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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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In war on terrorism, some feel gloomy

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. counterterrorism officials and experts, never known for their sunny dispositions, have entered a period of particular gloom.

In congressional testimony recently, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper Jr. went beyond the usual litany of threats to say that terrorism trend lines were worse “than at any other point in history.”

Maj. Gen. Michael Nagata, commander of U.S. Special Operations forces in the Middle East, told participants on a counterterrorism strategy call that he regarded the Islamic State as a greater menace than al-Qaida ever was.

Speaking at a New York police terrorism conference, Michael Morell, former deputy director of the CIA, said he had come to doubt that he would live to see the end of al-Qaida and its spawn.

“This is long term,” Morell said. “My children’s generation and my grandchildren’s generation will still be fighting this fight.”

Pessimism descends

The assessments reflect a pessimism that has descended on the U.S. counterterrorism community during the past year amid a series of discouraging developments.

Among them are the growth of the Islamic State group, the ongoing influx of foreign fighters into Syria, the collapse of the U.S.-backed government in Yemen and the downward spiral of Libya’s security situation. The latest complication came Saturday, when the terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria carried out a series of suicide bombings and reportedly declared its allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Unlike the waves of anxiety

Boko Haram aligns with Islamic State

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Nigeria’s homegrown Boko Haram group, newly weakened by a multinational force that has dislodged it from a score of northeastern towns, reportedly pledged formal allegiance to the Islamic State group.

The pledge to the Islamic State group came in an Arabic audio message with English subtitles, alleged to have come from Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau and posted Saturday on Twitter, according to the SITE Intelligence monitoring service.

“We announce our allegiance to the Caliph of the Muslims ... and will hear and obey in times of difficulty and prosperity, in hardship and ease, and to endure

being discriminated against, and not to dispute about rule with those in power, except in case of evident infidelity regarding that which there is a proof from Allah,” the message said.

The Islamic State group leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has declared himself the caliph.

The Nigerian extremist group was blamed for four suicide bomb attacks on Saturday that police said killed at least 54 people and wounded 143 in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state and birthplace of Boko Haram.

The blasts occurred over four hours in locations including a busy fish market and a crowded bus station, Police Commissioner Clement Adoda said.

From The Associated Press

that accompanied the emergence of new terrorist plots over the past decade, the latest shift in mood seems more deep-seated. U.S. officials depict a bewildering landscape in which al-Qaida and the brand of Islamist militancy it inspired have not only survived 14 years of intense counterterrorism operations but have also spread.

Officials emphasize that their campaign has accomplished critical goals. In particular, most officials and experts now see the risk of a Sept. 11-scale attack as infinitesimal.

Still, the adjusted outlook contrasts sharply with the surge of optimism that followed the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011 and the dawn of the Arab Spring, which was initially seen as a political awakening across the Middle East that might ren-

der al-Qaida and its archaic ideology irrelevant.

Optimism evaporates

Within months of bin Laden’s death, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said he was convinced “that we’re within reach of strategically defeating al-Qaida.” President Barack Obama echoed that view in subsequent years by saying that al-Qaida was on “a path to defeat” and later saying that the then-nascent Islamic State group was analogous to a junior varsity sports team.

Such upbeat characterizations have all but evaporated.

By its nature, counterterrorism work is an enterprise that induces pessimism, one that is focused on fending off catastrophe and involves dwelling

on worst-case scenarios. There are prominent dissenting voices who argue that the level of alarm now is out of proportion to the threat — as misplaced as the spike in confidence that preceded it.

Their case hinges on the degraded capabilities of al-Qaida and the limited agenda of the Islamic State group, which has been far more focused on securing territory in the Middle East than launching transnational plots.

“There are people who are alarmed and bewildered. There are also a lot of experts who don’t think this is the end of the world,” said Daniel Benjamin, a Dartmouth College professor who formerly served as the top counterterrorism official at the State Department.

Paul Pillar, the former deputy director of the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center, argued in articles last year that concern over Syria and Iraq had reached a state of panic that had more to do with the psychological scars of 9/11 and the wars that followed than any truly existential danger.

“Everyone should take a deep breath,” Pillar wrote.

Still, other veteran analysts known for their equanimity sound increasingly grim. Even if the near-term prospect of a major attack in the United States or Europe is slim, they argue, elements of risk are accumulating rapidly.

