

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Iraqis regain strategic oil refinery

Staff and wire reports

Iraqi forces claimed full control Friday of two towns near Iraq's biggest oil refinery, shoring up defenses around what the U.S. calls the focus of coalition efforts to turn back a two-pronged Islamic State offensive north and west of Baghdad.

Gen. Ayad al-Lahabi, of the Salahuddin Command Center, said the Iraqi army backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and Shiite and Sunni militias seized control of the towns of al-Malha and al-Mazraah about 2 miles south of the Beiji oil refinery. Islamic State fighters launched a large-scale assault on the refinery this week, breaching the perimeter with infantry and explosives-laden Humvees.

The latest Islamic State assault on the refinery, 117 miles north of Baghdad, occurred this week as the militants also launched a major attack on Ramadi, capital of mostly Sunni Anbar province about 70 miles west of Baghdad.

Thousands of civilians have clogged the roads from Ramadi to Baghdad, fleeing the extremist attack as U.S. and Iraqi officials warn the city may soon fall.

Despite the threat to Ramadi, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Thursday at the Pentagon that coalition air and intelligence assets were focusing on Beiji, which he described as "a more strategic target" than Ramadi.

The U.S. Central Command said Friday that five of the 13 coalition airstrikes overnight occurred in the Beiji area, compared with two near Ramadi. The Beiji attacks struck five tactical units, destroying four vehicles, three fighting positions and a heavy machine gun. The latest attacks followed eight airstrikes in the Beiji area the night before.

"I would much rather that Ramadi not fall," Dempsey said at a press conference with Defense Secretary Ash Carter. "But it won't be the end of the campaign should it fall — we've got to get it back and that's tragic for the people."

Dempsey called Beiji "a little different" because of the refinery, which supplies much of Iraq's domestic fuel supplies and gives the Islamic State group a major source of revenue through black market sales of oil and oil products.

"So Beiji is a more strategic target, and that's why in fact the focus is on Beiji," he said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said

### Car bomb explodes outside US Consulate in Irbil, Iraq

IRBIL, Iraq — A car bomb exploded outside the U.S. Consulate in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomy zone.

There was no immediate word on casualties. A U.S. official said no consulate personnel or guards were killed or injured in Friday's blast. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the press.

An Associated Press reporter on the scene said the large blast went off just outside the consulate building in Irbil's Ankawa neighborhood, setting nearby cars on fire. Kurdish security forces quickly arrived on the scene.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Meanwhile, a series of bombings ripped through Baghdad, mainly targeting public places and killing at least 31 people, Iraqi officials said.

The deadliest of Friday's attacks came when a car bomb went off inside a car dealership in the Shiite neighborhood of Habibya in eastern Baghdad, killing 10 people and wounding 23 others, police said. Thick black smoke could be seen rising from the area as at least 11 cars were burned. Security forces sealed off the dealership.

Half an hour earlier, a car bomb detonated near an outdoor market in the capital's southwestern Amil neighborhood, killing nine people and wounding 20, police officials said.

Earlier, a bomb blast on a commercial street in the southeastern Shiite New Baghdad district killed four people and wounded nine. Also, a bomb exploded near an outdoor market in the Dora neighborhood, killing three shoppers, and another bomb blast near a cafe killed three people in the capital's southeastern suburbs.

A roadside bomb exploded near a patrol of Sunni fighters known as Sahwa in southern Baghdad, killing two of the force's members. The Sahwa fighters joined forces with U.S. troops at the height of the Iraq insurgency to fight al-Qaida and other Sunni militants.

From The Associated Press

in Washington this week that Beiji was a priority because Iraq's forces also need to control the main highway to Mosul, the country's second-largest city and the Islamic State group's main base of power in the north.

The fall of Mosul, about 100 miles north of Beiji, triggered the collapse of the Iraqi army last summer in the face of a massive Islamic State assault that overran about a third of the country.

However, the fall of Ramadi would be a psychological blow to Iraq's Shiite-dominated government and to thousands of Americans who fought fierce battles with Sunni insurgents in the city during the Iraq War.

In 2006, U.S. forces suffered more than 80 combat deaths and more than 200 wounded during eight months of bitter fighting in

Ramadi, during which thousands of Sunni tribesmen mutinied against al-Qaida and turned the tide of the war.

