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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Arab League united in resolve on Yemen

Leaders agree to continue Saudi-led airstrikes until rebels withdraw; form joint military force

The Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt — Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen will continue until Shiite rebels there “withdraw and surrender their weapons,” a summit of Arab leaders decided Sunday. They also agreed in principle to form a joint military force.

The decision by the Arab League puts it on a path to more aggressively challenge Shiite power Iran, which is backing the Yemeni rebels, known as Houthis.

A Saudi-led coalition began bombing Yemen on Thursday, saying it was targeting the Houthis and their allies, which include forces loyal to Yemen’s former leader, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Current and former Yemeni military officials have said the campaign could pave the way for a possible ground invasion.

At the summit, held in the Egyptian resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh, Arab League Chief Nabil Elaraby read a final communique outlining the leaders’ views.

“Yemen was on the brink of the abyss, requiring effective Arab and international moves after all means of reaching a peaceful resolution have been exhausted to end the Houthi coup and restore legitimacy,” Elaraby said.

The Houthis swept down from their northern strongholds last year and captured the capital, Sanaa, in September. Embattled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, a close U.S. ally against a powerful local al-

Qaida affiliate, fled first to the southern city of Aden and then left the country last week.

Speaking at the summit Saturday, Hadi directly accused Iran of being behind the Houthi offensive, raising the specter of a regional conflict. Iran and the Houthis deny that Tehran arms the rebel movement, though the Islamic Republic has provided humanitarian and other aid.

Asked at a news conference to explain vague references to “foreign powers” being behind conflicts in different Arab nations, Elaraby said: “I will answer this question indirectly. There is meddling by some neighbors; Israel on one side, Turkey and Iranian interference in several countries.”

Speaking after Elaraby, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said leaders also agreed in principle to create a joint Arab military force. He said a high-level panel will work under the supervision of Arab chiefs of staff to work out the structure and mechanism of the force.

Elaraby said the chiefs of staff would meet within a month and have three more months to decide on the structure, budget and mechanism of the force before they present their proposals to a meeting of the Arab League’s Joint Defense Council.

“It is an important resolution given all the unprecedented unrest and threats endured by the Arab world,” Elaraby said.

A summit resolution said the force would be deployed at the request of any Arab nation facing a national security threat, and

that it would also be used to combat terrorist groups.

“There is a political will to create this force and not to leave its creation without a firm time frame,” Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri told a news conference.

Egyptian military and security officials have said the proposed force would consist of up to 40,000 elite troops and be headquartered in either Cairo or Riyadh, the Saudi capital. The force would be backed by jet fighters, warships and light armor.

However, it is unlikely that all 22 member nations of the often-fractional Arab League will join the proposed force. Creation of such a force has been a longtime goal that has eluded Arab nations in the 65 years since they signed a rarely used joint defense agreement.

Now in its fourth day, the Saudi-led air campaign has pushed Houthi rebels out of contested air bases and destroyed any jet fighters remaining in Yemen, Saudi Brig. Gen. Ahmed bin Hasan Asiri said.

The strikes also continued to target Scud missiles, leaving most of their launching pads “devastated,” according to remarks carried Saturday by the state-run Saudi Press Agency. However, he warned that the rebels could have more missiles. His account could not be immediately corroborated.

Meanwhile Sunday, Pakistan dispatched a plane to the Yemeni city of Hodeida, hoping to evacuate some 500 citizens gathered there, said Shujaat Azim, an adviser to Pakistan’s prime minister.

Marines: Landing MV-22s on S. Korean ship aids in planning

By **ARMANDO R. LIMON**
Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE USS BONHOMME RICHARD — The Marines showed off their most versatile aircraft to the South Koreans on Thursday, landing two MV-22 Ospreys on the deck of the South Korean ship Dokdo.

The MV-22s, from the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squad-

ron 262 Reinforced, took off from the amphibious assault ship the USS Bonhomme Richard to perform a series of touch-and-go landings on the South Korean vessel.

The deck crew of the Dokdo guided the hybrid aircraft to a safe landing and then tied them down as members of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and South Korean military looked on. Minutes afterward, they

were released and the Osprey took off again.

