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Dozens killed in Kabul bombing, assault

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Taliban insurgents struck Tuesday in the heart of Kabul, killing at least 28 people and wounding more than 320 in a complex assault that included a car bomb that targeted the main government intelligence agency.

The assault occurred a week after the Taliban announced a new spring offensive, threatening large-scale attacks against government facilities to drive the U.S.-backed government from power.

The coordinated attack began at about 9 a.m. in the Puli Mahmood Khan neighborhood with a blast that reverberated throughout much of the capital. A gunbattle between insurgents and security officials raged for

hours after the blast, witnesses said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility, saying the suicide attack targeted the National Directorate of Security, which also provides bodyguards for government and foreign VIPs.

“At 9 a.m., one of the suicide bombers blew up his vehicle full of explosives at the entrance of the [intelligence agency] and removed the barriers and after that a number of suicide attackers went inside the directorate,” the Taliban said on their website.

Most of the victims were civilians, some of whom were in critical condition on Tuesday afternoon, said Mohammad Ismail Kawoosi, spokesman for the Public Health Ministry.

Speaking to reporters, Inte-

rior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi confirmed that a suicide attacker detonated a vehicle with hundreds of kilograms of explosives and said that at least two insurgents were killed by security forces at the scene. He said women and children were among the civilians killed.

“This was one of the most powerful explosions I have ever heard in my life,” said Obaidullah Tarakhail, a police commander who was present when the attack began. Tarakhail told The Associated Press that he couldn’t see or hear anything for 20 minutes after the initial explosion.

“All around was dark and covered with thick smoke and dust,” he told the AP.

The president’s office described it as a terrorist attack

and said it “clearly shows the enemy’s defeat in face-to-face battle” with security forces.

NATO’s Resolute Support mission voiced similar views.

“Today’s attack shows the insurgents are unable to meet Afghan forces on the battlefield and must resort to these terrorist attacks,” Gen. John W. Nicholson, Resolute Support commander, said. “We strongly condemn the actions of Afghanistan’s enemies and remain firmly committed to supporting our Afghan partners and the National Unity Government.”

The violence came just over a week after the Taliban claimed responsibility for a rocket attack in Kabul that coincided with a visit by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

US military in Japan busy getting quake relief to victims

BY SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

KUMAMOTO, Japan — Maj. Jack Beene hasn’t slept much in the last couple of days.

As the first U.S. troop on the ground at Kumamoto Airport since a series of earthquakes shook the region, Beene — a C-130 pilot and Japanese linguist — was charged with making sure the local airport could handle U.S. aircraft bringing in needed supplies for the disaster victims.

At the city airport, U.S. C-130 Hercules transport planes and MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft have been helping Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers from the nearby Camp Takayubarū move supplies and equipment in recent days.

“There’s some damage to the airport,” Beene said during a

break outside the hangar where Japanese troops were coordinating military flights into and out of Kumamoto.

But a repair team has been fixing cracks in the tarmac at night and, by Tuesday, the airport was once again open to civilian aircraft, he said.

The quake death toll rose to 45 Tuesday afternoon after the discovery of a body in southwest Japan. The Kumamoto Prefectural government estimated 183,882 residents were in emergency shelters as of Sunday night, with many others sleeping outside or in vehicles.

Monday, the first U.S. C-130 flights, out of Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, delivered several Japanese military vehicles to Kumamoto, while two Ospreys, flying out of Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, ferried supplies, including blankets, toiletries, food and water,

to a nearby stadium.

“Humanitarian assistance is one of the core missions of the C-130,” said Capt. Travis Wilkes of the 374th Airlift Wing soon after landing at Kumamoto. He had flown in on a Hercules laden with two four-wheel-drive Mitsubishi trucks for the Japanese troops.

The Ospreys were due to deliver more relief supplies on Kyushu on Wednesday, U.S. officials said.

“The Ospreys executed a long-range mission and were able quickly deliver supplies ... demonstrating [the] ability to land in remote locations on unprepared surfaces and deliver badly needed aid,” 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit commander Col. Romin Dasmalchi said in the statement.

Meanwhile, the Navy has sent nine sailors from the USS Bonhomme Richard to the

Japanese helicopter destroyer JS Hyuga to help land Ospreys aboard the flat-top ship, Task Force 76 spokesman Lt. David Levy said.

