

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Carter seeks joint service duty changes

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — U.S. military officers would have a broader opportunity to fulfill joint assignment obligations and spend less time in those roles under proposed changes — unveiled by Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Tuesday — to the 30-year-old law that governs the Pentagon's force structure.

The changes to the joint duty requirements mandated by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act were among the reforms that Carter broadly described during a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. Other proposed changes included cutting some four-star command slots, further empowering the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and expanding the service chiefs' roles in acquisition.

Some changes would need action from Congress. Other proposals would be implemented unilaterally at the Pentagon "in the coming weeks," Carter said.

Carter said that adjusting

the landmark Goldwater-Nichols Act, which provided the Pentagon its current structure and simplified the chain of command, is necessary in an "increasingly complex" world where wars are likely to be fought across multiple geographical regions and in multiple domains, such as land, air, sea, space and cyber.

"Instead of the Cold War and one clear threat, we face a security environment that's dramatically different from the last quarter-century," Carter said. "It's time that we consider practical updates to this critical organizational framework, while still preserving its spirit and intent."

Carter said the current joint duty requirements for officers who want to be promoted to the top levels of military service remain important. But cutting them from three years to two would offer officers "more flexibility" to command troops or serve in other roles that could "broaden or deepen their careers."

The secretary also wants to expand assignments that would count toward those require-

ments, "which are more narrow and rigid than they need to be."

He proposed expanding duties from planning and command-and-control assignments to include joint experience in "other operational functions, such as intelligence, fires, transportation and maneuver, protection and sustainment, including joint acquisition."

He used the war against the Islamic State militant group as an example. A staff officer working for Central Command would get joint duty credit, while an officer assigned to a combined air operations center working with troops across all services to coordinate airstrikes might not receive such credit.

The Pentagon will look at the number of four-star commands to determine which could be filled by a three-star general or admiral in the future, he said. The Defense Department is already working to reduce headquarters staffs by 25 percent after they grew dramatically during the last 15 years of war. Reducing the size of those staffs and eliminating some four-star

officers, Carter said, would make them more efficient and reduce the "top-heavy" nature of the department.

Carter also wants the role of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, currently held by Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, to be rewritten to mandate that he works with the nine unified combatant commanders to provide the defense secretary and president singular advice on the U.S. military's global needs. Under the current structure, Carter receives individual assessments from each combatant commander. The current structure worked when the nature of conflict was less complicated, he said.

"In today's complex world we need someone in uniform who can look across the services and combatant commands and make objective recommendations to the department's civilian leadership about where to allocate forces throughout the world and where to apportion risk to achieve maximum benefit to our nation," Carter said. "The person best postured to do that is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs."

## Pentagon: US mulls more bases in Iraq amid Mosul push

BY TARA COPP

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Additional U.S. bases might be opened in Iraq as U.S. troops help Iraqi Security Forces advance toward Mosul, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

About 200 Marines are providing fire support out of a new base, formerly known as Fire Base Bell, that the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Task Force Spartan, opened last month just outside the training facility at Makhmour, Iraq.

The Marines are using the base to assist the Iraqi Army 15th Division's advance west and north to retake Islamic State-controlled villages about 45 miles south of Mosul, according to the Joint Staff vice director for operations, Rear Adm. Andrew L. Lewis.

"Their mission is to provide fires in support of Iraqi forces, just like we do with airplanes," Lewis said Wednesday about the surface-to-surface fires.

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph

Dunford are preparing options at President Barack Obama's request, Lewis said, including how U.S. forces can help accelerate the campaign against the Islamic State group. Dunford said last week in a briefing with reporters that additional U.S. forces could be sent to Iraq for the fight for Mosul, the de facto Islamic State capital in Iraq. Mosul was captured by the Islamic State group in 2014.

On Wednesday, Lewis said U.S. forces could establish additional bases in Iraq as part of that accelerated campaign.

"It's dependent upon what's happening on the ground and in the campaign," he said. "As Iraqi forces progress toward isolating Mosul, there may be a situation in which there is another base that is opened or reopened from years past that would be used in the same manner, as a fire-support base."

Fire Base Bell, recently renamed the Kara Soar Counter Fire Complex, has been repeatedly targeted by Islamic State fire, including a March 19 rocket strike that killed a U.S. Marine.

