man Gabon equalized in injury time through an own-goal by Burkina Faso midfielder Adama Guira to send the game to extra time.

It stayed 1-1 through extra time. Burkina Faso twice had opportunities to win the shootout after Gabon players missed. But Burkina Faso players stepped up and also failed.

### Messi back as PSG rout Reims

## Barcelona end poor run

MADRID, Jan 24, (AP): Barcelona finally got things going their way, finding a late goal to end its winless run and go into the international break on a positive note.

Barcelona struggled again but Frenkie de Jong scored in the 87th minute to salvage a 1-0 victory at relegation-threatened Alavés in the Spanish league, snapping their three-match winless streak that included elimination from the Copa del Rey and the Spanish Super Cup.

The win moved the Catalan club one point behind fourth-place Atlético Madrid in the final Champions League spot, and 15 points behind league leaders Real Madrid with a game in hand.

De Jong scored from close range to give Barcelona the much-needed win against Alavés.

"It's a crucial win to keep us fighting at the top," Barcelona coach Xavi Hernández said. "The international break will be good for us. We will be able to recover some players and work on our game."

Barcelona had won only twice in its last 10 away matches in the league, and it was coming off a draw at Granada when it conceded in the 89th. It then lost to Madrid in the semifinals of the Spanish Super Cup and to Athletic Bilbao in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey.

"This victory gives us confidence to keep trying hard and move closer to reaching our goals," Barcelona defender Jordi Alba said.

Barcelona were without the injured Ansu Fati and also without Ousmane Dembélé, who the club said was a "no-show" reporting to the squad because of an upset stomach. Barcelona and Dembélé have been at odds over contract negotiations.

### SOCCER

American defender Sergiño Dest made his first start since early December after recovering from an injury and the coronavirus.

Alavés are winless in their last 10 league matches, sitting in second-to-last place.

### Also:

**PARIS:** Amine Gouiri scored with a Panenka penalty kick and delivered an assist or Nice to beat Metz 2-0 and return to second place in the French league behind runaway leaders Paris Saint-Germain, which welcomed back **Lionel Messi** as they routed Reims 4-0.

PSG got off to a slow start at the Parc des Princes Stadium but ended up in control with goals from **Marco Verratti**, **Sergio Ramos** and **Daniilo Pereira** after Reims crumbled and collapsed in the second half.

PSG have an 11-point lead over Nice, which extended their winning run to five league matches.

Messi, recovered from a COVID-19 infection, played his first game of the year after coming on as a substitute in the second half in Paris.

Apart from a couple of chances from Pereira and **Kylian Mbappe**, who was fit again after suffering from a minor muscle problem, the hosts were largely frustrated throughout the first half by a Reims side that played well but lacked efficiency to convert their chances.

PSG finally took the lead just before the interval after a shot from **Mauro Icardi** was blocked and the ball bounced into Verratti's path. The **Italy** midfielder did not think twice and unleashed a left-footed effort into the back of the net.

**Mauricio Pochettino's** players took complete control in the second half.

Ramos made it 2-0, scoring from the rebound from close range after Reims cleared a header on the line. It was Ramos's first league goal for PSG.

Verratti then thought he had completed a rare double in the 66th from a corner kick quickly taken by Mbappe. **Angel Di Maria** crossed the ball inside the box for Verratti, whose shot took a double deflection and finished in the top corner. It was unclear whether the goal will be finally awarded to Verratti as the league first said it was an own-goal from Wout Faes.

Pereira added more luster to the win with 15 minutes left from Mbappe's assist. PSG players wore special commemorative shirts with their names written in Mandarin to celebrate the Chinese New Year.