While the supplies are flowing into and out of the airport, residents of nearby Mashiki have started to clear up damage despite regular aftershocks that rattle their homes.

The tremors, including a magnitude-7 shock Saturday, sent mud barreling down nearby hillsides, ripping thick clusters of bamboo from the ground. Some homes collapsed, although most appeared to have survived, with roof-damage evident from blue tarps hastily draped by their owners. Just getting to parts of the town is now a challenge because of debris and damage to bridges and road surfaces.

AF: Goggles case caused C-130 crash

The Washington Post

A solid plastic case designed to hold a set of night vision goggles was ultimately responsible for causing the crash of an Air Force transport plane that killed 14 people in October, the Air Force announced in a statement last week.

The crew of the C-130J, a four-engine transport that has been in service since the Vietnam War, had flown from Bagram, Afghanistan, to Jalalabad on Oct. 2 and was offloading cargo in Jalalabad. While on the runway, the pilot raised

the wing elevators on the rear stabilizer to provide additional overhead clearance for the cargo being unloaded from the rear of the plane.

The pilot then used the night vision goggle case to hold the elevators in place so he would not have to manually hold the elevators' controls, according to the statement.

As the crew was flying at night, the pilot and co-pilot were wearing night vision devices upon takeoff. Typically, night vision devices, including monocular and binocular

variants, severely limit the wearer's ability to see at short distances.

"Neither pilot recognized and removed the NVG case after loading operations were complete or during takeoff," the statement said.

As the C-130 took off, the locked elevator position caused the aircraft to point upward and climb at a rate that was unsustainable given the aircraft's speed, and it soon stalled. The co-pilot misidentified the problem, resulting in "improper" recovery techniques, and the

aircraft crashed into an outer guard tower, killing three Afghans standing post. Twenty-eight seconds after takeoff, 14 people, including the four crewmembers, two Air Force security personnel and five civilian contractors aboard, were dead.

The Taliban claimed to have shot down the aircraft.

The aircraft was from the 317th Airlift Group, stationed at Dyess Air Force Base in Texas, and was assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Airfield.

Some civilians working in Korea to see pay cut

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. has eliminated the post-hardship differential allowance for some 2,800 civilian government employees stationed outside Seoul, South Korea, according to a memo obtained by Stars and Stripes.

U.S. Forces Korea informed the employees about the pay reduction over the weekend in a letter dated April 15 and signed by chief of staff Lt. Gen. Thomas Vandal. Vandal told the employees he was "very concerned about the effect this will have on you and your families" and promised to address the issue as quickly as possible.

The State Department determines the hardship differential — distributed for extremely difficult or unhealthy conditions or physical hardship — based on a questionnaire that is supposed to be administered by local installations.

It has been 5 percent of basic compensation for most locations outside the Seoul metropolitan area for several years.

"However, as a result of the latest (Department of State) review, the rate was reduced to 0

percent for all U.S. government civilians in Korea" as of April 3, according to the memo, which also said eligible employees will start seeing the drop in their paychecks this week.

Civilian employees in the Seoul area were not affected since they did not receive the differential.

A civilian employee in Area I, which is considered especially dangerous because of its proximity to North Korea, said he never received a questionnaire and expressed frustration it hadn't been distributed more widely. The employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he didn't want to anger commanders, said the cut meant a loss of about \$300 per month for him.

Installations outside the greater Seoul area will be submitting new questionnaires to the State Department "to try and reinstate Post Hardship Differential where it is warranted," Vandal said in the memo. He stressed that he had communicated with senior commanders "on the importance of completing these questionnaires" and said the results were expected to be known by mid-June.

S. Korea signs off on US decision to give same-sex couples legal protections

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has signed off on a U.S. decision to give same-sex couples the same legal protections and benefits as military families under the status of forces agreement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Tuesday.

The statement came after the American Military Partner Association, a Washington-based advocacy group, announced that South Korea had been added to a list of overseas duty stations approved for same-sex couples.

"A huge burden has been lifted off of the shoulders of so many of our military families," AMPA president Ashley Broadway-Mack said in a statement. "This is incredibly welcome news for so many servicemembers and their families who now don't have to go through extraordinary lengths to stay together."

