

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, April 20, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Attack on Afghan ministry disrupts calm

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Multiple explosions and repeated gunfire echoed through downtown Kabul on Saturday during an attack on a government ministry.

At least four militants unleashed a bomb blast around noon before storming the compound of Afghanistan's Telecommunications Ministry and detonating several other bombs, according to Afghan officials.

Militants set off the blast by the wall of the ministry and then tried to get inside the building, said Nasrat Rahimi, spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior.

Nasart Rahimi, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry, told The Associated Press four civilians and three soldiers were killed during the attack. Eight civilians were wounded, he said.

All four attackers are now dead, along with three members of the Afghan security forces, a statement added.

The attackers were able to enter the ministry building and fought with government forces from there, a witness told Tolo News.

Police entered the building to conduct clearance operations and evacuated the ministry's 2,000 workers, Kabul Police Chief Sayed Mohammad Roshandil told Tolo News.

About five hours after the

attack began, the Ministry of Interior declared the incident over.

The blast occurred in the heart of the capital city of Kabul, a mile and a half from the U.S. Embassy and NATO Resolute Support headquarters, and next to the presidential palace, one of the city's most popular hotels and many government buildings.

The Taliban in a statement denied involvement in the attack.

Photos posted online appeared to show the attackers dead and wearing a type of Afghan police uniform.

Anti-government militants used false uniforms in another attack on a government

ministry last spring. Gunmen then used American uniforms to attack the Afghan Interior Ministry. Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in the country at the time, said phony uniforms had been used in the past by militants.

The fighting broke a relative calm that had settled over the city in recent months, during which the U.S. has negotiated with Taliban leaders in a bid to end the nation's longest war.

Talks between the Taliban and 250 Afghan politicians fell apart in recent days due to disagreements about how many delegates were supposed to come to the planned meeting in Qatar.

## Blue Angels gear up for a new era in new planes

*Pensacola News Journal*

PENSACOLA, Fla. — As the 2019 Blue Angels delight fans at air shows nationwide this year, two former Blue Angels have been busy laying the groundwork for one of the biggest changes in the team's nearly 75-year history.

Capt. Ryan Bernacchi, commander of the 2016-2017 Blue Angels, and Cmdr. Frank Weisser, who flew with the team from 2008-2010 and again in 2016 and 2017, recently oversaw a team of experts helping the Blue Angels change airplanes for the first time in more than 30 years.

The Blue Angels are tentatively scheduled to start flying the F/A-18 Super Hornet in 2021, the team's 75th anniversary season. The move to the Super Hornet will mark the first time the elite Navy and Marine fighter jet demonstra-

tion team has changed aircraft since it moved from the A-4F Skyhawk II to the F/A-18 Hornet back in 1986.

Both Bernacchi and Weisser said the new aircraft will mean exciting changes in the demonstration and a new era for the Blue Angels.

"The jet is more powerful, especially at lower altitudes, so we believe that our maneuvering will be more visible to the crowd and more impressive overall," Weisser said in response to a series of emailed questions from the News Journal. "That increased performance will also allow us to alter some maneuvers to better showcase the aircraft's very unique capabilities."

Bernacchi and Weisser did a lot of their work in flight simulators at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland. They first tried to recreate the

existing F/A-18 Blue Angels' demonstration in the Super Hornet using the simulator.

"Along the way, we worked closely with the engineering experts at Pax, folks that have unmatched knowledge about the F-18 flight dynamics, engines, flight control systems, fuel systems and airframe fatigue factors."

The team configured an artificial feel system in the simulator to mimic the 40-pound spring, which Blue Angels attach to their jet's flight stick to provide the precision control needed to fly the tight formations that are a hallmark of their flying.

They also introduced engine flameouts, control failures and other unexpected emergencies in the simulator to see how the Super Hornet performed under the demands of the demonstration.

"We wanted to understand what the effects would be and ensure there is a safe procedure to handle any situation that could possibly arise, no matter how unlikely," Bernacchi said.

Although some things will change with the newer aircraft, other things will stay the same.

The Blue Angels will continue to fly without the traditional G-suits worn by other fighter jet pilots when they change to the Super Hornet.

Overall, Weisser said, the new aircraft and advanced software will provide the pilots with more situational awareness and faster access to critical flight information.

"We very much believe this will not only make the show safer to fly but more enjoyable to the crowd," he said.

# How the CNO impacted collision probe

*ProPublica*

WASHINGTON — Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Pollio could not believe what she was hearing from the Navy's top officer.

It was Jan. 25, 2018, and Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, was addressing an auditorium filled with Navy attorneys. One officer asked a question that touched on a sensitive topic: two collisions of warships in the Pacific in the summer of 2017 that left 17 sailors dead in the Navy's worst maritime accidents in decades.

The Navy had recently announced that it would criminally prosecute the captains of the vessels and several crewmembers for negligence leading to the fatal accidents. The questioner wanted to know whether officers now had to worry about being charged with a crime for making what could be regarded as a mistake.

