

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Report: F-35 inferior to older US, foreign jets

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The F-35 Lightning II passed a major milestone last month when the Marine Corps declared it operational, but the accomplishment has not silenced critics.

A Washington think tank released a report Tuesday that found the 5th-generation jet — billed as the world's most advanced fighter — will be outmaneuvered in dogfights with current Russian and Chinese jets as well as the U.S. aircraft it is slated to replace. The report comes after details were leaked last month on a test flight where the F-35 was bested in most aerial maneuvering by an F-16.

"The F-35 will find itself outmaneuvered, outgunned, out of range, and visible to enemy sensors," according to Bill French, a policy analyst with the National Security Network, a progressive think tank that claims to challenge overly militarized conservative defense policies. "Staying the present course [on the aircraft program] may needlessly gamble away a sizable margin of American airpower at great expense and unnecessary risk to American lives."

The think tank has an advisory board that includes Sandy Berger, the national security adviser to President Bill Clin-

ton, and Richard Clarke, a senior White House adviser to several administrations. A call and email request for comment were not immediately answered.

After 14 years and more than \$390 billion invested, the first F-35s entered service two weeks ago when the Marines completed a battery of tests on a squadron of Harrier variants in Yuma, Ariz., and declared it ready for deployment around the world. Navy and Air Force variants are still being developed, and Lockheed Martin is working to overcome software and engine difficulties.

The Defense Department says the joint strike fighter will bring cutting-edge technology to the battlefield and become the backbone of U.S. air power over the next five decades. Congress has backed the program as a costly but necessary upgrade following years of delays, massive cost overruns and a final price tag estimated at \$1.4 trillion.

But the F-35 has become a magnet for criticism and doubt. The blog War is Boring published a leaked report by a test pilot who flew an F-35 against an F-16 in a mock dogfight at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., in January. The pilot wrote that the joint strike fighter performed sluggishly against the older jet and was mostly inferior in testing that

consisted of "traditional basic fighter maneuvers in offensive, defensive and neutral setups at altitudes ranging from 10,000 to 30,000 feet."

French compared the power, maneuverability and maximum payloads of the F-35 against the Russian-made MiG-29 Fulcrum and the Su-27 Flanker, which is made by Russia and flown by China.

The U.S.' next-generation fighter is "grossly inferior in terms of wing loading [except for the Navy variant], transonic acceleration and thrust-to-weight," French wrote in his report, "F-35, Thunder without Lightning."

"These are the kinds of aircraft the F-35 would most likely face in air-to-air engagements against a high-end opponent," he wrote.

The F-35 fared little better against the F-16, F-18 and AV-8B Harrier, which it is expected to replace in the current fleet due to its planned versatility. It was weaker in thrust, acceleration and wing loading, according to French.

"These performance factors are critical to building up speed and gaining or retaining energy that enables the aircraft to maneuver and gain advantages in firing position against other aircraft or defeating incoming missiles," he wrote.

The aircraft also has its defenders inside the Beltway.

"Compared with an F-15 or F-16, this is the most survivable tactical aircraft we've ever fielded," said Loren Thompson, chief operating officer at the Lexington Institute who has worked as a consultant for Lockheed.

Thompson has authored recent articles cheering the program as a success and said it is typical for newly developed military aircraft — especially very expensive ones — to be heavily scrutinized. He called the V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, which killed 19 Marines during development and raised safety concerns before being integrated into the fleet a few years ago, a perfect metaphor for the joint strike fighter.

Thompson said he had not seen the National Security Network report Tuesday morning but that the earlier leaked test documents on the F-16 mock dogfight provided a partial picture because the F-35 involved was not completely operational. For example, the pilot was not equipped with the F-35's advanced helmet, a key feature in dogfights that provides a 360-degree view through the surrounding aircraft.

"It's naive to think that three presidents and three U.S. military services would have spent so many billions of dollars on a program that doesn't work," he said.

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## Marine missing at sea off Guam is identified

*Stars and Stripes*

Officials have identified the Marine who went missing Sunday while swimming near Tumon Bay, Guam.

Pfc. Joshua Stewart, 20, of Sutter Creek, Calif., was swept out to sea at approximately 5 p.m., according to a Marine Corps

statement.