Dempsey, who served multiple tours in Iraq during the 2003-2011 war, said the fighting around Ramadi shows that the Iraqi military needs to connect the "ink blots," or pockets of government control across Anbar province to deny the Islamic State group future gains.

He said U.S. officials had discussed the challenges with the Iraqi prime minister during his visit to Washington this week, "and it is his intent to focus now" on Anbar province.

Last summer's offensive by the Islamic State group, the successor movement of al-Qaida in Iraq, was part of a major escalation of Middle East violence that saw various Islamic extremists score gains in Syria, Iraq and Yemen — the base of operations for what U.S. officials say is the most active and dangerous al-Qaida franchise.

The chaos in the Middle East has called into question President Barack Obama's strategy of slow disengagement from the region after nearly 14 years of war and shift American attention to East Asia, where a rising China could threaten vital U.S. economic, political and security interests.

But that strategy has been threatened by a chaotic situation in which multiple Sunni and Shiite armed groups are challenging the existence of the entire system of government that has prevailed there since the end of World War I.

In Yemen, for example, al-Qaida has taken advantage of the fighting between Shiite rebels and forces loyal to exiled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to expand its presence in areas where it had operated for years despite U.S. drone strikes and Yemeni counterinsurgency operations.

A three-week Saudi-led air campaign in support of Hadi has so far failed to stem the Shiite advance. The Saudi-led airstrikes, which began March 26, have not targeted areas with an al-Qaida presence, including the southern province of Hadramawt.

Al-Qaida seized control of a major airport in Hadramawt this week and tightened its hold on the provincial capital's main seaport and oil terminal.

Stars and Stripes correspondent Jon Harper and Associated Press reporters Robert Burns, Qassim al-Zahra, Sarah el-Deeb and Ahmed al-Haj contributed to this report.

## Lawmaker: Use aircraft carriers for toll bridge

*The Associated Press*

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A Washington state representative wants to study the possibility of building a toll bridge out of retired Navy aircraft carriers.

The Northwest News Network reported Rep. Jesse Young, R-Gig Harbor, would like to link Bremerton and Port Orchard using two retired carriers now moored at the naval shipyard in Bremerton.

“I know that people from around the world would come to drive across the deck of an aircraft carrier bridge, number one,” Young said. “Number two, it’s the right thing to do from my standpoint because this is giving a testimony and a legacy memorial to our greatest generation.”

Money for a \$90,000 feasibility study for Young’s idea was included in the state highway budget that passed the House last week. It could be stripped out of the final transportation spending plan ultimately passed by lawmakers.

A Navy spokesman said neither of the two ships Young would like to use — the USS Independence and USS Kitty Hawk — is currently available. Chris Johnson said the Independence will be transferred from Bremerton to a ship recycling company in Texas later this year. The Navy plans to hold the Kitty Hawk in reserve.

# Master chief loses Pacific post

*The Associated Press*

HONOLULU — The U.S. Pacific Fleet’s most senior enlisted leader has been removed from his post.

Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Harry Harris on Thursday relieved Master Chief Petty Officer Marco Ramirez, citing a lack of confidence in him.

The Pacific Fleet said in a news release it is because the initial findings of an investigation determined Ramirez hadn’t performed to the high standards of his office.

Ramirez became fleet master chief in 2013. The master chief is an advocate and leader for the 122,000 enlisted sailors

serving in the Pacific Fleet.

The Navy says Ramirez has been temporarily reassigned to other duties in the Pacific Fleet.

Ramirez joined the Navy in 1984. He’s served on the USS Enterprise, USS Carl Vinson and at postings including Naval Legal Service Office Pacific in

## Data: Most soldiers pessimistic on future

*USA Today*

More than half of the some 770,000 soldiers are pessimistic about their future in the military and nearly as many are unhappy in their jobs, despite a six-year, \$287 million campaign to make troops more optimistic and resilient, findings obtained by USA Today show.

Twelve months of data through early 2015 show that 403,564 soldiers, or 52 percent, scored badly in the area of optimism, agreeing with statements such as, “I rarely count on good things happening to me.” Forty-eight percent have little satisfaction in or commitment to their jobs.

The results stem from resiliency assessments that soldiers are required to take every year. In 2014, for the first time, the Army pulled data from those assessments to help commanders gauge the psychological and physical health of their troops.

The effort produced startlingly negative results. In addition to low optimism and job satisfaction, more than half reported poor nutrition and sleep, and only 14 percent said they are eating right and getting enough rest.

