

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, January 9, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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4-star worried military will lower standards for women

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The military will face pressure to lower standards in the future if women are unable to meet the physical requirements to join front-line combat units or elite fighting forces, a ranking Marine Corps general said Friday.

Calling it his “greatest fear,” Gen. John Kelly, the commander of U.S. Southern Command who is slated to retire at the end of the month, predicted few female troops would be able to meet the physical demands in the traditionally all-male military occupations — primarily in the infantry, armor and special operations fields.

“There will be great pressure, whether it’s 12 months from now, four years from now, because the question will be asked whether we’ve let women into these other roles, why aren’t they staying in those other roles?” Kelly told reporters Friday at the Penta-

gon. “And the answer is ... if we don’t change standards it will be very, very difficult to have any numbers — any real numbers — come into the infantry, or the Rangers or the SEALs.”

All jobs in the military are set to open to women no later than April 1, following a December directive from Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

Carter and other Pentagon leaders have been adamant standards would not be lowered for female troops attempting to enter such positions and quotas would not be introduced mandating certain numbers of women in positions or units. Carter has said it could take years for women to qualify to serve in many of the newly opened positions.

Kelly, a 45-year Marine veteran who will relinquish command of SOUTHCOM on Thursday, cited a University of Pittsburgh study commissioned by the Marine Corps to defend his position that most women

were unlikely to make the cut in the combat arms fields.

That study — one of more than 30 gender-integration studies conducted by the military in recent years — found women, generally, were twice as likely to be injured carrying heavy loads or participating in other activities common for combat soldiers.

“Because of the nature of infantry combat, infantry training, and all of rest, there’s a higher percentage of young women in the (University of Pittsburgh) scientific study that get hurt, and some of them get hurt forever,” Kelly said.

The Marine Corps opened its Infantry Officer Course at Quantico, Va., to women as part of its two-year, gender-integration assessment, but none were able to pass.

Three female soldiers, however, completed the Army’s famously grueling Ranger School last year.

House OKs asbestos bill

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Republican majority in the House passed a bill Friday that provides millions of asbestos victims’ confidential information to industry attorneys despite opposition from veterans’ groups.

The bill sponsored by Rep. Blake Farenthold, R-Texas, opens up the injury records of victims — many of them veterans — to companies defending against asbestos-poisoning claims in separate lawsuits, and calls for publishing their medical and work histories, as well as partial Social Security numbers, on the Internet.

The White House said it will veto the bill, and at least 16 national veteran-affiliated groups came out strongly against it prior to the vote, warning it would allow companies to delay the claims of terminally ill veterans while exposing their sensitive personal information to identity theft. House Democrats unanimously opposed the bill and tried unsuccessfully to sink it with nine amendments.

Navy relieves carrier strike group commander

Stars and Stripes

The commander of the Navy’s Carrier Strike Group 15 based in San Diego was relieved of his duties Friday, the Navy said in a release on Saturday.

Rear Adm. Rick Williams was removed from his position due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command, the release said.

The Navy’s Third Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Nora Tyson relieved Williams based on the

results of an investigation into allegations of misuse of government computer equipment.

Williams took command of Carrier Strike Group 15 in July 2015. He has been administratively reassigned, the release said, to the staff of Commander, U.S. Third Fleet.

Until a permanent relief is identified, Williams will be replaced by Capt. Chris Barnes who will serve as the interim commander.

The primary mission of the San Diego-based Strike Group is to train Pacific Fleet Carrier Strike Groups, Amphibious Ready Groups, and independently deploying surface ships prior to deployment.

According to his Navy biography, Williams was commissioned through an ROTC program in 1984.

He commanded Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific from

2013 through 2015, before taking command of Carrier Strike Group 15.

His military awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal (two awards), Legion of Merit (five awards), Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Joint Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (four awards), Army Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal (three awards).

CENTCOM: AC-130 not held back

By TARA COPP
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. Central Command on Friday disputed allegations that an AC-130 gunship was “waved off” during a firefight with Taliban in southern Afghanistan that killed Army Staff Sgt. Matthew McClintock.