Richardson answered by saying that he could not discuss pending cases. As a bedrock principle of military law, commanders cannot signal a preferred outcome. But then, almost as an afterthought, he attempted to reassure the man that the collisions were not accidents.

"I have seen the entire investigation. Trust me, if you had seen what I have seen, it was negligent," Richardson told the audience, according to court records.

Pollio, a Navy attorney, was alarmed. It appeared to her that Richardson had effectively pronounced guilt before trial. And he had done so in public, in front of an audience whose members could conceivably participate in the military's judicial proceedings.

"I was shocked that he would say that," Pollio would later recall in court testimony.

Commanders are central to military

justice. In most cases, they select jurors, approve plea deals and have a say in the outcomes. The prosecutors, defense lawyers and judges are often all servicemembers. They are charged with being independent, but some, inevitably, are conscious of their careers and the desires of higher-ups.

It is a system rife with the potential for bias. That's why commanders are forbidden from even giving the appearance of trying to sway results. Unlawful command influence has been called the "mortal enemy of military justice" because it undermines faith in the system's fairness — not just among members of the military but the general public, too.

Yet the January meeting was neither the first time nor the last that Richardson would be accused of attempting to influence the results of the inquiry into the collisions of the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain.

That fall, Richardson had told reporters at a press conference that the ships' officers were "at fault" because of their negligence. On another occasion, he told reporters that "there was nothing that was outside the commanding officer and the crews' span of control" before the collisions. In testimony before Congress, he again held the captains of the ships culpable, saying they "had complete ownership" of the causes of the collisions.

Richardson made investigating the accidents involving the Fitzgerald and the McCain a primary focus of his command of the Navy. He ordered multiple in-depth examinations of the incidents. He promulgated reforms designed to put more sailors on ships based overseas and increase training in basic navigation skills.

But his pursuit of accountability for indi-

vidual sailors has been deeply troubled, and the prosecutions of the men and women on the two destroyers are today in shambles. Richardson, who holds the most senior uniformed position in the Navy, was found by a judge to have violated the protections against undue command influence, a stunning result in one of the most high-profile cases of military justice in years.

A ProPublica examination of the cases based on confidential Navy documents, emails among top officials, court records and interviews shows that the criminal prosecutions of the accidents involving the Fitzgerald and the McCain were marred by questionable decisions and egregious mistakes.

On April 10, after ProPublica informed the Navy of its findings, the Navy told families of the fallen sailors that Richardson would announce that he was dismissing the cases against the captain of the Fitzgerald and a junior officer. Instead, both will receive letters of censure from Richard Spencer, the secretary of the Navy, a public finding of wrongdoing.

"The cases are being dismissed for legal reasons that impeded the continued prosecution of either officer," read the message, which was obtained by ProPublica. "Your loved ones did not die in vain; their legacy lives in the form of a stronger and more capable Navy."

A Navy spokesman confirmed the actions.

"This decision is in the best interest of the Navy, the families of the Fitzgerald sailors and the procedural rights of the accused officers," read a statement.

The unraveling of the cases against the sailors began soon after the collisions.

## Navy shows commitment to robotic submarines

*Los Angeles Times*

The U.S. naval fleet of the future may one day include submarines without a sailor from bow to stern that prowl the depths of the ocean, navigating mine-infested waters to gather intelligence or even clandestinely drop explosives.

The military views autonomous vehicles as a way to accomplish missions deemed too risky, mundane or expensive for human crews. While aer-

ial drones have largely been tasked with these types of duties for more than a decade, the Navy is now increasingly funding robotic ships and undersea drones to complement the work done by its crewed vessels.

Last month, Boeing Co. beat out rival Lockheed Martin Corp. for a \$46.7 million Navy contract modification to build an Orca undersea drone. Boeing had previously won a contract to build four of the Orca drones, bringing the total con-

tract value for the five to \$274.4 million. A large chunk of work will be done at the aerospace giant's Huntington Beach facility, and the drones are expected to be completed by 2022.

Neither Boeing nor the Navy have disclosed the size of the robot submarines, but Boeing has previously developed and tested a 51-foot-long underwater drone prototype called the Echo Voyager.

Analysts say the contract, along with the Navy's new fis-

cal year 2020 funding request for further development of uncrewed surface vessels and undersea drones, indicates a new level of commitment to autonomous sea operations.

The 51-foot-long, yellow-and-gray submarine-shaped drone has completed more than 2,500 hours of ocean testing, including two sea trials.

Eventually, the Navy could pair the underwater drones with their uncrewed surface counterparts.



# Camera found in bathroom aboard ship

BY SCOTT WYLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy is investigating after a female Marine found a camera hidden in a women's bathroom aboard the amphibious dock transport USS Arlington during a security operation in the Mediterranean Sea, Navy officials said Saturday.

The Navy is looking into who put the camera in the bathroom and what might have been recorded before the Marine dis-

covered the device in March.

"The Navy/Marine Corps team takes all reports of sexual harassment seriously and are committed to thoroughly investigating these allegations and providing resources and care to victims of sexual harassment," said Cmdr. Kyle Raines, a 6th Fleet spokesman, in a statement on Saturday.

