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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Admiral: Futenma move delayed until '25

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

The controversial relocation of a Marine Corps air station from densely populated central Okinawa to the island's northern recesses has been pushed back more than two years.

Units from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan will now likely be relocated to Camp Schwab at Henoko in 2025 or later. Futenma had been slated for closure and reversion to Japanese control by

2023.

Navy Adm. Harry Harris Jr., commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, discussed the new timetable Tuesday while testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Harris did not say what was causing the delay; however, it likely is the result of a small but formidable protest movement that wants U.S. forces off Okinawa altogether.

"The challenge we have is — to get the build done on the

Futenma replacement facility, which is Japan's responsibility," Harris told the committee. "That's their obligation to us. Right now, it's slowed. It's a little over two years late."

Aircraft must continue to fly out of Futenma in the meantime, Harris said. The U.S. will continue to work with Japan to complete the project, which began in 2014 with seabed drilling for a new runway into Oura Bay.

The 2014 election of anti-

base Gov. Takeshi Onaga further complicated the plan and emboldened protesters. After Tokyo vowed to follow through with construction despite the opposition, the process has devolved into a flurry of lawsuits between local and central governments.

Construction continues despite pending court rulings.

Harris' comments came during a hearing on the posture of U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea.

Female midshipmen to wear trousers, not skirts, at graduation

The Baltimore Sun

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — When female midshipmen in the Naval Academy Class of 2016 stride out onto the field at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium for commencement in May, they'll be wearing trousers, not skirts, officials said Tuesday. It will be the first time men and women have worn essentially the same uniforms as they mark the end of their training in Annapolis.

Marine Col. Stephen Liszewski, the commandant of midshipmen at the elite training ground for future Navy and Marine Corps officers, announced the change to this year's graduating class Monday night. The 266 female seniors at the academy make up 24 percent of the Class of 2016.

Spokesman Cmdr. John Schofield said the new dress policy will reinforce the idea of "shipmate before self."

"The graduation and commissioning ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy is not about individuals," he said. "It's about the academy writ

large. It's about the brigade writ large."

The rules come amid a major push by Navy Secretary Ray Mabus to emphasize the equal role of women in the service. It has been 40 years since women were first admitted to the academy. The Class of 2016 will be the first to graduate into a military in which all Navy and Marine Corps jobs are open to both genders.

Mabus' equality campaign includes a review of job titles that include the word "man" — such as "midshipman" — to determine whether they should be made gender-neutral.

Academy officials said the change from skirts to pants was made in coordination with Navy leaders. They played down the symbolism of the shift Tuesday.

But Mabus has been clear about what he sees as the value of men and women wearing the same uniforms. In a speech at the academy last year, he said different uniforms "segregate" female officers.

"Rather than highlighting differences in our ranks, we

will incorporate everyone as full participants," he told the Brigade of Midshipmen. "In the Navy and in the Marine Corps, we are trending towards uniforms that don't divide us as male or female, but rather unite us as sailors or Marines."

The Navy has used the academy in recent years as a testing ground for new outfits. At commencement last year, female midshipmen commissioning as Navy officers wore prototype high-collared jackets that are now scheduled to be rolled out to the fleet.

Women and men at the academy already wear the same working blues to class and the same parade dress uniforms.

Schofield said the shift in graduation attire is not the end of the skirt at the Naval Academy. Some opportunities for women to wear them will remain.

Female cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., have the choice of wearing a skirt or pants to graduation, a spokesman said. Male and female cadets at the Air Force Academy

in Colorado Springs, Colo., have long worn the same uniforms at graduation — as they do on all other occasions.

After years of study, the Pentagon announced in December that all combat roles in the military would be opened to women. The Naval Academy expects to start selecting candidates for previously all-male units such as the Navy SEALs soon.

Mabus has been at the forefront of the efforts — only to see his decisions sometimes overruled. He said last year that female sailors would receive 18 weeks of maternity leave — among the most generous policies in the nation and triple the previous allowance. But it was cut back to 12 weeks when the Defense Secretary Ash Carter issued a single policy for all the services last month.

Carter also announced longer child care hours at military facilities and a requirement that posts where more than 50 women work have dedicated nursing rooms.

Trump wins big in Nev.