The Army began a program of positive psychology in 2009 in the midst of two wars and as suicide and mental illness were on the rise.

To measure resiliency, the Army created a confidential, online questionnaire that all soldiers, including the National Guard and Reserve, must fill out once a year.

Last year, Army scientists applied formulas to gauge servicewide morale based on the assessments. The results demonstrate that positive psychology “has not had much impact in terms of overall health,” said David Rudd, president of the University of Memphis, who served on a scientific panel critical of the resiliency program.

The Army offered contradictory responses to the findings obtained by USA Today. Sharyn Saunders, chief of the Army Resiliency Directorate that produced the data, initially disavowed the results.

“I’ve sat and looked at your numbers for quite some time, and our team can’t figure out how your numbers came about,” she said in an interview in March.

However, when USA Today provided her with the supporting Army documents this week, her office acknowledged the data but said the formulas used to produce them were obsolete. “We stand by our previous responses,” it said in a statement.

Subsequent to USA Today’s inquiry, the Army calculated new findings but lowered the threshold for a score to be a positive result. As a consequence, for example, only 9 percent of 704,000 scored poorly in optimism.

## 2 National Guardsmen charged with selling guns to agent

*The Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — Two members of the National Guard in San Diego County were arrested Wednesday and charged with illegally selling guns, ammunition and body armor to an undercover federal agent posing as a member of a Mexican drug cartel.

According to a criminal complaint, Jaime Casillas, 22, and Andrew Reyes, 34, sold 10 guns, including four assault rifles, and thou-

sands of rounds of ammunition to the undercover agent. The complaint says some of the arms were military issue and others were bought in Texas and resold in California.

They were sold in seven different meetings with the undercover agent, who made it clear on multiple occasions that he worked for a cartel and the guns were bound for Mexico, the complaint said. The defendants wore their military uniforms to at least one of the exchanges.

Reyes indicated that the body armor and ammunition magazines they sold were from military inventory, the complaint said.

The defendants got at least \$13,000 from sales to the undercover agent.

Both men work in the Army National Guard Armory in La Mesa and were arrested Wednesday — Casillas during a traffic stop in El Cajon and Reyes at his home in La Mesa.



# Rose finally back in playoffs

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — For the first time in three years, the Chicago Bulls will have their injury-plagued star player, Derrick Rose, on the court at the most important time — at the start of the NBA playoffs.

Not since the 2012 playoff opener has Rose appeared in a postseason game, and not since the 2011 Eastern Conference finals have the Bulls had their hometown star for the duration of their run.

The Bulls open their current playoff campaign at home Saturday against Milwaukee.

"It'll be fun," Rose said. "It'll give me a chance to go out here and battle with my teammates in the playoffs. The playoffs is a different atmosphere, a different type of setting. I get the opportunity to play the game that I love playing. The intensity is going to be definitely high. I can't wait to play."

Does he wonder what might have been had he been healthy the past few years?

"Can't think about that," Rose said. "I let that go years ago. (I'm) living in the present and that's where I'm trying to keep things."

Still, it's hard not to wonder if the Bulls

would have emerged from the Eastern Conference at least once and maybe captured their first championship since 1998 had their standout point guard not suffered season-ending injuries to both knees.

After all, they had the No. 1 overall playoff seed in back-to-back seasons and Rose at his explosive best.

He became the youngest Most Valuable Player in NBA history while leading the Bulls to 62 wins and a trip to the Eastern Conference finals in 2011. The Bulls lost to LeBron James and the Miami Heat in five games, but the following season, they looked like they were poised to make another big run.

Then Rose crumbled to the court late in Game 1 of the first-round playoff series against Philadelphia. It happened just as he seemed to be rounding into form after missing 27 games in a lockout-shortened season.

The Bulls also lost Joakim Noah to a sprained ankle and wound up losing in the first round.

Chicago expected to get Rose back for the 2012-13 season, but that never happened. And his long-awaited comeback ended at 10 games last season when Rose tore the meniscus in his right knee.

Without Rose, the Bulls couldn't challenge the Heat for supremacy in the East, let alone win a championship. They lost in the second round to Miami in 2013 and got knocked out in the first round by Washington last season.

"You always reminisce," Bulls forward Taj Gibson said. "Every year, we reminisce about 'what if.' We talk about this all the time. It's frustrating. You have to think about the times we were right there and we were just a little bit short."