McClintock, 30, a Green Beret, was killed and two other U.S. soldiers were wounded Tuesday as they assisted the Afghan National Army’s 215th Corps in an effort to clear known Taliban compounds in the town of Mar-

jah in Helmand province.

The rescue operation has come under question by members of Congress about whether a Quick Reaction Force was allowed to respond as effectively as the Pentagon said it did and whether the U.S. forces had adequate overhead protection from an AC-130 gunship that was dispatched to the firefight.

Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., a former Navy SEAL commander, said Thursday he has been in touch with Special Forces soldiers close to the operation, and the Quick Reaction Force was delayed by hours along with

close-air support sent to help the beleaguered troops.

Zinke said the AC-130 gunship was deployed to support the Special Forces troops but was not allowed to fire on the enemy because of concerns of collateral damage. Instead, he said, the aircraft was allowed to fire only into a field.

Col. Pat Ryder, a spokesman for Central Command, disputed Zinke’s claims.

The AC-130 “absolutely did fire,” he said Friday. “The AC-130 was able to respond very quickly and provide that support.”

Police probe claim man shot cop in name of Allah

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Officer Jesse Hartnett was slowly patrolling his usual West Philadelphia beat just before midnight when a man appeared out of the darkness, firing a hail of bullets at close range as he charged toward the policeman’s car.

Hours later, police say, Edward Archer confessed to shooting the officer and told investigators he was following Allah and had pledged his allegiance to the Islamic State group. Archer said he believed the police department defends laws that are contrary to Islam, police said.

Local and federal authorities spent much of Friday trying to verify the motive and executing search warrants at two Philadelphia-area properties associated with Archer, hoping for more insight into how and why the shooting happened.

Archer’s mother, Valerie Holliday, told The Philadelphia Inquirer that her son, 30, had been hearing voices recently and had felt targeted by police. She said the family had asked him to get help.

At a news conference, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross, who just took office Tuesday, didn’t label the shooting a terrorist attack, although he said Archer “clearly gave us a motive.”

“It wasn’t like laying it out completely, chapter and verse for us,” Ross told reporters at the department’s headquarters as Archer was being questioned upstairs. “We’re left to say, ‘OK, he’s leaving a trail for us. Where’s it going to lead us, if anywhere?’”

He said the gun used to shoot Hartnett had been stolen from a fellow officer’s home more than two years ago.

Investigators believe Archer traveled to Saudi Arabia in 2011 and to Egypt in 2012, FBI special agent Eric Ruona said, and the purpose of that travel was being investigated by the FBI.

New US plans to erode militant appeal

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is overhauling its faltering efforts to combat the online propaganda of the Islamic State and other terrorist groups, U.S. officials said, reflecting rising White House frustration with largely ineffective efforts so far to cut into their use of social media to draw recruits and incite attacks.

Officials will create a new counterterrorism task force, which will be based at the Department of Homeland Security

but aims to enlist dozens of federal and local agencies. Other moves include revamping a State Department program that was created to serve as an information war room to challenge the Islamic State group online and erode its appeal.

U.S. officials said the unit at the State Department will turn its focus toward helping allies craft more localized anti-terrorism messages and will stop producing any videos or other material in English — ending a campaign that had been derided

by critics.

The plans were announced by the White House on Friday, as senior members of President Barack Obama’s national security team traveled to California in a renewed effort to enlist Silicon Valley companies to help contain the morphing terrorist threat. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, spy chief James R. Clapper Jr. and FBI Director James B. Comey were to meet with executives from Apple, Facebook, Twitter and other firms.

‘El Chapo’ extradition likely to be slow

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexican officials say dreams of Hollywood helped them track down and capture the world’s most notorious drug trafficker. Now they face the decision of whether Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman should face a nightmare he’s long tried to avoid: extradition to the United States.

Mexico’s leaders avoided talk about extradition following Guzman’s capture Friday, but even if they decided to send him to the U.S., the process likely would not be fast. As of

Saturday, he was back in the Altiplano maximum-security prison from which he escaped in July.

Apparently Guzman, while on the run, thought his story was worthy of a movie. Part of the reason authorities tracked him down was because he wanted to film a biopic, Attorney General Arely Gomez said at the airport ceremony where the prisoner was shown off to the media.