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — With a big win in Nevada, Donald Trump claimed a third straight commanding victory in the race for the Republican presidential nomination. A tight race for second between Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz offered little evidence that Republicans were ready to coalesce around one strong alternative to the businessman billionaire.

With victories now under his belt in the West, the South and Northeast, a gleeful Trump was oozing even more confidence than usual Tuesday night that the GOP nomination is within reach.

"It's going to be an amazing two months," he told a raucous crowd at a Las Vegas casino. "We might not even need the two months, folks, to be honest."

Rubio didn't speak after the results came in but earlier sought to project confidence that he can consolidate the non-Trump voters who have been splintering among an assortment of GOP candidates, saying, "We have incredible room to grow."

Tornadoes kill 3 in Gulf states

Associated Press

KENNER, La. — A deadly storm system that spawned tornadoes in Gulf Coast states Tuesday night was expected to bring severe weather to the Carolinas by Wednesday afternoon.

The Tuesday storms mangled trailers at an RV park, ripped roofs from buildings and killed at least three people in Louisiana and Mississippi, authorities said.

One of the hardest-hit areas in the Gulf Coast appeared to be a recreational vehicle park in the town of Convent, in southern Louisiana. Two people were killed there, said St. James Parish Sheriff Willy Martin, speaking on local television. Authorities were working into the early morning to look for people possibly trapped under the debris, Martin said.

Thirty-one people were taken to area hospitals and seven of them were in critical condition, he said.

"We never had anything like this; we never had this many people injured in one event, and so much destruction in one event," Martin told WVUE-TV. "We won't stop searching until

we're satisfied we've searched every pile."

Wednesday morning, Martin said an all-night search of the RV park found no additional injuries or fatalities. Three people were still missing and Martin said he hoped to locate them Wednesday.

Jerome Picou, who lives near the park, said that just before the tornado hit it was raining and the skies grew dark. Then he heard what sounded like a freight train.

"The wind was blowing a little bit, but then it stopped. Then all of a sudden all kinds of wind and rain started. It was so bad, I had to go inside the house or I would have been blown away with it," Picou said.

In Alabama and Georgia, forecasters issued flash flood watches ahead of the storm system, which was expected to drop 1 to 2 inches of rain. The warnings were expected to be in effect through Wednesday afternoon. The northern part of Georgia was also under a wind advisory.

The Wednesday forecast for the Carolinas calls for possible flash flooding and severe thunderstorms, including dam-

aging winds, hail and isolated tornadoes.

Raleigh forecasters said straight-line wind gusts may be particularly strong, reaching 70 mph or greater.

In Mississippi, officials Tuesday night were sorting through reports of damage to some buildings, but Vann Byrd, of the Lamar County Emergency Management Agency, said one person died in a mobile home west of Purvis. Lamar County Coroner Cody Creel said Dale Purvis, 73, died of blunt-force trauma.

The reported tornadoes are part of a line of severe weather and storms that ripped through the region.

At least seven tornadoes hit southeast Louisiana and southwest Mississippi, said Ken Graham, the meteorologist in charge for the National Weather Service's southeast Louisiana office.

A possible tornado ripped through Pensacola, Fla., on Tuesday evening, destroying an apartment complex and downing trees and power lines.

Marine hopeful's tattoo is a no-no for women's uniform

Bangor (Maine) Daily News

KENNEBUNK, Maine — A 20-year-old woman whose dream of joining the U.S. Marine Corps was dashed because of a tattoo on her collarbone has found an ally in U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree, who has written to the commandant of the Marine Corps to protest policies she said are unintentionally discriminatory against women.

When Kate Pimental, of Kennebunk, turned 18, she got a tattoo that reads, "Let your smile change the world but never let the world change you," according to a news release from Pingree's office. Marine Corps policy discourages accepting

recruits with tattoos, but waivers are regularly given when the tattoo can be covered by the official uniform, Pingree, a Democrat from Maine, said.

A tattoo in the same location on a male recruit would be covered by a crew neck T-shirt in the Marine Corps uniform, but the uniform for women is cut lower, and Pimental's tattoo would be visible, Pingree said.

On Friday, Pingree wrote to Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, to protest "several policies and regulations that, however unintentional, directly affect female Marines' opportunities to serve."