The Navy can't release details on an active investigation or identify victims, Raines said.

Investigators are looking into whether the camera took still photos or videos or streamed an unrecorded live feed, he said.

The vessel is on a seven-month deployment in Europe and the Middle East.

The ship, which was docked Friday in Greece, deployed from the East Coast in December with the USS Kearsage, USS Fort McHenry and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit as part of an amphibious ready group.

# US servicemember dies in Iraq incident

*Stars and Stripes*

An American servicemember died Saturday in a noncombat incident in northern Iraq, the military said.

The identity of the servicemember, who died in Nineveh province, would not be released until after next of kin were no-

tified, Operation Inherent Resolve said in a brief statement that gave no further information about the circumstances of the death.

U.S. troops are continuing to serve in Iraq as part of a coalition to train, advise and assist local forces in the fight against an Islamic State insurgency,

after helping bring an end to the terrorist group's physical "caliphate" in Iraq and Syria.

Last month, President Donald Trump announced that U.S.-backed forces in Syria had retaken the last of the ISIS-held territory.

Still, the terrorist group has continued to carry out violent

attacks in both Iraq and Syria and remains a threat.

Inherent Resolve said in a statement earlier this month that the group maintains an underground network of cells and that the U.S.-led coalition is continuing to provide Iraqi security forces the training needed to defeat those cells.

# ISIS militants ambush Syrian government troops

*Associated Press*

BEIRUT — Islamic State militants ambushed Syrian government forces in the country's desert, setting off two days of clashes that killed over two dozen soldiers, a war monitoring organization said Saturday.

A pro-government militia confirmed the ambush, saying it had sent its fighters to liberate the two besieged battalions.

The Islamic State lost its last territories in Syria in March after months of battles with U.S.-backed Kurdish-led fighters in the eastern province of

Deir el-Zour.

But the militants remain active in the desert to the west of Deir el-Zour, where they have taken refuge and increasingly targeted government troops and allied militia.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said ISIS militants ambushed government forces in the desert of central Homs province Thursday night, setting off clashes that lasted for two days. The Observatory said at least 27 soldiers were killed, including four officers.

Liwa al-Quds, a pro-govern-

ment militia, said its fighters deployed to the desert area to liberate 500 soldiers besieged east of al-Sukhna town.

In a Facebook post, the militia said it successfully broke the siege and liberated the surviving soldiers, before pulling the bodies of those killed and damaged vehicles to safety.

Liwa al-Quds, one of the elite militias operating side by side with government troops, didn't give a casualty figure.

Activists have reported a rise in clashes between government forces and allied troops

and ISIS militants following the end of the extremist's presence in the nearby Deir el-Zour province.

The militant group, which once controlled large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq, has kept a network of sleeper cells active in both countries.

It has also kept up its media operations. The ISIS-affiliated Amaq news agency reported the attack east of al-Sukhna, adding that in 24 hours of clashes its militants killed nearly two dozen Syrian soldiers and officers.

# Family says boy thrown from mall balcony is recovering

*Associated Press*

MINNEAPOLIS — The family of a 5-year-old boy thrown off a third-floor balcony at the Mall of America last week says he's "showing real signs of recovery" but remains in intensive care.

The boy's family posted the update Fri-

day on a GoFundMe page that has raised nearly \$900,000 for Landen's medical expenses. Beyond the fundraising page, Landen's family has asked for privacy.

Prosecutors have charged Emmanuel Aranda, 24, with attempted premeditated first-degree murder for the April 12 attack.

Aranda told police he was angry at being rejected by women at the Minnesota mall and was "looking for someone to kill."

Landen plunged almost 40 feet and suffered head trauma and multiple broken bones.

His family says he still has "a long road ahead" to recovery.

# Storms kill girl in Fla., spur twister threat

Associated Press

ATLANTA — A strong storm system barreling through the South killed an 8-year-old girl in Florida and threatened to bring tornadoes to large parts of the Carolinas and southern Virginia.

A tree fell onto a house Friday in Woodville, Fla., south of Tallahassee, killing the girl and injuring a 12-year-old boy, according to the Leon County Sheriff's Office. The office said in a statement that the girl died at a hospital while the boy suffered non-life-threatening injuries. Their names weren't immediately released.

The same storm system was blamed for the deaths a day earlier of three people in Mississippi and a woman in Alabama.

The threat on Friday shifted farther east, where tornado

warnings covered parts of northeast Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia, where four suspected tornado touchdowns were reported Friday night. Twisters touched down in Reston, Fredericks Hall, Barham and Forksville. Homes and small structures were damaged, but no injuries were immediately reported.

The national Storm Prediction Center said 9.7 million people in the Carolinas and Virginia were at a moderate risk of severe weather. The region includes the Charlotte, N.C. metro area.

Torrential downpours, large hail and a few tornadoes were among the hazards, the National Weather Service in Raleigh, N.C., warned.