“For that, he established communication with actresses and producers, which became

a new line of investigation,” she said.

Guzman, head of the powerful, international Sinaloa Cartel, was wearing dark blue athletic clothing Friday as he was frogmarched to a helicopter by marines, who stopped mid-transit and turned his expressionless face toward the media for a clear view.

There were immediately calls for his quick extradition, just as there were after the February 2014 capture of Guzman, who faces drug-trafficking charges in several U.S. states.

Raiders' Mack doubles up

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Khalil Mack has made All-Pro history.

Mack's versatility and relentlessness earned him selection at two positions on the 2015 Associated Press All-Pro Team, an NFL first. The second-year Oakland Raiders defensive end and outside linebacker drew enough support Friday from a panel of 50 media members who regularly cover the league to make the squad both spots.

Others, including Houston's J.J. Watt last year, have been chosen first team at one position and second at another. Watt was a unanimous pick at defensive end for this season's team, as was Minnesota running back Adrian Peterson.

"I do whatever I can to help the team win. I'm a team guy," said Mack, who had 15½ sacks (five in one game), behind only Watt in the league. "Whether it's dropping in coverage or rushing the passer. I can do either. I think they (voters) saw that."

What the voters also saw was the superb work by the Carolina Panthers.

Carolina, with an NFL-best 15-1 record, had the most All-Pro selections with six: quarterback Cam Newton, fullback Mike Tolbert, center Ryan Kalil, linebackers Luke Kuechly and Thomas Davis, and cornerback Josh Norman. Kuechly led the Panthers contingent with 49 votes.

"He has fulfilled everything we thought he could be," Panthers general manager Dave Gettleman said of Newton. "And he's

just had a great year. Again, the franchise quarterbacks make everybody better — that's what they do."

Newton was especially happy to join Kuechly on the team; the linebacker has made it in three of his four pro seasons.

"That's big, man," Newton said, adding with a laugh, "I'm just trying to be like Luke Kuechly man, that's it — Captain America, man. He sets the tone."

Five teams — New England, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Arizona and St. Louis — had two All-Pro selections. Steelers receiver Antonio Brown drew 49 votes; teammate David DeCastro made it at guard.

The Patriots were tight end Rob Gronkowski and kicker Stephen Gostkowski. From Cincinnati, it was DT Geno Atkins and OT Andrew Whitworth. Arizona, in a measure of the strength of its secondary, had cornerback Patrick Peterson and safety Tyrann Mathieu. St. Louis' All-Pro was DT Aaron Donald and punter Johnny Hekker.

One rookie, Seattle kick returner Tyler Lockett, was selected.

"It means a lot," Lockett said. "There are a lot of great players who come into the NFL and do an exceptional job and have a great career, but they're never able to make it on the All-Pro team. ... To be a rookie to be able to come in, it's a crazy experience and a crazy accolade to have."

In all, 15 NFC players and 12 from the AFC were chosen.

The other All-Pro selections: Tampa Bay RB Doug Martin, Atlanta WR Julio Jones, Cleveland OT Joe Thomas, Baltimore G

Marshal Yanda, Denver OLB Von Miller, San Francisco ILB NaVorro Bowman, and Kansas City S Eric Berry.

For Berry, 2015 was a particularly special season. He was diagnosed with lymphoma and this time a year ago was undergoing chemotherapy. He returned in spectacular fashion, helping the Chiefs win their final 10 games this season to make the playoffs.

"It's an incredible honor. It means a lot to me," said Berry. "Football's a team game, so I have to give credit to those guys around me as well. We've been hungry from the get-go. I don't know how to explain it, but I think you see it throughout our play."

Bowman is another player coming off a courageous comeback from a major knee injury sustained in the 2013 NFC title game. He only returned to the field this season after being an All-Pro in 2011, '12 and '13.

Newcomers to the team along with Mack and Lockett are Newton, Norman and Davis among the Panthers, plus Jones, Whitworth, Martin, DeCastro, Donald and Mathieu.

"That's another goal check off my list," Norman said. "It really is. It went from Pro Bowl to All-Pro to hopefully Defensive Player of the Year. Sheesh."

