

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## SIGAR: US fed obstacle of corruption

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
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*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Corruption, fed by U.S. actions during the war, is the biggest obstacle to rebuilding Afghanistan, the head of a government watchdog agency has warned.

Corruption undermines the legitimacy and viability of the Afghan state and fuels grievances that strengthen insurgents like the Taliban, John F. Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, said in a speech Wednesday at the University of Pittsburgh.

“The U.S. government initially had little understanding that corruption could threaten its entire security and state-building mission,” Sopko said.

During the 2001 U.S. invasion to oust the Taliban from power, and for years afterward, “the United States partnered with abusive warlords and their militias to pursue al-Qaida and the Taliban, and supported the installation of these warlords and their militias at high levels of the Afghan government,”

Sopko said. “The United States also failed to recognize that vast sums of money injected into the Afghan economy, with limited oversight and pressures to spend, created conditions for corruption.”

A 2015 survey by The Asia Foundation showed Afghans had the least confidence in their government in a decade, partly because of systemic corruption, which those polled said was the third-biggest barrier to national progress after insecurity and unemployment.

“Corruption is particularly a problem when you have huge amounts of money coming from abroad,” said Kate Clark, country director at the Afghanistan Analysts Network. “A culture of corruption and impunity has developed in Afghanistan,” she said. “People think they can get away with stealing from the state with relative ease.”

The government has taken positive steps, she said, including establishing the National Procurement Commission chaired by President Ashraf Ghani and attended by the government’s Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, but

challenges remain.

“It’s not that the will isn’t there,” Clark said. “But it’s difficult because the president and CEO inherited an extremely weak and corrupt state at a time when the economy was nosediving.”

The National Procurement Commission is part of what Ghani has called his “national jihad” on corruption.

Another issue Ghani is tackling is seeking to repatriate roughly \$1 billion stolen from Kabul Bank in the form of fraudulent loans in 2010. Sopko said Ghani has asked SIGAR to join a new task force that will attempt to retrieve the stolen funds, particularly those that have been moved to the United States.

“We are currently in the process of exploring options of best international mechanisms to retake money and assets illegally obtained in the case of Kabul Bank,” Zafer Hashimi, deputy spokesman for the president’s office, said in an email. The government was seeking SIGAR’s “advice” and exploring how the agency could “play an effective role as we embark on this im-

portant undertaking.”

But many Afghans doubt the government will be able to hold the perpetrators accountable. History has shown that influential citizens are above the law, especially with regard to corruption.

“It will only disclose information about the corruption, but they don’t have a system to bring people to justice,” Kabul University lecturer Saifuddin Saihoon said about the proposed task force.

Saihoon commended Afghan leaders for trying to bring perpetrators of corruption to justice, but said the government is too weak. “It just doesn’t have the power,” he said.

Weeding out the corrupt members of the government is not easy, said political analyst Wahid Muzhda.

“When you say to the thief to capture another thief, it is very difficult,” he said. “Corruption is a virus among the Afghan people. No one knows how to fix it.”

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## Obama on Islamic State: We cannot be complacent

*The Washington Post*

President Barack Obama rallied world leaders Friday to confront the growing threat of the Islamic State group and defended his administration’s aggressive use of airstrikes against terrorist groups outside of declared war zones.

Obama said that in recent weeks, the U.S. military has stepped up attacks on terrorist training camps that have killed scores of suspected fighters aligned with al-Qaida or the

Islamic State group in Libya, Yemen and Somalia.

Typically, such strikes outside of war zones like Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan have been directed at suspected terrorist leaders or other “high-value targets,” Obama said. The chaos in ungoverned areas of places such as Libya and Yemen have given terrorist groups more latitude to set up training facilities.

“In some cases, we are seeing camps that after long periods of monitoring are involved in and

directing plots that could do the United States harm” or are supporting the Islamic State group or al-Qaida, Obama said.

Obama’s remarks came at the end of a two-day Nuclear Security Summit that brought 50 world leaders to Washington to discuss ways to prevent the spread of nuclear-weapons technology and ensure that dangerous nuclear material does not fall into the hands of terrorist groups or criminal networks.

The White House added a session on counterterrorism to the summit after the attacks in Brussels that killed 32 people and injured more than 300.