U.S. military officials in Korea declined to confirm the status change.

South Korea joins more than 50 countries that have been ap-

proved for same-sex couples, the AMPA said. Servicemembers in South Korea have confirmed that their requests are being processed, Broadway-Mack told Stars and Stripes.

The Supreme Court enabled federal employees, including servicemembers and Department of Defense civilian workers, to obtain housing and other benefits on June 26, 2013, when it overturned a key provision in the Defense of Marriage Act. The issue remained murky for many posts in conservative countries. The U.S. military delayed extending benefits such as official passports, visas and housing allowances while it reached out to host nations.

South Korea said U.S. Forces Korea had requested its cooperation in admitting the dependents of same-sex couples under SOFA, said a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official.

The U.S. has about 28,000 troops in South Korea.

Homosexuality is not illegal in South Korea but is widely considered taboo in the conservative country.

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Warriors win without Curry

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — As Stephen Curry emphatically waved his arms to ignite the crowd and coached from the bench when he could do little else, Klay Thompson and the Golden State Warriors' supporting cast proved they can win on the playoff stage without their NBA MVP.

They would rather have him, of course, but the defending champions have believed in their depth all along. Golden State played short-handed down the stretch of the regular season on the way to a record 73 wins.

"We've relied on our depth all year, not just when Steph's out," Draymond Green said. "I think we're the deepest team in the NBA."

Thompson scored 34 points and dished out five assists and the Warriors held off the Houston Rockets 115-106 on Monday night to take a 2-0 lead in their playoff series despite no Curry, sidelined because of an injured right ankle.

"Ahh, it's so much easier without him out there. When Steph's out there, his man just sags in the paint, he doesn't move the ball, he's a very selfish teammate," cracked Thompson. "I'm just kidding, man, he's the exact opposite of that. I think we showed it's hard to fill that void. No one's going to do it by themselves."

Curry cut short his pregame warmup

routine after appearing to be in discomfort as he was shooting while putting little pressure on the tender ankle.

Andre Iguodala, last year's Finals MVP, added 18 points with four three-pointers and Green had 12 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists. He didn't commit a turnover in 39 minutes, his longest stretch without one in the regular season or playoffs.

Now, Curry has until Thursday's Game 3 in Houston to get healthy. But the Warriors aren't going to push it with the game's best player.

"We want to make sure Steph is right and that his foot is fine and healthy," coach Steve Kerr said. "Fortunately we don't play 'til Thursday and he's got some time to get some treatment."

James Harden had 28 points and 11 assists to lead the Rockets, losers of six straight and 14 of 15 to Golden State. He made 13 of 15 free throws after not attempting one in the opener.

Big man Marreese Speights hit a key momentum three-pointer from the baseline with 8.2 seconds remaining in the third quarter to make it 86-79, and the deep, versatile Warriors showed they can win without Curry on the playoff stage.

Golden State did it on New Year's Eve on Houston's home court and did it again Monday at rockin' Oracle Arena.

Harden considered it a missed opportunity.

"Yeah, for sure. We just didn't do enough to get a win," he said.

Shaun Livingston, who left Sunday's practice with an illness, had 16 points and six assists playing in Curry's place.

After a 26-point victory in Game 1, the Warriors had to work a little harder in Game 2.

Dwight Howard's dunk of an alley-oop pass with 6:54 left in the third pulled the Rockets within 71-67, but Golden State kept answering with timely baskets.

Kerr called for better ball movement, hard cuts and intensity on defense in Curry's absence. For much of the game, the Warriors did those things well.

Kerr looked at more film from that Dec. 31 game in Houston the past couple of days after already having watched it before Curry's latest injury.

On three occasions in the first half, Harden drew a foul beyond the three-point line and sent the fans into fits. He missed 7 of 8 three-point tries and committed five turnovers.

"Every time we reached, we fouled him, and they were all fouls," Kerr said.

But it was Thompson's three free throws after interim Rockets coach J.B. Bickerstaff's technical with 7:16 to play that helped seal this one. Livingston scored the next time down for a 99-86 lead.

Federations voice concern on Rio venues

Associated Press

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — International sports federations expressed concern Tuesday over problems with venues for the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, including power failures at the gymnastics arena this week.

