

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## US to aid response to quake in Japan

BY ERIK SLAVIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOHAMA, Japan — The U.S. military is preparing to assist Japan's disaster response and recovery efforts in Kyushu following a series of devastating earthquakes and aftershocks, officials said Sunday.

The military is readying an "operational airlift," according to a U.S. Forces Japan statement Sunday afternoon.

"To the people of Japan and the region affected by this tragedy, we send our heartfelt sympathies," said USFJ commander Lt. Gen. John Dolan. "The men and women of [USFJ] stand with you during this difficult time."

Initial support will come from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force's Osprey aircraft and the 374th Airlift Wing's C-130 cargo planes, USFJ spokesman Lt. Col. Kenneth Hoffman said Sunday.

Four of the tilt-rotor Ospreys prepared for takeoff from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa, according to a Marine Corps statement issued Sunday. The Ospreys were scheduled to fly to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, 130 miles from Kumamoto.

Other Marine and Air Force aircraft are also available, as are the Army's helicopters, Hoffman said.

Navy officials in Japan were determining Sunday which ships and aircraft would be useful to the disaster response. In addition to its assets in Japan, the USS John C. Stennis carrier strike group is in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Japanese government made the request for assistance to the State Department on Saturday, according to a U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday morning said U.S.

forces would be providing aircraft.

"We are grateful," said Abe, according to a Jiji Press report. "We want to conduct it as soon as we coordinate the transportation needs and make preparations."

A Japan Defense Ministry spokesman told Stars and Stripes on Sunday that operations would begin as soon as possible, once needs on the ground in Kyushu had been assessed.

The Japan Self-Defense Forces is now assisting rescue efforts. Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said that as of 9 a.m. Sunday there were 17,000 Japan Air Self-Defense Force personnel in Kumamoto and that will be increased to 20,000 by the end of Sunday, a Defense Ministry spokesman said.

At least 41 people have died since a magnitude-6.4 earthquake struck nearby Kumamoto, a city of about 740,000 people in southwest Japan, on

Thursday night, according to The Associated Press. On Saturday night, a magnitude-7.3 earthquake destroyed bridges, initiated mudslides and further stymied recovery efforts.

The Kumamoto Prefecture government said there are 183,882 people staying in emergency shelters, according to a Kyodo News report.

The closest major U.S. military facility to Kumamoto is Sasebo Naval Base, about 65 miles west. Military bases have not reported significant damage or injuries since the earthquakes began.

The last major U.S. humanitarian assistance deployment in Japan came during Operation Tomodachi, which mobilized 24,500 personnel at peak levels following the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster on March 11, 2011.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report. slavin.erik@stripes.com

## Subs in South China Sea should draw concerns

*The Washington Post*

Defense Secretary Ash Carter was in Asia last week, making stops in India and the Philippines to bolster relationships that the United States could call on in a time of crisis. Discussion has focused at least in part on the South China Sea, where tensions remain high as China has deployed surface-to-air missiles and other equipment and several countries have made conflicting territorial claims.

Security concerns about the South China Sea often focus on the ships that traverse it, including in so-called freedom-of-navigation operations run

by the U.S. Navy and recent efforts by Chinese fishermen and coast guard units to take control of the lucrative fishing business in the region. But another element of maritime security has received less attention: submarines. The Navy's "Silent Service" rarely discloses its operations, but is part of a diverse and growing international fleet of submersibles that is deployed across the Pacific region broadly and in the South China Sea specifically.

Adm. Scott Swift, the top officer of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in an interview that submarines are a "critically valuable asset" to him. Surface-to-air missiles and other weapons in the re-

gion are deployed as part of a concept known as anti-access area denial, or A2AD, to hinder the movement of adversaries, but submarines aren't affected by them like surface ships and aircraft because they're below the surface, he said.

"It gives me much more open access to areas that would be more contested in a conflict for surface units, for instance, or air units, potentially," Swift said.

The United States, China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia are all among the countries looking for ways to upgrade submarine operations in coming years. Swift said it's in part a "reflec-

tion of the angst" in the theater with respect to not just China, but others as well.