The Bulls believe they can challenge for the Eastern Conference title this time with Rose back and Pau Gasol now on the team. They've earned the third seed with a 50-32 record and expect most if not all their key players to be available — a rarity for Chicago this season.

Rose averaged 17.7 points this season, but his aggression has been lacking at times. He also recently missed about six weeks following a minor operation on his right knee and sat out the second half of Wednesday's finale against Atlanta because of soreness in his left knee.

He insisted it was minor. He was also adamant about something else.

"I believe I'm one of the best players in the NBA," Rose said.

# Warriors adjust to new role

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — A larger banner hangs on the far end of the Golden State Warriors' practice gym reminding every player, coach and executive of the franchise's past glory.

"1974-75 NBA Champions," it reads.

The Warriors have spent most of the last 40 years trying to reclaim a place among the NBA's elite. Instead, they've often been an outlier, fielding teams such as "Run TMC" and "We Believe" every so often that could thrill crowds during the regular season but would always finish well short in the playoffs.

Nobody sees them that way anymore.

The Warriors are in a rare position entering the playoffs as one of the favorites. They won a franchise-record 67 games, going an incredible 39-2 at home, and finished seven games better than East-leading Atlanta to earn the league's top seed.

Golden State opens its first-round series against New Orleans on Saturday comfortable and confident in its new role, knowing a regular season unlike any other has everybody in the basketball-united Bay Area feeling one way about these playoffs: championship or bust.

"We feel like we're going to get it done," Warriors star Stephen Curry said. "We feel like we have what it takes to do it. Obviously, we have to take care of one opponent and reset after that point. But if we play our best game and New Orleans plays their best game, we feel like we should take care of business."

"But that's the hard part. You got to be on top of your game every single night, especially when the pressure builds each moment throughout the playoffs. We got to be ready."

They have been all season.

The Warriors had best shooting percentage and best defensive shooting percentage. They dished out the most assists, and they had an eye-popping plus-10.1 point differential; the next best team, the Los Angeles Clippers, outscored opponents by 6.6 points.

Las Vegas believes Golden State can get it done. Bovada set the Warriors and Cleveland as 11-5 favorites to win the championship after the playoff bracket came out.

Curry could be the NBA MVP, Steve Kerr, the Coach of the Year, and Draymond Green, the Defensive Player of the Year when the league announces the awards over the next few weeks. But none of those regular-season accolades will get Golden State the Larry O'Brien Trophy in mid-June.

Only 16 more wins can.

"We know 67 wins doesn't mean anything going into a seven-game series against anyone," Warriors center Andrew Bogut said. "They don't care that we won. We don't get an extra pat on the back before the series starts or anything like that. We get homecourt and that's about it."

# Big stars sitting at home

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The NBA playoffs are about to begin without some of the most recognizable players in the game.

The Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant and New York's Carmelo Anthony will miss the playoffs for the second straight year, and Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant and Miami's Dwyane Wade are also out.

So is Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook, the first scoring champion to miss the playoffs since Tracy McGrady in 2004.

"I'm at home, watching other teams play," Westbrook said when asked about the scoring title after Oklahoma City's season ended Wednesday. "It doesn't mean nothing."

There are still plenty of star players left in the postseason. Tim Duncan will try to win his sixth title with San Antonio and LeBron James is resuming his quest to bring a title to Cleveland. Stephen Curry and James Harden will try to lead Golden State and Houston to their first NBA Finals in decades.

And new faces are ready to make a splash. Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love make their playoff debuts when Cleveland opens against Boston. Anthony Davis gets his first taste of the postseason when New Orleans takes on the Warriors.

Games will sell out and television ratings will surely be high, but something might just seem off.

"These (are) guys who've been in the playoffs year in and year out, who bring a lot of excitement to the game and to the postseason," Anthony said. "So when I look back and see all the guys that's out, it's like the game is missing something."

Bryant, Durant, Anthony and Chris Bosh were among those who saw their seasons end early because of injury or illness. Of those, only Bosh played in more than half of his team's games.

Paul George made a gallant effort to help Indiana after he recovered from the horrific leg injury he suffered last summer, but the Pacers were ousted on the season's final night. Wade and Miami had a chance until the next-to-last night.

"It's been my toughest year by far," George wrote on Twitter, "but looking forward to my greatest summer ahead!"