Radar readings appeared to show a tornado formed in western Virginia's Franklin County, south of Roanoke, though dam-

age on the ground still must be assessed, said National Weather Service Meteorologist Phil Hysell. In South Carolina, authorities urged motorists to avoid part of Interstate 26 — the main artery from Upstate through Columbia and all the way to Charleston — because downed trees had left the roadway scattered with debris.

In Georgia, the storm system knocked down trees, caused flooding and cut off power to tens of thousands of people.

In Forsyth County northeast of Atlanta, three firefighters suffered minor injuries when their firetruck overturned during heavy rain and wind, Fire Department Division Chief Jason Shivers told the newspaper.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people cleaned up part of a central Mississippi town hit hard by a tornado on Thursday.

Volunteers and family members were swarming the north side of Morton, where the National Weather Service says a twister with winds as high as 132 mph hit a neighborhood. More than 20 homes were heavily damaged or destroyed. The town of 3,500 is about 30 miles east of Jackson.

"When it stopped, there was nothing left," Morton resident Sharon Currie told WAPT-TV. "I was going, 'Oh my God. My house is gone.'"

Forecasters confirmed that 14 tornadoes had touched down in Mississippi and damage from the storm system was reported in at least 24 of the state's 82 counties. Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant declared a state of emergency — the second one he has declared in less than a week due to tornadoes.

## 2-wave US flu season is now longest in a decade

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Three months ago, this flu season was shaping up to be short and mild in the U.S. But a surprising second viral wave has made it the longest in 10 years.

This flu season has been officially going for 21 weeks, according to reports collected through last week and released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That makes it among the longest seen since the government started tracking flu season duration more than 20 years ago.

Some experts likened the unusual double waves to having two different flu seasons compressed, back-to-back, into one.

"I don't remember a season like this," said Dr. Arnold Monto, a University of Michigan researcher who had been studying respiratory illnesses for more than 50 years.

The previous longest recent

flu season was 20 weeks, which occurred in 2014-2015.

Flu can cause a miserable, relatively mild illness in many people and a more severe illness in others. Young children and the elderly are at greatest risk from flu and its complications.

The current season began the week of Thanksgiving, a typical start time. In the beginning, most illnesses were caused by a flu strain that tends not to cause as many hospitalizations and which is more easily controlled by vaccines.

But in mid-February, a nastier strain started causing more illnesses and driving up hospitalizations. Not helping matters: The harsher bug is not well matched to the vaccine, said the CDC's Lynnette Brammer, who oversees flu tracking.

Still, this flu season is not nearly as bad as last winter's 19-week season, the deadliest in at least four decades.

## Notre Dame sympathy stirs yellow vest anger

Associated Press

PARIS — French yellow vest protesters set small fires as they marched through Paris on Saturday to drive home their latest message to the government: that rebuilding the fire-ravaged Notre Dame Cathedral isn't the only problem the nation needs to solve.

Police repeatedly fired tear gas on stone-throwing protesters on the margins of the largely peaceful march, one of several actions around Paris and other French cities. They're marking the 23rd straight weekend of yellow vest action against wealth inequality and President Emmanuel Macron's leadership.

Security was extra-high in Paris as authorities braced for resurgent yellow vest anger. The Paris police headquarters said authorities detained 126 people by early afternoon and carried out spot checks of more

than 11,000 people trying to enter the capital for Saturday's protests.

The tensions focused on a march of several thousand people that started at the Finance Ministry in eastern Paris to demand lower taxes on workers and pensioners and higher taxes on the rich.

As the crowd headed toward the Place de la Republique plaza in eastern Paris, barricades were set ablaze at multiple spots, and branches set on fire elsewhere. Firefighters quickly responded to extinguish the flames.

An Associated Press reporter saw a masked protester dressed entirely in black jump on a Mercedes parked along the march route, smashing its front and back windshields.

Another group of about 200 people tried to march on the president's Elysee Palace in central Paris, but riot police blocked them



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Road rage shooting began as littering fight

**MO** SPRINGFIELD — A Springfield man was charged with shooting at another driver in an act of road rage that police say stemmed from a littering confrontation.

The Springfield News-Leader reported that Treycarcio Jones, 23, was charged with unlawful use of a weapon.

Charging documents said the confrontation happened on April 3 when Jones threw trash out of his car. Police said another driver then yelled at Jones to pick up the trash. The document said Jones then fired two shots at the man. He wasn't wounded, although his front tire was damaged.

Jones told investigators the other man threw a cup at his vehicle. He said he only fired because he thought the other man was reaching for a weapon.

## Chimp dies after 35 years as alpha female

**NC** ASHEBORO — The North Carolina Zoo said a 46-year-old chimpanzee has died after 35 years as the dominant female of her group.

Zoo officials said in a news release that the chimp named Maggie was humanely euthanized after health issues including an infection and lung problems. Zookeepers noted she had already lived longer than most female chimpanzees, who typically live to around age 40.

As the alpha female, Maggie built relationships and served as a leader to younger chimps.

## Police solve headless chicken, pigeon mystery

**CT** WESTPORT — Police captured a man they

said had been leaving decapitated chickens outside a Connecticut home.