Two top International Olympic Committee officials, meanwhile, will be dispatched to Rio for frequent visits to monitor the final preparations for South America's first Games.

Members of the Association of Olympic International Sports Federations reviewed the status of the Rio Games, which open in less than four months on Aug. 5.

"They miss some very important details in each field of play," ASOIF President Francesco Ricci Bitti said at the group's annual meeting during the SportAccord conference in Lausanne.

Ricci Bitti told delegates that IOC President Thomas Bach "is worried like you, like me" about details for Rio.

Rio's sports director acknowledged to the 28 Olympic sports that the city's seven-year preparations "were not perfect or up to your expectations" but said the games would be a success.

"I can assure you that the athletes will not have any problems in games time, nor any of you in your events," Agberto Guimaraes said.

The comments followed complaints raised by the gymnastics federation, known as FIG, which is holding its artistic gymnastics test event at Rio Olympic Arena this week.

FIG official Ron Froehlich cited power outages lasting from 15 to 90 minutes, putting at risk athletes' safety and the scoring system, plus missing equipment at an underfunded temporary training venue.

"Most important, they have problems with regard to the Omega [scoring] system," Froehlich said. "Furthermore, power outages while the athletes were performing, which is a very serious issue."

The absence of flooring at a temporary training center venue was "due to lack of funding," he said.

Earlier, ASOIF director general Andrew Ryan disclosed that two senior IOC officials will travel to Rio soon to work more closely on preparations.

Christophe Dubi, the Olympic Games executive director, and sports director Kit McConnell are "moving permanently" to the host city, Ryan said.

The IOC said Dubi and McConnell would spend more time in Rio but would live there full time. Dubi's predecessor, Gilbert Felli, was assigned to work there with local organizers two years ago amid growing concerns about Rio's readiness.

Guimaraes also addressed longstanding problems of water pollution and "floating garbage" in Rio, and the possibility of officials' accommodation — including a Trump hotel — not being ready, before giving further assurances.

"The athletes will be happy with the results that we have achieved," he said. "You and your federations will be happy with the level of service that we will provide to you."

Mavs top Thunder, even series

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Thunder thought they had stolen one.

The home fans were celebrating, streamers were falling onto the court and Oklahoma City appeared to have taken a 2-0 lead in its series against the Dallas Mavericks, despite a shaky overall performance.

In the end, Dallas escaped.

A putback at the buzzer by Oklahoma City's Steven Adams that would have won the game was disallowed upon review, and the Mavericks defeated the Thunder 85-84 on Monday night to even their Western Conference playoff series at one win apiece.

Dallas had been embarrassed 108-70 in the opener on Saturday, but the Mavericks bounced back and held Oklahoma City to 33.7 percent shooting on Monday.

"I'm very proud of our guys and the way they responded after one of the most disappointing games in franchise history," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said. "It's a group with a lot of pride, and obviously, a lot of resilience."

In the postgame news conference after the Game 1 loss, Carlisle defiantly stated that the loss was not significant, and that it was just one game. His team bought it, and, even goes home for Thursday night's Game 3 with a chance to take the lead in the series.

Raymond Felton had 21 points and 11 rebounds and Dirk Nowitzki added 17 points for the Mavericks.

Deron Williams, declared doubtful on Sunday with a left abdominal strain, scored 13 points for Dallas, 11 in the game's first 5 minutes.

"This wouldn't be possible if Deron Williams hadn't given it a shot," Carlisle said. "He got us off to a good solid start — actually better than a solid start, he got us off to a very good start."

Kevin Durant scored 21 points for Oklahoma City, but he made just seven of 33 shots in the worst postseason shooting performance, both by percentage and number of misses, of his career. Durant's 26 misses were the most he's had in 716 career games, regular-season and playoffs.

"It was a bad shooting night for me," Durant said. "It's part of it. I wish it didn't happen tonight, but it's a part of it. I got some great looks all night and I just didn't knock them down. It was just one of those nights."

The Mavericks said they did a good job of being physical with Durant and disrupting his rhythm.

Dallas led 85-84 with 7.1 seconds left when Felton missed two free throws. Durant got the rebound of the second, but his shot to try to win the game was blocked by Justin Anderson. Russell Westbrook rebounded and missed, then Adams rebounded Westbrook's miss and made a basket, but the ball was in his hand as time expired.