The Pentagon expects to spend about \$97 billion alone in coming years on what it calls the Ohio-class replacement program, phasing out 14 existing nuclear missile submarines with a new generation of vessels that includes 12 more. Additionally, it has been buying a new generation of attack submarine called the Virginia class since 1998, phasing out old attack subs in its Los Angeles and Seawolf classes while also investigating how it can expand operations with unmanned submarines.

# Report: Fewer Afghan civilians killed in 1st quarter; injuries up

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
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*Stars and Stripes*

Fewer civilians were killed in Afghanistan for the first quarter of this year, compared with last year, according to data released Sunday by the United Nations, but reports of injuries are on the rise.

The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan documented 600 civilian deaths and 1,343 cases of injury between Jan. 1 and March 31, 2016 — a 13 percent decrease in deaths but an 11 percent increase in injuries.

Overall, the country saw a 2 percent increase in civilian casualties.

In the first three months of last year, the total number of casualties was 1,800, the U.N. said at the time.

The group noted “with particular concern” an increase in casualties caused by Afghan and coalition airstrikes: There were 27 in the first quarter of

2016, compared with 16 during the same period in 2015.

“Even if a conflict intensifies, it does not have to be matched by corresponding civilian suffering, provided parties take their international humanitarian law and human rights obligations seriously,” Nicholas Haysom, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, said in a statement. “Failure to respect humanitarian obligations will result in more suffering in a nation that has suffered enough.”

Like last year, ground engagements were shown to have caused the most total civilian casualties, followed by improvised explosive devices, complex suicide attacks and targeted killings.

Anti-government groups caused at least 60 percent of the casualties, down from 73 percent last year, while pro-government forces were responsible for at least 19 percent,

a 5 percent increase.

“Both the Government and NATO/Resolute Support must ensure prompt investigations are conducted into all aerial operations should there be credible allegations of civilian casualties,” the statement said.

The U.N. mission in Afghanistan also called on all parties in Afghanistan’s conflict to ensure civilians are protected during their operations.

The U.N. report was released less than a week after the Taliban announced the start of their annual spring offensive, promising to target enemy strongholds with assaults and assassinate “enemy commanders in urban centers.”

However, the group said insurgents had “been unequivocally instructed to implement their operations in such a manner that takes pains to protect civilians and civil infrastructure.”

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## Earthquake kills scores in Ecuador

*Associated Press*

PEDERNALES, Ecuador — The strongest earthquake to hit Ecuador in decades flattened buildings and buckled highways along its Pacific coast.

President Rafael Correa said at least 233 people had died, and rescuers were struggling to reach survivors trapped in the rubble.

The magnitude-7.8 quake, the strongest to hit Ecuador since 1979, was centered on Ecuador’s sparsely populated fishing ports and tourist beaches, 105 miles northwest of Quito, the capital.

Correa reported the death toll on his official Twitter account while flying back from Rome to deal with the crisis. Officials earlier had reported more than 580 people injured.

Vice President Jorge Glas said there were deaths in the cities of Manta, Portoviejo and Guayaquil — all several hundred miles from the center of the quake, which struck shortly after nightfall Saturday.

In Pedernales, a town of 40,000 near the quake’s epicenter, dozens of scared residents slept in the streets while men equipped with little more than car headlights tried to rescue survivors who could be heard trapped under rubble.

“We’re trying to do the most we can, but there’s almost nothing we can do,” said Gabriel Alcivar, mayor of Pedernales.

Alcivar pleaded for authorities to send earth-moving machines and emergency rescue workers to help find people amid the rubble. He said looting had broken out amid the chaos, but authorities were too busy trying to save lives to re-establish order.

“This wasn’t just a house that collapsed; it was an entire town,” he said.

Correa declared a national emergency and urged Ecuadoreans to stay strong while authorities handle the disaster.

## Finance leaders vow to boost global economy

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Global finance officials are vowing to try to reinvigorate a lackluster global economy and urging governments to embrace free trade and do more to fight tax evasion.

Concluding biannual meetings by the world finance leaders, the 189-nation International Monetary Fund said in a statement that it would work toward “strong, sustainable, inclusive, job-rich and more balanced global growth.”

“The global recovery is continuing, but the expansion is modest,” Agustin Carstens, the head of Mexico’s central bank and chair of the IMF policy

panel, told reporters Saturday. “We must implement mutually reinforcing policies to boost global growth and strengthen financial stability.”