The focus on terrorist networks infused other aspects of the summit, as well, as the world leaders discussed ways to prevent militant groups from obtaining nuclear materials that could be used to make a “dirty bomb” that would cause far higher levels of mass casualties.

# Navy to have intel chief who can view intel

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — The Navy is finally moving to end a long spell during which its intelligence chief hasn't been able to see, hear or read any military secrets.

Navy officials said Vice Adm. Jan Tighe, now the commander of the U.S. Fleet Cyber Command, will soon be nominated to become the chief of naval intelligence. If confirmed by the Senate, she would replace Vice Adm. Ted "Twig" Branch, whose access to classified information was suspended in November 2013 when he was swept up in a still-unfolding Justice Department corruption investigation.

Branch has been under

scrutiny for his ties to Leonard Glenn Francis, an Asian defense contractor commonly known in Navy circles as Fat Leonard. Francis has pleaded guilty in federal court to bribing scores of Navy personnel with cash, prostitutes and luxury hotel rooms in exchange for classified or sensitive information about ship movements and competitors' secrets.

Several Navy officers have pleaded guilty, and more than 100 other personnel remain under investigation for possible criminal or ethical violations in what is shaping up as the worst corruption scandal in Navy history.

Although Branch has not been charged or indicted, federal prosecutors haven't cleared

him, either, leaving Navy officials in a tight spot and unsure whether to replace him. As a result, he has been stuck in limbo for almost two-and-a-half years: nominally in charge of the Navy's secrets even though he's not allowed to know any.

The Navy has taken steps in the past to replace Branch, but never actually went through with it for a variety of reasons.

In November 2014, the Navy prepared a nomination package for Rear Adm. Elizabeth Train to become the service's intelligence head. But her promotion was put on hold after someone filed a complaint against her with the Navy inspector general.

Pentagon officials said Train was ultimately cleared of

wrongdoing. Her nomination was finally sent to the Senate Armed Services Committee in September — where it sat untouched for months.

This week, the Navy withdrew Train's nomination. In a statement, Adm. John Richardson, who took over as the chief of naval operations in the fall, said he decided he wanted to put someone else in charge of naval intelligence.

He lauded Train's service, but with her promotion nixed, she is expected to retire.

Navy officials said Tighe's nomination was still working its way through official channels at the Pentagon but that her name is expected to be forwarded to the White House and the Senate in the coming weeks.

## General: Women in combat will help Army

*Associated Press*

FORT STEWART, Ga. — Despite some initial challenges, allowing female soldiers to serve in combat jobs that have long been closed to women should ultimately "make the Army stronger," the top general at Fort Stewart, Ga., said Friday.

Maj. Gen. Jim Rainey, commander of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, discussed the upcoming change during a question-and-answer session with reporters at the southeast Georgia Army post. Along

with the rest of the Army, Fort Stewart is preparing to begin integrating women into infantry and armor units, possibly before the end of the year.

Rainey noted that the Army already has women serving in battlefield roles as aviators, combat engineers and in field artillery units. He said he expects any resistance from male troops to be short-lived.

"There are women in combat now," Rainey said. "So this isn't like something we've never done and don't know how to do."

As long as the right soldiers are chosen for the right jobs, based on their abilities, he said, "I think it's going to make the Army stronger in the long run."

Rainey has about 15,000 soldiers under his command in the 3rd Infantry, which served combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and about 21,900 troops total at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield in nearby Savannah. Roughly 15 percent are women.

## Americans jump into job market

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Americans are flooding back into the job market at the fastest pace since before the Great Recession, encouraged by steady hiring and some signs of higher pay.

The flow has halted, at least temporarily, one of the economy's more discouraging trends: the sharp decline in the percentage of people either working or looking for work. That figure fell last year to a four-decade low. The pickup since then suggests that nearly seven years after the recession ended, Americans are finally more confident that they can find jobs.

In March, nearly 400,000 people began job hunts. Their searching lifted the unemployment rate to 5 percent from 4.9 percent. Employers added 215,000 jobs, the Labor Department said Friday, a solid figure but not enough to keep up with the new job-seekers.

## US drone strike in Somalia targets al-Shabab

*The Washington Post*

The U.S. military carried out a drone strike in Somalia Thursday against a senior member of the al-Shabab militant group who oversaw attacks resulting in the deaths of at least three U.S. citizens, Pentagon officials said Friday.