Phoenix police ID gunman

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Authorities trying to rescue a family begging for help after their 26-year-old son opened fire in their Phoenix home arrived to a chaotic crime scene they could not prepare for.

The shooter ignited a raging fire and was still inside. Officers donned breathing gear, grabbed firehoses and ran in, hoping to save lives. They pulled out two victims, but they had to make a hasty retreat as bullets flew their way.

The violence played out in a cul-de-sac of quiet, suburban family homes Tuesday morning. Authorities eventually found Vic Buckner, 50; Kimberly Buckner, 49; and their

daughter, Kaitlin Buckner, 18, who were all pronounced dead. A 6-year-old daughter, Emma, later died at a hospital.

The shooter was the couple's son, Alex Arthur Buckner, who was fatally shot by police, Sgt. Trent Crump said.

Three officers were treated for smoke inhalation.

The chaos woke up residents in surrounding houses, forcing some to evacuate just before dawn.

Yolanda Strayhand, who lives behind the burned home, said she got a glimpse of the back of the home engulfed in flames.

"Every room on the top floor was lit, and they were pointing guns toward the basement," she said.

There's a logjam atop the ACC

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — North Carolina sits atop the Atlantic Coast Conference standings, right where the Tar Heels were expected to be when they were the pre-season No. 1 pick. Now, though, they've got plenty of company.

The league is set for quite a finishing leg to the regular season.

With less than two weeks left, seven teams have at least nine ACC wins. And they're dotting one another's closing schedules in what amounts to a playoff before the ACC Tournament begins in Washington, D.C.

"It definitely feels different for me," UNC coach Roy Williams said Tuesday. "This time at the end of the year you hope you're involved and look to see who's playing who and which location. But you're doing for two or three. Now you're doing it for seven, eight or nine teams."

The seventh-ranked Tar Heels (22-5, 11-3) were picked to win the league ahead of Virginia and rival Duke. They hold the league lead behind player of the year candidate Brice Johnson, who has an ACC-best 16 double-doubles entering Wednesday's trip to nearby rival North Carolina State.

Right behind them is No. 12 Miami (22-5, 11-4), which beat No. 3 Virginia in a critical matchup Monday night. Then there's No. 11 Louisville (21-6, 10-4), which won't play in the league or NCAA tournaments due to a self-imposed postseason ban connected to an ongoing probe into escort

allegations.

From there, Virginia (21-6, 10-5), No. 15 Duke (20-7, 9-5), No. 23 Notre Dame (18-8, 9-5) and Clemson (16-12, 9-7) form the top half of the 15-team league.

The Cavaliers swept the regular-season and tournament titles in 2014, then won the regular season again last season while compiling a two-year record of 36-5 against ACC opponents. Their only two losses in the past month have come at Duke and at Miami by a combined four points.

Now they get a visit from the Tar Heels on Saturday, a big day that also includes Louisville's trip to Miami.

"It's nice that when you have a big game, you have another big game waiting for you in the next couple of days," Virginia's Malcolm Brogdon said after Monday's loss. "We can redeem ourselves."

And the big matchups keep coming in the final week. Miami visits Notre Dame next Wednesday, then the regular-season finale includes UNC at Duke and Louisville at Virginia on March 5.

Virginia has the toughest remaining schedule. Throw in a trip to Clemson, and its final three opponents have won 68 percent of their ACC games.

"For everybody, the top six teams, it's going to be crazy," Miami guard Angel Rodriguez said after a weekend loss at UNC. "We're all a game away from each other, so things can change quickly."

The top four seeds get a double-round bye at the ACC Tournament, though Louisville's postseason ban opens a potential slot. Rick Pitino's Cardinals play

three of their final four on the road, starting Wednesday at Pittsburgh (19-7, 8-6).

"When you're not in the tournament, I think you're looking for silver linings and challenges," Pitino said. "So this will prove to be a good one."

It's still unclear how many NCAA bids the league will get. Clemson, Pittsburgh and Syracuse (18-10, 8-7) probably represent the last of the group in contention for one, while teams like reigning ACC Tournament champion Notre Dame are trying to bolster their résumés.

"I guess when you look at it," Fighting Irish coach Mike Brey said, "we're playing for seeding in two tournaments right now."