The event was two years in the making, said Maj. Bryon deCastro, a Marine Forces Korea liaison officer.

“The hardest part was getting the schedules matched for the aircraft to land on the Dokdo,” deCastro said.

Now that the MV-22 has proven it can land on the Dokdo, the U.S. and South Korean forces

have greater planning flexibility, he said.

The Marines had made a previous MV-22 landing on a Japanese vessel off the California coast in 2013, according to a Marine statement.

The Bonhomme Richard is part of Amphibious Squadron 11 and home to the 31st MEU.

limon.armando@stripes.com

Officials: Iran nuke talks solving some issues

The Associated Press

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Iran may accept new constraints to its uranium enrichment program at nuclear talks but is fighting how long it must accept limits on technology it could use to make nuclear arms, Western officials told The Associated Press on Sunday.

The officials spoke less than four days ahead of Tuesday's target date for a preliminary agreement. That accord is meant to set the stage for a further round of negotiations toward a comprehensive deal aimed at imposing long-term curbs on Iran's nuclear activities in return for sanctions relief.

Foreign ministers and other representatives of Iran and the six powers it is negotiating with have said that despite significant obstacles, the talks have a chance of succeeding by Tuesday. The two officials demanded anonymity in exchange for outlining the state of the talks because they are not authorized to discuss them publicly.

The sides are advancing on limits to aspects of Iran's uranium enrichment program — which can be used to make the core of a nuclear warhead, they said. Iran during the past weeks moved from demanding it be allowed to keep 10,000 centrifuges enriching uranium, to

agreeing to 6,000. The officials said Sunday that it now may be ready to accept even fewer.

Tehran also is ready to ship out all of the enriched uranium it produces to Russia — a change from previous demands that it be allowed to keep a small amount in stock, the officials said. One of them, however, cautioned that Iran previously had agreed to this but changed its mind.

Uranium enrichment has been the key concern in more than a decade of international attempts to cap Iran's nuclear programs. Tehran says it wants to enrich only for energy, science, industry and medicine,

but many nations fear it could use the technology to make weapons-grade uranium.

The United States and its allies are seeking a deal that stretches the time Iran would need to make a nuclear weapon from the present two to three months to at least a year.

The officials said differences on the length of an agreement remain one of the main disputes. Iran, they say, wants a total lifting of all caps on its activities after 10 years, whereas the U.S. and others at the talks — Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — insist on progressive removal after a decade of pervasive limits.

DOD paid accused Chilean killer after visa revoked

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon rebuffed efforts to remove a Chilean professor accused of torturing and murdering political prisoners, keeping him on the payroll of a prestigious U.S. military school for almost three years after the State Department revoked his visa because of the suspected human rights violations.

Exploiting legal loopholes and inaction across several government agencies, the accused torturer was able to remain in the United States, to renew his work contract twice

and even to travel widely despite his visa revocation, a McClatchy investigation reveals. The Pentagon now promises changes to its vetting process for foreign nationals working throughout its National Defense University, with an emphasis on accusations of human rights violations.

Officials with the U.S. military school — the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies — knew by at least 2008 that Jaime Garcia Covarrubias had been accused of being part of Chile's brutal secret police and stood accused of torture and murder.

Indiana governor: Law 'not about discrimination'

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Mike Pence defended the new state law that's garnered widespread criticism over concerns it could foster discrimination and said Sunday it wasn't a mistake to have enacted it.

Pence appeared on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" to discuss the measure he signed prohibiting state laws that "substantially bur-

den" a person's ability to follow his or her religious beliefs. The definition of "person" includes religious institutions, businesses and associations.

Pence, a Republican, did not answer directly when asked six times whether under the law it would be legal for a merchant to refuse to serve gay customers.

"This is not about discrimination, this is about empowering people to confront government overreach," he said.

From The Associated Press

Doolittle Raiders to get Congressional Gold Medal

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

House and Senate leaders will present a Congressional Gold Medal on April 15 in recognition of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, who carried out a daring and risky bombing raid on Japan's mainland on April 18, 1942.

Although the effects of the bombing on Tokyo were negligible, the strike was a morale booster for Americans still reeling from Japan's surprise attack four months earlier on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The raid on Tokyo, Yokohama, Yokosuka, Nagoya and Kobe also sent a message to Japan that its homeland was not invulnerable to Allied attack.