Westport police said a resident called to say someone had dropped a bag containing two headless chickens and a headless pigeon on his property, then ran toward a nearby railroad station.

Based on surveillance video, police found New York City resident Ajamu Obataiye, 48, at the station and charged him with breach of peace, animal cruelty and illegal dumping.

## Newborn infant left at firefighter station

**AZ** PHOENIX — Authorities said a newborn was left at a Phoenix fire station.

Phoenix fire officials said firefighters at a station on the city's west side were working out when a woman holding a baby rang the doorbell.

The crew said the woman, who wished to remain anonymous, said she was a friend of the baby's mother. She said the mother did not feel she could take care of the infant.

Phoenix fire department spokesman Jake Van Hook said the firefighters assessed the newborn before taking the child to the hospital for evaluation.

## Woman charged after 86 cats, 1 dog found

**MI** MOUNT CLEMENS — A 62-year-old woman faced charges after authorities removed 86 cats and a dog from a suburban Detroit home while she was being evicted.

Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith said the animals were living in "appalling conditions" in Mount Clemens when they were found last month.

Smith's office charged the woman with animal cruelty.

County animal control officers removed the animals and took them to the Macomb County Animal Shelter. Most of the animals were sick.

## Endangered whale is having mini-baby boom

**MA** PROVINCETOWN — An endangered species of whale is experiencing a mini-baby boom in New England waters, researchers on Cape Cod said.

The North Atlantic right whale is one of the rarest species of whale on the planet, numbering only about 411. But the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown said its aerial survey team spotted two mom and calf pairs in Cape Cod Bay. That brings the number seen in New England waters alone this year to three.

That's big news because the whale's population has been falling, and no calves were seen last year. In all, seven right whale calves have been seen this year.

## Beware: 2 coyotes test positive for rabies

**VT** BURLINGTON — Vermont health officials said two coyotes tested positive for rabies.

The Vermont Department of Public Health is urging residents near Salisbury and New Haven to avoid animals that are acting sick or aggressive and reach out to local game wardens or animal control officers.

The spokesman said one coyote attacked two people in Salisbury and tests earlier this month showed it was rabid. The department received reports of aggressive behavior from an-

other coyote in New Haven and also found it tested positive for rabies.

A spokesman for the department said that rabies among coyotes is relatively rare.

## The Eastern hellbender voted official amphibian

**PA** HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania is getting an official amphibian, a nocturnal, unsightly salamander that's sometimes known as a snot otter, lasagna lizard or mud devil.

The House voted 191-6 to grant the honor to the Eastern hellbender, which can grow to be more than 2 feet long and is battling declining numbers across much of its range in the United States.

The path to legislative recognition was not smooth, as the Eastern hellbender faced a stiff challenge from another amphibian called Wehrle's salamander.

## Boy Scouts remove shoreline debris

**KY** GOLDEN POND — Boy Scout troops from three states removed about a ton of trash and litter from the shoreline of Land Between the Lakes at a recent event.

The scouts from western Kentucky, Tennessee and southern Illinois are from the Four Rivers District and performed the clean up during their annual Conservation Day.

The scouts worked with leaders from the Friends of Land Between the Lakes and the USDA Forest Service to focus clean up on four locations that had been impacted by flooding debris.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# Avs bounce to top Western seed Flames

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — After getting shut out in the series opener, the Colorado Avalanche clamped down defensively to shut down the Western Conference-leading Calgary Flames.

Now, the Avalanche are on to the second round of the playoffs for the first time in 11 years.

Colin Wilson and Mikko Rantanen each had two goals and an assist, and Colorado beat Calgary 5-1 in Game 5 of their first-round series Friday night to eliminate the Flames.

Gabriel Landeskog also scored, and Nathan MacKinnon and Tyson Barrie each had three assists as the Avalanche won a playoff series for the first time since 2008. Philipp Grubauer stopped 28 shots and a penalty shot by Johnny Gaudreau in the first period.

"It's awesome to win a round," said MacKinnon, who had three goals and five assists in the series. "It's been a while for this organization and I, personally, have never won a round so I'm really excited about it."

T.J. Brodie scored for the Flames, and Mike Smith finished with 27 saves.

Calgary, which finished first in the Western Conference at 50-25-7, was beaten by a team that sprinted the final two weeks of the regular season to capture the West's last wild card and then won four straight in

this series after losing the opener.

"Obviously we were the big underdogs and no one picked us to win," MacKinnon said. "I didn't expect to win it in five, but we believed in this group."

The Flames' ouster marked the first time both conferences' top seeds were eliminated in the first round. East-leading Tampa Bay, which won the Presidents' Trophy with the league's best record, was swept by Columbus.

Calgary ranked second in goal scoring in the regular season behind the Lightning and tied with San Jose. However, after opening with a 4-0 victory in Game 1, the Flames didn't score more than two goals in any game. The NHL's highest-scoring team on home ice this season mustered only one in Game 5.

"Some of the strengths we had during the regular season weren't strengths in Round 1," Flames coach Bill Peters said. "I can't explain it to you why some of those went away. It'll be interesting as we reflect and look back and try and find some answers. ... We tried to change some things lineup-wise, we tried to change some matchups a little bit on the MacKinnon line and we didn't have an answer."