Markets have stabilized after a chaotic start to the year, when fears were growing about a possible new global recession. But the IMF cited a long list of threats, from extremist attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis to the shock to global confidence from a potential exit by Britain from the European Union. The IMF foresees global growth of 3.2 percent this year, down from the 3.4 percent it predicted in January.

New threats may imperil efforts to promote greater trade and capital flows between

countries.

Many nations buffeted by the forces of globalization have lost jobs, and workers’ wages have stagnated. In the United States, that anger has propelled the presidential candidacy of Republican front-runner Donald Trump. In Britain, voters will decide in June whether to leave the EU. Carstens urged nations “to refrain from all forms of protectionism,” as it hampers global growth.

The IMF policy group and the G-20 leaders also worked on a stronger response to international tax evasion, stepping up efforts to penalize countries that do not share tax information.



# Curry tweaks ankle in Game 1 victory

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry dazzled from long range and drove to the hoop with flair and fire until a tweaked ankle finally slowed him down.

Once he sat for good after three firm requests to coach Steve Kerr about returning, his supporting cast handled the rest.

"Like a kid in timeout over there on the bench," Curry said of his mood.

He still did plenty, scoring 24 points as the Golden State Warriors beat the Houston Rockets 104-78 on Saturday in their playoff opener.

The reigning MVP's status for the next game is uncertain.

"Right now I don't see a scenario I would be out," Curry said, noting that could change if it gets worse or there's risk of further trouble. "Pain tolerance, all that stuff, I kind of know what I can deal with on the court."

Draymond Green added 12 points and 10 rebounds as top-seeded Golden State carried momentum from setting the all-time wins record Wednesday night with No. 73 into a testy playoff opener some 60 hours later.

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series is Monday night at Oracle Arena, and Kerr said Curry is questionable for that one. He will be re-evaluated Sunday.

"You lose the MVP of the NBA it definitely changes your team," Green said. "There's some concern."

The Warriors topped the Michael Jordan-led Bulls of 1995-96, then immediately made one thing clear: That mark will mean nothing if they don't bring home back-to-back titles to the East Bay.

James Harden scored 17 points and didn't have a free throw attempt for cold-shooting Houston, held to six field goals in the first quarter of the rematch from last year's Western Conference finals, won by Golden State in five.

Dwight Howard had 14 points and 11 rebounds and Harden was limited to four fouls and four points in the first half before helping Houston narrow a 27-point deficit to 16 late in the third.

Curry utterly flustered defensive menace Patrick Beverley. Then, when Jason Terry took a turn at stopping the reigning MVP, Curry pulled up for long 3s and drove the baseline for reverse layups on the left side. He dribbled right through traffic in the paint late in the first half before double-pumping and beautifully spinning the ball off the glass.

He didn't slow down until hurting his right ankle just before halftime, but he got it re-taped and briefly returned before heading back to the locker room with 8:31 to go in the third to have it taped once more and not returning to the game.

A day earlier, when Klay Thompson was asked whether Beverley had a chance to stop Curry, the fellow Splash Brother's simple answer was "no."

Curry, who made an NBA-record 402 3-pointers in the regular season, went 8 for 13 with five 3s while playing all of about 20 minutes. Thompson scored 16, Marreese Speights matched his playoff high with 12 points, while Andre Iguodala dished out seven assists.

Things got heated in a hurry. With Beverley smothering Curry's every dribble, they became tangled up with 6:31 left in the first quarter.

Curry kept his dribble while going down to his left knee before their arms got entwined and led to shoving.

"It felt it was a little too much, so I protected myself and moved on," Curry said.

Beverley immediately received a technical then, after a review, Curry also received one.

"It's part of the game, it's playoffs. Emotions are going to be high and it's going to get chippy out there," Howard said. "I think we allowed it to get us a little frustrated. We've got to figure out a way to play through that."

Perhaps the early start — 12:30 p.m. local time — contributed to both teams' cold shooting out of the gate.

They missed their first seven shots combined before Curry's 3-pointer at 9:41. Houston missed its initial six before Howard's dunk and three-point play at 8:24.