Taking part in the 3 p.m. ceremony at Emancipation Hall will be House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio; Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.; Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.; and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. It will be live streamed at speaker.gov/live.

The Congressional Gold

Medal is the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow. A single gold medal has been struck for the presentation.

Only three of the 80 men who flew in the raid are still alive.

One of them, Lt. Col. Richard E. Cole, who was the co-pilot on the B-25 flown by mission leader Lt. Col. James Doolittle, earlier this month visited a Florida airfield where one of the vintage planes was on display.

Cole, 99, told a Bradenton Herald reporter that Doolittle "was the greatest propeller pilot in the world at the time."

Doolittle had been in the Army Air Corps from 1917 to 1930 and returned to active duty in 1940 when war seemed imminent, according to a history of the raid by the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

The U.S. Army Air Forces chose the B-25 for the raid because it was the only aircraft available with the required range, bomb capacity and short takeoff distance needed for the job.

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
Twitter: @WyattWolson

Kentucky survives scare from Irish

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — With everything at stake for Kentucky, the Wildcats stayed calm and made just enough plays to keep their unblemished season intact.

The shot at history and another NCAA title are still in reach.

Andrew Harrison made two free throws with six seconds remaining, and the unbeaten Wildcats made their last nine shots to survive their toughest test to date, coming back after trailing for much of the second half to defeat Notre Dame 68-66 on Saturday night in the Midwest Regional final.

The Wildcats (38-0), seeking to become college basketball's first undefeated champion in 39 years, advanced to the Final Four in Indianapolis next week, where they will meet Wisconsin — a rematch of last year's semifinal.

"We know our will to win," said Aaron Harrison, who hit a crucial three-pointer. "And it just showed we never give up, and we fight to the end just like any other team."

These Wildcats are not like any other team.

The Fighting Irish (32-6) came within seconds of shocking the tournament's overwhelming favorite, Notre Dame, with a rich history of stunning upsets in football and basketball, wasn't done until Jerian Grant's double-clutch three-pointer from the left corner was long.

When the ball harmlessly hit the floor and the horn sounded, Kentucky's players hugged in celebration knowing they had ducked disaster. The Cats had used up one of their nine lives.

"We didn't play very well and Notre Dame, I thought, controlled the whole thing, but we made the plays," Kentucky coach John Calipari said. "We figured out a way to win it. We've had other tests, but we have a will to win."

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 25 — 17 after halftime — to lead Kentucky.

Zach Auguste scored 20, Steve Vasturia 16 and Grant 15 for the third-seeded Fighting Irish, playing in their first regional final in 36 years.

There was no doubt Notre Dame belonged. The ACC tournament champions controlled the tempo and weren't intimidated by the Wildcats and their collection of high school All-Americans and soon-to-be NBA millionaires.

The Fighting Irish took the fight to Kentucky and nearly pulled off another one of those shockers.

"We really thought we had a great chance of beating them, and I thought we displayed that," Notre Dame coach Mike Brey said. "But I think you've got to give them credit, they made some big plays, they made some timely three-point shots at key times."

Calipari insisted on Friday his team was not perfect, only unbeaten and that any team left in the tournament was capable of toppling the top Cats.

Notre Dame was right there.

"It's tough," said Grant, who returned to Notre Dame this season after being dismissed for academics. "Just to be so close to making history, from doing something so special and just like that it's over. We felt we played well enough to win."

Following a brief award ceremony, Kentucky's players cut down the nets as Prince's "Party Like It's 1999" blared through the speakers inside Quicken Loans Arena, which rocked for more than two hours as Notre Dame and Kentucky traded baskets. The game featured 20 lead changes and 12 ties.

Down six with 5:22 left after Auguste's three-point play, Kentucky roared back and took a 64-63 lead on Aaron Harrison's three-pointer with 3:14 left. The sophomore, who hit two big last-second shots in last year's tournament to get Kentucky to the title game, stared into the crowd of delirious Wildcats fans, including actress Ashley Judd, who spent most of the night jumping out of her seat.