Hassan Ali Dhoore, the al-Shabab figure, also was a member of al-Qaida, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said in a

statement. Dhoore was part of al-Shabab's security and intelligence section and was involved in plotting more attacks against Americans in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, Cook said.

"While we are still assessing the results of this operation, removing Dhoore from the battlefield would be a significant blow to al-Shabab's operational planning and ability to conduct attacks against the government of

the Federal Republic of Somalia, its citizens, U.S. partners in the region, and against Americans abroad," Cook's statement said.

A defense official said the strike occurred about 20 miles from the town of Jilib, southwest of Mogadishu. The airstrike, during the early evening, hit a vehicle in which Dhoore and two other members of al-Shabab were traveling.

# Celtics end Warriors' streak

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Everybody expected Stephen Curry to make the three from way out with the clock winding down, just as he always does.

Instead, this time Curry missed a long three-pointer to tie it with 5.3 seconds left and the Golden State Warriors suffered their first home defeat in more than 14 months, losing 109-106 to the Boston Celtics on Friday night to snap an NBA-record 54-game winning streak in the regular season at Oracle Arena.

"Every one of them I think is going down. But it didn't," Curry said. "All things considered, it was a pretty good look at it. ... We've gotten away with some games that we probably shouldn't have won with some shots like that. And tonight it wasn't our night."

That unbeaten run in Oakland included 36 straight home wins to start this season. Golden State hadn't lost at home since a 113-111 overtime defeat to the Bulls on Jan. 27, 2015.

Now, the Warriors (68-8) must win five of their final six games to break the 1995-96 Bulls' record of 72 wins.

Isaiah Thomas made a driving layup with 8.3 seconds left on the way to 22 points for Boston. He scored 18 of his points in the third quarter, when Curry got hot from three-point land, making all six of his attempts.

Shaun Livingston hit two free throws with 46.9 seconds left to get Golden State within two at 105-103, then Draymond Green wrestled the ball away from Amir Johnson moments later for his sixth steal and Golden State called timeout. But Green lost the ball with 23.9 seconds left.

"I kind of started observing the floor before I really grabbed the ball and saw the exact situation that we wanted and left the ball behind," Green said. "I guess you need those lessons sometimes, but it never feels good."

Evan Turner made a pair of free throws

with 18.1 seconds to go before Harrison Barnes' baseline three on a dish from Curry.

But Curry's final look from long range fell short on a night he had been spectacular from beyond the arc. Barnes grabbed the offensive rebound and missed on a long desperation heave with 0.2 seconds left.

Curry went coast to coast and behind his back for a layup to make it 103-101 with 1:29 to go. Boston answered once more, this time on Turner's jumper.

Curry shimmied and swiveled his hips, celebrating as three-pointers kept finding the net — he made eight of them to score 29 points — and for a change that wasn't enough for the sloppy defending champs, who couldn't overcome 22 turnovers that led to 27 points for the Celtics.

Green tried to rally the Warriors on his own. In order, he had a three-point play, a three-pointer and a putback with 3:58 left that pulled the Warriors within three at 99-96.

Trailing 82-79 going into the fourth marked just the Warriors' sixth deficit after three quarters at home this season.

Marcus Smart's three-pointer with 8:41 left put the Celtics up 93-83, and Smart took an elbow to the chin from Barnes in the backcourt with 7:20 left. Every play like that mattered for the Celtics to accomplish what no other team had done in so long.

And Boston did it in the second game of a back-to-back no less following Thursday's 116-109 loss at Portland.

While coach Steve Kerr called the execution "really bad," he also praised his players.

"Everybody's bummed," he said. "I congratulated them. Are you kidding me? They just won 54 home games in a row. What our guys accomplished is incredible. I don't know if people understand the intensity it takes and the work that it takes to put together a streak like that."

Golden State won the first meeting Dec.

11 124-119 in two overtimes in a game featuring 22 lead changes and 16 ties as the Warriors improved to 24-0. They lost at Milwaukee the next night for the first defeat after a record-setting start.