“You’ve got a much bigger counterterrorism problem than you had a few years ago,” said John McLaughlin, a former deputy director of the CIA. Terrorist groups “have never had territory of this magnitude. Never had this much money. Never had this much access to Western passport holders. Never had the narrative they have now.”

In this case, “narrative” is a broad term for the appeal of the Islamic State.

Atlantic Resolve adding 450 GIs, 25 Black Hawks

BY MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — An additional 450 soldiers and 25 Black Hawk helicopters will join the expanding roster of units converging on eastern Europe in March as part of a longer-term effort to reassure allies worried about Russia's intentions.

Pilots, flight and ground crews from the 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade out of Hunter Army Air Field, Ga., will deploy to Illesheim, Germany, later this month.

From the staging ground there, they then will deploy in

support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, a multinational training mission to reassure Poland and the Baltic countries of NATO's commitment in the face of Russia's aggressive moves in Ukraine.

The unit will remain deployed for about nine months, U.S. Army Europe said.

While in Europe they will serve as a supporting element to the Operation Atlantic Resolve ground forces, led by the 1st Armor Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Stewart, Ga., as that unit assumes the role of the regionally aligned force in the area.

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Top-secret studies are planned at Naval Academy

The (Annapolis, Md.) Capital

Hackers steal emails from Sony and an FBI agent is Web chatting with midshipmen about investigation leads.

A U.S. airstrike hits militants in Syria and Naval Academy students are studying cockpit film in Annapolis.

Such discussions of classified operations don't happen yet at the Naval Academy. But they could become a reality in three years when the first classrooms are built to study top-secret

operations.

About 10,000 square feet of secure classrooms, labs and a small lecture hall are included in plans for the academy's \$120 million cybersecurity center, expected to be constructed by late 2018.

Admission will mostly be restricted to professors and midshipmen with top-secret clearance, he said.

The academy is planning to hire five professors this summer to expand its cybersecurity faculty.

UN: Rocket attack on base in Mali kills 3

BAMAKO, Mali — Three people were killed and 14 were wounded in a rocket attack early Sunday on a U.N. base in Mali's northeastern city of Kidal, the United Nations mission in Mali said.

More than 30 rockets and shells hit the U.N. base about 5:40 a.m. Sunday, the U.N. mission said. The attack killed a U.N. soldier and two civilians

and an additional 14 people were wounded, said Olivier Salgado, the spokesman of the U.N. mission in Mali. The U.N. forces returned fire about 6 a.m. It said the rocket attack was launched from a spot about 1.2 miles from the camp.

The attack was not immediately claimed but the Islamic extremist group Ansar Dine claimed a similar attack against U.N. peacekeepers in Kidal in September.

From The Associated Press

Ready to respond

USS New York meets high demand amid high operational tempo

BY HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE USS NEW YORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF — “The only solid plan was yesterday's plan.”

That's what some sailors aboard this ship like to say. Their mission is being ready to respond. On any given day, a downed pilot in a hostile area, an embassy in distress or any other crisis may send Marines off the deck in as little as six hours to execute a mission.

Capt. Chris Brunett, the USS New York's commanding officer, said the crew is used to plans changing quite a bit. That's the exciting part about what he called “amphibosity.”

“It's the ability to be trained up on a lot of different missions, quickly plan and then go execute them,” Brunett said.

The Mayport, Fla.-based New York is currently on an eight-month deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility as part of the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group, which also includes the USS Fort McHenry. The warship has been maintaining a presence in the northern Persian Gulf, while the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima is positioned near Yemen because of the conflict there.

Sailors aboard the New York express deep pride and commitment to their jobs, even though uncertain deployment schedules and long times at sea can be stressful. Sequestration cuts and the fight against the Islamic State group haven't made the situation any easier.

“It takes a toll overall,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Jody McClain, who's going to miss his son's graduation this year. “But when you go to sea duty, that's why it's called arduous: You never know when the nation needs to call for certain things and when we have to do certain

things.”

McClain is not the only sailor who finds himself deployed during important life events: So far, six sailors have missed the birth of a child since the ship left homeport.

With a crew of 360 sailors and an embarked landing force of some 700 Marines, the New York can respond to a full range of missions, from combat to humanitarian assistance.

It's equipped with a well deck with two landing craft air cushion transports, a flight deck capable of supporting a mix of helicopters and MV-22 Osprey aircraft, and a cargo bay filled with various types of combat vehicles. The ship even has a hospital, complete with operating rooms and a medical staff capable of handling a mass-casualty situation.