Notre Dame's Grant responded with a 3 to put the Irish ahead 66-64, but the Wildcats again went inside to the 6-foot-11 Towns, who backed down Auguste to drop in another layup.

The Fighting Irish ran as much clock out as possible, but Grant had his shot blocked by Willie Cauley-Stein and the ball went back to Kentucky on a 35-second violation — Notre Dame's only turnover of the second half. Kentucky then put the ball in Andrew Harrison's hands and he drew a foul before knocking down his free throws.

Grant pushed the ball up, but with several Kentucky players in his face, his last-second heave was way off.

For a long stretch of the second half it appeared the Fighting Irish would add another upset to their roster of stunners, none bigger than ending UCLA's 88-game winning streak in 1974.

Lady Vols rally to make Elite Eight; UConn coasts

The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Tennessee was having trouble sinking field goals but fortunately the free throws kept dropping and dropping.

The Lady Vols made all 10 of their shots from the line in overtime — and missed all five field goal attempts — to beat Gonzaga 73-69 on Saturday to advance to the Spokane Regional final of the NCAA tournament.

Tennessee shot only 32 percent from the floor for the game, but made 21 of 22 free throws to come back from a 17-point, second-half deficit for the win.

"No matter how many punches you throw at us, we continue to get up," said Cierra Burdick, who scored 22 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for Tennessee. Her four late free throws provided the winning points.

"We had to draw fouls late to win this game," Burdick said. "Our free throws are what saved us."

Ariel Massengale scored 15 points for Tennessee (30-5), while Jordan Reynolds and Jaime Nared had 12 points each.

"I'm extremely proud of my teammates for not giving up," Massengale said.

Sunny Greinacher scored 24 points and Keani Albanese 20 for surprising 11th-seeded Gonzaga (26-8).

Second-seeded Tennessee will play top-seeded Maryland (33-2) on Monday for a trip to the Final Four in Tampa, Fla.

Albany Regional

UConn 105, Texas 54: Breanna Stewart had 31 points, 12 rebounds and

seven assists to help UConn rout Texas, earning coach Geno Auriemma his 100th tournament win.

Auriemma became the second coach to reach the century mark, joining Pat Summitt, who finished with 112 victories in her career. They are the only two coaches in men's or women's basketball to reach that milestone.

The Huskies shot a blistering 56 percent from the field and became the eighth team to put up more than 100 points in the regionals. UConn (35-1) also broke the record for biggest margin of victory in regionals, breaking the previous mark of 44.

Dayton 82, Louisville 66: Andrea Hoover scored 26 points and seventh-seeded Dayton continued its improbable run.

Amber Deane added 15 points and Jodie Cornelie-Sigmundova had 12 and 11 rebounds for the Flyers, who won for the 11th time in the last 12 games.

The Flyers (28-6) become just the fourth No. 7 seed to advance to a regional final since the field expanded to 64 teams.

Spokane Regional

Maryland 65, Duke 55: Shatori Walker-Kimbrough scored 18 of her 24 points in the second half and Laurin Mincy scored all 15 of her points in the first half for top-seeded Maryland.

Walker-Kimbrough took over the scoring load carried by Mincy as the Terrapins (33-2) reached the Elite Eight for the sixth time under coach Brenda Frese, taking down their former foe from the ACC in the process. Maryland is 2-0 against the Blue Devils in the NCAA tournament.

Dekker, Wisconsin sink Arizona's hopes

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Just call him Sam Dagger.

Sam Dekker hit 5 of Wisconsin's 10 three-pointers in the second half on his way to a second straight career high of 27 points, Frank Kaminsky added 29 points and the top-seeded Badgers beat No. 2 Arizona 85-78 on Saturday to reach consecutive Final Fours for the first time in school history.

The Wildcats twice got within five points in the last 2½ minutes, but both times Dekker connected on arcing three-pointers, narrowly beating the shot clock on the first one.

"Sam Dekker pretty much just crushed our dreams with that shot," Arizona guard T.J. McConnell said.

Dekker confirmed the Badgers are more than just "Frank the Tank." The junior followed up his career-high 23 points and 10 rebounds in a semifinal win over North Carolina with timely shooting that bailed out the Badgers.