Beverley wasn't part of that losing round for Houston in the West finals. He had undergone season-ending left wrist surgery last spring and was relished to spectator.

The Warriors have dominated this rivalry of late, winning nine in a row and five consecutive at home.

Now, Golden State's lone focus is the 15 remaining victories it needs to repeat after capturing the franchise's first title in 40 years.

Interim Rockets coach J.B. Bickerstaff insisted before the game that his team had no concerns with the raucous home crowd, the Warriors' wins record or any other potential distraction. Though the Rockets really didn't play like they were unaffected.

Houston, which reached the playoffs on the final day of the regular season as the No. 8 seed, shot 35.7 percent and went 6 for 22 from long range.

# Thunder overwhelms Mavs in opener

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Thunder scored the first nine points Saturday night against Dallas Mavericks.

Turns out, they were just getting warmed up.

Russell Westbrook had 24 points and 11 assists, Kevin Durant added 23 points, and the Thunder overwhelmed the Mavericks 108-70, opening the Western Conference series with their most dominant post-season performance since moving to Oklahoma City.

"We just wanted to impose our will early," Durant said. "We didn't want to ease into the game. We wanted to be the aggressor."

Serge Ibaka had 17 points and nine rebounds, and Enes Kanter added 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Thunder.

It was Oklahoma City's largest victory margin in a playoff game since moving from Seattle before the 2008-09 season, and the lowest point total the franchise has allowed in a postseason game, in Seattle or Oklahoma City.

"That was a shellacking," Dallas guard Devin Harris said. "They came out and hit us. We couldn't make shots. It kind of affected our defense and we really couldn't recover."

Dallas scored its fewest points ever in a playoff game, and its .298 field-goal percentage was the worst ever in a post-season game for a franchise that has existed since 1980.

"We started off missing a couple shots, and we got a little discouraged, I think," Dirk Nowitzki, who led the Mavericks with

18 points, said. "Instead of just playing through it, playing hard, getting back, picking up full court, just making life hard on them, we just went back in our shell a little bit. It's disappointing."

Game 2 will be Monday in Oklahoma City.

"I guess the only positive I take out of this — it's only one game. If you lose by two or by 50, in the playoffs, it's only one game," Nowitzki said. "We've got another crack to steal one on Monday night. We've got to play harder, we've got to play better. It's as simple as that."

The Thunder rolled to a 21-7 lead as Dallas made just three of its first 19 shots. Durant made 4 of 6 shots in the first quarter and scored nine points to help Oklahoma City take a 26-11 lead.

Frustration mounted for the Mavericks, and Nowitzki was called for a technical foul late in the second quarter. Durant made the free throw, then made a 3-pointer on the next possession to push Oklahoma City's lead to 52-23.

The Thunder led 59-33 at halftime. It was the fewest points the Thunder franchise has allowed in the first half of a playoff game since the move from Seattle, and matched the fewest the Mavericks have ever scored in the first half of a playoff game. Dallas shot just 26.2 percent from the field before the break.

The Thunder pushed the lead to 30 on a jumper from Ibaka with about 7 minutes left in the third quarter. The Thunder made 12 of 18 shots in the period to take a 93-51 lead into the fourth quarter.

"I thought we did a great job of coming out with a defensive mindset, espe-

cially against a good offensive team," Westbrook said. "We did a great job defensively for 48 minutes."

The Thunder have been in enough playoff games over the years to understand that they need to refocus for Monday's game.

"Each game is different, and we've got to be ready for a different team," Durant said.

**Pacers 100, Raptors 90:** Paul George scored 33 points, Monta Ellis had 15 and host Indiana beat Toronto in the first game of their first round playoff series.

Jonas Valanciunas fouled out after scoring 12 points and setting a Raptors' playoff record with 19 rebounds.

All-Star guards Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan both struggled for the second-seeded Raptors. Lowry made 3 of 13 field goal attempts while DeRozan made 5 of 19. The pair went 1 for 10 from 3-point range and 8 for 15 at the free-throw line.

DeRozan finished with 14 points and Lowry had 11. Corey Joseph scored 18.

Toronto dropped to 0-8 in the first game of an opening round playoff series.

Solomon Hill scored 13 points while George Hill and Evan Turner each had 10 for the Pacers.