There's also some drama at the bottom of the league, too.

North Carolina State (14-13, 4-10) is all but certain to end a four-year streak of NCAA Tournament trips, but ACC-leading scorer Anthony "Cat" Barber (23.2 points) is a strong player of the year candidate despite the Wolfpack's record.

Then there's Boston College (7-21, 0-15), which is flirting with becoming only the sixth team in league history to go winless in league regular-season play and first since Maryland went 0-14 in 1986-87. The Eagles lost at home to Virginia Tech on Tuesday night.

"I knew coming in this was a long process," BC coach Jim Christian said. "This is not an instant turnaround process. ... That's all you can do is keep building and stay positive, and that's what we've tried to do."

Rockies' Reyes on paid leave

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Colorado Rockies shortstop Jose Reyes was placed on paid leave Tuesday under Major League Baseball's new domestic violence policy pending completion of criminal proceedings. He will not report to spring training.

The 32-year-old Reyes, a four-time All-Star, was arrested in Hawaii at a Maui resort on Oct. 31 following an argument with his wife and pleaded not guilty to a charge of abuse of a family or household member. He was released after posting \$1,000 bail and is scheduled for a trial starting April 4, the day the Rockies open the season at Arizona.

Reyes became the first player affected by the policy, agreed to in August by MLB and the players' association following a series of high-profile domestic violence cases involving NFL players. New York Yankees closer Aroldis Chapman and Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Yasiel Puig also are under investigation.

MLB said Commissioner Rob Manfred will not decide on possible discipline for Reyes until after the criminal proceedings and an MLB investigation. Discipline is not dependent on a criminal conviction.

Under the policy, a player can be placed on paid leave in "exceptional cases" pending a legal proceeding if the commissioner determines allowing him to play "would result in substantial and irreparable harm to either the club or to Major League Baseball."

While the policy calls it a paid suspension, MLB in its statement termed it leave. While players do not earn salary during spring training, Reyes will start accruing his \$22 million salary on April 3, the day the MLB season opens. If the discipline becomes an unpaid suspension, he has the right to offset the time served against the penalty but must repay any salary he received during the paid suspension.

The players' union has the right to challenge the decision before an arbitrator.

"We are closely monitoring the proceedings in Hawaii, as well as the commissioner's actions," the union said in a statement. "If further discipline is issued or if Mr. Reyes' paid suspension is not resolved in a timely fashion, the players' association will work with Mr. Reyes to ensure that all of his rights under the policy are protected."

Reyes signed with the Mets in 1999 and made all of his All-Star appearances with New York. He left after the 2011 season to sign a \$106 million, six-year contract with the Miami Marlins, who traded him to Toronto after one season.

Colorado acquired Reyes last July from Toronto.

Chapman, acquired by the Yankees from Cincinnati in December, is under investigation for an incident at his house in Florida in October involving his girlfriend. Chapman is alleged to have fired a gun during the incident.

Prosecutors declined to file charges. Puig got into a fight with a bouncer at a Miami bar in November following an argument with his sister.

Arrieta will have hard time topping '15

Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — Sometime around the end of last season or maybe afterward, it hit Jake Arrieta.

He finally grasped that he did not simply dominate down the stretch. He performed at a record level that catapulted him to the Cy Young Award while leading the Chicago Cubs to the NL Championship Series.

"I joked with my buddies about this a few times," Arrieta said Saturday. "I didn't even really understand the magnitude of the second half that I had until the season was kind of over. I looked at the numbers and I was messing around with a few of my buddies, saying, 'I don't know if that second-half ERA will ever be broken.' You look at guys like Bob Gibson, Sandy Koufax, some of these guys that had incredible seasons a long, long time ago."

Arrieta's season was as dominant as any and his second half reached historic proportions.

All he did last year was lead the majors in wins while going 22-6 and posting a 1.77 ERA. As impressive as those numbers are, they don't quite tell the complete story.

His ERA after the All-Star break was 0.75. The right-hander went 11-0 over his final 12 starts, and he finished with 236 strikeouts. Arrieta also tossed a no-hitter and

beat Zack Greinke and Clayton Kershaw for the Cy Young.

All that from a guy who had never won more than 10 games.

Now, Arrieta is one of the most important figures as the Cubs try to bring home their first championship since 1908 after a breakthrough 97-win season.