“We bring a lot to the fight,” Brunett said. “On any given day, we're getting our intel updates, and we're looking at probably a half-dozen different places.”

Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are potential hot spots where the New York might be needed. In June, the ship conducted a surge deployment in which it played a crucial role in the capture of suspected Benghazi attack ringleader Ahmed Abu Khattala in Libya. Along with work-ups, the ship spent most of last year at sea and left in December for its current deployment.

The ship's embarked Marines recently spent a month ashore in Kuwait conducting weapons training and live-fire exercises.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Andrew Dailey, who maintains the ship's diesel engines, said deployment isn't as bad as people make it out to be.

“I think you've got to know why you're here and what your motivation is, and just kind of hold onto it,” he said.

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RBs may be undervalued asset

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — When the checkbooks fly open on Tuesday, the bidding wars figure to be concentrated on receivers and defensive linemen.

Yet the most interesting position in free agency is running back.

As the NFL has evolved into a pass-prone league, the role of the ball carrier has diminished. Still, when the reigning Offensive Player of the Year, DeMarco Murray, and two other 1,000-yard rushers, Justin Forsett and Frank Gore, are on the block, it's impossible to overlook the position.

The key question: Which teams are willing to sink big bucks into running backs who generally begin to decline before players at other spots?

"I don't know who came up with the idea that the running game is devalued," says former NFL personnel executive Pat Kirwan, now an analyst for SiriusXM NFL Radio and CBS Sports. "How well did Seattle run the ball with Marshawn Lynch, and the Sea-hawks won one Super Bowl and played in another."

Murray, the league's leading rusher by nearly 500 yards, is 27, and there figures to be a strong market for him. Forsett is 29. Gore is a well-worn 31.

Because enough teams have been burned by big-money contracts for running backs — Chris Johnson in Tennessee, Steven Jackson in Atlanta, Knowshon Moreno in Miami — it could make everyone antsy. But Murray is a rarity, just entering his prime and at the top of his game.

One area that certainly will get plenty of attention, and dollars, is receiver. A dynamic crop awaits, including All-Pro Dez Bryant, Torrey Smith, Wes Welker and Jeremy Maclin.

Another is the defensive line, featuring All-Pro tackle Ndamukong Suh, DTs

Terrance Knighton and B.J. Raji, and ends Brian Orakpo, Brooks Reed and Anthony Spencer — several of whom can also play outside linebacker.

So where might the money go, and who might be left out of the big bonanza?

Here are some possibilities:

HEAD OF THE CLASS

Ndamukong Suh, DT, Detroit. The dominant Suh's penchant for drawing fines and suspensions — some say for playing dirty — is the only real drawback to signing him. He'll cost plenty.

DeMarco Murray, RB, Dallas. Teams might be wary of spending big money on running backs, but Murray has been a game changer. He also has some injury history.

Darrelle Revis, CB, New England. If he doesn't rework his current deal with the Patriots and is available, Revis is among a handful of outstanding coverage cornerbacks who can shut down almost anyone. He will be very expensive.

Julius Thomas, TE, Denver. Fits perfectly in most offenses because he can get deep as well as find open spaces in the seams.

Stefen Wisniewski, C, Oakland. The best blocker in this crop, young, energetic and versatile. He can be an anchor on many offensive lines.

Mike Iupati, G, San Francisco. Solid player who slumped in 2014 amid the Niners' turmoil.

Byron Maxwell, CB, Seattle. Any starter from the Legion of Boom who becomes available will get snapped up quickly.

NEXT IN LINE

Terrance Knighton, DT, Denver. Versatile space-eater who provides experience and leadership, but not nearly as dominant as Suh.

Torrey Smith, WR, Baltimore. Any team looking for a deep threat will consider him.

Jeremy Maclin, WR, Philadelphia. Proved

he can come back from serious injury and be a major contributor.

David Harris, LB, New York Jets. One of the building blocks for Rex Ryan's defenses in New York, which says a lot.

Devin McCourty, S, New England. Also can play cornerback, a leader and one of the game's most intelligent defensive backs.

Bryan Bulaga, G-T, Green Bay. Not a franchise-type blocker, but more than serviceable if he can stay healthy.

Brooks Reed, LB-DE, Houston. Dependable defender who shows flashes, could wind up with bigger contract than expected.