In all, nearly half of the league's 32 highest-paid players won't be in the playoffs.

Wade has had the shortest off-seasons in the last four years, with Miami going to the Finals in each. He played in 86 games during those four seasons, which means he basically logged an extra full season — and then some — during those postseasons.

"I haven't had that much time off in a long time," Wade said. "Playing into late June the last four years, it's been a lot, mentally, especially physically. Then coming right back into this season and all the things we went through, from the summer to the season with all the injuries and everything, it was a lot."

Would he have rather been in the playoffs? Absolutely.

But with that not an option, Wade can see a positive outcome.

"It'll be good for me to get away for a while," Wade said, "and come back better next year."

AP Basketball Writer Brian Mahoney contributed to this report.

# Seattle Storm take Loyd first

The Associated Press

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — American basketball player Jewell Loyd and Sweden's Amanda Zahui B. were selected with the top two picks in the WNBA Draft on Thursday after both decided to leave their universities early to turn professional.

Loyd went first to the Seattle Storm, and Zahui B. was taken second by the Tulsa Shock.

"For me, it was the best thing," Loyd said about skipping her final year at Notre Dame.

Zahui B. was born in Sweden and attended the University of Minnesota, where she sat out her first season before averaging 18.8 points, 12.9 rebounds and 4.1 blocks in her second year.

Zahui B. and Loyd were eligible to be drafted because they turn 22 during this calendar year.

"I'm not really sure, both me and Jewell are very unique players," Zahui B. said. "Whoever wants to do it, be sure about it. Make sure you're happy. This feeling is amazing."

Seattle took Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis with the third pick, the Connecticut Sun selected center Elizabeth Williams fourth, and the Chicago Sky took Cheyenne Parker fifth.

The New York Liberty made two trades to get into the first round. New York took Brittany Boyd with the ninth pick after trading Alex Montgomery to San Antonio. The Liberty then traded Anna Cruz to Minnesota for the No. 11 pick and took Kiah Stokes.



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# Peterson reinstated by NFL

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Adrian Peterson has been cleared to return to the NFL. Now all that remains to be settled is where he will play next season.

Commissioner Roger Goodell sent the Minnesota Vikings star a letter on Thursday advising him of his reinstatement. Peterson missed most of last season while facing child abuse charges in Texas.

Goodell wrote that Peterson will have to fulfill all the obligations of his plea deal that reduced a felony charge to a misdemeanor.

Goodell also told Peterson he would have to continue attending counseling while adhering to the league's new personal conduct policy to avoid further discipline.

"Any further violation of the personal conduct policy by Peterson would result in additional discipline, which could include suspension without pay or banishment from the NFL," the league said.

Peterson's agent has said the star running back wants to play elsewhere next season. But the Vikings say they have no plans to trade him.

"We look forward to Adrian re-joining the Vikings," the team said in a statement issued after the announcement.

Peterson was indicted on abuse charges after inflicting injuries on his 4-year-old son with a wooden switch. He played the opener against St. Louis, then sat out

the remaining 15 games of the season while tangling with the league over the discipline.

Harold Henderson, a league-appointed arbitrator, rejected Peterson's appeal and upheld the suspension in December. The NFLPA's petition in federal court to overrule Henderson was granted by U.S. District Judge David Doty, who ordered the appeal back to the NFL for re-arbitration. The league promptly appealed Doty's decision to a higher court.

The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals won't hear that case for months, so those proceedings will be merely for principle in the ongoing dispute between NFL owners and players over protocol and fairness of the personal conduct policy.

The league essentially tabled Peterson's suspension in February after Doty's ruling, putting him back on the exempt list to allow the Vikings to communicate with him, but the announcement Thursday means he's finally in the clear to take the field again.

The question, then, is what colors he'll be wearing this fall.

Despite several cordial meetings with Vikings officials, Peterson's public stance on returning to the only NFL team he has ever played for has been uneasy at best.

In his statement the day of Doty's ruling, Peterson thanked fans, the NFLPA, the union's lead lawyer and his agents but never mentioned the Vikings. One of his agents, Ben Dogra, took the stance a step further in March by declaring that

Peterson no longer wanted to return to Minnesota, setting up a stare-down of sorts between the two sides.