To that end, manager Joe Maddon plans to bring him along slowly in spring training and monitor his innings after watching him throw a career-high 229 a year ago. That easily surpassed his previous high of 156 2/3 in 2014, and Arrieta and the Cubs believe the heavy workload ultimately wore him out when it mattered most.

Sure, he shut out Pittsburgh in the wild-card game. But after that?

Arrieta was far from dominant, combining for a 6.75 ERA in a sluggish victory over St. Louis in the division series and a loss to the New York Mets in the NLCS.

"He gets it now," Maddon said. "Guys like him who had never been through it before, you pretty much feel like you're invincible, you can do anything. We've all been through that. He's had the experience of understanding what does it feel like to be in that position. And he knows it now first hand. My job should be somewhat easier in regards to harnessing him just a bit in regards to different moments."

That means the Cubs might on occasion take him out an inning sooner than they would have last season. It also means Arrieta probably won't have as many complete games after tying for the major league lead with four.

After all, the Cubs believe they have a deep bullpen. And they want to preserve their ace.

Maddon said that would have been the plan even if Arrieta had not struggled in those final two starts. And Arrieta insisted he is fine with that even if it goes against his competitive nature.

A year or two ago, that might have bothered him. But not now.

"We were in the NLCS last year," Arrieta said. "We expect to go one step farther this year. If we want to do that, there are certain sacrifices that have to be made. And I'm more than willing to make those sacrifices to be better for my team."

He isn't worried about approaching last season's numbers because there is simply too much luck involved, whether it's a close pitch being called a strike or a batted ball being caught rather than falling for a hit.

He is focusing more on what he can control, such as improving his pickoff move and mixing up the amount of time he takes between pitches. And, of course, his conditioning.



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No. 2 Kansas tops Baylor

Associated Press

WACO, Texas — Frank Mason III scored 19 points and Landen Lucas had the tie-breaking layup as No. 2 Kansas won its eighth straight game, moving closer to a 12th consecutive Big 12 title with a 66-60 victory at No. 19 Baylor on Tuesday night.

The Jayhawks (24-4, 12-3) trailed by as many as eight points after halftime before going on a 9-0 run to take the lead. After the game was tied for the eighth time, at 55-all, Lucas had a putback with 3:03 left to put them ahead to stay.

Perry Ellis added 15 points for Kansas, which has a two-game lead over No. 14 West Virginia in the Big 12 standings with three league games remaining. Devonte Graham had 11 points and Lucas had five points and 10 rebounds.

Al Freeman led Baylor (20-8, 9-6) with 17 points, including four three-pointers. Taurean Prince had 12 points.

After losing three straight Big 12 road games, the Jayhawks have won their last four as part of an eight-game winning streak overall. They play Texas Tech at home Saturday with a chance to guarantee at least a share of the Big 12 title.

"That's big for us. About a month ago, a lot of people were doubting us and what-not," Lucas said. "So to be able to come back and do it with a couple of games left is just an awesome feeling."

There were eight ties and 17 lead changes Tuesday night.

No. 6 Michigan State 81, Ohio State 62: The visiting Spartans' Bryn Forbes hit six three-pointers in the second half and finished with 27 points. He finished

7-for-10 from three-point range.

Michigan State (23-5, 10-5 Big Ten) led 36-31 at halftime but Forbes then scored 20 points and Matt Costello added 12 of his 16.

Denzel Valentine added 17 points and eight assists as the Spartans won for the seventh time in eight games.

Michigan State made 14 of 22 three-point attempts.

Marc Loving had 19 points and JaQuan Lyle added 16 for Ohio State (18-11, 10-6), who had a four-game winning streak stopped.

No. 16 Kentucky 78, Alabama 53: Jamal Murray scored 23 points and Tyler Ulis added 19 points and 10 assists for the host Wildcats.

Senior Alex Poythress returned after a five-game absence because of a right knee injury to come off the bench and score 14 points, helping Kentucky (21-7, 11-4 Southeastern Conference) bounce back from Saturday's overtime loss at Texas A&M.

Isaiah Briscoe scored 10 points and Marcus Lee grabbed 12 rebounds for the Wildcats, who limited the Crimson Tide (16-11, 7-8) to 35 percent shooting and handed them a second straight loss.