"Incredible game," tweeted Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers from his seat behind the Badgers' bench, calling Dekker "cold blooded."

Wisconsin (35-3) denied the Wildcats (34-4) a Final Four berth for the second straight year, having beaten them by one point in overtime in Anaheim a year ago when their seeds were reversed.

"That loss left a sour taste in our mouth, so we wanted to get back," Dekker said of last season's 1-point loss to Kentucky in the national semifinals. "As a team we set some

goals of what we wanted to do, and now we're two games away from our last goal."

The Badgers and 67-year-old coach Bo Ryan head to Indianapolis next week for another shot at undefeated and top-ranked Kentucky, which beat Notre Dame 68-66 in the Midwest Regional final.

Rondae Hollis-Jefferson and Brandon Ashley scored 17 points each for the Wildcats, who once again failed to deliver a first-time Final Four appearance for coach Sean Miller. McConnell added 14 points in his college finale and Kaleb Tarczewski and Gabe York had 11 each.

"It was tough to be playing hard on defense and trying to get a stop to win the game and he made those shots," Hollis-Jefferson said of Dekker. "It was tough to watch them go in, but in basketball you have those days."

Miller compared the Badgers' offensive execution and ability to make shots to a video game.

"Sam Dekker and Frank Kaminsky, they're really good," Miller said. "No team has done what they did to us in the second half. They made shots, and if they play like that next weekend, they have a chance to win it all."

The Badgers hit 10 of 12 three-point attempts in the second half — connecting on a season-high 67 percent overall — and outscored the Wildcats 30-3 from long range. Dekker had five three-pointers and was named most outstanding player of the West Regional.

Arizona closed within two points early in the second half only to watch Dekker casually fling up a rainbow three.



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Knicks drop record 60th

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Chicago Bulls did what so many other teams have done against the Knicks this season: They made it look easy.

They handed New York its franchise-record 60th loss, too.

Nikola Mirotic scored 24 points, Pau Gasol added 19 points and 12 rebounds, and Chicago pounded the Knicks 111-80 Saturday night.

"There's nothing I can really say about that," New York's Langston Galloway said. "All I can control is playing hard."

A night after tying the team's previous single-season loss mark, the Knicks dropped their seventh straight and 14th in 16 games.

Jimmy Butler scored 18 for Chicago.

Mirotic closed out a terrific March with another strong showing, finishing five points shy of his career high. The rookie averaged 20.8 points in 15 games this month.

Gasol recorded his league-leading 48th double-double as Chicago won for the fifth time in six games.

"I think our mindset at this point is we're building toward something, we have more than enough right now," Mike Dunleavy Jr. said. "When (the injured) Derrick (Rose) gets back, it's a bonus. We're pulling for him."

The Bulls, who have battled injuries all year, appear to be clicking even though their superstar point guard is recovering from his latest knee surgery.

They led by 20 at halftime and fell four points short of their most lopsided victory of the season. They pulled within two games of Central Division leader Cleveland and moved 1½ games ahead

of fourth-place Toronto in the Eastern Conference.

Andrea Bargnani led New York with 14 points and seven rebounds. But with their crisp ball movement and an attacking mentality, the Bulls overwhelmed the Knicks.

They had 28 assists compared to 14 turnovers, hit 43 of 84 shots and outscored New York 50-22 in the paint.

"The biggest mindset is just to not give up," the Knicks' Cole Aldrich said. "We still have some basketball to play. We can't all forget the opportunity that's ahead of us. We haven't had the season that we wanted to, but it doesn't mean we can't go out and finish strong."

Saturday marked the 20th anniversary of the "Double Nickel Game" that saw Michael Jordan score 55 points at Madison Square Garden, a masterpiece that announced he still was the game's greatest player after two years away from basketball. He finished off that game with an assist to Bill Wennington, giving the Bulls a 113-111 victory.

In this one, Chicago stomped on the Knicks almost as soon as they stepped on the court.

Warriors 108, Bucks 95: The Golden State Warriors achieved two impressive milestones with another double-digit win on the road. Now it's a matter of staying healthy and feeling good going into the postseason for the team with the best record in the NBA.

Stephen Curry scored 25 points, and the Warriors clinched the top seed in the Western Conference by pulling away in the second half.