Toronto, first-round losers in each of the past two seasons, has never won a seven-game playoff series. Its only post-season triumph was a five-game series over the Knicks in 2001.

**Hawks 102, Celtics 101:** Jeff Teague stymied another big Boston comeback, taking matters into his own hands in the closing minutes to lead Atlanta over the Celtics in Game 1 of the opening-round

playoff series.

Teague scored 23 points and doled out 12 assists, making sure Atlanta maintained the home-court edge after the gritty Celtics rallied from a 19-point deficit.

With the game tied at 88, Teague worked the pick-and-roll to set up a layup for Al Horford. The Celtics missed and the Hawks again got the ball to Teague, who found Paul Millsap alone under the basket for a dunk that pushed Atlanta to a 92-88 lead with 2:56 remaining.

The Celtics had a chance to tie in the final minute, but Evan Turner missed an open three-pointer.

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series is Tuesday night in Atlanta.

Jae Crowder gave the Celtics one more chance by knocking down a 3-pointer with 6 seconds left. But Teague, appropriately enough, sealed the win with a couple of free throws that kissed off the front of the rim and dropped through.

Horford scored 24 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Hawks, while Kent Bazemore came up big with 23 points.

Isaiah Thomas, after a sluggish start, led the Celtics with 27 points, including a long three-pointer with 0.4 seconds left that at least created a bit of suspense. The Hawks called timeout and managed to get away an inbounds pass that finally ended it.

Boston lost Avery Bradley, its best perimeter defender, with 6:42 remaining to an apparent right hamstring injury, which really opened up things for Teague. Boston coach Brad Stevens said Bradley heard "a pop," but it's not known how long he might be out.



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# Arrieta extends home streak

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Even Jake Arrieta has to admit that his scoreless streak at Wrigley Field is impressive.

The right-hander threw eight more shutout innings and the Chicago Cubs hit three home runs to beat the Colorado Rockies 6-2 on Saturday.

Arrieta (3-0), the reigning NL Cy Young winner, struck out eight and allowed five hits in his home debut. He has not allowed a run in his last 48<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings — dating to last July — at home.

"I didn't know that. That is pretty good," Arrieta said. "But I don't put too much time and effort into that. I just try and execute each time I go out. The results are hard to control. Just try and continue to go on the path I'm (on) right now, force contact and be aggressive in the zone, and good things will happen."

Arrieta had a chance for a complete game, but manager Joe Maddon lifted him after the Cubs scored six runs. Arrieta threw 100 pitches.

"It's early, it's April," Arrieta said. "The most important innings are going to come later in the year."

Dexter Fowler hit a three-run homer in the seventh, and Anthony Rizzo and Jorge Soler hit back-to-back shots in the fourth.

The Cubs have won nine of 11 for their best start since they went 10-1 in 1969.

The Rockies saw their three-game winning streak end. Carlos Gonzalez hit a two-run home run, his fourth, off Travis Wood in the ninth.

Christian Bergman (0-2) matched a career high of seven strikeouts and allowed two runs in five innings in his first start of the season.

Rizzo and Soler homered on the first two pitches of the fourth. Rizzo hit his third homer, and Soler smacked his second to left field. Fowler homered on a 2-1 pitch from David Hale in the seventh.

"They were all properly struck," Maddon said. "That was a tough home run day with the wind. Even their guy, Gonzalez, it was properly struck too."

Gonzalez singled in the fourth to extend his hitting streak to 11 games this season and 21 games since 2015.

Arrieta struck out swinging the first

three batters and retired 10 straight from the fourth to the seventh inning. He has made a club-record 23 consecutive quality starts.

"You get minimal fly balls, hopefully minimal groundballs," Fowler said. "He punches guys out like it's his job, and it is."

The Rockies had their best chance to score in the third. Dustin Garneau led off with a double but was stranded at third after Cristhian Adames grounded out and rookie Trevor Story struck out.

"You want to score right there," Rockies manager Walt Weiss said. "You know you're gonna have to grind for every one you get. The good ones like that (Arrieta) when they get some traffic or get guys in scoring position, they take it up a notch. That's what he did in that situation."