## Miss. religious freedom law gets muted response

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — The decision by Mississippi's governor to sign a law that allows religious groups and some private businesses to deny services to gay and transgender people may have headed off gathering opposition in the state's business community, but it could launch the state into litigation.

Saying he was protecting religious freedom, Republican Gov. Phil Bryant signed the bill Tuesday without hesitation or fanfare just hours after it cleared its final legislative obstacle Monday.

According to several supporters, Bryant said increasing pressure from businesses against the law illustrated Mississippi's need for it.

"It shows why we need this bill, so people can not only believe what they believe, but act in accordance with their beliefs and not violate their

conscience," said Rep. Andy Gipson, R-Braxton, who helped shepherd the measure through the chamber.

Mississippi, with a slow-growing economy, no Fortune 500 company headquarters and little technology employment, could be less vulnerable than other states to major corporations exerting economic pressure against new laws that began emerging after a U.S. Supreme Court decision last summer that effectively legalized gay marriage nationwide.

Republican Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal vetoed a similar bill last week after big companies including Coca-Cola and Delta Air Lines expressed vehement opposition and national sports organizations hinted that they might hold their important events elsewhere.

It was unclear whether opponents would seriously push for repeal of the Mississippi law. It is slated to take effect July 1.

## Ukraine leader: Offshore account not a tax dodge

Associated Press

BERLIN — The president of Ukraine became the latest prominent politician to deny wrongdoing Wednesday after his name was linked to secretive offshore accounts arranged by a Panama law firm.

The revelations have raised suspicion that such offshore entities were set up to avoid taxes, but Petro Poroshenko denied that was the purpose in his case. Rather, he said, it was necessary to create an offshore holding company to put his candy business in a blind trust when he became president of Ukraine in 2014.

"This is absolutely normal procedure, and I think this is the main difference from the naming of all the political figures in this Panama list," Poroshenko said in Tokyo, where

he was meeting with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and business leaders.

"If we have anything to be investigated, I am happy to do that," he said. "But, this is absolutely transparent from the very beginning. No hidden account, no associated management, no nothing."

Reports, based on a trove of confidential documents from Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca, have purported to expose the offshore arrangements of public officials, businesspeople and celebrities around the world.

Iceland's prime minister became the first casualty of the affair Tuesday, stepping down two days after a video was aired showing him breaking off a television interview over questions about his family's offshore dealings.

## Results in Wis. shift campaign momentum

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Republican Donald Trump emerged from Wisconsin as a damaged front-runner following a crushing loss to rival Ted Cruz, deepening questions about the billionaire businessman's presidential qualifications and pushing the GOP toward a rare contested convention fight.

Democrat Bernie Sanders also scored a sweeping victory in Wisconsin's primary that gives him a fresh incentive to keep challenging Hillary Clinton. But Sanders still lags Clinton significantly in the delegate count.

Both parties are turning their sights toward New York, which offers a massive delegate prize in its April 19 contests. It marks a homecoming of sorts for several candidates, with Trump, Clinton and Sanders all touting roots in the state.

Trump, who has dominated the Republican race for months, suddenly finds himself on the defensive as the campaign moves east. He's struggled through a series of missteps, including his campaign manager's legal issues after an altercation with a female reporter and his own awkward explanation of his position on abortion.

Exit polls in Wisconsin highlighted the deep worries about Trump that are surging through some corners of the Republican Party.

A majority of GOP voters said they're either concerned about or scared of a potential Trump presidency, according to surveys conducted by Edison Research for The Associated Press and television networks.

Cruz has stepped forward as the candidate best positioned to block Trump, though it would likely take a convention battle to accomplish that goal. A Texas senator with a complicated relationship with Republican leaders, Cruz cast his Wisconsin victory as a "turning point"

in the race and urged the party to rally around his candidacy.

Even if Cruz's gains do force the GOP race into a contested convention in July, it is unclear whether he would emerge as the nominee, or whether the party would try to put forward someone else.

Trump was unbowed in his defeat. His campaign put out a biting statement accusing Cruz of being "worse than a puppet — he is a Trojan horse, being used by the party bosses attempting to steal the nomination from Mr. Trump."