"That is all personal goals, though. The Super Bowl is the granddaddy of them all. I'm working so hard toward that right now. All of these other accolades will fall into place."

Lions hire Pats' Quinn as new GM

Associated Press

DETROIT — The Detroit Lions agreed to a deal in principle with Bob Quinn to be their general manager, hoping to replicate some of the New England Patriots' success.

Lions President Rod Wood confirmed the agreement Friday night.

"We are thrilled to have agreed to a deal with Bob," Wood said in a statement. "As Mrs. (Martha Firestone) Ford indicated at the outset, our search would be national in scope, and we would do everything possible to identify the very best person to lead our football operation. We believe Bob is that person."

Quinn has been the Patriots' director of pro scouting for four seasons after serving as assistant director of pro personnel for two years. He has been a part of the franchise's personnel department for 16 years, working as a national, regional and pro scout after starting out as a player personnel assistant.

"Bob has done a good job," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said this week. "Been with us for a long time and has had a number of different responsibilities in the scouting department — pro, college, advance — different projects and all that. He's done a real solid job."

Quinn's first task will be to decide whether to retain or fire coach Jim Caldwell.

Chargers snub City Hall

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The lead negotiator for the city and county's efforts to keep the San Diego Chargers in town has tried unsuccessfully to obtain a copy of the team's application to relocate to Los Angeles and officials are concerned it might contain inaccuracies.

Attorney Chris Melvin requested the document from the Chargers and the NFL, and nothing has been provided, Craig Gustafson, a spokesman for Mayor Kevin Faulconer, said Friday.

On Monday night, the Chargers released a video in which chairman Dean Spanos contended the team made nine proposals for a new stadium that the city rejected. Many of those proposals were with other cities in San Diego County and didn't include financing plans from the team.

"After seeing the many inaccuracies in Mr. Spanos' recent video, we are concerned there may be similar inaccuracies about San Diego in their relocation application," Gustafson said in an email to The Associated Press. "We would like the opportunity to correct the record, but we can't do that if they refuse to make their application public."

Late Friday, various media outlets reported they had obtained an "executive summary" of the Chargers' relocation application, which could have only come

from the team.

"This application is full of inaccuracies and we've only seen the first four pages," Matt Awbrey, another mayoral spokesman, said in an email. "Dean Spanos can't rewrite history as he tries to walk out the door. As has been widely reported, the Chargers have never produced a viable stadium plan, let alone nine. The only real plan produced in the last 14 years is the one proposed by the City, and the Chargers refused to negotiate on it. Any reasonable person can see that the Chargers have not met the requirements for relocation."

On Friday, Melvin emailed Eric Grubman, the NFL's point man on Los Angeles, to say that he had heard nothing back on his request to Mark Fabiani, who represents Spanos. Melvin asked Grubman if the league could request the team forward its application to the city and county.

Grubman replied: "We suggested to all three teams that they consider whether they wished to release, and that we would not release on their behalf unless directed to do so. Each team has determined their course of action. The most I could do is to relay another request that came from you."

Fabiani, a former deputy mayor of Los Angeles, didn't respond to multiple requests from The Associated Press for a copy of the application.

Nationals trade Storen to Blue Jays for Revere

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Washington Nationals accommodated reliever Drew Storen on Friday night, trading him to the AL East champion Toronto Blue Jays for outfielder Ben Revere.

The Nationals also will get a player to be named and will send cash to the Blue Jays.

The 28-year-old Storen had sought a deal, having lost his closer role in late July when the Nationals acquired Jonathan Papelbon from Philadelphia.

Storen had converted 29 save chances and had a 1.73 ERA when the Nats got Papelbon. Shifted to an eighth-inning role following that deal, Storen struggled and finished the season with a 3.44 ERA without another save. His season ended in mid-September when he slammed his locker in frustration and broke his right thumb.

Storen was 21-13 with 95 saves and a 3.02 ERA in six major league seasons, all with the Nationals. He had a 1.12 ERA in 65 games in 2014.

For all his success in the Washington bullpen, the right-hander also was tagged with two big blown saves in the playoffs.