"You make tough choices in life. We clearly understand he's under contract with the Vikings. After several discussions and much thought, I believe that it's not in his best interest to resume his career in Minnesota," Dogra said last month. "It might be best for all parties involved for him to resume his career elsewhere."

Vikings general manager Rick Spielman has told Dogra he doesn't plan to release Peterson, who recently turned 30.

"They have not given us one compelling reason why it's in his best interest to remain as part of the Minnesota Vikings," Dogra said.

The Vikings have leverage with Peterson's contract, which covers the next three years including a \$12.75 million salary for 2015. None of the remaining money on the deal, however, is guaranteed.

If they're serious about not trading the franchise player, the Vikings could conceivably sit tight all spring and summer and not have to pay Peterson at all, given that player paychecks don't go out until the regular season games begin.

Peterson has a \$250,000 workout bonus in his contract, but if he's not interested in playing for the Vikings anymore, he's surely not going to attend their offseason training program when he lives near Houston. He'd be subject to fines if he were to skip the mandatory minicamp in June.

# New York pounces on Pittsburgh

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Rangers wanted to jump right on the Pittsburgh Penguins in their playoff series opener.

How about a goal at 28 seconds?

Derick Brassard provided that, then Ryan McDonagh scored later in the first period. Henrik Lundqvist made the goals stand up as the Rangers shut down Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin and won 2-1 Thursday night.

Game 2 is in New York on Saturday night.

Brassard got things started when Marc-Andre Fleury sent the rebound of Rick Nash's hard slap shot directly into the slot. Brassard was uncovered for a quick wrist shot, the center screaming in delight as the puck went in.

"I give a lot of credit to Rick," Brassard said. "He didn't shoot to score there. He shot for a rebound, he did it on purpose. It was just right there for the rebound."

As were many other shots throughout the game as Fleury made 36 saves. The Rangers couldn't get to the loose pucks the rest of the night.

But they got McDonagh's winner on their slumping power play, which went 1-for-5.

On its third of four man-advantages — and the only one that threatened — in the opening 20 minutes, McDonagh's slapper from midpoint sneaked past Fleury.

"We put a couple goals there in the first period, and got the crowd and momentum on our side," the Rangers captain said.

**Red Wings 3, Lightning 2:** Pavel Datsyuk scored twice and Petr Mrazek had 44 saves in his playoff debut to help visiting Detroit beat Tampa Bay in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference series.

Datsyuk scored on two of the first four shots the Red Wings got against Tampa Bay's Ben Bishop. Luke Glendening's short-handed goal gave Detroit a 3-1 lead early in the third period.

Mrazek, named Detroit's starter for Game 1 over veteran Jimmy Howard, gave up a short-handed goal to Brian Boyle in the first period and a late goal to Nikita Nesterov that enabled the Lightning to pull within 3-2.

**Wild 4, Blues 2:** Jason Zucker and Matt Dumba gave their team a two-goal lead through two periods and visiting Minnesota kept chances to a minimum for Devan Dubnyk, opening the playoffs with a victory over St. Louis.

Jaden Schwartz and Alexander Steen scored in the third period for the Central Division champion Blues.

Dubnyk, in his playoff debut, saw only 11 shots in the first two periods, and finished with 19 saves.

Mikael Granlund's empty-netter made it a two-goal cushion with 1:13 to go, 7 seconds after Allen headed for the bench. Steen scored with 58.7 seconds left for St. Louis, but Jason Pominville scored with 20 seconds left to clinch it.

**Ducks 4, Jets 2:** Corey Perry scored two goals in the third period of a four-point performance as host Anaheim rallied from another late deficit for a victory over Winnipeg in the teams' first-round series opener.

Perry scored the tiebreaking goal with 6:39 to play, but the officials didn't immediately see that the puck had crossed the goal line near Ondrej Pavelec's outstretched pad. The teams played on for 62 seconds until a stoppage allowed video review. The tape confirmed another impressive third-period rally by the Ducks, who had 24 comeback wins in the regular season.

# D-backs outlast struggling Giants

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Arizona second baseman Aaron Hill spent most of the game diving around on the infield dirt at AT&T Park. He ended it with a rare hit off Giants closer Sergio Romo that likely saved teammate Josh Collmenter's spot in the Diamondbacks' rotation.

Hill hit a two-run double with two outs in the 12th inning and Arizona held on to beat San Francisco Giants 7-6 on Thursday night.