The billionaire's campaign also suggested in the statement that Cruz is illegally coordinating with his own special interest group.

In response, Cruz' communications director, Jason Miller, said late Tuesday that "Donald Trump has a real problem when he gets his tail kicked, and that's exactly what happened tonight."

On the Democratic side, Sanders still trails Clinton in the pledged delegate count and has so far been unable to persuade superdelegates — the party officials who can back any candidate — to drop their allegiance to the former secretary of state and back his campaign.

At a raucous rally in Wyoming, Sanders cast his victory as a sign of mounting momentum for his campaign.

With an overwhelming white electorate and liberal pockets of voters, Wisconsin was favorable territory for Sanders. In a sign of Clinton's low expectations in the Midwestern state, she spent Tuesday night at a fundraiser with top donors in New York City.

Clinton congratulated Sanders on Twitter and thanked her supporters in Wisconsin. "To all the voters and volunteers who poured your hearts into this campaign: Forward!" she wrote.

# Big Three favored in Masters

Associated Press

The opening line in a book David Owen wrote 17 years ago about the Masters captures why the anticipation for the first major at Augusta National.

"The modern golf season never ends, but it does begin."

That rings particularly true this year.

The fall is forgotten. The preliminaries are over. For some, the Masters could not get here soon enough.

It felt that way when the 2015 majors ended last August with Jason Day winning the PGA Championship in a one-sided duel and a record score to par. Jordan Spieth opened the new year with an eight-shot victory in Hawaii, right as the Masters began airing TV promos with those moody piano notes.

For three months, just about every tournament was a reminder of the show-down looming amid the azaleas and dogwoods.

"I don't know if it's a free-for-all," Adam Scott said. "I think it's an exciting lead-up to the Masters with a lot of top players in great form and a lot of stories there, probably more so than the past few years."

The top of golf is so tight at the moment that Westgate Las Vegas Sportsbook has three co-favorites — Day, Spieth and Rory McIlroy — with 7-1 odds to win the green jacket. All in their 20s, they have won five of the last six majors, which is why they have been referred to as the modern version of the "Big Three."

Only now they have company.

Bubba Watson won at Riviera, reviving memories of his two Masters victories in the last even-numbered years. Scott tabbed him as the favorite, even as the Australian won in back-to-back weeks to start the Florida swing. And then along came Day, who won his last two starts

before the Masters to return to No. 1 in the world.

"I am looking forward to it. I know it's one tournament that I've always wanted to win, so the motivation and the want ... there's no problem," Day said. "I can't get comfortable with how I'm playing right now. I can't get lazy, because I've got to understand that what I'm doing is working. So I've got to keep working ... and then stay focused and hopefully put on the green jacket."

The only player among the top six in the world without a victory is McIlroy, who has had three good chances to win in the last six weeks. He returns to Augusta with another shot at becoming only the sixth player in history to complete the career Grand Slam.

Not to be overlooked is three-time Masters champion Phil Mickelson, who narrowly missed winning at Pebble Beach and looks rejuvenated at 45.

"There are more guys in the conversation," Scott said. "There are so many that I'd be surprised if some or all of these guys aren't there come Sunday, from Bubba to Jason to Jordan."

So many top players are performing so well that this will be the smallest field at Augusta National in at least 10 years. PGA Tour winners automatically qualify for the Masters, but in the 12 tournaments to start the year, every winner already was eligible except for Augusta resident Vaughn Taylor, who won at Pebble Beach as an alternate.

Seven of the top 14 players in the world already have won this year.

That's not much different from four years ago when eight of the top 20 had won early in the year, including McIlroy, Mickelson and Tiger Woods. Only one of those players, Mickelson, was in contention that year.

For all its magic, Augusta manages to

keep everyone guessing. The last No. 1 player to win the Masters was Woods in 2002.

The original "Big Three" featured Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player, and it was as much about marketing as the majors they won. It's too soon to hang that tag on players still in their 20s, though all of them have won majors and have traded turns at No. 1.

The youth movement in golf, however, is as much about depth.

"I think you've got more good players right now than you've had in a while," Nicklaus said.

Nicklaus and Woods are the only players over the last 50 years to have won back-to-back heading into Augusta, and then won the Masters. That's what is facing Day, the 28-year-old Australian who has an exquisite short game to complement his power.