Storen failed to close out St. Louis in the ninth inning of the deciding Game 5 in the 2012 NL Division Series, and also let a ninth-inning lead slip away in Game 2 of the 2014 NLDS against San Francisco.

Storen joins a Toronto relief corps that relied on young Roberto Osuna as the main closer last year. At 20, Osuna led the team with 20 saves.

The 27-year-old Revere figures to take over the center field and leadoff job that Denard Span held. Span signed with San Francisco this week as a free agent.

Revere has hit over .300 in each of the past three seasons. He batted a combined .306 for the Phillies and Toronto last year, with a .342 on-base percentage and 31 stolen bases.

The Nationals had hoped to boost their offense from the left side of the plate in the offseason. Coming off a disappointing second-place finish in the NL East, they recently signed free agent second baseman Daniel Murphy — Murphy and Span both bat left-handed.

Revere led the NL with 184 hits in 2014 with the Phillies. In six seasons with Minnesota, Philadelphia and Toronto, he's hit .295 with 176 steals.



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Spurs stay unbeaten at home

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Kawhi Leonard had 19 points and 12 rebounds and the San Antonio Spurs held off Kristaps Porzingis and the New York Knicks 100-99 on Friday night to remain undefeated at home.

San Antonio won its franchise-record 22nd straight home game to open the season and is tied for the franchise's best start after 38 games at 32-6. This was its most difficult home test yet, though.

Jose Calderon missed a contested three-pointer from the left corner for New York that would have won it. Porzingis finished with 28 points and 11 rebounds but was on the bench when the Knicks started a 14-4 run to pull within 96-94 with 1:27 remaining.

Thunder 117, Lakers 113: Russell Westbrook had 36 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, and visiting Oklahoma City barely survived Lou Williams' 44-point performance.

Kevin Durant scored 24 points in the Thunder's 15th victory in 18 games and their seventh straight win over the lowly Lakers, but Williams put an extraordinary scare into them.

Williams scored 23 of his career-high output in the fourth quarter for Los Angeles, who avoided a third straight blowout loss to the Thunder in three weeks. Williams had all but five of the Lakers' points during a frenetic fourth quarter.

Warriors 128, Trail Blazers 108: Klay Thompson scored 36 points, making seven three-pointers, and visiting Golden State beat Portland for its fifth straight win.

Reigning league MVP Stephen Curry added 26 points and nine assists in three quarters for the Warriors (34-2), who led by as many as 25 points and made 18 three-pointers. Draymond Green finished with 11 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for his eighth triple-double of the season.

Curry started despite continued sore-

ness from a bruised left shin that kept him out of a pair of games late last month. He aggravated the injury again when he crashed into Roy Hibbert on Tuesday night and sat out the fourth quarter of Golden State's 109-98 victory at the Los Angeles Lakers.

Cavaliers 125, Timberwolves 99: J.R. Smith scored a season-high 27 points and Kevin Love had 20 points, nine rebounds and four assists in his return to Minnesota to help Cleveland to its sixth straight win.

LeBron James added 13 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, Iman Shumpert had 23 points and the Cavaliers outscored the Timberwolves 22-5 in transition to win for the 12th time in 14 games. Smith made 5 of 6 three-pointers in just 19 minutes and Cleveland was 13 of 27 from long range to cruise to the win.

Andrew Wiggins scored 35 points, Shabazz Muhammad had 22 and Karl-Anthony Towns added 22 for the Timberwolves, who have lost five in a row and nine of their last 10.

Bucks 96, Mavericks 95: Khris Middleton's driving layup with less than 10 seconds to play carried host Milwaukee over Dallas.

Middleton scored 27 points, John Henson 16 and Michael Carter-Williams added 15 points and a season-high 12 rebounds as Milwaukee snapped Dallas' six-game winning streak against them.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 20 points and Devin Harris came off the bench for a season-high 19 for Dallas.

Heat 103, Suns 95: Dwyane Wade scored 27 points and Miami beat host Phoenix for the 11th straight time.

Former Suns guard Goran Dragic added 22 points and Gerald Green, also a former Sun, had 21. They were returning to Phoenix for the first time as opposing players.