Klay Thompson added 21 for Golden State, which also set a franchise record with its 60th victory of the season. The

Warriors hold a 10-game lead over second-place Memphis in the West with nine games left in the regular season.

Khris Middleton had 14 points for Milwaukee, which fell back under .500 at 36-37 after winning two straight.

Hornets 115, Hawks 100: Kemba Walker scored 21 points and host Charlotte beat an Atlanta team missing all five starters.

Gerald Henderson scored 20 points on 9-for-10 shooting, and Mo Williams hit four three-pointers and had 18 points as the Hornets snapped a three-game losing streak.

Marvin Williams chipped in with 17 points for Charlotte (31-41), which moved back within a game of eighth place in the tight Eastern Conference.

Jazz 94, Thunder 89: Trey Burke scored 22 points off the bench to help host Utah rally from a 16-point deficit and beat Oklahoma City.

The Jazz needed extra offense with Derrick Favors sidelined with back spasms and Burke provided it.

The Thunder were poised for a blowout as Russell Westbrook scored 13 first-quarter points and Oklahoma City led by 16 early in the second quarter. Utah quieted Westbrook and outscored the Thunder 55-29 over the next quarter and a half to take a 10-point lead into the fourth.

Trail Blazers 120, Nuggets 114: LaMarcus Aldridge had 32 points and 11 rebounds, and host Portland beat Denver for its third consecutive victory.

Portland increased its Northwest Division lead to 6½ games over second-place Oklahoma City.

Revolution get 1st win of season

The Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Kelyn Rowe scored twice and the New England Revolution beat the San Jose Earthquakes 2-1 on Saturday in steady snow and hail for their first victory of the season.

New England (1-2-1) got its first goal of the season in the 21st minute. A turnover created a chance for Rowe, whose blast from 17 yards deflected off the head of defender Shaun Francis, who committed the original turnover.

The Revolution added their second 16 minutes later. Chris Tierney's left-footed free kick was headed by a diving Darrius Barnes to Rowe and he buried it past David Bingham, who could only get a hand on it.

Chris Wondolowski halved the deficit with a penalty kick in the 62nd minute, awarded after Scott Caldwell clipped Clarence Goodson in the box.

San Jose fell to 2-2-0.

New England started the season scoreless in its first three matches. Its goal in the 21st minute broke a 291 minute drought, ensuring the Revolution would not come close to equalizing the MLS record to start the season without a goal, 383 minutes by Toronto FC in 2007.

Orlando City 2, Impact 2: Brazilian star Kaka and countryman Pedro Ribeiro scored goals to help expansion Orlando City rally for the tie with host Montreal.

Ignacio Piatti and Jack McInerney spotted Montreal (0-1-2) to a two-goal lead, but Kaka and Ribeiro struck back in the first half for Orlando.

Whitecaps 2, Timbers 1: Robert Earnshaw scored in the 90th minute in his Vancouver debut and the host Whitecaps opened their Cascadia Cup defense with a victory over Portland.

Signed earlier in the week, Earnshaw entered the game in the 86th minute as a substitute.

D.C. United 1, Galaxy 0: Chris Pontius scored in stoppage time, lifting host D.C. past Los Angeles.

Nick DeLeon made a series of nifty moves on the right wing, and then found Pontius at the far side of the 6-yard box. Pontius went low to head it past an outstretched Brian Rowe in the third extra minute for D.C. United (2-1-0).

FC Dallas 0, Sounders 0: FC Dallas played with 10 men for the majority of the night in the scoreless draw with visiting Seattle.

Kellyn Acosta received a red card for a high kick in the 18th minute and FC Dallas (3-0-1) failed to open the season with a fourth straight win for the first time in club history.

Sporting KC 1, New York City FC

0: Ike Opara scored early and Sporting Kansas City made it stand up, beating host New York City FC in blustery conditions with intermittent flurries.

Kansas City (1-1-2) ended a five-game winless streak that dated to last year.

Red Bulls 2, Crew 1: Mike Grella chipped in the decisive goal from long distance in the 67th minute in visiting New York's victory over Columbus.

Dynamo 0, Rapids 0: Tyler Deric had three saves for his second shutout of the season, helping host Houston preserve a scoreless draw with Colorado.