His victories have taken a little attention away from Spieth, who is chasing his own slice of history as he tries to join Nicklaus, Woods and Nick Faldo as the only Masters champions to repeat. The 22-year-old is playing the Masters for only the third time.

As a rookie, he had a two-shot lead with 11 holes to play and was on the cusp of becoming the youngest Masters champion until Watson chased him down. Last year, Spieth was so dominant in his wire-to-wire victory that he set the 36-hole record, tied the 72-hole record and never let anyone closer to him than three shots over the final three days.

Expectations are one thing. The real hurdle for Spieth is the competition.

"I think this year's Masters might be the hardest one to win in quite a while as far as the depth of the field and the quality of golf being played by people who play Augusta National very well," Spieth said. "Everybody wants it badly."

# Amateur's irons are unusual

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Bryson DeChambeau is the only golfer at the Masters with a set of irons that are all the same length. The last guy to try that was none other than Bobby Jones, the club's co-founder.

DeChambeau is a U.S. Amateur champion — like Jones was once — and the 22-year-old rookie's debut may be the most anticipated since Jordan Spieth's a couple years ago. DeChambeau also won the NCAA title last year, a double accomplished previously by only Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Ryan Moore.

What makes his entry more tantalizing still is his unique iron set. Unlike a traditional set, where each club from the 3-iron through the wedges gets shorter and more lofted, all 10 of DeChambeau's irons measure 37½ inches, the length of a typical 6-iron.

DeChambeau became intrigued by the idea of equal-length clubs in 2009, not long after his golf coach, Mike Schy, introduced him to an esoteric swing manual called "The Golfing Machine." The book was written by Homer Kelley, a Seattle aircraft mechanic determined to lay out the engineering specs of the golf swing on a page. It offers students a chance to build their own swings by choosing between 24 different components, each offering between three and 11 variations.

DeChambeau settled on a swing that keeps the club on a single plane from start to finish, and that his interest in physics led him to conclude the easiest way to accomplish that was to use a set of irons all of the same length. That concept was tested and employed by Jones, but it never caught on with golfers or the big equipment companies.

The first time DeChambeau and Schy experimented with the concept was in 2011. They kept adding lead to both the clubheads and grips trying to find a balance.

"Took us two weeks to make it," he recalled. "It was an old set, all mangled and had a lot of metal taken off it and lead tape put on. It was quite ugly looking, but it was fun."

It's easy to understand why DeChambeau was thrilled on his first visit to Augusta to find Jones' similar iron set on display in a glass case in the club's grill room.

"It was a pretty special moment, because we'd always heard that story, never verified it," DeChambeau recalled. "But when I actually got to go up to that case and I looked in, I went, 'Oh my goodness ... It inspired me even more. It was gratifying to our journey.'"

DeChambeau, who grew up in Clovis, Calif., is confident in his approach.

"He comes at the game from such a different point of view," said Phil Mickelson after a practice round with the youngster, "and he has such well-thought out opinions as to why and how it should be played a certain way, a different way, the way that he plays it."

"He's a terrific player," he added, "Fun to be around."

# UConn wins 4th straight national title

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Peerless again. Perfect again.

Connecticut senior Breanna Stewart capped off her brilliant career with a fourth straight national championship — a feat never accomplished before in Division I women's basketball.

"It was the perfect ending," Stewart said. "We had a goal coming in as freshmen and now as seniors we did that. We did what we wanted to do. It was a lot of fun."

The 82-51 win over Syracuse on Tuesday night finished another flawless season for Geno Auriemma and his Huskies (38-0). Until now, only the UCLA men's team had won four in a row in D-I, rolling to seven consecutive championships under John Wooden from 1967-73.

Now Auriemma has passed the Wizard of Westwood with his 11th national title.

"What those 11 championships mean to me is how many great players I've had the opportunity to coach," Auriemma

said. "How many great people have come through the program. It doesn't matter whose name is above, or whose name I'm under. As long as I have those players in my memory, I'm good."

He won't forget Stewart anytime soon.

The three-time AP Player of the Year has said it is up to others to decide her place in women's college basketball lore. There is no denying she is the most accomplished player ever, winning more titles than fellow UConn greats Diana Taurasi and Maya Moore, who watched from the stands at Bankers Life Fieldhouse. Auriemma wouldn't argue with the description of Stewart as the best ever.