Stewart, who was on liberty when he disappeared, is deployed to Guam with Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, out of Okinawa.

The Marines, Navy, Coast Guard, Guam fire department and local authorities continued the search Tuesday with both aerial

and surface teams.

Waters around Guam can be treacherous. Last December, an airman from Andersen Air Force Base who was thought to have gone into the water near Tarague Beach on Guam's northern shore went missing and was later found dead.

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# F-16 crashes on training flight

*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. F-16 fighter jet that crashed Tuesday morning in southern Germany was not carrying live munitions when it went down, according to an Air Force news release.

The aircraft, assigned to Spangdahlem Air Base, crashed near the city of Bayreuth.

The pilot jettisoned the jet's fuel tanks and ejected safely. He was being treated at a nearby hospital for minor injuries, according to U.S. Air Forces in Europe and a German police spokesman.

The F-16, part of the 480th Fighter Squadron of the 52nd Fighter Wing, departed Spangdahlem and was flying over the U.S. Army training area

in nearby Grafenwoehr as part of a training flight when the crash occurred, the Air Force said in a statement. American aircraft routinely fly from European bases to train at Grafenwoehr's ordnance ranges.

The jet was carrying six 25-pound inert training munitions, the Air Force said.

The jet came down about 9:38 a.m. on the outskirts of Engelmannsreuth, a village about 10 miles south of Bayreuth. Local authorities cordoned off the crash site and restricted it to military personnel. On Tuesday morning, the police spokesman said firefighters were working to prevent the resulting blaze from spreading to the nearby forest.

# USS George Washington in Calif. for crew swap

BY ERIK SLAVIN

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The aircraft carrier USS George Washington arrived Monday in San Diego, where most of its crewmembers will disembark and assume their new roles aboard the USS Ronald Reagan.

Thousands of sailors aboard each carrier will swap ships over the next 10 days, Navy officials said.

Once transferred, the Reagan's new sailors will conduct a flight certification for its embarked air wing and make other adjustments before heading back toward the Asia-Pacific region, officials said.

"For training of new crews, each ship will go through a tailored syllabus following the crew swap," Capt. Timothy Kuehhas, the George Washington's commanding officer, said in a statement.

Kuehhas and some other key personnel will remain with the George Washington as it takes on a complement of Reagan sailors.

The George Washington will then head around South America and eventually stop in Newport News, Va., where it will undergo a mid-life nuclear refueling and overhaul expected to take three to four years. The multibillion-dollar project will refuel both of the ship's reactors, repair the propulsion plant and upgrade several other systems.

Several Reagan sailors serving briefly aboard the George Washington will join the informal "Three Presidents" club this year. After the George Washington arrives in Virginia for its overhaul, they will leave and join the permanent crew of the USS Theodore Roosevelt.

Meanwhile, the Reagan will replace the George Washington as the Navy's forward-deployed carrier in Japan when it arrives at Yokosuka Naval Base in the fall.

# 'Clean' Marines audit draws criticism

*Bloomberg News*

WASHINGTON — Word that the U.S. Marine Corps had passed an audit of its books was such a cause for celebration that a ceremony was staged last year in a Pentagon hall usually reserved to honor battlefield bravery.

"I know that it might seem a bit unusual to be in the Hall of Heroes to honor a bookkeeping accomplishment," then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said. "But, damn, this is an accomplishment."

Now, that first "clean" audit by a U.S. military service — one found to be fair and accurate according to generally accepted accounting principles — has been called into question in a report by the Government Accountability Office.

The Pentagon inspector gen-

eral, who conducted the audit, "did not perform sufficient procedures, under professional standards, and consequently did not obtain sufficient, appropriate" evidence to "support the audit opinion," the nonpartisan GAO said.

The Defense Department, dependent on different sets of books kept by the military services and scores of specialized agencies, has struggled to meet a 1990 law requiring federal agencies to pass annual audits like those routinely conducted by businesses.

The GAO report, released last week after it was obtained by Bloomberg News, is a setback in efforts toward a full audit of agencies that together were authorized to spend more than \$581 billion in fiscal 2014.

The Marine Corps "schedule

of budgetary activity," which was for fiscal 2012, wasn't thoroughly evaluated by the inspector general for the completeness of reported transactions, according to the report. Nor did the inspector general sufficiently question the reliability of information from other Pentagon agencies that fed into the statement or whether budget activity was recorded in the proper period, the GAO said.