Story leads the majors with seven homers but continued to struggle against Chicago. He went 0-for-5 with two strikeouts Friday and 1-for-4 with a double and three strikeouts Saturday.

The Rockies won the series opener 6-1 to snap the Cubs' five-game winning streak.

"We like our chances to stop skids pretty early," Arrieta said.

**Nationals 8, Phillies 1:** Max Scherzer's bat was even more impressive than his arm.

Scherzer threw seven sharp innings and hit a two-run double, Bryce Harper launched another homer and Washington beat host Philadelphia.

The Nationals are off to a 9-1 start, best in franchise history.

Scherzer (2-0) allowed one run and five hits, striking out seven.

**Tigers 5, Astros 3:** Jarrod Saltalamacchia hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the sixth inning and Detroit rallied for a win over host Houston.

**Rangers 8, Orioles 4:** Mitch Moreland's go-ahead double off the right-field fence and Rowned Odor's two-run single highlighted a six-run seventh inning, leading Texas to a victory over visiting Baltimore.

**Pirates 5, Brewers 0:** Andrew McCutchen hit his first home run of the season and Jon Niese combined with two relievers on a three-hitter as host Pittsburgh blanked Milwaukee to end its four-game losing streak.

**Braves 6, Marlins 4:** Nick Markakis drove in three runs with three hits and Atlanta won for the second consecutive night after losing their first nine games, beating host Miami.

**Rays 7, White Sox 2:** Brandon Guyer homered to end Tampa Bay's scoreless drought, Brad Miller added a two-run shot and the host Rays stopped Chicago's five-game winning streak.

**Indians 7, Mets 5:** Jason Kipnis and host Cleveland handed New York's Matt Harvey his third straight loss to begin the season.

**Reds 9, Cardinals 8:** Brandon Phillips, Zack Cozart and Jay Bruce had two RBIs apiece for visiting Cincinnati, which erased an early four-run deficit against St. Louis ace Adam Wainwright in a victory.

**Mariners 3, Yankees 2:** Felix Hernandez looked uncomfortable all afternoon but overcame a career high-tying six walks, and Seattle held off host New York for a third straight win.

**Twins 6, Angels 4:** Oswaldo Arcia and Byung Ho Park homered in the eighth inning to lift host Minnesota over Los Angeles for its second consecutive comeback victory after opening the season with nine straight losses.

**Red Sox 4, Blue Jays 2:** David Price rebounded from a rough start in Boston's home opener with seven solid innings, Xander Bogaerts hit a three-run home run and the Red Sox beat Toronto.

**Athletics 5, Royals 3:** Josh Reddick and Stephen Vogt homered to back Sonny Gray's solid effort, and host Oakland ended a four-game losing streak with a victory over Kansas City.

**Padres 5, Diamondbacks 3:** Melvin Upton Jr. hit a two-run homer with two outs in the 14th inning and host San Diego beat Arizona for their first victory in five home games this season.

**Giants 4, Dodgers 3:** Johnny Cueto pitched 7 1/3 sharp innings and San Francisco got run-scoring hits from Joe Panik, Brandon Crawford and Brandon Belt in a victory over host Los Angeles.

# Mason's mistake hands Caps win

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Washington's Braden Holtby made 41 saves, Philadelphia's Steve Mason gave up a goal from 101 feet away and Alex Ovechkin scored on the power play and the Capitals beat the Flyers 4-1 in Game 2 Saturday night to take a 2-0 series lead.

Ovechkin's 37th Stanley Cup playoff goal was as predictable as Jason Chimera's goal from beyond the red line was unexpected. Mason whiffed at the puck on what turned out to be the game-winner.

The Flyers outshot the Capitals 42-23 and dominated for much of the game, but came up empty as John Carlson scored his second power-play goal in as many games and Nicklas Backstrom added one at even strength late. Jake Voracek scored the Flyers' only goal.

The series shifts to Philadelphia for Game 3 on Monday night.

Mason did the splits to stop Carlson from point-blank range early in the second period and was slow to get up. He remained in the game, but less than a minute later made the mistake that will be shown on bad-goal blooper reels for decades.

After Karl Alzner backhanded the puck from his goal line, Chimera tipped it from the Capitals' side of the red line. It slid five-hole on Mason, who wrenched his head back in dismay.