"I'll say this. She's the greatest NCAA Tournament player I've ever been around," Auriemma said. "When the lights were the brightest, that's [when] she was at her best."

Stewart said when she came to campus four years ago that she wanted to win four titles. She delivered on that promise by scoring 24 points and grabbing 10 rebounds. She and fellow seniors Morgan

Tuck and Moriah Jefferson posed on a ladder after cutting down the net for the final time.

Mission accomplished. The three went 24-0 in NCAA tourney games, too.

"It wasn't a sense of relief, it was a sense of success. This is exactly what we wanted," Stewart said. "Going into every one of our national championship runs, we were confident and that's what we were tonight, confident. We made history and to be able to say that we did that with those two guys, we're going to remember that forever."

The Huskies have been nearly unbeatable since Stewart arrived. They lost four games her freshman year and only one since. The win over Syracuse was the 75th straight for UConn, all by double figures.

Stewart earned the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four all four years of her career. No other women's player has won it more than twice and only Lew Alcindor did it three times on the men's side.



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# Rays slide past Blue Jays

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — After a disputed defeat Tuesday night, Toronto Blue Jays manager John Gibbons is certainly no fan of baseball's new rule on breaking up double plays.

"Maybe we'll come out wearing dresses tomorrow," Gibbons said. "Maybe that's what everybody's looking for."

The recent change took all of three days to undoubtedly swing the outcome of a game this season, giving Logan Forsythe and the Tampa Bay Rays a 3-2 victory over Toronto that left Gibbons fuming.

With the bases loaded and one out in the ninth inning, Blue Jays slugger Edwin Encarnacion hit a grounder to third. After taking a throw from Evan Longoria for the force at second, Forsythe made an errant relay to first that appeared to allow the go-ahead run to score for Toronto.

Rays manager Kevin Cash asked for a replay review, claiming Jose Bautista violated the new "Chase Utley Rule" governing slides on potential double plays.

Replay umpires in New York ruled Bautista's slide was not directly into the bag and it illegally hindered Forsythe. The call was changed to a game-ending double play that preserved Tampa Bay's victory.

The call was overturned after a delay of 1 minute, 30 seconds.

An announcement in the press box explained that the replay umpire definitively determined the runner violated rule 6.01 (j), that the runner's actions hindered and impeded the fielder. It was also determined that Bautista did not engage in a bona fide slide, as he did not attempt to remain on the base.

**Red Sox 6, Indians 2:** David Price struck out 10 and won his weather-delayed debut for Boston, and David Ortiz hit a two-run homer to lead the Red Sox over host Cleveland, who pushed back their season opener a day because of wintry conditions.

Price (1-0) gave up two runs and five hits in six innings, giving the Red Sox an immediate payoff after they signed the left-hander to a \$217 million, seven-year contract.

Ortiz began his farewell season with a bang, connecting for his 504th homer in the ninth. Big Papi tied Hall of Famer Eddie Murray for 26th place on the career list. Ortiz also doubled.

Boston's Mookie Betts homered in the second off Corey Kluber (0-1), tagged with a loss in the opener for the second straight year.

**Astros 5, Yankees 3:** Carlos Correa reached on an eighth-inning dribbler that Dellin Betances threw over first baseman Mark Teixeira as Jose Altuve scored the tiebreaking run, and visiting Houston beat New York to win four straight openers for the first time in franchise history.

Yankees manager Joe Girardi argued with plate umpire Dana DeMuth that Correa should have been called out for running on the fair side of the foul line, causing Betances (0-1) to throw the ball over Teixeira for an error.

After the four umpires conferred, the call was upheld and Girardi played the remainder of the game under protest.

**Mets 2, Royals 0:** Noah Syndergaard pitched six dominant innings, Neil Walker hit his first homer with his new team and visiting New York won after Kansas City's players were given their 2015 World Series rings.

Syndergaard (1-0) was the only pitcher to beat the Royals in the World Series last year, winning Game 3 after intentionally throwing his first pitch above Alcides Escobar's head, which angered the Royals.