GAO investigators said they uncovered "numerous e-mail communications" between field auditors for the Office of the Inspector General and Washington superiors before the clean audit opinion was issued "that indicate there was a disagreement" about "whether there was sufficient, appropriate audit evidence to support an unqualified ('clean') audit opinion."

# Turkish warplanes strike PKK targets

*Associated Press*

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish warplanes struck Kurdish rebel positions overnight in southeast Turkey, the military said Tuesday, a day after heavy violence in the country left at least nine dead.

In a statement, the Turkish military said jets hit 17 targets of the Kurdistan Work-

ers' Party, or PKK, around the Buzul mountain and the Ikiyaka region in Hakkari province, which borders Iran and Iraq.

In further violence Tuesday, Kurdish rebels attacked an infantry brigade command post in nearby Sirnak province, seriously wounding a soldier who later died in a hospital.

On Monday, nine people, including five police officers,

were killed in separate attacks in Istanbul and in the southeastern Sirnak province. The attacks were blamed on the PKK.

Turkey has seen a sharp spike in clashes between security forces and Kurdish rebels in recent weeks. More than 50 people, mostly police and soldiers, have died during the renewed violence.

# Jays surge after deadline deals

Associated Press

TORONTO — When Minnesota Twins manager Paul Molitor felt the energy inside Rogers Centre during David Price's debut for the Toronto Blue Jays, it reminded him of SkyDome a long time ago.

"I've seen that atmosphere here before," said Molitor, the Blue Jays' designated hitter when they last won the World Series in 1993. "It was nice to see. The Toronto fans have had to wait for a long time."

The Blue Jays haven't made the playoffs since then, but their recent run amid a flurry of trades at the deadline has the city and the clubhouse buzzing. Winners of eight in a row, Toronto has only lost once since acquiring star shortstop Troy Tulowitzki.

Fresh off getting Tulowitzki, Price, outfielder Ben Revere and relievers LaTroy Hawkins and Mark Lowe, the Blue Jays swept the New York Yankees over the weekend to move within 1½ games of the AL East leaders.

Even before that pitching-led domination at Yankee Stadium, players started to sense a different feeling than ever before.

Starter Mark Buehrle said this is remi-

niscent of 2005, when he won the World Series with the Chicago White Sox. Boosted by a bruising lineup and a strong staff, the Blue Jays have an aura of invincibility about them.

"There were times when we'd be down two runs in the seventh inning and it was like, 'We don't care, we're going to win this game, somehow we're going to find a way to win this game,' and we do," Buehrle said recently.

"I don't know if it's the guys we brought in here, or the way we're playing right now, it's just that feeling that if we get down two runs in the first or second inning, just try to hold the other team down because we know we're going to score runs, especially with this offense, we can put up a bunch of runs," he said.

Led by MVP candidate Josh Donaldson and sluggers Jose Bautista and Edwin Encarnacion, the Blue Jays lead the majors with 5.28 runs a game. After adding Tulowitzki, Donaldson called it "the best lineup in baseball," and it's hard to argue that right now.

Toronto's pitching has drastically improved, too. The staff allowed just one run in three games against the Yankees after the rotation was stellar in a four-game sweep of the Twins.

The combination of power that Kansas City Royals manager Ned Yost called "ridiculous" and timely pitching has been a winning recipe.

"I feel like synergy's a good word for this team," knuckleballer R.A. Dickey said. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I'm just a puzzle piece and so is Josh, and as big of a name as Tulo is he's just a piece, and we all know it. It's neat to play on a team like that."

As good as the hitters were, the Blue Jays were out of a playoff spot and hanging around .500 when general manager Alex Anthopoulos traded a pile of pitching prospects to improve this team for this run.

Since the additions, Rogers Centre has been the site of multiple sellouts, with the Blue Jays anticipating many more in the coming weeks. On the field and in the clubhouse, the "special feeling" that Buehrle said was hard to describe is having a real impact.

"We are very confident, no doubt about that," manager John Gibbons said. "It's really picked up since Alex made those trades. It's a better team, no question about that, but we're feeling really good right now."