Westbrook finished with 19 points and 14 rebounds and Serge Ibaka added 12 points for the Thunder.

Raptors 98, Pacers 87: Raptors All-Star DeMar DeRozan endured another difficult playoff performance.

With the highest-scoring playoff game of his career, Jonas Valanciunas made sure DeRozan's struggles didn't matter.

Valanciunas had 23 points and 15 rebounds, Kyle Lowry had 18 points, nine assists and seven rebounds and host Toronto beat Indiana. That snapped their postseason losing streak at seven games and evened the series 1-1.

"We've all got to step up," Valanciunas said. "It's not an individual sport. Some nights are tough for Kyle, some nights it's tough for DeMar, tough for me. Everybody has tough times, so everybody has got to pull for each other."

The Raptors had not won a playoff game since a 115-113 home victory over Brooklyn on April 30, 2014.

Paul George scored 28 points and Monta Ellis had 15 for the Pacers, who host Game 3 on Thursday night.

Before then, Georgesaid, the Pacers have to find a way to slow down Valanciunas.

"He's been huge, literally," George said. "We're doing a good job on Kyle and DeMar but the third guy, Valanciunas, has stepped up. He's who is causing us the problems right now and we've got to figure it out."

Toronto finished with 46 points in the paint, compared to Indiana's 30, and the Raptors outrebounded the Pacers 44-33.

"We've got our hands full with their frontcourt," Pacers coach Frank Vogel said.



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Wright's 2 homers lift Mets

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — David Wright put on his latest power display in Philadelphia's home park.

Wright homered twice for his first two RBIs this season and the New York Mets went deep four times to back a stellar Noah Syndergaard in their 5-2 victory over the Phillies on Monday night.

Lucas Duda and Neil Walker hit consecutive home runs for New York, which has 11 homers in its last four games after hitting two in the first eight. The power surge has helped the defending NL champions win four of five following a four-game skid that produced a 2-5 start.

Wright connected in the first inning and hit another opposite-field shot to right in the ninth, giving him 22 home runs in 98 games at Citizens Bank Park. That's the most by a visiting player in the ballpark's 13-year history.

"He's dangerous here, feels great swinging and hitting here," Mets manager Terry Collins said. "He did it again tonight."

It was the 21st career multihomer game for Wright and first since June 20, 2013, at Atlanta.

"I can't explain it," Wright said. "It's a good place to hit, certainly, but other than that I think I play a lot here."

Syndergaard (2-0) struck out eight in seven innings and threw 17 of his 94 pitches at least 99.5 mph. He allowed one run and five hits with two walks, leaving him with 29 strikeouts and a 0.90 ERA through three starts.

"I was saying, 'Boy, he must feel good in warm weather,'" Collins said. "The second thing was, 'I hope he's throwing something else besides 100 mph heaters.' He had another great outing."

Jerad Eickhoff (1-2) tossed seven strong innings for Philadelphia, giving up two runs and five hits with nine strikeouts and two walks.

The Phillies, who entered last in the NL in batting average and runs, have scored three runs or fewer in 12 of 14 games and have yet to reach 10 hits in a game.

"Eickhoff pitched another good game, went toe to toe with Syndergaard and really did a great job," Phillies manager Pete Mackanin said. "We're just not scoring enough runs. We've got to find a way to score more runs. We're in all the games we're playing, except a few. We just need to score."

Blue Jays 4, Red Sox 3: Russell Martin hit a two-run single against Craig

Kimbrel, who walked Troy Tulowitzki with the bases loaded to force in the tying run.

The rally began when Ezequiel Carrera reached second base against Koji Uehara (0-1) after Josh Rutledge's throwing error on his infield hit to third.

J.A. Happ (2-0) gave up one run and four hits in seven-plus innings in the Patriots' Day morning game.

Drew Storen got three outs for his first save despite giving up Travis Shaw's RBI double and Hanley Ramirez's two-out, RBI single. Storen then struck out pinch-hitter David Ortiz, who took a 93 mph sinker with a 2-2 count for a called third strike.

Angels 7, White Sox 0: Hector Santiago matched a career high with 10 strikeouts over seven crisp innings, and visiting Los Angeles roughed up Chicago lefty Carlos Rodon.