Rodney Hudson, C, Kansas City. Experienced centers who excel at run blocking are hard to find in free agency.

Davon House, CB, Green Bay. One of the more improved cornerbacks in the league even though he's rarely started.

Jared Odrick, DT, Miami. A good player with good timing who will find lots of interest after Suh and Knighton.

Brian Orakpo, LB-DE, Washington. Past injury issues will limit interest, incentive-laden deal likely.

Jordan Cameron, TE, Cleveland. The top player available at an important position in some offensive schemes.

SECOND WAVE

Some of these players might get quick deals more because of the position they play than their overall production:

Jerry Hughes, DE, Buffalo; Reggie Bush, RB, Detroit; Michael Crabtree, WR, San Francisco; Antonio Cromartie, CB, Arizona; Louis Delmas, S, Miami; Justin Forsett, RB, Baltimore; Greg Hardy, DE, Carolina; Brian Hartline, WR, Miami; A.J. Hawk, LB, Green Bay; Jacoby Jones, WR, Baltimore; Pernell McPhee, LB, Baltimore; Mark Sanchez, QB, Philadelphia; Anthony Spencer, DE-LB, Dallas; Shane Vereen, RB, New England; Vince Wilfork, DT, New England.

Phillies' Lee shut down with pain in elbow

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — Phillies left-hander Cliff Lee was temporarily shut down after experiencing soreness in his pitching elbow, general manager Ruben Amaro Jr. said Sunday morning.

Lee had an MRI on Friday and was examined by Phillies team physician Michael Ciccotti. Amaro said there was "very mild inflammation" in Lee's elbow. Lee will seek a second opinion from Dr. James Andrews next week.

"You have to be alarmed, we have to be concerned because it's the same area and he feels something," Amaro said. "It's the same area, the same issues he had last year."

Lee, 36, was limited to 13 starts last season, when he had two stints on the disabled list. He was sidelined for the final two months of the year with a flexor pronator strain.

Rangers ace Darvish could need surgery

SURPRISE, Ariz. — Yu Darvish and the Texas Rangers had hoped the tightness felt by the three-time All-Star in his triiceps during his spring training debut was nothing to be concerned about.

Instead, an MRI exam late Friday revealed just about the worst news possible.

Darvish has partially torn ligaments in addition to inflammation in his troublesome right elbow, and might need Tommy John surgery. It's another massive blow a suddenly snake-bit franchise that struggled through a rash of devastating injuries last season.

"Not going to sugarcoat it, it's not the news that we wanted," Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said. "You basically have two choices: You can hang your head and kind of dwell on it or you can do everything you can to get him the right care and get him back."

Just exactly what care that is had yet to be determined.

Darvish could try to pitch through the injury, rest it for six weeks and try to rebuild his stamina, or undergo surgery that would end his season before it begins.

That decision will be made after he visits Dr. David Altchek, the Mets' team physician and an expert in Tommy John surgery, on Tuesday in New York.

Messi scores record hat trick in victory

BARCELONA, Spain — Lionel Messi scored a record-setting hat trick to help Barcelona rout Rayo Vallecano 6-1 and take the lead of the Spanish league on Sunday.

Messi's three second-half goals completed his 32nd career treble in all competitions for Barcelona, breaking a Spanish record held by former Athletic Bilbao great Telmo Zarra with 31. Messi also became the all-time leader in hat tricks scored in the league with 24, one more than rival Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo.

The three goals took Messi's season tally overall to 41 goals in 38 games, as he reached the 40-goal mark for a sixth consecutive season.

From The Associated Press

Hornqvist lifts Penguins to OT victory

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — To beat the defending Stanley Cup champions in their building, the Pittsburgh Penguins knew they needed to buckle down defensively, weather a big shots disparity and play for a game-changing goal.

In an instant deep in overtime, Patric Hornqvist provided it.

Hornqvist scored on a Kings turnover in the slot 1:44 into overtime, and the Penguins beat Los Angeles 1-0 on Saturday for their sixth victory in seven games.

Hornqvist pounced when Jeff Carter made a curious clearing pass from the corner to Tyler Toffoli in front of the Los Angeles net. Toffoli bobbled the puck to Hornqvist, who ended it with his 22nd goal.

"We've been playing really good, and today was a grind," Hornqvist said. "We knew it was going to be that way, and everybody bought in and stuck with it. That was the first OT goal for me, so it was great."