# US rowers ill after trial event in Rio

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Thirteen rowers on the 40-member U.S. team came down with stomach illness at the World Junior Rowing Championships — a trial run for next summer's Olympics — and the team doctor said she suspected it was due to pollution in the lake where the competition took place.

The event took place amid rising concerns about the water quality at venues for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, now less than a year away.

The Americans were by far the hardest hit at the regatta that concluded over the weekend, with reports of vomiting and diarrhea. Other teams reported some illnesses, according to World Rowing, the sport's governing body, but those were about as expected at an event that featured more than 500 young rowers.

On July 30, The Associated Press published an independent analysis of water quality that showed high levels of viruses and, in some cases, bacteria from human sewage in all of Rio's Olympic and Paralympic water venues, including the Rodrigo de Freitas Lake, where the rowing competition took place.

U.S. coach Susan Francia, a two-time Olympic gold-medal rower, said in an interview with the AP that 13 athletes and four staff members — including herself — suffered various gastrointestinal symptoms during the team's two weeks of training in Rio.

Dr. Kathryn Ackerman, the U.S. team physician, said athletes from several other countries stayed in the same hotel as the Americans, but did not seem to get as sick as her rowers.

"I don't know if it was the water bottles in the boats, or hygiene precautions that some athletes are really good about and others weren't," she said.

Officials did not rule out that the Americans could have gotten ill from food or drinking water.

"We're not really sure. My personal feeling is, I think it's from the lake," Ackerman said.

Francia said she lacked the data and information to directly blame the illness on the venue, but added: "It just doesn't seem normal."

She warned athletes coming for the Olympics that "you should know when you're coming next year that you have to be smart about how you are preparing."

US Rowing, which oversees the sport in the United States, said it is investigating what sickened the athletes, who range in age from 16-19. None are likely to be Olympians next year.

The Americans' experience is almost certain to raise more concerns for the Olympics. About 10,500 athletes will attend the Summer Games, and 1,400 will participate in rowing, sailing, triathlon, canoeing and distance swimming in the waters around Rio.

# Royals' Cueto excels in home debut

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Johnny Cueto could not have scripted a better introduction to the Kansas City fans.

Cueto threw a four-hitter in his home debut as the Royals beat the Detroit Tigers 4-0 on Monday night.

Cueto (1-1) did not allow a runner past second base, struck out eight and walked none. It was his sixth career shutout and second this season.

"The crowd really gave me an extra boost," Cueto said with catching coach Pedro Grifol acting as his interpreter. "This is the most I've felt from a crowd; the intensity is by far the most."

Cueto, who was acquired from Cincinnati on July 26 for three pitching prospects, received a loud cheer as he went out for his warmup pitches and the standing ovations grew after every scoreless inning as he walked to the dugout.

Cueto struck out Anthony Gose on three pitches to begin the game as the festive Kauffman Stadium crowd roared with approval. Sluggerr, the Royals' mascot, appeared wearing a Cueto-esque mane of dreadlocks.

When Cueto came out for the ninth, the Kauffman Stadium announced crowd of 36,672 rose in unison with a deafening roar that did not stop until long after he retired Victor Martinez on a fly ball to right fielder Alex Rios for the final out.

"A bunch of us were saying in the eighth inning just watch how loud this gets when he goes out for the ninth inning," said Eric Hosmer, who had an RBI single in the seventh. "It was really cool to see and fun to be a part of it."

"It was pretty fun to see, his first game as a Royal at the K and hear the crowd out there in the ninth inning. It was a fun atmosphere tonight, a different feel tonight, a lot of people excited."

Tigers manager Brad Ausmus complained to plate umpire Joe West that Cueto's delivery was illegal, that he was stopping in his windup.

"Really, the way the rule reads, you're not supposed to even alter your motion," Ausmus said. "That's the way the rule reads. They don't enforce it. Well, he said if he stops it's an illegal pitch."

**Mets 4, Rockies 2:** Daniel Murphy drove in two runs with a tie-breaking single in the seventh inning, and the New York Mets rallied past visiting Colorado after top Rockies pitching prospect Jon Gray was lifted after six innings.

The Mets wasted three-run leads in two straight losses to Tampa Bay last weekend, then went ahead against Colorado on Travis d'Arnaud's first homer since June 20. It was the only hit for the NL East leaders off Gray, the hard-throwing right-hander making his second major league start.