Diamondbacks manager Chip Hale had cleared his bench, emptied his bullpen and had Collmenter — Friday's scheduled starter — warming up in the bullpen.

Hale planned on using Collmenter had the game gone any longer. Hill, who made several key defensive plays earlier in the game, bailed the Arizona skipper out with his game-winning hit — Hill's first in 11 at-bats against Romo.

"He's pitched me very well," Hill said. "I've always told myself just try to get something up with him. He's got that tough slider. I was lucky enough to get something I could put a barrel on."

Ender Inciarte singled to lead off the inning against Sergio Romo (0-1) and stole second base. After Paul Goldschmidt was intentionally walked with one out, Cliff Pennington popped out to short. Hill followed with a line shot into the gap in left-center to drive in both runners.

Randall Delgado (1-1), the eighth Arizona pitcher, retired six batters for the win.

Mark Trumbo, Paul Goldschmidt and A.J. Pollock homered for the Diamondbacks, who blew a three-run lead late before beating San Francisco for only the fourth time in the last 15 games.

"We have to learn how to win these type of games," Hale said. "When you win in 12 it's great but you'd like to win that game in nine."

Brandon Crawford homered to end an 0-for-23 slump for the Giants. San Francisco has lost seven straight.

The 3-8 start matches the Giants' worst start in the San Francisco era.

"We're not happy about it, that's for sure," Giants starter Madison Bumgarner said. "But I definitely think things will turn around for us. It can be frustrating but we play a lot of games."

**Mets 7, Marlins 5:** Lucas Duda got three more hits and host New York overcame Giancarlo Stanton's blast and Ichiro Suzuki's ballet for its fifth straight win.

The Mets lost a replay challenge that took nearly six minutes, but posted their longest winning streak since May 2013.

Wilmer Flores hit a three-run homer that helped the Mets rally from a 3-0 deficit. Duda raised his average to .395.

Stanton hit his first home run since a fastball to the face ended his season last September.

Suzuki made a pair of headfirst dives into home plate on the same play, eluding catcher Travis d'Arnaud to make it 5-all in the seventh. Originally called out, Suzuki was ruled safe after a lengthy replay review.

Jerry Blevins (1-0) got the win and Jeury Familia closed for his fourth save. Mike Dunn (0-1) took the loss.

**Twins 8, Royals 5:** Kennys Vargas and Kurt Suzuki each hit a two-run homer, powering host Minnesota to its first series win this season.

Tommy Milone (2-0) picked up his second straight victory for the Twins, recovering from a rough start to log 5½ innings.

Lorenzo Cain put the Royals in front with his two-run shot in the first inning, but starter Jason Vargas (1-1) was shelled. He gave up 10 hits and a walk, failing to get an out in the fourth and leaving with a 5-3 deficit.

**Cardinals 4, Brewers 0:** John Lackey threw seven scoreless innings and Matt Carpenter doubled twice, helping St. Louis over visiting Milwaukee.

Lackey (1-0) gave up five hits, struck out eight and walked one.

St. Louis took a 2-0 lead on two doubles and two singles in the sixth inning.

Carpenter doubled to right to begin the sixth inning. With one out, Matt Holliday hit a 3-2 pitch up the middle for a run-scoring single. Holliday stole second and went to third on Jhonny Peralta's single. Mark Reynolds hit an RBI double to center, but Peralta was thrown out trying to score.

Brewers starter Mike Fiers (0-2) allowed seven hits in 5½ innings.

**Nationals 5 Phillies 2:** Doug Fister pitched effectively into the seventh inning, Yunel Escobar and Michael A. Taylor each hit a homer, and host Washington beat Philadelphia.

Ryan Zimmerman added a two-run double for Washington which, after averaging 2.4 runs through its first seven games, has 22 runs and 28 hits over its last three.

Fister (1-0) allowed two runs on four hits in 6½ innings, striking out four and walking four.

Drew Storen pitched the ninth for his third save.

**Rays 4, Blue Jays 2:** Chris Archer struck out 11 in seven shutout innings and pinch-hitter Tim Beckham had a two-run homer in the sixth to lead visiting Tampa Bay.

It was the second pinch-hit homer of the season for Beckham, making him the first rookie in Tampa Bay history with two pinch-hit long balls — and the first Rays player since Willy Aybar in 2010 to hit two in a season.

Archer (2-1) allowed just two hits and two walks, lowering his ERA to 1.37.