Marc-Andre Fleury made 31 saves in

his ninth shutout of the season for the Penguins, who completed a Southern California sweep after beating NHL-leading Anaheim on Friday night with two goals from Hornqvist.

The Kings outshot the Penguins 31-16 in 60 minutes of tense regulation hockey, but got nothing past Fleury.

Bruins 3, Flyers 2: Boston's Brad Marchand scored the tying goal late in regulation and added the winner in overtime for host Boston.

Lightning 5, Stars 4: Alex Killorn and Victor Hedman scored early third-period goals, and host Tampa Bay rallied to top Dallas.

Avalanche 4, Blue Jackets 0: Jarome Iginla, Gabriel Landeskog and Matt Duchene scored in the first 10 minutes, and Semyon Varlamov made 44 saves to lead Colorado over host Columbus.

Panthers 4, Islanders 3 (SO): Jonathan Huberdeau scored the deciding shootout goal to lift host Florida.

Capitals 6, Sabres 1: Curtis Glencross notched a goal and two assists, Alex Ovechkin returned from a one-game injury absence to score his NHL-leading 44th goal, and host Washington routed Buffalo.

Canadiens 2, Coyotes 0: Carey Price made 29 saves for his seventh shutout, and Montreal beat host Arizona.

Jets 3, Predators 1: Blake Wheeler scored the go-ahead goal midway through the second period, and Winnipeg sent host Nashville to its season-worst sixth straight defeat.

Blues 6, Maple Leafs 1: Jori Lehtera and Alexander Steen both had three assists, and six St. Louis players scored in a rout of host Toronto.

Canucks 3, Sharks 2: Radim Vrbata scored his second goal of the game to break a tie in the third period and made an alert defensive play to preserve the lead and help host Vancouver complete the rally from a two-goal deficit to edge San Jose.



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Kentucky finishes perfect

The Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — After downplaying the possibility of the achievement in recent weeks, top-ranked Kentucky finally embraced its milestone following the end of Saturday's 67-50 victory over Florida.

The Wildcats gathered at midcourt and hurriedly donned blue T-shirts with "31-0 Not Done Yet" in white. For sure, they seek nine more wins to claim the ultimate achievement for the storied program.

But taking a moment to recognize Kentucky's first 31-0 regular season was significant for players who insist that winning the program's ninth NCAA championship is most important. At the same time this celebration is temporary as the Wildcats will soon resume working toward the only thing that matters.

"We take pride but our journey is not done," said freshman forward Trey Lyles, who had 14 points and six rebounds for Kentucky. "We have a lot of work to do and we only have two guaranteed games left in our season, so we have to make sure we go out there and play hard and together."

"It just shows how great these guys are on the team, how much we care for one another and how much we want to win."

Lyles, who missed last month's matchup in Gainesville with strep throat, was essential in getting the Wildcats started toward history with 10 first-half points. Karl-Anthony Towns added 13 points, nine rebounds, six blocks and three assists for the Wildcats (31-0, 18-0 Southeastern Conference).

Of Lyles, Towns said, "today is just another showing of how great he is."

Aaron Harrison added nine points while Willie Cauley-Stein and Andrew Harrison each had eight for Kentucky, which shot 47 percent and outrebounded the Gators 31-26. Cauley-Stein had seven rebounds.

Kentucky was in charge for the most part but took control after Devin Booker's three-pointer with 10:16 left made it 47-41. The Wildcats' 20-9 run after that sealed its accomplishment, and a blue-clad sellout crowd stayed long after the final horn to cheer loudly as players flashed souvenirs of their feat.

Unaware of the T-shirts, coach John Calipari was told about them afterward and joked, "that's really nice."

Kasey Hill scored 15 points and Dorian Finney-Smith had 12 for Florida (15-16, 8-10), which couldn't keep up with the Wildcats' depth in the final 10 minutes. The Gators were outscored 46-13 in bench points alone and shot 43 percent.

Kentucky's methodical path to victory and the milestone achievement were enough for Florida coach Billy Donovan to declare that it could stand for "a long, long time."

"I think it's important for people to reflect in a real positive way of what they have accomplished this season," said Donovan, whose team went 21-0 in SEC play last season including a tournament championship victory over Kentucky.

Kentucky eventually clamped down inside defensively and asserted itself on the other end for several key baskets and a lot of free throws. The Wildcats made 12 of 16 from the line to take their place in program history.