**White Sox 8, Angels 2:** Chris Sale allowed two runs and five hits in 7 1/3 innings, and Avisail Garcia homered twice to drive in four runs for host Chicago.

Tyler Flowers added a solo shot to back Sale (10-7), who didn't allow more than one baserunner in an inning until Johnny Giavotella drove in two runs with a double in the seventh.

Angels starter Matt Shoemaker (5-8) had thrown 19 consecutive scoreless innings before Melky Cabrera's sacrifice fly put Chicago ahead 1-0 in the first.

**Diamondbacks 13, Phillies 3:** Wellington Castillo equaled a career high with four RBIs, and Yasmany Tomas and A.J. Pollock homered to lead host Arizona.

Arizona scored three runs in the fifth to break a 2-2 tie, highlighted by Castillo's solo shot with two outs. Castillo has eight home runs and 14 RBIs in his last 12 games.

**Nationals 8, Dodgers 3:** Gio Gonzalez scattered seven hits over eight scoreless innings and Ian Desmond hit two homers as Washington kicked off a 10-game road trip.

Gonzalez (9-4) struck out six, walked one and stranded eight runners. The left-hander is 5-0 with a 1.48 ERA in eight starts since losing 6-1 at Tampa Bay on June 15.

**Orioles 3, Mariners 2:** Chris Davis hit a go-ahead single and his 30th home run for visiting Baltimore.

Adam Jones launched his 18th homer in the first inning off Seattle starter Vidal Nuno (0-1) and scored on Davis' base hit in the fourth. Davis then hit a line drive out to center off reliever Maycol Guaipe in the sixth.

**Padres 2, Reds 1:** Justin Upton hit a two-run homer as host San Diego snapped a six-game skid.

Ian Kennedy pitched five innings for the win, backed up by four relievers who did not permit a run to the Reds, who have lost five of six. Kennedy (7-10) was charged with two hits and a season-high six walks. He struck out four while improving to 5-1 against the Reds.



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# Ducks' priority: Finding a QB

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — Oregon opened fall camp with ongoing uncertainty about who will replace Marcus Mariota as starting quarterback.

Jeff Lockie was the backup last season, but saw little playing time as Mariota led Oregon to the championship game.

Now, Lockie is the top player in camp to succeed Mariota — at least until the anticipated arrival of former Eastern Washington star Vernon Adams.

Adams is supposed to join the Ducks as soon as he finishes the last course he needs to graduate. The fifth-year senior can't play for the Ducks until he's got a diploma.

He was supposed to arrive in June, but that was pushed back. As the Ducks opened practice on Monday, Adams was still a few days away from completing a final math class. He may join the Ducks this week.

Lockie, meanwhile, was making the most of the extra time to make his case, especially when it comes to leading a team he already knows well.

"The main thing I've been focused on is improving myself and doing all the natural leadership things that I can do," he said.

In 19 games, Lockie has completed 29 of 41 passes for 264 yards, one touchdown and one interception. In the spring game, the 6-foot-2, 205-pound junior completed all nine of his passes for 223 yards and

three touchdowns, leading his team to a 35-29 victory.

Mariota, the Heisman Trophy winner, led the Ducks to a 13-2 season that included a Rose Bowl win against Florida State before a 42-20 loss to Ohio State in the national championship game last January. Leaving with a year of eligibility, Mariota was selected second overall by the Tennessee Titans in the NFL Draft.

"I don't think anyone can fill Marcus' shoes — very few could do that — we're just trying to be ourselves and do what we do best," Lockie said of Oregon's quarterbacks group. There are five quarterbacks on Oregon's roster, minus Adams.

Coach Mark Helfrich said the quarterback competition, whatever that looks like in the end, will sort itself out. He said that ideally it will be apparent before the opener.

"In my opinion you can't say that by August 29th, or whatever the date, you're going to name a guy. That has to play out," Helfrich said. "It's kind of like leadership."

Adams was a two-time Big Sky Conference offensive player of the year and a two-time All-American. He threw for 10,438 yards and 110 touchdowns in three seasons at Eastern Washington.

Two of Adams' most memorable games came against the Pac-12: He passed for 411 yards and four touchdowns and rushed for 107 yards and two TDs in a 2013 win at Oregon State, and he threw for 475 yards and seven touchdowns in a 59-52 loss at Washington last season.