A three-pointer from Green with 4:35 to play gave Miami the lead for good, and Chris Bosh's 3 with 1:57 left put the game

out of reach at 98-91.

Grizzlies 91, Nuggets 84: Zach Randolph scored 16 of his 24 points in the second half and Mario Chalmers made a pair of three-pointers in the final 1:30 to lead host Memphis over Denver.

Chalmers scored 12 points in the game, with eight in the last 90 seconds to keep the Nuggets at bay.

Jeff Green finished with 16 points, Matt Barnes scored 15 and Marc Gasol had 12 points and five steals. Tony Allen had 10 points, nine rebounds and three steals as Memphis won its fourth in the last six.

Pacers 91, Pelicans 86: Ian Mahinmi had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and visiting Indiana beat a reeling New Orleans team that lost Anthony Davis to a lower back bruise early in the game.

Davis was hurt diving into the stands to stop a ball from going out of bounds on the defensive end. He went to the locker room soon after and never returned.

C.J. Miles scored 15, hitting a running hook inside the final 2 minutes to help Indiana hold on, while Paul George added 13 points and Monta Ellis 10.

Raptors 97, Wizards 88: DeMar DeRozan scored 21 of his season-high 35 points in the second half, Kyle Lowry had 21 points and 10 assists, and visiting Toronto beat Washington.

The Raptors overcame a season-high 23 turnovers, taking control with an 18-4 run that gave them a 69-59 lead with 2:40 to play in the third quarter.

John Wall scored 21 points as Washington (15-19) lost for the fifth time in six games and matched a season worst at four games under .500.

Magic 83, Nets 77: Victor Oladipo and Nikola Vucevic each scored 20 points to lead Orlando over Brooklyn, which has lost nine straight home games.

Aaron Gordon added 14 points and Evan Fournier had 13 for the Magic, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

Brook Lopez led the Nets with 17 points. Joe Johnson finished with 13.

Vonn ties downhill record

Associated Press

ALTENMARKT-ZAUCHENSEE, Austria — Watched by Annemarie Moser-Proell, whose many World Cup records she has been breaking one by one, Lindsey Vonn joined the Austrian great as the world's best female downhill skier on Saturday.

With her 36th victory in the discipline, the American matched the record set by Moser-Proell in January 1980.

The 62-year-old Austrian was among the first to congratulate Vonn, who leaned backward and spread both arms in celebration right after finishing a full second ahead of the competition in an unusual two-run format downhill.

"She is so kind," said Vonn, who broke Moser-Proell's overall record of 62 victories a year ago in Italy. "I am so glad she's here today as she couldn't be in Cortina last year. It means a lot to me. She is a true legend of our sport."

Vonn, who now has 72 World Cup wins across all Alpine disciplines, already held the record for most super-G victories with 25. That discipline was introduced after Moser-Proell had retired.

The Austrian holds one more record that will take even Vonn some time to beat — Moser-Proell won six overall titles compared to Vonn's four.

"I am very happy," said Vonn, competing in her first race of 2016 after taking a break with friends and family in the United States last week.

"I just had a bad feeling after (not finishing last month's downhill in) Val d'Isere, I lost the momentum, I was tired, my knees hurt, and I was sick in the end," she said. "I went home and I felt much better. So far I like the new year."

Vonn, who held a comfortable lead after the first run, finished in an aggregate time of 2 minutes, 11.17 seconds, one second ahead of Larisa Yurkiw of Canada, who earned her third career podium.

Cornelia Huetter of Austria was 1.66 behind in third.

Despite building big leads over her competitors, Vonn said she "wasn't trying to do anything special. I just tried to ski a solid run."

Overall leader Lara Gut of Switzerland failed to finish the opening run and didn't score points. Gut remains in the lead, 58 points clear of Vonn, going into Sunday's super-G.

Gut lost balance halfway down her run and just avoided falling but missed the next gate.

"It took me too long to react. But physically I am OK," Gut said. "It's become rougher, there are some bumps in it. It's dark so you don't see the bumps."