Louisville upsets No. 2 UVA

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Mangok Mathiang made a 15-footer with 2.7 seconds left to give host Louisville a stunning victory over Virginia, 59-57.

Evan Nottle's inbounds pass went wide to end the Cavaliers' chance for a last-second win, giving Louisville the ball back underneath its own goal. Terry Rozier made a free throw for the final margin.

Louisville (24-7, 12-6) clinched the fourth seed in the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament.

No. 3 Duke 84, No. 19 North Carolina 77: Tyus Jones had a big second half to help Duke shoot 59 percent after the break and beat North Carolina.

Jones scored 17 of his season-high 24 in the second half for the Blue Devils (28-3, 15-3 Atlantic Coast Conference), who capitalized on a handful of key turnovers by the Tar Heels (21-10, 11-7).

No. 4 Villanova 105, St. John's 68: Daniel Ochefu had 21 points and nine rebounds, and JayVaughn Pinkston scored 18 points as host Villanova rolled to its 12th straight victory.

The Wildcats (29-2, 16-2 Big East) now have the most regular-season wins in team history and head to New York as the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament.

No. 5 Arizona 91, Stanford 69: T.J. McConnell had 10 points and 11 assists in his final home game to help host Arizona close out the regular season.

The Wildcats are the No. 1 seed in next week's Pac-12 Tournament.

No. 7 Gonzaga 81, San Francisco 72: At Las Vegas, Przemek Karnowski scored a season-high 24 points and Kyle Wiltjer added 19 to lead Gonzaga over San Francisco in the West Coast Conference tournament.

The Bulldogs (30-2) will play Pepperdine in the semifinals Monday night.

Illinois St. 65, No. 8 Wichita St. 62: At St. Louis, Daishon Knight capped a 25-point game with two critical free throws in the closing seconds and Illinois State rallied from an eight-point halftime deficit to beat Wichita State in the semifinals of the Missouri Valley Conference tournament.

No. 15 Oklahoma 75, No. 9 Kansas 73: Buddy Hield scored on a tip-in with 0.2 seconds left to give host Oklahoma the victory.

Hield got up high and got both hands on

Jordan Woodard's missed layup. Hield finished with 18 points and seven rebounds to help the Sooners (21-9, 12-6 Big 12) clinch at least a tie for second in the conference.

No. 11 Northern Iowa 63, Loyola 49: At St. Louis, Seth Tuttle led a balanced, methodical attack with 13 points and Northern Iowa was stingy again defensively in the Missouri Valley Conference tournament semifinals.

No. 12 Notre Dame 81, Clemson 67: Jerian Grant had 19 points and eight assists and Zach Auguste added 19 points as host Notre Dame shot 55 percent from the field.

Washington 77, No. 13 Utah 68: Nigel Williams-Goss scored 28 points, including a deep three-pointer with 1:08 remaining as the shot clock was about to expire to lift host Washington (16-14, 5-13 Pac-12) over Utah.

Utah (23-7, 13-5) will now be the No. 3 seed for next week's Pac-12 Tournament in Las Vegas after finishing in a tie with Oregon.

No. 17 Iowa St. 89, TCU 76: Georges Niang and Monte Morris each had 19 points and Iowa State ended the regular season with another comeback win, beating host TCU to clinch the No. 2 seed in the Big 12 tournament.

LSU 81, No. 18 Arkansas 78: Keith Hornsby hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to give visiting LSU the victory.

No. 20 West Virginia 81, Oklahoma St. 72: Devin Williams tied a career-high with 22 points to lead host West Virginia.

Daxter Miles Jr. added 15 points for the Mountaineers (23-8, 11-7 Big 12).

No. 21 Butler 68, No. 24 Providence 64: Roosevelt Jones scored 16 points and Kellen Dunham had 15 as visiting Butler held on for the win.

Belmont 88, No. 25 Murray St. 87: At Nashville, Tenn., Taylor Barnette hit a three-pointer with 3.2 seconds left, and Belmont upset Murray State to win the Ohio Valley Conference tournament championship and clinch its seventh NCAA Tournament berth.

Harvard 72, Brown 62: Siyani Chambers scored 15 points and defending champion Harvard earned a share of the title with a victory over visiting Brown after Yale lost later Saturday night.