Senior Byron Marshall, who has played at both running back and receiver for the Ducks, said the sideshow is amusing.

"It's like, 'Well, when is he coming in? Is he going to be the starter? Is it Lockie? Is it Vernon? Is it Lockie? Is it Vernon?' I'm like, I don't know. It's whoever the best man is, is going to play," Marshall said.

"The coaches will see that and we'll see that. It will be obvious on the field who will be better. Right now, I don't care, really, I just want to play football."

Oregon returns eight starters on offense, including wide receiver Bralon Addison and left tackle Tyler Johnstone, who missed last season with injuries. In addition to Mariota, key departures on offense include center Hroniss Grasu and left tackle Jake Fisher.

The Ducks lost five defensive starters, including defensive end Arik Armstead, who left school with eligibility remaining.

As fall camp started, Oregon was hurt by the loss of running back Thomas Tyner, who was expected to miss the season after left shoulder surgery on Friday.

Tyner struggled with the injury last season and Royce Freeman had a breakout freshman year. The two were expected to be a potent ground attack for the Ducks. Marshall, who was expected to take on more of a receiver role this season, now may see plays running the ball.

Oregon is also awaiting word on the status of receiver Darren Carrington and whether he must sit out half of the season after failing an NCAA-run drug test during the football playoffs.

# KC's Smith must carry bigger load

Associated Press

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Alex Smith did everything the Kansas City Chiefs asked of him last season.

Now, he must do more. The veteran quarterback with a reputation for being a game manager is being called upon to build on a solid if unremarkable season.

After signing a four-year, \$68 million extension before training camp, Smith proceeded to throw for more than 3,000 yards and 18 touchdowns with only six interceptions, despite having his season cut a game short by injury.

But if the Chiefs hope to return to the playoffs — and win their first postseason game since 1993 — it will almost certainly be because their passing game flourishes this season.

"I feel really good," said Smith, who is entering his 10th season in the league. "It's a point of emphasis for us all off-season. We worked hard on it, QBs and wide-outs included. We worked really hard on it and I do feel good with where we're at."

Much of his career, Smith has been hampered by spotty options at wide receiver. Dwayne Bowe and Donnie Avery hardly fit Chiefs coach Andy Reid's offense, but other than a host of also-rans, they were just about all Smith had at his disposal.

That is hardly the case this season. The Chiefs signed Jeremy Maclin, who grew up in Reid's offense in Philadelphia — although the high-profile free agent missed Monday's practice with an injury.

They also drafted Chris Conley in the third round, and the speedy, rangy pass-catcher out of Georgia returned to the practice field Monday for the first time since July 29 after dealing with a knee injury.

Throw in the emergence of tight end Travis Kelce as a bona fide star last season, and running back Jamaal Charles's ability to catch passes out of the backfield, and Smith has more weapons in the huddle than any other time in his first two years in Kansas City.

He also has more down-the-field options.

One of the big criticisms of Smith has been his reluctance to throw deep, which might help loosen up opposing defenses and give Charles room to run. Smith completed just 40 passes of at least 20 yards last season, ranking in the bottom half of NFL starters, and three of at least 40 yards — tied for 35th among all quarterbacks that attempted a pass.

"Your percentages obviously go down when you shoot deep as opposed to short and intermediate passes, that only makes sense," Reid said. "But he's connected on some nice ones [in practice]."

Even offensive coordinator Doug Pederson, himself a former quarterback, seems to be hoping Smith takes more chances, at least before the games start to count.

"If you're going to throw an interception, training camp is the time to throw it. Let's test our skill and ability, let's see what our guys can do," Pederson said.

Smith and his wide receivers are only part of the equation, though. To make the passing game click, the offensive line must protect better than it did last season, when it allowed Smith to get sacked a career-high 45 times in just 15 games.

"It doesn't matter if you have two or three studs," Jeff Allen said. "You have to have five guys working together. That is what we're trying to get."

# McIlroy says he's 100 percent for PGA

Associated Press

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. — Rory McIlroy says he's 100 percent and his game appears to be in order.