Tulsa 74, Temple 55: Pat Birt scored 23 and James Woodard added 15 points, a career-high eight assists and six rebounds to help host Tulsa beat Temple and continue its push for an NCAA Tournament bid.

The Golden Hurricane won their third in a row and pulled within a game of American Athletic Conference-leading Temple.

Texas Tech 83, TCU 79: Thanks to career nights from Aaron Ross with 25 points and Zach Smith with 23, the host Red Raiders rallied from a 12-point halftime deficit to notch their fifth straight Big 12 Conference victory for the first time in its 20-year stay in the league. Texas Tech (18-9, 8-7), which has not reached the NCAA Tournament since 2007, has won five conference games for the first time since the 1995-96 season when it won the Southwest Conference title.

The Red Raiders jumped out to a 14-2 game-changing run to knot things up at 49-49 with 14:38 to play in the second half.

Texas Tech visits Kansas on Saturday.

Vanderbilt 87, Florida 74: Damian Jones scored a career-high 27 points, Jeff Roberson added 18 points and 10 rebounds and Vanderbilt earned a resume-building road win that should bolster the Commodores' NCAA Tournament chances.

Army 80, Boston U 71: At Boston, Kevin Ferguson scored 18 points and colared 14 rebounds to help Army win its fifth-straight game and secure a spot in the quarterfinals of the upcoming Patriot League tournament.

Tanner Plomb scored 16 points, Kyle Wilson 15 and Luke Morrison 11 for Army (18-11, 9-8 Patriot League), which notched its 11th road win, a program record.

Ferguson's double-double was seventh in a row and 15th in the senior's career for Army (18-11, 9-8 Patriot League).

If Army remains in sixth place and Boston in third, they will meet again next week in the tournament quarterfinals.

Blazers win 6th straight

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — The Portland Trail Blazers kept up their midseason tear through the NBA thanks to their increasingly prolific backcourt duo.

Damian Lillard and C.J. McCollum each scored 34 points, and the Blazers beat the Brooklyn Nets 112-104 on Tuesday night for their season-high sixth consecutive victory.

Lillard became the first player to score at least 30 points in five straight games for Portland since Geoff Petrie in the franchise's inaugural 1970-71 season, and the first NBA player to do so this season. McCollum cracked the 30-point mark in back-to-back games for the first time in his career.

"No question they carried us," Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "Sixty-eight points from your backcourt, that goes a long way."

Brook Lopez had 36 points and 10 boards for Brooklyn, which has lost three of four. Joe Johnson had 19 points and eight rebounds.

"We did not play particularly well on the defensive end in the first half," Nets interim coach Tony Brown said. "As soon as we got engaged and started being aggressive, things started to turn for us."

The Nets trailed 68-49 early in the third before charging back for an 89-88 lead with 9:21 to play in the game.

"We had a lot more energy (in the second half) and we knuckled down on defense and got some stops," Lopez said. "We came out a bit relaxed. I don't know what it was. There really is no excuse to start that way."

Wizards 109, Pelicans 89: John Wall had 16 points, 12 rebounds, and 11 assists, helping the host Wizards beat Anthony Davis and the Pelicans.

Marcin Gortat had 21 points and 11 rebounds for Washington, which pulled away in the second half of its season-high fourth straight home win. Jared Dudley scored 18 points on six three-pointers and helped hold Davis in check after his monster game at Detroit.

Wall was 5-for-17 from the field in his second triple-double of the season and fifth of his career. He also had two steals in 31½ minutes.

Jazz 117, Rockets 114 (OT): Gordon Hayward scored 28 points as host Utah defeated Houston in a game with significant playoff implications.

The victory moved the Jazz into the No. 8 spot in the Western Conference playoff race, a half-game ahead of the Rockets.

James Harden scored 42 points for Houston and Jason Terry hit a tying three-pointer with 10.8 seconds remaining in regulation.

Kings 114, Nuggets 110: DeMarcus Cousins scored 39 points for visiting Sacramento, including the go-ahead free throws with 48.3 seconds left.

Cousins came up big down the stretch, scoring eight of the final 13 points for the Kings, who blew a 17-point lead in the second half before rallying at the finish.