With her third downhill win of the season, Vonn extended her lead in the discipline standings. She has 300 points, followed by Heutter on 250 and Swiss skier Fabienne Suter, who is out injured for an indefinite time, on 200.

Despite being Vonn's closest competitor in the discipline, Huetter said winning the season's downhill title "would be an unreasonable goal."

"All I wanted for this season is to improve in downhill," the Austrian said. "Lindsey always keeps a perfect balance between risking and skiing smoothly. There is still a lot of work to do for me."

It was the first women's downhill in 14 years to be contested over two runs. Organizers had to lower the start because of insufficient snow conditions in the upper part, shortening the course from its usual 3 kilometers to 1,875 meters.

Bruins top Devils for franchise win 3,000

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Rookie Frank Vatrano scored early, Jonas Gustavsson made 19 saves and the struggling Boston Bruins beat the banged up New Jersey Devils 4-1 on Friday night for the 3,000th win in franchise history.

Ryan Spooner, Jimmy Hayes and Colin Miller also scored as the Bruins snapped a two-game losing streak and won for only the second time in seven games.

Bobby Farnham scored for the Devils, who have dropped three straight games in regulation for the first time since the start of the season. Cory Schneider finished with 27 saves.

The game was the start of a five-game road trip for the Bruins, and that might be the best place for them now. They are now 12-3-2 on the road and 9-11-2 at home.

Boston has won its last five against New Jersey and 17 of 20.

Ducks 4, Blues 3 (SO): Ryan Kesler tied it on a power play with his second goal of the game early in the third period, Ryan Getzlaf got the deciding goal in the fourth round of the shootout and host Anaheim beat St. Louis.

Corey Perry also scored for the Ducks and John Gibson made 25 saves.

Ryan Reaves, Troy Brouwer and Robby Fabbri scored for the Blues, who have lost five in a row (0-2-3) for the first time

since dropping their final six of the 2013-14 season.

They were coming off back-to-back overtime losses to Ottawa and Colorado in which they squandered two-goal leads in both games — and did it again against the Ducks.

The Blues have lost 10 straight games in Anaheim since Oct. 17, 2009.

Blackhawks 3, Sabres 1: Phillip Danault scored his first NHL goal, Corey Crawford made 28 saves and host Chicago beat Buffalo for its sixth consecutive victory.

Niklas Hjalmarsson and Jonathan Toews also scored for Chicago, and Crawford remained perfect in seven career starts against Buffalo. The Blackhawks have won nine in a row against the Sabres.

Ryan O'Reilly had Buffalo's only goal in the Sabres' sixth consecutive loss. Chad Johnson had 42 stops in a terrific performance.

Lightning 3, Oilers 2: Victor Hedman had a goal and two assists and Steven Stamkos capped Tampa Bay's three-goal, third-period rally to beat host Edmonton.

Nikita Kucherov also scored for the Lightning, who benefited from some luck as each of their three goals deflected in off an Edmonton skater.

Justin Schultz and Benoit Pouliot scored for the Oilers, who led 2-0 after two periods.

Avalanche 5, Predators 3: Tyson Barrie put his team ahead midway through the third period and host Colorado beat Nashville.

Ryan Johansen had a goal and an assist in his first game with the Predators since they traded for him Wednesday.

Barrie beat goalie Pekka Rinne with a shot from the top of the slot with 9 minutes left. It was his third goal in three games.

Jarome Iginla, Cody McLeod, Gabriel Landeskog and Jack Skille also scored and Semyon Varlamov made 19 saves to help Colorado tie Nashville in the Western Conference standings with 45 points. The Predators have played one fewer game.

Hurricanes 4, Blue Jackets 1: Elias Lindholm scored twice, Cam Ward made 35 saves and host Carolina beat Columbus.

Lindholm put Carolina ahead 2-1 on a slap shot with 5:25 left in the second period, then added an empty-net goal with 1:01 remaining. Jordan Staal and Chris Terry also scored for the Hurricanes, and Kris Versteeg had two assists, giving him 299 NHL points.

Brandon Dubinsky scored for Columbus, and Anton Forsberg made 25 saves.

Defenseman Seth Jones made his first appearance with Columbus since a trade from Nashville on Wednesday.