Colorado was the more confident team after coming from behind to win both the second and fourth games of the series 3-2 in overtime, and decisively beating Calgary 6-2 in Game 3.

In four straight wins to take the series,

the Avalanche beat the Flames to the puck in all three zones and forced Calgary to chase and defend. MacKinnon was the catalyst in Colorado's superior speed with and without the puck.

"For anyone who doesn't think MacKinnon is not one of the best if not the best, they might want to look at this series," Flames captain Mark Giordano said. "He really took control and led their team."

Gaudreau, Calgary's top goal scorer, was limited to one assist in the series.

His penalty-shot attempt in the first was unsuccessful, he shot the puck wide on a clear breakaway in the period, and had what would have been his first goal of these playoffs waived off for goaltender interference in the second.

"I had a ton of chances tonight," Gaudreau said. "I didn't find the net when I should have a couple times during the series."

Rantanen's wrist shot over Smith's left shoulder 57 seconds into the third period deadened Scotiabank Saddledome as Flames fans began coming to grips with their team's impending first-round upset.

"The season we had we were not expecting to go out in five games obviously in the first round," Giordano said. "Right now it doesn't feel good. We had a great season and we couldn't find a way to get leads in the playoffs and stick to it when we did have the lead."

# Leafs clamp down, edge Bruins in Game 5

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Toronto Maple Leafs have grown accustomed to playoff disappointment in recent years.

However, after putting together possibly their best defensive effort of the season, their latest victory has them on the brink of getting out of the first round for the first time since 2004.

Auston Matthews broke a scoreless tie in the third period, Kasper Kapanen added another goal and the Maple Leafs held on to beat the Boston Bruins 2-1 Friday night and take a 3-2 lead in their first-round playoff series.

With the goalie pulled for an extra skater, David Krejci got

the Bruins on the board with 43.7 seconds left, but Boston couldn't tie it up.

The Maple Leafs, who have alternated wins and losses in the first five games, now have a chance to close out the series when it shifts back to Toronto for Game 6 on Sunday.

"Total team victory," Toronto's Zach Hyman said. "Guys were battling. It took a full 60 to get it done, but we got it done."

Frederik Andersen had 28 saves for Toronto. The Bruins' Tuukka Rask finished with 25.

Boston failed to convert on its three power plays, and Toronto was 0-for-1.

"Defensively the ice was tough," Toronto coach Mike Babcock said. "It was humid in the building. ... But I thought

our guys kept grinding and stayed patient. We didn't get in our own way tonight."

The Maple Leafs' goals broke up what had been a defense-dominated game for 2½ periods.

Matthews' fourth goal of the postseason came after he took a feed from Jake Muzzin and found an open corner of the net on a slap shot with 8:27 left. The Bruins challenged Matthews' goal, arguing that Rask was interfered with, but the goal was upheld after a review.

"I guess you really just hope for the best," Matthews said. "I never really got a good look at it, but I'm fortunate that they called it a good goal. So you'll take it."

Kapanen got Toronto's sec-

ond goal less than two minutes later, scoring on a wrist shot off assists from Andreas Johnsson and Morgan Rielly. Kapanen was also credited with an assist on Matthews' goal, along with Muzzin.

Toronto failed to convert on its power play in the third after the Bruins were nabbed for having too many men on the ice.

The Bruins were 2-for-2 on power plays in Game 4, helping propel them to the win. However they couldn't take advantage of their chances in Game 5.

"They were better than us in the third and finished plays," Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy said. "We've to generate more."



## NBA playoffs roundup

# Westbrook helps OKC get back in series

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook called his play in Game 2 “unacceptable.”

It was more than acceptable in Game 3. He had 33 points and 11 assists and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Portland Trail Blazers 120-108 on Friday night to cut their series deficit to 2-1.

Thunder forward Paul George called Westbrook a man of his word.

“He led, we got behind him and he put us on his back,” George said.

George scored 22 points, Jerami Grant had 18 and Dennis Schroder 17 for the Thunder. They will host Game 4 of the best-of-seven series on Sunday night.

Damian Lillard scored 32 points, but he had just three in the fourth quarter after scoring 25 in the third. He made 8 of 11 shots in the third quarter, but missed all four of his field goals in the fourth.

“Their defense pretty much stayed the same,” Lillard said of Oklahoma City’s fourth-

quarter strategy. “They got a little more aggressive on the ball. Instead of just trying to stay in front of me, they were coming up a little higher.”

C.J. McCollum had 21 points and Enes Kanter added 19 for the Trail Blazers.

Oklahoma City closed the second quarter on a 10-1 run to take a 49-39 lead. Lillard was held to four points on 2-for-6 shooting and the Trail Blazers shot 37.5% in the half.

George hit a three-pointer, was fouled and made the free throw in the opening minutes of the second half to push Oklahoma City’s lead to 55-43. Westbrook backed down Lillard, hit a bank shot and was fouled. Westbrook brought out his “rock the baby” celebration, then made the free throw to put Oklahoma City up by 15.