Magic 124, 76ers 115: Nikola Vucevic scored a season-high 35 points against his former team, leading Orlando to the road win.

Vucevic also had nine rebounds in a "must-win" game according to coach Scott Skiles as the Magic try to gain ground in pursuit of their first playoff berth in four years. Vucevic was 13-for-21 from the field and 9-for-9 at the line.

Streaking Bolts top Coyotes

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Steven Stamkos is scoring and the Lightning are playing like Eastern Conference champions again.

Tampa Bay's captain had a goal in his fourth consecutive game, Andrei Vasilevskiy made 29 saves and the Lightning won their fourth straight by beating the Arizona Coyotes 2-1 on Tuesday night.

"We're getting there," Stamkos said. "It's a work in progress. I don't think we can sit here and say we're totally satisfied with our game yet. We know what this group is capable of when we're playing at our best and I don't think we're at our best right now. It's encouraging that we're finding ways to win not being at our best. Hopefully we can continue to get better."

Tampa Bay also got a goal from Cedric Paquette on a short-handed penalty shot. The Lightning, second in the Atlantic Division, are three points behind first-place Florida.

"We're getting back to our roots," coach Jon Cooper said.

Jordan Martinook had a goal and Louis Domingue stopped 34 shots for the Coyotes, who were coming off a 3-2 loss Monday night at Washington. Arizona, 10th in the Western Conference, is six points back in the race for the second wild card.

"We knew they were going to push hard early and we hung in there," coach Dave Tippett said. "I have no problem with the way we competed. We just need to execute better and find ways to generate more chances."

Stamkos opened the scoring with his 26th goal 12:38 into the game when he poked home a loose puck that was behind Domingue after Alex Killorn's shot hit the post earlier in the offensive sequence.

The best streak of Stamkos' career came in 2010, when he scored in seven consecutive games.

Stars 5, Jets 3: Jamie Benn scored twice in the third period, but it was another late goal that Dallas was talking about, though.

Benn got his 31st and 32nd goals of the season after Colton Sceviour scored a go-ahead goal in the Stars' win over host Winnipeg.

Dallas scored three times in the final period to end a three-game skid. Sceviour put Dallas up 3-2 at 12:29 into the third on a goal awarded after a video review showed the puck bounced off the in-net camera before ricocheting out.

Benn put the Stars up 4-2 before Mark Scheifele pulled the Jets within one a few moments later. Benn sealed it with an empty-netter with 15 seconds left in the third.

Dallas also got goals from Jason Spezza and Valeri Nichushkin. John Klingberg had three assists. Antti Niemi made 22 saves.

Devils 5, Rangers 2: Lee Stempniak scored late in the second period to break a tie and help host New Jersey end a three-game losing streak with a win over short-handed New York.

The Rangers played without defenseman Ryan McDonagh and Marc Staal and forward Rick Nash. They also played the third period without J.T. Miller, who received a match penalty late in the second

for fighting against Sergey Kalinin with his hand taped.

Kings 2, Flames 1: Anze Kopitar got the go-ahead goal on a power play late in the second period and defenseman Luke Schenn also scored for Los Angeles in a victory over visiting Calgary.

Jonathan Quick made 22 saves, helping the Kings increase their Pacific Division lead to four points over idle Anaheim. The only puck that got past him was a power-play goal by Sean Monahan.

Red Wings 2, Blue Jackets 1 (SO): Riley Sheahan scored in a shootout and had the tying goal in the second period, helping host Detroit beat Columbus to end a four-game losing streak.

Andreas Athanasiou sealed the victory by scoring in the shootout after Petr Mrazek stopped two shots in the tiebreaker.

Hurricanes 3, Flyers 1: Jordan Staal put Carolina ahead and Eric Staal added an insurance score late to lift the Hurricanes over visiting Philadelphia.

Predators 3, Maple Leafs 2: Filip Forsberg, 21, became the youngest player in franchise history to get a hat trick as visiting Nashville beat Toronto.

Islanders 4, Wild 1: Frans Nielsen scored twice, John Tavares had a goal and an assist, and New York topped host Minnesota in a matchup of surging teams.

Senators 4, Oilers 1: Zack Smith had a goal and an assist as Ottawa ran its winning streak to four games by defeating host Edmonton.