It was a three-point shootout during one sequence late in the third when Leandro Barbosa hit for the Warriors, then Jared Sullinger, and Curry — who the next time down was fouled from way beyond the arc and made all three free throws. That pulled the Warriors within 73-72 at the 2:19 mark of the third.

Curry hit a 30-foot three from the top with 1:52 remaining in the third only to see Kelly Olynyk answer — except Curry's onslaught from way out never subsided.

"When Curry got going in the third quarter, I thought the biggest moment of the game was us scoring consecutively when he scored," Boston coach Brad Stevens said.

Curry shot 9-for-19, 8-for-14 on threes, and passed for six assists. Kerr nearly rested him for Wednesday night's overtime win at Utah but Curry declared himself good to go.

"He's in his prime," Kerr said of the 28-year-old reigning MVP. "He's not injured." Curry hit two three-pointers in the first 62 seconds of the third and six in all during the quarter.

X-Rays on Warriors center Andrew Bogut's injured ribs were negative. He was scheduled to be re-evaluated.

**April Fool's:** At shootaround Friday morning, Kerr told Green he wasn't playing against the Celtics.

Ha! That joke went nowhere.

"It didn't get much of a laugh and Draymond glared at me, so it didn't go over well," Kerr said. "I told him I was going to give him the night off because he needed a rest. He just glared at me. I said, 'April Fool's,' and nobody laughed, and I said, 'All right, it's time to start practice.'"

Green hit two three-pointers to start the game.

# Woods won't play in Masters

Associated Press

Tiger Woods is going to Augusta National next week — to eat, not play.

Woods made official Friday night what most observers figured all along. Recovery from two back surgeries last year has not progressed to the point where he is ready to tee it up at the Masters. It will be the second time in the past three years that the four-time champion has not played the Masters.

"After assessing the present condition of my back, and consulting with my medical team, I've decided it's prudent to miss this year's Masters," Woods said on his website.

"I've been hitting balls and training daily, but I'm not physically ready. I've said all along that this time I need to be cautious and do what's best for my long-term health and career."

"Unfortunately, playing Augusta next week wouldn't be the right decision."

Woods said he at least plans to attend the Champions Dinner on Tuesday night "and see a lot of friends." Masters champion Jordan Spieth has said he will serve Texas barbecue.

It will be the second social event in two months for Woods. He also showed up at the home of Jack Nicklaus in late February when Nicklaus hosted Ryder Cup captain Davis Love III, the vice captains (Woods is one of them) and prospective players.

Woods first missed the 2014 Masters when he had back surgery a week earlier. He returned in June after the U.S. Open, took three more months off at the end of the year to get fit, and then ran into trouble with his back again last year.

**Spieth's golf IQ:** Jordan Spieth was on the right side of the fairway at Albany Golf Club in the Bahamas, trying to figure out his next shot. He remembered the grass being a little thin on the left side, so any shot hit too hard in that direction was likely to run through into the scrub and dunes.

What he didn't notice — or hear — was the guy sitting in a cart just outside the ropes.

"This kid is so smart," Tiger Woods said as he leaned forward with his arms resting against the wheel.

More than his capacity to hole 20-foot putts, his reliable short game and the other parts of his game that don't get enough credit, the 22-year-old Masters champion has an old head on young shoulders. It's what led David Feherty to blurt out during an interview with Spieth, "This is like listening to Old Tom Morris."

Cameron McCormick noticed something different about Spieth when he first began teaching the 12-year-old from Dallas. The kid was relentless with questions. McCormick attributes a big part of Spieth's smarts to his parents. His father, Shawn, played baseball at Lehigh. His mother, Chris, played basketball at Moravian.

"It's like he had a master's degree before he ever won the Masters," McCormick said.

# Ortiz looking forward to farewell tour

Associated Press

BOSTON — Get ready for the ultimate Big Papi walkoff.

David Ortiz is retiring after the season, but not before he takes a farewell tour of the major leagues that should allow him to fill a couple of closets with gifts from opponents who were reluctant to face him and glad to see him go. But even as his longtime opponents try to fete the foe who upended so many ninth-inning leads, the Red Sox designated hitter says he also wants to thank the fans — including those who rooted against him.

"Whatever team you're cheering for — you're supporting me because you are a baseball fan," Ortiz said this spring as he looked ahead to his farewell tour. "So I'm going to show my appreciation to everyone."