“I didn’t even see him do it,” Lillard said. “A lot of times, I’m waiting for the ball to be inbounded, so I’m not looking at what’s going on the other way. So rock the baby on a jump shot? I mean, you can do that all day.”

Whether Lillard was inspired or not, he scored 23 points the rest of the quarter to help cut Oklahoma City’s lead to 86-82 at the end of the period. McCollum hit a three-pointer to tie the game at 89 early in the fourth.

Oklahoma City regained control, then kept it. Westbrook hit a wild 26-foot three-pointer over Lillard with 1:20 to go that put the Thunder up by 14, then he told Lillard all about it.

**Celtics 104, Pacers 96:** Jaylen Brown scored 23 points and Kyrie Irving added 19 to help visiting Boston beat Indiana for a 3-0 lead in the first-round series.

The Celtics can close out the series Sunday in Indianapolis.

Irving also had 10 assists and five rebounds.

Tyreke Evans matched his career playoff high with 19 points for the Pacers. Bojan Bogdanovic had 15, not enough to prevent Indiana from losing its sixth straight to Boston in the regular season and playoff.

**Raptors 98, Magic 93:** Pascal Siakam had 30 points and

11 rebounds, Kawhi Leonard added 16 points and Toronto held off host Orlando to take a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference series.

Siakam was 13-for-20 from the floor and the Raptors held Orlando to 36% shooting. Leonard had 10 rebounds, Danny Green had 13 points and Kyle Lowry finished with 12 points and 10 assists.

Terrence Ross led Orlando with 24 points, and Nikola Vucevic shook off a slow start to finish with 22 points and 14 rebounds.

Game 4 is Sunday night in Orlando.

Lowry’s three-pointer with 7:48 left gave Toronto its biggest lead at 86-69. The Magic came flying back, and Ross’ three-pointer with 41 seconds left got Orlando to 96-93. Leonard was short with a jumper on the next possession — but the Magic couldn’t control the rebound, and were doomed shortly afterward. Leonard made a pair of free throws with 12.9 seconds remaining to make it a two-possession game again.

## MLS roundup

# Hamilton, Toronto FC rally to beat Minnesota United

Associated Press

TORONTO — Substitute Jordan Hamilton scored in the 77th and 79th minutes to give Toronto FC a 4-3 comeback victory over Minnesota United on Friday night.

Hamilton converted a pass from Jonathan Osorio to tie it at 3, then put Toronto ahead on a header after Jozy Altidore chipped goalkeeper Vito Mannone. Alejandro Pozuelo also scored twice for Toronto (4-1-1).

Darwin Quintero scored twice for Minnesota (3-3-1), giving the Loons a 3-2 lead with the second on a penalty

kick in the 70th minute. Angelo Rodriguez also scored for Minnesota.

Minnesota finished with nine men. Jan Gregus was sent off in the 89th for a dangerous scissors tackle on Pozuelo, and Francisco Calvo followed in the 91st after a second yellow card in two minutes.

**Real Salt Lake 3, FC Cincinnati 0:** Albert Rusnak scored two goals, Sam Johnson added another and visiting Real Salt Lake beat expansion FC Cincinnati.

Salt Lake (3-4-1) won for the first time in five road games this season. Cincinnati (2-4-2)

is winless in four matches.

Rusnak opened the scoring in the 42nd minute. Corey Baird blocked a clearance attempt, settled the loose ball and sent a shot off goalkeeper Spencer Richey’s chest, and Rusnak sent the rebound into the back of the net from the penalty spot.

Rusnak capped the scoring on a penalty kick in the 59th after Jefferson Savarino was taken down at the edge of the 18-yard box.

Johnson scored in first-half stoppage time by finishing a three-shot sequence with a close-range sliding attempt.

**Galaxy 2, Dynamo 1:** Diego

Polenta scored his first MLS goal by heading in a corner kick in the 88th minute to lead the host Galaxy over the Dynamo.

Los Angeles (6-1-0) and Houston (4-1-1) each entered with four-game winning streaks.

The first two goals came on penalty kicks. Los Angeles striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic converted in the 31st minute, and Houston midfielder Alberth Elis scored in the 53rd.

Ibrahimovic was pulled down at the far post and sent the penalty kick off the hands of David Bingham for his seventh goal of the season and sixth in his last four games.

# Betts, Moreland homers lift Red Sox

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Mookie Betts hasn't looked much like the 2018 AL MVP yet. Two key hits Friday night might help jumpstart the Boston star's season.

Betts and Mitch Moreland hit back-to-back homers for the go-ahead runs in the eighth inning and the struggling Red Sox beat the MLB-best Tampa Bay Rays 6-4.

"A lot of emotions going through my head there, but the main thing is it put us ahead," Betts said. "It's just one (game), but it's definitely a starting point. The main thing is I helped in some way today, and that's kind of my viewpoint on playing."

With the game tied at 4, Betts hit a leadoff shot off Diego Cas-

tillo (0-2) and Moreland connected three pitches later.