**Pirates 6, Cardinals 5 (11):** Jordy Mercer singled home Gregory Polanco from second base with one out in the 11th inning to lift host Pittsburgh over St. Louis.

Polanco, who agreed to a \$35 million, five-year contract earlier in the day, drew a walk from Seth Maness (0-1) and made it to second on Josh Harrison's infield single. Mercer slapped a single to right for his fourth career game-ending hit.

**Giants 2, Brewers 1:** Johnny Cueto pitched seven solid innings to win his San Francisco debut against host Milwaukee.

Cueto (1-0) was the centerpiece of the Giants' offseason rotation overhaul when he signed a \$130 million, six-year

deal after winning a championship with Kansas City. The right-hander scattered six hits and struck out four, winning his seventh straight against Milwaukee.

**Tigers 8, Marlins 7 (11):** Ian Kinsler homered and had four RBIs, including a run-scoring single in the 11th inning, and visiting Detroit overcame a ninth-inning meltdown to beat Miami on opening day.

The Tigers led 5-0 and Justin Verlander didn't allow a hit until the sixth inning, but new closer Francisco Rodriguez gave up three runs in the ninth, including two-out RBI doubles to pinch-hitter Derek Dietrich and Dee Gordon.

**Mariners 10, Rangers 2:** Nelson Cruz hit one of four of his team's homers, fellow former Texas player Leonys Martin had a tiebreaking double and visiting Seattle bounced back from an opening day loss.

Scott Servais, who spent six years in player development with Texas, got his first win as a manager while having a shouting match with reigning AL Manager of the Year Jeff Banister.

**Dodgers 3, Padres 0:** Scott Kazmir combined with three relievers on a two-hitter to win his first start with visiting Los Angeles, which shut out San Diego for the second straight game.

Kazmir (1-0) and relievers Pedro Baez, Chris Hatcher and Kenley Jansen combined to retire 26 of the final 27 batters.

**Cubs 6, Angels 1:** Jon Lester pitched seven strong innings in his season debut and visiting Chicago got home runs from Anthony Rizzo, Dexter Fowler and Matt Szczur in a victory over Los Angeles.

Lester (1-0) allowed a run and four hits. **Diamondbacks 11, Rockies 6:** Paul Goldschmidt drove in four runs with a solo homer and a bases-loaded triple, and host Arizona stormed back from a four-run deficit to beat Colorado.

**White Sox 5, Athletics 4:** Jimmy Rollins hit a tiebreaking homer off Sean Doolittle with two outs in the ninth inning to lift visiting Chicago over Oakland.

A native of the Bay Area who was signed to a minor league deal by the White Sox in February, Rollins connected on a 2-2 pitch from Doolittle (0-1) after Chicago's bullpen blew a two-run lead in the eighth.

# Wolves surprise Warriors in overtime

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Golden State Warriors hit an unexpected obstacle on their quest for a record 73 wins, blowing a 17-point lead and losing 124-117 in overtime to the last-place Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

Shabazz Muhammad scored a career-high 35 points and Andrew Wiggins had 32 as Minnesota prevented Golden State (69-9) from becoming the second team to win 70 games in a season. The Warriors now must win their final four games to break the single-season wins record of 72 set by Chicago in 1995-96.

Stephen Curry had a rare off-shooting night as Golden State took its third loss against a team currently in last place in its division, following earlier defeats at Milwaukee in December and last month at the Los Angeles Lakers.

But this one came at home, where the Warriors had won a record 54 straight regular-season games before falling to Boston last Friday.

**Spurs 88, Jazz 86:** Kawhi Leonard made the go-ahead jumper with 4.9 seconds left and scored 18 points as visiting San Antonio beat Utah, giving Tim Duncan his 1,000th regular-season victory.

**Thunder 124, Nuggets 102:** Russell Westbrook had 13 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists to become the first player with 17 triple-doubles in a season in 27 years, helping visiting Oklahoma City beat Denver.

**Raptors 96, Hornets 90:** DeMar DeRozan scored 26 points, Kyle Lowry had 12 of his 21 in the fourth quarter and host Toronto handed Charlotte back-to-back losses for the first time in more than two months.

**Grizzlies 108, Bulls 92:** Zach Randolph had 27 points and 10 rebounds, Vince Carter added 17 points and host Memphis ended a six-game losing streak by beating Chicago.