Ortiz announced on his 40th birthday in November that 2016 would be his final season. Since then, the Red Sox have

been planning a going-away party befitting the player who helped end their 86-year dynasty of disappointment and lead the franchise to three World Series titles.

The festivities started this week in Fort Myers, Fla., where a street outside the team's spring ballpark was named "David Ortiz Way." After his final home spring training game, Ortiz was chauffeured off the field in a specially decorated golf cart driven by Hall of Famer Jim Rice and former Red Sox pitcher Luis Tiant.

"I wasn't expecting any of it, but it happened," Ortiz said. "Whenever somebody comes to you with a gift, it's always welcomed, right?"

Ortiz homered in his final spring training at-bat on Thursday against Minnesota. After striking out and grounding out in his two scheduled plate appearances, he asked manager John Farrell for one more shot.

While opposing teams are planning their farewell gifts, the Red Sox will be

showing their fans with Papi-themed giveaways throughout the season.

Ortiz's team has five scheduled promotions centered around their departing DH, one each month through August: A necklace commemorating his 500th homer, a canvas print, a gnome, "build-a-Papi" and the requisite bobble head.

There's no word yet on what other teams have planned for Ortiz's final visit; the Red Sox don't play in San Diego this year, so we can be spared the image of the 230-pound slugger trying to scramble onto a hand-painted surfboard.

It's going to be an emotional final week for Ortiz, with a three-game series in New York against the archrival Yankees followed by the last series at Fenway Park.

But the Red Sox are hoping to extend his career — through the World Series.

"To finish out with a ring for him, that'd mean a lot," Red Sox outfielder Mookie Betts said. "For him to go out with a bang like that would be very special."



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# James, Cavs top Hawks in OT

Associated Press

ATLANTA — LeBron James had 29 points to pass another Hall of Famer on the NBA's career scoring list as the Cleveland Cavaliers recovered from blowing a big first-half lead to beat the Atlanta Hawks 110-108 in overtime.

James had 16 rebounds and nine assists, just missing a triple-double.

The Cavaliers still lead Toronto, which won at Memphis, by 2½ games in the race for the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference.

James moved past Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson into 11th place on the NBA's scoring list when he scored on a layup late in the third quarter. Atlanta's Al Horford was called for goaltending on the play. The basket gave James 26,711 points. He began the night 21 points behind Robertson's 26,710 points.

**Hornets 100, 76ers 91:** Kemba Walker had 27 points and 11 rebounds to help host Charlotte beat Philadelphia and close in on clinching an Eastern Conference playoff spot.

The Hornets (44-31) can wrap up a postseason berth for the second time in three seasons if Detroit beats Chicago on Saturday night.

Walker had three three-pointers late in the fourth quarter to seal the win. Nicolas Batum overcame a shaky start and had 19 points and seven assists for the Hornets, who have won 14 of their last 17 games and positioned themselves to potentially host a playoff series.

**Mavericks 98, Pistons 89:** J.J. Barea scored 29 points and Dirk Nowitzki added 19 as visiting Dallas beat Detroit.

With the win, Dallas remained tied with Utah for seventh place in the Western Conference.

Even with the loss, Detroit leads eighth-place Indiana by a half-game and ninth-place Chicago by 1½ games in the East. The Pistons visit the Bulls on Saturday.

Marcus Morris led the Pistons with a season-high 29 points, while Andre Drummond had 12 points and 17 rebounds.

**Knicks 105, Nets 91:** Langston Galloway scored 14 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter as New York beat visiting Brooklyn to split the four-game season series with their city rival.

Derrick Williams had 16 points in place of injured starter Kristaps Porzingis as the Knicks avoided dropping the series for the second straight season. Jerian Grant, also getting a start because of injury, finished with 14 points and Carmelo Anthony scored 13.

Porzingis has a strained right shoulder and Jose Calderon is out with a deep thigh bruise. It's unclear if either will play again this season.

Sean Kilpatrick scored 17 points and Brook Lopez had 16 in outplaying twin brother Robin on their 28th birthday, but the Nets fell apart in the fourth quarter of their fourth straight loss.

**Bucks 113, Magic 110:** Jabari Parker made a driving basket with 10.1 seconds left to put host Milwaukee ahead and Tyler Ennis hit two free throws that sealed the Bucks' win over Orlando.