He was talking about golf, not soccer. McIlroy played another practice round Monday for the PGA Championship and declared himself ready to go at Whistling Straits. The world's No. 1 player injured ligaments in his left ankle the first weekend in July while playing soccer with friends in Northern Ireland.

Thursday will be his first competitive round since the U.S. Open.

"To play golf it's 100 percent," he said. "To go back on a soccer pitch, it wouldn't be quite ready. But to do what I need to do this week, it's 100 percent."

Monday was the first official day of practice for the final major of the year, though it was interrupted throughout the afternoon as thunderstorms rumbled into the area off Lake Michigan and twice suspended play.

McIlroy got his work done in the morning. He flew in from Portugal on the weekend and played twice, and the 26-year-old from Northern Ireland said he has been playing with one ball to keep score and try to regain a competitive feel.

He said he played — and walked — 72 holes during his time in Portugal. That's much different — as is the injury — from when Tiger Woods played the 2008 U.S. Open at Torrey Pines with shredded ligaments in his left knee and a double stress fracture in his leg. Woods did not walk 18 holes until he teed it up that week.

"It actually feels better when I go at it as hard as I want because my left foot sort of spins out of the way whenever I hit the driver anyway," McIlroy said. "If my left foot was to stay completely flat, like roll on to the left side like a lot of guys do, then it would obviously probably create a

few problems. Because mine sort of spins out of the way, it takes a lot of pressure off it."

McIlroy said he was putting even while he was in a boot to keep his ankle steady.

He began this year with a runner-up finish in Abu Dhabi after a seven-week break, though he conceded it was far different at a major championship.

"I think it's just the competitiveness of feeling what it's like to play a tournament," he said. "It's OK coming back to play Abu Dhabi as your first week back, but playing a major, it's a bit different. Just that sharpness and competitive edge, that's the thing you really hope is there when you come back."

McIlroy joins the marquee group of this year's major champions in the opening rounds: Masters and U.S. Open champion Jordan Spieth and British Open champion Zach Johnson.

That threesome has accounted for the past five majors. McIlroy has not played since the U.S. Open. He injured ligaments in his left ankle while playing soccer with friends, costing him title defenses at the British Open and this week at the Bridgestone Invitational. He won the PGA Championship last year at Valhalla.

The PGA Championship, like other majors, doesn't require players to officially commit. They can wait until their tee time on Thursday to decide whether to play, and it's possible that McIlroy first wants to play a practice round or two to see how his ankle holds up, especially on the terrain of Whistling Straits.

McIlroy is host of the champions' dinner on Tuesday night, and his news conference is scheduled for Wednesday. And assuming he plays, it should be quite a show in the same group as Spieth, who is closing in on McIlroy's No. 1 ranking that he has held for the past year, does not have to win the PGA Championship to re-

place McIlroy at No. 1 in the world. In fact, he might not get there even if he does win his third major.

The Official World Golf Ranking laid out the following scenarios for Spieth to get to No. 1:

■ Spieth wins and McIlroy finishes in a two-way tie for second or worse.

■ Spieth finishes second alone and McIlroy is out of the top six.

■ Spieth finishes in a two-way tie for second and McIlroy is out of the top 13.

■ Spieth finishes in a three-way tie for second and McIlroy is out of the top 33.

The only way for Spieth to finish alone in third and get to No. 1 is for McIlroy to miss the cut.

If the last two championships at the course are any indication, spectators should be in for a treat.

Martin Kaymer won in 2010, beating Bubba Watson in the playoff. Vijay Singh won in 2004, beating Chris DiMarco and Justin Leonard in another playoff.

McIlroy said being cautious is key.

"So I'll always hover my club regardless if it's a waste area or a bunker, McIlroy said, "just to be on the safe side."

**Late additions:** Martin Laird, J.J. Henry and Sean O'Hair are the latest entries to the PGA Championship.

Laird was the first alternate and go in when Shane Lowry won the Bridgestone Invitational. Lowry already was eligible, but because five players at Firestone were not eligible, the PGA kept open one spot.

Henry got the 156th spot on Sunday night by winning the Barracuda Championship. Then, Graham DeLaet of Canada withdrew Monday because of an injury to his left thumb. He was replaced by O'Hair, who had moved up as first alternate.

That moves Carl Pettersson up to first alternate, followed by Daniel Summerhays and William McGirt.