"You're talking about two pretty talented hitters," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "Not surprising if you don't locate it or command it the way you want, they can make you pay."

Betts finished 2-for-4 and raised his batting average from .200 to .216. Last season, the Red Sox outfielder hit a big league-leading .346 with 32 homers and 80 RBIs on his way to the MVP award.

Christian Vazquez also homered and Brandon Workman (1-1) went 1<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> scoreless innings for the Red Sox, who are 7-13 and trail the AL East-leading Rays by seven games. Ryan Brasier worked the ninth to pick up his fourth save.

"The standings?" Boston

manager Alex Cora said. "We know where we're at, but it's more about we've got two shots to win the series. That feels good."

The Rays are the last team in the majors to have consecutive losses this season. Castillo was also the loser in a 6-5, 11-inning loss to Baltimore on Thursday night.

"It's a long, long season," Cash said. "We'll be fine."

After 20 games last season, the eventual World Series champion Red Sox (17-3) were 10 games up on Tampa Bay (7-13).

Daniel Robertson, mired in an 0-for-21 slide, got the Rays even at 4-all with a two-run double during the sixth. The inning was set up when Boston third baseman Rafael Devers

misplayed what looked like a double-play grounder from Avisail Garcia with one on and no outs.

Devers had a run-scoring double in the fifth for Boston's first hit before Vazquez put Boston ahead 3-2 with his two-run shot to center.

Vazquez has three homers and eight RBIs in his last five games.

Betts, hitless in his previous 12 at-bats, doubled in the sixth and scored as the Red Sox grabbed a 4-2 lead when J.D. Martinez extended his hitting streak to nine games with an RBI single.

"I've been struggling all year, and to be able to hit a double in a spot like that, it definitely felt like a weight came off my shoulders," Betts said.

## MLB roundup

# Altuve, Bregman back Verlander in Astros' victory

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman homered on consecutive fastballs for the Houston Astros before the game's first out, giving Justin Verlander a three-run lead before he even took the mound.

Add in a few doubles, including one by George Springer that should have been a home run, and the Astros won for the 11th time in 12 games with a 7-2 win over the Texas Rangers on Friday.

"Boys did a great job tonight. Putting runs up early and often is a great recipe for success," Verlander said. "Once we got a big lead, I just kind of pulled back a little bit trying to go in energy conversation mode, just hit some spots and try to get deep in the game."

Verlander (3-0) limited the Rangers to one run and three hits over seven innings. He struck out eight and walked three.

"He's a very smart guy. He never throws you the same

thing more than once," Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus said. "He's constantly changing timing of a hitter, velocity. Keep it high and low. You never feel comfortable."

**Yankees 6, Royals 2:** CC Sabathia earned his first win of the season and Brett Gardner hit a two-run homer to help New York beat visiting Kansas City.

The Yankees got four solid innings from their bullpen to bounce back from a listless performance against the last-place Royals in the series opener.

**Cubs 5, Diamondbacks 1:** Kyle Hendricks struck out a season-high 11 over seven scoreless innings in his first win to lead host Chicago over Arizona.

Hendricks (1-3) was the third straight Cubs starter to go seven innings without allowing a run after Jose Quintana and Cole Hamels did it against Miami.

**Pirates 4, Giants 1:** Jordan Lyles cruised through six in-

nings before taking a line drive off his pitching hand, Starling Marte and Erik Gonzalez were also pulled following a collision in the field, and short-handed Pittsburgh beat visiting San Francisco.

Lyles (0-2) continued his hot start, striking out six and allowing four hits while dropping his ERA to a major league-best 0.53.

**Dodgers 5, Brewers 3:** Enrique Hernandez lined a three-run homer with two outs in the eighth inning and Los Angeles extended its winning streak to six games with the win over host Milwaukee.

**Reds 3, Padres 2 (11):** Derek Dietrich hit a two-run homer in the 11th inning to lift Cincinnati over host San Diego.

**Rockies 4, Phillies 3 (12):** Charlie Blackmon hit a two-out, two-run home run in the 12th inning, and host Colorado beat won a game that saw two Philadelphia players leave early due to injuries.

**Mariners 5, Angels 3:** Tim Beckham and Omar Narvaez hit back-to-back home runs off Cody Allen (0-2) to begin the ninth inning for visiting Seattle, sending Los Angeles to its fifth straight loss.

**White Sox 7, Tigers 3:** Yoan Moncada hit a mammoth home run in the first inning, and Chicago scored five runs in the seventh inning to break the game open and beat host Detroit.

**Marlins 3, Nationals 2:** Miami snapped a four-game losing streak by scoring runs on an error, a walk and a hit batter in a win over visiting Washington.

**Mets 5, Cardinals 4:** Rookie Pete Alonso hit his seventh home run, Robinson Cano added three hits and visiting New York edged St. Louis.

**Blue Jays 5, Athletics 1:** Marcus Stroman struck out six and pitched into the ninth, Brandon Drury homered, and Toronto beat host Oakland to snap a seven-game losing streak in the series.