It's Harvard's fifth straight Ivy crown. Yale, which came in a game up over Harvard after a road victory over the

Crimson on Friday, blew a late lead at Dartmouth, falling 59-58 about an hour later. The schools will play a tiebreaker Saturday at Penn.

The Ivy is the only conference that awards its automatic NCAA bid to the regular-season champion.

Boise State 71, Fresno State 52: James Webb III had 18 points and 10 rebounds as Boise State routed visiting Fresno State to claim at least a share of the Mountain West regular-season title.

The Broncos (24-7, 14-4) clinched the No. 1 seed for next week's Mountain West conference tournament.

Davidson 107, Duquesne 78: At Pittsburgh, Tyler Kalinoski scored a career-high 32 points and Davidson clinched first place in the Atlantic 10 crushing Duquesne.

Purdue 63, Illinois 58: At West Lafayette, Ind., Rapheal Davis scored 18 points, and A.J. Hammons had 16 points and 10 rebounds, to help rally Purdue past Illinois.

Temple 75, UConn 63: At Philadelphia, Will Cummings scored 23 points to lead Temple over Connecticut.

The defending national-champion Huskies (17-13, 10-8) likely will have to win the conference tournament to even make the NCAA tournament this season.

Michigan St. 74, Indiana 72: Travis Trice scored 18 of his 21 points in the second half as Michigan State barely staved off host Indiana's frantic rally.

The Spartans (21-10, 11-6) have won two straight and six of eight as they try to earn the No. 3 seed in the Big Ten tournament.

Florida State 61, Pittsburgh 52: Xavier Rathan-Mayes scored 19 points on 5-of-8 shooting as host Florida State finished the regular season above .500 with a win over Pittsburgh.

Miami 82, Virginia Tech 61: Manu Lecomte scored 20 points to lift Miami over host Virginia Tech.

Ivan Cruz Uceda came off the bench to add 18 points, as Miami (20-11, 10-8 Atlantic Coast Conference) hit 15 three-pointers in reaching the 20-win mark for the third time in four seasons.

N.C. State 71, Syracuse 57: Trevor Lacey scored 19 points and North Carolina State beat visiting Syracuse, ending the season for Jim Boeheim's Orange a day after the NCAA hit the program with sanctions for numerous violations.

Hawks rest three, fall to Sixers

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Atlanta Hawks decided to rest three starters against lowly Philadelphia, and it cost them.

Hollis Thompson and Luc Mbah a Moute scored 19 points apiece, and the 76ers surprised the short-handed Hawks 92-84 on Saturday night.

Nerlens Noel had 11 points and 17 rebounds for the 76ers, who erased a 16-point deficit to win for the second time in 11 games. Philadelphia (14-49) entered with the NBA's second-worst record.

Jeff Teague had 17 points to pace Atlanta, which had its six-game winning streak snapped. The Hawks (49-13), who came in with the best record in the league, rested starters Paul Millsap, Kyle Korver and DeMarre Carroll — taking more than 41 points out of their lineup.

Cavaliers 89, Suns 79: LeBron James tied Cleveland's career assists record and scored 17 points in the Cavaliers' victory over visiting Phoenix.

James tied Mark Price at 4,206 assists in the third quarter.

Hest 114, Kings 109 (OT): Dwyane Wade scored 28 points, Tyler Johnson added 24 and Miami erased a 12-point, fourth-quarter deficit to beat Sacramento.

Rockets 114, Nuggets 100: James Harden scored 28 points, Corey Brewer had 24 and Houston Rockets snapped a three-game road losing streak with a victory over Denver.

Trevor Ariza had 19 points and Donatas Motiejunas added 18 for the Rockets.

Pelicans 95, Grizzlies 89: Tyreke Evans scored 26 points, Anthony

Davis added 23 points and 10 rebounds, and host New Orleans overcame an 18-point deficit to beat Memphis.

Timberwolves 121, Trail Blazers 113: Kevin Martin scored 29 points and Ricky Rubio hit a big three-pointer with a minute left to help host Minnesota snap a four-game skid and end Portland's winning streak at five games.

Pacers 92, Knicks 86: Rodney Stuckey scored 17 points, George Hill made the tiebreaking three-pointer with 2:34 left, and visiting Indiana beat New York for its season-best fifth straight win.

Bucks 91, Wizards 85: Khris Middleton scored 30 points and hit a key three-pointer from the corner with 40.8 seconds left, and host Milwaukee beat Washington to snap a four-game losing streak.