Parker finished with 26 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo had a triple-double with 18 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists, and Greg Monroe and Khris Middleton each added 18 points as the Bucks snapped the Magic's three-game winning streak.

Nikola Vucevic scored 22 points on 10 of 13 shooting and Victor Oladipo added 18 for the Magic.

**Raptors 99, Grizzlies 95:** DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points and Kyle Lowry added 22 as visiting Toronto held off Memphis.

Terrence Ross was key in the fourth quarter, scoring all 12 of his points in the final period, making four three-pointers in the fourth.

Jonas Valanciunas had 11 points, 14 re-

bounds and a career-best seven blocks as the Raptors won their second straight and third in the past four.

**Jazz 98, Timberwolves 85:** Gordon Hayward scored 22 points as host Utah defeated Minnesota to hold on to its place in the Western Conference playoff race.

The Jazz (38-38) are tied with the Dallas Mavericks for the final two slots and are a full game ahead of the Houston Rockets.

Andrew Wiggins paced Minnesota with 24 points, while Karl-Anthony Towns chipped in 17 and 11 rebounds.

**Heat 112, Kings 106:** Luol Deng made a three-pointer with 45.7 seconds left as Miami held on to beat host Sacramento, avoiding a second straight late-game collapse.

Two nights after blowing a big lead and losing in overtime to the Lakers, the Heat nearly let another one get away before Deng's shot from the left corner halted Miami's slide and helped move coach Eric Spoelstra's club one step closer to the playoffs despite being without leading scorer Dwayne Wade.

Wade was injured during Wednesday's loss to the Lakers and watched the game from Miami's bench in street clothes.

Gerald Green started in place of Wade and scored a season-high 30 points.

**Wizards 106, Suns 99:** Markieff Morris overcame a rude welcome in his Phoenix return by scoring 21 points to help Washington beat the Suns.

John Wall added 22 points, eight rebounds and 10 assists, and Brandon Beal scored 21 points for the Wizards, who moved within 2½ games of idle Indiana for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

Morris, whose tumultuous 4½-year Phoenix stint ended when he was dealt to the Wizards on Feb. 18, was booed in introductions and every time he touched the ball. But he shot 8 of 14 and grabbed nine rebounds as the Wizards rallied to snap a two-game losing streak.

## NHL hits Blackhawks' Keith with suspension

NEW YORK — The Chicago Blackhawks will start the playoffs without reigning playoff MVP Duncan Keith, who was suspended six games for "dangerously and violently" high-sticking Minnesota Wild forward Charlie Coyle.

Keith will miss the final five games of the regular season and the first game of the Blackhawks' first-round playoff series.

While on his back on the ice, Keith struck Coyle in the face with his stick, an action Patrick Burke of the NHL's department of player safety called "an intentional and retaliatory act of violence by a player with a history of using his stick as a weapon" in the video announcing the suspension.

Keith has been suspended twice before, including for a similar incident when he deliberately hit Los Angeles Kings forward Jeff Carter in the face with his stick during the 2013 Western Conference finals.

## Oregon coach: Apology not necessary

HOUSTON — Oregon coach Dana Altman's message to Coach K: No apology necessary.

With a week to digest the dust-up between Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski and Oregon guard Dillon Brooks, Altman said that, sure, he wished things had gone differently, too. But he was fine with Krzyzewski's dressing down of Brooks after the game.

"I had no problem with what he did," Altman said on Friday. "I've got great respect for him. Dillon had no problem. Dillon's response, 'I'm sorry, coach' — I thought he handled it unbelievably well."

Krzyzewski initially denied that part of the conversation, but with CBS audio confirming that conversation had actually taken place, Krzyzewski reached out to Brooks and Altman to say he was sorry.

## USC LB Felix loses appeal, career over

LOS ANGELES — Southern California linebacker Scott Felix has lost his final year of football eligibility after losing an appeal of his penalty for taking a banned substance.

Felix claims he took an over-the-counter supplement from a nutrition store that led to his positive test. He says he didn't consult the school's medical staff before he took the substance.

Felix started 15 games for the Trojans, including 10 last season as a redshirt junior. He made 75 tackles in his USC career.