**Rangers 4, Penguins 2:** Keith Yandle and Derick Brassard scored 18 seconds apart in the second period and Henrik Lundqvist looked just fine dealing with an eye injury and New York stopped host Pittsburgh to even the Eastern Conference quarterfinal series at one game.

Lundqvist finished with 29 saves and showed no ill effects after getting accidentally slashed in the right eye by a teammate in Game 1, forcing him to leave after the first period.

**Sharks 2, Kings 1:** Captain Joe Pavelski scored his third goal in two games, Martin Jones made 27 saves and visiting San Jose took a 2-0 series lead on Los Angeles with a victory in Game 2.

Logan Couture also scored for the Sharks, who largely dominated their California rivals in their second straight road victory.

Jones made several key stops against his former Los Angeles teammates and hung on after losing his shutout bid on Vincent Lecavalier's power-play goal with 5:01 to play.

**Stars 2, Wild 1:** Antoine Roussel scored from behind the net without the puck touching a stick and Jamie Benn had an unassisted goal and host Dallas beat Minnesota for a 2-0 lead in the Western Conference playoff series.

The Stars scored first on Roussel's strange goal about 4 minutes into the second period, when the puck ricocheted off the skates of Ales Hemesky and Roussel without either getting a stick on it.

Benn scored on a breakaway that he ended with a backhand to make it 2-0 with 9:37 left in the game, and that was big since the Wild got their first goal of the series soon after that.

Kari Lehtonen stopped 25 of 26 shots, including a last flurry by the Wild with an extra skater in the final seconds.

# Jones rallies to win Bristol race

Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Facing little time and room to make his final move, Erik Jones just decided to let it fly.

Jones blew past Kyle Larson soon after the final restart and held off Kyle Busch in the final laps to win the NASCAR Xfinity Series race Saturday at Bristol Motor Speedway.

Larson led a race-high 94 of 200 laps thanks to a series of daring moves between cars on the tight half-mile track that kept Busch at bay during the final third. Then came the final caution that left a three-lap sprint on the restart, when Jones' No. 20 Toyota Camry got past Busch's No. 18 Toyota on the outside before he eventually cleared Larson, whose No. 42 Chevy finished third.

"We got a really good restart and we were right with the 42 (Larson)," Jones said. "The 42 just really left the top open where I'd been running before the yellow came out. I figured that was our only chance, we could go up there and see if it holds, and I went up there and it stuck."

Jones then withstood a last charge

from Busch to win the race after starting on the pole. He led three times for 62 laps and collected a \$100,000 bonus with a third career series victory that also denied Busch's bid for a third consecutive weekend sweep of NASCAR events.

Busch, the Sprint Cup Series champion, led 43 laps after starting fifth.

Austin Dillon was fourth and Justin Allgaier fifth in Chevys.

Jones jumped three spots to second in the standings and trails Daniel Suarez (sixth) by six points.

Before the final caution the race was shaping up as a thrilling two-car duel between Larson's No. 42 Chevy and Busch's No. 18 Toyota.

While Busch stuck mostly with the low line, Larson thrived with a high-line strategy that got him through a number of tight spaces. At least twice down the stretch Larson navigated through a small gap while racing three-wide and had just enough to seal off the inside track from Busch in the corners.

Larson just didn't have enough on the final short run. Jones on the other hand was better than him and Busch, his Joe

Gibbs Racing teammate.

"Both restarts I had today were absolutely horrendous," Busch said. "We'd go to the throttle and the thing would shut off, and those guys were gone by then."

Said Larson, "I didn't want to see that caution because we were tight on the short runs. I knew I gave that one away."

In other auto racing news:

■ Nico Rosberg of Mercedes captured the Chinese Grand Prix with ease on Sunday at Shanghai to extend his perfect start to the Formula One season and become just the fourth driver in history to win six straight races.

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, who collided with teammate Kimi Raikkonen at the first corner, finished second, 37.7 seconds behind Rosberg, while Red Bull's Daniil Kvyat used an aggressive race strategy to take third — only the second podium of the 21-year-old's career.

Rosberg started on pole position and led nearly the entire race by a wide margin to win his third race to start this season and his sixth consecutive dating back to last year.