Deric had the play of the match in the 31st minute when he deflected Marcelo Sarvas' 8-yard shot over the crossbar.

Canadiens edge Panthers in OT

The Associated Press

MONTREAL — Max Pacioretty scored in overtime as the Montreal Canadiens clinched a playoff berth with a 3-2 victory over the Florida Panthers on Saturday night.

Lars Eller and Alex Galchenyuk scored in regulation for the Canadiens, and Carey Price stopped 21 shots for his 41st win of the season.

Aleksander Barkov had a pair of goals for the Panthers, while Roberto Luongo made 21 saves in defeat.

After a scoreless third period, Pacioretty scored the winner on the power play just seconds after Florida's Vincent Trocheck took a penalty for high sticking.

The Canadiens have clinched a playoff spot for three consecutive years, and have appeared in seven of the last eight postseasons.

Near the end of a mostly uneventful first period, defenseman Greg Pateryn levelled Florida's Jimmy Hayes with an emphatic hip check in front of the players' bench. Hayes took a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct on the play. As the penalty expired, Eller jumped on a loose puck to Luongo's left and buried his first goal in seven games at 17:37. Jeff Petry got an assist on the goal — his first point with Montreal.

Brendan Gallagher came inches from giving the Canadiens a 3-2 lead with three minutes on the clock in the third, but Luongo made an acrobatic save to keep the puck from crossing the goal line.

Predators 4, Capitals 3: Filip Forsberg

scored during a three-goal first period and had two assists as Nashville became the first Western Conference team to clinch a playoff berth with a win over host Washington.

Washington holds the East's top wildcard spot, five points ahead of Ottawa and Boston, who were tied for the second and final spot.

Ducks 3, Islanders 2: Frederik Andersen made 29 saves, and visiting Anaheim used a two-goal second period to beat the struggling Islanders and clinch a Western Conference playoff berth.

Bruins 4, Rangers 2: Milan Lucic scored twice in the first 10 minutes, Carl Soderberg also scored in the first period, and host Boston spoiled Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist's return after a long layoff.

Boston goalie Tuukka Rask left the game 10 seconds into the second period after stopping 14 shots. There was no announcement why Rask left the game and he didn't return to the bench. Backup Niklas Svedberg made 16 saves in relief.

Lundqvist missed seven weeks after a puck hit his neck. He stopped 26 shots in his return.

Penguins 3, Coyotes 2: Daniel Winnik, Steve Downie and Sidney Crosby scored in a 4-minute, 8-second stretch of the third period to rally host Pittsburgh.

Sharks 3, Flyers 2 (SO): Matt Irwin and Joe Pavelski scored in regulation, and Brent Burns got the winning goal in the shootout to lead visiting San Jose.

Red Wings 4, Lightning 0: Petr Mrazek

made 23 saves for his fourth career shutout and host Detroit won in regulation for the first time in six games.

Hurricanes 3, Devils 1: Eric Staal and Justin Faulk scored in the third period to lead host Carolina past New Jersey.

Maple Leafs 4, Senators 3 (OT): Eric Brewer scored 3:17 into overtime to lift host Toronto.

Tyler Bozak had a hat trick — all in the third period — and added an assist on Brewer's winning goal as the Maple Leafs rallied from two down twice in the final period to snap a seven-game skid.

Blue Jackets 4, Blues 2: Boone Jenner scored the tiebreaking goal late in the second period, and Cam Atkinson had an empty-netter late in the third to lead Columbus to its eighth straight road win.

Wild 4, Kings 1: Nino Niederreiter and Mikko Koivu each scored two goals, and Devan Dubnyk had 31 saves in his 34th straight start with Minnesota to lead the Wild past visiting Los Angeles.

Avalanche 5, Sabres 3: Matt Duchene had a goal and two assists, Jarome Iginla had three assists and host Colorado kept its slim playoff hopes alive.

Stars 4, Canucks 3 (OT): John Klingberg scored 4:13 into overtime as Dallas edged host Vancouver.

Jamie Benn, Patrick Eaves and Tyler Seguin scored in regulation for the Stars, while Kari Lehtonen made 32 saves.