He changed his last name from Starr to Felix in late 2014.

USC coach Clay Helton says the school is investigating ways to allow Felix to be involved with the program this fall while he completes his theater degree.

## C Teagarden suspended for drug violation

NEW YORK — Former major league catcher Taylor Teagarden, among the athletes accused of using performance-enhancing drugs in a December report by Al Jazeera, was suspended for 80 games on Friday by Major League Baseball.

The 32-year-old Teagarden played eight games with the Cubs last year and spent the majority of the season at Triple-A Iowa. He became a free agent in October when he refused an outright assignment to the minors.

— Associated Press

# Caps earn franchise-record 55th win

Associated Press

DENVER — Once the Washington Capitals stopped hitting the post, they were able to reach a milestone.

Alex Ovechkin scored in a three-goal second period and the Capitals won their franchise-record 55th game of the season by beating the Colorado Avalanche 4-2 on Friday night.

Early on, the Capitals were ping-pong shots off the post left and right. And the ones that didn't draw iron were stopped by former Washington goaltender Semyon Varlamov.

"The only reason the game was close was Varlamov and the posts," said Capitals coach Barry Trotz, who estimated his team hit five posts. "We could've lit them up tonight."

It turned around in the second period as Jay Beagle, Ovechkin and Jason Chimera all had goals within a 5:26 span to help Braden Holtby notch his 47th victory of the season. The Capitals goaltender is one away from matching Martin Brodeur's mark for most wins in a single season.

Given that Holtby faced just 19 shots, stopping 17, Trotz is considering starting him Saturday night in Arizona. The team really wants to get that record for him.

"Maybe it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Ovechkin said. "We're going to do our best."

The loss was costly for the Avalanche, who trail Minnesota by five points for

the last playoff spot in the Western Conference. The Wild lost earlier in the night, but Colorado couldn't capitalize. The Avs have just four games left.

"When you don't play .500 hockey at home, it's hard to make the playoffs," said Colorado coach Patrick Roy, whose team is 17-18-4 at Pepsi Center. "Those nights you have to find a way, the ugly way, whatever way it is, you have to find a way to win a game like this."

Gabriel Landeskog scored with 5:39 remaining to make it a one-goal game. Colorado pulled Varlamov with around 2:20 left, only to have T.J. Oshie add an empty-netter with 9.9 seconds left to wrap up the win.

Jarome Iginla scored his 609th career goal in the second period. He's one away from tying Bobby Hull for 16th place on the career list.

Washington doesn't have much at stake after already locking up the Presidents' Trophy as the top regular-season team in the NHL. But the Capitals played like the more desperate team and outshot Colorado by a 46-19 margin.

"That's a team on a mission right now," Roy said.

**Canucks 3, Ducks 2:** Emerson Etem scored the tiebreaking goal against his former team with 6:37 to play as visiting Vancouver rallied from a third-period deficit for its second straight victory.

Dan Hamhuis scored the tying goal shortly after Nate Thompson put the

Ducks ahead in the third period. Etem then batted home a rebound in the longtime Ducks forward's first game back at Honda Center since Anaheim traded the native of nearby Long Beach last summer.

**Bruins 6, Blues 5:** David Krejci had two goals and two assists as visiting Boston snapped out of a scoring funk to beat St. Louis and hang onto third place in the Atlantic Division.

Loui Eriksson got his 500th career point with a goal and an assist and Patrice Bergeron scored his 30th this season for the Bruins, who totaled 10 goals while dropping six of their previous seven games. They're a point ahead of Detroit with four games remaining.

**Blackhawks 5, Jets 4 (OT):** Brent Seabrook scored 1:02 into overtime after Artemi Panarin tied it late in the third period with his second goal of the game as visiting Chicago beat Winnipeg.

Panarin also had two assists, including orchestrating a 2-on-1 with Seabrook in overtime. Panarin passed across the slot to Seabrook, who beat Ondrej Pavelec with a shot inside the near post.

**Red Wings 3, Wild 2:** Riley Sheahan had a goal and an assist to lead host Detroit over Minnesota in a game with playoff implications for both teams.

Detroit entered one point behind Boston for third place in the Atlantic Division, while Minnesota came in with a five-point lead on Colorado for the final Western Conference wild-card spot.