Kole Calhoun, Andrelton Simmons and Geovany Soto hit consecutive RBI singles during a five-run first, matching the Angels' season high for runs in an entire game.

Rodon (1-2) got only one out before he was pulled. The No. 3 pick in the 2014 amateur draft allowed six hits and walked two in the shortest of his 29 major league appearances.

Simmons and C.J. Cron each had three hits as the Angels rebounded from a weekend sweep by the Twins.

Santiago (1-0), traded from the White Sox to the Angels in 2013, yielded two hits and walked three. Greg Mahle and Mike Morin finished the three-hitter for Los Angeles' first shutout of the season.

Twins 7, Brewers 4 (6): Miguel Sano and Byung Ho Park homered, and host Minnesota had a season-best 14 hits against Milwaukee in a game that was shortened to six innings because of rain.

After losing their first nine games this season, the Twins have won four straight.

Every Minnesota starter had a hit to support Phil Hughes (1-2), who allowed three earned runs and six hits with six strikeouts in an abbreviated complete game.

Joe Mauer's RBI double in the sixth pushed him past Harmon Killebrew for fifth in Twins history with 1,712 hits.

Chase Anderson (1-1) gave up five runs, four earned, and 11 hits in five innings for the Brewers, who have lost four of five.

The game was called after a delay of 2 hours, 6 minutes.

Rockies 5, Reds 1: Trevor Story's solo homer snapped an eighth-inning tie, Jordan Lyles got his first victory in nearly a year and visiting Colorado beat Cincinnati.

Story added to his incredible rookie start, connecting on the first pitch from Ross Ohlendorf (2-2) for his NL-leading eighth homer in only 13 games. Ben Paulsen completed the rally with a three-run homer off Jumbo Diaz.

Lyles (1-1) allowed four hits and one unearned run in seven innings for his first win since April 23 last year. He missed most of 2015 with injuries and had been 0-5 in his last eight starts with an 8.35 ERA.

Cubs 5, Cardinals 0: John Lackey struck out 11 in seven innings against his former team and had an RBI single, leading visiting Chicago over St. Louis.

Jayson Heyward, playing at Busch Stadium for the first time since leaving to sign with Chicago, was 0-for-4 at the plate, made two nice catches in right field and was booed throughout.

Dexter Fowler homered for the second time in three days for the Cubs, a major league-best 10-3 and off to their best start since 1970. Chicago has won 15 of its last 16 regular-season road games, going 6-1 this year. Lackey (3-0) allowed four hits.

Mike Leake (0-2) yielded four runs — three earned — in seven innings in his home debut for the Cardinals.

Diamondbacks 9, Giants 7 (11): Jake Lamb hit a tying homer with two outs in the ninth inning and doubled home an insurance run in the 11th, rallying visiting Arizona past San Francisco.

Phil Gosselin scored on Jean Segura's go-ahead infield single with two outs in the 11th. Lamb, who homered off closer Santiago Casilla two innings earlier, made it a two-run cushion with his RBI double.

Segura and Lamb had three hits apiece. Wellington Castillo homered and drove in two runs for Arizona in a game that ended 9 minutes shy of midnight on the West Coast.

Rubby De La Rosa (1-3), scratched from his scheduled start in this series opener after coming out of the bullpen over the weekend, struck out three for the win.

Brad Ziegler earned his third save this season and 31st consecutive overall — an ongoing franchise record.

Gosselin reached on a leadoff single against Chris Heston (1-1).

Capitals go up 3-0 on Flyers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Wayne Simmonds raised his hand toward the crowd and pleaded with fans to stop hurling colorful bracelets on the ice.

The Flyers PA announcer urged fans to "show some class" during the first wave of band tossing.

The Philly fans refused to listen and pelted the ice with the giveaways at seemingly the same rapid rate Washington was scoring goals.

Alex Ovechkin scored twice, Braden Holtby had 31 saves and the Washington Capitals moved one game closer to a sweep in their first-round playoff series with a 6-1 win over the Philadelphia Flyers on Monday night.

The Capitals lead a series 3-0 for the first time in franchise history. Game 4 is Wednesday night in Philadelphia.