**Cavaliers 109, Bucks 80:** J.R. Smith scored 21 points and went 7-for-11 from three-point range to lead hot-shooting Cleveland over host Milwaukee.

**Heat 107, Pistons 89:** Goran Dragic scored 22 points to lead five of his teammates in double figures, Dwyane Wade added 16 and host Miami beat Detroit.

**Hawks 103, Suns 90:** Jeff Teague scored 20 points, Kent Bazemore added 17 and host Atlanta rallied from 13 down in the third quarter to beat Phoenix.

**Clippers 103, Lakers 81:** Chris Paul scored 25 points and the Clippers beat their Staples Center co-tenants for the 10th straight time in Kobe Bryant's last game as a visitor in his home arena.

**Trail Blazers 115, Kings 107:** CJ McCollum made five three-pointers and scored 30 points to lead visiting Portland over Sacramento.

**76ers 107, Pelicans 93:** Carl Landry scored 22 points to lead his team to a victory over injury-depleted New Orleans, ensuring host Philadelphia won't tie its own league record for fewest victories in an 82-game season.

# Isles top Caps to clinch playoff spot

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — All eyes were on Braden Holtby in his first chance to tie Martin Brodeur's single-season wins record. Then, New York Islanders rookie Christopher Gibson stole the show at the other end.

Gibson made 29 saves in his first career NHL start as the Islanders rallied from two goals down in the third period and beat the Washington Capitals 4-3 in overtime Tuesday night to clinch a playoff berth amid a seemingly never-ending torrent of injuries.

Gibson, the Islanders' fourth-string goaltender pressed into duty in the second half of back-to-back games, bounced back from allowing a goal on the second shot he faced and stopped Evgeny Kuznetsov on a breakaway in overtime to pave the way for the victory.

Coach Jack Capuano called Gibson the Islanders' best player on the ice, and he had to be against the league-leading Capitals. Alex Ovechkin scored his 46th and 47th goals of the season and T.J. Oshie added his 22nd, but Gibson was solid and didn't crack under pressure.

Neither did his teammates, who stared down a 3-1 deficit in the third. Kyle Okposo and Anders Lee scored 1:45 apart to tie it, and defenseman Thomas Hickey returned from a skate-cut scare to score the game-winner 2:13 into overtime.

**Penguins 5, Senators 3:** Sidney Crosby and Carl Hagelin each scored twice and visiting Pittsburgh won its seventh straight.

**Hurricanes 2, Bruins 1 (SO):** Noah Hanifin scored the only goal of a shootout in the fifth round and Cam Ward stopped 35 shots to help visiting Carolina dent Boston's playoff hopes.

**Predators 4, Avalanche 3:** Craig Smith scored at 4:17 of the third period, and host Nashville eliminated Colorado from playoff contention.

**Blackhawks 6, Coyotes 2:** Andrew Ladd scored two power-play goals after Artem Anisimov was knocked out of the game by a questionable hit from Antoine Vermette, and surging Chicago beat visiting Arizona.

Anisimov was driven into the boards near Chicago's bench midway through the second, leading to a boarding penalty

and game misconduct call on Vermette. Anisimov looked woozy as he left the ice and headed to the locker room.

**Rangers 3, Lightning 2:** Derek Stepan scored twice and set up Chris Kreider's winner while rallying host New York to its second straight win.

**Sharks 3, Wild 0:** James Reimer made 29 saves for his third shutout in eight games as visiting San Jose beat playoff-bound Minnesota.

**Kings 5, Flames 4 (OT):** Jeff Carter scored 40 seconds into overtime after Kris Versteeg tied it with 35.1 seconds left in the third period to help Los Angeles beat host Calgary.

**Jets 2, Ducks 1 (OT):** Blake Wheeler scored with 1:53 left in overtime, and Winnipeg rallied for a victory over host Anaheim.

**Panthers 4, Canadiens 1:** Roberto Luongo made 32 saves and Aleksander Barkov got his 28th goal to help visiting Florida win its fourth straight and clinch first place in the Atlantic Division.

**Sabres 3, Devils 1:** Jack Eichel got his 24th goal and Ryan O'Reilly got his 21st to help Buffalo beat host New Jersey.