"It's a huge opportunity for us to come back home with the win and see what's going to happen and who's going to be next," Ovechkin said.

Ovechkin snapped a tie game with his 38th career postseason goal and Holtby made the lead stand with his third straight sensational effort in the series. The Capitals scored five power-play goals, including four in a third period marked by the behavior of Philadelphia's disgruntled home fans.

The Flyers lost in their first home game since founder Ed Snider's death last week. Michael Raffl scored 57 seconds into the game and sent a crowd already rocking after an emotional pregame tribute into a frenzy.

But passion alone wasn't enough to fuel the Flyers.

Philadelphia fans showed the wrong kind of spirit late in the game when they tossed wristbands used as part of a pregame lights show on the ice as Washington turned this one into a rout.

Flyers public address announcer Lou Nolan scolded fans and warned the Flyers would be hit with a penalty if they kept littering the ice with bracelets and other garbage.

Sure enough, the wristbands kept coming, and the Flyers were whistled for a bench minor for delay of game. Capitals defenseman Dmitry Orlov was even smacked by a flying bracelet sitting in the penalty box. Nolan said, "way to go," and the fans cheered as if they were proud of the penalty.

"I know they're upset in that situation but that can't happen," Simmonds said.

The Flyers dedicated their postseason run to Snider, who died last week after a two-year battle with cancer.

The Flyers hanged a banner outside the arena with Snider's picture and the caption "A Flyer Forever." His silhouette was inside the Flyers logo for the customary playoff T-shirt giveaway, and some fans left flowers and cards at a makeshift memorial next to the team flag.

"EMS" — initials for Edward Malcolm Snider — were painted on the ice behind each net.

Lauren Hart, the team's longtime anthem singer, sang "God Bless America" with Snider's name and "67" on the back of her team jersey. The Flyers' first season was 1967-68. Hart's eyes watered and her hands were shaking throughout her performance.

Raffl knocked in the first shot of the game off Brandon Manning's attempt from the point and 19,678 fans went wild.

Kings climb back in series with OT win

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Getting down in a series seems to bring out the best of the Los Angeles Kings. Especially when they're playing the San Jose Sharks.

Tanner Pearson scored 3:47 into overtime and the Kings bounced back from a pair of series-opening losses at home to beat the Sharks 2-1 in Game 3 in the first round Monday night.

"It's a confident group when our backs are against the wall," Pearson said. "We're still there and we've got to fight back to even up the series."

Anze Kopitar added a power-play goal, Jonathan Quick made 29 saves and Los Angeles killed two third-period penalties to cut San Jose's lead in the series to 2-1. The Kings rallied from a 3-0 series deficit to beat the Sharks in the first round two years ago on the way to their second Stanley Cup title.

"You know they're thinking a little bit

about it now, so we're right where we want to be," said defenseman Drew Doughty, who played 35:01 of the game.

Game 4 is Wednesday night in San Jose.

Joe Thornton scored 30 seconds into the game for the Sharks, but San Jose couldn't get anything else past Quick as their regular-season pattern of road dominance and home struggles extended to the playoffs. The Sharks led the NHL with 28 road wins in the regular season and added two to start this series. But San Jose has lost 24 of 42 home games for the worst record on home ice of any playoff team.

"It's the first time to four," Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said. "I couldn't care less where we win the game. We played well enough to win the game tonight. We outshot them, outchanced them. We didn't win."

Martin Jones made 22 saves but couldn't stop Pearson.

Wild 5, Stars 3: Jason Pominville had two goals and an assist and host

Minnesota roared back from an early two-goal deficit to beat Dallas and slice its deficit in the Western Conference quarterfinals to 2-1.

Chris Porter put the Wild on the board in the final minute of the first period, their first even-strength goal of the series. Erik Haula added a goal and an assist, Mikko Koivu scored on a power play in the third period and the Wild stopped a seven-game losing streak that started on March 31.

Patrick Sharp scored 26 seconds into the game and again less than 4 minutes later for the Stars, but the Wild controlled the action after that and finished with a 25-17 shots-on-goal advantage.

Game 4 is in Minnesota on Wednesday night, and Game 5 will be back in Dallas on Friday night.

The Stars went nearly 50 minutes without scoring until the puck took a pinball-like path to the net off Colton Sceviour's chest.